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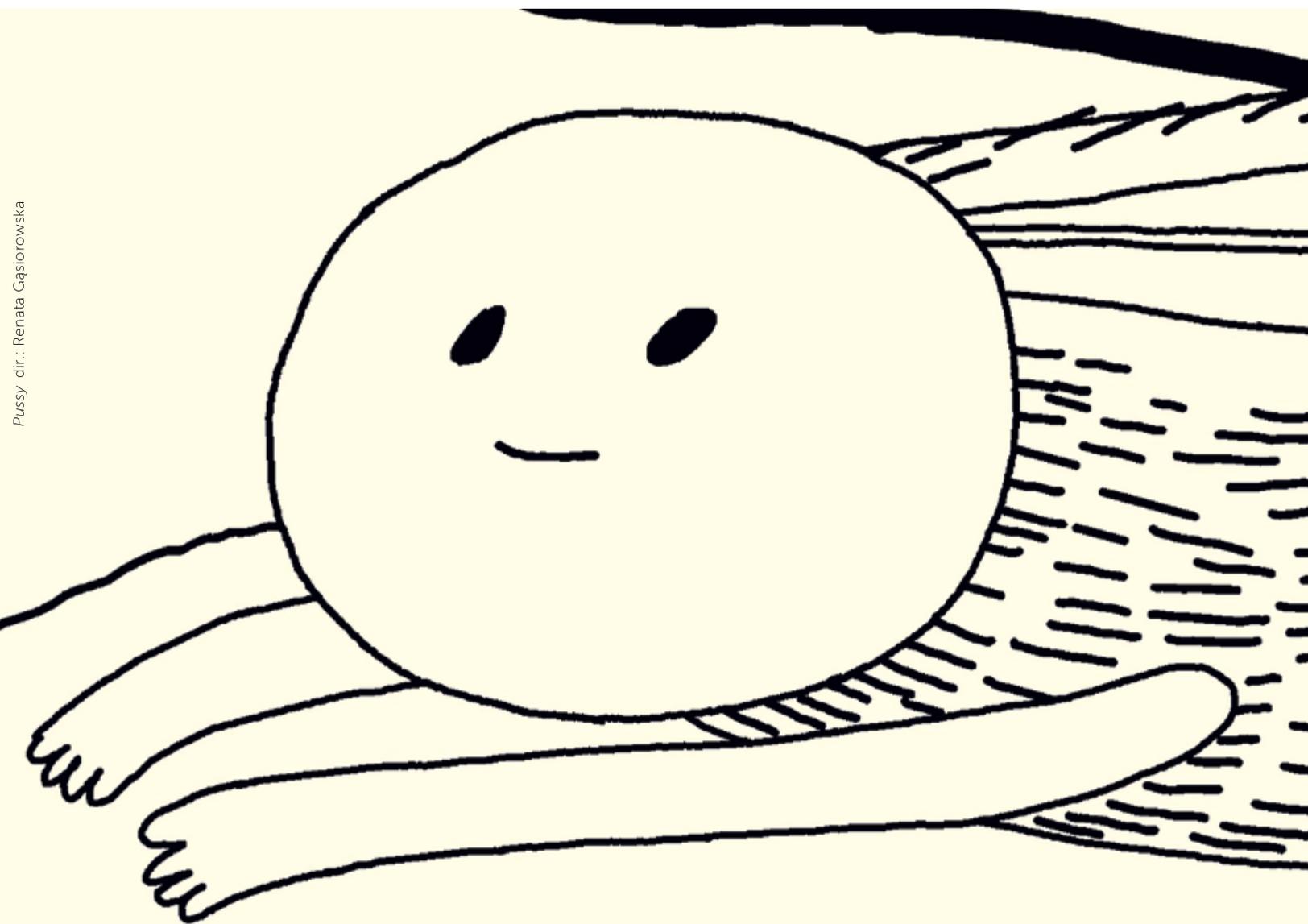
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Pussy dir.: Renata Gąsiorowska

Case study:
**Over
the Limit**

Portrait
of the artist:
**Walerian
Borowczyk**

Interview with
Zofia Kowalewska,
the director of
Close Ties

Catalogue
of **new
films**

POLSKI INSTYTUT SZTUKI FILMOWEJ

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THIS SPRING IS DOMINATED BY ANIMATED FILMS due to the celebration of 70 years of Polish animation in 2017. So it follows that we are delighted with the news that during the Anney International Animated Film Festival, the world premiere of the long-awaited film by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman – *Loving Vincent* – will take place. It is the first entirely hand-painted full-length film in the world. Jerzy Armata writes of the history of Polish animation and masters of the genre, while Jakub Mikurda presents the person of Walerian Borowczyk – one of the bravest creators. Interesting talks with Zofia Kowalewska, a debuting filmmaker whose film *Close Ties* has conquered world festivals, and with Zbigniew Czapla, whose most recent animation *Strange Case* is about to start its festival circuit, shed light on the artists' point of view and motivations. The case study of Marta Prus's documentary film project *Over the Limit* provides insight into the process of making an international co-production including the production side. Be sure to take a look at the portrait of Władysław Ślesicki – a director whose poetic documentaries have forever left their mark on Polish cinema history. Enjoy!

BARBARA ORLICZ-SZCZYPUŁA
KATARZYNA WILK

POLISH DOCUMENTARIES IN BUENOS AIRES AND TOKYO

At the end of July, a big Polish documentary cinema review will take place during the FIBDA International Documentary Film Festival in Buenos Aires. The Argentinean audience will have an opportunity to get acquainted with both classic films by recognized makers and new productions in three program sections. Within the 'Masters from Krakow' section, there will be a chance to see the Krakow Film Festival winners from the Festival's beginning until the 1990's – among others, the works by Krzysztof Kieślowski, Marcel Łoziński, Bogdan Dziworski, Wojciech Wiszniewski, Marek Piwowski, or Kazimierz Karabasz. The retrospective dedicated to Wojciech Staroń's documentaries will also take place in Buenos Aires. This recognized director, screenwriter and cameraman has earned many awards, among others a Silver Bear at the Berlinale festival. The retrospective will showcase his *Siberian Lesson, El Misionero, Argentinian Lesson, and Brothers*. Wojciech Staroń, himself, will run a master class. The Young Talents section will focus on young, talented novices, earning recognition at international film festivals; among others, Grzegorz Zariczny's *The Whistle*, and Paulina Skibińska's *Object*, both award winners at the Sundance Film Festival, Tomasz Śliwiński's *Our Course* nominated for the Academy Award, as well as Zofia Kowalewska's *Close Ties* and Michał Szcześniak *Starting Point*, both on the Oscar's shortlist. **Films by young filmmakers will also be featured in August in the Brilla Theatre in Tokyo, where the Polish Documentary Cinema Week will be organized** in collaboration with the Shorts Shots Film Festival. Not only will it showcase contemporary films by young artists, but it will also present a large retrospective of Krzysztof Kieślowski's films. Both reviews are run within the Polish Docs Intercontinental framework, the curator of which is the Krakow Film Foundation.



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POLISH FILM INSTITUTE

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PARTNERS:



For a While dir.: Wojciech Staroń



THE WINNING STREAK OF **PUSSY** GOES ON

Pussy by Renata Gąsiorowska, which lasts only a few minutes, is an incredibly entertaining, cleverly told, and kept in perspective animation story, offering a feminine point of view. Its popularity is ever growing since its spectacular success of the audience award at the DOK Leipzig festival. Since last fall, **Pussy** has been seen at over 50 festivals worldwide, including such prestigious ones as Sundance Film Festival, Oberhausen ISFF, Ottawa International Animation Festival, Tampere Film Festival, and Hong Kong IFF. The film left thirteen of them with awards, out of which the most important were the Grand Jury Award – Animated Short from the AFI FEST in the United States, Best Animation Film from the Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival, and Special Jury recognition for Animated Shorts from the SXSW in the United States.

CANNES Film Festival

Two Polish short fiction films will be screened this year at the Cannes Film Festival, one of the most important film festivals in the world. One of them is **TIME TO GO**, the graduation film by Grzegorz Motła from the Gdynia Film School. It is selected for the main short film competition and will compete for the Short Film Palme d'Or. It is the second short feature film in the history of Polish cinema which will compete for the Golden Palm in Cannes, and the second one produced by the Gdynia Film School.

In 2013, such a success was achieved by Elżbieta Benkowska, a graduate of the first class of the Direction Department at Gdynia Film School, with her film **Olena**. The winner of the short film competition will be selected by an international jury under the chairmanship of the Romanian director, Cristian Mungiu.

The second Polish film, **THE BEST FIREWORKS EVER** by Aleksandra Terpińska, qualified for the short film competition at the 56th Semaine de la Critique which takes place during the Cannes FF. The film is set in a contemporary European city and tells the story of one day in the lives of three young friends, who, confronted with an armed conflict in their country, have to modify their plans for the future. The film is produced by Munk Studio within the frame of the '30 Minutes' Programme.

