

# FOCUS

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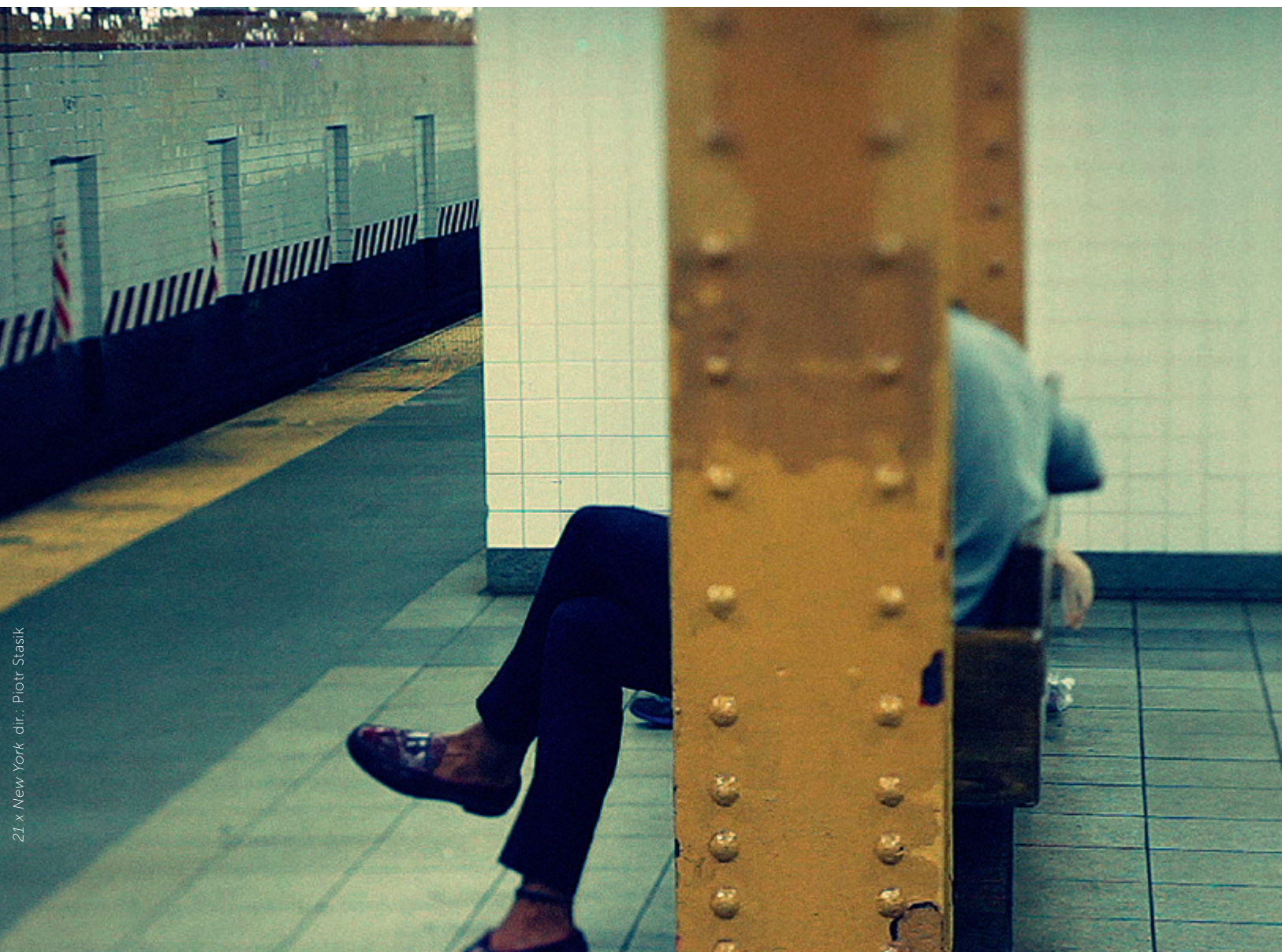
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shorts

POLISH  
DOCS

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ISSUE 4 (2/2016)

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WITH SUPPORT OF THE POLISH FILM INSTITUTE



21 x New York dir.: Piotr Stasiak

A dramatist  
of reality:  
**Krzysztof  
Kieślowski**

Zofia Jarozuk  
talks with **Izabela  
Plucińska** about  
her animations

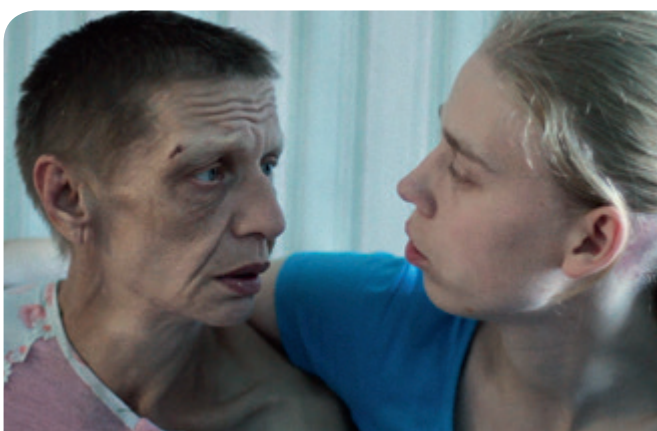
200 films a year:  
profile of the  
**Łódź Film  
School**

**Catalogue**  
of the latest  
film releases



**KFF  
SALES &  
PROMOTION**

**Icon** by Wojciech Kasperski **The Gift** by Przemysław Kamiński



**Walking Spark** by Marcin Kopeć **The Internal Ear** by Szymon Uliasz & Magdalena Gubała


NEW SALES AGENT IN POLAND

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THE AUTUMN IS AN INTENSE TIME in terms of festival premieres, in particular for documentary films. In this issue, you can read about the films that will soon begin their international career. An interview by Krzysztof Gierat with Paweł Łoziński about his recent *You Have No Idea How Much I Love You* will surely interest those who seek new paths in documentary filmmaking. A feature about Krzysztof Kieślowski shows a different face of one of the most famous Polish directors. Tue Steen Müller writes about *21 x New York*, a film essay by Piotr Stasik running for a European Film Award nomination. Polish animation is known for the incredible imagination of the artists, a diversity of techniques and a variety of approaches to film production. We invite you to learn more about Jerzy Kucia, a master of Polish animated film, and Izabela Plucińska, an animated film maker whose material of choice is plasticine. This year, Polish short fiction films received considerable attention at international festivals. *The Dogcatcher* by Daria Woszek, one of the subjects of the director's talk with Dagmara Romanowska, will be competing for an Academy Award nomination, so it's worthwhile to find out how it was made. Enjoy the read!

Barbara Orlicz-Szczypuła  
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POLISH FILM INSTITUTE

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PARTNERS:



/ Was a Soldier dir.: Krzysztof Kieślowski

# KIEŚŁOWSKI

## & POLISH FEMALE DIRECTORS

# IN CHINA

Polish cinema will be a special guest at this year's GZ DOC, the biggest documentary film festival in China. The Focus on Poland section includes both the classics of Polish documentary and the latest productions.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the death of Krzysztof Kieślowski, the audience in Guangzhou will get to know 12 of his documentary films, including masterpieces such as *Hospital*, *Talking Heads*, *Seven Women of Different Ages* and *From a Night Porter's Point of View*. The contemporary film programme includes 6 films by Polish female documentary directors of the young generation, whose works prove very successful worldwide: Aleksandra Maciuszek (*Previous Scenes*, *Casa Blanca*), Agnieszka Zwiefka (*Albert Cinema*, *The Queen of Silence*) and Karolina Bielawska (*Warsaw Available*, *Call Me Marianna*).

The review is co-organised by the Krakow Film Foundation and the Polish Filmmakers Association, with the support of the Polish Film Institute.



The Queen of Silence dir.: Agnieszka Zwiefka

## POLISH SHORTS ON THEIR WAY TO THE OSCARS

ON JANUARY 24TH, NOMINATIONS FOR THE ACADEMY AWARDS WILL BE ANNOUNCED; A LITTLE EARLIER WE WILL GET TO KNOW THE OSCARS SHORTLISTS. ONCE AGAIN, POLISH SHORT FILMS HAVE A CHANCE TO BE SELECTED AND COMPETE FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT STATUETTE IN THE FILM INDUSTRY.

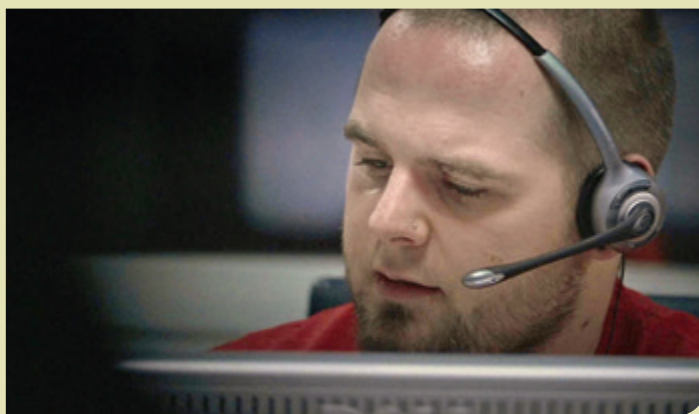
During the past year, as many as five Polish shorts have won awards at festivals, allowing them to compete for the Oscars. In 2015, the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival qualifying award went to **End of the World**, a short documentary by Monika Pawluczuk, and the New Orleans Film Festival qualifying award to **Invisible** by Zofia Pręgowska. The Krakow Film Festival gave an Oscar chance to Zofia Kowalewska and her documentary **Close Ties**, and the Rhode Island International Film Festival – to Daria Woszek and her short fiction film **The Dogcatcher**. **Tenants** by Klara Kochańska have already received one Oscar – the Bronze Medal at the Student Oscars and the award from the Warsaw Film Festival will allow the director to run for the most important statuette in short film.

In recent years, the Academy has appreciated Polish productions. In 2014, two Polish short documentaries were nominated:

**Our Curse** by Tomasz Śliwiński and **Joanna** by Aneta Kopacz. Last year, in turn, **Super Unit** by Teresa Czepiec and **Starting Point** by Michał Szcześniak came close to getting nominated, and the latter even found its place on the shortlist. Earlier in history, nominations in the short documentary film category went to **The Children of Leningradsky** by Hanna Polak and Andrzej Celiński (2005) and **Rabbit à la Berlin** by Bartosz Konopka and Piotr Rosotowski (2010).



Close Ties dir.: Zofia Kowalewska



End of the World dir.: Monika Pawluczuk

IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER, THE POLISH FILM WEEKS WILL BE HELD IN A NUMBER OF CITIES IN FINLAND. DURING THE FESTIVAL, THE VIEWERS WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO WATCH A SELECTION OF POLISH SHORTS.

The Polish Film Weeks in Finland will present a number of feature films from recent years. Still, the festival also includes screenings of short fiction, animated and documentary films. In the programme, we will find three short animations: **Domestication** by Sylwia Gawet, **Fences** by Natalia Krawczuk and **Creatures** by Tessa Moulton-Milewska. Another three shorts will represent the Polish documentary: **Object** by Paulina Skibińska, **Super Unit** by Teresa Czepiec and **Starting Point** by Michał Szcześniak. The selected short feature films include: **Daughter** by Tomasz Wolski and **La Etiuda** by Martin Rath. The Polish Film Weeks will take place from October 7th to November 10th in Helsinki, Joensuu, Tampere, Oulu and Hanko. The programme of the screenings has been prepared by the Krakow Film Foundation, being the partner of the festival.

# POLISH SHORTS

# IN FINLAND

## KFF SALES & PROMOTION NEW SALES AGENT IN POLAND

In autumn, KFF Sales & Promotion – the first and only sales agent of Polish documentary films – was established. The goal is to introduce Polish documentary cinema to a wider audience around the globe. KFF Sales & Promotion is a new branch of the Krakow Film Foundation, devoted to international promotion and distribution of Polish films. Apart from previous activities linked with festival promotion, the new task for KFF Sales & Promotion is to initiate and develop Polish documentaries distribution network worldwide, and sell films to theatres, television broadcasters, internet and VOD platforms. As of today, the KFF Sales & Promotion catalogue includes four strong titles with upcoming world premieres: *Icon* by Wojciech Kasperski, *The Internal Ear* by Szymon Uliasz and Magdalena Gubała, *The Gift* by Przemysław Kamiński and *Walking Spark* by Marcin Kopeć.

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**KFF  
SALES &  
PROMOTION**

This is one of the most important showings of the classics of Polish documentary film abroad. The programme includes films dating from the 1950s, being part of the so-called 'black series', to the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century. The overview will showcase the work of the most prominent Polish documentary filmmakers, such as: **Kazimierz Karabasz, Władysław Ślesicki, Wojciech Wiszniewski, Zbigniew Rybczyński, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Marcel Łoziński and Bogdan Dziworski**, as well as recognised authors of the younger generation: **Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz, Maciej Drygas, Paweł Łoziński, Marcin Koszałka and Małgorzata Szumowska**. The Festival's organisers believe that those looking for defiance will certainly find it in the so-called School of Polish Documentary Filmmaking. Its representatives, in a brave and radical way, were crossing boundaries, both politically and artistically speaking. Their documentaries resembling fiction films, open to staging, with their own, specific style, stand out in the international arena. The curators of the retrospective have selected the films based on their provocative undertone. They do not present the history of Poland, but rather discuss important issues with history in the background. The programme includes films with universal meaning, discussing the conflict of generations, fear of the unknown or fall of an individual within a system. There are also numerous references to religion, nation, family and censorship. The programme was developed by DOK Leipzig in co-operation with the Krakow Film Foundation and the Polish Institute in Berlin/Leipzig, with the support of the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation.



Love, Love dir.: Grzegorz Zariczny



Icon dir.: Wojciech Kasperski

## 7 SILVER EYE NOMINATIONS FOR POLISH FILMMAKERS

**As every year, the East Silver Market gives an opportunity to watch almost 50 latest documentaries produced or co-produced in Poland. Seven of them have been nominated to the Silver Eye awards for the best documentaries selected to the Market.**

The Silver Eye is a special prize awarded to the producer, not the director of a film. It is designed to support promotion and distribution of films abroad. Documentary films featured at the Market are divided into three categories – short, medium-length and full-length. Apart from a statuette, the winners receive a cash prize and a yearly representation of their film in the East Silver Caravan, which involves promotion at over 100 most important film festivals worldwide. This year, the Silver Eye nomination was granted to seven Polish documentaries: **21 x New York** by Piotr Stasik, **You Have No Idea How Much I Love You** by Paweł Łoziński, **Communion** by Anna Zamecka, **Icon** by Wojciech Kasperski, **Walking Spark** by Marcin Kopeć, **Life of a Butterfly** by Piotr Bernaś and **Love, Love** by Grzegorz Zariczny.

# THE CLASSICS OF POLISH DOCUMENTARY

## AT DOK LEIPZIG

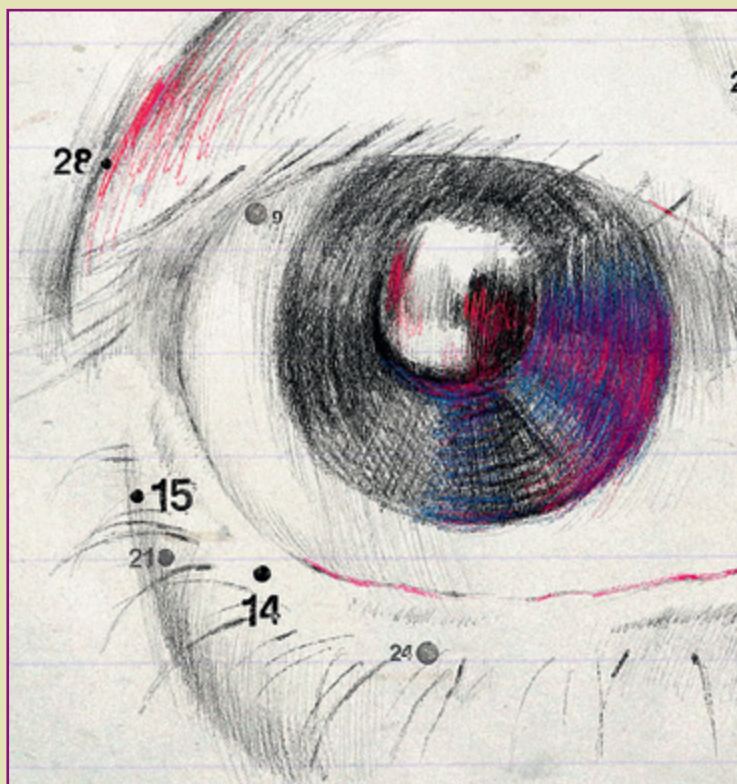
During this year's edition of the DOK Leipzig festival the viewers will have a chance to watch a retrospective of Polish documentaries titled '**Seven Sins and Other Confessions** in Polish Documentary Films'. The programme includes 26 Polish films.



*Such a Nice Son I Gave Birth To* dir.: Marcin Koszałka (1999)



*Psychodrama* dir.: Marek Piwowski (1969)



## 22 FOCUS ON POLISH ANIMATIONS AT REANIMANIA

This year's edition of the ReAnimania International Animation Film and Comics Art Festival of Yerevan (Armenia) will include the Focus on Poland section. The audience will watch Polish animations from the last five years – the most popular, most often screened and most acclaimed animated films by the young generation of Polish artists. The programme curated by the Krakow Film Foundation includes: ***A Documentary Film*** by Marcin Podolec, ***Creatures*** by Tessa Moulton-Milewska, ***Domestication*** by Sylwia Gawet, ***Woolen Cogwheels*** by Bartosz Kędzierski, ***under\_construction*** by Marcin Wojciechowski, ***The Incredibly Elastic Man*** by Karolina Specht, ***Baths*** by Tomek Ducki, ***Ziegenort*** by Tomasz Popakul, ***The Railway Watchman*** by Piotr Szczepanowicz, ***Afternoon*** by Izabela Plucińska, and ***What Happens When Children Don't Eat Soup*** by Paweł Prewencki. The Festival will take place from October 28th to November 3rd.



## 21 x NEW YORK ON THE EUROPEAN FILM AWARDS SHORTLIST

**21 x NEW YORK** DIRECTED BY PIOTR STASIK IS ON THE LIST OF 15 DOCUMENTARY FILMS RECOMMENDED FOR THE EUROPEAN FILM AWARDS! FROM AMONG HUNDREDS OF APPLICATIONS, THE EFA HAS SELECTED 15 TITLES; THEN, 5 NOMINATIONS WILL BE ANNOUNCED. WE WILL GET TO KNOW THE WINNER AT THE OFFICIAL CEREMONY IN WROCLAW.

For the second time, the Krakow Film Festival jointly with ten other European festivals recommends documentary films for the European Film Awards. This year the official recommendation was given to Piotr Stasik's *21 x New York*, which opened the 56th edition of the Festival. The film was received warmly by the audience and the critics alike. In the prestigious ranking of the Festival Newspaper, recognized film critics: Tue Steen Müller (Filmkommentaren.dk), Will Tizard ('Variety'), Truls Lie ('NY TID'), Pawet T. Felis ('Gazeta Wyborcza'), Krzysztof Kwiatkowski ('Wprost') and Janusz Wróblewski ('Polityka') gave the film the highest possible note, making *21 x New York* the absolute winner among documentary films screened at this year's Festival. In one of his original articles in the Festival Newspaper, Tue Steen Müller wrote: 'This films is an international breakthrough for the author, ranking him in the top league of European documentary filmmakers'.

The documentary by Piotr Stasik is an intimate portrait of the city and its residents. We get to know the protagonists on the subway and follow them on the ground, finding out more about their life, desires, passions, hopes and dreams – sometimes already lost, sometimes still waiting to come true. The set of stories creates a touching tale of loneliness in the 21st century. **The European Film Awards ceremony will take place on December 10th in Wrocław, the 2016 European Capital of Culture.**

## STUDENT OSCAR FOR **TENANTS**

The so-called Student Oscars ceremony took place on September 22nd. The award was given to the representatives of the *Tenants* film crew, the director Klara Kochańska, student of film directing at the Łódź Film School, and Zuza Kernbach, graduate from direction of photography at the same school.

The film tells the story of Justyna, a single woman in her 30s, who, despite the associated risk, buys a flat at a bailiff auction. The day when she tries to move in, she finds out that the keys don't work and she is not able to enter. Sometimes dreams come true in a terrible way. The Student Academy Award for the film by Klara Kochańska was the first award to be given to a film produced at the Łódź Film School, but not the first distinction for *Tenants*. The film received the Short Grand Prix for best short film at the 31st Warsaw Film Festival. *Tenants* were also awarded a prize for best foreign film in Hong Kong at the Global Chinese Universities Student Film and Television Festival. The film was also screened at the Karlovy Vary festival as part of the Future Frames programme, whose objective is to attract the film industry's attention to young filmmakers and their projects.





