

## Proposal of the FAMU development concept in the years 2024 - 2028

**Doc. Mgr Tereza Brdečková,**

candidate for dean



### Introduction:

#### **A few words about the candidate**

I studied at FAMU from 1977 to 1982, on the department of film editing. Then I assisted to Alois Fišárek, but at that time I was also writing about film, translating film literature and started writing prose. I made a living as an interpreter.

When great opportunities opened up for my generation after November 89, I always divided my time between creative and organizational work. In 1992 I was programming Director of the Karlovy Vary festival, and from 1996 to 2005 I was the Head of the programme of Febiofest under the leadership of Feri Fenič. There I met excellent young collaborators, then students of film theory, including today's vice-dean for foreign affairs on FAMU, David Čeněk.

Thanks to the federation of International critics FIPRESCI, I was invited regularly to participate in juries of important festivals such as Cannes, Berlinale, Venice, Locarno.

Between 1996 and 2012, I filmed with Zdeněk Tyce for Czech Television, among other things, the documentary series "I'm Still Here", which was a total of 140 episodes. Later, I finally got into feature screenwriting and also in international co-productions.

Today I work as a screenwriter and script doctor, and I co-manage a small family publishing house.

I was a member of the selecting commission of Fond kinematografie for five years.

Now I am teaching on the screenwriting department of FAMU ( KSD ) since 2016.

In 202, I reached a senior lecturer degree and I habilitated with a lecture titled The Heart of Story- a topic I want to continue to develop.

I am enclosing my CV and filmography. Here I just point out that I experiences the world of audiovisual from many sides over the decades. In front of the camera and behind it, as a scriptwriter, organizer, critic and publisher working with film heritage. It's always the same activity - serving our industry.

I've learned that successful or inspiring results come only from the ability to agree with each other and that power solutions don't work or they fail sooner or later. If we are not able to reach the common opinion, or the compromise, nothing can be done and everyone loose.

FAMU was a depressing institution during my studies. On the contrary, today it is so much in line with my opinions that I would like to apply my lifelong experience as a dean.

Here I suggest FAMU's goals for the coming years. In terms of ways how to achieve them, I am deliberately not setting out any precise solutions. I only raise issues and questions.

As for answers, will discuss them and we will seek consensus together. Simply I am not planning any revolution, and especially not personnel one. On the contrary, I wish to continue with the members of the team who are now in the school.

## **Our main Topics**

### **1. Opening up to Europe means more opportunities**

Thanks current management of FAMU, we can benefit contacts and programmes of prestigious schools in Europe: the French FEMIS, the Belgian INSAS, the Danish Den Danske Film Skole and the Italian Centro Sperimentale. In addition, we have long-standing relations with the Polish school in Lodz, the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and others. New perspectives are opening up for students in terms of Erasmus. We are working on concrete ways to connect our students with young filmmakers from other European countries, to enable them to prepare projects together.

The current reality of European cinema are international coproductions. It is well known that film partnerships established during the learning school period often last for decades. For students who start working internationally while still at school, this opens up new career opportunities.

**International cooperation of students of any film professions should become the flagship of FAMU.** Why? We educate here world-class professionals, but they are limited by a small market and a limited language territory. To what extent are we, as educators, responsible for the students' upcoming careers?

**I Think that we should try to manage, that our graduates leave with a hope that they will find an opportunity. The Czech environment is very small, but from a European perspective it looks different. To know and understand European opportunities and to be able to establish working contacts, that is where I see the future.**

In recent years, the Mentoring Program has played a big role in opening FAMU. Thanks to it, we could experience masterclasses of world leaders, plan internships and interesting workshops. A major credit for Mentoring goes to Vice-Dean David Čeněk, whose follow-up work I see as almost irreplaceable for the mondialization of FAMU. If I'm elected dean, I'll be happy if he'll continue it if he wants to.

## **2. Cooperation across professions, departments, faculties.**

FAMU was once modeled according the Soviet film school VGIK. We have separate departments, which in practice made up the crews.