TWO POLISH SHORTS:



SPECIAL MENTION: **VOLTE** BY MONIKA KOTECKA

SIX POLISH FILMS IN THE PROGRAMME OF HOT DOCS

Six Polish productions was showcased in the programme of this year's edition of the International Documentary Film Festival Hot Docs in Canada. As many as four of them was shown in the section 'Shorts': **Close Ties** by Zofia Kowalewska, **Goran the Camel Man** by Marcin Lesisz, **Volte** by Monika Kotecka and Karolina Poryzala

and **Urban Cowboys** by Paweł Ziemilski. In addition, **Communion** by Anna Zamecka appeared in the section 'World Showcase', whereas **Photon** by Norman Leto featured in the programme 'Nightvision'. It is worth mentioning that the work-in-progress film, **War Watchers** by Vita Maria Drygas, was presented at Hot Docs Forum.

SELF-PORTRAIT OF THE BEKSIŃSKI FAMILY OPENS

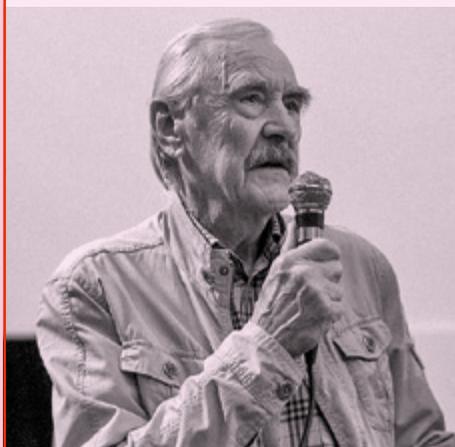
57TH KRAKOW FILM FESTIVAL



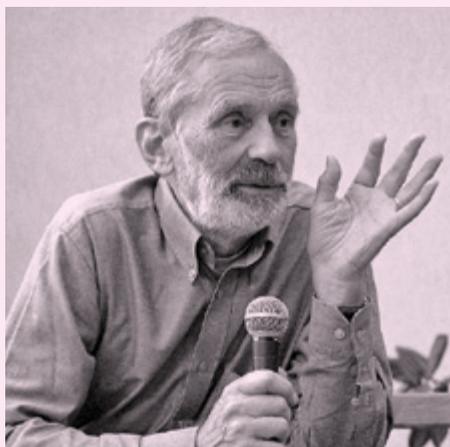
On May 28, the Krakow Film Festival will open with the documentary film **The Beksińskis. A Sound and Picture Album** by Marcin Borchardt – an authentic, intimate record of the fate of the Beksiński family. It is a feature-length documentary film, made up of sound, film and photographic archival materials, most of which come from the private collection of the famous Polish artist, Zdzisław Beksiński and they have never been shown publicly before. For almost fifty years, the painter meticulously documented his life and the life of his closest family. He kept a diary, wrote letters, took photos, and passionately filmed everyday events. An extremely complex image of the relationships between the artist and his wife Zofia and his son – the charismatic radio journalist

and translator – Tomasz, emerge from these materials. The documentary film by Borchardt gives voice to the protagonists themselves, creating a unique opportunity to get to know the Beksiński family through authentic materials, for the first time presented in such an extensive form. Although Beksiński filmed mundane activities and events, a non-obvious portrait of the family emerges from the recorded conversations which are far removed from any oversimplifications. The relationship of two difficult characters: the father and the son are in the foreground. The film is produced by Darek Dikti Biuro Pomysłów, with the financial support of the Polish Film Institute, Gdynia Film Fund and TVP2.

2 DRAGONS OF DRAGONS AT 57TH KRAKOW FILM FESTIVAL



Witold Giersz



Daniel Szczechura



The Krakow Film Festival decided to celebrate this year's 70th anniversary of Polish animation with an unprecedented tribute to two outstanding masters of this genre: Witold Giersz and Daniel Szczechura. It is the 20th edition of the Dragon of Dragons Award which is granted for significant influence on the development of world cinema. Witold Giersz and Daniel Szczechura are among the greatest filmmakers in the history of Polish animation. Both of them won numerous awards at the world's most prestigious film festivals. They received awards at the Krakow Film Festival seven times: Witold Giersz for the first time during the festival's first edition

in 1961, Daniel Szczechura the following year. The Dragon of Dragons Award will be awarded this year for the 20th time. Among the previous winners of the Dragon of Dragons award are such renowned filmmakers as Werner Herzog, Priit Pärn, Kazimierz Karabasz, Bohdan Kosiński, Bogdan Dziworski, Allan King, Albert Maysles, Jonas Mekas, Helena Trestíková, Stephen and Timothy Quay, Raoul Servais, Jerzy Kucia, Paul Driessen and Marcel Łoziński. The official awards ceremony will take place on 30th May during the 57th Krakow Film Festival in Krakow. The audience will have an excellent opportunity to watch an extensive selection of films from both laureates and take part in meetings with them.



Red and Black dir.: Witold Giersz (1963)



The Voyage dir.: Daniel Szczechura (1970)

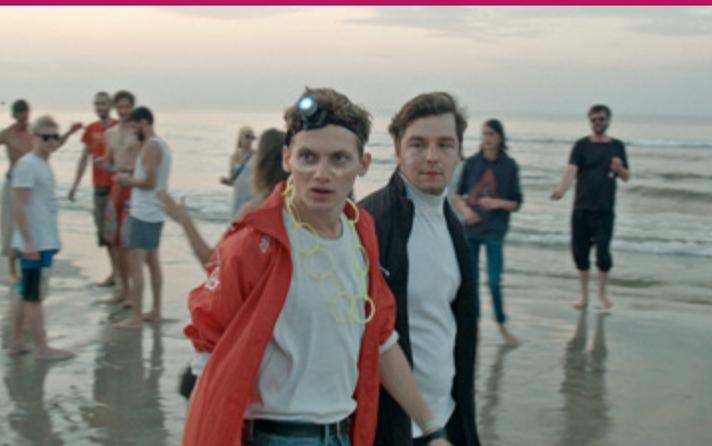
WAJDA SCHOOL CELEBRATES 15th ANNIVERSARY



In 2017 the Wajda School celebrates 15 years of its existence and mission of educating new generations of Polish filmmakers. The school, created by Andrzej Wajda and Wojciech Marczewski, always proposed the most innovative film education solutions that focused on developing ideas within the environment of a real film set. To celebrate 15th anniversary, the Wajda School has prepared a special set of 15 films, directed by its graduates, which gained international recognition and success. The school wants not only to celebrate, but to promote the method of creative development which has become the cornerstone of the Wajda School's teaching methods. The 15/15 film collection will be published on a special DVD and travel to local and international film festivals, where the screenings will be accompanied by master classes with school graduates and tutors in order to fully engage international audiences, media and young filmmakers in the Wajda School film education mission.



Pussy dir.: Renata Gąsiorowska



All These Sleepless Nights dir.: Michał Marczak

SELECTION OF THE

- Nomination for the Best Documentary at European Film Awards: **21 x New York** by Piotr Stasik (doc./2016/70')
- Heterodox Award at Cinema Eye Honors: **All These Sleepless Nights** by Michał Marczak (doc./fic./2016/104')
- Grand Jury Prize, Student Prize at CineDoc Tbilisi, Georgia: **Brothers** by Wojciech Staroń (doc./2015/68')
- Alpe Adria Cinema Award at Trieste Film Festival, Italy: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73')
- Best Documentary Film at Bratislava International Film Festival, Slovak Republic: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73')
- Young Eyes Film Award at DOK Leipzig, Germany: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73')
- Grand Prix at Echo Mountain Film Festival, Macedonia: **Jurek** by Paweł Wysoczański (doc./2015/73')
- Audience Award for Best Short Film at Central and Eastern European Film Festival, Luxembourg: **Education** by Emi Buchwald (doc./2016/20')
- Margaret Mead Filmmaker Award at Margaret Mead Film Festival, USA: **Casa Blanca** by Aleksandra Maciuszek (doc./2015/63')
- Wildscreen Panda Award at Wildscreen Festival, UK: **Honey Hunters** by Krystian Matysek (doc./2016/77')
- Golden Dove at DOK Leipzig, Germany: **Close Ties** by Zofia Kowalewska (doc./2016/18')

DOC LAB POLAND FOR THE THIRD TIME



Photo: Tomasz Korczyński

Doc Lab Poland, a training and consultation program for producers and Polish documentary filmmakers, includes workshops, individual consultations and seminars, as well as preparations for pitching sessions under the guidance of recognized Polish and international experts. The program aims to give rise to co-production relationships and to support featured projects' promotion and distribution. The projects developed within the DLP will be shown in June at the KFF Industry, during the Docs to Start (projects in development) and Docs to Go! (projects in postproduction) pitching sessions. After those shows, the participants individually meet with potential financial partners, co-producers, sales agents, and film festival programmers. Moreover, during the DLP Co-production Market, the producers from various countries will gather to present their projects, share experiences, and find collaboration partners. Previous DLP editions provided a platform to develop among others **Miss Holocaust**, featured in the Berlinale short-film competition this year.