## SELECTION OF THE LATEST AWARDS FOR POLISH FILMS

- Audience Award at AFI DOCS, USA: **Snails** by Grzegorz Szczepaniak (doc./2015/29')
- The Premi Gall Fer Cadí award at Festival Picurt, Spain: **K2. Touching the Sky** by Eliza Kubarska (doc./2015/72')
- Prémio Olhar Universitário at Festival Cine Ceará, Brazil: **Casa Blanca** by Aleksandra Maciuszek (doc./2015/63')
- Best Middle Length Film at Tirana International Documentary Film Festival, Albania: **End of the World** by Monika Pawluczuk (doc./2015/40')
- New Talent Award at DocsBarcelona, Spain: **Call Me Marianna** by Karolina Bielawska (doc./2015/75')
- Best Director Award at Festival Imagineindia, Spain: **Something Better to Come** by Hanna Polak (doc./2015/100')
- The Best Audiovisual Portrayal at Pärnu International Documentary and Anthropology Festival: **K2. Touching the Sky** by Eliza Kubarska (doc./2015/72')
- Best Short Documentary at Pärnu International Documentary and Anthropology Festival: **Goran the Camel Man** by Marcin Lesisz (doc./2016/17')
- Special Mention at Festival Internacional de Cine de Montaña Ushuaia Shh, Argentina: **The Place** by Julia Poptawska (doc./2015/14')
- Special Mention at Festival Internacional de Cine de Montaña Ushuaia Shh, Argentina: **Jurek** by Pawet Wysoczański (doc./2015/73')
- Best Documentary Film at Film Critics' Week of Locarno FF, Switzerland: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73')
- Honourable Mention at Traverse City Film Festival, USA: **Snails** by Grzegorz Szczepaniak (doc./2015/29')
- Grand Prize for the Best Feature Documentary Film at Flickers' Rhode Island IFF, USA: **Two Worlds** by Maciej Adamek (doc./2016/51')
- Nomination for the Prix Italia, Italy: **Kantor's Circle** by Adrianna Książek and Iwo Książek (doc./2016/58')
- Grand Prix at Animafest Zagreb, Croatia: **Magic Mountain** by Anca Damian (doc./anim./2015/80')
- The Cine Golden Eagle Award at the 59th CINE Awards in Washington, DC, USA: **Baths** by Tomasz Ducki (anim./2013/4')
- Amnesty International Award at the 46th Giffoni Film Festival, Italy: **Fences** by Natalia Krawczuk (anim./2015/7')
- Award for Best Undergraduate Animation at Ottawa International Animation Festival, Canada: **Foreign Body** by Marta Magnuska (anim./2016/7')
- Animated European Award at Encounters ISFF, UK: **Don't Loose Your Head** by Karolina Specht (anim./2015/4')
- Bronze Student Academy Award in Foreign Narrative Category, USA: **Tenants** by Klara Kocharńska (fic./2015/30')
- Best Short Film Grand Prize at the Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival, USA: **The Dogcatcher** by Daria Woszek (fic./2015/30')
- Best Short Film Award at Ischia Film Festival, Italy: **Milky Brother** by Vahram Mkhitaryan (fic./2014/30')
- The Jury's Special Award at Sardinia Film Festival, Italy: **Pinky** by Tomasz Cichoń (fic./2014/24')
- Best Short Student Film at Paphos International Film Festival, Cyprus: **The Shadow Forest** by Andrzej Cichocki (fic./2014/14')
- Best Short Film at Durban International Film Festival: **Grandma's Day** by Miłosz Sakowski (fic./2015/30')
- Silver Palm Award at Mexico IFF, Mexico: **The Test** by Teresa Czepiec (fic./2015/26')
- Special Mention at Art Film Fest, Slovakia: **America** by Aleksandra Terpińska (fic./2015/30')

Communion dir.: Anna Zamecka



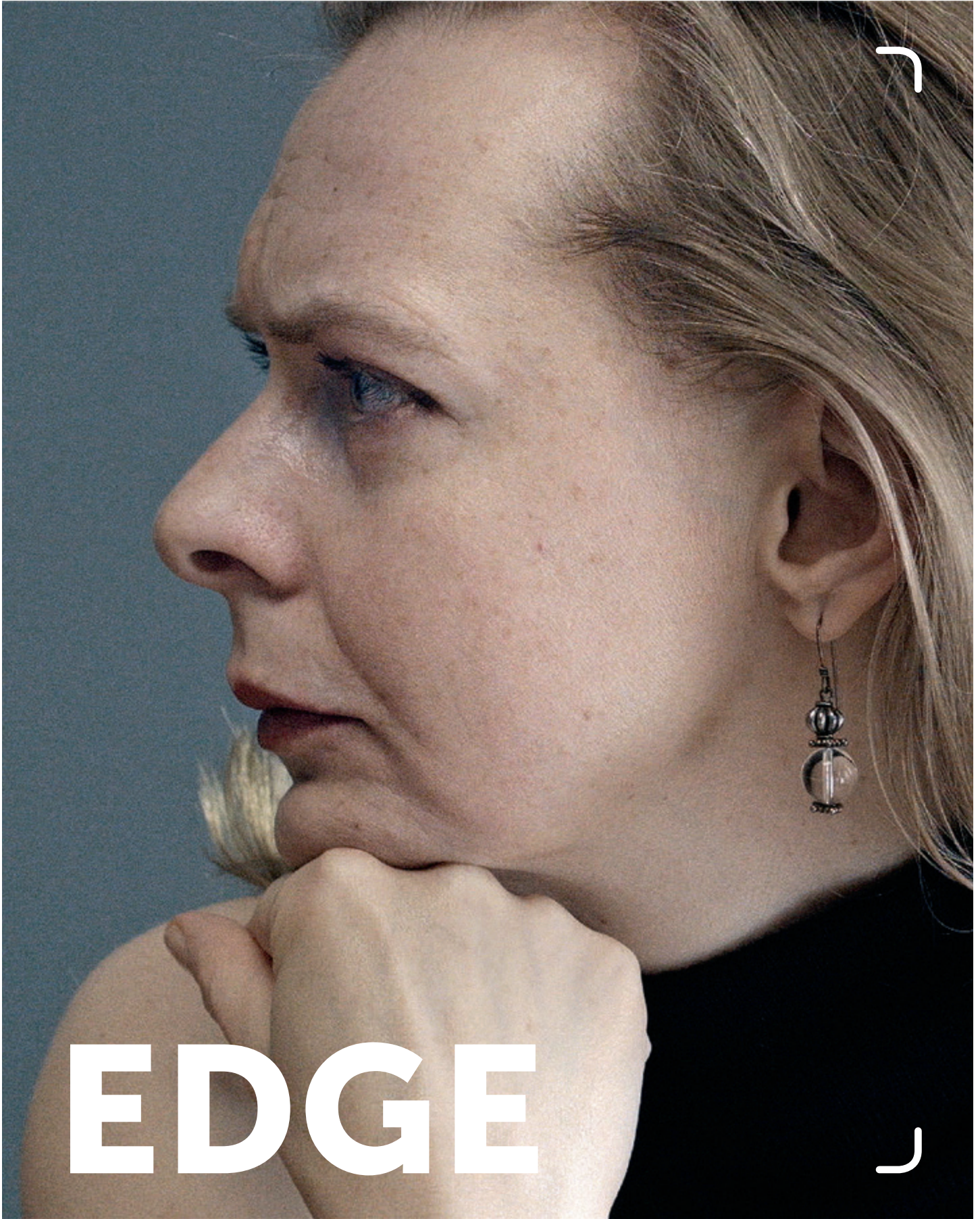
Baths dir.: Tomasz Ducki





You Have No Idea How Much I Love You dir. Paweł Łoziński

# ON THE



# EDGE

**KRZYSZTOF GIERAT:** I have a proposition: let's talk about this film openly, with full disclosure. We'll just put a warning at the beginning: 'Warning, this conversation reveals the secret on which the film is built!'

**PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI:** I cannot agree to this, the method of production is completely secondary.

**But not when you are filming your protagonists during their therapy sessions... I'm very interested in the behind the scenes of this project, because it resulted in an outstanding and innovative film. But since this is the case, let's leave the secret to the audience and start in a banal way.**

No, let's be original, I will ask you a question instead. What is this film to you?

**To me? It's a conversation between two sensitive women about the most important, most essential things in life, moderated by an exceptional therapist that is professor de Barbaro, who acts here as a confidant, a confessor, and a director of this spectacle.**

And what are those most important things?

**Communication with another person, love...**

Look how difficult it is to say this out loud; we rarely talk about intimate things, but the more we talk about it, the easier it gets to... confess our emotions. It sounds as if they were some kind of crime. Love is a hard word to say out loud.

**The same applies to saying 'I love you, son' or 'I love you, dad', if I may bring up your and your father's previous project. Only in therapy one may reach the edge without falling off the cliff.**

If I were the one asking these questions, it would be intrusive of me as well as unethical; but when a renowned psychotherapist does this for me, he knows how not to hurt the protagonists.

**Did you and Marcel hurt yourselves with your double documentary about your trip to Paris?**

Indeed, this trip with my father was the result of us naively thinking that we could deal with our issues on our own, a self-therapy of sorts. We thought that we were self-sufficient and didn't need anyone's help. And it ended how it ended. We made two versions of the film, and we didn't speak to each other for several years. Fortunately, things are better now, so it wasn't all for nothing. But I really wanted to see if there was some way of communicating that would lead to true reconciliation and not only reopening old wound. Hence the film about psychotherapy.

**Initially, it wasn't supposed to be about a mother and a daughter.**

It was supposed to be about divorce counselling; about two deeply conflicted people who are getting a divorce and seek counselling for the good of the children, to somehow reconcile or at least reach some kind of understanding. Incredibly difficult. I wanted to see what

## KRZYSZTOF GIERAT TALKS WITH PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI ABOUT HIS LATEST FILM YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU

were the tools used by the counsellor, and how this could be filmed. And I wanted to do this without interference, to just put there a camera and start filming, but people were reluctant. This forced us to come up with a certain solution that allowed us to put a camera in a therapist's office without compromising the ethical aspects of therapy.

**Once you found this mysterious solution, you had to find a psychotherapist and his clients.**

Many clients.

**You usually look for your protagonists around you, among people close to you. I assume that professor de Barbaro was a stranger to you.**

A complete stranger.

**What about the protagonists?**

At first, we put an ad on Facebook saying that we were looking for people who would be willing to participate in this film experiment that would consist in recording their therapeutic sessions. We also stated the conditions that would protect the welfare and the image of the protagonists. A lot of people answered. For the first time in my life I was doing castings for dozens of people, even a hundred of people for a documentary. We would meet in a café, just like we're doing right now...

**So you didn't look in psychotherapy centres?**

Not at all. I was still interested in the subject of divorce, families breaking apart, then there were alcohol problems, illness



or death in the family, adultery, sometimes parents finding out that their child was homosexual and being unable to deal with that. I wanted to make a catalogue of our problems and worries nowadays, and to give my protagonists one session in front of the camera that would open their mind to the possibility that they could receive help through psychotherapy. All this in the form of a film experiment. From this abundance of volunteers we picked out over twenty couples that agreed to this joint film therapy. We recorded a lot of interesting sessions with different emotional intensity. Some were deeply moving and teary, others were funny, for instance husband and wife arguing like a typical Italian married couple. All the while, the editor Dorota Wareżzkiewicz and I were looking at different themes and trying to find a way to combine them into one film. But after the first mother and daughter's session we decided to continue, because they went very deep into the therapeutic process. With much regret I rejected the rest of the otherwise very interesting material.

**But you still have it?**

I do.

**So you'll go back to it at some point.**

I don't know, maybe I will make a documentary series about psychotherapy. For now we decided to focus on this one couple.

**Those were still screen tests, or were you already working full throttle?**

We were already filming. Kacper Lisowski was shooting, we had three cameras, and I was also behind one of them.

**The film was shot in a manner very similar to your *Chemo*, being incredibly close to the protagonists: there are practically no shots with all three, only a number of panoramic takes from one character to another, but generally speaking we get total close-ups, a lot of detail...**

Frontal shots.

**But how did you do it?**



Photo: Rafat Masłow

**PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI** – film director, screenwriter and documentary and fiction film producer. He graduated from the Film Directing Department at the Łódź Film School. He gained recognition, in particular, thanks to his intimate documentaries, in which he grew closer to his characters by eliminating the distance of the camera, as for example *Such a Story* and *The Sisters* (1999). He has won many awards, including the Silver Horn at the 53rd KFF for his penultimate picture *Father and Son* (2013).

We were shooting with extremely small Blackmagic Pocket cameras with very long lenses, like when hunting birds, so we were standing let's say four and a half metres from the patients.

**So to some extent you became invisible.**

We were trying to be discrete, but it's hard with film lights illuminating the whole room; Kacper was very precise in the placement of lights, so that it would be clear that it was the same situation, the same room. But we also wanted for the image to look natural and to also get some natural light coming in through the window.

**You were also consistent in the way that you filmed *de Barbaro*. The camera was turned slightly upwards and at an angle, which gives an impression that he is inclining over us, as if we were also participating in this therapy. I've never attended any kind of therapy, but I would be willing to do it with him. There are a lot of recordings of him online, but he never looks as hypnotic as in your film.**

Kacper illuminated him brilliantly, but he's also a very photogenic person, the camera likes him. And it's true that he was filmed from a lower perspective than the others. We wanted to obtain naked faces like in Bergman films; we also

## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

*Birthplace / Miejsce urodzenia* (1992)  
*100 Years at the Cinema / 100 lat w kinie* (1995)  
*The Sisters / Siostry* (1999)  
*The way It Is / Taka historia* (1999)  
*The Ukrainian Cleaning Lady / Pani z Ukrainy* (2002)  
*Kitty, Kitty / Kici, kici* (2008)  
*Chemo / Chemia* (2009)  
*Inventory / Inwentaryzacja* (2010)  
*Father and Son / Ojciec i syn* (2013)  
*Werka* (2014)  
*You Have No Idea How Much I Love You / Nawet nie wiesz, jak bardzo cię kocham* (2016)

experimented with profile shots, but then a lot can be hidden. One can turn away from the camera, or make a face that's only visible on the hidden side. While with frontal shots, just like we're sitting right now, one cannot hide anything, even the slightest twitch is visible.

**Were you editing as you filmed?**

Absolutely. You were very right to say that de Barbaro was directing the sessions. For the first time I had all the shots completely in chronological order: we filmed sessions in order, from the first to the fifth, but we also kept the order of what was said in each session. We only removed the unnecessary fragments, because a real session lasts fifty minutes. The professor directed each session rigorously, and in a way he was also the one who set the film's pace.

**So there were no commands: 'cut', 'repeat'? There was no interference with the sessions?**

It's the most documentary of all my films, I didn't want to do any cuts or retakes. The cameras were filming the entire time; we were all part of some magical process.

**You were simply observing what was happening in front of the camera, and trying to find the essence of therapy, but not in order to show how it looks like, but what it can lead to.**

I find de Barbaro's methods extremely fascinating. He is a constructionist: he believes that words create reality, that how you name something determines what it becomes. His method

*If I were the one asking these questions, it would be intrusive of me as well as unethical; but when a renowned psychotherapist does this for me, he knows how not to hurt the protagonists.*

is extraordinary: it consists in listening to his patients' words describing their emotions and sometimes suggesting to change those words that are too strong or categorical, because they can be too hurtful for another person.

**It's very easy to imagine what would happen if he weren't there, if this conversation was taking place only between the two women.**

After all, they were having these conversations for years, and it didn't do them any good. They were going in circles. But de Barbaro helped them to break this emotional vicious cycle, as he calls it. The mother feels guilty because of the situation in the family, she offers the kind of love that she knows, but the daughter refuses to accept it, so she gets angry and communicates this anger to her daughter, which leads to conflict, then once again she feels guilty and drowns the daughter with her love. A true *perpetuum mobile*.

**Your film shows how very difficult it is for us – people who often read the same books, watch the same films – to communicate. How easily we hurt one another, how even the most simple words can be misunderstood, how much good will is necessary for two people to communicate. And what about larger communities? Is individual or group therapy the only solution for a person nowadays?**

Psychotherapy, this kind of communication, is not for everyone. It's not a key that opens all doors.

**But did your film therapy work?**

The protagonists certainly made a small step. This film is a dramatic construct. It's five sessions compressed into one. Five sessions is like driving a shovel into a tip of an iceberg. Still, I'm impressed with the way in which de Barbaro wields this shovel and opens them up to communication. It was important for me to leave things open. At the end, the professor tells them: 'Maybe you shouldn't yet cook that dinner together? Maybe you should let this umbilical cord scar heal.' The film needs to have a dramatic structure, it needs closure, but with a ray of hope. The way they act towards each other at the end is completely different than what we see at the beginning. They learned a few words that will allow them to talk to each other using a new language.

**You made a very simple, ascetic film...**

Yes, it could hardly be any simpler: they don't come in, they don't leave the room, they sit, nothing happens except for what goes on inside their heads.

**But everyone can find in this story some reflection of his or her own traumas.**

Perhaps not everyone. There are some who say: 'What purpose does this serve? I'm not interested in this kind of talk.' There are people who don't ask themselves fundamental questions, because it's more convenient this way, and it's their right. This film is for those who have the willingness to – in de Barbaro's words – put question marks next to some of their life choices...

**... to search, to open up.**

Yes, to search and to open up. ■

# LONELINESS OF A SHORT FILM MAKER

# KIEŚŁOWSKI

Krzysztof Kieślowski's documentary work resists easy labelling. However, it can be situated in a defined time frame. Aside from a short episode in the late 1980s, the bulk of Kieślowski's documentary films were made in the period between 1966 and 1980, starting with early school etudes and ending with Kieślowski abandoning the documentary method, embittered by the unpleasant consequences of his documentary work. During this time, did he realize his full documentary filmmaking potential? And what was the reason behind his cutting short this brief, turbulent, but also incredibly productive adventure with documentary film?

## A DRAMATIST OF REALITY

In order to answer this question about the future maker of *The Double Life of Véronique* (1991), one must go back to his student years. Let us start with *From the City of Łódź* (1969), an observational miniature typical of the young Kieślowski. This impressionistic portrait of the city where he pursued his studies has some of the melancholy seen in the works of his mentor Kazimierz Karabasz. But the film also demonstrates sensitivity and empathy that are unique to Kieślowski, allowing him to see potential subjects in plain factory workers and their attachment to an old-fashioned radio orchestra, filmed without even a trace of judgement or condescension.

His later documentary film *Hospital* (1976) proves that the director's interest in working people was genuine and not motivated ideologically. Kieślowski saw a certain kind



First Love (1974) © WFDIF

#### SELECTED DOCUMENTARY FILMS:

- The Office* / *Urząd* (1966), 5'
- From the City of Łódź* / *Z miasta Łodzi* (1969), 18'
- I Was a Soldier* / *Byłem żołnierzem* (1970), 16'
- Factory* / *Fabryka* (1970), 18'
- Before the Rally* / *Przed rajdem* (1971), 16'
- Between Wrocław and Zielona Góra* / *Między Wrocławiem a Zieloną Górą* (1972), 11'
- Workers '71: Nothing About Us Without Us* / *Robotnicy '71: nic o nas bez nas* (1972), 47'
- Bricklayer* / *Murarz* (1973), 18'
- X-RAY* / *Prześwietlenie* (1974), 13'
- First Love* / *Pierwsza miłość* (1974), 52'
- The Legend* / *Legenda* (1975), 25'
- The Hospital* / *Szpital* (1977), 20'
- From a Night Porter's Point of View* / *Z punktu widzenia nocnego portiera* (1977), 17'
- Seven Women of Different Ages* / *Siedem kobiet w różnym wieku* (1978), 16'
- Talking Heads* / *Gadające głowy* (1980), 16'
- Seven Days a Week* / *Siedem dni tygodnia* (1988), 18'

Kieślowski's time in film school not only brought his first short attempts at documentary filmmaking, but it also shaped his awareness as an artist.

of heroism in the daily efforts of doctors, without political involvement. Some humour could also be found in the rather grim reality of the hospital: an orthopaedist dealing with power shortages in the operating room must demonstrate not only a sense of responsibility, but also a sense of humour.

Kieślowski's time in film school not only brought his first short attempts at documentary filmmaking, but it also shaped his awareness as an artist. At the time, graduates of the Łódź Film School were required to write a theoretical paper on the challenges of film production. Today, these are both a material of unique historical value and a testimony of the ideological awareness of an entire generation of documentary filmmakers. Kieślowski's graduation thesis titled 'Documentary Film and Reality' is a proof of the importance that he placed on the mundane. It is also a declaration of faith in the dramatic value of reality, which – he believed – a film director must bring to light as it is, faithfully and without transformation. His later reflections on the nature of documentary – including those after he definitively abandoned the genre – reveal his great concern for the protagonists and for the film's interference in their lives. Kieślowski was well aware of a filmmaker's moral responsibility and the camera's dangerous power. But did he really manage to resist it entirely?