Many film schools around the world today prefer a different model, namely the common core at the beginning of their studies and later specialization. Others (Berlin DFFB) are returning to the principle of separate departments after experimenting with management-driven study. It turns out that students need a direct human background, that professional knowledge is better achieved in smaller stable teams and that new ideas also thrive better there.

The problem is that our system suffers from a lack of interconnectedness, although this is improving. Given the short preparation time, I have not had the opportunity to map all the new interdisciplinary collaborations. I do know, however, that FAMU has a time-tested and functioning system of exercises based on disciplinary professional interdependence. It is based on the plans of the KR(directing) KDT (docu) and KAT (animation) departments. These exercises are created under the umbrella supervision of the KP.(production). These exercises reflect professional practices of staffing, budgeting and shooting schedules. They are guided by the logic of the pedagogical process from simple etudes to more complex, costly and complex artistic statements in the upper grades. For example, a director should have a cameraman a year more experienced. However, it is essential to continuously Watch and update this principle. And, outside of it, to create other models of collaboration.

Let me give you an example. During this year, KP and KSD have managed to create a shared database of film ideas, synopsis and screenplays that can be implemented in the school environment. Each student can place there any of his work. The database exists under the management of KP and encourages for creative collaboration between students of different

departments. We are at the beginning and it is up to all of us to decide how the platform will perform and evolve. I would like CAS and the Game Design Department to join all existing and future activities..

**To create projects across departments, faculties and international schools, such as modules, workshop or projects, must be one of the main goals for the coming years.**

**Any department of FAMU is a place where the daily routine and real life of the school takes place. Departments have legitimate leadership and so any proposals for further cooperation should come from them or to approved by them. All plans are then aligned at the Dean's College.** This should take into account common goals, while specific departmental requirements should be discussed in separate meetingsI see the Dean's College as a roundtable. But that means that all of us need to explain, listen, and stay ready for a reasonable compromise.

### **3. Connection between theoretical and practical teaching.**

FAMU is a university type of school and we educate ambitious audiovisual professionals in relevant fields. Our graduates profile themselves as highly educated artists, not just "audiovisual workers." That's why we cultivate a rigorous theoretical education led by top film scholars and build on programs in science and artistic research.

There are two other practical film schools and three university departments of film studies in the Czech Republic. But only FAMU cultivates both practice and theory. This allows students to move freely through the European education system and to obtain grants in science and research.

However, we lack spontaneous interdisciplinary **communication and the link between theoretical and practical teaching, which exists in fact only in isolated form in CAS.**

As a lecturer, I sometimes experience film theory graduates coming to our CAS. Their thinking about film is interesting, but initially quite different from that of the authors, and it gives them the same difficulties as, on the contrary, the authors of theoretical work. But what is it?

**What tools does the theorist use? Which ones does the artist use? How do they differ and why? These questions are the order of the day. The boundary between methodology and creation is not insurmountable, it is freely permeable and current European grants take this into account.**

**I would welcome new modules, artistic outputs and research, with theorists and practitioners working together.**

I'm a member of the Phd council. Currently, the rules of our Phd studies require, that the final output be both a theoretical work and an artistic act. To encourage this activity more in the M.A. degree would open the way for students to get grants, but above all to a new type of thinking about the film.

#### 4. Studio FAMU

The reinforced cooperation between departments, faculties and European film schools will lead to new film projects. This would raise additional demands on FAMU studio, which already has capacity problems (now we also fight with pandemic consequences) But at the same time, the studio is open very much on top professionally. The studio management believes that with better organization, it could handle even more exercises in the future. The studio has now acquired about 15 million CZK worth of equipment.

**The increase of the film production may eventually be possible in case that we reestablish the project competition but optionally on an international basis.**

**But first we need to discuss around departments and with studio, whether it is possible to spread a part of production outside of the main shooting and post-production periods. It turns out that the formerly clear system is now breaking down.**

**So we need an analysis of study options, , and a preliminary plan and budget for possible new interdisciplinary and international projects.**

And at the same time we need a consensual reduction of existing exercises. No department wants to give up its exercises and most of the time it cannot. But it is possible to return to a model where first and second bc year exercises were focused, simple, and did not require any special service. Only from 3bc onwards should they be more realization-intensive film works..

