

SCREENING PROGRAM

When You're Different, You're Free: Scenes from the Underground by Jan SágI

MON 29 JUN 2026 07:00 PM | Czech Center Cinema + Gallery

Studio at Argentinská

Jan SágI, 1973, Czechoslovakia, 14 min, sound

A raw and intimate document of a private concert by The Plastic People of the Universe at their rehearsal space in Prague's Holešovice district. Filmed in extreme close-up with handheld lighting, SágI's camera captures the physical intensity and immediacy of the underground scene. The blurred images, harsh light, and claustrophobic framing create one of the most visceral moving-image documents of Czech counterculture.

Profile: Jan SágI

Tomáš Pospiszl, 2019, Czechia, 21 min, sound

A filmed discussion between photographer and filmmaker Jan SágI and art historian Tomáš Pospiszl, reflecting on SágI's artistic practice, his role as a chronicler of the Czech underground, and the continuing relevance of independent culture today.

Homage to Andy Warhol: Aktual and The Plastic People of the Universe

Jan SágI, 1973, Czechoslovakia, 8 min, silent

Created in response to the influence of Andy Warhol and American pop art, this short film captures the atmosphere surrounding the Czech underground groups Aktual and The Plastic People of the Universe. It reflects the desire of local artists to remain connected to global artistic currents despite the cultural isolation of normalization-era Czechoslovakia.

Underground

Jan SágI, 1971, Czechoslovakia, 20 min, sound

Filmed in a pedestrian underpass beneath Prague's Wenceslas Square, Underground transforms an ordinary scene of commuters ascending an escalator into a powerful metaphor for life during the normalization period that followed the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Created shortly after SágI himself was pushed from the official art world into the underground cultural scene, the film has come to be seen as one of the most striking cinematic reflections on conformity, resignation, and the subtle forms of resistance that characterized the era.