#### RISKS OF DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

Kieślowski's films are not as simple as one would assume based on his idealistic beliefs voiced as a young film school student. The legendary closing scene of *Camera Buff* (1979), perhaps his best fiction work, illustrates this contradiction in a one-to-one scale. Despite all the complications that appeared in his life along with the filming camera, the protagonist Filip (Jerzy Stuhr) turns its lens onto himself. Kieślowski also took a similar risk.

In some of his documentary films, the professed principle of 'the dramaturgy of reality' takes on a rather unexpected form. *First Love* (1974) is a seemingly 'pure' observational documentary about complicated beginnings of a relationship between two young people after an unplanned pregnancy. Financial difficulties and social censure paint a rather bleak picture. However, the surprising choice of Johann Sebastian Bach's suites as the film's music score creates a peculiar contrast against the sordid landscape of the communist Poland. Also, the music gives a certain framework to the story, marking chosen fragments in an almost geometrical order: in the fourth, the eight, the sixteenth minute etc. Despite his theoretical proclamations, Kieślowski did not limit his search for the truth about reality only to the outside world; he also looked deep within himself.

Kieślowski's mastery in terms of creative composition is evident in his documentary shorts: *Seven Women of Different Ages* (1978) and *Talking Heads* (1980). The title of the latter is an obvious jab at the simplistic documentary formula. Quite on the contrary, Kieślowski's film reveals artistic ambition;



**KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLÓWSKI (1941–1996)** – director of documentary and feature films, screenwriter. He graduated from the Film Directing Department at the Łódź Film School. His first documentary shorts were made under the supervision of Kazimierz Karabasz and Jerzy Bossak, masters of Polish documentary film. After graduating, he worked at the Documentary Film Studio (WFDiF) in Warsaw, where most of his documentary films were produced. In 1973, he made his first feature film *The Underground Passage*. In 1985, he started cooperation on screenplays with Krzysztof Piesiewicz, which resulted in his well-known *Decalogue* series (1988) and the *Three Colors* trilogy (1993–1994). He won numerous awards for his films, both documentaries and features, including the Felix Award of the European Film Academy, the Silver Bear at the Berlinale, and the Golden Lion in Venice among others.

it is a *tour de force* that begins with commonplace questions – How old are you? Who are you? What do you want? – that after 15 minutes makes a full circle with a reply: ‘What do I want? To live longer!’

*Seven Women of Different Ages* is perhaps Kieślowski’s greatest achievement in documentary filmmaking, as well as a mischievous fulfilment of his theoretical declarations: in this case, the dramaturgy of reality is arbitrarily limited to seven days. Despite this restriction, the film does reflect the essence of the passing of time: each day is a short scene devoted to a ballerina, from a small girl to an elderly professor teaching the young disciples of dance. Once again, Kieślowski makes an impressive loop.

### LONELINESS ABOVE DIVISIONS

In the turbulent 70s and 80s, despite the black and white division of the political debate, Kieślowski managed to retain his own voice. Still, he was criticised by both sides of the political landscape. The communist government saw in his film traces of subversion, while the anti-communist Solidarity movement branded him a ‘eulogist for the [governing] party’.

In *The Bricklayer* (1973) and *I Was a Soldier* (1970), Kieślowski saw individuals systematically and mercilessly crushed by the wheel of history, who paid for political shuffling with their

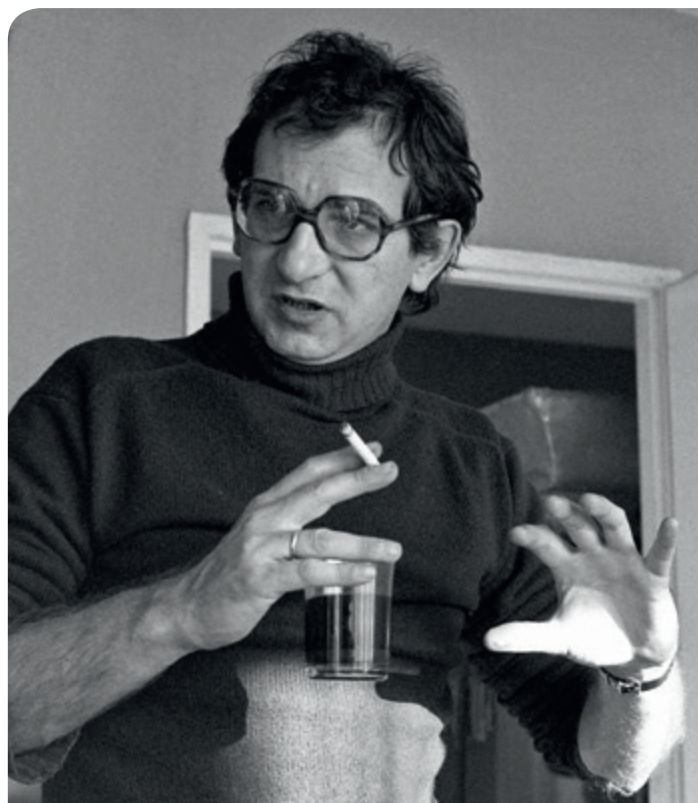


Photo: Jerzy Kośnik. Source: The National Film Archive

*Despite his theoretical proclamations, Kieślowski did not limit his search for the truth about reality only to the outside world; he also looked deep within himself.*

own health and dignity. In both cases, his films went against the exceedingly optimistic propaganda of success of the 70s. *From the Night Porter’s Point of View* (1977) brings a bitter end to the director’s search for human dignity. While this was not Kieślowski’s last documentary work, it significantly contributed to his disappointment in the mechanisms of documentary. In *From the Night Porter’s Point of View*, Kieślowski wanted to show the protagonist as a product of propaganda and the system of rewards and punishments existing in the communist Poland. In the end, however, many saw the film as disgracing for the protagonist, who delivers with utter conviction slogans such as ‘regulations are more important than people’. Kieślowski did not want for his protagonists to pay such a high price for his artistic visions.

While the point of this story is disheartening, it is clear now that at the end of the day Kieślowski managed to emerge unscathed. Despite the circumstances, for a long time he managed to stay on people’s side and above ideological divisions. In the present times of turbulent political change, independent voices such as his are severely lacking, and not only in Polish film. ■



From a *Night Porter’s Point of View* (1977) © WFDiF



TEXT DAGMARA MARCINEK

# Polish documentary sets off into the world

Crowded New York subway, picturesque coasts of Thailand, a run-down psychiatric hospital somewhere in remote Siberia – Polish documentary filmmakers are travelling to the most remote corners of the world in search of fascinating protagonists for their films. But not all of them: some find moving stories here in Poland, unfolding in a small town or behind a psychotherapist's doors. While so different, all these films have one thing in common: they all are now starting their own journey through the biggest and most prestigious festivals in the world, such as Locarno, DOK.Leipzig, Valladolid, and IDFA.

## AT THE OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE WORLD

One of the films, with its international premiere scheduled for this autumn, is Piotr Stasik's *21 x New York*. It's a portrait of a vibrant metropolis, but above all a portrait of its residents. With its electronic music score and fast editing, this documentary collage resembling a music video focuses on the life stories and the feelings of its twenty-one protagonists. And while New York brings to mind 'big city lights' and neons at the Times Square, Piotr Stasik found the city's essence in its underground. The New York subway became a metaphor for one of the biggest ailments of today's world: loneliness in the crowd. Absorbed in their cell phones, passengers don't have time to take an interest in a person sitting right next to them.

At the other side of the world, in the exotic Thailand, Rafał Skalski found the protagonist of his *Monk of the Sea*.

With Stasik, we saw people who came to a crowded city; with Skalski, we get to meet Ball, a young man who decides to leave behind the hustle and bustle of the city and the comforts offered by modern technology. The decision is not entirely motivated by his own choice, but by tradition that requires Thai boys to spend 15 days in a monastery becoming temporary Buddhist monks. Ball's companions in this experience are a 47-year-old monk and the sounds of silence and nature. Will they win the battle for his attention with constant Facebook notifications?

#### A JOURNEY INSIDE A FAMILY

Instead of going to remote locations, in her *Communion* Anna Zamecka takes us on a journey inside a family. The protagonist, fourteen-year-old Ola, is a de facto head of her family: after her mother left them several years back, the responsibility of caring for her father and her autistic brother Nikodem fell on the young girl's shoulders. But Ola dreams for her mother to return home, and Nikodem's communion and the resulting family reunion are supposed to be a step towards reuniting the family. *Communion* shows an exceptional protagonist who was forced to grow up beyond her years. She struggles to rebuild her family, while growing to understand the hard truths of adulthood: that not all things are possible and that everything requires time.

*You Have No Idea How Much I Love You* also deals with a complicated mother-daughter relationship. In his experimental documentary, Paweł Łoziński accompanies the protagonists during their psychotherapy sessions, when

## WHERE TO WATCH NEW POLISH DOCS

**21 x NEW YORK** DIR.: PIOTR STASIK

**DOCSMX MEXICO** (13-22.10) – INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

**VALLADOLID FF SPAIN** (22-29.10) – EUROPEAN PREMIERE

**DOK LEIPZIG GERMANY** (31.10-6.11)

**MINSK IFF 'LISTAPAD'** BELARUS (4-11.11)

**ICON** DIR.: WOJCIECH KASPERSKI

**IDFA THE NETHERLANDS** (16-27.11) – INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

**ART DOC FEST RUSSIA** (1-9.12)

**YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU**

DIR.: PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI

**IDFA THE NETHERLANDS** (16-27.11) – INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

**FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI ITALY** (25.11-2.12)

**COMMUNION** DIR.: ANNA ZAMECKA

**DOK LEIPZIG GERMANY** (31.10-6.11)

**IDFA THE NETHERLANDS** (16-27.11)

**MINSK IFF 'LISTAPAD'** BELARUS (4-11.11)

**MONK OF THE SEA** DIR.: RAFAŁ SKALSKI

**JIHAVA IDFF CZECH REPUBLIC** (25-30.11)

**CORK FF IRELAND** (11-20.11)

The Internal Ear dir.: Szymon Uliasz, Magdalena Gubata





*Monk of the Sea* dir.: Rafał Skalski

unvoiced grudges and unnamed emotions come to surface. Intimate conversation reveals unresolved issues that accumulated through the years leading to conflict. Thanks to the use of close-up shots the viewer feels like the fourth participant in a therapeutic meeting, while the surprising ending emphasises the universal value of the film's message – anyone can assume the mother's or the daughter's role.

### ESCAPING EXCLUSION

Leaving aside family matters, *Icon* by Wojciech Kasperski deals with the issues of society. The film offers a gripping presentation of a psychiatric hospital in remote Siberia. However, the institution housing thousands of patients and only a few doctors can hardly be called a hospital; it is, in fact, a shelter

*Walking Spark* dir.: Marcin Kopec



for society's outcasts. Some are mentally ill and require medical assistance, while others are homeless and have no other place to go. In the corridors, a female serial killer crosses paths with teenagers sent here instead of a reformatory. *Icon* is an appalling tale – while beautifully filmed by an Oscar nominee Łukasz Żal – about people rejected by the society who now build relationships within their own microcosm.

Social exclusion also affects the protagonist of *Walking Spark* by Marcin Kopec. Piotr is a former criminal; after being released from prison, he is taking his first steps on the outside. But first, he must break free from his past – the pain that he caused and that which he experienced when his brother died in a gang shooting. His job at a hospice helps, and so does Magda, an artist making an animated film about his life, uncovering the demons of the past and helping to put them to rest.

### WALKING WITH THE PROTAGONIST

If Polish documentary films of 2016 have one thing in common, it's their focus on a human being. This applies in particular to *The Gift* by Przemysław Kamiński. Jurij is an illusionist and a hypnotist, an entertainer for some people, for others – almost a miracle worker. But when he goes back home to a Ukrainian village, he takes off his scenic mask. The director attentively observes his relationships with family members, grief for his recently deceased mother, and above all the conflict between being a self-proclaimer miracle healer and a devout Orthodox Christian.

In *The Gift*, we follow the protagonist step by step; in *The Internal Ear* by Szymon Uliasz and Magdalena Gubała, it's the protagonist who takes us on a journey through the sounds of his music. Mikołaj Trzaska, musician and composer, impersonates the essence of artistic improvisation. His music is a heart-felt product of his meetings with artists from all around the world. *The Internal Ear* is a documentary about music filtered through the protagonist, a film that hypnotises with the sound of saxophone and clarinet and seduces with the images that complement the sound in perfect harmony.

In recent years, Polish shorts dominated film festivals, winning important awards and snatching Academy Award nominations. This year, however, belongs to feature lengths. *Monk of the Sea* and *Communion* premiered at the Critics' Week in Locarno, where the latter won the Grand Prix. *Icon* and *You Have No Idea How Much I Love You* will have their international premieres at IDFA, but they already won awards at the Krakow Film Festival, which also brought a recommendation to the European Film Award for 21 x New York. Piotr Stasik's documentary is scheduled to premiere internationally in Valladolid and it will also be featured at DocsMX and DOK.Leipzig. Let us hope that this journey, starting this autumn, will bring not only awards, but also a memorable experience for the audiences. ■



# 21 x New York

## THE FILM BY PIOTR STASIK

TEXT TUE STEEN MÜLLER

It starts in the New York subway and it ends in the New York subway. 'Time's up' a man screams at the end station at the end of the film. A moment before the young Chinese man with the hat, the most high-profile of the 21 male and female characters in the film, has announced what he thinks will happen to the world: Big Bang 2 will come, we will all come to live in a virtual world with our brains attached/directed through computers!

A sad film with a message? No, a powerful film with an enormous richness of energy, a film that rightfully has been characterised as a symphony, I would add 'a visual bombardment' of sounds and images, of music and words, which are thoughts that bring the film to be – also – a philosophical essay on *la condition humaine*. With New York and its subway as the location.

Well, to get grounded and straight forward, it is also a film shot in a fascinating place, underground New York, where more or less strange fates seek refuge. There is the artist who draws faces (like director Piotr Stasik catches

faces with his camera), there is the mentioned Chinese artist, who wants solitude but goes to the subway stations to take photos with his cell phone, there is the young man who is looking for women with big asses, the blind young man who performs with coins...

It's New York, it's where you most clearly sense the pulse of a city. Wonderful and terrible at the same time. It does not have the charm that Walter Benjamin experienced as a *flâneur* in the streets of Paris or the romanticism Hans Christian Andersen filled himself with on his travels to the South of Europe. Here it is tough and rude and noisy, when the train doors make *their* music or when homeless cry out for help or – softer – when a bass player's tunes fill the platform.

And yet, what is it about? What is it that 'all the lonely people' are looking for? LOVE. In the fragmented stories conveyed by the 21, 'love is all there is'. They long for, they look for relationships, they succeed or they don't, they get beaten up by a partner, they go dating and find the right one after having met several others for a whole week, they perform in night clubs, they are all equipped with the cell phone, when they are being transported in the subway.

That is the core of a narrative that in tone sometimes brings you into a meditative, introvert or even introspective mood



*A powerful film with an enormous richness of energy, a film that rightfully has been characterised as a symphony.*

‘Men follow their penis’, which makes the boy burst into laughter while hesitating to repeat the sentence... With this scene Piotr Stasik leaves the subway and gives us some green grass. He also takes us up from underground to the streets of New York, to nightclubs and home to the thinking Chinese artist, who has the most interesting texts/ monologue of the 21. A quote: ‘Without a pretext for a deep thinking my brain slowly falls asleep. In this half-sleep I ride on the subway, lulled by anti-depressants. Finally I feel aligned with people here...’

I have followed Piotr Stasik since he visited another city and made *7 x Moscow* (2006), followed by his lyrical *The Last Summer* (2010) and *Diary of a Journey* (2013) about fabulous photographer Tadeusz Rolke – all short documentaries that showed his unique documentary eye. With *21 x New York*, his first feature length work, he has gone further and has got his international breakthrough, developing his visual language and composition skills, expanding the borders of documentary filmmaking.

‘New York, New York, if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere’. What’s next? ■

thanks to the superb combination of image, sound score and music score. And a montage that is equally exceptional. There is a change of rhythm, and in between changes of how much the image fill out the screen, there are sequences that last longer and invite you in, and there are sequences that ‘shoot at you’ with a fast editing that is almost impossible to follow for the eye. Like when a train passes you and you see someone, and then he/she is away. And then – thanks for that Stasik – there is the boy who (must be a reference to Marcel Loziński’s *Anything Can Happen*) talks to a grown up man about girls. A scene full of humour when the grown up says



*It's New York, it's where you most clearly sense the pulse of a city. Wonderful and terrible at the same time.*



## Monk of the Sea Mnich z morza

DIR.: RAFAŁ SKALSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2016 • 63'

70% of Thai young men become temporary monks. Some decide to stay in the monastery forever. But what happens to those who return to their homes? The protagonist, Ball, joins the monastery for 15 days. He won't be able to dance or listen to music. He is not allowed to eat too much. He must put aside all stimulants and maintain celibacy. The day-to-day of a Buddhist monk isn't particularly entertaining; when compared to living in a big city, it may seem dull. In the absence of intense experiences and emotions, there is time for thinking and talking. Does this bore Ball? Why is he checking his Facebook?

Is it true that there is no place in the contemporary world for faith and asceticism? Will these two weeks change nothing in his life? What could change are his point of view and his priorities. But what if this doesn't happen? His experience will have no lasting effect, and his spirituality will remain as abstract as it had been before. Ball gets tangled in the monk robe when he puts it on in the morning. When he stands on the pier, the wind blows away the orange cloth from his shoulder, revealing his chest. We notice the young man's slightly rounded back that suggests that he is afraid of lifting his gaze, looking the world straight into the eye and bravely taking on whatever life brings.

*Monk of the Sea* is a story about an initiation that doesn't happen, and about maturity, for which it's too early. Religion was supposed to transform the soul, but it remained the same as it was. But this conclusion doesn't bring a sense of disappointment; instead, it makes the film true. 'Buddhism promises nothing' – wrote Nietzsche. And perhaps its role in today's world consists only in reminding us of the spiritual side of life. In his film, Rafał Skalski talks about it in a subtle and unobtrusive way, leaving the audience time and space for their own reflection.

ANNA BIELAK



## Close Ties Więzi

DIR.: ZOFIA KOWALEWSKA • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2016 • 18'

They count every penny. He is incapable of making savings, and she gets angry with him. Not once, not twice. They constantly bicker at one another – sometimes in jest, sometimes in anger, other times with a hint of resentment. But they eat dinners together and talk quite a lot. At times, he is insensitive, inattentive; once in a while, she sheds a tear for the past. Still, Zdzisław suggests that they should have a celebratory dinner for their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of marriage. He forgot that they were supposed to celebrate it five years ago. 'What do we need this celebration for?' – asks the wife. – 'So that the children know that mum and dad love each other?' – Barbara bursts into laughter, as if she was releasing some great tension. Or perhaps she is being ironic? This short documentary by Zofia Kowalewska offers as many plot twists and suspense as any good thriller; the director keeps the audience at the edge of the seat, gradually revealing the elderly couple's surprising story that did not lack violent storms, passionate separations and reunions. Despite all this, did they really love each other? The answer to this question hangs in the air, concealed behind the words of the song hummed by Barbara: 'Silent lips, a singing soul. The world is worth nothing without love.'

In *Close Ties*, Kowalewska portrays a relationship based on such sincerity that is possible only between two people who braved together many storms. They betrayed, left, came back, forgave – sometimes themselves, other times each other. In this intimate short story that unfolds in less than half an hour between four walls, the young director managed to capture truths of life with tenderness, honesty, sincerity, and wisdom. Also, with restraint and distance, despite the fact that the protagonists are her grandparents.

ANNA BIELAK



## Education Nauka

DIR.: **EMI BUCHWALD** • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2016 • 20'

The head is spinning from all the questions. Another thing spinning in Emi Buchwald's short documentary is the camera. Tomasz Gajewski skilfully turns it on its axis, so that we may see everything that surrounds us and look at the reality from different perspectives. To reflect on the nature of the world and the mechanisms by which it is governed, and – like the young protagonists – start asking questions. To ourselves and to everyone around us. Why do people on the other side of the planet walk upside down? Does a sphere filled with ice really exist, or is it just a poetic metaphor? And what is a metaphor? If the poet, Julian Tuwim, was Jewish, does it mean that he was circumcised? Is there really more joy in life than there is pain? Only some of these questions are answered in the film, but each reveals something about the asker: what they are interested in, curious about, and scared of. It's a testimony of searching. In *Education*, those searching are children and their parents. They ask questions and try to find answers. After all, this is the essence of education. But is it really useful? And to whom? 'We learn all our lives. Now you are learning how to teach me' – a father tells his son. Buchwald listens attentively to the children's and parents' conversations and watches students in class. She closely observes faces and emotions that they reflect. She looks for them in the eyes, in small gestures. Sometimes she captures concentration, other times surprise, sometimes helplessness in the face of the enormous task that the teacher gave the children when she asked them to analyse and interpret a poem by Julian Tuwim titled *Education*. Can you imagine how big the universe is? How would you like to talk about it? Using grand or simple words? What is the best way to talk about science, life, and trying to understand the world? Apparently exactly the way Buchwald does in her film: with distance, humour, and acceptance of the fact that for each question, everyone will find their own answer.

