

**THE GYPSY VOTE**  
**(orig. Cigáni idú do volieb)**  
**Documentary, SK - CZ, 2012**  
**72 min, colour**  
**TV version: 52min**

Director: **Jaroslav Vojtek**  
Story and Screenplay: **Jaroslav Vojtek, Tomáš Kaminský**  
Story Editor: **Marek Lešák**  
Director of Photography: **Jaroslav Vojtek, Noro Hudec, Tomáš Stanek, Ján Meliš**  
Music: **Kokavakére Lavutára alias the Sendreis**  
Editor: **Terézia Mikulášová, Peter Harum**  
Featuring: **Vlado Sendrei with his family, music and his election team**

Genre: DOCUMENTARY  
Running Time: **72 min**  
Language: **Slovak, Romani**  
Screening formats: **35 mm, DCP**  
Shooting format: **HDV**

**Formats available:** **35 mm, DCP, digiBeta, TV:** FullHD  
Dolby Stereo, 16.9, PAL

Producer: **Tomáš Kaminský - Mandala Pictures (SK), Michal Kollár, Viktor Tauš - Fog'n'Desire Films (CZ)**

**Tag-line / teaser:**

A documentary featuring the attempt by a Gypsy leader and his team to win elections in „white“ Slovakia. Flying temper, dance, and betrayal.

**Synopsis:**

A documentary film-about the attempt of the Gypsy leader to win elections in “white” Slovakia.  
Vlado Sendrei, a Romani cultural and sports activist, decides to step out of the borders of his Romani community and candidate in the local elections as the official representative of his people. However, life is not a bed of roses, and Vlado faces surprising stumbling blocks along the way. Despite all the energy invested in the preparations, the Big Day – the Election Day turns original emotions upside down.

**Background:**

What are the odds that a Roma activist and his election team, stepping out of the Roma ghettos, succeed in a society of “the whites”?

A truly intimate and honest portrayal of the life of the Romani – Gypsy community in Slovakia.

Romani, being a social group pushed to the edge of the society by the white majority tainted with prejudice, as well as coping with strong differences in opinions, actions and life-styles of the community itself, struggle to make their voice heard in the society they live in.

The documentary follows a very important event for both sides of the society: A Gypsy

politician fighting for a breakthrough in the political establishment.

Vlado Sendrei and his team receive professional guidance from an American foundation, however, still lead a spontaneous and lively campaign true to their own nature and traditions.

What are the odds that a Roma activist and his election team, stepping out of the Roma ghettos, succeed in a society of “the whites”?

Being an easygoing and idealistic person, Vlado Sendrei has the quality to motivate people around him and make them step out of themselves. However, it is not easy to change human nature and often he is not able to achieve his idealist goals. In the election campaign he eventually finds himself fighting not only the prejudice and mistrust of his “white” colleagues and rivals, but also the limitations and obstacles in his own community. Vlado’s family life and his circle of friends are also much affected by his “activism”, and not an easy task to handle.

Jana, his wife, is rather sceptical about his political struggle, and sees Vlado’s activities as yet another opportunity to escape from his family and his home. She knows her predictions and feelings about the “political circus” will turn out to be true... Still, she supports his campaigning by her presence, with her fantastic voice and practical insight.

Thanks to his lively enthusiasm, as well as the longer relationship and cooperation with Jaroslav Vojtek, Vlado is able to forget the camera and, thus, allow the filmmakers to document the natural course of events. This unusual creative symbiosis results in a colourful and comprehensive account of the Romani world of today. It uses to the full one important event in the community and brings to light many aspects of life on both sides of the society that has been struggling to find balance and understanding between the Romani and the “white” majority society.

With the Financial Support:

**Slovak Audiovisual Fund**

**MEDIA Programme**

As works in progress, the film was successfully presented at:

**Meetings at the Border** – Cinema at the Border, Czieszyn, PL 201

**East European Forum** – Jihlava Documentary Film Festival 2010

Docu Talents from the East – Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2011

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## **Jaroslav Vojtek – scriptwriter, cinematographer, director**

Jaroslav Vojtek (\*1968, Slovakia), graduate in documentary filmmaking from the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Bratislava (VŠMU), is one of the genuine followers of the tradition of Slovak documentary filmmaking represented by e.g. Dušan Hanák.