LATEST AWARDS FOR POLISH FILMS

- Golden Dove at DOK Leipzig, Germany: **Patriotic Lesson** (doc./2016/20')
- IDFA Special Jury Award for Student Documentary at IDFA, The Netherlands: **Close Ties** by Zofia Kowalewska (doc./2016/18')
- Best Short Documentary at Flickerfest's International Short Film Festival, Australia: **Close Ties** by Zofia Kowalewska (doc./2016/18')
- The ARRI IDFA Award for Best Student Documentary at IDFA, The Netherlands: **When Will This Wind Stop** by Aniela Gabryel (doc./2016/66')
- Silver Edelweiss at Mountain Film Festival in Torello, Spain: **Jurek** by Paweł Wysoczański (doc./2015/73')
- Best Mountaineering Film at Kendal Mountain Film Festival, UK: **Jurek** by Paweł Wysoczański (doc./2015/73')
- Youth Award at Escales Documentaires – International Festival of Creative Documentary, France: **Piano** by Vita Maria Drygas (doc./45'/2015)
- Best Short Documentary at Tirana International Film Festival, Albania: **Football Brothers** by Marcin Filipowicz (doc./2015/26')
- Best Feature Sound, Best Feature Film at Wales International Documentary Festival, UK: **Two Worlds** by Maciej Adamek (doc./2016/51')
- Best Selection Award at Kaohsiung Film Festival, Taiwan: **Lila** by Dominika Łapka (fic./2015/24')
- Audience Award for Best Short Feature Film at Central and Eastern European Film Festival, Luxembourg: **Romantic** by Mateusz Rakowicz (fic./2016/21')
- Audience Award at DOK Leipzig, Germany: **Pussy** by Renata Gąsiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Grand Jury Award – Animated Short at AFI FEST, USA, 2016: **Pussy** by Renata Gąsiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Best Animation Film at Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, France: **Pussy** by Renata Gąsiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Special Jury recognition for Animated Shorts at SXSW, USA: **Pussy** by Renata Gąsiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Golden Horseman Animated Film – International Competition, ARTE Short Film Prize – International Competition, Special Mention Sound Design at 29th Filmfest Dresden – ISFF, Germany: **Pussy** by Renata Gąsiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Best International Short at Foyle Film Festival, Ireland: **Grandma's Day** by Miłosz Sakowicz (fic./2015/30')
- Best Short Film Award a Bratislava International FF, Slovakia: **Adaptation** by Bartosz Kruhlik (fic./30'/2016)
- Stadionshop Jury Grand Prix at Animateka International Animated Film Festival, Slovenia: **Black** by Tomasz Popakul (anim./2016/14')
- Grand Prix at GLAS Animation Festival, USA: **Impossible Figures and Other Stories II** by Marta Pajek (anim./2016/15')



Sloping Fields (1970) © WFDiF. Source: National Film Archive

a separate documentarian

BY PIOTR PŁAWUSZEWSKI

PORTRAIT OF WŁADYSŁAW ŚLESICKI

PERSONAL PATH

Creative outsider, difficult to capture in a few paragraphs. He consciously avoided following trends in film and was rarely interested in editorializing about the present. Using words sparingly, he trusted much more in images and sounds. On the one hand he clearly divided his artistic biography into documentaries and feature films, while on the other hand he was never afraid to break and mix convention, believing that to be an inalienable artistic right which applied also to film. When he felt he had reached the end of creative strength in his work, he simply resigned and never returned to film-making. And herein lies a sad

paradox: one of the most important and award-winning Polish documentarians has been known for decades mainly as the director of the (mega) best-seller adaptation of Henryk Sienkiewicz's *In Desert and Wilderness* which has been viewed by over 30 million people since its premiere in 1973. The paths of film history are twisted and especially given the distance that time allows, it is worthwhile to straighten some of them.

STYLISTIC EXERCISES

Władysław Ślesicki began his professional career immediately after completing his studies at the Łódź Film School. It was the second half of the 1950's and Polish documentaries took

advantage of a moment of increased ease that was brought on by the cultural-political shocks of 1956, the so-called Post-October Thaw. Censorship had relaxed for the moment, allowing exploration of themes that had been forbidden, along with new forms of expression for the screen. All of this led to the birth of the 'Black Series' trend where Ślesicki, together with Kazimierz Karabasz (who would soon go on to become a master of documentaries as well) directed two of his important works, *People of the Vacant Area* (1957) and *Where the Devil Says Goodnight* (1956) which caught the attention of Free Cinema in England and was presented by the London National Film Theater in a set called Polish Voices. Both works, though very well done and exploring the authentic pain of that time, including the problems of youth who found it difficult to find their place in a Socialist nation, were not what Ślesicki intuitively felt 'his path' was. Fascinated by the world of geographic peripheries and the often heroic co-existence of man and nature he began to avoid (big) city scenes and themes. When he did choose a city, it was for example to paint a perspective of a dog besieged by human brutality. John Grierson, a major figure in British non-fiction film commented on *Among Men* (1960), 'the film is wonderful and disturbing, technically and artistically perfect... The most admirable part is the humanization of the dog character'.

In the 1960's, by trial and error, Ślesicki began to work on his directorial style which gave his following films a well-thought-out form. He was known for long preparatory periods for his films and never spared time in documentation. As he himself said, 'you can accuse me of creative incompetence but you cannot take away my conviction that I know everything about the issues and people in my films'.

SELECTED DOCUMENTARY FILMS AND AWARDS:

Where the Devil Says Goodnight / *Gdzie diabeł mówi dobranoc* (1956, with Kazimierz Karabasz)

People of the Vacant Area / *Ludzie z pustego obszaru* (1957, with Kazimierz Karabasz)

Among Men / *Wśród ludzi* (1960), Award at Oberhausen ISFF

People and Fish / *Ludzie i ryby* (1962)

The Floats Sail On / *Płyną tratwy* (1962), Golden Dragon at Krakow ISFF, Second Prize at Buenos Aires IFF

The Mountain / *Góra* (1964), Grand Prix at Trento Mountain FF

Before the Foliage Falls / *Zanim opadną liście* (1964), Silver Hobby-Horse at Krakow FF, Man Prize at Bergamo FF, Bronze Medal at ISFF in Guadalajara, International Jury Award at Cork IFF

Family of Man / *Rodzina człowieka* (1966), Diploma of Merit at Edinburgh IFF; Golden Hobby-Horse at Krakow FF, Lion of San Marco – Grand Prize at Venice IFF

Energy / *Energia* (1967), Silver Dove at Leipzig IDFF

Sloping Fields / *Chyłe pola* (1970)



Photo from the private family archive

WŁADYSŁAW ŚLESICKI (1927–2008) – director of feature and documentary films, screenwriter. He graduated from the Department of Direction of the Łódź Film School PWSFTviT, he also studied history of art at Warsaw University. After graduation, he started working at the Documentary and Feature Film Studios (WFDiF) in Warsaw, where he made documentary films, many of which were prize-winners in Poland and worldwide. In 1968, he made his debut as a feature film director. He is a laureate of the Polish Filmmakers Association award for outstanding artistic achievements, received in 2007.

He quickly made the decision to forego off-camera commentary, which was not obvious for the norms of the period, and was never tempted to speak on-camera either. Exploring mainstream life without following an unusual situation that quickly caught the eye was more important to him than telling a specific story. 'I don't have a journalist's temperament', he said of himself. 'Reflection is of higher priority to me than editorial passion, as is contemplation – examining human fate and the desire to sometimes emphasize normal things. In these films I am at peace with myself'. Let us look at the most important of 'these films' since they gave Ślesicki his permanent place in the history of (not only) Polish film.

STYLE DISCOVERED

Two films premiered in 1962: *People and Fish* about fisherman dealing with the force of water, filmed for the most part on the open sea but also containing impressive scenes of a fishing village lit by lanterns piercing the dark night, and *The Floats Sail On* – an allegorical, moving portrait of a boy who crosses the border between youth and adulthood against the background of the Mazurian countryside. When at dawn the boy floats away on a quiet stream, images from Robert Flaherty's (whom Ślesicki valued highly) *Louisiana Story* come to mind. The director's filmography

was enriched in 1964 by two exceptional titles: *Mountain* is in honor of teachers who in the winter trek daily along snowy mountain paths to reach their school classes situated on the heights. The documentary presented this hike. An even more exceptional work was the fruit of many months of travel for Ślesicki and his small crew with a Gypsy camp. *Before the Foliage Falls* is unique on a world scale, an ethnographic study with soul of a Roma community including all its charm as well as internal complications. It was reported after the premiere ‘The film leaves a huge impression, delightful photography and atmosphere’, rightfully underlining that Ślesicki once again confirmed his ‘singularity’ in Polish film. His unique style was complemented by the creation of *Family of Man* (1966), a documentary, ‘difficult to write about but that I want to go back to again and again’, as Jerzy Giżycki wrote. In essence this picture of a day in the life of a Mazurian family, living in accordance with the relentless, yet soothingly harmonious rhythms of the changing seasons is not easy to describe. *Family of Man* made the rounds of the festivals of its day and brought

new precious trophies to the director including the Golden Lion of St Mark at the Venice Film Festival.

SHADOW ZONE

For Ślesicki himself that was a turning point – as he confessed, he didn’t want to repeat nor in a simple way discount his earlier successes. Thus the following years brought attempts to enrich his documentary style, such as off-camera statements from his characters, of which the best result was achieved in *Sloping Fields* (1970) – a beautiful documentary about a mountain village cut off from the world. In the end, however, the director was led into the area of feature films. As stated, he had already achieved spectacular popular success in that field and he consciously tried to saturate his films with documentary elements, yet it is difficult to speak of artistic fulfillment. In the mid-1980’s Władysław Ślesicki turned silent and shortly before his death he commented, ‘The best part of my life was when I was making documentaries, but today I live in the shadow of my film characters.’ All the more reason to throw some light on this shadow zone. ■

He consciously avoided following trends in film and was rarely interested in editorializing about the present. Using words sparingly, he trusted much more in images and sounds.