ANNA BIELAK

## Two Worlds Dwa światy

DIR.: **MACIEJ ADAMEK** • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2016 • 51'

Mother, father, and daughter. An ordinary family, whose members love and care for each other. Sometimes Laura is afraid for her mother, because if anything happens to her, she won't be able to call for help. The girl is about to finish elementary school; her mother has been deaf-mute since birth, and her dad is also deaf. The girl cannot talk to her parents about everything, and she admits that sometimes it's easier this way. But Maciej Adamek, the director, listens to her intently, and Mateusz Skalski's camera watches her closely. Laura doesn't complain. She is used to having different responsibilities than her peers. She accompanies her mother to doctor's appointments and her father to electric supplies store and employment agency. In each of those, she acts as an interpreter. She is a link between her parents' silent world and the reality of sounds and words. She is the one to tell Adamek her family's story.

While showing their home video archive, she talks about how her parents first met, their young love, and her own birth. She talks about things that she didn't experience, but that are alive in her memory. Because of this, she seems older by a lifetime and more aware of the realities of life. One is moved not only by her maturity, but also by her ability to enjoy the moments when she can just be young: rollerblading with a friend and lying on grass.

Laura finds time for all those things and she knows how to appreciate them. She admits to being a little bit afraid of growing up, since she already knows the challenges of adult life. While such words could convey despair or inspire anxiety in the listener, Adamek successfully balances what is difficult and painful in the girl's life with what is wonderful and carefree. Somewhere in between these two opposite poles he places two singular worlds inhabited by the protagonists of his documentary film.

ANNA BIELAK





## Walking Spark Nauka chodzenia

DIR.: MARCIN KOPEĆ • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2016 • 52'

Piotr and Magdalena are the protagonists of Marcin Kopeć's documentary, but their position is not equal. Piotr is the focus of attention, while Magdalena limits herself to listening to what he has to say, sometimes asking a timid question. This is no surprise, since Piotr is a former gangster turning his life around, while Magdalena assists in the making of the documentary and the animations.

It is hard to deny the impression that the idea behind the film consists precisely in this juxtaposition of two different personalities. Piotr is a burly middle-aged man who retains his vitality despite a turbulent past of violence and hard drugs. After being released from prison, he is calmer and his voice is somewhat muted, but his strong body, densely covered in tattoos and scars from suicide attempts, makes it impossible to forget his adventurous past. Magdalena doesn't try to confront him, but instead she shows empathy toward the ex-convict. Her empathetic approach is motivated artistically: she is attempting to create an animated reflection of the protagonist's past.

In the film, Piotr's turbulent life takes an unexpected turn: he starts working in a hospice, providing care for the elderly patients. A mile-long criminal record does not prevent him from performing noble deeds. Or is it a form of penance? The director does not resort to such simple solutions. For Magdalena, however, this attitude is a key to understanding the protagonist. Instead of focusing on a multiple offender, she prefers to see a hurt and unloved child. This psychoanalytic perspective is perhaps the film's greatest strength.

KRZYSZTOF SIWOŃ



## The Gift Dar

DIR.: PRZEMYSŁAW KAMIŃSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2016 • 57'

The film by Przemysław Kamiński is an attempt at understanding a difficult and ambiguous protagonist. Jurij is a Ukrainian born hypnotist. In Poland, he awes the audiences with his magic shows; back at home, he takes off his miracle worker mask and becomes a loving son. On one hand, he has a gift for commanding the crowds; on the other, he is capable of conforming to the norms of family and society.

The director accurately defines the protagonist's position in-between, which is further emphasized by the editing. At the same time, he avoids unnecessary simplification and he does not judge. Even the scenes with Jurij walking barefoot on red-hot coals, hypnosis sessions, or healing smokers by 'coughing up tar' are filmed with the required seriousness. The aim is not to denounce fraudulent practices, but to offer a faithful portrait of the protagonist.

However, Kamiński does not resist the use of some obvious clichés, such as deeply emotional scenes that make it impossible to impartially judge the protagonist. When Jurij takes off his theatrical, expressive makeup, he really only assumes another role. His unquestionable communication skills are put to the test only when he must have a hard talk with his elderly father, while mourning the loss of this mother.

At the margin of the story, the film offers an interesting reflection on the transformation of spirituality in the modern world. Jurij lives between two worlds, also in terms of religion. On one hand, he is deeply rooted in the orthodox Ukraine; on the other, there is Poland, which in a way similar to the rest of the Western world increasingly often turns to forms of spirituality alternative to religion.

KRZYSZTOF SIWOŃ

# POLISH DOCS

## CATALOGUE OF FILMS

### 2016



### Goran the Camel Man

DIR.: **MARCIN LESISZ** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 17' • PROD.: STOWARZYSZENIE LUBIŃSKA GRUPA FILMOWA UISEL STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

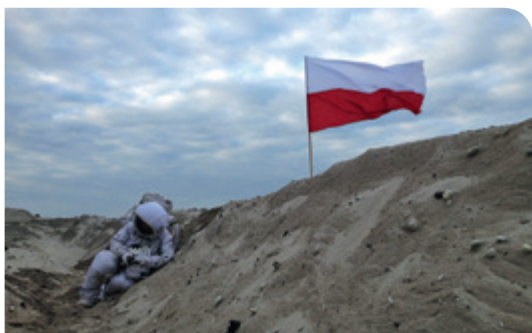
*Goran the Camel Man* is a short documentary presenting an excerpt from the life of an extraordinary traveller. Goran is a Swiss who travels on a gypsy wagon in the company of his dogs, goats and a camel, recreating the route of the Silk Road. He has been consistently living his dream for the last 27 years, travelling through Mongolia, Iran, Turkey, Italy, France etc. The film, made in Georgia, shows a fragment of his unusual, nomadic way of life.



### Communion

DIR.: **ANNA ZAMECKA** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 70' • PROD.: OTTER FILMS, WAJDA STUDIO, HBO EUROPE • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL; MAËLLE GUENEGUES, CAT&DOCS – MAELLE@CATNDOCS.COM

A teenage girl prepares her autistic brother for his First Communion, while juggling other responsibilities that include taking care of her father and running a house that is falling apart. She dreams of a picture perfect family with her mom coming back home for good, but instead she learns her first lesson of mature life – sometimes the hardest thing to do is to let go of your own dreams.



### First Pole on Mars

DIR.: **AGNIESZKA ELBANOWSKA** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 39' • PROD.: SQUARE FILM STUDIO, DI FACTORY • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

In the Milky Way, on the Solar System's third planet from the Sun, Kazimierz, aged 68, is mounting a device for communicating with the Universe. In the same space-time, the competition for participation in the historical Mars One project begins. Kazimierz has a chance of becoming one of the first colonists on Mars. But first, he must beat some three thousand other applicants...



### Before Dawn

DIR.: **ŁUKASZ BOROWSKI** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 27' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

A rugged outdoorsman and his androgynous, fashionable son go on the unlikely camping trip ever in the Albanian mountains. While the Dad sets up camp and starts the fire, his boy primps and poses for selfies. When they get lost, father and son must join forces to overcome sinkholes and bad directions in this road movie that runs on tenderness and teamwork.



## Morgenrot

DIR.: **MICHAŁ KORCHOWIEC** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 68' • PROD.: ERSATZ MICHAŁ KORCHOWIEC • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The director's personal story. After WW II, Poland pursued the policy aimed at suppressing ethnic diversity. The post-war issues of native inhabitants of the Recovered Territories, formerly German, were in-existent in public discourse. The director's grandmother, afraid of public humiliation, never revealed her nationality. She pretended to be a Pole her whole life. Her secret had a strong impact on her entire family. The director discovered the indirect influence of war on his own life. Now it is honesty alone that can help them rebuild relationships in the family.



## Last Season

DIR.: **SLAWOMIR WITEK** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 13' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, STARON-FILM • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

At the far end of Gdynia, by the Baltic Sea, there is a small fishing settlement. A young fisherman dreams of following into his father's and grandfather's steps. A few seasons of fishing with his father make him realise that this dream may never come true.



## Three Conversations on Life

DIR.: **JULIA STANISZEWSKA** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 25' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

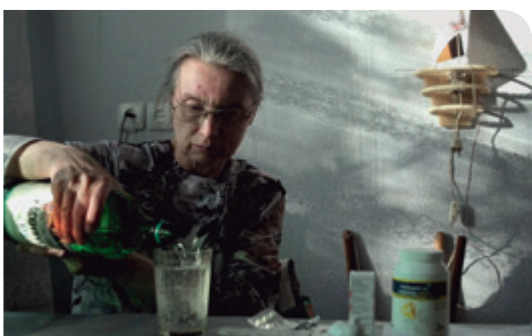
A series of conversations between a mother and a daughter. The mother (66) is a doctor and a devout, practicing Catholic. The daughter (35) is an atheist and a mother of two children conceived through IVF. Although the grandmother loves her grandchildren, she does not accept this form of assisted reproductive technology.



## Marina

DIR.: **MARCIN LESISZ** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 15' • PROD.: STOWARZYSZENIE LUBIŃSKA GRUPA FILMOWA UISEL STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

*Marina* tells a story of river carriers that pulled the rope from one shore to another day and night. It is a reflection on the last days of the existence of a small microcosm, the world of a river, man and machine. A ferry that has run since medieval times is being replaced with a bridge that brings a chapter of some forgotten local history to an end.



## Second Life

DIR.: **EUGENIUSZ PANKOV** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 19' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ, FUNDACJA ARTYSTYCZNA ERINA B • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Iryna Myenova decided to sign a contract with a cryopreservation company to freeze the body of her 98-year-old mother. The procedure is performed in the few minutes after the heart stops but while the brain still remains alive. She did this in hope that, in the future, technology will allow to unfreeze and bring her mother back to life. Iryna also signed a similar contract for herself, because she would like to get a chance at a new, better relationship with her extremely strict and self-centred mother. Now she waits for death making plans for the future with her mother.



## Icon

DIR.: **WOJCIECH KASPERSKI** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 40'/51' • PROD.: DELTA FILM, TVP  
 • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

*Icon* is a documentary portrayal of a provincial psychiatric hospital. For the first time in the history of one of the largest psychiatric hospitals in Siberia, a film crew could see the day-to-day life happening behind its high walls. The five doctors are mostly grey, old men who have spent their best years in this obscure village, looking after generations of patients with the help of nurses, who live in the surrounding villages. In the claustrophobic interiors we find patients with schizophrenia, serial killers, elderly women suffering from Alzheimer's, and teens with behavioural problems – the hospital offers shelter for all kinds of social outcasts. It is to them that the film is dedicated.



## 21 x New York

DIR.: **PIOTR STASIK** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 52'/70' • PROD.: LAVA FILMS, TVP • CONTACT:  
 KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

*21 x New York* is an intimate portrayal of New York City and its residents. We meet the characters on the subway and we follow them to the surface, learning things about their lives, desires, passions, hopes and dreams, sometimes already lost, and sometimes still waiting to be fulfilled. The result is an emotional tale of loneliness haunting the 21st century Western world.



## Daniel

DIR.: **ANASTAZJA DĄBROWSKA** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 24' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI  
 FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT:  
 KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Daniel is a young man dealing with problems typical for someone his age: love, infatuation, personal dilemmas, friendships with other teenagers. A summer vacation at the seaside is an opportunity to take a look at all those ordinary aspects of his life. But being a person with a Down syndrome, Daniel experiences everything in his own way: deeply, honestly, and without irony.



## You Have No Idea How Much I Love You

DIR.: **PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 80' • PROD.: ŁOZIŃSKI PRODUCTION, TVP  
 • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

A brave, intimate and innovative step towards new forms of documentary filmmaking. The camera follows an intimate conversation between a mother and a daughter, confronted with a therapist. In a psychodrama, the medium itself gains importance. How authentic are the reactions obtained during a staged and filmed talk?



## Walking Spark

DIR.: **MARCIN KOPEĆ** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 52' • PROD.: SHIPSBOY, TVP •  
 CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The fairly clear distinction between good and evil becomes less evident when the line runs within one person. *Walking Spark* is a tale about how dramatic events determine a person's life: their behaviour, way of thinking, perception of the world.



## The Gift

DIR.: PRZEMYSŁAW KAMIŃSKI • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 57' • PROD.: TELEMAR, TVP • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Yuriy is suspended between Poland and Ukraine. He often visits his homeland; he spent his childhood and grew up there, and this is where he feels best. Already as a child, he had an ability to entertain and inspire people's trust. It was also then that he discovered his ability to help people, to heal them. He has had a commercial success in Poland, where he performs for money. But he has increasing doubts whether what he is doing is right. His father's death makes him reflect on what is important in life.



## The Internal Ear

DIR.: SZYMON ULIASZ, MAGDALENA GUBAŁA • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 70' • PROD.: MAGIC PRODUCTION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

*The Internal Ear* is a film essay on the essence of improvisation presenting the artistic work of Mikotaj Trzaska – composer, saxophone and bass clarinet player – as well as contemporary international jazz scene in general. Trzaska's biography as an artist and the independent and uncompromising road that he follows are a starting point for the story. The film shows areas, inspirations and roots that improvised music draws from.



## Monk of the Sea

DIR.: RAFAŁ SKALSKI • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 63' • PROD.: CENTRALA • CONTACT: PAWEŁ KOSUŃ, KOSUN@CENTRALAFILM.PL

In Thailand, tradition dictates that any 'real man' should at least once join a monastery and become a Buddhist monk, at least for a few days. For this reason, 70% of men become temporary monks. Ball is a 30-year-old party lover who lives with his parents in Bangkok and is so absorbed by work in a large corporation that he hasn't been on vacation in five years. Now, he decides to fulfil the customary duty and become a monk for a period of two weeks. He will spend this time in an extraordinary monastery surrounded by water, run by the charismatic Abbot.



## Borderline Miracles

DIR.: TOMASZ JURKIEWICZ • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 52' • POLAND • PROD.: FALA NOWA MARTA PIELASZ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Wiesław Konieczny's vocation is writing. He is working on an exceptional book, arising under the influence of an exceptional incident that changed the course of life of this retired miner. On the day when he did not come to work in the mine a tragic accident occurred at his work station. Now Wiesław collects similar stories told by older people, which serve as a proof of encounters with the supernatural world. In his mission, he is assisted by his wife, Genowefa.



## Close Ties

DIR.: ZOFIA KOWALEWSKA • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 18' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

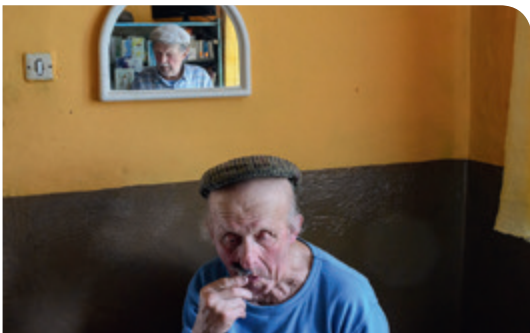
Forty-five years of marriage is an impressive anniversary. Barbara and Zdzisław could be proud of themselves if not for the fact that the husband left the wife for his lover eight years ago. But now they are together again, although Barbara claims that if it were not for his infirm legs, Zdzisław would still be chasing skirts around Kraków. Despite the resentment over the past, everyday problems with paying bills, queues to the bathroom and rearranging furniture, they have a unique bond that is hard to define.



## Education

DIR.: **EMI BUCHWALD** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 20' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

In one elementary school children are told to learn Julian Tuwim's poem *Education* by heart as homework. The poetic phrase is sometimes incomprehensible, some words require explanation, but parents come to their aid. Unfortunately, not all metaphors can be explained in an unambiguous way and poetry clashes with the prose of life, in particular when a football match of Legia Warszawa is broadcast on television. Some will get Bs, some will fail, but everyone will learn something from this lesson.



## Springs Have Gone, Winters Are Coming

DIR.: **KAROL PAŁKA** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 17' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, STUDIO OBRAZU • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The film is a documentary impression about the relationship between two brothers who live on a small farm somewhere in the remote Polish countryside. Marian is a retired acrobat while Kazimierz is a former serviceman. They fight like cat and dog about their past, political views and the approach to history. Nevertheless, the brothers keep standing by each other in peculiar unity. After 40 years of their life together, what they have in common is above all the time that has passed.



## Polonaise

DIR.: **AGNIESZKA ELBANOWSKA** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 16' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

In a small Polish town the director of the local community centre announces a competition. The theme... a creative presentation of your personal patriotic attitude. Participants are free to demonstrate their creativity in whatever form they like; in song, recitation or gesture, by giving a speech or staging a play. There's just one requirement; they may only present their own, original work. Poland's Independence Day arrives... And on this very day, the jury, consisting of the director, the mayor, a priest and a local poetess, will select the region's number one patriot.



## Two Worlds

DIR.: **MACIEJ ADAMEK** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 51' • POLAND • PROD.: METRO FILMS • CONTACT: MARCIN WIERZCHOSŁAWSKI, METRO FILMS, OFFICE@METROFILMS.PL

Three people, two ways of perceiving reality and one family. The film is a portrait of deaf parents and their 12-year old daughter. Laura takes on the role of her father and mother's mouths and ears helping them in everyday activities, such as, for example, buying coal. In the film she is also the medium that, with empathy, introduces the spectator to the daily life of people with disabilities. Not only is she the narrator, but also the transmitter of emotions that could not have found an outlet to the world of the hearing without her assistance.



## Jarocin, Rock for Freedom

DIR.: **MAREK GAJCAK, LESZEK GNOIŃSKI** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 108' • POLAND • PROD.: STOWARZYSZENIE FILM KRAKÓW • CONTACT: ANETA ZAGÓRSKA, STOWARZYSZENIE FILM KRAKOW, ANETA@FILM.KRAKOW.PL

The film is a music documentary about one of the most important festivals of alternative music organised in Jarocin. Rock fans can treat it as a sentimental journey to the past, not only thanks to video archives or recollections of music idols, but, above all, because of the rock soundtrack. While the younger viewers will have an opportunity to find out what the festival and its audience used to look like, everyone will receive a fair portion of the history of Poland under communism.



## Kantor's Circle

DIR.: **IWO KSIĄŻEK, ADRIANNA KSIĄŻEK** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 58' • POLAND •  
 PROD.: STUDIO-11 • CONTACT: IWO KSIĄŻEK, STUDIO-11@STUDIO-11.EU

*Kantor's Circle* is a documentary film about young Polish artists who created and developed clandestine art in Krakow under Nazi occupation. During WW II, Tadeusz Kantor – one of the most famous Polish theatre directors and painters of the 20th century – gathered around him a circle of talented artists. They created the Underground Independent Theatre in 1942 and staged two plays in private apartments. The film includes many archival materials: film archives, photographs, and reproductions of unknown paintings and drawings from the period of occupation.



## Patriotic Lesson

DIR.: **FILIP JACOBSON** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 20' • POLAND, GERMANY • PROD.:  
 ACADEMY OF MEDIA ARTS COLOGNE, FILIP JACOBSON • CONTACT: FILIP JACOBSON,  
 FILIPJACOBSON@WP.PL

At a patriotic academy at an elementary school in Gdynia children sing songs about marching soldiers, guns and lives put at stake. Are they fully aware of the weight of these words? Nevertheless, the teachers in the jury evaluate the enunciation and emotional involvement of students, as the regional edition of the competition might be held at the school in the future. Black and white photographs introduce distance to patriotic folklore and the camera just captures the reactions of spectators, impassioned students, and proud teachers.



## State of Mind

DIR.: **DARIA LIPKO** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 53' • POLAND • PROD.: OPUS FILM, TVN  
 • CONTACT: ANETA ZARĘBA, TVN, ANETA.ZAREBA@TVN.PL

Landscape after the war in Yugoslavia. Over 20 years after the conflict the country is still treating its open wounds. Doctor Senadin Ljubović is among those who were the closest to victims and perpetrators. During his over 40-year long career he has managed to discover the darkest side of human nature. The film is a synthesis of his experience as a neuropsychiatrist and his friendship with a future war criminal Radovan Karadžić.



