

Press release, 30. September 2026

The Signal Festival will join in the celebration of Václav Havel's 90th birthday. Two art installations and a panel discussion will commemorate his legacy

The first Czech president and prominent Czechoslovak dissident Václav Havel would have celebrated his ninetieth birthday this October. In connection with his legacy, Signal Festival is preparing two installations. Both the video mapping *Living in Truth* by Ukrainian artist Svitlana Reinish and the work *What Are You Responsible For* by Czech artist Karolína Schulzová draw inspiration from his timeless essay *The Power of the Powerless*. Václav Havel's intellectual legacy also shapes one of the program blocks of this year's international Signal Forum conference, which will take place on October 16. The fourteenth edition of Signal Festival, the festival of digital and creative culture, will take place from October 15 to 18.

This year's program of **Signal Festival is part of the Havel90 project**, the celebrations of Václav Havel's ninetieth birthday held under the auspices of the Dagmar and Václav Havel Foundation. Havel's ideas and visions transcend the era in which they were born. They are a challenge for every generation, and perhaps they speak most urgently precisely when the world seems to stop understanding itself.

At a time when the geopolitical order is being rewritten and the certainties we took for granted are being shaken, **Havel's ideas are becoming relevant once again.**

"The dramaturgy of Signal Festival always touches, in one way or another, not only on current social themes but also on the fundamental questions of a free, open society. It is therefore natural that this year we are commemorating the personality and legacy of Václav Havel with two art installations. We are aware that the possibility to create freely is not a given, but rather a gift that must be well taken care of," said **Signal Festival curator Pavel Mrkus.**

One of this year's installations inspired by the thoughts of Václav Havel and the power of words will be the **video mapping *Living in Truth* on the façade of the Old Town Hall**. The work was created by **Ukrainian multimedia artist and scenographer Svitlana Reinish** together with her compatriot, composer and sound designer Anton Dehtiarov. Spread across two walls of the town hall, the projection connects centuries-old architecture with an urgent contemporary message. **Words such as truth, freedom, justice, love and democracy will gradually appear on the façade of the building, only to begin to deform, fall apart and disappear.** The installation thus reminds us that where lies become the foundation of a system, truth is one of the most powerful forms of resistance.

*"I think that *The Power of the Powerless* is still very relevant today. The work is built on language and its destruction in order to create a new reality, which is something that is happening in the world right now: the meanings of words are being shifted, and as a result, the way people think is changing. The main message of *Living in Truth* is that we must keep fighting for democracy together,"* **Reinish** said about the installation. In addition to the 1978

Press release, 30. September 2026

essay in which Havel analyzed the principles of the totalitarian system, the artist also found inspiration in the work of American historian **Timothy Snyder** and his concept of **post-truth**.

The Power of the Powerless is also referenced by the installation ***What Are You Responsible For*** located in the courtyard of the Gothic Church of Our Lady of the Snows. It draws on Havel's example of the greengrocer who displays an ideological slogan in his shop window not because he believes in it, but because it is socially easier. Havel uses it to show that unfree systems are not maintained solely by power from above, but also by small acts of conformity and silence. The space, which boasts the highest vault of all Prague churches, will be filled by the author of the installation, **Karolína Schulzová**, with light panels bearing statements that reflect passivity and the desire "not to be seen". Visitors will be able to walk freely among them and become part of a system formed by a network of everyday decisions. **The panels gradually lose synchronization, empty spaces appear and the collective illusion begins to fall apart. In the end, a single panel remains, with the statement: It only takes one.** *"For me, The Power of the Powerless is still relevant today, because the question of personal responsibility has not gone away. I have experienced situations myself when I disagreed with something but preferred to stay silent, because it was easier to conform to others. For me, 'It only takes one' expresses the moment when a person decides to step out of this passivity,"* says Schulzová about her installation.

The exhibiting artist combines graphic design and new media in her work. **The project was selected for Signal Festival during the end-of-semester reviews in the winter semester of 2025**, when students of the Interactive Media studio at FAD UJEP worked on the theme of the 90th birthday that Václav Havel did not live to see. **The work is a joint project of Signal Festival and the Díky, že můžem association.** It was created in collaboration with the **Faculty of Art and Design of UJEP** and is the result of Signal Festival's long-term initiative to support the art of young creators. Through cultural and educational projects, Díky, že můžem reminds the current generation of the values of freedom and democracy and supports civic engagement. The association already collaborated with Signal Festival in 2024 on the development of the installation *Democracy?*. **After this year's edition ends, the installation will also be on view during Korzo Národní, the November celebrations of the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. The patron of the installation is Václav Havel Airport Prague.**

Both Havel installations are free of charge. Tickets to the Signal INSIDE zone are available on the Signal Festival website. **Families, seniors and students are eligible for a discount.**

This year, Signal Festival is holding the **international Signal Forum conference** for the third time. As part of it, it will present **the Dare to Dream panel, which also draws on Václav Havel's intellectual legacy.** The guests will debate the current definition of freedom, the direction of civil society and the question of how to understand Václav Havel's ideological legacy. The discussion will feature **Ester Valtrová, program manager of the Díky, že můžem association, Svitlana Reinish, author of one of this year's installations, and Pavel**

Press release, 30. September 2026

Kopřiva, head of the Interactive Media studio at the Faculty of Art and Design of UJEP. The debate will be moderated by reporter and author of the *Puls* podcast **Jolana Humpálová**.

The one-day international Signal Forum 2026 conference will take place **on October 16 at the National Technical Library, and those interested can register [here](#)**. It will bring together professionals and the general public interested in contemporary digital and light art. Through panel discussions with artists and experts, the program reflects on the possibilities and meanings of this year's Signal Festival theme **Dream On! Dreams and Visions**.

About Signal Festival:

Signal is a festival of digital and creative culture. It brings together contemporary visual art, urban space and modern technology. It has become the most-attended cultural event in the Czech Republic. The program features renowned international and Czech artists working in the fields of visual art and light design. Signal Festival is one of the largest producers of contemporary art in the country. It supports the youngest Czech artists and organizes accompanying programs for professionals, students and children. It collaborates with a wide range of international festivals and cultural institutions.

In 2025, the organizers of Signal Festival opened Signal Space, the largest digital art gallery in the Czech Republic, which showcases contemporary digital and interdisciplinary art year-round through exhibitions, installations and an accompanying program.

Signal Festival 2026 will take place from October 15 to 18, 2026.

More information: signalfestival.com. Facebook: facebook.com/SignalFestival. Instagram: instagram.com/signalfestival

Organizer: Signal Creative

Main Partner: Mercedes-Benz

Supported by: City of Prague, Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic

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Press release, 30. September 2026

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