Family of Man (1970) © WFDiF. Source: National Film Archive



OVER THE LIMIT

CASE STUDY OF THE DOCUMENTARY PROJECT



Over the Limit, the full-length documentary by Marta Prus, portraying the world of Russian gymnasts, is already quite a hot topic within the international film milieu, even though it hasn't yet been made. The Warsaw-based firm, Telemark, is its producer. This project, which the director has been working on for several years, proved to be an incredible challenge both in the artistic, as well as in production-related respects and the interesting fact is that it has aroused considerable interest and is shown at the most important pitching sessions in the world.

It started with a dream. Marta Prus, a student of direction in the Łódź Film School at the time, wished to make a graduation film about rhythmic gymnastics which had fascinated her since she was a child. She chose Russia – with no doubt, a cradle of talents within this discipline. The problems started already at the first documentation when it became clear that it is a very closed world.

During a few visits in Russia, along with her cameraman Adam Suzin, the main characters emerged and the idea for the film was outlined. The first protagonist was Rita, a very successful teenager who captivated the director

at first sight. She stood out from the other gymnasts, and it was in her that Marta saw a story to be told. Simultaneously, Marta became fascinated by the person of Irina, a charismatic coach, president of the Russian Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation, and wife of one of Russia's oligarchs, a co-owner of Gazprom. Her presence provided an opportunity to present a wider sociopolitical context, even though ultimately, it was not something Marta wanted to make her film about. At the forefront were relationships between the characters and the sports tension they face every day. However, difficulties in reaching the protagonists started to grow. 'It turned out that entrance to the training area in Novogorsk is almost impossible – it's a guarded area, surrounded by barbed wire. Somewhat miraculously, we managed to go through the formal checks and we entered inside. It all looked more like a command center rather than a sports center. Persuading both the coach and the gymnasts was also a challenge. Everybody was saying that I bit off more than I could chew, but the fact that it was difficult was the very thing that mobilized me', the director remembers the documentation period.

Though Marta started working on her own by somewhat guerrilla means and with no financial backup, it was known from the beginning that without an apt and experienced producer, the project would have no chance. Maciej Kubicki, from Telemark, came to her aid. He had gotten to know the

Some people considered what we showed them as the film, while for me it was still a project, a sort of process. It brought incredible pressure to me.

director at various previous projects. They started by applying for a grant from the Polish Film Institute (PISF). Marta had earlier obtained a scholarship for the screenplay, but it was not possible to receive funds for development, nor for production. The producer decided to risk it nonetheless and take on the production with their own money.

The screenplay concept that Marta envisioned turned out to be a true challenge. It was supposed to include a year of preparations ending with the battle for medals at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. It imposed a very strict timeline and at the same time provided for a certain production rigor.

As the topic was becoming more and more international, the natural course of action was to find a foreign co-producer. The project attracted Hans Robert Eisenhauer, a German producer from Ventana Films, and, more importantly, a commissioning editor of many years for ARTE, who had just left the network and started an independent career looking for interesting projects.



Marta's previous training as a gymnast and her keen eye give the project precision and grace that is not often found in films at early submission.

It was he who was the first to open doors to foreign connections. Marta got him interested in her idea while participating in the Zagreb Dox Festival with a different short documentary. For the next stage of conversations and arrangements, Maciej went to La Rochelle to the Sunny Side of the Doc film market, where Eisenhauer and he decided on collaboration. The hope was to gain TVP, so that through the bilateral agreement between Polish Television and ARTE, the queue for funding could be shortened. In the meantime, ARTE temporarily suspended the agreement with TVP, but the German co-producer already had in mind a different, quite simple solution to this deadlock – he convinced his friend, producer and filmmaker Mika Kaurismäki to get involved in the project and engage ARTE through the Finnish YLE which had an analogous agreement. ‘Winning Mika Kaurismäki turned out to be important in yet another respect: he had lived and worked for some time in Brazil, and it was Brazil, or strictly speaking the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, that we envisioned as the key moment for the film’, adds Maciej



MARTA PRUS – graduated from the Department of Direction at the Łódź Film School and Documentary Programme at the Wajda School. Her works include internationally awarded documentaries *Vakha and Magomed* (2010), *Eighteenth Birthday* (2012) and *Talk to Me* (2015). In cooperation with Telemark, she directed a docuseries *Teen Mom Poland* (2014) for MTV Poland. Awarded by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage for outstanding achievements in arts, she also received the Wiesław Nowicki Prize for the most promising young filmmaker.



MACIEJ KUBICKI – a film producer with a story editor background. A graduate of the Institute of Polish Culture at the University of Warsaw and the Program for Creative Producers at the Wajda School, he works as a creative producer and a board member for Telemark, where he develops ideas for creative documentaries, innovative premium TV series and feature forms. Currently he is working on three documentaries as a producer.

Kubicki. ‘His support would facilitate this stage of production. The fate of the project became really dynamic.’

Simultaneously, the producer and the director began thinking about a communication strategy for the film. The first phase was the Ex Oriente workshop – three consultation sessions ending with a presentation at the East European Forum in Prague. The workshop was considered important at this stage of production, as it enabled, most of all, a look at the project with someone else’s eyes, a possibility to talk and confront it with others, and at the same time, a knowledge of how to present the project – how to speak about its strengths and weaknesses. At Ex Oriente, they also met three people who contributed a lot of good energy and support to the project: Peter Jäger – former chief and founder of Autlook Films, Iikka Vehkalahti – commissioning editor of many years for YLE, and the British producer Mike Lerner. ‘Those three people treated me like a filmmaker, not like a market product’, remembers Marta who is not a fan of carrying out marketing activities before a film is made. From the director’s point of view, it entailed huge stress resulting from growing expectations, especially since the project had been very well received from the beginning. ‘Some people considered what we showed them as the film, while for me it was still a project, a sort of process. It brought incredible pressure to me. I wasn’t used to conversations that, ultimately, are aimed at selling the product which

the film is. Praises don’t work in a motivating way if you’re fully aware of what you’re doing. During the meetings with the decision makers I switched off because I didn’t want to listen to compliments. For me, the biggest gain from all those meetings and visits was that the relationship with my producer grew stronger’, the director adds.

Finally, the first funding for the production from PISF was obtained. At the same time the project qualified for presentation during two of the most important events in the documentary industry: Hot Docs Forum and MeetMarket in Sheffield. Dorota Lech, the Hot Docs Forum director, remembers the project very well. ‘We were immediately drawn to *Over the Limit*. Marta’s previous training as a gymnast and her keen eye give the project precision and grace that is not often found in films at early submission. Her access combined with her storytelling skills gave us confidence and we were thrilled to see it succeed at the pitch.’ Carolina Lidin, responsible for the project selection at MeetMarket, equally had no doubts with respect to the selection: ‘This was very case-in-point concerning this project. The sports universe and the competition set-up in itself is already a great starting point for drama, but the final convincing element was, without a doubt, the clip that precisely encapsulated this drama, introduced the girls and gave promise to a strong emotional journey. We felt confident that we were in the hands of a real filmmaker who

will get close to the characters and tell a larger story through their universe', Lidin says.

Both pitching sessions opened a perspective to build up a market presence within the Anglo-Saxon world, as well as an opportunity to present the project before decision-makers from Israel, Australia, and Japan. Thanks to participation in the aforementioned pitching sessions, they met Chris White from P.O.V. – a prestigious documentary film slot in PBS. The conversations about possible collaboration took place in New York City, where the producer and the director came to present their project at the IFP Film Week – and they are still going on. In the meantime, the key moment of the film took place – the Olympic Games in Rio. Though it turned out to be a success for the main character who unexpectedly won the gold medal, it was unfortunately a failure for the filmmakers – they were not allowed to film during the competition, nor were they

TELEMARK is a Warsaw based film and TV boutique production company established in 2003. Managed by two young producers Anna Kępińska and Maciej Kubicki, it is well known for documentary films and TV formats, both original and adapted. Telemark has cooperated with the biggest Polish TV stations such as TVP1, TVP2, Polsat, MTV Poland, and HBO Europe. Its producers and shareholders gained considerable experience while working with European TV stations including German ZDF, ARD and ARTE.

