

# I'M NOT EVERYTHING I WANT TO BE

After the Soviet invasion of Prague, a young female photographer strives to break free from the constraints of Czechoslovakian normalization and embarks on a wild journey towards freedom, capturing her experiences through thousands of photographs.

A DOCUMENTARY BY KLÁRA TASOVSKÁ



Berlinale  
74<sup>th</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Panorama

# JEŠTĚ NEJSEM, KÝM CHCI BÝT I'M NOT EVERYTHING I WANT TO BE

Czechia / Slovakia / Austria 2024

documentary feature

90 min. Black and White & Colour

original language: Czech (with subtitles)

Director **Klára Tasovská**

Idea **Eva Dvořáková, Irina Minaříková**

Screenplay **Klára Tasovská, Alexander Kashcheev**

Cinematography **Libuše Jarcovjáková**

Edited by **Alexander Kashcheev**

Music **Oliver Torr, Prokop Korb (badfocus), Adam Matej**

Sound Design **Alexander Kashcheev, Michaela Patriková**

Sound & Mix **Michaela Patriková**

Dramaturgy **Viera Čákanyová, Eva Dvořáková**

Producers **Lukáš Kokeš, Klára Tasovská**

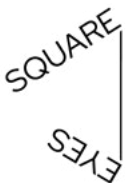
Produced by **Somatic Films**

Co-Producers **Jakub Viktorín, Ralph Wieser**

Co-Produced by **nutprodukcia (SK), Mischief Films (AT)**

**ARTE G.E.I.E. - La Lucarne (FR/GE), Czech Television (CZ)**

**world sales and festival strategy**



**Wouter Jansen**

wouter@squareeyesfilm.com

Mob: +43 6609805377

www.squareeyesfilm.com

**PR and press service:**

**NOISE**  
Film & TV

**Kai Hermann**

kai@noisefilmpr.com

Mob:+49 152 534 509 55

www.noisefilmpr.com

**INEIWTB**  
on Instagram



**INEIWTB**  
on Facebook



# SYNOPSIS

From the darkness come flashes of bright light followed by fragments of black-and-white images that appear in quick succession. An invitation to a prestigious photography exhibition means that seventy-year-old Libuše Jarcovjáčová has to turn on her photo scanner. She has been waiting for such an invitation for the last 50 years. All that time she's been trying to be a recognized photographer, but no one really cared. Now she has to choose photographs that represent her and her work. But what should she show the world? Who is she, really?

The story of Libuše begins in normalisation-era Prague, when she sets off, with her camera around her neck, on a journey through "islands of freedom." She heads off into the night streets of the communist capital city for a night shift in a printing house, to spit-and-sawdust pubs, to communities of Roma people and the newly-arrived Vietnamese and Cubans... Snapshots of nudity, sex, and alcohol, but also boredom and the straitjacket of normalisation. Her personal journey of emancipation and

search for her own sexual identity captured through thousands of analogue images, is interrupted by a murder. As the Czechoslovakian police take an interest in her photographs from the semi-legal gay T-club, Libuše decides to enter into a fake marriage and moves to Berlin.

The new world is full of obstacles. After a car accident, Libuše ends up in a hospital with a broken leg. Once she recovers, she uses her last bit of money to fly to Tokyo, where, with the help of her friend, she miraculously breaks through as a fashion photographer. But it's not the life she wants to live. Libuše returns to Berlin, and after the fall of the Iron Curtain, heads back to Prague. Meanwhile, she keeps a record of her everyday struggles, identity exploration, corporeality, relationships, and emotions in her pictures and journals. The result is tens of thousands of negatives, preserving the transformation of body and soul over decades. What is Libuše looking for beyond the mirror?





## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

There is still a question today of how to be a woman and an artist or creator, to succeed in a world that is still male-dominated, to have a family and believe in acknowledgment that may never come, to be authentic in both work and life, and to discover who you really want to be in life. In the character of Libuše Jarcovjáčková, I found a great protagonist who embodies all these questions. Although her story takes place from 1968 to the present, it is timeless and still highly relevant. Her search for islands of personal freedom, her decision not to have children, her sexuality and coming out, her escape to Berlin and unknown Tokyo...these story elements form the foundation for articulating themes that can inspire everyone.