**First we have to analyze the traffic and the possibilities of the studio and then increase the number of exercises and short films within the possibilities. The studio was also originally planned to be used only for training Czech students. Now We are facing different situation. We do not want to give up foreign students and their films. And we don't know how many problems the purchase of new equipment will solve. As for now, everything is in the end somehow managed, but the price is the enormous psychological burden and sometimes justified anger of the students who are obliged to work on the film in stressing conditions. The agenda of studio is actually very urgent! Things will not work out by themselves.**

## 5. People

### A/ About and for students

**If I am elected as the dean of FAMU, I will immediately ask the student ambassadors to develop with fellow students an alternative concept of school leadership from their perspective. According, their wishes, aspirations but also according our common responsibility. That such alternative concept would be a great value. Our thinking about FAMU is different. Also, the administration of the school looks different from the point of view of students. We are all Responsible members of our Academic Community.**

**And let's be honest: Evaluations filled out by a small minority tell us little about students preferences and difficulties.** The evaluations also suggest the idea that the school is a sort of supermarket, where the student puts what he likes in the basket, eventually complains about supply shortages, pays and then leave.

**But as members of the academic community, we are all equal in the sense that we also share responsibility for the shape of the school.**

FAMU is here for the students, but sometimes it doesn't feel like it. The school is proud about films, but authors - students, have only limited possibility to travel to festivals, and the applause and prizes are sometimes addressed to professors and managers. I find this unfair.

In our overloaded studio, we are putting in danger the health of students, mainly from production department. Many don't stand up to the aggressive pressure and then leave the school with a sense of disgust that they continue to spread. This needs to be changed.

**We also have an unfair system of awarding merit scholarships.** They should not be allocated with regard to a grade for artistic performance (screenplay, film etc). A bad grade does not encourage anyone to become better artist, and, also. these grades are usually just an average of the committee members' evaluations.

We need to find a way of rethinking eligibility for scholarships so that only grades for science subjects count.

**We talk a lot o about ethical issues in recent years. I requested the written version of the performance „You Don't Have to Endure“and I recommend this reading to everyone. Not every complaint seems justified to me. But there are many situations that are egregious and disgusting, and I don't know if anyone has drawn consequences from it.**

Although doesn't happen often (as I hope), there are situations in which our students feel rightly humiliated. Various forms of bragging showing muscle, being vindictive, playing down the artistic or scientific results of women and topics of queer authors, or even personal harassment are often

unconscious. But not excusable. The institution of an ombudsman is therefore entirely appropriate. However, I would be happy if ombudsman is not directly linked to the management of FAMU itself

. Then students would have the opportunity to take their complaint out of the faculty environment into a more independent environment.

### **B/ Professors and mentors**

**Shamefully low salaries of our academic staff are a long-standing pain for FAMU. They are also the reason why we cannot hire more young colleagues**The school administration will always look into salary increases, but I doubt we will get higher than the single digits of a percent. **I suggest therefore to invest more finances in module teaching, in fact in honoraria. That way we could attract our successful graduates to work more closely with the school.**

I figure out it as several days of well-paid modules and workshops, for which we can seek money from grants and other programs. It will be up to departments to come up with proposals for these modules by the end of the semester or of the academic year. I myself, thanks to the helpfulness of David Cenek and Mentoring, have initiated the „Bases of film directing" modules led by Olmo Omerzu and Beata Parkanova. other departments may feel have similar needs and it is certainly financially feasible to organize models for several departments thus reducing the expenses. However, we need to ensure that these are modules are not an exception but systemic solutions.

