MoMA ANNOUNCES TWO FILM EXHIBITIONS CELEBRATING INFLUENTIAL CZECH FILMMAKER IVAN PASSER & CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTARIAN JAN SIKL

Ivan Passer's Way
March 6–14, 2009
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

Jan Sikl's *Private Century*
March 9–15, 2009
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

Press Screening:
Thursday, February 26

10:30 **Intimate Lighting (Intimni osvetleni).** 1965. Directed and co-written by Ivan Passer. In Czech; English subtitles. 71 min.
Private Century (Soukromé Století): part 1, Daddy and Lili "Marlene" (Tatícek a Lili "Marlén"). 2007. Directed by Jan Sikl. In Czech; English subtitles. 52 min.

RSVP to pressoffice@moma.org

NEW YORK, February 13, 2009 — The Museum of Modern Art will screen the works of two very different yet equally original filmmakers: Ivan Passer, a master of the Czech New Wave who then went on to create quintessentially American films, and Jan Sikl, one of the Czech Republic's most promising new documentary filmmakers. The two exhibitions will be presented from March 6 through 15 in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters. *Ivan Passer's Way* (March 6–13) features a weeklong theatrical run of Passer's astonishing directorial debut *Intimate Lighting* (1965), in a newly struck, newly subtitled 35mm print that has been recently acquired for the Museum's collection. Jan Sikl's landmark eight-part series *Private Century* (2007) (March 9–15) is composed entirely of home movies, still photographs, letters, and diaries that offer an intimate view of Czechoslovakia's turbulent history from the 1920s to the 1960s.

The two directors will come together on March 9 for *Modern Mondays: An Evening with Jan Sikl and Ivan Passer*, taking part in an onstage conversation after the screening of the first episode in Sikl's *Private Century*, *Daddy and Lili "Marlene."*

Ivan Passer's Way

Ivan Passer's major directorial contribution to the Czech New Wave came in 1965 with his finely attuned filmmaking debut *Intimate Lighting,* which will open the celebration of the influential director's ongoing career on March 6. *Intimate Lighting* is an extraordinary portrait of rural living and of two friends reconnecting after several years. Shot through with compassion, humanity, and

a keen sense of the absurd, the film perfectly expresses the tone and rhythms of real life, while exemplifying Passer's remarkable ability to capture atmosphere and craft detailed psychological portraits. *Intimate Lighting,* which features newly improved subtitles, will have a theatrical weeklong run.

After immigrating to the U.S. in the early 1970s, Passer retained his signature style by shooting two films in New York, a city that reminded him of "home." *Born to Win* (1971), one of Robert De Niro's first roles, and *Law and Disorder* (1974) both display his characteristic gifts: capturing human foibles, unveiling the tragicomic nature of group interactions, and celebrating the ins and outs of close friendships. Friendship is also at the core of the unclassifiable but masterful *Cutter's Way* (1981), a devastating neo-noir, cult film in which Jeff Bridges plays a commitment-phobic, part-time gigolo opposite John Heard's one-eyed veteran turned mad avenger.

Concluding the showcase on March 8 is the world premiere of Czech Republic director Martin Sulik's *Golden Sixties* (2009), an insightful documentary portrait of Passer, the first completed of a series portraying 26 major figures of the Czech New Wave including Milos Forman, Dusan Hanak, Vera Chytilova, Jiri Menzel, and Jan Svankmajer.

Ivan Passer will introduce the opening night screenings of *Intimate Lighting* (6:00) and *Cutter's Way* (8:00) on March 6.

Organized by Jytte Jensen, Curator, Department of Film, and supported by the Czech Center New York.

Jan Sikl's *Private Century*

The dramatic political and social upheavals of twentieth-century Czechoslovakia—war and occupation, the twin specters of Nazism and Communism, a Velvet Revolution—have never been more intimately evoked than in Jan Sikl's landmark eight-part series *Private Century*. A highlight of the 2008 Telluride Film Festival, and counting director Milos Forman among its champions, *Private Century* is composed entirely of family home movies, still photographs, letters, and diaries from the 1920s to the 1960s. Narrated in the first person and featuring interviews with surviving family members, the series explores, in Chekhovian fashion, how sweeping historical events transform the private lives of ordinary people, and how small domestic pleasures can crystallize into profound and enduring memories that are passed down from generation to generation.

