



"I WANT TO BE HUMAN"

ARNOŠT LUSTIG'S MESSAGE TO
THE STARS AND TO ALL OF US

**"The good in a person
is expressed
through action."**

Arnošt Lustig

FESTIVAL100 COMES TO ISRAEL

INTERNATIONAL TOURING EXHIBITION "I WANT TO BE HUMAN"

AT PLANETANYA - NETANYA 15. OCTOBER 2026 – 19. NOVEMBER 2026

On the 100th anniversary of the birth of Arnošt Lustig, the international touring exhibition **I Want to Be Human** will arrive at Planetanya - Netanya, Israel. The sixth vernissage of this international touring exhibition, organized by the Arnošt Lustig Foundation, will take place on 15. October 2026, at 18:00. The exhibition will be open to the public until 19. November.

This event is part of **Festiv**AL**100** and follows a series of cultural and educational activities in the Czech Republic, Tanzania, Austria, Germany and other countries on four continents across the globe prepared organized by the Arnošt Lustig Foundation to commemorate the birth centennial anniversary of the birth of this writer, journalist, screenwriter, and Holocaust witness - one of the most significant figures of 20th-century Czech literature. This is a flagship project of the **Arnošt Lustig Foundation** reaching a wide range of audiences since 2022 in planetaria in Brussels, Prague, Brno and Ostrava and particle physicists attending the global ICHEP Conference in the Prague Congress Centre.

It aims to inspire the audience, especially young people, to champion equality and justice, confronting social ills like racism, fanaticism, and sexism to build a fairer, more humane society. This is also the objective of the multiple genre Festiv**AL**100 that is already in progress to commemorate Arnošt Lustig's birth centennial as a celebration of our much-needed humanity in eleven countries and on four continents.

The exhibition celebrates the intersection of humanism, literature, art, science, and history while drawing inspiration from Arnošt Lustig's quote about the thin crust of civilisation. Namely, that *"The problem with civilisation is that it grows slowly, millimetre by millimetre, yet its thin crust can be peeled off in a week, a month... It's easier to destroy civilisation than to enhance it, just as it's easier to find an enemy than a friend."*

Students participating in educational workshops related to the exhibition will present their aphorisms about what it means to be human here and now at the opening on 15 October. The aphorisms will become part of the exhibition, and will be published in a book once the touring of the exhibition is over. At the same time, exhibition explores the disturbing vacuum between the remarkable scientific progress people have made in the last one hundred years on one hand and the even more remarkable neglect of humanity on the other. Not least, the exhibition invites reflection on a better and more just world that we all create together. Through excerpts from the provocative writings of the three-time Nobel Prize nominee, alongside texts by scientist-humanists and an artistic installation, it sends a message into space about universal values – values that Arnošt Lustig embodied in both his work and his life.

"No writer in Europe, in the East or in the West, has expressed as much truth about the time of the Holocaust as Arnošt Lustig."

Maariv (Tel Aviv)

"Lustig's view is oddly invigorating, and his work invites a maximal audience: it will quarrel, it will recognize, it will marvel, and yes, of course, sometimes it will have to look away. Why, after all, do we read?"

The New York Times

The extensive multi-genre program FestivA100 is also a tribute to humanity, freedom, and humanism. It offers a wide range of artistic and cultural events, book publications including previously unpublished texts, exhibitions, literary competitions, and educational programs for students and teachers. In the coastal city of Netanya, the exhibition will be hosted at the **Planetanya Planetarium** and will be on display from **15 October 2026 to 19 November 2026**. The event has been prepared by the Arnošt Lustig Foundation in cooperation with the Czech Centre and the the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tel Aviv, the Czech Centre and the Planetanya in Netanya, The Netanya Association for Tourism/ GoNetanya, and the Joe Alon Connection Program, Rés(O)nances, the Shai Agnon School and E-M-I-S.

"It is a profound honor for the City of Netanya to host the international exhibition 'I Want to Be Human – Arnošt Lustig's Message to the Stars and to All of Us' at Planetanya. This exhibition is not only a tribute to an extraordinary author; it is a call to responsibility. By engaging young people through educational workshops and inviting them to reflect on what it truly means to be human, we reinforce the essential foundations of democratic values, tolerance, and humanism," said Avi Slama, Mayor of Netanya.

Message into space about universal values – values that Arnošt Lustig embodied in both his work and his life.