I was fascinated by the continuity with which Libuše recorded herself and her everyday life. Her photos are actually like a photo novel. What young people now do to fill their Instagram feeds, she did in the past just for personal reasons. She took photos of herself after her first sexual experience, after an abortion, after a car crash, after the first time having sex with a woman, and when she was unhappy or happy in different parts of the world.

## ARTISTIC AND VISUAL APPROACH

We tell the story of Libuše Jarcovjáčková conceptually only through her raw photograph. The uniqueness of Libuše's pictures does not only lie in

the quality of isolated, individual shots and single moments. The impressiveness of her photographs is based on quantity, seriality, compact sequences capturing time, transformation, and even a micro-story of a situation similar to a comic strip. She often photographed a situation as it unfolded in a series of several pictures all taken from one spot. These image series therefore create, in quick succession, the impression of discontinuous (sort of animated) movement. Together with Alexander Kashcheev (editor of the Oscar nominated animated short "Daughter", 2019) we ended up utilizing thousands of photographs on our editing timeline. In combination with detailed foley, sound effects, ambient soundscapes, and contemporary music, the dynamic montage of photographs literally comes to life. The viewer forgets after a while that they are watching "just" a series of images, their imagination is ignited and their brains fill in the rest of the movement. An interesting, audiovisual, and immersive effect is created. How else could Libuše's unconventional female gaze be expressed more truthfully, more deeply, than through the montage of her own pictures that embody her own point of view?

The narration is based on personal diaries that Libuše Jarcovjáčková has been writing since she was 16 years old. Her voice accompanies the photographic point of view and narrates situations "here and now," in the present tense. The main character is searching for freedom and self-affirmation on a life-long journey.

## INTERVIEW WITH KLÁRA TASOVSKÁ

**While watching, it seems like the only right method of making a film about Libuše Jarcovjáčová - but just a few seconds beforehand one doesn't know that it will be a film composed entirely of photographs! Sometimes quietly static, sometimes rhythmically arranged. How did you come up with the idea of telling the story in this particular way?**

At the beginning of our collaboration, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, creating challenges in our initial work plans. Yet, it also led us to change our focus. As I delved into Libuše's photographic archive, a remarkably rich and diverse world unfolded before my eyes. In addition to photographs, there were tens of thousands of diary pages, revealing a whole new universe! It became evident that by weaving together thousands of self-portraits and snapshots from Libuše's daily life, we could craft an intimate, personal, and authentically powerful narrative—told exclusively through a dynamic montage of static photographs. This approach allowed us to creatively capture her unique female perspective, offering viewers a genuine glimpse into Libuše's world. That was my intention from the start—to present audiences with the opportunity to see the world through Libuše's eyes.

**In one of the interviews, Libuše talks about how people hugged her at her exhibition at the renowned photography festival in Arles a few years ago. The majority of them had just discovered her. How did you personally come across her work, and what was appealing to you about her story?**

The original idea came from Czech television script editors, Eva Dvořáková and Irina Minaříková, who approached me with their proposal of a film about photographer Libuše Jarcovjáčová. I was immediately hooked by the idea. I had been following Libuše's photographic work already for some time. Right at our first meeting, I expressed my wish for the film to authentically capture and convey Libuše's unique point of view. Her personal narrative, as she seeks her own identity, inner freedom, liberation, and nonconformity, serves as an inspiration not only in her artistic expression but also in life. Furthermore, Libuše's remarkable ability to openly and honestly address women's dilemmas is truly astonishing. For me, she embodies the ideal female protagonist whose story encompasses a myriad of universal themes and personal conflicts. Libuše encountered those dilemmas years ago, yet they remain remarkably relevant and important today. Many of us are currently going through similar challenges.

