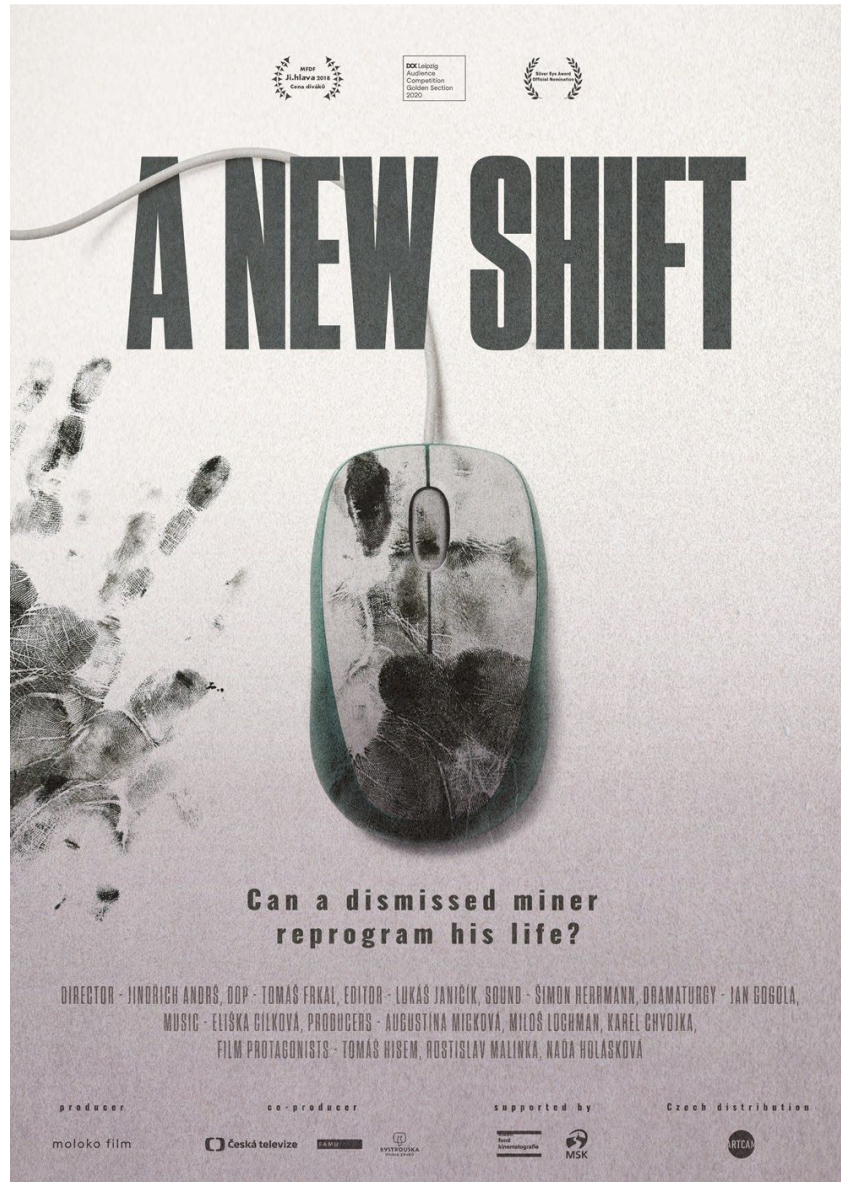


moloko film ltd.

presents



PRESS NOTES

Czech premiere:



27 October - 1 November

International premiere:



26 October - 1 November

Screenings & tickets [here](#)

PRESS CONTACT: NOISE Film PR | Mirjam Wiekenkamp | miriam@noisefilmpr.com | +49 176 28771839
Stills can be downloaded here: noisefilmpr.com/projects/new-shift

LOGLINE

Forty-something miner Tomas emerges from the underground and into a challenging new world of work as he retrains to become a computer programmer.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Tomas has been working underground as a coal miner for 25 years. When the mine has to close due to the general decline of coal mining, he is offered a new career as a computer programmer. He enrolls in a state-funded re-education programme, preparing him for one of the most in-demand jobs. Tomas takes up the challenge and gets ready to transform his life radically. But will a forty-something long-haired, subterranean punk rocker who has spent his whole life performing hard physical labour ever fit in with the young and trendy digital crowd?