Arnošt Lustig himself described it as follows: *"The problem of civilization is that it grows slowly, millimeter by millimeter, and its thin shell can be scraped off in a week, in a month... It is easier to destroy civilization than to expand it, just as it is easier to find an enemy than a friend."*



ARNOŠT LUSTIG, TEREŽÍN © Petra T. Růžičková, Museum of Photography and Modern Visual Media in Jindřichův Hradec

"Being human is a lifelong task—it is necessary that humanity does not disappear from our lives, that we become aware of it every day. It cannot be saved up, and it should never be economized with. In times of great crises and the suppression of human rights, it is up to us to cultivate the values that humanize us: freedom, dignity, justice, compassion, and consideration from one person to another," adds Eva Lustigová, curator of the exhibition and co-founder of the Arnošt Lustig Foundation.

The authors of the exhibition's artistic concept are Versailles based artists Marie Kopecká Verhoeven and Dominique Defontaines from the French creative group [Rés\(O\)nances](#).

"The visual installation of wooden ladders and their quasi-abstract structure offers the visitor's imagination an upward view connecting the high and the low, the small and the large. The installation reflects the experience of imprisoned artists in Terezín who, even in a place of suffering and on the edge of death, continued to create and thus bore witness to the strength and inner freedom of the creative spirit," explains Marie Kopecká Verhoeven.



Israel is a symbolic place for the exhibition. It is the country where Arnošt Lustig worked traveled as a war correspondent for Czechoslovak Radio in 1948–1949, as well as where he married a member of the Haganah, Věra Weislitzová and , where he received his Hebrew name Ben Ami in Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk. Importantly, he also, and where he began writing his first short stories in Israel. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact troops, he and his family also found temporary refuge in Israel, at Merkaz Klita Hameginim in Haifa and in Kibbutz HaHotrim.

"I am personally very pleased that, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tel Aviv, we have been able to bring the exhibition I Want to Be Human to Israel. In today's turbulent times, full of challenges and rapid technological development, this exhibition is extremely important because it reminds us of the significance of humanism and universal human values. Arnošt Lustig's work is remarkable because he was able to address these values in a credible and sincere way, supported by his own life story," said Jan Štern, Director of the Czech Centre in Israel.

"I greatly appreciate the work of the Arnošt Lustig Foundation, which continues and spreads his legacy. In the context of the upcoming exhibition, I would particularly like to highlight its educational dimension and the fact that, through workshops, it involves high-school students in discussions about the essence of humanism. I cannot imagine a better place to present an exhibition marking the centenary of Arnošt Lustig's birth than Israel," adds Štern.

"The Czech Embassy in Tel Aviv is proud to co-organize the exhibition I Want to Be Human – Arnošt Lustig's Message to the Stars and To All of Us on the 100th anniversary of the birth of this renowned Czech Jewish writer and Holocaust survivor. This exhibition is both a tribute to the extraordinary life of Arnošt Lustig and a celebration of the enduring friendship between the Czech Republic and Israel. Together with our Israeli friends in Netanya, we honour Lustig's legacy of humanity, courage, and moral responsibility — a message that continues to inspire across generations and across borders," Michal Dvořák from the Czech Embassy in Israel agrees.

ABOUT ARNOŠT LUSTIG (1926–2011)

Czech Jewish novelist born in Prague, journalist, screenwriter of the famous Czechoslovak Film Wave and educator Arnošt Lustig stands out as one of the most influential authors of the twentieth century. His humanistic legacy and personal story are extraordinary in the European and world context. His work, translated into scores of languages, includes over thirty novels, novellas and short story collections, and several books of non-fiction, essays, and philosophical reflections. His writing has earned him nominations for the Nobel, Pulitzer and International Man Booker Prize for his long-term contribution to world literature. He was sentenced to death three times by the Nazis, once to an unconditional prison sentence by the Czechoslovak Communists and was a banned author in his native country for more than twenty years after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact Armies in August 1968. As a survivor of the Shoah – or perhaps because of it – he loved people and believed in life, justice, camaraderie, courage and dignity. He dedicated a substantial part of his work to the Shoah. He left a legacy of several feature film scripts.

Lustig's global impact is also reflected by the fact that the 100th anniversary of his birth has been included by UNESCO on the prestigious list of significant anniversaries commemorated in 2026–2027.

ABOUT THE ARNOŠT LUSTIG FOUNDATION

This artistic and educational organization was founded by Arnošt Lustig's children, Eva and Josef Lustig, to work with his oeuvre holistically, systematically around the world. The main goal of the Foundation is to ensure that the works and the legacy of Arnošt Lustig can help to make the world more cultivated – and to promote the humanistic and democratic values that guided Arnošt Lustig's life and work.

In 2026 the Foundation is organizing Festival 100, a series of events taking place both in the Czech Republic and abroad to mark the centenary of the author's birth. Festival 100 offers a close look at Arnošt Lustig's oeuvre and personal life, highlighting the deep connection of his work to humanity.

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100th anniversary of
the birth of Arnošt Lustig,
author (1926–2011),
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