He debuted in 1993 with the short documentary ***Slepá viera (Blind Faith)***, a portrait of a gravedigger loyal to socialist ideals. His short feature film ***Rojkovia (Dreamers)*** is part of the feature-length project ***Šest statečných (The Magnificent Six)***, screened at the Karlovy Vary IFF 2000. Vojtek's debut feature-length documentary about an originally Slovak family returning from Kazakhstan back to Slovakia ***My Zdes! (Here We Are)*** premiered in Karlovy Vary in 2005, ***Hranica (The Border)***, documenting a Slovak village which fell victim to an absurdly demarcated borderline of the Soviet Red Army, was awarded the Best East European Documentary at IDFF Jihlava 2009.

***Cigáni idú do volieb (The Gypsy Vote)*** is a natural result of the long-term friendship and professional relationship with Vlado Sendrei, who has been the main character and/or subject in a number of Vojtek's film projects.

### **Filmography:**

#### **Full-Length Documentaries**

2012: **Cigáni idú do volieb (The Gypsy Vote)**, SK – CZ, 72 min

2009: **Hranica (The Border)**, SK, 72 min.; [www.border.sk](http://www.border.sk)

- BEST EAST EUROPEAN DOCUMENTARY FILM AWARD "BETWEEN THE SEAS" - 13TH JIHLAVA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS

2005: **My zdes (Here We Are)**, SK, 76 min.; [www.myzdes.com](http://www.myzdes.com)

- Grand Prix - International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival One World 2006, Prague

Best European Film –Astra Film Fest Sibiu 2006

#### **Short Documentaries (selected)**

2011: **Povieme si to v nebi (We'll Talk About It in Heaven)**, SK, 30 min

2010: **Z kola von: Čo je za tým (Out of Round: What is Behind)**, SK, 30 min

2008: **Malá domov (Back Passing)**, SK, 29 min.

2006: **Cesta za snom (Following a Dream)**, SK, 46 min

2003: **Blázonko (Crazy Man)**, SK, 27 min

2001: **Akvárium (Acquarium)**, SK, 15 min

### **Jaroslav Vojtek on documentary filmmaking:**

"I got attracted to documentary filmmaking through the human life-story. For me him, man is a universe whose unexplored corners I long to discover. I am fascinated by relationships, the ability to sacrifice, solidarity, love and hate. Making a documentary film can also serve as a kind of a self-therapy. I think the current situation in the production and distribution of documentary films

in Slovakia is not very favourable, however, I hope it will change for the better very soon."

## Jaroslav Vojtek on shooting with Vlado Sendrei:

"And that is the point when the movie really motivates me. A story in the documentary film. The story evolving right in front of us over time. And since the shooting is realized by material compilation over time, we get very close to the truth. And such possibility exists with Vlado. The shooting method is watching a person in his real life which he authentically lives in front of the camera. Neither the author himself, nor the character of the movie know where the story will lead them and what kind of real things will happen."

## **Tomáš Kaminský – scriptwriter, producer**

Tomáš Kaminský (1971, Slovakia) has been in the media and film industry in Slovakia since 1994, after his graduation from the Faculty of Arts of the Comenius University Bratislava. He has worked for several Radio and TV service providers, as journalist, scriptwriter and script editor, director and producer, and for independent production companies such as Monarch and Piknik Pictures, for various TV formats. He has also been involved in numerous documentary film projects, and active in charity projects. In 2010, he established the independent docu-art production company Mandala Pictures, and after having worked with Jaroslav Vojtek on several of his short film projects, *The Gypsy Vote* is the first feature length film of Vojtek and Kaminský as a creative team.

### **Filmography:**

2012: **Cigáni idú do volieb** (The Gypsy Vote), dir. Jaroslav Vojtek, SK – CZ, 72 min; scriptwriter, producer

2010: **Nesmrteľní** (Immortals) – TV-film series, Slovak Television, various directors, producer: Oreo (SK); Script Editor

2008: **Ia som bulvár** (I am a Tabloid), dir. Peter Begányi, SK, 31 min; scriptwriter, producer

2006: **Sendreiovci** (The Sendreis) - documentary TV series, dir. Jaroslav Vojtek; story and script editor

2002: **Tolerancia, cudzie slovo?** (Tolerance. The strange word?) – TV documentary series, script editor, one of directors