The films are intimate and gripping: Two ambitious artists—a sculptor and a composer—pledge themselves to the Communist State and cause their families to suffer. Emigrés of the Russian intelligentsia, cast out by Stalin, take root and flourish in Prague. A prosperous ethnic German farmer—a citizen of Czechoslovakia—loses his land and his birthright after the 1938 Nazi occupation of Sudetenland. These are stories of love and infidelity, courage and betrayal; of fateful decisions and sudden reversals of fortune.

Organized by Joshua Siegel, Associate Curator, Department of Film, and supported by the Czech Center New York.

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Press Contacts:
Emily Lowe, Rubenstein Communications, (212) 843-8011, elowe@rubenstein.com
Tessa Kelley, Rubenstein Communications, (212) 843 9355, tkelley@rubenstein.com
Margaret Doyle, MoMA, (212) 408-6400, margaret_doyle@moma.org.

Public Information:	The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019
Hours:	Films are screened Wednesday-Monday. For screening schedules, please visit www.moma.org.
Film Admission:	$10 adults; $8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. $6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only.) The price of a film ticket may be applied toward the price of a Museum admission ticket when a film ticket stub is presented at the Lobby Information Desk within 30 days of the date on the stub (does not apply during Target Free Friday Nights, 4:00–8:00 p.m.). Admission is free for Museum members and for Museum ticketholders.

SCREENING SCHEDULES

Ivan Passer's Way
March 6–14

Friday, March 6

6:00

A Boring Afternoon (Fádní odpoledne). 1964.
A short film about all the things that happen when, ostensibly, nothing is happening. In Czech; English subtitles. 20 min.

Intimate Lighting (Intimni osvetleni). 1965. Directed by Ivan Passer. Written by Passer, Jaroslav Papousek, Vaclav Sasek. With Zonek zusek, Karel Blazek, Vera Kresadlova, Jaroslav Streda.
Two friends meet again after several years and reconnect over a night of drinking through their shared passion for music. This extraordinary portrait is as personal as a home movie and as penetrating as an X-ray. Every gesture and musical cue is intimate and effortlessly laden with history and meaning; every movement and action reveals the details of provincial living and the heartache of diminished expectations and broken dreams. In Czech; English subtitles. 71 min. ***Discussion with Passer to follow***

8:00

Cutter's Way. 1981. USA. Directed by Ivan Passer. With Jeff Bridges, John Heard, Lisa Eichhorn.
This devastating neo-noir has it all: sleek design, a stripped-down narrative, a Santa Barbara locale that mixes dark alleys and glittery lawn parties, and, above all, the most complex, conflicted characters of any post-Vietnam movie. The two leads portray a pair of very different, though equally damaged, men who are neither morally righteous nor outright criminal. Bridges' commitment-phobic Bone gets by as a part-time gigolo—not exactly an upright citizen—but he's nothing compared to Heard's Cutter, a one-eyed veteran turned mad avenger. The shifting

emotional complexity of their lifelong friendship is pushed into the realm of hallucinatory nightmare when a murder is committed. 109 min. ***Discussion to follow with Passer***.

Saturday, March 7

2:00

A Boring Afternoon (Fádní odpoledne). 1964. In Czech; English subtitles. 20 min. See Friday March 6.

Intimate Lighting (Intimni osvetleni). 1965. Directed by Ivan Passer. In Czech; English subtitles. 71 min. See Friday March 6.

4:00

Born to Win. 1971. USA. Directed by Ivan Passer. With George Segal, Karen Black, Paula Prentiss, Robert De Niro.
Passer's first American film, a gritty, hard-boiled tale about a junkie, was shot on the mean streets of New York City. Segal gives a nuanced performance as JJ, a charming heroin addict who drags his girlfriend (Black) into his desperate quest for a daily fix. Anticipating the dingy atmosphere of Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976), Passer evocatively captures the hallucinatory, sordid beauty of 1970s Times Square. 100 min.

Sunday, March 8

1:30

Law and Disorder. 1974. USA. Directed by Ivan Passer. With Ernest Borgnine, Carroll O'Connor, Karen Black.
When police fail to respond to the influx of criminals and perverts into Borgnine and O'Connor's working-class neighborhood, the two men take matters into their own hands. But instead of making the streets safer, their shoestring militia of bumbling, incompetent husbands—like modern-day Keystone Kops—only makes them crazier. Featuring vibrant location photography, Passer's second American film is an insightful look into the social politics of 1970s New York City. 106 min.