## The Gentle Giant

DIR.: **MARCIN PODOLEC** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY / ANIMATION • 11' • POLAND  
 • PROD.: FUMI STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION,  
 KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The main protagonist of *The Gentle Giant* is going to take part in a poetry contest. To gather up the courage to perform, he collects the memories from his entire life and fights his own demons. It's a film about one tiny step for mankind, one giant leap for a man.



## Right Side of Cello

DIR.: **ALEKSANDRA REK** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 37' • POLAND • PROD.: WAJDA  
 STUDIO • CONTACT: AGNIESZKA ROSTROPOWICZ, WAJDA STUDIO,  
 AROSTROPOWICZ@WAJDASTUDIO.PL

Dominik Potoński is an eminent musician and a cancer survivor. His struggle with the disease left a mark, partial paralysis, which left the artist with the use of only one arm. This, however, did not prevent him from returning to performing, although his repertoire has changed since the disease. Potoński is no longer able to perform virtuoso compositions. But he finds fulfilment as a performer playing contemporary pieces in which he experiments with the sound of the instrument. The film focuses on the relationship between the musician and the cello.



## Urban Cowboys

DIR.: **PAWEŁ ZIEMILSKI** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 30' • POLAND • PROD.: WAJDA STUDIO • CONTACT: AGNIESZKA ROSTROPOWICZ, WAJDA STUDIO, AROSTROPOWICZ@WAJDASTUDIO.PL

Can a horse save a life? In Clondalkin (Dublin) that's exactly the case. In a district where there is a lot of problems and not a lot of prospects, young people face drugs, prison and the path of crime. But some of them manage to escape into an unusual hobby. They tame wild horses and become... urban cowboys. When 14-year-old Dylan loses his mother, he finds comfort in Shelly, a white mare that quickly becomes his whole life. Even though taming of wild horses is illegal in Ireland and Shelly's hooves are not used to the concrete streets, their unlikely friendship grows stronger.



## Honey Hunters

DIR.: **KRYSTIAN MATYSEK** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 75' • POLAND • PROD.: ARKANA STUDIO • CONTACT: DOROTA ROSZKOWSKA, ARKANA@ARKANASTUDIO.PL

From the roofs of Warsaw skyscrapers, through the Notre-Dame Cathedral to Nepal, Bashkiria and Augustów, the filmmakers observe the life of bees and try to answer the question whether it is possible to save them from extinction? These extremely laborious insects are in danger and our future without them looks grim. Using the latest technological inventions, honey hunters follow the latest trends in urban beekeeping and, at the same time, show the ancient traditions and methods of forest beekeeping.



## Bogdan's Journey

DIR.: **MICHAŁ JASKUSKI, LARRY LOEWINGER** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 90' • POLAND, USA • PROD.: TWO POINTS FILMS, METRO FILMS • CONTACT: MARCIN WIERZCHOSŁAWSKI, METRO FILMS, OFFICE@METROFILMS.PL

Kielce, Poland was the site of Europe's last Jewish pogrom. In 1946, a year after WW II, townspeople killed forty Holocaust survivors seeking shelter in a downtown building and injured another 80 around the city. The massacre became known as the Kielce pogrom. After the event, most of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust fled Poland. It was a clarion call from Jews in Palestine to come & help create the state of Israel. In the modern Poland, Bogdan Bialek, a Catholic Pole, journalist, editor and trained psychologist, opens the Pandora's box: he starts talking in public about the issue. He persuades the people of Kielce to confront this painful piece of hidden history of their town.

more at [www.polishdocs.pl](http://www.polishdocs.pl)



# Internal landscapes by Jerzy Kucia

TEXT JERZY ARMATA

The films by Jerzy Kucia – one of the most original animated film directors in the world – are somewhat ambivalent: they are ascetic, but also incredibly dense, filled with emotion as well as intellectual reflection, sometimes expressive, other times slow-paced or almost frozen in frame. In his films, Kucia uses the surrounding world as props for creating an internal landscape of his protagonist – a human being.

Jerzy Kucia graduated from the Faculty of Painting and Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków (1967). In 1981, he became head of the Department of Animated Film, where he once studied himself, a position that he held for three decades. In 1970, he started working with the Kraków-based Animated Film Studio, where he

made his debut film *The Return*. He quickly became the studio's leading filmmaker. His films brought him an abundance of prestigious awards at film festivals, including Annecy, Chicago, Espinho, Grenoble, Huesca, Melbourne, Oberhausen, Toronto, Varna, and Kraków.

At the time, the Animated Film Studio was one of the leading producers of animated film, both in Poland and worldwide. Its output consisted almost exclusively of art-house films, which in the studio's nearly 30 years' long history won over 130 awards and distinctions at both domestic and international festivals. Let us note that Kucia's works contributed significantly to this figure. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – in the aftermath of democratic transformation – the studio was thrown into the whirlwind of capitalist economy and it had to shut down. At that point, Kucia had already become independent. He co-produced his 1992 film *Through the Fields*, and he was the sole producer of *Tuning Instruments* (2000) and



*Fugue for Cello, Trumpet and Landscape* (2014). His later works also won several prestigious awards at film festivals in, among others, Dresden, Hiroshima, Huesca, Kiev, Korfu, Leipzig, Montreal, Ottawa, Shanghai, and Kraków.

Beside their visual perfection, Kucia's films are also known for their sound score. Thanks to the skilful use of music, murmurs, fragments of words, and moments of silence, the score perfectly complements the visual aspects of his films, often expanding them beyond what can be seen on screen. All Kucia's films spring from the same core and are logically connected. This applies both to the image and the sound.

#### FILMOGRAPHY

*The Return* / Powrót (1972)

*A Lift* / Winda (1973)

*In the Shadow* / W cieniu (1975)

*The Barrier* / Szlaban (1977)

*The Circle* / Krąg (1978)

*Reflections* / Refleksy (1979)

*Spring* / Wiosna (1980)

*Chips* / Odpryski (1984)

*The Parade* / Parada (1986)

*Through the Fields* / Przez pole (1992)

*Tuning Instruments* / Strojenie instrumentów (2000)

*Fugue for Cello, Trumpet and Landscape* / Fuga na wiolonczelę, trąbkę i pejzaż (2014)

This has been true from the very beginning of Kucia's creative work. His debut *The Return* (1972) is an emotional return to the land of his youth, one that Kucia will continue to revisit in his later films. 'When I was studying at the Academy of Fine Arts, I wanted to become a painter; I never thought that I would be making films. It happened by chance, I was working on graphic art for a while and I ended up in the Animated Film Studio' – Kucia once said in a TV show *Inne Kino* hosted by Jerzy Kapuściński. He also added that painting didn't give him the same opportunity to talk directly about people, their psychology and emotions, as film did. This intention led to *The Return*, followed by *A Lift* (1973) and *The Circle* (1978). Together, they form a triptych, where the Kraków-based artist uses three types of motion – horizontal, vertical, and circular – for performing his 'inner' explorations.

A theme that Kucia often returns to in his work is the opposition between nature and civilisation. This is particularly evident in *The Circle*, and it's successfully continued in the wonderful *The Parade* (1986), where the harvest brings to mind the long-gone past, encouraging reflection and memories, as well as *Through the Fields* (1992), a poetic impression on the passage of time, where wandering through a vast expanse of the fields is complemented by the images of past events, close ones, and dreams. In turn, his earlier *Chips* (1984) was a poignant study of the loneliness and brevity of human life. The present blends with the past, the indicative mood with the conditional, reality with imagination. Recurring elements from Kucia's previous works reappear: falling water drops, flying insects, a moving

*Kucia's films are also known for their sound score. Thanks to the skilful use of music, murmurs, fragments of words, and moments of silence, the score perfectly complements the visual aspects of his films.*

train, concentric ripples on the surface of water... All this is photographed in dark, shimmering tones, and agitated editing. One can hear traces of music blending with the sounds of daily life. The film is an expressive, poetic impression on the passage of time, the process of aging, the 'renewal' of our existence by going back to times past.

These themes and this atmosphere are even more pronounced in his latest films – *Tuning Instruments* (2000) and *Fugue for Cello, Trumpet and Landscape* (2014) – true masterpieces that I believe are the best of his work. In the former – a moving visual and auditory story – the artist 'tuned the instruments', so that in the latter he could produce a wonderful concert in crystal clear voice completely devoid of any false notes. *Fugue for Cello, Trumpet and Landscape* is definitely 'the best of Jerzy Kucia' – as stated by one of the artist's young fans at the premiere screening, who by the way was absolutely right. Almost all films by Kucia are impressionistic in their form. One exception, albeit one that proves the rule, is *Reflections* (1976), with a well-defined plotline based on the logic of cause and effect. All other animations by this author don't have a plot in the traditional meaning of the word. Kucia's cinema is one of philosophical reflection; he explores the areas never before explored in animated film, namely the world of a person's internal experiences. The logic of causality often gives way to the logic of memories. Kucia's films are in fact

*Through the Fields* (1992)

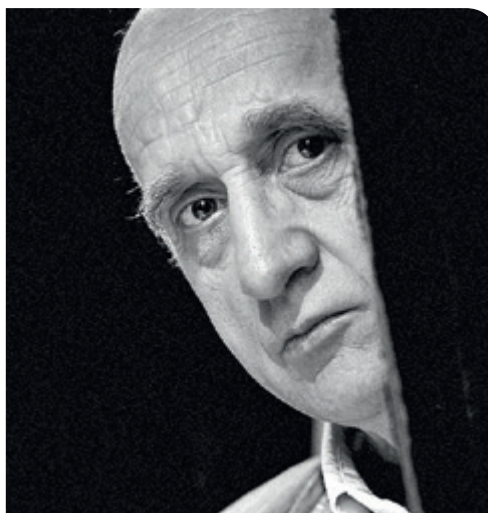
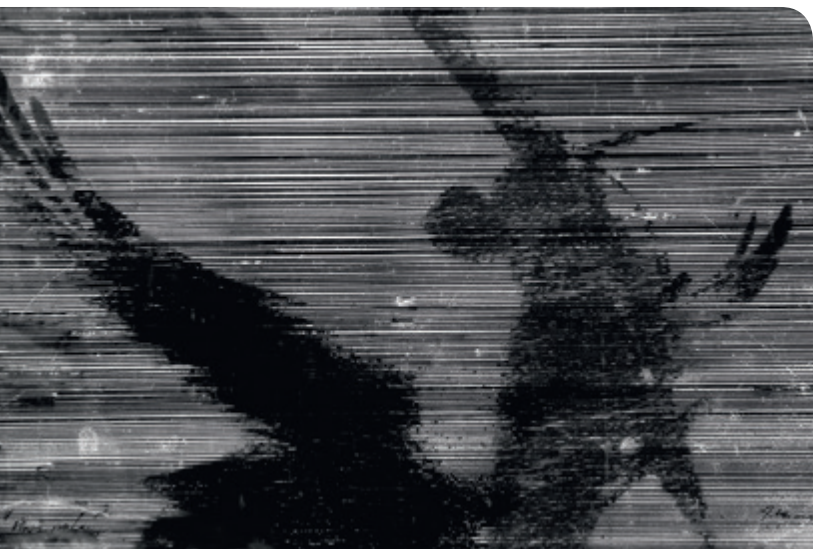


Photo: Danuta Wegiel

**JERZY KUCIA** – screenwriter, animated film director, graphic artist, producer and university teacher. He earned his degree from the Painting and Graphic Art Department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. For many years he run the Academy's Animated Film Lab. He cooperated with the Animated Film Studio in Krakow and since 1992 he has been producing films at his own production company. He has won many awards, including the Special Jury Award at Annecy International Animated Film Festival, the Special Prize at Hiroshima International Animation Festival, the Golden Dragon and the Silver Hobby-Horse at the Krakow Film Festival, and the Main Prize at Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, among others. He was awarded the Special Golden Dinosaur at the Etiuda International Film Festival in Krakow for his ability to combine artistic and pedagogical activity, and the Dragon of Dragons Special Award at the Krakow Film Festival for his contribution to the development of animated film worldwide. Jerzy Kucia was a vice-president of the Association Internationale du Film d'Animation ASIFA (1994-1997) and he has taught at a number of film schools including those in Vancouver, London and Mumbai. For many years, he has co-organised and run the International Animated Film Workshops in Krakow.

documentaries from inside a person's mind. 'The logic of associations, feelings and emotions is more important in my films that the logic of facts' – the director said in his talk with Marcin Giżycki for the magazine 'Kino' (issue 4/2001).

In 2009, Jerzy Kucia received the Dragon of Dragons for lifetime achievement awarded by the Programme Council of the Krakow Film Festival. Let us note that the artist already has several Krakow awards in his collection, including three Golden Dragons, one Silver Hobby Horse, and two Bronze Hobby Horses. Quite a menagerie. ■

*'The logic of associations, feelings and emotions is more important in my films that the logic of facts' – the director said.*



TEXT PAULINA BUKOWSKA

# Drawing reality

## ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Animated documentary as a genre seems like a contradiction. On one hand, the documentary form consists in recording events in the heat of the moment, limiting the artist's interference in portraying the world. On the other hand, animation involves creating an autonomous world based on the author's vision and unrestrained imagination. We see through our eyes, but also through our brains. The eye explores the external world, while the brain is an area of unlimited imagination. At the seam of these two points of view, a complex image of our world emerges.

Animation gives one an opportunity to go far beyond the limits of reality, while maintaining authenticity. It may show things that, while true, are imperceptible to the eye of the camera, hidden from view inside the protagonist's mind. They cannot be recorded, but they can be recreated. Creation serves documentation. The voice of the film is the voice of its protagonist.

Polish filmmakers like to experiment with form, mixing documentary with animation in a variety of ways. *The Governance of Love* by Adela Kaczmarek deals with the

subject of mental illness. Hand-made, primitive-like drawing is accompanied by an anonymous narrator's commentary. As the story unfolds, we realise that the collection of absurd situations is in fact a biography. We start seeing hints suggesting that the protagonist suffers from some kind of illness, which determines the way in which he sees and describes the world. The drawings, created by the protagonist himself, document not only chosen events from of his life, but also hallucinations experiences due to schizophrenia. While it's hard to draw the line between reality and delusion, it doesn't

matter, since all the images form an integral part of the protagonist's life. The animation makes it possible to infiltrate the illness and to draw the world as seen through the eyes of a schizophrenic. It gives room to imagination, allowing to give form to the subconscious. We do not follow the protagonist's life from an independent onlooker's perspective; we see it just the way it is seen by the protagonist himself. Another take on the animated documentary is *Vanilla//Whip* by Bogna Kowalczyk about the Polish BDSM community. The production uses fragments of authentic interviews with people sharing the same fetish, while the animation is purely the author's creation. The protagonists do not hide behind cartoon characters – their true identities are revealed at the end of the film – but the animated scenes complement the situations told by the protagonists, presenting the less known and often hidden aspects. By revealing the true faces of people speaking the words, combined with the images, the director emphasises the difference between reality and imagination. The use of animation strengthens the message of the words.

Marcin Podolec mastered the specific art of combining the content based on fact with animation. In *A Documentary Film* and *Gentle Giant*, the narrative is based on real people's stories. In his personal debut titled *A Documentary Film*, Podolec gives voice to his father, who talks about a parent's life after his children left the family home. In turn, *Gentle Giant* is a story about fulfilling one's dreams despite any obstacles thrown by fate.

The title protagonist successfully participates in poetry slams, but in order to do so, he must face a lot of challenges. This one small step for mankind, but one giant leap of a man, is the core of the story. Podolec knows how to weave documentary stories from bits and pieces, from small things and events and rituals that determine the growth of his protagonists. Both films are based on the memories of the protagonists; Podolec uses them to paint a nostalgic world that no longer exists but thanks to animation one again comes to life.

Combining animation and documentary is an opportunity to talk about events that serve as a factual background but cannot be recorded in the here and now. In this case, accessed



*The Gentle Giant* dir.: Marcin Podolec

archives and witnesses of past events are an addition to the film's content. One example is *Moczarski's Case* by Tomasz Siwiński, a short animated documentary presenting an episode from the life of Kazimierz Moczarski, a captain of the Polish resistance Home Army accused of collaborating with the Nazis and placed on a death row along with an SS general Jürgen Stroop. At the end, Moczarski was cleared of charges and rehabilitated; later he related his experience in a book titled *Conversations with an Executioner*. While Siwiński focuses on this episode only, the film's rich visual and symbolic side is an opportunity to recreate the story's historical background. Another example is Zbigniew Czapla's *Paper Box*, in which he goes back to the time of his ancestors in the aftermath of an unfortunate accident. In May of 2010, after record rainfall, the risen waters of the Vistula River broke through a nearby dike, inundating his family home. The flood made thousands of people lose their homes and lifetime belongings. Shortly after, in the ruined house the director found a paper box with photographs. Due to the damage and advancing decay, it was increasingly difficult to identify family members portrayed of the photographs. The process of documenting and animating the remaining mementos was, therefore, the director's desperate attempt to prevent further destruction. He used this as an illustration of the ravages made in our memory by time: our memories are very selective to begin with and they become blurred with the passage of time, fading and becoming increasingly difficult to identify.

The works by Polish filmmakers, as well as the huge success of feature films such as *The Waltz with Bashir* by Ari Folman, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, and *Way to the Other Side* by Anca Damian make a convincing case for combining animation and documentary. A symbiosis between realism and creation is not only possible, but it also constitutes another example of expanding the borders of genres and going beyond the established division into documentary and fiction. Animated documentary is more than a sum of the two forms: it contributes stylistic diversity that serves to emphasize the film's content. ■



*Moczarski's Case* dir.: Tomasz Siwiński



Darling (2013)

# Stories of marriage and Polish plasticine

## ZOFIA JAROSZUK TALKS WITH IZABELA PLUCIŃSKA

Izabela Plucińska is the author of original plasticine based animated films and a winner of the Silver Bear award at the Berlinale. For years, she has lived and worked in Germany. She talks with Zofia Jaroszuk about her theatre inspirations, working with plasticine, and her upcoming projects.

**ZOFIA JAROSZUK: Do you know how much plasticine you've already used in producing all your films?**

**IZABELA PLUCIŃSKA:** I have a vague idea. Recently, I ordered 300 kg of plasticine that I will need for the next two years. Luckily, plasticine is a material that can be reused.

**My first question was about plasticine, because you've been working with it practically since the very beginning of your work, and you've been perfecting this technique with each next film. Why did you choose to work with plasticine?**

It's an incredibly flexible material and it gives me the widest range of possibilities. It's a combination of sculpture, relief, painting, but also drawing, and it can give surprising results in animation.

**Since we're talking about the beginnings of your creative work, let me ask you about your studies at the Łódź Film School. This was when you made three of your films: *Backyard*, *On the Other Side*, and *Twin*. They all were consistent in terms of style, still rather flat, painted with plasticine rather than multidimensional. What was important for you during these school years?**

I was greatly influenced by the fact that at the same time I was studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź. Not knowing much about animation, I started working with clay; sculpting was important to me. This is why I used clay in my first attempts at animated film. With time, I leaned towards plasticine, which was a lot more practical.

While working on my first film, *Backyard*, I discovered that the lights and the heat from the fingers made plasticine in different colours blend together. The colours would get messy and change, creating new texture and adding other meanings. This made the film more expressive.

Using this technique to create space was challenging from the very beginning. And this difficulty comes back with every new film. At this point, I see working on a film as if it were a cut-out, with different elements distributed on several

*In my technique, where everything is static, rather 'theatrical' and closed within one unmoving shot, with the camera moving from the left or from the right, it was important for me to introduce camera movement.*

different planes. The most difficult thing is to create space and to generate movement towards and away from the camera.

**Right after graduating you decided to move to Germany.** After I graduated from the Academy and from the film school, there was not much going on in Poland. It was 2002, Polish Film Institute did not yet exist, and there was practically no work and no place for art-house films. The best decision was to continue my education. In Germany, I received a scholarship from DAAD. I went to a German school in Potsdam with a project called *Jam Session*. I was surprised to find out that the school did not have a multiplane camera, so it had to be built specifically for this project. It's funny that I brought this multiplane from Łódź to the school in Potsdam, which at the time was already more focused on computers. I drew a design and the school produced a multiplane, which later on served many other students.

**Your *Jam Session* won the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2005. Was this a break-through in your career?**

One of the reasons behind the film's success was the fact that at the time I was studying in Potsdam. There, all films were automatically submitted to the Berlinale. Luckily, I managed to finish the film before the festival. I was exhausted with production and I was struggling to finish it as well as I could.

