FILM EUROPE
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The premiere of The Old Oak and a retrospective on the work of legendary director Ken Loach

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On May 9th, the powerful and moving new film *The Old Oak*, from award-winning British auteur director Ken Loach, comes to cinemas. *The Old Oak* tells the story of a village in the Northeast of England where Syrian refugees arrive to start a new life in a once prosperous and proud community. How will they be received? And what does the future hold for the Old Oak - the last remaining pub and pillar of a beaten down village?

Ken Loach's latest film will also be screened as a part of The World According to Ken Loach, a retrospective showcase made up of both contemporary and classic selections from the director's filmography over the past 50 years. It will also include a presentation and Czech book launch of Édouard Louis and Ken Loach's documented interview *Dialogue sur l'art e la politique* (*Dialog o umění a politice*) by Paseka Publishing.

Film Europe, in collaboration with the British Council Czech Republic and Paseka Publishing, will host the premiere screening of The Old Oak on Thursday 9 May at 7pm at the Edison Filmhub. The film will open The World According to Ken Loach showcase, which will feature seven more Loach films from Thursday the 9th to Sunday the 12th, including classics like his debut feature *Kes* (1965), *Looking for Eric* (2009) and *I, Daniel Blake* (2016).

Following the premiere of *The Old Oak,* there will be a post-screening discussion with Ken Loach's regular screenwriter and friend, Paul Laverty.

The Old Oak at its core, is about people

The mine in the village has closed, most young people have left, and the remaining residents feel cut off from the world. Housing however is cheaper, which is ideal for Syrian refugees who have been welcomed to Britain in recent years. Anger, resentment and a lack of hope soon grows in a community struggling to maintain their traditions and values, and a clash of cultures and ideologies soon amass inside the local village pub, The Old Oak.

Ken Loach's mastery lies not only in the art of telling stories, but above all in letting the audience experience them. This is no different in *The Old Oak*, which touches us in a way which is both direct and sympathetic.

Five decades of timely cinema

The films of the now legendary British director, who was awarded the 2017 Crystal Globe for Outstanding Contribution to Cinema by the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, along with his screenwriter Paul Laverty, describe individuals entangled in social systems and living conditions that oppress, humiliate and threaten them.

Loach's stories, however, are not all doom and gloom. On the contrary, they are always deeply inspiring and human. His work teaches audiences and filmmakers a new way of looking at those aspects of life from which we would usually tend to ignore. At the same time, it proves that even critical social realism can be full of beauty and hope.

Just as the director himself says: "I don't think films about working-class people have to be sad: they can be funny, full of life, exciting, warm, generous, and say beautiful things."

Interview with Ken Loach

Prior to the premiere of *The Old Oak* on May 9th at 17:30 in Edison Filmhub, Paseka Publishing will present their new book, *Dialogue sur l'art e la politique (Dialog o umění a politice).* In a lively conversation with popular French writer Édouard Louis, Loach touches on the pains of the contemporary world: the origins of intolerance, prejudice,

homophobia, the negative influence of social media, homelessness, violence, the status of women, and more.

Can film and literature solve social problems? What changes does the left need to undergo so that frustrated people do not increasingly turn to populism and extremism? Paseka Publishing will present the book symbolically in the form of a dialogue between the translator of the title, Sara Vybíralová, and the author of the afterword, Tomáš Koblížek. During May, you will be able to buy the book at the Edison FIlmhub box office.

- ★★★★ "The film is proof that filmmakers can influence the real world." - The Guardian

- "An extraordinarily empathetic film." - Deadline

  The film was selected for the main competition of the Cannes IFF 2023.

- *The Old Oak* will be in cinemas throughout the Czech Republic and Slovakia on May 9th.

- For the full programme of The World According to Ken Loach, which will take place May 9th – 12th and for the tickets - read more here

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