SELECTED PRODUCTIONS: documentaries: *The Gift* (2016, 56'), *Talk to Me* (2015, 45'), *One Man Show* (2014, 52'), *Entangled* (2012, 52'); fiction TV series: *The Pact* for HBO Europe (2015-2016), *In Treatment* for HBO Poland (2011-2013), *Londoners* for TVP1 (2008-2009); fiction: *La Isla* (2014, 30').

admitted to the Olympic Village with a camera. This turn of events forced yet another concept tweak that the director is currently working on in the editing studio. The film editor is Maciej Pawliński (Golden Lion and Golden Eagle awards), with great experience in feature films, which holds the promise of a storytelling style not often encountered in documentaries. They are in the home stretch now and just got admitted to the Dok Incubator workshop, where they will work on a rough-cut with outstanding film editors. They are already thinking about the dream festival premiere. After the presentation at Docs to go! at the Krakow Film Festival, a member of the Sundance selection committee showed interest in their project. The makers are also thinking about a submission for the Berlinale festival. The most important thing is, however, to deliver the finished film, which in the whole sea of difficulties they have gone through, may not turn out to be that simple. International co-productions entail a complicated system of pre-release previews. 'Everybody has learnt a lot during the filmmaking process. Nobody knew what lay ahead, and nobody expected the project would be so hard and demanding for all the collaborators. If we'd known that from the start, probably the film would never been made in the way it is now and it would remain one of the director's dreams', Maciej Kubicki sums it up. 'Today, I can hardly imagine a documentary film that would be more of a challenge. Yet, looking back, I have a feeling that if I were to do it again, I would do it.' 'It was all new for me, and I'm still anxious about how it's going to end', Marta Prus adds. 'I realize I'm a novice director and I'm making a difficult film, hence I'm grateful to everyone who believed in my dreams rather than in a sure, documented subject.' ■





Opera about Poland Opera o Polsce

DIR.: PIOTR STASIK • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 43'

'He is interested only in intense impressions and metaphorical images', Bartosz Marzec wrote in his review of Andrzej Stasiuk's *A Journal Written Later*. The exact same thing may be said about *Opera about Poland*, based on excerpts from a report, and without a doubt, it is a compliment. The latest documentary by Piotr Stasik is a masterpiece of vision and sound – a formal experiment where Poles play the main role. Stasik encases them in the frame of an opera performance. In his film, the festive days intertwine with everyday life; classified advertisements – sometimes slightly absurd in their nature – with epic confessions. Narratives about love find their place next to disputes on patriotism, attempts to portray manifestations of faith, and conversations on chaos and death. The national Decalogue consists of an aggregate of commandments, truisms, lies, and clichés that the Poles pass from hand to hand; from mouth to mouth. Stasik juggles with them. He juxtaposes pictures and words, at times complementing one with the other, at times contrasting them. The sound-design in *Opera about Poland* is not less hypnotic than in Stasik's previous documentary – *21 x New York*. *Opera...* also seduces with variable coloring. The images may drown in cool blue hues and muddy, dull greens; they may glare with intensity, but also draw on the nobility of the combination of black and white. Stasik creates a multicolored and multidimensional tale. His film is critical and ironic; beautiful in its perverseness. It fully exploits the possibilities indwelling the operatic form – a dramatic, vocal, and instrumental work, the essence of which is the *gesamtkunstwerk*, a synthesis of the arts. And what about the art of acting? The people portrayed by Stasik act every day – before themselves and others. Some of them do it better, others worse – all of them, however, from morning till night, play their social roles. As the title of the last chapter in the film suggests – Stasik sings a lullaby for them because he sees them as representatives of a tired nation.

ANNA BIELAK

All Inclusive

DIR.: MATEUSZ ROMASZKAN, MARTA WÓJTOWICZ-WCISŁO • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 72'

He's self-obsessed, despite his claims that he came over to get to know others. He's a thrill-seeker – but only thrills he expected, hence it's not easy to please him. He's vulgar. He talks through his hat and doesn't care whether he offends anyone by doing so. He juggles clichés about foreign cultures. He desires an exotic experience, but doesn't accept it. Such is the Western tourist – a collective hero of the bold documentary entitled *All Inclusive*.

He was already described in milder words by Zygmunt Bauman in his *Two Essays on Postmodern Morality*. According to his sociological theories, the tourist is convinced he is entitled to everything – because he paid a pretty penny for the trip. He wants the world he visits to adhere to his own idea of it. His self-confidence and sense of security feeds on the fact that he has a place to come back to. Is he a bad person? No, but for sure he's an interesting character for a documentary filmmaker. Romaszkan and Wójtowicz-Wcisło show the tourist in the way he presents himself – in his own films from vacation. They cut authentic excerpts from video cameras and phones. From the images and tourists' commentaries, they build the narration. It brings into being a tale of clichés, disrespect for others, a sense of superiority, egotism, intolerance and averseness to anything foreign. The hero of *All Inclusive* travels through Asia and South America. He is surprised by the poverty, looks with indulgence at local traditions and draws from them only as much as he can buy; nothing more. The tourist learns nothing from his travels and watching him closely, is repulsive; sometimes amusing. It is, however, a bitter and ambiguous amusement. The documentary by Romaszkan and Wójtowicz-Wcisło is saturated with irony similar to the one present in the Austrian productions by Ulrich Siedl – most of all in *Paradise: love* from 2012, the first part of a phenomenal trilogy laying bare the Western man's soul, though he doesn't even notice it.

ANNA BIELAK



Arabic Secret Arabski sekret

DIR.: JULIA GROSZEK • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 52'

Kamil is an adult man. He misses his father. He longs for him, as he never had a chance to meet him. He was raised by his mother and grandmother. He seems happy, but is consumed with curiosity, for he knows that his father is a folk musician. Ilham Al Madfai plays concerts mainly in the Middle East. He has a son. Is he aware there's more than one? Would he like to meet the boy who was born in Poland when martial law was declared? Could the beginning of the relationship between the two adult men be a prologue to a touching narrative about a lost son and a father found after many years?

Julia Groszek observes how a hope begins to rise in Kamil, a hope that the meeting that has so far existed only in dreams may become a reality. Kamil's desire, as well as anticipation, paired with growing suspense, are the driving force of *Arabic Secret*. Groszek succeeded finely at building up the dramaturgy based on a true story that was evolving before her eyes. What if Kamil's and his father's meeting turns out to be a painful awakening from a dream? How will his future life unfold if this moment brings disappointment?

The director follows Kamil's efforts. She is patient, sensitive to her protagonist's emotions and full of respect for the fears he is facing. It seems however that it was the presence of the camera that prompted Kamil to make a step in the direction he was afraid to take until then. Kamil makes use of the camera as an excuse. He hides his clumsiness, modesty and mounting emotions behind it, but not for a moment does he lose his charisma. The director manages to portray a man who is so genuine and excited that one can't help but to pull for him. He has a charm in him one cannot resist. Will Ilham Al Madfai think the same when he meets him?

ANNA BIELAK



Festival Festiwal

DIR.: ANNA GAWLITA, TOMASZ WOLSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 85'

In the foreground, there is music. A bit further in is the emotion it evokes and the people who let themselves be possessed by it – musicians, artists, composers, music directors. For words, there is no room. They appear rarely and that is fine. Any attempt to verbalize impressions would be redundant. What counts in the documentary by Anna Gawlita and Tomasz Wolski, is sound, pure observation and eavesdropping driven by genuine curiosity. *Festival's* creators emerge from backstage and look at the stage, not keeping a safe distance. Wolski's camera is at times perversely close – to both instruments and people. It doesn't, however, violate the creative process. It is attentive and patient. It doesn't interfere. It looks at them from various angles, more often from the worm's-eye than from the bird's-eye view, as if an artist playing Chopin had something in common with God's figure. In *Festival*, there is however no bombast; the directors avoid pomp. The camera roams through the halls of the Fryderyk Chopin National Institute in Warsaw in anticipation of the start of the Chopin Competition. It records the rehearsals – the struggles of the musicians, their minor errors and small successes leading to later victories. The directors capture moments filled with sublime emotion, but also extremely mundane ones – details that lend particular charm to the narrative about musicians, such as trainer shoes tapping on the floor to the beat, black patent leather shoes shined in the electric shoe polishers, hands turning music pages during a concert. They notice grimaces on faces and artists edging their way through narrow hallways with their large and heavy instruments. However, they never interfere with the situations they watch. They have too much respect – for music and for the individuality of the world they portray. However, as if by accident, they manage to find a beautiful answer to two quite fascinating questions, 'Where does music come from?' and 'Where does it go?'.

ANNA BIELAK



How to Destroy Time Machines

DIR.: JACEK PIOTR BŁAWUT • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 39'

You can close your eyes and listen. The music is peculiar. It has a recognizable rhythm and melody, but it also seems to have an extraordinary personality. Just open your eyes and see that it is not made with any instrument. It is created when a stone hits a stone, a nutshell hits a nutshell, when dry branches crack in hands or when the wind blows through the trees. Is this how poetry sounds? Possibly.

Jacek Piotr Bławut listens to it with attention, yet without pathos. He tries to understand the process by which it is produced and the ideas that inspire its creator. He paints a picture of Jeph Jerman, an experimental musician who collects sounds and combines them into subtle, modest symphonies. Jerman talks about them, yet he also wonders what would happen if man forgot language. Is that possible? Would we think in images, even though we wouldn't be able to describe them? Maybe we would communicate solely with sounds? Meanwhile, Jerman manages to create a space-time where words don't have the primary function; they even get in the way a bit. Bławut doesn't ask for much then, he focuses on observation. He doesn't rush.

Adam Palenta's camera looks with a similar intensity both into the instruments' details and Jerman's wrinkles which in the desert landscapes of Arizona are immersed in shades of orange, old gold, various shades of brown, and muddy green. There, time goes by differently and actually, it may not count at all. Jerman lays bare a paradise before Bławut. There is no tree of the knowledge of good and evil, forbidden fruit, nor God in it. There is only one man who, filled with respect for nature, tries to discover its possibilities and describe them using sounds, melodies, and rhythms because the southeast part of a desert sounds differently than the southwest one. Just close your eyes and listen.

