



PARADISE ON EARTH

FILM BY JARO VOJTEK

STARRING **ANDREJ BÁN** SCREENPLAY **MAREK LEŠČÁK, JARO VOJTEK**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **DOMINIKA FÁBEROVÁ** DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **JARO VOJTEK** MUSIC BY **MICHAL NEJTEK**
EDITED BY **PETER HARUM, ASFS** PRODUCERS **ZORA JAUROVÁ, MÁTYÁS PRIKLER** DIRECTED BY **JARO VOJTEK**



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PARADISE ON EARTH

World premiere:	23rd Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival 2019
Country of origin:	SR
Year of release:	2019
Format:	DCP
Running time:	78'
Languages:	Slovak, English, Arabic, Albanian, Serbian, Georgian, Russian
Subtitles:	Slovak, English
Genre:	Documentary
Producer:	MPhilms
Coproducer:	RTVS - Radio and Television Slovakia

Directed By: Jaro Vojtek

Screenplay: Marek Leščák, Jaro Vojtek / Director of Photography: Jaro Vojtek / Edited By: Peter Harum ASFS / Music By: Michal Nejtek / Sound Designer: Richard Fúlek / Production Manager: Dominika Fáberová / Producers: Zora Jaurová, Mátyás Prikler

Starring: Andrej Bán

Synopsis

Paradise on Earth is a documentary film by director Jaro Vojtek about Slovak journalist and war photographer Andrej Bán. Jaro as his friend has been a silent witness of his struggles, felt-apart relationships, and his depressions. Their intimate conversations in contrast to tragic and painful war and refugee crisis has laid the foundation to the concept of the film. Jaro follows Andrej to various destinations in the world, his camera observing his interaction with people in need and his photographic work. *Paradise on Earth* is a topography of individual and global struggles – continual therapy without the end.

"Paradise on Earth is a film about Andrej Bán and Europe – about a single war correspondent on one hand and the entire world on the other. Together with my friend, the journalist and photographer Andrej Bán, we travel through Iraq, Georgia, and Kosovo and encounter people who have suffered the horrors of armed conflict – people who have been forgotten by other people. Their emotional stories paint a picture of the destructive consequences of war, which robbed many of our subjects of their homes and loved ones. On my journeys by Andrej's side, I am alone, accompanied only by a camera which authentically captures the misfortunes of victims of war and provides an insight into Andrej's soul, inner turmoil and personal crises. The film is a dialogue between myself and my friend, as well as a dialogue between Andrej's inner world and the world that surrounds him."

Jaro Vojtek
Director

"We believe, that *Paradise on Earth* is an important and very urgent film, especially because of its political context – the refugee crisis and other war situations in the world are shown through a personal story of the war reporter, as seen by eyes of very sensitive and introspective documentary camera of Jaro Vojtek. It brings a new, very personal point of view to situations seen in the news so many times, we are not understanding the pain behind them anymore. Parallel reflection of individual and global destiny helps us to empathize with the pains of the world, those we cannot cure, only feel."

Zora Jaurová, Mátyás Prikler
Producers, MPhilms

Andrej Bán
Main Protagonist

Andrej Bán (*1964) is a Slovak photographer and a reporter with the *Denník N* daily. He studied economics and journalism in Bratislava. Since 1987, he has worked as a conflict correspondent for both Slovak and international media, visiting countries such as Kosovo, Israel, Georgia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ukraine and Haiti. He regularly returns to his past postings. Until May 2018, he worked for the *.týždeň* weekly. He is interested in deeper analysis of the causes of conflict, as well as in the difficult situation that victims of war or natural disasters face when trying to return to a normal life. This is what led him to produce the photobook *Žijeme horšie ako mŕtvi* (Even the Dead Live Better than We) about Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia. In 1999, during the war in Kosovo, he founded the charitable non-profit People in Need, which he chaired for thirteen years. The Slovart publishing house has released three of Bán's photography collections: *Iné Slovensko* (A Different Slovakia, 2006), *Kosovo* (2008), and in 2016, the reportage/photo volume *Na juh of raja* (South of Eden), which presents a compilation of stories and images from the 25 countries he has visited and worked in since 1991. Bán applies the same patience and determination with which he documents warzone developments to mapping current events in Slovakia. His reportage book *Slon na Zemplíne* (An Elephant in Zemplín, Absynt, 2018) is the culmination of nearly 30 years of his journalistic work all across Slovakia, from the town of Čierna nad Tisou on the eastern border to Bratislava in the west. The book won the Tatra Banka Foundation Award for Art. In 2019, *Slon na Zemplíne* will be published in Czech and Polish translations. Later that same year, the Absynt publishing house will release Bán's book on the Balkans, *Trochu oheň, trochu voda* (One Part Fire, One Part Water). Andrej Bán co-authored the documentaries *Tisove tiene* (Tiso's Shadows; director: Dušan Trančík, 1996) and *My zdes* (director: Jaro Vojtek, 2005). He was a member of the jury at the Czech Press Photo competition, led photography workshops in Bratislava and Poprad, held about 50 exhibitions at home and abroad, and won numerous honours such as the Slovak Journalism Award, Picture of the Year Award, The Crystal Wing Award, the White Crow and Gypsy Spirit awards and others.