**How extensive is Libuše's photographic archive, how did you work with it? Did the text from her diaries come first, and then you searched for photos to match it? What was the process?**

The process was quite demanding. It took us two years of daily work. I had to organize Libuše's archive and get oriented within it. Not all the photographs existed in digital form, so it was necessary to look through the physical negatives as well. In the editing room, we were working with tens of thousands of still images. Libuše often captured sequences of photographs from the same event or situation. In a book, only one chosen snapshot would be published, but in our film, we could use a succession of photos to give a sense of "movement." At one point, we had about 20.000 photos in various folders. While exploring the photographic archive, I simultaneously created an ideal structure for the film from hundreds of Libuše's personal diary pages. Still, everything constantly changed based on what was offered to us for visual information through the photographs. For example, specific photos from different periods, from various stages of Libuše's life, etc. We approached the archive of images as a kind of visual diary. In the editing room we then arranged the photos one after another into five main chapters, looking for connections, fine-tuning them with the timing of the spoken portion of the film, which, at the time was actually a recording of my voice reading the diary entries.

**How, in collaboration with the editor Alexander Kashcheev and the music composers, did you seek the distinctive rhythm for your storytelling? Was it an intuitive process, or did it involve finding a precise path that you then followed?**

On the editing timeline, we created a "fragmented motion" from motionless photographs. In doing so, we aim to ignite the audience's imagination. While watching, viewers momentarily forget they are observing a 'slideshow' of static images. The layered and complex sound design, crafted by editor Alexander Kashcheev, greatly contributed to bringing the silent photographs to life. At the same time, we knew that we wanted to work with contemporary music, thus creating a simple, refreshing contrast to the predominantly black-and-white archival photographs. We wanted diverse, surprising music. That's why we decided to approach the trio of young progressive music producers Oliver Torr, Prokop Korb, and Adam Matej. Each of them has a slightly different 'touch' that complements various moods devel-

oped in the film – from minimalist, lyrical spaces and conceptual reinterpretation of the past to contemporary dance club music. Each composer created music directly for specific scenes that we selected for them. However, there were situations where the music was composed based on our rough cut, and others where we rearranged chapters according to the music. It was a pleasantly collaborative process.

**People today understand the work of Libuše Jarcovjáčová much more than before. It's probably because for several decades she has been photographing in a style similar to how people take photos on social media today, although she does it more thoughtfully and with a different intention. In your opinion, how did Libuše come to approach photography in this way, especially at a time when other photographers in her surroundings were striving for technical precision and distinct style?**

Libuše wrote in one of her notes from the 1970s: "I can take a good photo in the convention of that documentary tradition à la Bresson, but it's not interesting for me. The level of subjectivity will always be the highest aspiration for me!" Her focus has always been on capturing the moment, the atmosphere, or her point of view on things around her, or even capturing something that lies beneath the surface, like a story, a moment, depth... Focusing on those things means a lot more to her than a correctly exposed, technically perfect photograph.

## **INTERVIEW WITH LIBUŠE JARCOVJÁKOVÁ**

**You've probably seen photos of yourself from various periods of your life many times, but how does it feel to watch yourself in a film? Did it ever occur to you that one day you would be a film protagonist?**

I don't feel like a film heroine. And it's not easy at all. I am still amazed how it could have happened that I obsessively documented almost everything that was happening around me and within me. I try to maintain some distance, perceiving the film as a sort of autobiographical fiction, but it only works to some extent. I've only seen the film so far without the presence of an audience. I'm curious about how the reactions of the viewers will affect me – I hope I won't have to run away.

**What surprises you retrospectively about your oldest photos and their reception by today's audience?**

I've always believed that people are fundamentally the same. And this film confirms that for me once



again. The settings may change, but the contents of our souls are more or less the same. I'm pleased with how the filmmakers worked with my photographs. They brought to light many long-forgotten moments and gave them a contemporary context. If something surprises me, it's the unorthodox visuality that I've never let anyone dissuade me from. And perhaps that's what could resonate with today's audiences.

**Are you still taking photos in Berlin, where you spent a part of your life and captured, for example, the fall of the Berlin Wall? Do you still have a chance to just sit somewhere and take photos as you did before?**

I try it repeatedly. And it's always an experience. Berlin is a very pleasant and inspiring city. I keep discovering new places or new things in old places. My latest photos from Berlin are featured in my recent photographic publication "Supersonico". The title is derived from a bar in Berlin, where I like to go.