ANNA BIELAK

The Ugliest Car

Najbrzydszy samochód świata

DIR.: GRZEGORZ SZCZEPANIAK • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 47'

They aren't a couple, although at first sight, they behave like an old, happily married pair. Kazimiera is the mother. She is 94. Bogdan, 70, is her son. Their Wartburg car just celebrated its 51st birthday and proudly bears the title of the 2015 Ugliest Car in Poland. 'Charm is found in ugliness!' says Bogdan fondly. What is most charming in Grzegorz Szczepaniak's film, however, is not really the worn out car, but above all the relationship between mother and son. The camera, attached inside the car to the windscreen, doesn't show us where we're headed. We don't know whether the road is straight or full of turns. Wherever it leads, the view is turned to the driver and his passenger. Kazimiera scolds her son; Bogdan doesn't care much about his mother's reproaches, but their relationship is not as neglected as the car, barely rolling through the city streets and international roads.

The son lovingly takes care of his mother. He takes her on a trip from Warsaw to Magdeburg, where she worked during the Second World War. Her husband, Bogdan's father, was imprisoned in Majdanek at that time. The mother and son reminisce all the time but they don't live in the past; don't stay in a room full of dusted photographs, don't reconstruct the course of events based on archives. Szczepaniak manages to masterfully connect the reflection on history and the trauma of war with a finely sketched portrait of a couple of protagonists who constantly head somewhere. Special nostalgic circus music accompanies them on their journey, which is an excellent composition. Thanks to it, Bogdan and Kazimiera seem humorous – they even have a clownish trait to them; but the apparently light narrative about them progressively assumes growing gravity. Sadness, and a bit of regret, emerge since there comes a time of reflection on what has been lost and of longing for what has never been possible to achieve.

ANNA BIELAK

POLISH DOCS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

2016–2017



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.



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...



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.



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.



Icon

DIR.: **WOJCIECH KASPERSKI** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 40'/52' • 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 • 85' • PROD.: ŁOZIŃSKI PRODUCTION, TVP
 • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL;
 MAËLLE GUENEGUES, CAT&DOCS, MAËLLE@CATNDOCS.COM

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 • 75' • 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.: **RAFAL 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.



Close Ties

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

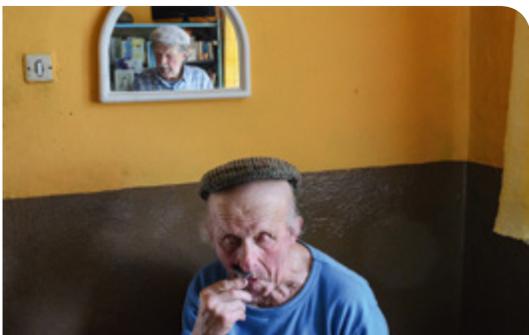
Forty-five years of marriage is an impressive anniversary. Barbara and Zdzisław could be proud of themselves if not for the fact that the husband left the wife for his lover eight years ago. But now they are together again, although Barbara claims that if it were not for his infirm legs, Zdzisław would 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' • 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' • 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.



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.



Polonaise

DIR.: **AGNIESZKA ELBANOWSKA** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 16' • 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.



The Gentle Giant

DIR.: **MARCIN PODOLEC** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY / ANIMATION • 11' • 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.



Urban Cowboys

DIR.: **PAWEŁ ZIEMILSKI** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 30' • PROD.: WAJDA STUDIO • CONTACT: AGNIESZKA ROSTROPOWICZ, WAJDA STUDIO, AROSTROPOWICZ@WAJDASTUDIO.PL; KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.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.



Author Solaris

DIR.: **BORYS LANKOSZ** • 2016 • DOCUMENTARY • 56' • PROD.: BLANKFILM PRODUCTIONS, TVP • CONTACT: MAGDALENA LANKOSZ, MAGDALENA.LANKOSZ@GMAIL.COM

The creative documentary film by Borys Lankosz is an attempt to capture the phenomenon of Stanisław Lem as a writer and thinker, whose intellectual horizons were far ahead of his epoch and the realities of the country where he had to live. The film, composed of archival collages, stage adaptations and unique excerpts of interviews, provides us with insights not only into the author's biography, but also into the tumultuous history of Central and Eastern Europe, which had shaped him.



One Two Zero

DIR.: **ANNA PAWLUCZUK** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 15' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Justyna is a nine year old girl who is training to be a professional rhythmic gymnast. Her life is filled with trainings and competitions where she often has to exceed her own limits and weaknesses. Every day she needs to be stronger and more determined if she wants to beat her competitors. Despite all the enormous efforts she doesn't always manage to stand on the podium. When she loses her hopes for winning she decides to start training five-year gymnasts by herself.



Volte

DIR.: **MONIKA KOTECKA, KAROLINA PORYŻAŁA** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 14' • PROD.: MOTH FILMS, MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Zuzia (12) has been training vaulting for two years and has an extraordinary role as the top of the acrobatic pyramid. She's a 'flyer', lifted by the stronger and more experienced vaulters, the 'base'. Another intensive season begins but during the training sessions it becomes apparent that the girl has lost some of her grace and lightness. At first the coach blames the 'base' but they admit that Zuzia is too big to lift. It becomes clear that she is 'just growing' and her role is given over to a younger girl.



Three Sisters

DIR.: **DARIUSZ KOWALSKI** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 56' • PROD.: RAGUSA FILM • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

A film about three sisters living in a Roma settlement in the Polish mountains. Cassandra, Soraja and Clara are typical teenagers who are interested in cosmetics, talk about jewellery and fashion and listen to simple Polish pop music. They go to school but Cassandra, the oldest, has individual tuition. They have additional classes organized by the Polish authorities to help them integrate into Polish society.



Face-Off

DIR.: **LUKASZ OSTALSKI** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 16' • PROD.: MAJ FILM PRODUKCJA FILMOWA • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Face-Off is a short documentary about Rafat: player, coach and founder of an amateur lacrosse team – The Corsairs. He has to divide his time between his sport passion and his daughter, Tosia, who he takes care of in turns with his ex-wife. Rafat stands at a crossroads. On one hand, he knows that his daughter is the most important and on the other hand, he's incapable of giving up the Corsairs even though his colleagues are immature and don't put their hearts into the sport.



XXXLove

DIR.: **JOANNA FRYDRYCH** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 60' • PROD.: GRUPA MEDIALNA FRYDRYCH, HBO EUROPE • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Adrian Lukoszek, without the help of specialists and without any miraculous diet, lost 120 kg in one year. He became a media hero and was overwhelmed with an avalanche of requests for help from obese people. So he began his mission of helping others. He noticed that the lack of love, closeness and acceptance is the main problem of people with XXXL size. Adrian became close to some of them. All in all, they have a ruined personal and intimate life.



Collection

DIR.: **MARCIN POLAR** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 19' • PROD.: FILM HOUSE PAWEŁ WILKOŁEK • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Mieczysław lives with his wife, Władzia, in a small, lost village. Being on the edge of life he lives a simply, taking care of his disabled wife. In his spare time, the old man tries to save relics of the past for future generations.



Dos Islas

DIR.: **ADRIANA F. CASTELLANOS** • POLAND, SPAIN • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 40' • PROD.: WAJDA STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Driven by a desire to reconstruct her grandmother's childhood memories, Adriana travels from Cuba to the island El Hierro. Just like the origin of life, this film was born from stories. Even at the age of 102, Elvira still tells her granddaughter that by jumping over a washbasin she can magically cross the Atlantic and visit the house of her birth. This return journey, which Elvira herself has decided not to undertake, shatters the family history that had been hidden in the fragmentary tales with which Adriana grew up.



Arabic Secret

DIR.: **JULIA GROSZEK** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 52' • PROD.: WAJDA STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Kamil Filipek wants to meet his father, Ilham Al Madfai. Ilham is a renowned star of Arabic folk music in the Middle East. The two have never met. The director invites viewers into Kamil's life to observe and reflect on the meaning of finding ones' roots. Can the meeting with his father shed some light on the inner secret – who he really is? This will be not only a meeting of two people, but also a meeting of two cultures. Kamil represents both of them – raised in Poland but deep in his soul he feels part of him belongs to the East. Can those two cultures coexist in this present time?



All Inclusive

DIR.: **MATEUSZ ROMASZKAN, MARTA WÓJTOWICZ-WCISŁO** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 72' • PROD.: TAKFILM • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

A telling image of contemporary society created out of amateur video footage filmed 'as a memento' by tourists on exotic holidays abroad. Everything constitutes one, never-ending, emotional point of view. We observe that a constant, almost obsessive, recording of visited sites changes the meaning of the journey and becomes its essence.



Desert Coffee

DIR.: MIKAEL LYPINSKI • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 53' • PROD.: MIKAEL LYPINSKI
SALTON SEA FILMS • CONTACT: MALGOSIA.KOZIOLL@GMAIL.COM

In the Californian Sonora desert, close to a military base, there is a 'wild' Slab City, inhabited by American Dream refugees. They are of different ages, they brought with them different stories, but all of them chose freedom, even at the expense of basic convenience. The only place with electricity here is a makeshift internet café hosted by Rob, serving 'the best coffee in the neighborhood.'



Dust

DIR.: JAKUB RADEJ • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 25' • PROD.: RADIO AND TELEVISION
DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK,
KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Dust is a study of the road a human body needs to go through from the moment of death to burial. The following stages of the road (embalming room, morgue, and cemetery) are juxtaposed in Jakub Radej's film with bureaucratic bookkeeping reality which touches also the possessions of the deceased. The cold record of the fate of a human's material remains creates an open forum which takes up both the question of the sense of existence and a reflection on the loneliness of people no one cares to say goodbye to.