I wasn't expecting such a reception; I didn't think that a story about an elderly couple rekindling the old flame due to music would appeal to the audiences. Of course, it was very nice and perhaps it was indeed the most important moment for me, a lucky strike. [laughing]

**This film also introduced themes that you returned to in your later films, such as *Darling* and *Sexy Laundry*, namely the relationship between a woman and a man. In the film, this relationship is portrayed with perceptiveness typical for fiction films but rarely seen in animation. We will get back to this later on.**

**In 2009, you made *Esterhazy*, the longest project in your filmography. It's an adaptation of a book by Hans Magnus Enzensberger and Irene Dische.**

I learned about the book from Bartek Konopka when together with Piotr Rosołowski he was working on his *Rabbit á la Berlin*. Initially, they wanted to combine documentary with animation, but they quickly abandoned this idea. But I was left with the book. We acquired the rights, and it took four years to produce. For me, it was an important project as well as an interesting experience. Especially in terms of production, since finding funds for a film longer than 15 minutes was a great challenge. At the end, we managed to gather a modest budget, so there were many trainees involved in the making of the film. However, working with a team of twenty people went very well. The making of *Esterhazy* resulted in many friendships, romantic relationships, and even marriages.

**Let us go back to 2006, when you created *Breakfast*, which forms a diptych together with your *Afternoon* filmed in 2012. In these short films, you captured the essence of a relationship between two people.**

Now I'm finishing work on the third part of this series – *Evening* – which will premiere at the German festival



Esterhazy (2009)

Dok Leipzig. *Breakfast, Afternoon*, and now *Evening* are projects that I work on in between other work. For me, it's pleasure in itself and an opportunity to experiment with form.

**Let's now talk about *Darling*, a film inspired by a play by Maria Wojtyzsko titled *Uterus*. I wanted to ask you what kind of staging means do you put emphasis on in telling stories.**

In *Darling*, I put importance on the movement of the camera. In my technique, where everything is static, rather 'theatrical' and closed within one unmoving shot, with the camera moving from the left or from the right, it was important for me to introduce camera movement. We shot reference scenes with actors,



*Jam Session* (2005)

but when I watched them, I got completely lost – in the amount of detail and the degree of realism. At that point I started drawing lines. A spider network that appears in the film is to some extent a reflection of what I felt while working on the film.

I transferred my own emotional states to each next scene. I put aside the previously developed storyboard, because I couldn't work on it. I also had two breaks in working on the project. The first was when I came back from India. Right after I returned, I made the middle part of the film, which is made in black.

This fragment was a result of all the energy that I had after returning from the sunny India. I had courage to try things that perhaps normally I wouldn't dare to try. Later I went to Africa, which also resulted in the last part being somewhat in opposition to what had been written in the script.

It took one year to produce the film. Sound was one of the crucial elements in the whole process. I collaborated with Detleff Schitto, a fantastic composer from Berlin, who was the author of sound; I just gave him one suggestion, but it was enough for him to capture and reflect the film's character. Another important aspect was dialogue. We recorded a lot of dialogue, but during work it turned out that the less we said directly, the better. This is why we decided not to use much of the dialogue.

**This is decidedly the darkest film in your filmography in terms of its message and emotional tone.**

Yes, it is indeed, and at that point of my life perhaps it had to be. I'm not sure now if I'm satisfied with this film, because

#### SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY:

*Jam Session* (2005)

*Breakfast / Śniadanie* (2006)

*7 More Minutes / 7 minut później* (2007)

*Maraton* (2008)

*Esterhazy* (2009)

*Josette und ihr papa / Josette i jej ojciec* (2010)

*Afternoon* (2011)

*Darling* (2013)

*Sexy Laundry / Seks dla opornych* (2015)

it was created in a difficult time in my life. I wasn't sure what the results would be. This is why I very much wanted to follow up with a comedy. I received the play *Sexy Laundry* through Justyna Celeda, a theatre director who staged it in Szczecin. I thought that it was a good moment to give a comedy a try. The subject appealed to me: there is a married couple, one scene, and one bed around which all the story unfolds. Later on it turned out that this was a Canadian play by Michele Riml, so it was only a step towards collaborating with Canada.

**Can you tell us what you're working on right now?**

I'm preparing for another twelve-minute adaptation of a short story by Roland Topor titled *Portrait en pied de Suzanne*. We bought the rights and we received initial funding from Germany and France. The film will be co-produced by Poland, Germany, and France. Work is scheduled to start next year. ■

**IZABELA PLUCIŃSKA** – animated film director and graphic artist. She was born in 1974. She is a graduate of the Faculty of Clothing and Textile Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź (specialisation in Design) and Film Animation of the Cinematography Department at the Łódź Film School. She also studied in Germany and is professionally linked with Potsdam and Berlin. She specialises in clay animation.







## Super Film Super rzecz

DIR.: PIOTR KABAT • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2016 • 6'

An animated film made with a flare similar to *The Apocalypse*, *Mad Max* and *Alien*? This is the promise made by the film's opening titles, similar to those that open each part of the *Star Wars* saga. *Super Film* by Piotr Kabat is supposed to be an epic pinnacle of cinema and art in general. Unfortunately, due to lack of funds, instead of professional cameras the author has at his disposal only some paper and felt-tip pens...

With this joke starts *Super Film*, which takes us on an equally amusing journey through cinema and TV hits, mostly from the 80s. The animation has all the must-haves of the New Adventure Cinema: police pursuits, great explosions and space travel. There are also superheroes, robots, aliens, and giant monsters. However, there are no 3D special effect; instead, we get animated drawings created in the author's sketchbook. Instead of vivid colours, there are black lines on white paper. But the action is fast-paced, and there are plenty of references to big movie hits, well-known film quotes, and names of famous Hollywood film studios. The plot is only an excuse to pay tribute to American popular culture, starting with hamburgers and ending with the Simpsons family.

Still, *Super Film* is not a naïve praise of Hollywood productions. The film deals with cinema and contemporary culture in general, which appeal to the eye but often fail to carry much depth. Quickly edited images equally quickly head towards self-destruction. Scenes, mixed together in a diabolical alchemist's melting pot, explode destroying the whole depicted world. Thus, a cheerful vision transforms into a sad reflection on the future of art and film.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



## Vanilla//Whip Klimat i wanilia

DIR.: BOGNA KOWALCZYK • ANIMATION / DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2016 • 16'

In the BDSM community, 'vanilla' means ordinary love, the kind where romantic partners don't have to invite third parties to their bed or use sex toys. On the other hand, 'kinky' is the kind of love that allows all kinds of fantasies and fetishes; this is the kind that Bogna Kowalczyk focuses on in her animated documentary.

In *Vanilla//Whip*, cartoon characters looking like a combination of Disney princesses and the Addams Family talk about BDSM with the voices of real people. The film illustrates the director's interviews with people involved in BDSM. There is a man who attends special training in order to learn how to cause pain without causing harm. There is a relationship between a female dom and a sub, and a woman who likes to experiment but who still stays in a 'vanilla' relationship.

The use of animation allows the protagonists to remain anonymous, which makes it easier for them to share their experience. Thanks to this, despite its controversial subject matter, the film is neither tacky nor vulgar. Kowalczyk uses multiple animation techniques to emphasize the diversity of sexual preferences, while strong, sometimes fluorescent colours accentuate the protagonists' uncompromising honesty.

The film aims to overcome stereotypes. It shows that people with a penchant for whips, latex costumes and wearing collars are no different in their day-to-day relationships than other couples: they also take walks, hold hands, and watch *Titanic* on TV. Hidden behind their animated masks, the protagonists talk about the essence of sexual masochism, the origins of their sexual preferences, struggling to accept being different, and trying to withdraw from the addiction that is BDSM. Are they capable of turning to the 'vanilla' side? And do they even want to?

DAGMARA MARCINEK



## Foreign Body Ciato obce

DIR.: MARTA MAGNUSKA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2016 • 7'

How to live with something that is deeply disturbing but that one cannot get rid of in any way? There are two choices: you can either hate it, or accept it. *Foreign Body* by Maria Magnuska shows how difficult it is to adapt to what doesn't fit into our vision of the world and of ourselves.

In this abstract story, the protagonist gets her leg cut off by a lawnmower. A limb that is attached in its place is nothing like her previous slim, feminine leg. In fact, it looks like it could belong to King Kong: it's thick and hairy, with oversized nails. The new limb doesn't only ruin the woman's romantic dates, but it also puts to test her mental health.

Maria Magnuska skilfully builds up the tension: from a serene scene on the grass, just before the butchery will happen, to a climax nightmarish vision, when fur starts sprouting on the character's entire body. Simple, black lines against white background allow the viewer to focus on the details – hands, legs, hair – increasing the sense of drama. Different parts of the woman's body become animated characters fighting against each other, with her fate hinging on the outcome of this battle.

The title 'foreign body' is open to several different interpretations. The monstrous leg may be a metaphor for the woman's insecurities that start to take control over her perception of her body. It may also represent a problem that cannot be solved, but instead must be accepted. It may also be a painful memory, one so deeply embedded in her psyche that it shapes her personality. Finally, it may serve as a metaphor for all that is different, foreign, alien, not only to an individual, but also to a society as a whole. The interpretation depends only on the viewer and his or her experiences. Come and find out what this huge leg will mean to you.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

## Gyros Dance

DIR.: PIOTR LOC HOANG NGOC • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2016 • 5'

She dreams of conquering the world. He is afraid to stick his nose beyond the doors of his gyros bistro. She would like to be a TV star, while he doesn't even like to watch TV. She craves new experiences, while he only wants for his business to stay afloat. Both are small, plump mice who learn that love is an art of compromise.

The protagonists of *Gyros Dance* learn a lesson when Mariola sneaks out to a talent show casting. There, she presents a unique ability consisting of dancing while simultaneously sculpting in... a chunk of kebab. After being ridiculed by the jury and the audience, she can only count on her partner, who managed to overcome his fear and came to the TV studio to support his partner.

*Gyros Dance* is a humorous story about how love shows not only through great deeds, but also small gestures, such as preventing someone from falling down on a hard floor or sheltering them from pouring rain. In the case of the two charming mice, love also means sharing interests and overcoming one's weaknesses. The film is also a satire on contemporary pop culture. Hilarious TV show scenes expose the ridiculousness of fame-seeking, fierce competition, and worship of celebrities.

The animation, filled with electro-pop music combined with oriental sound, takes the audience on a journey to an exotic land. The richly detailed scenery brings to life a colourful landscape of the Middle East. We also get strong, well-drawn protagonists as well as memorable supporting characters: the squealing twins and the impassive jury. The language used by the mice is as entertaining as Mariola performing her 'gyros dance'.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



## Pussy Cipka

DIR.: RENATA GAŚSIOROWSKA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2016 • 8'

This vibrant animation drawn with colour markers looks like it could be a children's story. This is far from true. In line with its title, *Pussy* shows viewers things that they are embarrassed even to think about.

A pleasurable 'moment for herself' is supposed to be an escape from boring chores, stirring tea, and dispassionate channel hopping, both for the protagonist and for her Pussy. But all attempts at indulging in such a seemingly simple pleasure fail. The bathtub is too uncomfortable, the sofa too close to the window, each sound is a distraction. Eventually, Pussy takes matters into her own hands and runs away from the protagonist, determined to teach her owner how to find pleasure. This humorous animation deals without embarrassment with a subject considered to be a social taboo. It points out the limitations imposed by herself as well as society that prevent the protagonist from taking joy from her sexuality. Renata Gaśiorowska shows masturbation by anthropomorphising the vagina, but while the female sexual organ is shown up close and in detail, there is not a trace of vulgarity. The animate Pussy resembles an animal that could well star in a cartoon for small children.

The thick lines of the animation, drawn with markers in three colours only, disappear once Pussy brings her owner to a climax. Sharp shapes give way a whirlwind of colourful spots that shamelessly inundate the screen, pulsating to the rhythm of electronic music, creating a feeling of unlimited freedom. Feelings accompanying sexual rapture, expressed thus by the director, complement the film's comical scenes, resulting in a light-hearted but well-aimed story.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



## Black Czerń

DIR.: TOMASZ POPAKUL • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2016 • 14'

Three explosions in the United States, two in Russia, one in Israel and one in Korea. Nuclear war is underway, as seen by two astronauts trapped in a space station far from the surface of the Earth. They keep adding points to the map of the world, marking cities destroyed by bombs. Fortunately Tokio – their home city – is still intact.

Enclosing the protagonists, a man and a woman, in a claustrophobic spacecraft drifting in outer space allows Tomasz Popakul to emphasize their loneliness, as well as the relationship, brimming with emotion, between the two. In less than twenty minutes, we see their resignation and doubts as to whether they will be able to return to Earth, but also determination to survive, despite the fact that soon there may not be anything left to go back to. The title hints at all that surrounds the protagonists, being both their salvation and their doom.

*Black* is a science fiction short set in outer space. Tomasz Popakul's style of animation brings to mind science fiction classics. It seems that both 'the camera' and the protagonists are beyond the pull of gravity, floating and spinning gently in space. The director also draws inspiration from the Japanese manga, using strong, black lines and expressive facial features. The animation in *Black* is based on contrasts. In moments of anxiety, black and white images turn into their negative. The aroma of the last piece of chocolate, savoured by the protagonists, is a rare treat among tasteless powdered food. The dying Earth stands in contrast to the geckos hatching on the spacecraft. In his film, Popakul explores the paradox existing between the humanity's insatiable desire for exploration and conquest of the universe, and the senseless destruction of the lives of people inhabiting the planet Earth.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

# POLISH ANIMATIONS

## CATALOGUE OF FILMS

### 2016



#### XOXO – Hugs and Kisses

DIR.: **WIOLA SOWA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 13' • POLAND • PROD.: SOWA FILM •  
CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*XOXO – Hugs and Kisses* deals with emotional boundaries, both personal and relationship-related, that we want to push. By showing a sensual game in which the characters are involved, the film tells a story of mutual fascination, attraction, sensuality and provocation. Two women and a man engage in an erotic dance that reveals their entanglement and loneliness in this relationship.



#### Pencilless Case

DIR.: **MAGDALENA PILECKA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 7' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*Pencilless Case* is a story about feeling different and the consequences resulting from confronting this feeling. We meet our protagonist when he decides to step beyond the confines of his loneliness and to go out to people, which turns out to be a rough experience tinted with both happiness and madness. What ensues is a surreal confrontation with a belief that someone else's crayons (that, surprisingly, are not meant for drawing) are better.



#### Impossible Figures and Other Stories II

DIR.: **MARTA PAJEK** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 15' • POLAND • PROD.: ANIMOON •  
CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The film's protagonist is a woman who trips and falls while busying around the house. She gets up, only to discover that her home has some unusual features: it is built from paradoxes, filled with illusions and covered in patterns.



#### Black Volga

DIR.: **MARTA WIKTOROWICZ** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 4' • POLAND • PROD.:  
MARTA WIKTOROWICZ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION,  
MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

In a black and white world, local neighbours are talking about the Black Volga. The conversation quickly spins out of control, and the world created by the ladies changes at a dizzying pace. The film deals with the issue of rumours and stereotypes.



## Locus

DIR.: ANITA KWIATKOWSKA-NAQVI • 2016 • ANIMATION • 10' • POLAND • PROD.: WJTEAM, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ, NINA, LELE CROSSMEDIA PRODUCTION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A woman is travelling on an empty train in the middle of the night. She is alone and anxious to get back home to her husband and son. When the train suddenly brakes, she looks through the window. What she sees will change her life.



## The Courtyard

DIR.: GRZEGORZ WACŁAWEK • 2016 • ANIMATION • 5' • POLAND • PROD.: ANIMOON • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

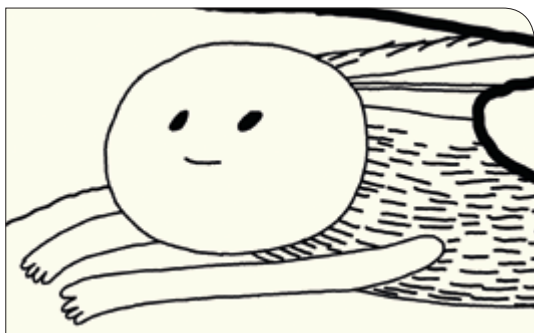
One of many similar, yet an entirely unique courtyard that brings back dozens of vivid memories. For the protagonist – a young boy – it is a safe place where he grows up and first experiences joy, curiosity and friendship. Years later, as a grown man he tries to bring back the memories of those happy days that are now long gone. *The Courtyard* is a nostalgic story about trying to bring back the days of childhood carelessness and the profound longing for a world that is irrevocably gone.



## The Gentle Giant

DIR.: MARCIN PODOLEC • 2016 • ANIMATION / DOCUMENTARY • 11' • POLAND • PROD.: FUMI STUDIO, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: ANNA WASZCZUK, FUMI STUDIO, FESTIWALE@FUMISTUDIO.COM; MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The main protagonist of *The Gentle Giant* is going to take part in a poetry contest. To gather up the courage, he sifts through memories of his entire life and fights his own demons. It's a film about one tiny step for mankind, one giant leap for a man.



## Pussy

DIR.: RENATA GAŚSIOROWSKA • 2016 • ANIMATION • 8' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A young girl spends the evening alone at home. She decides to have a sweet solo pleasure session, but not everything goes according to plan.



## Leaven

DIR.: ARTUR HANAJ • 2016 • ANIMATION • 5' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

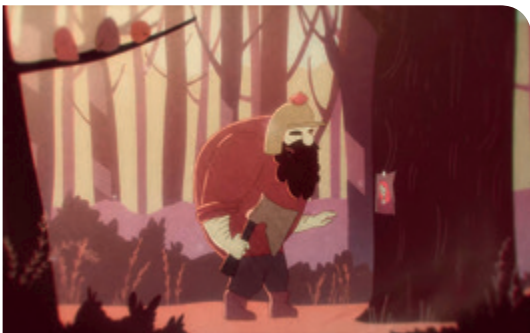
If you want the dough to rise, mix flour with yeast and milk. Then keep the dough in warmth, so it rises a bit. Finally knead it well, place it in the baking pan and put it in the oven. Be careful, or the dough will fall.



## Chainlets

DIR.: **ALICJA BŁASZCZYŃSKA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 8' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A story of five people that are considered 'weirdos'. What if their compulsions and obsessions have more sense than anyone would think? Perhaps they know something about the world that the rest of the so-called 'normal people' simply can't see.



## The Shavings

DIR.: **AGATA MIANOWSKA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 6' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A lonely lumberjack tries to cope after a breakup with his beloved girlfriend. An unexpected meeting in the woods turns his life upside down.



## Foreign Body

DIR.: **MARTA MANGUSKA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 7' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

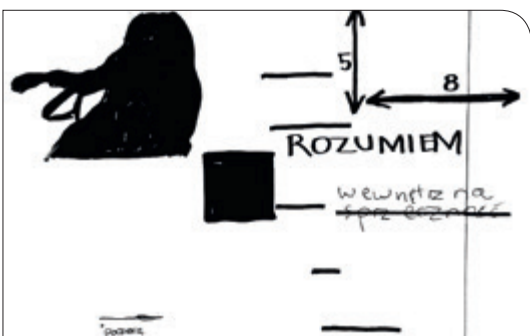
A foreign body lives its own life. You're not able to get rid of it, it's always with you, you need it. Caress that odd part of yours, don't try to shave off its long tousled fur. This is a story about something that you consider strange at first, but with time it becomes the dearest thing to you; a story about transformation on the inside and on the outside.



## Hail Mary

DIR.: **ALEKSANDRA WIT** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 5' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

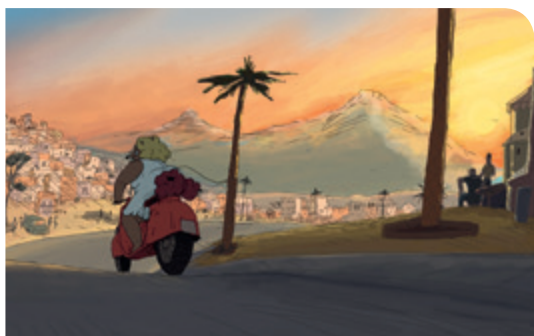
*Hail Mary* is a story about children's fears fuelled by village superstition. Little Boy, who is the main character, is convinced that the Crone has a significant impact on his life. She goes around the village and, one time, she casts a spell on his Mother. Even death can't stop the Crone.



## Yesterday's Record

DIR.: **MICHAŁ SOJA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 5' • POLAND • PROD.: ANIMATED FILM STUDIO OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKÓW • CONTACT: ROBERT SOWA, ANIMATED FILM STUDIO OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKÓW, ASPPRODUCTION@INTERIA.PL

A variety of stimuli, roles and tasks shape a chaotic view of reality forming in a person's mind. This is a study of perception of such a disordered reality, and an attempt to translate memories into the language of film. The author puts together mechanical recordings of everyday life with personal, diary-like drawings of past events.



## Gyros Dance

DIR.: **PIOTR LOC HOANG NGOC** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 15' • POLAND • PROD.: FUMI STUDIO • CONTACT: ANNA WASZCZUK, FUMI STUDIO, FESTIWALE@FUMISTUDIO.COM

In a crowded, sunny city two mice live together under one roof. They are close, but very different. The house is also their place of work; the work is boring and hard. He is fine with that, while she dreams of being a TV star.