**1998: Mále veľké dejiny Mikuláša Hubu** (Little Big History of Mikuláš Huba) - documentary portrait, SK 26 min; scriptwriter, director,

**Mandala Pictures** is an independent docu-art production company founded in 2010 by Tomáš Kaminský, specialized in creative documentary films. *The Gypsy Vote* by Jaroslav Vojtek is Mandala Pictures' first feature-length project. Currently, the company is developing its second feature-length project Felvidék (The Land Behind), directed by the young Slovak filmmaker Vladislava Plančíková, dealing with "the Hungarian issue" in the Czechoslovak history after the World War II and an imaginary chess game between Slovaks and Hungarians in times when there is no place for black and white vision (more at [www.mandalapictures.com](#))

## Mandala Pictures

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### **Marek Leščák – script editor**

**Marek Leščák (\*1971, Slovakia)** is one of the most renowned and established scriptwriters and story editors in Slovakia today. He graduated from the Department of Script Editing and Screenwriting at the Film and Television Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (VŠMU) and currently works as a lecturer with the Academy. He is a member of the European Film Academy.

He is the co-scriptwriter of numerous Slovak fiction and documentary films which won both local and international acclaim, such as: films by Martin Šulík *Cigán (Gypsy, 2011)*, *Slnečný štát (The City of the Sun, 2005)*, *Záhrada (The Garden, 2005)*, Juraj Lehotsky's documentary *Slepé lásky (Blind loves, 2008)*, Jaroslav Vojtek's *Hranica (The Border, 2009)*, *My zdes! (Here We Are, 2005)*, ea.

### **Filmography - scriptwriter:**

#### **Fiction Films (selected):**

- 2012: **Ďakujem, dobre** (Fine, Thanks), dir. Mátyás Prikler, SK, 130 min; in post-production  
2011: **Cigán** (Gypsy), dir. Martin Šulík, SK – CZ, 107 min  
- SPECIAL JURY PRIZE, DON QUIJOTE PRIZE, EUROPA CINEMAS LABEL – KARLOVY VARY IFF 2011  
2005: **SLNEČNÝ ŠTÁT (THE CITY OF THE SUN)**, DIR. MARTIN ŠULÍK, SK – CZ, 95 MIN  
- THE SUN IN A NET – SLOVAK NATIONAL FILM AWARD: BEST SCREENPLAY, 2006  
1997: **ORBIS PICTUS**, DIR. MARTIN ŠULÍK, SK – CZ, 109 MIN  
- SPECIAL JURY AWARD – MANNHEIM-HEIDELBERG IFF 2997  
1995: **ZÁHRADA (THE GARDEN)**, DIR. MARTIN ŠULÍK, SK – CZ – FR, 96 MIN  
- SPECIAL JURY PRIZE - KARLOVY VARY IFF 1995

#### **DOCUMENTARIES (SELECTED):**

- 2012: **CIGÁNI IDÚ DO VOLIEB (THE GYPSY VOTE)**, DIR. JAROSLAV VOJTEK, SK – CZ, 72 MIN.  
2009: **Hranica (The Border)**, dir. Jaroslav Vojtek, SK, 72 min.; [www.border.sk](http://www.border.sk)  
2008: **Slepé lásky** (Blind Loves), dir. Juraj Lehotský, SK, 77 min  
- C.I.C.A.E. Art Cinema Award – Directors' Fortnight Cannes 2008  
2005: **My zdes** (Here We Are), dir. Jaroslav Vojtek, SK, 76 min.; [www.myzdes.com](http://www.myzdes.com)



**Fog'n'Desire** is a Prague-based production company founded in 2006 by Viktor Tauš and Michal Kollár, both producers and film directors with the goal to produce and to co-produce films with strong themes, new talents with individual filmmaking approach and unique handwriting, aiming at both local and international markets. Being in the market for 7 years, Fog'n'Desire has reached successful credits with films such as *Sněženky a machři po 25 letech (The Great Thaw, by Viktor Tauš, 2008)*, *Dom (The House, by Zuzana Liová, 2011)*. Currently, it is involved in international co-production projects *Mieletön elokuu (August Fools)* by Taru Mäkelä (FI) and *Klauni (Clownwise)* by Viktor Tauš. *The Gypsy Vote* is the company's fourth film production, and first documentary.

Fog'n'Desire Films, CZ

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