The Ugliest Car

DIR.: GRZEGORZ SZCZEPANIAK • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 51' • PROD.: ANAGRAM
PUBLISHING COMPANY, TVP • CONTACT: JOANNA POPOWICZ, JOANNA@ANAGRAM.AUDIO

Retired Bogdan has nothing, except a 51-year-old Wartburg, officially named Poland's Ugliest Car, and no one, but his 94-year-old mother who wants to live only when her son takes her on a journey in his rusty car. Bodan desires to visit the place where his mother was taken as a young girl during WWII to work in a Nazi labour camp. From his hometown Marki, to Schoenbeck, Germany is about 750 km. Normally it's a one day trip but for them, but driving the old Wartburg it becomes a long and dangerous journey.



Dramas

DIR.: ZVIKA GREGORY PORTNOY • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 76' • PROD.: PLESNAR &
KRAUSS FILMS • CONTACT: MARIA KRAUSS, MARY@PLESNARANDKRAUSS.COM

Think of those in your life whom you've lost. Sit in front of a camera. Look at it as if you were looking in someone's eyes. Speak. Convince you are worthy to meet. This is how Daniel does it. For four years, he has been recording video letters. He works at construction sites. He doesn't know how to jump off a roof, but he can hang himself. He recognizes his daughter by her toes. He just got released from prison after 14 years. Dramas are his second skin. His greatest aspiration is to become a respected citizen as soon as possible.



The Land of Homeless

DIR.: MARCIN JANOS KRAWCZYK • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 53' • PROD.: JANOS FILM
PRODUCTION • CONTACT: JANOS FILM PRODUCTION, JANOSFILM.PRO@GMAIL.COM

Since 2007, the homeless in Ursus have been building an ocean-going yacht. Their goal is to finish it and sail for a year-and-a-half long cruise around the world. The idea had been sown in them by the Camillian Father Bogustaw, who passed away in 2009. The mission is in the making as the homeless, together with their captain, fulfill their common dream not only to break the cliché of homelessness, but above all to help themselves.



The Beksińskis. A Sound and Picture Album

DIR.: **MARCIN BORCHARDT** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 80' • PROD.: DAREK DIKTI
BIURO POMYSŁÓW, TVP • CONTACT: DAREK DIKTI, DAREK@DIKTI.PL

Painter Zdzisław Beksiński, his wife Zofia, and son Tomasz, a well-known radio journalist and translator, were a typical, and yet at the same time an unconventional family. One of the father's obsessions was to film himself and his significant ones. Using only archive material never seen before, most of which was filmed by Zdzisław, but also by many others, the film tells the tragic story of the Beksińskis, which keeps intriguing successive Polish filmmakers.



The Mine

DIR.: **MARIA ZMARZ-KOCZANOWICZ** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 59' • PROD.: ATM GRUPA SA,
CONTACT: ATM GRUPA, ATM@ATMGRUPA.PL

A portrait of three women of different ages working at the same place. Sorting coal in the Rydułtowy Coal Mine is a hard way to earn a living, but the protagonists are role models when it comes to fortitude. Unfortunately, their daily struggles are not only limited to shoveling the raw material, but also concern the most dull issues – such as the battle with mine clerks about cleaning the toilet stalls. Sometimes, their only weapon seems to be their sense of dignity and, not less important, their sense of humor.



Noiselessly. Background of the Desert

DIR.: **MACIEJ MAĐRACKI, MICHAŁ MAĐRACKI, GILLES LEPORE** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY
• 65' • PROD.: OTTER FILMS • CONTACT: ANNA WYDRA, ANNAWYDRA@OTTERFILMS.PL

At the gates of the desert, in southern Morocco, there is a town called Ouarzazate, where cinema permeates the indigenous culture, sharing common history for over half a century, soaking up the blue sky. The limits between fiction and reality blur. People of the desert became people of the cinema. Participation in the successive Western productions became the center of existence for movie extras. The point of view, desires, and emotions of background people now come to the forefront.



Opera about Poland

DIR.: **PIOTR STASIK** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 43' • PROD.: KIJORA • CONTACT:
KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

What is our country? What is our attitude towards it? Who are we? What's happening to us? Which ethos and values help us and which are our curse? Are we a nation striving for self-destruction? Have we been slowly committing suicide for centuries? A music piece, written especially for this occasion, is combined with documentary pictures (showing Poland and Polish people) and words (announcements from local papers, fragments of radio programs, poetry and prose). It is a story about Poland with Polish archetypes, symbols, anthropology, philosophy and metaphysics.



Festival

DIR.: **ANNA GAWLITA, TOMASZ WOLSKI** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 85' • PROD.: KIJORA •
CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

For a musician with perfect pitch and outstanding sensitivity, every performance in front of an audience is a lesson and an attempt to measure up to not only their remarkable predecessors but also themselves. During the 12th International Music Festival: Chopin and His Europe, we look closely at artists as they prepare for their performances. Their conversations and preparations come together to form exceptional portraits of these pianists' personalities. They all strive for perfect performances, but sometimes, when the applause fades, they experience something Arthur Rubinstein once dubbed as demi-succès.



By Stanley for Stanley

DIR.: **MONIKA MELEŃ** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 53' • PROD.: TVP •
CONTACT: MONIKA MELEŃ, MONIKA.MELEN@TVP.PL

Can a film become a vehicle for empathy? Stanisław is a painter and co-author of the film message addressed to Staś, several dozen years his junior. The intimately shot scenes are not only a testimony to unique understanding between the people afflicted with a similar disability, but also a lesson about the most common everyday matters: what to wear or how to react to intolerance towards people with disabilities.



How to Destroy Time Machines

DIR.: **JACEK PIOTR BŁAWUT** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 39' • PROD.: RABARBAR FILM STUDIO
• CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

How to Destroy Time Machines is a film to be listened to. It focuses on the person of Jeph Jerman, living in Arizona, a musician, experimenter, passionate about sounds. Jeph perceives the world in a different way than most of us. He doesn't want to get into the time machines that we are stuck in. It is a story about being here and now. It is not merely a film about an extraordinary composer – it is a parable of life.

more at www.polishdocs.pl



BY JERZY ARMATA

Tango dir.: Zbigniew Rybczyński (1980) Source: The National Film Archive

Seventy Years of

Polish animation is seventy years old. This important anniversary is being celebrated this year on numerous screens both in Poland and abroad. There is truly something to boast about, because since the end of the 1950's and beginning of the 1960's (the birth of the so-called Polish School of Animation) a brand has been established. The most spectacular proof of this are the two Oscars won in 1983 for *Tango* – Zbigniew Rybczyński and for *Peter and the Wolf* – Suzie Templeton (co-production Polish-British) a quarter of a century later.

To be honest, Polish animation was born much earlier, though not in film but in thought. Three decades after the birth of cinematography, Karol Irzykowski, a well-known critic, writer and translator, highly rated the artistic possibilities of animated film, prophesying a bright future. In 'The Tenth Muse – The Aesthetic Issues of Film' published in 1924, he wrote, 'The artificial decorations in *Caligari* (referring to *Dr Caligari's Cabinet* – Robert Wiene, 1919) have already moved into the area of drawn film, up until now in its embryonic state, but this will develop into a truly great film genre of the future.' This accurate, in-depth theory was unfortunately not accompanied by projects.

Aside from a few attempts, which count only as experiments, it would be necessary to wait until after World War II for those films. However, the first Polish animations were rather a denial of Irzykowski's theories and predictions. These were mainly 'agitprop' for adults and children, made using only the 'proper' method of socialist realism, and meant to teach and entertain, or more correctly 'teach, teach and once again teach' as said by the author of the famous sentence: 'Film is the most important form of art.' It was only in the beginning of 1956 that the climate was right for the creation of films, 'intuitively imaginative enough to express the powerful possibilities of this type of film', as Irzykowski had expressed earlier. Jan Lenica and

Polish original animated films were not created for the most part by film-makers who were inspired by art, but by artists who learned their film skills not in school but directly on-site with the camera much like French New-Wave artists.

Walerian Borowczyk, above all others, proved to be those intuitive ones. By penetrating entirely new areas of content and seeking new materials and techniques they became pioneers of a different understanding of animated film, one that was no longer a utilitarian, crafted product, but an art form. An artistic 'changing of the guard' took place. One of the best films of that period, directed by Halina Bielińska and Włodzimierz Haup, had exactly that rather symbolic title.