## Beside Oneself

DIR.: **KAROLINA SPECHT** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 5' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

One day, She notices that something strange is going on with Him... *Beside Oneself* is a short animated film about people's ideas about the world being confronted with reality. Do we share our lives with real people, or with an image of them that we created in our minds?



## The Wizard of U.S.

DIR.: **BALBINA BRUSZEWSKA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 24' • POLAND • PROD.: WJTEAM • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

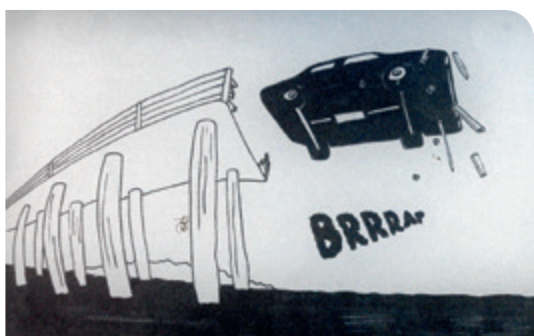
*The Wizard of U.S.* is an animated collage, a social satire referring to a popular American story by L. F. Baum *The Wizard of Oz*. A mysterious tornado transports Dorothy to an unusual place full of prosperity and danger. She follows a yellow brick road to meet the wizard, who will surely make her dreams come true.



## Black

DIR.: **TOMASZ POPAKUL** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 14' • POLAND • PROD.: TOMASZ POPAKUL • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*Black* tells about a pair of astronauts trapped on an orbital space station because of a nuclear war that erupted unexpectedly on Earth. They lost contact with Earth and all attempts to communicate with their base or anybody else have failed. All they can do now is watch nuclear explosions taking place on the surface of the Earth and try to survive together somehow...



## Super Film

DIR.: **PIOTR KABAT** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 6' • POLAND • PROD.: ANIMATED FILM STUDIO OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*Super Film* is an animated short film based on contemporary mass culture. It is a tribute to American movies, TV series and cartoons created in the second half of the 20th century. The plot takes place in an artist's sketchbook, where the clashing realities of doodles, special effects, Hollywood movies, cartoons and corporate logos collide. All this put together leads to an inevitable end, revealing a completely different and much greater reality.



## Moczarski's Case

DIR.: **TOMASZ SIWIŃSKI** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 5' • POLAND • PROD.: FUNDACJA IM. KAZIMIERZA I ZOFII MOCZARSKICH • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*Moczarski's Case* is the story of Kazimierz Moczarski – a famous Polish journalist, a resistance officer in the Nazi-occupied Poland during WW II, author of the book titled *Conversations with an Executioner*. The film is a metaphorical story of his life and his encounter with a Nazi general Jürgen Stroop, responsible for the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto.



## Vanilla//Whip

DIR.: **BOGNA KOWALCZYK** • 2016 • ANIMATION / DOCUMENTARY • 16' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*Vanilla//Whip* is an animated documentary film that tackles the taboo subject of BDSM in Poland, combining animation and documentary recordings. The story shows four people with absolutely different approaches to BDSM and visions of self. In the depicted world anonymity meets self-awareness, while safety competes with the desire to flirt with danger.



## Schroedinger's Dog

DIR.: **NATALIA KRAWCZUK** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 8' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KRZYSZTOF BRZEZOWSKI, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ, PROMO@FILMSCHOOL.LODZ.PL

This is a story about a certain man, a woman, and a dog (as well as a couch). They spend their days napping and being bored. Everything changes when their pet suddenly disappears. Is the microcosm of day-to-day life only an insignificant speck of dust in the universe, or is it a universe in and of itself?



## Debut

DIR.: **KATARZYNA KIJEK** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 7' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The protagonist unexpectedly finds himself in the middle of the screenplay that he is struggling to write.



## Mr Minuscule and the Whale

DIR.: **ANDRZEJ GOSIENIECKI** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 9' • POLAND • PROD.: MANSARDA STUDIO • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*Mr Minuscule and the Whale* is an original animated film based on one of the most famous poems by Julian Tuwim. Mr Minuscule's expedition tells a philosophical tale about a little man who wants to face a great challenge. The story unfolds accompanied by a ballad composed and performed by Włodzimierz Korcz.





## Carrot Field

DIR.: **KACPER ZAMARŁO** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 15' • POLAND • PROD.: XANF FILM STUDIO  
 • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Last weeks of a harsh winter. A drab, desolate rural landscape. A 7-year-old boy, left without proper care, is looking for a companion to play. Despised and ridiculed by his peers, he decides to make a snowman, which becomes a substitute for a coveted friend. But soon events take a dangerous turn. The animation uses a combination of traditional and digital techniques to talk about empathy, suppressed emotions, and growing up.



## Sylwan

DIR.: **TOMASZ GŁODEK** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 6' • POLAND • PROD.: TOMASZ GŁODEK  
 • CONTACT: TOMASZ GŁODEK, GŁODEKART@GMAIL.COM

This animation is made of minimalist black and white images and sound bits which build the gloomy atmosphere of World War II. The film impression is an attempt at reconstructing the feeling of fear that the director's grandfather, who was the liaison officer in the Krakow unit of the Home Army during a sabotage mission at the Piłsudski's Mound in Krakow, must have experienced. It is based on facts, confirmed by the Institute of National Remembrance.

more at [www.polishanimations.pl](http://www.polishanimations.pl)



# Towards the macabre: scary, but **funny**

**Daria Woszek** graduated from theatre studies only to discover that the language that she wanted to use was that of... film. Now she is presenting *The Dogcatcher*, her first short film after graduation. The idea – the story of a man who earns his living catching dogs in Kraków and then demanding ransom for returning them – piqued the interest of a number of excellent Polish actors, who got involved in the project.

**DAGMARA ROMANOWSKA: You studied theatre studies... How comes you make films?**

**DARIA WOSZEK:** In part, it happened by chance. I was preparing a play with my friends and I was looking for a way to record it. I realised that camera gives me a far greater control over form and material, and I started thinking about film directing. I was admitted to the film school in Katowice. In the first year of my studies, I became Marcin Wrona's assistant director when he was working on *The*

*Christening*. Later on, we worked together on a TV series *Rescuers* and on one of his theatre productions. He was always open to young people and he became my mentor. He also gave me his support when I was making *The Dogcatcher*.

**What is the most important thing that you learned from him?**

Marcin Wrona was one of the most talented film directors in Poland – he knew exactly where the camera should stand and why. He always came to the set brilliantly prepared. These two things are the foundation of a director's work.

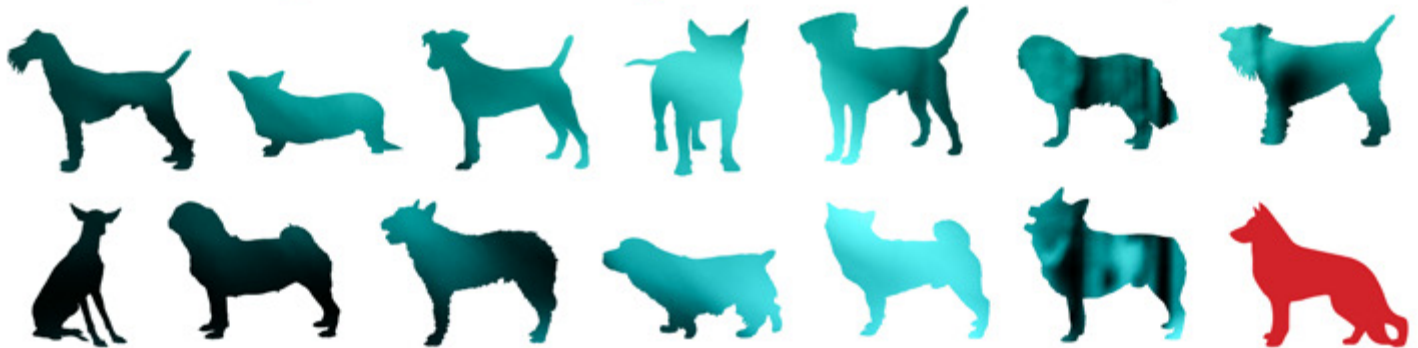
**How did you come up with the idea for *The Dogcatcher*? A protagonist who earns his living in a similar way, that is, by catching dogs, appears in *Seven Psychopaths* by Martin McDonagh. Was this some kind of inspiration?**

Work on *The Dogcatcher* started earlier, over four years ago. A friend of mine who was teaching film studies gave me a short story by Jagoda Jaworska; the text won a special mention in the competition organised by the Munk Studio, but then it was put aside. He thought that it might interest me. He wasn't wrong. As it turned out, it was my type of protagonist and story – I'm interested in genre cinema, I like the macabre, stories that are scary and funny at the same time. I met Jagoda and we started working together. Later on, Janusz Chabior – who plays the main role – took an interest in the script and also contributed a lot to his protagonist.

**You took a risk with such an unpleasant protagonist: a dogcatcher!**

There are plenty of unpleasant protagonists in cinema. The character doesn't have to be positive, what matters is that we want to follow his story, and I think this is the case with the dogcatcher. However, there is something in him that makes us want him to succeed.

**Then there is a dog – even three dogs. I don't want to reveal too much of the film's plot, but this is no Lassie story. Some of the themes are rather drastic. But you were not afraid of this subject matter.**



No, though everyone tried to dissuade me from this idea. They said that it wouldn't work; they even told me to change the script. But I was determined to follow through. I was convinced that it would work. I admit that it's a powerful story, but it's also a parable or a metaphor. Like I already said, I like it best when a story is both scary and funny. If I removed the element of humour from the film, it would probably become unbearable.

**Can a dog's love transform a bad man?**

This is a question that perhaps even the protagonist could not answer. There is no Hollywood-like transformation of evil into good, because this is not a Disney character. But I think that the dogcatcher gives himself a chance – and this is more important.

**How did you manage to direct the dogs? They say that children and animals are a filmmaker's nightmare.**

I was lucky to have a great dog trainer, Beata Krzemińska, who had already collaborated on a number of big fiction films and TV series. By the way, the dogs from the TV series *Inspector Alex* were the ones that appeared in *The Dogcatcher*. And they behaved great. Despite the producer's misgivings, things went very smoothly. I never had to do more than three retakes.

***The Dogcatcher* is very elaborate on every level, in terms of image, music and sound.**

For me, image is an immensely important part of each film; I don't like it when information is given only in dialogue. It's the frame – its colour and setup – that should tell the story. I had already worked previously with the operator Michał Sosna and we understand each other perfectly. The sound determines in one third how this story is received; it was very important for me to have good sound design, and Aeroplan did perfectly. I worked with a really wonderful team, where everyone wanted to contribute their bit to creating this world. We decided to go all the way and the result perhaps even exceeded my expectations. I'm glad, because it proves that everything is possible. You can remain independent without trying to fit into a mold. You can do your own project.

**This perfectionism in production and attention to detail was one of the things that were praised at festivals in the United States...**

*The Dogcatcher* was presented at Palm Springs International Short Fest and Rhode Island International Film Festival. I also talked about it in Los Angeles. I received a lot of praise for this. In Poland, this is something that doesn't draw so much attention. Operators, producers and screenwriters that I talked with congratulated me on the smallest details, from camerawork to small actor gestures.

**Did you receive any feedback that you found particularly surprising?**

I'm not sure if surprising is the right word. There is no doubt that in the US, they appreciate genre savvy, and the way this film was made is somewhat 'American'. I pay a lot of attention to the opinion of the audience, people who simply watch films without being involved professionally in film. They described this story as heart-gripping. What's more, many people

identify with the protagonist. I was intrigued when some said that it was a ‘very Eastern European’ story. I was approached by viewers saying that their families had Polish roots, that I showed them a piece of Poland...

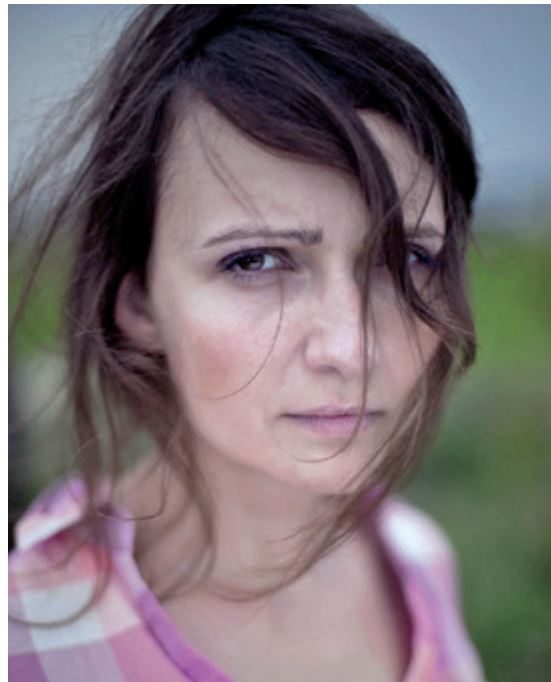
***The Dogcatcher* won the Rhode Island festival, which automatically qualifies it for the run for the Academy Awards. This is great news!**

We’ve been long-listed, now it’s time for the short list! Obviously! Among film industry professional that we talked with in the US were also American Academy Award members, who appreciated *The Dogcatcher*. I’m aware that a hard road lies ahead. From the very beginning we have been getting support from the Krakow Film Foundation in terms of international festival promotion; in addition to this, we have a fantastic team that will be working of the film’s Oscar promotion, including Małgorzata Janczak and creative producer Agata Bobola, both with international experience. We’ll probably also get support from the US for the campaign, which is scheduled to launch in October. That’s all I can reveal.

**Are you already working on a new project? When do you plan to make a feature film?**

That’s the most important thing right now. For now, I’m leaving aside short forms. I have three big projects coming up, including a feature-length version of *The Dogcatcher*, a black comedy about women, and a certain Balkan project. My stay

in the US reminded me of why I really make films... It only makes sense when confronted with the audiences, because then the stories may live in their minds, taking on a life of their own. This is the type of cinema that I’m interested in. ■



**DARIA WOSZEK** – graduated from the Jagiellonian University (theatre studies) and the Krzysztof Kieślowski Faculty of Radio and Television of the University of Silesia in Katowice (film directing). She also completed film directing and screenwriting courses at the Wajda School. She works as a theatre director and a multimedia director, she was responsible for designing digital scenography for numerous performances at Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic – European Art Centre.

**FILMOGRAPHY:** *The Confession* (short, 2009), *Fidelity* (short, 2011), *Saleem* (TV Series, 2014), *The Dogcatcher* (short, 2015)

*There are plenty of unpleasant protagonists in cinema. The character doesn’t have to be positive, what matters is that we want to follow his story, and I think this is the case with the dogcatcher.*





Are you thinking about studying at the Łódź Film School? You will find your answer in 'Hollywood Reporter'. This prestigious magazine once again published a list of fifteen best film schools worldwide, including the one in Łódź. As to those who don't trust rankings, they should just have a look at the school's output in recent years – after all, a school is only as good as its students.

The problem with art education is that it is difficult to measure its effectiveness. What's more, many people ask themselves if it is even possible to teach talent. Probably not. However, it is possible to point a person in the right direction, give them inspiration, and provide support in their artistic undertakings. Students' ideas, meetings with acclaimed filmmakers, practical training, and artistic and logistic support – all of the above impact the quality of student films created in film schools, which in turn bring the school international fame and attract further students.

Marcin Malatyński, head of Film & TV Production and International Relations at the Łódź Film School, is responsible for matters relating to production. He is the one who shows us around, introducing us to the school's considerable

the **Łódź Film School**

**2000**

**FILMS**

**A YEAR**

capacity in terms of production. Each year, its students make over 200 short forms, including animation, documentary, fiction, and practice films, of a total length of 16 hours of screen time, which is an equivalent of around ten feature length productions. Film directors and camera operators make both fiction and documentary films. ‘Very few film schools in the world offer a similar curriculum’ – says Malatyński. Interestingly, future producers studying at the Faculty of Film Art Organisation also get a chance to explore their artistic potential by making their own practice films. Scripts are eagerly provided by the Faculty of Screenwriting, which may or may not be used at each director’s discretion. One of the key principles that the school adheres to is artistic freedom.

This freedom, however, is limited by the budget available. Funds are distributed in proportion to film length, script requirements, and a given student’s seniority, so in theory last year students are the most privileged. Those with interesting ideas for their diploma films also get a chance to boost their production budget: third year and last year students who come up with the most original and promising projects are rewarded with additional funds. The funds proceed from a dedicated pool allocated on a yearly basis and distributed by an independent jury, whose members include each year’s supervisors as well as independent members from the film industry, such as directors and critics. The school’s production is financed by the Polish Film Institute; films are also co-produced by regional film funds, private-owned companies, and sponsors. The most determined directors and producers also invest their own funds. The school has its own production studio: the School Film Production Unit is an in-house department whose aim is to help students in making their short films. The unit employs over 50 staff members, including directors of production, editors, sound technicians, light technicians, camera assistants, and

prop makers. The Łódź Film School does not lack filming equipment: it has a wide range of cameras, from the classic 35 mm to a modern Arri Alexa, lighting and sound equipment, editing facilities, and professional rooms for colour and sound post-production. During their first and second year, young camera operators are obliged to film their etudes on a 35 mm stock. In the digitally dominated world, this is a unique learning opportunity. However, one has to wait for the equipment and book it with sufficient advance; otherwise, it is easy to miss the availability of a desired camera or set of lights. Of course, the school does not prevent students from co-operating with external companies. Quite on the contrary, it may put them in touch with a professional production or post-production studio, if the equipment available at the school at the moment is not sufficient for a given project.

‘The school’s structure reflects the film industry in miniature’ – says Bogna Kowalczyk, director of the animated *Vanilla//Whip*, while adding that leaving students considerable freedom teaches them self-reliance and how to work in a competitive environment. This is confirmed by Marta Prus, a graduate from the Faculty of Directing: ‘What you do yourself is what counts the most, and the school is always ready to help. But your own initiative and work are essential. This is not a place where anything will be done for you.’ In the Łódź Film School, young film directors don’t have to deal with constant supervision: they are the ones who decide about the degree to which the school will be involved in their projects, bearing in mind that they can always get help from a production coordination, who is a person appointed by the school to oversee their activities.

Once the film is complete, one must show the results of one’s work to the outside world. The students are probably more preoccupied with festival opportunities than with their final



Fragments dir.: Aga Woszczyńska (2014)

Without Snow dir.: Magnus von Horn (2011)



## THE MOST POPULAR FILMS OF THE LAST 10 YEARS

MADE IN THE ŁÓDŹ FILM SCHOOL

**52 PERCENT** DIR.: RAFAŁ SKALSKI • DOC. • 2007 • 20'

**ECHO** DIR.: MAGNUS VON HORN • FIC. • 2009 • 14'

**WHERE THE SUN DOESN'T RUSH** DIR.: MATEJ BOBRIK • DOC. • 2009 • 18'

**CHARCOAL BURNERS** DIR.: PIOTR ŻŁOTOROWICZ • DOC. • 2010 • 15'

**VAKHA AND MAGOMED** DIR.: MARTA PRUS • DOC. • 2010 • 12'

**THE CONVERSATION** DIR.: PIOTR SUŁKOWSKI • DOC. • 2011 • 16'

**FROZEN STORIES** DIR.: GRZEGORZ JAROSZUK • FIC. • 2011 • 27'

**WHITOUT SNOW** DIR.: MAGNUS VON HORN • FIC. • 2011 • 35'

**WRITTEN IN INK** DIR.: MARTIN RATH • DOC. • 2011 • 11'

**ROGALIK** DIR.: PAWEŁ ZIEMILSKI • DOC. • 2012 • 17'

**WATERMELON** DIR.: TATO KOTETISHVILI • FIC. • 2012 • 10'

**THE HEAT** DIR.: BARTOSZ KRUHLIK • FIC. • 2013 • 23'

**THE INCREDIBLY ELASTIC MAN** DIR.: KAROLINA SPECHT • ANIM. • 2013 • 5'

**AB OVO** DIR.: ANITA KWIATKOWSKA-NAQVI • ANIM. • 2013 • 6'

**ARENA** DIR.: MARTIN RATH • FIC. • 2013 • 23'

**FRAGMENTS** DIR.: AGA WOSZCZYŃSKA • FIC. • 2014 • 25'

**TENANTS** DIR.: KLARA KOCHAŃSKA • FIC. • 2015 • 30'

**A DOCUMENTARY FILM** DIR.: MARCIN PODOLEC • ANIM./DOC. • 2015 • 7'

exams or grades: Where to send the finished work? What are its chances of being noticed on the Polish or international market? Who should see it first? This is the area of expertise of the school's Promotion Department, whose staff will answer these and many other questions. The Department is also responsible for establishing and maintaining relations with other film schools, the media, organising conferences, workshops, symposiums, etc., which far exceeds simply sending films to festivals. It's not surprising that once again students are encouraged to establish contacts with film industry companies and institutions, such as the promotional agency at the Krakow Film Foundation, as well as professional sales agents.

