

Karel Zeman Museum press release

Shooting Footage Encouraged! **The Karel Zeman Museum entices with a unique interactive exposition**

Prague, September 26, 2012 – *A museum dedicated to Karel Zeman is opening in Prague. It's creators are using modern computer technology and contemporary exhibition techniques to present the work of this visionary filmmaker to visitors. The museum's playful approach to the exhibition is unique, it allows visitors to participate directly - to try out with their own photo and video cameras selected special-effect techniques that Zeman used in his films.*

Simply put - in this museum shooting photos and video is encouraged!

The individual rooms of the museum are conceived as movie studios, and there are small stages with backdrops which visitors can step into and shoot their scenes. They can take a ride on a flying machine, or walk around the moon like Baron Munchausen, or take the controls of the famous submarine from "An Invention for Destruction." Also part of the exhibition are previously unpublished photographs, original puppets, and other documentary materials. The museum will open its doors to the public this October 6th, 2012 at 10am.

The conceptual and artistic authors of the exposition are Jakub Fabel and Ondřej Beránek. It was during a meeting with Karel Zeman's daughter, **Ludmila Zemanová** that the idea to create a Zeman museum was born. All that was left was to find a suitable location. "After a year and a half of looking we got an offer to lease Saský Dvůr next to the Charles Bridge. You simply don't refuse an offer like that," said Beránek and Fabel, who also invited marketing specialist Marcel Kral to assist in the preparations for the museum.

„Ludmila Zemanová and her daughter Linda collaborated intensively with us, giving us the rights to the works and also importantly access to the personal archives. At the same time they also made sure that the information about the work and life of Karel Zeman was factually correct and objective. There were many hours of phone calls between Prague and Canada and many long meetings in person. Due to the difference in time zones involved it was an especially difficult but a wonderful collaboration,” the authors agree. “The longer we worked on the museum the more I came to marvel at Karel Zeman's work. I don't know how he did it all in a single lifetime,” added Jakub Fabel.

“I was intrigued by their enthusiasm and love for their work,” said Ludmila Zemanová daughter of the famous director, about the authors of the project. “I made them privy to the process so they would understand how dad put the films together. His films are still inspiring today's youth, who now thanks to this museum can bring them back to life themselves, using a variety of his special effects techniques.”

The museum maps the life and work of Karel Zeman from its beginnings – from his first animations and puppet films in the 1940's to his work in his last creative period. A substantial part of the museum is dedicated to his most significant films - *Journey to Prehistory*, *An Invention for Destruction*, and *Baron Munchausen*.

The entire exposition is colored by music which musicians from Clarinet Factory composed for the museum and recorded on their acoustic instruments. Their concept for the sound of the museum is a unique compositional principle where individual songs in the spaces overlap harmonically, in this way the visitors smoothly go from one musical atmosphere to another.

Ondřej Beránek presented further plans for the museum saying, “the exposition will continue to develop and expand in the future. The museum will also take up other activities. One of the most important steps in the first year will be publishing a collection of all of Karel Zeman's key films on DVD, in a digitized and restored format for the first time.”

During preparations the creators were able to collect a large amount of original material and formerly non-

published information. Where the official sources, historical references, and Zeman family archive lacked information, the exposition authors conducted interviews with eye-witnesses. During preparations they interviewed not only Ludmila Zemanová but also for example the producer of the film *Journey to Prehistory* Karel Hutěčka, actor Zdeněk Husták who played Jenda in the same film, and many others.

In the long term, the museum will become an institute preserving and promoting the legacy of the director and fine artist Karel Zeman, offering a wide range of activities for the general public and for specialists from the Czech Republic and abroad.