LONG SYNOPSIS

When demand for coal reaches a new low, the Paskov mine in the Czech Republic finally closes, putting forty-something miner Tomas and his soot-covered colleagues out of work. Facing an uncertain future and a radically different job market after twenty-five years on the job, Tomas agrees to take on a requalification course to try a new profession; Computer programmer, swapping the slang of his mates down the mine for a new type of code.

This intimate story follows charming, down-to-earth Tomas through the challenges and uncertainty of an ambiguous new vision of his working life. We witness the diversity of Tomas's passions, including time with his three children and at the stadium of his beloved football club, Banik. Initially baffled, he soon begins to find meaning in Java, SQL, C++ and beyond, transforming from a long-haired, subterranean punk rocker into a smooth data specialist.

Over hard-earned pints of beer, Tomas faces doubt and criticism, not only from former colleagues and concerned friends, but a younger generation who wonder if he has what it takes. As employment agencies arrive at the technical college where Tomas studies, it becomes increasingly obvious that Tomas's transition from the world of manual labour and into the digital age will require a different kind of heavy lifting.

Easily capturing the warmth and challenges of contemporary, working-class Czech life, A NEW SHIFT finds welcome inspiration in Tomas's humble, hard-working attitude, while provoking questions increasingly close to home to any worker or labourer; will we too soon be facing similar changes as a result of the ongoing automation of work?



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In December 2017, the McKinsey Global Institute published a report stating that 800 million workers will lose their jobs in the next 12 years due to automation. On the engineering side, however, millions of new positions will open. This on-going industrial revolution will mostly affect manual workers, who will now need to make some radical changes in order to survive. Tomas' story is an early example of this.

With A NEW SHIFT I wanted to create a bridge between the two groups affected by the movement. Manual workers on the one side and corporate industries on the other side.

The last industrial revolution was driven by coal and steam. The current one is driven by smart computer algorithms. Tomas experiences 100 years of human labour transformation in just one year. In the film, we explore what this transformation does with our bodies, psyche, behaviour, how we shape, how we look. On a deeper level, it touches on the subject to which I am returning repeatedly: the disappearance of authenticity from people's lives, through technological development.

Miners are straight-forward people. If you are digging 1,000 meters under the surface in 35 degrees, facing danger on a daily basis, you don't think about how you look or communicate. But when one enters the job market looking for a job as a programmer, a communication game begins, with the candidate and the company both pretending to be better than they are. When actually getting the job, these communication games develop even further. You are often forced to play along with small political games, to present things in certain ways. *Soft skills* play a crucial role. Does this mean we're deviating too far from our instincts?

I wanted to answer this by placing the coal mine and the corporate environment in contrast. And I hope Tomas' story is so surprising and inspiring, that it will touch audiences with both these backgrounds. On the one hand, I hope to inspire companies and show them why it is a good idea to give a 50-year-old man a chance. I also hope that Tomas' story creates a better understanding between the middle and the worker's class. And finally, I hope the film will give confidence to the many manual labourers who are losing their jobs at the moment. As Tomas shows, you can take your life into your own hands at any age.

- Jindřich Andrš, October 2020

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Jindřich Andrš (1994) studied film at FAMU, Charles University and Edinburgh Napier. In 2017 he received a Special Mention Award at the Ji.hlava IDFF, amongst others, for his short documentary THE LAST SHIFT OF TOMAS HISEM. A NEW SHIFT is based on this short and is his feature film debut, with which he participated in Ex Oriente, dok.incubator and the IDFA Academy. As a producer he debuted with the short film PRIPYAT PIANO - a cinematographic poem from Chernobyl. PRIPYAT PIANO received a Silver Eye Award in 2019 and premiered at Visions du Réel 2020.



Filmography

- 2020 A New Shift - feature documentary - director
- 2019 Pripyat Piano - documentary short - producer
- 2017 The Last Shift of Tomas Hisem - documentary short - director