*Fragments, Adaptation, Ab Ovo, Tenants* – these are some of the recent productions by Łódź Film School students that have been conquering festivals abroad. The latter, a film by Klara Kochońska-Bajon about a young lawyer who buys an apartment along with its tenants, won the Student Academy Award and is a contender for an official best short film nomination. The school also encourages its graduates to collaborate with it on their first productions. In recent years, this was the case for Magnus von Horn's *Without Snow*, co-produced by Lava Film (screened in Sundance and Locarno), Grzegorz Jaroszek's *Frozen Stories*, co-produced by EasyBusyProductions, and Jenifer Malmqvist's *Birthday*, co-produced by Good World AB and featured in the Cinefondation section in Cannes.

'As a school, we focus on creativity, independence, and courage' – says Malatyński. As a producer, the emphasis is put on spectacular debuts and successful appearances at film festivals, which is hardly surprising. ■



# the Łódź Film School

**... is the oldest in Poland** and one of the oldest film schools in the world. It was established in 1948 and since then it puts particular emphasis on practical work in its teaching programme. The school produces directors, directors of photography, animators, photographers, screenwriters, editors, film and television production managers, and actors. Studies comprise practical workshop classes accompanied by history, culture and art theory, thus contributing to thorough artistic development.

## famous graduates

**film directors:** Andrzej **Wajda** • Roman **Polański** • Krzysztof **Kieślowski** • Jerzy **Skolimowski** • Marcel **Łoziński** • Krzysztof **Zanussi** • Piotr **Dumała** • Małgorzata **Szumowska** • Borys **Lankosz** • Daniel **Szczechura** • Zbigniew **Rybczyński**

**cinematographers:** Sławomir **Idziak** • Paweł **Edelman** • Wojciech **Staroń** • Krzysztof **Ptak**

[ [www.filmschool.lodz.pl](http://www.filmschool.lodz.pl) ]







## 16.03

DIR.: NATALIA SIWICKA • FICTION • POLAND • 2016 • 16'03"

*16.03*, a short film by Natalia Siwicka, requires attentive watching. After this sixteen minutes and three second master shot ends, we won't be able to rewind to the beginning. The first thing that comes to mind at the end is to go back and not let ourselves be taken by surprise like the protagonist.

A young, attractive girl wakes up after spending a night in an elegant house in the countryside. She gets dressed, gets in a car and leaves. From this point, we follow the protagonist in real time. Like in every good thriller, the suspense is building up. It starts innocently – problems with starting the car, a branch in the middle of the road. Climatic shots showing the sunrise outside the window and disquieting illumination of the girl's profile contribute to the growing apprehension. Suddenly a truck appears from behind; the protagonist accelerates, and so does the viewer's heart rate.

*16.03* is above all an original idea executed with a great deal of genre savvy, and an excellent performance by Agnieszka Żulewska. Her acting task may seem minimal, but it's also extremely demanding – the camera follows her face practically throughout the entire duration of the film, observing the emotions that slowly take control over the protagonist. The actress once again proves her solid technique and admirable acting skills. As to the director, this is her debut. It's worth noting that the film was made entirely independently from any official or public institutions and sources of funding. One must praise the authors for their courage and determination which, hopefully, will pave them a way to making a full feature film as engaging and as unconventional in terms of narrative as *16.03*.

ALEKSANDRA ŚWIERK



## Opening Otwarcie

DIR.: PIOTR ADAMSKI • FICTION • POLAND • 2016 • 30'

*The Opening* by Piotr Adamski is a fiction film documenting a performance presented by an entirely real artist – Zbigniew Libera – playing a fictional character. The artist decides to die in an art gallery, in front of the audience, in the flash-light, among glasses filled with wine and under the suspicious gaze of critics. He has a nurse at his side – an ordinary woman wearing unfashionable socks, who was lured to the world of art with money. When one of the guests ask the owner of the gallery how long the performance will be, she has the presence of mind to answer: it's not for me to decide. Together with other guests at the opening we stroll around a dying man's bed, watching, thinking, and asking ourselves questions – about the limits of art, about cynicism, about the intimacy of dying. Carefully framed, static shots encourage the contemplative mood. *The Opening* doesn't have a narrative typical for fiction films, and the only incipient dramatic conflict – the relation between the gallery owner and the nurse – fades against the gravity of the subject matter. The film was directed by Piotr Adamski, a filmmaker with graphic art background, known for his artistic duo Adamski/Brzuzan. The involvement of a fellow artist – Zbigniew Libera – adds another dimension to the story. After all, Libera is known for his fascination with death and passing.

*The Opening* is the director's first professional fiction film, made in co-operation with the Munk Studio. It was appreciated by the jury of the Polish competition at the 56<sup>th</sup> Krakow Film Festival, which awarded it with the Silver Hobby Horse.

ALEKSANDRA ŚWIERK



## Tenants Lokatorki

DIR.: KLARA KOCHAŃSKA • FICTION • POLAND • 2015 • 30'

To buy an apartment with tenants is no small feat, especially for a lawyer. Justyna spends her days studying criminal law and she dreams of having a place of her own. An opportunity presents itself at an auction of goods that were seized due to debt. But when the protagonist hauls her things to the apartment, her dream of a cosy dwelling evaporates. The apartment is still occupied by the previous tenant, her disabled daughter, and their cat. Should she evict them? For this, Justyna lacks courage and ruthlessness, but she does try to fight for what is rightly hers. The only choice left is to live together until the matter is solved. Lying on her small sofa-bed, stuck in the middle of a mountain of boxes, the young woman devises her plan, which involves fighting with her weapons of choice – provisions of the criminal code – while being completely devoid of human emotion. Starting with a morally ambiguous situation, the authors of *Tenants* ask difficult questions about the choices and dilemmas faced by a sensitive person. Justyna – the role played by Julia Kijowska – has messy hair, a runny nose, and is desperate. This representation goes beyond the cliché of an enterprising lawyer working for a big firm, which is refreshing. The fact that she decided to buy an apartment at a bailiff auction is both improbable and delightfully funny. Who can say that not even once their area of expertise turned out to be the one that was the most treacherous? The film also has a somewhat redundant off-screen narration, in which the protagonist reads out loud the laws that she intends to use against her opponents. Almost a year ago, the film started its festival career by winning the short film award at the Warsaw Film Festival. Now, after receiving the Student Academy Award, it has a chance to compete for the Academy Award nomination in the category of best short film.

ALEKSANDRA ŚWIERK

## Adaptation Adaptacja

DIR.: BARTOSZ KRUHLIK • FICTION • POLAND • 2016 • 24'

One of two brothers dies in a car accident that was caused by the other one. Michał and Marcin, Marcin and Michał – it's easy to confuse them, but it's hard to forget what happened on that road. The grieving father is looking for someone to blame, and he directs his suspicion at the son who survived. The mother is trying to save the family and to mourn the loss in peace, but adapting to the new situation is not easy for her either. It's equally difficult for the eyes to get used to the darkness on screen. The camera often peeks at the protagonists from the side or from behind, glimpsing only the outlines of figures; it accompanies them in their mourning, following their reactions, emphasizing their loneliness.

*Adaptation* is an ambitious attempt to penetrate the darkest recesses of the human mind and to create a story based on extreme emotions: despair, guilt, accusations. The director shows a family in the midst of the biggest crisis, while the viewers ask themselves whether there is hope for the protagonists, whether there is any sense to this torment. The authors limit themselves to observing, without giving a straight answer, but the vision of the world created in the film doesn't leave much room for optimism.

What makes an impression is certainly the acting: based on extreme emotions and means of expression, it highlights the dynamics between the protagonists. Tension in the father/son/mother triangle gradually escalates, leading to an open ending. The combination of image and sound creates a deliberate whole, creating an oppressive, claustrophobic, disquieting atmosphere. The viewer wants to get away from this family, to flee from the small apartment and run.

The film, produced in the Łódź Film School, has been particularly well received at American festivals (Burlington, New York), where it won awards for the best student fiction film and best photography.

ALEKSANDRA ŚWIERK



## Hot and Cold Ciepło-zimno

DIR.: MARTA PRUS • FICTION • POLAND • 2016 • 35'

Sandra drops into the apartment, the child is crying, her sister must leave, Sandra leaves the little one alone and runs downstairs to an ex boyfriend, she comes back, dresses the child, the taxi is already waiting, and the driver takes Sandra straight from the housing project to an elegant neighbourhood. A call from the landlord reminds Sandra that she must pay the rent today or she will lose roof over her head.

The rhythm of *Hot and Cold*, a fiction short by Marta Prus, is captivating. We accompany the protagonist, who earns her living as a small-time thief. During one of her usual jobs, the woman gets caught. The events take an unexpected turn when the assaulted woman makes her an offer that she can't refuse. The stake is a handsome sum of money, which Sandra doesn't have; what she does have are a small child and a lot of debts. She doesn't know yet how much the task will cost her. Neither does she know that the woman is lying.

A stunning performance by Magdalena Berus gives tone to the entire story. While she is the one who steals the show, *Hot and Cold* is really a story of two women with two completely different backgrounds. But when confronted with one another, the differences no longer matter.

One must congratulate the young director on her perfect handling of Magdalena Berus' acting temperament and her consistent portrayal of her character, Sandra. While Marta Prus only recently graduated from the Łódź Film School, she already has considerable experience and a number of awards under her belt from festivals such as Silhouette Film Festival, Thurrock International Film Festival, and the International Festival for Cinema Schools FIDEC. *Hot and Cold* is another proof of her improving craft and artistic growth.

ALEKSANDRA ŚWIERK



## Romantik

DIR.: MATEUSZ RAKOWICZ • FICTION • POLAND • 2016 • 21'

The Eiffel Tower seems like a perfect place for a romantic proposal. At least this is the common opinion, also shared by the fifty-year-old Stanisław (played by Robert Więckiewicz). The man takes his considerably younger girlfriend on a surprise trip to Paris. He has everything planned out: the ring, the hotel, the place where he is going to propose. It's no surprise when things don't go according to plan. Paris turns out to be an unfriendly place for a foreigner, while Stanisław proves to be a rather careless protagonist, even though he bravely tries to salvage the situation. But as per the rules of screenwriting, he must face one obstacle after another – starting with a stolen cell phone and ending with a fistfight. Wandering at night around the city of love, Stanisław sees its different face, one much less colourful and pleasant than that seen on the postcards. Paris is not just chestnuts and romantic walks; it's a city like any other, with petty crime, over-zealous police force, and an occasional swindler. Slowly, he's starting to regret the escapade and the crazy idea to propose under the Eiffel Tower. The language barrier complicates the matters even further; Stanisław knows only a few English words, although surprisingly as the plot progresses, his language skills seem to improve. The film leans towards comedy, which is clear in Więckiewicz's acting. There may also be a lesson here. But what would it be? The authors give us a hint with the quote from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry that appears at the beginning of the film: 'Love is not just looking at each other, it's looking in the same direction'. What is more, perhaps a truly great love doesn't need grand gestures?

ALEKSANDRA ŚWIERK

# POLISH SHORTS

## CATALOGUE OF FILMS

### 2015–2016



#### Grandma's Day

DIR.: **MIŁOSZ SAKOWSKI** • 2015 • FICTION • 30' • POLAND • PROD.: GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Tomek needs money, so he decides to scam an elderly lady. When it seems that everything is going according to plan, the woman suddenly exposes the scammer and locks him in her apartment. She offers him a deal: he will get the money if he pretends to be her grandson when a social worker comes to visit. If the social worker decides the infirm woman is not under her family's care, she may find herself being moved to a nursing home.



#### The Dogcatcher

DIR.: **DARIA WOSZEK** • 2015 • FICTION • 30' • POLAND • PROD.: ALL MUSES, COR LEONIS PRODUCTION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*The Dogcatcher* is a black comedy about a man who kidnaps dogs for ransom and then returns them acting as their saviour. One day he kidnaps a German shepherd that turns out to be a stray.



#### Tenants

DIR.: **KLARA KOCHAŃSKA** • 2015 • FICTION • 30' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The film's main protagonist is Justyna, a young woman who decides to buy a flat at a bailiff auction regardless of the risk that such a purchase may entail. When she wants to move in, it turns out that the keys she was given do not fit the locks. Her dream about having a place of her own turns into a nightmare.



#### Travelling

DIR.: **KAROLINA ZALESZCZUK** • 2015 • FICTION • 23' • POLAND • PROD.: GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Travelling is a violation of basketball rules that occurs when a player holding the ball makes an illegal movement with one or both of his feet. Teenage Justyna, trying to get away from her mom's life, becomes fascinated with the new neighbour. A brief and intense relationship will push her to grow up.



## Restless Wanderers

DIR.: **KALINA ALABRUDZIŃSKA** • 2016 • FICTION • 28' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Konstancja, a 40-year-old single woman, wants to finally become a mother. She decides to use a sperm donor. While waiting for the result of the first insemination procedure, Konstancja meets the love of her life.



## The Return

DIR.: **DAMIAN KOCUR** • 2016 • FICTION • 21' • POLAND • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Ania is temporarily released from prison on her first thirty-hour home leave. At home, her husband and toddler son are waiting for her arrival. Everything is prepared – the whole family is to leave the country during Ania's temporary release. Before the escape, she decides to once again meet with the family of the person that she killed.



## 16.03

DIR.: **NATALIA SIWICKA** • 2016 • FICTION • 16'03" • POLAND • PROD.: COR LEONIS PRODUCTION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A girl wakes up after a night spent with a man in an elegant room of a palace on the outskirts of the city. It's the 16th of March. A cold, foggy morning. The girl gets into her car, drives off, goes through villages, fields, into the forest. On the road, there is a log blocking her way. The girl pulls the log onto the side of the road. She sees a truck approaching from behind; hastily gets into the car and drives off not to block the way. The truck seems to be following her, the pursuer flashes his full beams, honks. The girl is confused, tries to let the truck overtake her car but the road is too narrow. The driver gets more and more aggressive.



## Hot and Cold

DIR.: **MARTA PRUS** • 2016 • FICTION • 35' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Filmed in one long take, *Hot and Cold* tells a story of two women from two different worlds who meet unexpectedly and, despite unfavourable circumstances, eventually end up helping each other.



## It Happens

DIR.: **ARKADIUSZ BIEDRZYCKI** • 2016 • FICTION • 29' • POLAND • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Strange things happen every day. In the least expected moment, in the least convenient circumstances. Sometimes between one mundane activity and another, the world makes an unacceptable turn. One day, Joanna – the protagonist of *It Happens* – vanishes without a trace. What does her family know about her and how useful that knowledge turns out to be when searching for the woman?



## The Opening

DIR.: **PIOTR ADAMSKI** • 2016 • FICTION • 30' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Gallery owner Ewa Dreger is about to open a most unusual exhibition, where an artist suffering from terminal cancer is put on display like an object. At the appointed hour, the guests arrive at the opening in order to watch his death. The main protagonist is played by Zbigniew Libera, one of the most outstanding Polish artists and a pioneer of the Critical Art movement. His shocking video works of the 1980s preceded by a decade the emergence of body art.



## Reservation

DIR.: **WIKTOR KOREK BOJANOWSKI** • 2016 • FICTION • 15' • POLAND • PROD.: MARIA SURZYCKA • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Antek and Julka are having a date at the theatre. The girl is waiting for her boyfriend who is running late – he is riding a bike through the rain-covered streets of Krakow. The bell rings for the third time but Antek is still not there. He doesn't know yet how unfortunate this evening will prove to him and how many adversities he will have to overcome to finally make his way to the theatre hall.



## Adaptation

DIR.: **BARTOSZ KRUHLIK** • 2016 • FICTION • 24' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ, OKOMOTION FILM PRODUCTION • CONTACT: DARIUSZ DUŻYŃSKI, INDEKS FILM STUDIO, OFFICE@STUDIOINDEKS.PL

Adaptation: 1. Structural or functional evolution of an organism towards higher survivability. 2. Process of an individual becoming better suited to environment and more resistant to outer stress. 3. The ability of eyesight to adjust to seeing in the dark.



## I've Got You

DIR.: **SEBASTIAN DROŻAK** • 2016 • FICTION • 15' • POLAND • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE, MICHAŁ.HUDZIKOWSKI@US.EDU.PL

A couple of strangers, a hotel bar. Ann, a flight attendant, wants to forget; he wants a one-night stand. This night at the hotel, full of ambiguities and surprising twists, might give her a different perspective on her own life.



## Evil Deeds

DIR.: **PIOTR DOMALEWSKI** • 2016 • FICTION • 24' • POLAND • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Max, a ten-year-old son of a hospital cleaner, has been caught trying to steal a patient's wallet. The old pensioner decides not to report the theft and instead asks Max to complete three tasks. Those turn out to be much more challenging than Max would ever expect.



## Charon

DIR.: **PAWEŁ HEJBUDZKI** • 2016 • FICTION • 30' • POLAND • PROD.: WARSAW FILM SCHOOL  
• CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

An unlikely friendship develops between a disabled hospital worker and a patient waiting for an abortion procedure.



## Romantik

DIR.: **MATEUSZ RAKOWICZ** • 2016 • FICTION • 21' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Stanisław (40) takes his beloved Zosia on a mysterious and romantic trip. He wants to propose to her in the city of love. Stanisław doesn't expect that it will be the most horrible night of his life, and his well-planned trip will go much further than he anticipated. It's a short story kept in a tragicomic tone about how we can't control our fate, even when we believe that we reached the best moment of our life.



## Man Night

DIR.: **MAŁGORZATA SUWAŁA** • 2016 • FICTION • 18' • POLAND • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIESLOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

It's a hot summer in the city. Andrzej is facing yet another matriculation exam, and his family should provide a source of strength and composure in this difficult situation – at least theoretically. He knows there is no way to avoid a difficult talk with one of the most important figures in his life. Is it too late already?



## Not About J.

DIR.: **OLGA KAŁAGATE** • 2016 • FICTION • 22' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Barbara lives her life absorbed in her own thoughts and daily routines. One day, someone rings her doorbell. Her husband. His apparently normal return home shocks not only her, but their daughter too. Something is clearly wrong.



## Endurance

DIR.: **GRZEGORZ DĘBOWSKI** • 2016 • FICTION • 28' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHALINA FABIJANŃSKA, MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, M.FABIJANSKA@SFP.ORG.PL

To swindle money from an insurance company, first seek out a dupe, then let him make a mistake, take advantage of that and let the collision happen. Kamil is a pro at this. The problems start when his debt-ridden brother Filip asks him to set up an accident. But Filip is a party animal and not at all the right person for the deed. Kamil refuses, but the situation becomes complicated...



## The Play-Off

DIR.: **TOMASZ GAŚSOWSKI** • 2016 • FICTION • 31' • POLAND • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHALINA FABIJANŃSKA, MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, M.FABIJANSKA@SFP.ORG.PL

38-year-old Zyga living in the Warsaw suburbs tries to explain the rules governing the world to his son. These are rules he doesn't necessarily follow himself, which doesn't go unnoticed by the clever boy.



## Apocalypse

DIR.: **JUSTYNA MYTNIK** • 2016 • FICTION • 15' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KRZYSZTOF BRZEZOWSKI, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL, PROMO@FILMSCHOOL.LODZ.PL

This is a dark fairy tale about loneliness. A young couple lives in a tower block infested with surreal pigeons. A baby pigeon advises them to look into each other's eyes, or else they will die. Susie believes the bird, but Maurice wants to kill it.



## Lockjaw

DIR.: **KORDIAN KĄDZIELA** • 2016 • FICTION • 30' • POLAND • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIESLOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, KRZYSZTOF KIESLOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA, MICHAŁ.HUDZIKOWSKI@US.EDU.PL

*Lockjaw*, a performance art trio, dream of conquering the art industry. Unfortunately, so far they themselves have been their only audience. However, they believe that tables will turn after they present their new piece at 'Prowokalia' – one of the most important performance art festivals.



## The Fractal Show

DIR.: **JUSTYNA BILIK** • 2016 • FICTION • 11' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KRZYSZTOF BRZEZOWSKI, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL, PROMO@FILMSCHOOL.LODZ.PL

An American popular science program presents a revolutionary educational system reform where cheerleaders play a key role. Two people take credit for this 'breakthrough' idea, which quickly gets one of them fired. Will the alleged 'reformer' give up without a fight?



## Unfortune Teller

DIR.: **JOANNA SATANOWSKA** • 2016 • FICTION • 26' • POLAND • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KRZYSZTOF BRZEZOWSKI, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL, PROMO@FILMSCHOOL.LODZ.PL

Dorothy is a clairvoyant. She works at the Institute of Physics and attends the Fortune Tellers Anonymous meetings, where she tries to control her gift. Matters get complicated when she meets Sprat – a young, small-time criminal.





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