4:00

A Boring Afternoon (Fádní odpoledne). 1964. In Czech; English subtitles. 20 min. See Friday March 6.

Intimate Lighting (Intimni osvetleni). 1965. Directed by Ivan Passer. In Czech; English subtitles. 71 min. See Friday March 6.

6:00

Cutter's Way. 1981. USA. Directed by Ivan Passer. 109 min. See Friday March 6.

6:30

Golden Sixties. Ivan Passer. 2009. Czech Republic. Directed by Martin Sulik.
This insightful and revelatory documentary portrait of Passer is part of a just-finished project by the producer Cestmir Kopecky to depict all the major figures of the Czech New Wave while they can still participate. The twenty-six portraits completed to date include Milos Forman, Dusan Hanak, Vera Chytilova, Jiri Menzel, and Jan Svankmajer. In Czech; English subtitles. 53 min.

Monday, March 9

5:00 **A Boring Afternoon (Fádní odpoledne).** 1964. In Czech; English subtitles. 20 min. See Friday March 6.

Intimate Lighting (Intimni osvetleni). 1965. Directed by Ivan Passer. In Czech; English subtitles. 71 min. See Friday March 6.

Wednesday, March 11

4:30 **Golden Sixties. Ivan Passer.** 2009. Czech Republic. Directed by Martin Sulik.
English subtitles. 53 min. See Sunday March 8.

8:30 **A Boring Afternoon (Fádní odpoledne).** 1964. In Czech; English subtitles. 20 min. See Friday March 6.

Intimate Lighting (Intimni osvetleni). 1965. Directed by Ivan Passer. In Czech; English subtitles. 71 min. See Friday March 6.

Thursday, March 12

6:00 **A Boring Afternoon (Fádní odpoledne).** 1964. In Czech; English subtitles. 20 min. See Friday March 6.

Intimate Lighting (Intimni osvetleni). 1965. Directed by Ivan Passer. In Czech; English subtitles. 71 min. See Friday March 6.

Friday, March 13

6:00 **Law and Disorder.** 1974. USA. Directed by Ivan Passer. 106 min. See Sunday March 8.

8:30 **Born to Win.** 1971. USA. Directed by Ivan Passer. 100 min. See Saturday March 7.

Jan Sikl's *Private Century*
March 9–15

Monday, March 9

7:00 **Modern Mondays: An Evening with Jan Sikl and Ivan Passer**
Jan Sikl opens the exhibition of his Czech film series *Private Century* with a screening of the first episode, *Daddy and Lili "Marlene,"* followed by an onstage conversation with Ivan Passer.
Daddy and Lili "Marlene" (Tatícek a Lili "Marlén"). 2007.
The daughter of a prosperous German farmer in Sudetenland, Lili Saisser set her sights on the glitter of Prague, marrying an oral surgeon and living among cosmopolitan society. This episode, which continues the story of

the Seissers begun in *King of Velichovky*, is based on the childhood memories of Lili's daughter Eva, centering on her parents' strained marriage and the difficulties that ethnic German citizens faced in Czechoslovakia during the war. Richly evocative and intimate, the episode is enlivened by snapshots of a family trip to Nazi Berlin in 1934; home-movie footage of a playful but revealing burlesque farce; and erotic images of the vivacious, but ever self-absorbed, Lili. 52 min. Program 100 min.

Wednesday, March 11

6:00 **Private Century, Parts 3 and 4**
Small Russian Clouds of Smoke (Ruské oblácky koure). 2007.
A fascinating look at a community of wealthy and cultured Russians who escaped the Bolshevik Revolution and settled in Czechoslovakia during the 1920s and 1930s. With dreams of soon returning home, these fiercely proud expatriates preserved their culture and their language by setting up social clubs, churches, schools, and cooperative housing. Edited together from home movies, this episode features rare glimpses of Russian émigré society, including the historian Kizeweter, whom Lenin had banished on the infamous 1922 "Ship of Philosophers"; and Prince Dolgorukov, who in 1945 would be sent to the gulag. 52 min.