“My grandfather has been a great inspiration for me throughout my life. I have also met with filmmakers and audiences throughout the world who know his films and who have been very touched and also inspired by his images. During this occasion of the opening of the museum I would like to mention a quote about the film *An Invention for Destruction* which comes from an article by the reporter Josef Srycek: “... this is the story of a small man – Zeman measured just over 160cm – from a small country, he works in a small studio, with small models, a small budget, and he has prevailed over all the giants...” I think this quote expresses what my grandfather was able to achieve. I am so glad that all of this is also reflected in the museum which is opening in Prague just now,” said granddaughter of Karel Zeman Linda Zemanova-Spaleny.

The following organizations took part in the project: C&COM Advertising company as the owner of Aurapont; Punk Film in audiovisual production; and the Zeman family.

The museum is located near the Charles Bridge in the space of Saský Dvůr on the border between Kampa and Malá Strana, just a few steps from the Royal Route. Saský Dvůr is part of a collection of houses given to Charles IV by the Saxon Dukes as a hereditary property, which to this day has retained its unique historical atmosphere, and which thanks to the repairs connected with opening the museum, will be able to stand out once again after many years.

Collaborating on the museum preparations, aside from Jakub Fabel, Ondřej Beránek, Marcel Kral, and the Zeman family were many professionals who still vividly remember the work of filmmaking before the advent of computer technology – for example the important special effects master Boris Masník (*The Visitors, Kolya, Perfume – Story of a Murderer*), or Chief Lighting Technician Jaroslav Betka (*Kolya, Dark Blue World*).

The creators of the museum could not however realize their own visions without modern technology: the entire team of the company UPP worked under the direction of Boris Masník on the reconstruction of films and on computer animations for individual special-effects for museum exhibitions. UPP also did the restoration of Zeman's films for DVD. Thanks to the work of Petr Ostrouchov, expert on copyright law, the films could be made available before Christmas of this year.

The interactive attractions for visitors –the engine room of the submarine and the flying machine from *An Invention for Destruction* among others - were created thanks to the enthusiasm of Zdeněk Šorm and his team of collaborators from his Barrandov atelier. The backgrounds for all the exhibition spaces were made by Galileo Production in České Budějovice under the direction of Michal Režný; the technical realization of the exposition was significantly supported by David Fabel, as well.

Even though from the time of the initial idea to its realization almost two years passed, the final preparations took place in an extremely brief six month period beginning when the worthy space of Saský Dvůr was secured. “We were able to successfully complete the work thanks most of all to the incredible enthusiasm of everyone who worked on the project preparations,” and as for the commitment of the building company of Michal Pěkný and Jakub Fabel he adds, “they were building faster than we were able to make things up. My compliments to all!”

About Karl Zeman

One of the most significant Czech directors, screenwriters and fine artists, Karl Zeman was born in 1910 and died in 1989. He made a number of short, medium-length, and feature-length films, the most renowned of which are, *Journey to Prehistory*, *An Invention for Destruction* and *Baron Munchausen*. Zeman received a

number of prizes and recognitions at prestigious film festivals, making Czech cinematography famous throughout the world in the 20th century. He was admired in his time by personalities like Pablo Picasso, Charlie Chaplin and Salvador Dalí. His film work is still highly regarded, and the techniques he used are studied at film schools throughout the world. The aesthetics of Zeman's filmic creations have influenced a range of world-class filmmakers, such as the director, fine artist, and member of Monty Python Terry Gilliam.

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Photographs

We provide print quality photographs upon request.

Appendix to Press Release # 1

Practical information

Address, contact:

Karl Zeman Museum, Saská 3, 110 00 Praha 1 – Malá Strana

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Hours of operation:

daily from 10am to 8pm

Admission:

Adults	200 Kč
Children under 1 meter tall	free
Children to 15 years of age.....	140 Kč
Discount admission	140 Kč
good for seniors over 60 years old, students, and invalidity card holders (1 assistant gets free admission)	
Family ticket (2 adults + 3 children)	490 Kč
each additional child	100 Kč

Group admissions:

Groups of 10 or more.....160 Kč

School groups (10 or more persons, escorting pedagogue gets in free) 70 Kč