**Teaching at FAMU contains a paradox: On the one hand, we educate artists and help them develop imagination, sensitivity, cinematic vision, inspiration, enthusiasm. On the other hand, we know that we are preparing them for extremely harsh working environment. The audiovisual industry gives nothing for free, is unfair and often destroys the very qualities that an artist needs to create.**

**That collisions with reality are hard and sad. While it is tempting for us educators to show our superiority, it is good to remember that we deal first of all with our future colleagues who merit a respect. At the same time, students should know that in our time of rapid generational transformation, our job is not easy, that understanding their intentions is sometimes difficult for us, even when we are on their side.**

**This is on more reason to invite young graduate into module teaching, in order to reduce the generational barrier.**

### **C/ administration staff**

**School IT systems like KOS are impenetrable to some of us. Secretaries or assistants struggle to manage the entire agenda and I am to sure, if adequate resources are allocated for them.**

Few departments have highly qualified administrative staff. One small consequence for example: the school is allocated money from the state according to, among other things, the RUV register of artistic performances. It's not a small amount of money, according to my information it can be up to 9 million CZK a year.

This register is, in my opinion, firstly partly wrong, because it only considers the final outputs (film premieres). But mainly, it requires to fill a sort of form, that cannot be understood without training. As underpaid academics, we feel no duty to spend hours on it and we find it absurd. But then, FAMU loses lot of money.

**The debate on professional management support in departments needs to be opened as soon as possible.**

### **6. English programs**

**We run accredited and commercial English programs. I don't want to enter into the details, but the point is, that some of the accredited programs run under the departments of for example CINKK, Montage, Photography, while the main disciplines, Ma directing and screenwriting, remain under FI.**

After several years of funding shortfalls caused mainly by Covid, the dean asked for an audit of accredited programs.

It is true, that in the past, FI was profitable and the surplus was used to fund exercises in Czech departments. This, according to my information, is not only no longer the case.

Based on consultations with colleagues, I believe that we are facing a fundamental question:

**Should all our Czech departments have their English accredited programs, and the short terms courses or common lectures remain under FI? How exactly manage the administration?**

**In any case: the current situation is unsystematic, a drain on resources and should be changed, according to the analysis.**

**We all agree that Czech and English-speaking students need to be mixed and connected, and the whole system needs to be penetrable. We disagree on how and when to achieve this.**



**Although this is a very complex issue, we need to open and conclude the debate on what is best by the end of the year..** It is in all our interests that as many students as possible apply and do not leave disillusioned.

### 7. **Greater connection with the Cinematography Fund**

At a time when the Cinema Fund is being transformed, we could provide better conditions for debutants and help graduating students to better navigate the application system. **We once had a good idea at the Fund to create a separate call for debutants. We understood that beginners would never get the necessary number of points and needed their own call. We should now focus on improving all calls for debutants in discussions with the Fund's management.**

This can be planned still in this summer semester..

### 8. **Finances**

a) **According to my information, FAMU currently has a reserve of about 500 000 CZK in the fund. For comparison - DAMU has over 6 million, HAMU over 5 million - however FAMU did not end up in the deficit. This is pretty good news.**In the two previous years, FAMU had used its budget to supplement FI's reserve funds with about 3 million crowns for non realized production (similar to the FAMU Studio). This should now be equalised and FI should come out with a budget without a loss.

b) The future Dean will stand in front of an unpopular task: **In 2026, the lease for the tenant of the Slavia Café will expire. At the same time, a repair of the HVAC system that runs through FAMU itself needs to be reconstructed.**

The rent from Slávie is 500,000 czk per month, according to my information.. A competition needs to be issued at time for a tenant who will cooperate in the repairs (which is the task of the Rectorate, but in agreement with FAMU).

This agenda is urgent.

c) **The current management is working on the agenda of the operational program JAK from the European Union funds.**

Due to the short time until the submission of the concept note it was not in my possibilities to get acquainted with this agenda. However, continuing it will thus be one of the tasks of the next Dean/Dean.