Low-Level Flight (Nízky Let). 2007.
Tána Palejko (née Popov) reminisces about her marriage to an ace fighter pilot in the Czechoslovakian army, a charismatic, ambitious man whose heavy drinking fits of jealousy, and infidelities would ultimately drive them apart. This episode features remarkable aerial shots taken clandestinely from a MIG fighter jet, as well as footage of a remote military training camp in the Soviet Union where drunken soldiers carouse with Russian girls to while away the lonely hours. 52 min.

Thursday, March 12

8:00 **Private Century, Parts 1 and 2**
Daddy and Lili "Marlene" (Tatícek a Lili "Marlén"). 2007 52 min. See Monday March 9.

A Stroke of Butterfly Wings (Mávnutí motylích krídel). 2007.
Of all the families depicted in *Private Century,* perhaps none was more deeply or painfully driven by generational and ideological conflict than the Felixes. This episode traces the political awakening and gradual disillusionment of the prolific and noted Czech composer Václav Felix from the 1930s until the 1980s. The film reveals the ways in which Václav's unquestioning faith in Communism shaped both his music and his romantic life, even as it estranged him from his father, who was imprisoned by the Party. 52 min.

Friday, March 13

8:30 **Private Century, Parts 5 and 6**
King of Velichovky (Král Velichovek). 2007.

For as long as anyone could remember, Czechs and Germans in the border region of Sudetenland had lived together in relative peace. But the 1938 Nazi occupation of Sudetenland forever changed all that, turning neighbor against neighbor and friend into foe. This is a portrait of the Sudeten German Karel Saisser, a prosperous and demanding farmer who lived with his wife and three daughters near the spa town of Velichovky. The Saissers were pillars of the community, hosting lavish parties, donating to the town church, and making car trips to Prague, Berlin, and Venice (Nazi flags adorn the Berlin streets in their travelogues). Their story continues in *Daddy and Lili "Marlene."* 52 min.

Statuary of Granddad Vinda (Sousosí dedecka Vindy). 2007. Vincenc Havel, a sculptor who lived in the Opava region of northern Moravia in the 1950s, was as hard and as immovable as the statues he carved. An eccentric nonconformist, in the early 1950s he nonetheless received some favorable recognition from the State for his Socialist Realist sculpture of the reviled president Klement Gottwald. But Havel's opportunism, and the special treatment given him, did not sit well with his fellow artists, and in later years he grew increasingly withdrawn, inflicting much of his bitterness on his own daughter. This episode is drawn from Havel's home movies and diaries, and is also based on the recollections of his granddaughter Eva. 52 min.

Saturday, March 14

4:30 **Private Century, Parts 3 and 4**
Small Russian Clouds of Smoke (Ruské oblácky koure). 2007. 52 min. See Wednesday, March 11
Low-Level Flight (Nízky Let). 2007. 52 min. See Wednesday March 11.

6:30 **Private Century, Parts 7 and 8**
See You in Denver (Sejdeme se v Denver). 2007. As a child living in prewar Prague, Frantisek loved watching American Westerns and slapstick comedies in his father's chain of cinemas. When the Communist nationalization of the Czech film industry took away the family business, Frantisek satisfied his cinematic obsessions by shooting his own movies, until he was banned from school and unjustly imprisoned. Swept up in the momentous events of 1968, he decided to emigrate to the country of his silver-screen dreams. 52 min.

With Kisses from Your Love (Líbám Tě a Miluji). 2007. Based on family films and impassioned letters from the 1940 and 1950s, this episode relates the story of high-school sweethearts Marie and Josef Šechtl, who married after the war and inherited the photography studio that had belonged in Josef's family for several generations. After the Communist takeover in 1948, the Šechtls lived in constant fear of losing their studio and their family's treasured, irreplaceable archive of photographs dating back to the late-nineteenth century. But nothing, not even show trials and prison, could extinguish their profound love. 52 min.

Sunday, March 15

2:30 **Private Century, Parts 7 and 8**
See You in Denver (Sejdeme se v Denver). 2007. See Saturday March 14.

With Kisses from Your Love (Líbám Te a Miluji). 2007. 52 min. See Saturday March 14.

5:00 **Private Century, Parts 5 and 6**
King of Velichovky (Král Velichovek). 2007.52 min. See Friday March 13.

Statuary of Granddad Vinda (Sousosí dedecka Vindy). 2007. 52 min. See Friday March 13.