Jaro Vojtek

Director

Jaro Vojtek (*1968, Žilina) is a graduate of the Bratislava Academy of Performing Arts, having studied documentary filmmaking under director Dušan Hanák. His feature debut, *My zdes* (2005), won numerous awards, including the Grand Prix at the 2006 One World Film Festival in Prague. His documentary *Hranica* (The Border, 2009) won the Between the Seas Award for Best Central and Eastern European Documentary at Jihlava IDFF and screened as part of the prestigious Spectrum section at IFF Rotterdam.

Vojtek's latest works include his feature debut *Deti* (Children, 2014), which received several awards at IFF Beijing, and the documentary *Tak d'aleko, tak blízko* (So Far, So Near, 2014) – a probe into the lives of people suffering from autism. He is currently working on his second live-action feature, *Anestéza* (Anaesthesia), and a documentary feature called *Sedem dní* (Seven Days).



Marek Leščák

Screenwriter

Marek Leščák (*1971, Bratislava) studied scriptwriting and editing at the Film and Television School of the Bratislava Academy of Performing Arts, where he currently teaches. He has worked on a number of films that have received critical acclaim at home as well as abroad, including: *Záhřada* (The Garden; director: Martin Šulík, 1995), *Orbis Pictus* (director: Martin Šulík; 1997), *Slniečny štát* (The City of the Sun; director: Martin Šulík, 2005), *My zdes* (director: Jaro Vojtek; 2005), *Slepé lásky* (Blind Loves; director: Juraj Lehotský, 2008), *Hranica* (The Border; director: Jaro Vojtek, 2009), *Cigán* (Gypsy; director: Martin Šulík, 2011), *Ďakujem, dobre* (I'm Good, Thanks; director: Matyáš Prikler, 2013), *Deti* (Children; director: Jaro Vojtek, 2014), *Koza* (Goat; director: Ivan Ostrochovský, 2015), *Nina* (director: Juraj Lehotský, 2017), *Piata loď* (She's a Harbour; director: Iveta Grófová, 2017), *Tlmočník* (The Interpreter; director: Martin Šulík, 2018).



MPhilms is Slovak film company based in 2005. It produces mainly feature and documentary films in the arthouse spectrum, but has also a record of smaller film and interdisciplinary projects with the societal focus. It has two producing partners - Zora Jaurová and Mátyás Prikler. Besides the film production, MPhilms is involved in educational activities, creative workshops and trainings for young people.

Filmography

Paradise on Earth (documentary, 78 min, 2019) d. Jaro Vojtek / MPhilms, RTVS

Expremiéri (documentary TV series, 7 X 26 min, 2018) d. Mária Brnušáková, Kristína Leidenfrostová, Dominik Jursa, Jana Durajová, Lena Kušnieriková, Edo Cicha, Lucia Kašová / MPhilms, RTVS

Mirage (feature fiction film, 90 min, 2015) d. Szabolcs Hajdu / Mirage Film Stúdió, Filmpartners, MPhilms

Children (feature fiction film, 100 min, 2014) d. Jaro Vojtek, MPhilms, Duracfilm, RTVS

Slovakia 2.0 (omnibus, 112 min, 2014) d. Juraj Herz, Martin Šulík, Peter Kerekes, Zuzana Liová, Mišo Suchý, Iveta Grófová, Peter Krištúfek, Viera Čákanyová, Miro Jelok / MPhilms, RTVS, Filmpark production

Fine, Thanks (feature fiction film, 134 min, 2013) d. Mátyás Prikler, MPhilms

feature fiction film (mid-length fiction film, 40 min, 2009) d. Mátyás Prikler / VŠMU, MPhilms

Future Projects

Power (feature fiction film, 2020), d. Mátyás Prikler – in production

Anesthesia (feature fiction film, 2020), d. Jaro Vojtek – in pre-production

Nikola Šuhaj (feature fiction film, 2020), d. Vladimír Morávek – in post-production

A Pack of Our Own (feature fiction film, 2020), d. Hajni Kis – in production

Marathon (feature fiction film, 2022), d. Peter Kerekes – in development

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