## 9. In conclusion

I have explained in these points what seems to me to be important in the coming period. **I believe , that I share with most of yours the preference for long-term goals (opening up to Europe and the world, deeper collaboration across departments, stabilization of FAMU studio and more effective setting of English programs )**

**These goals are realistic. Let's talk about a short-term strategy to achieve them. In a democracy, not everyone can't get what he wants, but it is possible to reach a consent acceptable for almost everyone.**

**I don't believe in personnel changes, on the contrary.**

**Let's all consider each other legitimate**

**and competent. If we are to maintain our prestige and get results, we have no choice. We live in uncertain and hard times. Let's create together a quiet, opened and friendly working ambience.**

### **Tereza Brdečková, cv, filmography, biblio**

1977 - 1982 studies at the Film Faculty in Prague FAMU, majoring in editing

1982 - 1983 - assistant editor at Alois Fišárek's studio

1983 - 1987 - teaching at FAMU speciale, in French: lecturer in audiovisual composition

1984 - 1988 interpreter, French, Serbo-Croatian

1990 - 91 - dramaturge of the Barrandov Film Studio, Antonín Máša's group

1992 - Programme Director of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

1994 - leading the programme of the International PEN Congress in Prague

1995 - 6 - Editor of the cultural section of the weekly Respekt /intern

1996 - 7 - Cultural section of Lidove noviny

1997- dramaturge of Czech Television /intern

1995 - 2005 - artistic direction and programming of the Febiofest festival

Since 2010 - CERGE, UPCES, Film as a mirror of communism and transition, course lecturer

2010 - 2012 - position "Art movies coordinator" at CME

2012 - 2016- Councillor of the Cinematography Fund

2014 - establishment of the publishing house Limonádový Joe Ltd.

2016 - teaching at FAMU, KSD - conducting undergraduate year seminars and master workshops

2021 Habilitation at FAMU

## **filmography and bibliography**

### **Screenwriter:**

1996 - 2012 I am still here, interviews with Czech seniors "about life, history and old age"

*(140 documentary programmes as writer and presenter, directed by Zdeněk Tyc).*

*One of the first programmes reflecting the past of the Czech Republic through individual human fates. Syndicate of Journalists Award*

1996 - screenplay Mirrors for Wallenstein, (with Otakar Votoček) *prize in the Hartley- Merill Prize, not realized*

2002 - Toyen, a film script for Jan Němec (premiere 2005) *A blessed collaboration with a great man, it produced a script that had little to do with the film but stood on its own.*

2004 - Man and Shadow, script, screenplay, directed by Dušan Klein, Czech Television, premiere 2005

2005 - The Thirteenth Chamber by Eva Pilarova, script, moderation - directed by Zdenek Tyc, script

2005 - The Thirteenth Chamber by Jaroslav Hutka - directed by Zdenek Tyc - screenplay

2011 - Zrcadlo1600, script, not realized

2012 - Donshajni, dir. Jiří Menzel, collaboration on the screenplay

2014 - Lucerna, film from the series Strange Cinemas of the World, Kolam and CT, script and collaboration on

directed by Joel Farges - *a feature documentary about the Havel family cinema through which history passes, garnered positive reviews in the French press and toured a number of film festivals*

2017. Bohéma, a six-part series about Czech filmmakers during the Protectorate and the 1950s, directed by Robert Sedláček - *a high-budget Czech television series about filmmakers and actors who had to face or serve totalitarian regimes. The aim was not to pronounce theses, but to ask questions.*

2017 - Anežka screenplay, 1st, Barrandov Foundation Award 2018, in development, directed by Dagmar Knoepfel

*Agnes shows the Czech patroness as a charismatic and strong personality who wants to live her own life freely in the service of people and God and does not believe in the devil.*

2017 - Universum Brdečka, script, director Miroslav Janek

*The life and work of Jiří Brdečka through narrative and his diverse output*

2018 - The Moment -documentary TV series on the anniversary of the occupation of 1968- the drastic fate of people who were marked for life by the occupation.

