**Press release The Czech Leonarda Award**

**The first film award for female screenwriters, film directors and artists, Czech Leonarda, has been established**

**July 5, 2024 Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic: At a Press Conference on 5 July in the Zander Hall of the Imperial Spa in Karlovy Vary, the 1st Annual Czech Leonarda Film Award is launched for female filmmakers who create scripts for feature and documentary films, animated films, new TV formats and experimental films for cinema, television or the web.**

 Mrs. Zora Cejnková, a screenwriter and director and winner of the EBU Creative Forum European Award, is the creator of this award. The Czech Leonarda Award (Česká Leonarda in Czech) is endorsed by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Governor of the Karlovy Vary Region Petr Kulhánek and ARAS, the Association of Directors, Screenwriters and Dramaturgs. At the Press Conference, producer Michal Podhradský, representative of APA, Association of Producers in Audiovision, also expressed the support for the award. Among others who expressed their backing for the award were film producer Jana Tomsová, casting director Soňa Ticháčková, actress Tereza Herzová-Pokorná and producer Martin Vandas.
 Czech Leonarda Award is aimed at supporting talented female filmmakers and their film, television and web projects and its objective is to support the initial author's development from the idea to the first version of the script.
 Zora Cejnková introduced the award as "Without the development, as you know, a good work of art will not come into existence. We, who are standing here, are setting up this prize with the firm belief that it will help promising themes to be transformed into excellent, even outstanding films that may one day belong to the golden fund of Czech and world cinema."
 Czech Leonarda Award wants to motivate and support women filmmakers in their efforts to create quality audiovisual works that will be interesting for Czech and international producers. Last but not least, it plans to make the work of women filmmakers more visible and thus promote Czech audiovisual works even more.
 Although the ratio of women and men studying at film schools in the Czech Republic is almost equal, only a small proportion of female graduates are employed in the field.
 Mrs. Zora Cejnková commented, "You're all film professionals and journalists here, so you know how the proportion of female screenwriters and directors is low on more challenging projects. Let me just give you one number here: the APA says the proportion of women directors on feature films has been only 14% over the last 5 years.
 Due to this disproportion, the Czech audiovisual industry lacks a female auteur perspective on the themes. We are losing talent, opportunities and thus audiences. We are falling outside the current global trends."
 Czech Leonarda Award wants to make a concrete and direct contribution to begin to change this unfavourable situation. That is why it offers a suitable platform to provide women the conditions for creative work, which will be to the benefit of the entire audiovisual industry and our culture.
 Czech Leonarda Award is dedicated to women screenwriters, directors and artists who develop scripts for audiovisual works. The authors can apply for the prize by submitting a Treatment of their work (up to 10 A4 pages), intended for cinema and television in all formats and for the web.
 The condition for participation is tax domicile in the Czech Republic.
 The prize winners will receive a financial stipend that will enable them to work in a focused and consistent manner to develop their work into a 1st version of a Literary Screenplay (fiction and animation), a complete Realization Screenplay (documentary) and a Literary-Realization Screenplay (experimental, new TV formats and web formats).
 Czech Leonarda supports ambitious, innovative or thematically valuable works of interest to Czech producers and international co-productions. Works contributing to the building of democracy, civil society, diversity of creative views and methods, and gender equality. Works that fight against social stereotypes and promote women's perspective on current social issues.
Works promoting the education of society and bringing in themes relevant to the future, with particular reference to themes representing science and scientific progress in all areas of life, reinforcing the idea of a common Europe and international cooperation.
Last but not least, works contributing to innovative and free creativity, breaking down established authorial stereotypes.
 The prize is awarded in three basic Categories.
 1) Fiction, including animated works, with the aim of supporting the 1st version of the script of a feature or animated film/series; the minimum running time for a feature/animated film is 60 minutes / for a series there is no limit per episode
2) Documentary Film production focusing on documentary films/documentary series with a running time of 40 min+/series without limit
3) Experimental works, new TV formats and web formats; with the aim to support the 1st version of the realization script, footage and form without limit
 Proposal for the minimal stipend for the 1st year of the Czech Leonarda:
 1. category feature film: 200 000 CZK (approx. 8 000 EUR)
 2. category documentary: 100 000 CZK
 3. category experiment: 100 000 CZK (approx. 4 000 EUR)
 The Categories may change and be themed in each year of the award. The recipients will have 1 year to create the relevant work.
 Czech Leonarda Award is announced by the Czech Leonarda Foundation, which is now being established. The Award is governed by a Status with detailed competition rules, an essential part of which is the protection of the intellectual property of the artists submitting their projects.
 The laureates of the Award will be selected by the Ceska Leonarda Jury, whose members include Milan Šteindler, actor, screenwriter and director, Daria Kashcheeva, Student Oscar-winning director, Irena Pavlásková, screenwriter and film director, Martin Vandas, film producer, Tereza Herzová-Pokorná, actress, Steve Lichtag, internationally renowned wildlife director and producer, Nela Boudová, film and television actress, Jana Stryková, actress, Sona Ticháčková, casting director, Krasimira Velitchková, internationally acclaimed editor and others.
 The Award's final categories for the 1st edition, the Status of the Award, the submission deadlines and the date when the Czech Leonarda Award will take place will be published on the Award's website www.ceskaleonarda.cz on 31 October 2024.
 The first Czech Leonarda Award will take place and the first prize laureates will receive a stipend in one year's time, in late summer 2025.