## KLÁRA TASOVSKÁ

graduated from the New Media Department at the Academy of Fine Arts and the Documentary Film Department at FAMU in Prague. Her mid-length documentary essay **Midnight** (2010) was screened at several international film festivals (Jihlava IDFF – Special Jury Mention, Visions du Réel Nyon, EMAF Osnabrück – Newcomer Award, etc.). Her feature-length debut **Fortress** (2012), directed together with Lukáš Kokeš, was awarded Best Czech Documentary at Ji.hlava IDFF 2012. It also competed at CPH:DOX 2012 among other European festivals and was nominated for the LUX Prize 2013. Her last film **Nothing Like Before** (2017), co-directed by Lukáš Kokeš, premiered at IDFA's First Appearance Competition 2017.



## FILMOGRAPHY

**Midnight** (2010) - script, director

Jihlava IDFF 2010 Special Mention, Visions du Reel Nyon 2011 Official Selection

**Fortress** (2012) - script, director, editor

IDFF Jihlava 2012 Best Czech Documentary, CPH:DOX 2012 Official Selection

**Gottland** (2014) - script, director, editor

one segment from the omnibus film, IDFF Jihlava 2014

**Nothing Like Before** (2017) - script, director, editor

IDFA First Appearance Competition 2017

script editor, creative producer for HBO Europe:

**America** (2015, dir: Jan Foukal)

Karlovy Vary IFF 2015

**5th October** (2016, dir: Martin Kollar)

Rotterdam IFF 2016

**FC Roma** (2016, dir: Rozálie Kohoutová, Tomáš Bojar)

Karlovy Vary IFF 2016

**When the War Comes** (2017, dir: Jan Gebert)

Berlinale Panorama Dokumente 2018

script editor

**FREM** (2019, dir. Viera Čákanyová)

Berlinale Forum 2020

**White On White** (2020, dir. Viera Čákanyová)

Jihlava IDFF 2020, Opus Bonum Award

**Intensive Life Unit** (2021, dir. Adéla Komrží)

Karlovy Vary IFF 2021, Special Mention East from the West

**Visitors** (2022, dir. Veronika Lišková)

Locarno IFF 2022 Semaine de la critique

**Notes from Eremocene** (2023, dir. Viera Čákanyová)

Berlinale Forum 2023

co-editor

**Brotherhood** (2021, dir. Francesco Montagner)

Locarno IFF 2021, Pardo d'Oro Concorso Cineasti del presente

# CONTACTS

## SOMATIC FILMS

Na hutích 757/14  
16000 Prague 6  
Czech Republic

Mob. +420 606 606 830  
lukokes@gmail.com

## SQUARE EYES

Habichergasse 39/3,  
1160 Vienna  
Austria

info@squareeyesfilm.com  
[www.squareeyesfilm.com](http://www.squareeyesfilm.com)

## NUTPRODUKCIA

Palárikova 13  
811 04 Bratislava  
Slovak Republic

Mob. +421 948 050 189  
info@nutprodukcia.sk  
[www.nutprodukcia.sk](http://www.nutprodukcia.sk)

## NOISE FILM & TV

Rapenburgerstraat 109  
1011 VL Amsterdam  
the Netherlands

info@noisefilmpr.com  
[www.noisefilmpr.com](http://www.noisefilmpr.com)

## MISCHIEF FILMS

Goethegasse 1, Hof 2, Stiege 4  
1010 Vienna  
Austria

Telefon: +43 1 585 23 24 25  
office@mischief-films.com  
[www.mischief-films.com](http://www.mischief-films.com)

a production of

**SMT**

co-produced by

**NUT**  
PRODUKCIA

**mischief**

**arte**

**Česká televize**

funded by

**czech  
film  
fund**

**SAF** SLOVAK  
AUDIOVISUAL  
FUND

**Creative  
Europe  
MEDIA**

**prague  
audiovisual  
fund**

**PRA  
HAGUE  
PRA  
GA  
PRA  
G**

developed in  
collaboration with

**institute of  
documentary  
film**

presented at  
**DOC** Leipzig  
Co-Pro Market  
2021

**CANNES DOCS**  
MARCHÉ DU FILM

**KVIFF**  
Eastern Promises  
Works in Progress  
2023

supported by

**UPP**

**SOUNDSQUARE**

**hama**

**SIGMA**

**untitled**  
" "