2019 - Jiří Trnka, A Friend Found, screenplay, French-Czech co-production, directed by Joel Farges  
*The combined documentary with fiction elements was precisely scripted and reveals the artist's existential tragedy through his work. We deliberately worked with facts in the form of a fairy tale narrative -*

*Young Audience Award at the Bologna Festival*

2019 - Nigrin, feature film screenplay, in development - a mysterious film noir genre set around Prague in August 1939 and inspired by the fate of painter Zdeněk Rykr.

2020 - Une Guerre tres animée/ War of Images , Czech-German-French documentary, script . Joel Farges

2021 - Czechoslovak fairy tale, Czech. French documentary about the Czech New Wave, directed by Christian Paigneau, dramaturgy

2021 -Jofie, scenario, in development

### **books (fiction)**

1996 - Letters to Margaret, book, nakl. ERM - collection of novels

2000 - Shahrazad and the King, novel, ARGO publishing house

2004 - The History Teacher, novel, Argo

2005 - Toyen, film novel, book, Argo

2006 - Blind Maps, novel, published by Odeon

2010 - Alhambra - novel, Odeon

2016 - Zrcadlo Serafina, novel, ed. Lemonade Joe Ltd.

2022 - Golden Roosters /poetry collection / Lemonade Joe

### **Books film literature and non fiction**

1988 - Look Down, Book - a book of interviews with documentary filmmaker Jan Špata

1990 - Gérard Depardieu, Czechoslovak Film Institute

1991 - Under the Old Lantern, book - editor of inedit texts by Jiří Brdečka, study TB, ed. Primus

2005 - Nebezpečí, jak je tvé jméno, book - feyets and texts 1993 -2005, Argo

2005- I'm Still Here, NLN, literary form of the TV show

- 2007 - Women who read are dangerous, Czech foreword, essay , Odeon
- 2013- Jiří Brdečka, monograph, Arbor Vitae
- 2015 - Jiri Brdečka, Life, Animation, Magic, English, vyd Limonádový Joe s.r.o
- 2018 - That moment, my sixty-eighth, book, ed. CT
- 2018 - Secrets of the Castle in the Carpathians,
- 2020 - Jiří Brdečka, Protectorate Jokes/Limonade Joe
- 2020 - Vila Mystérií - Dreams of Jiří Brdečka, book, editor and foreword, published by Limonádový Joe.
- 2022 - About Jana and Zdenka around Jan Werich, published by Lemonade Joe.
- 2023 - Mostly Me - essays 1996 - 2005 (Lemonade Joe)

### **Books translations**

- 1987 - Novel about Francois Truffaut, book, editor and translation, published by Czechoslovak Film. Institute
- 1991 - Telling the Story, Jean Claude Carriere, book, translation and editor, ed. NFA
- 2008 - In the New World - translation and editing of a collection of poems by Zafer Senock, Fra
- 2020 - Bernard O'Donoghue, The Rainmaker, a selection of poetry, translation and preface, ed. Lemonade Joe

### **Prices:**

- 1995** Silver Quail for the best cultural journalism,,
- 1996** Hartley Merrill Prize (Mirrors for Wallenstein,)
- 1999** Prize of the Syndicate of Journalists We Live Together for the programme I'm Still Here,
- 2016** FITES Award for Audiovisual Achievement DVD release of Jiří Brdečka's animated films
- 2018** - 2nd prize of the Barrandov Foundation for the screenplay Anežka
- 2019** - Young Audience Award at the Bologna Film Festival for Trnka, a Friend Found
- 2022 - 1st** Film Foundation Award for the screenplay Nigrin, the worst is fear

### **Foreign languages**

French (state exam), English, German, Russian (matriculation), Serbo-Croatian, passively most other European languages

**Membership in professional juries and committees:**

Miloš Havel Foundation, Councillor of the Cinematography Fund 2012 - 2016, Permanent Jury

Member of the Award

Book Club from 2004 to 2023, member of the FIPRESCI juries at Cannes, Berlin, Locarno, Stockholm and other festivals.