Lenica and Borowczyk paved the way for others. The philosophically reflective message of the original cartoon stories from Mirosław Kijowicz or Stefan Schabenbeck's satirical films are some examples. Daniel Szczechura's structurally condensed works, 'moving painting' by Witold Giersz and Piotr Szpakowicz, Kazimierz Urbański who constantly sought new forms of statement, the aesthetic, psychologically grippingly deep dramas of Ryszard Czekala or the contemplative philosophical

POLISH ANIMATION HIGHLIGHTS

In the Time of King Krakus / Za króla Krakusa (1947)
dir.: Zenon Wasilewski

Once There Was / Był sobie raz... (1957) dir.: Jan Lenica, Walerian Borowczyk

The School / Szkoła (1958) dir.: Walerian Borowczyk

New Janko, the Musician / Nowy Janko Muzykant (1960) dir.: Jan Lenica

Little Western / Maty western (1960) dir.: Witold Giersz

Playthings / Igraszki (1962) dir.: Kazimierz Urbański

The Banner / Sztandar (1965) dir.: Mirosław Kijowicz

Stairs / Schody (1968) dir.: Stefan Schabenbeck

Hobby (1968) dir.: Daniel Szczechura

An Appeal / Apel (1970) dir.: Ryszard Czekala

Sharp Involved Film non camera / Ostry film zaangażowany (1979)
dir.: Julian Józef Antoniszczak

Tango (1980) dir.: Zbigniew Rybczyński

Solo na ugorze / Solo na ugorze (1983) dir.: Jerzy Kalina

The Race / Wyścig (1989) dir.: Marek Serafiński

Franz Kafka (1991) dir.: Piotr Dumata

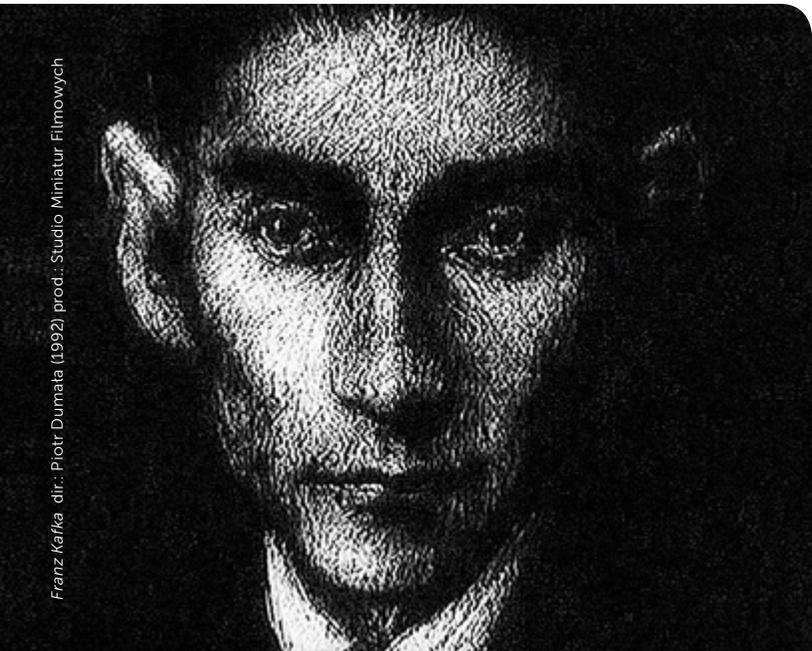
Tuning Instruments / Strojenie instrumentów (2000) dir.: Jerzy Kucia

The Cathedral / Katedra (2002) dir.: Tomasz Bagiński

Peter and the Wolf / Piotruś i wilk (2006) dir.: Suzie Templeton

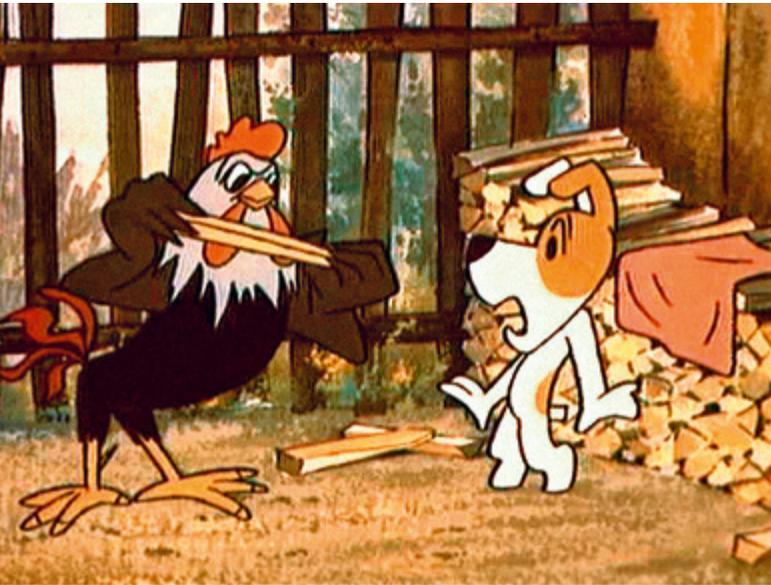
Kizi Mizi (2007) dir.: Mariusz Wilczyński

Polish Animation



Franz Kafka dir.: Piotr Dumata (1992), prod.: Studio Miniatur Filmowych

works of Jerzy Kucia, along with many other original artists all created a rich and stylistically unique Polish animated film scene in the 1960's and 1970's. Outside of Poland this was called, 'The Polish School of Animation'. The number of awards received by these films testify to the fact that it was as highly rated as the 'real' Polish film school represented by the likes of Andrzej Wajda, Andrzej Munk or Jerzy Kawalerowicz. Polish animated films quickly became not only the most award winning type of Polish film but also the most measurable one. Episodes of the most popular children's series, *Bolek and Lolek* were sold to over 80 nations on all continents. Other stars of children's films such as the dog *Reksio*, *The Magic Pencil*, the bear *Uszatek* or *Colargol*, also became very successful. Animated film contains elements of fine art as well as elements of film. Just as traditional film was once called 'moving pictures' so animated films were called, 'living art'. Hence the large interest in them from artists. Polish original animated films were not created for the most part by film-makers who were inspired by art, but by artists who learned their film



Rex and the Cockerels dir.: Józef Cwiertnia (1981) prod.: Studio Filmów Rysunkowych

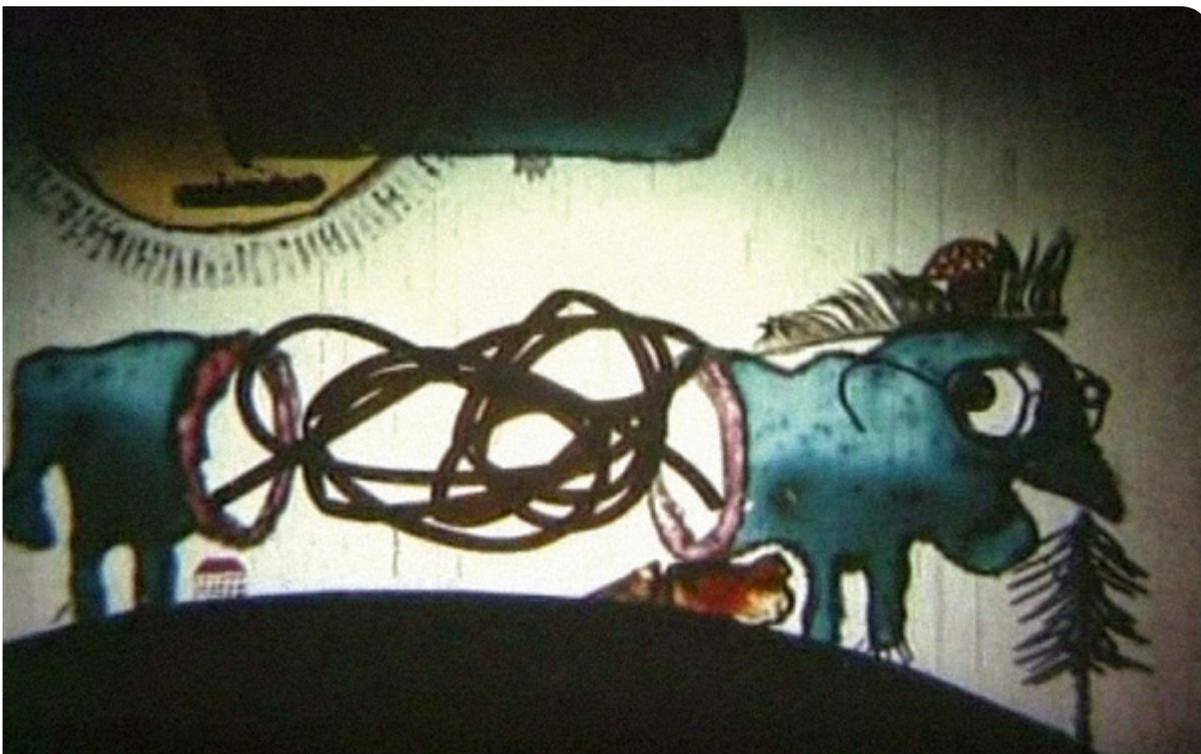
skills not in school but directly on-site with the camera much like French New Wave artists. That was how it was during the pioneering phase, and now for half a century animators have learned their trade in the Łódź Film School and in many art universities.

Polish animated film makes use of a broad range of technique, from the traditional (drawn, puppets) to the modern, such as cut-outs which became a Polish specialty. ‘We were always frustrated by how laborious animation was, so we decided to make it more simple. That’s how cut-out was born – from

our laziness’, Daniel Szczechua confessed humbly. Thus streamlining work led to a basic technique that left its mark on the world. Another type of streamlining was used by Julian Józef Antonisz. He cultivated the non-camera method which consists of painting or drawing on the film roll and even sometimes hand scratching sound onto it. ‘A camera isn’t necessary for making films. True cinema ceased to exist with the entrance of the Lumiere brothers’, he remarked provocatively. Piotr Dumała created an original, extremely time-consuming technique using plaster boards that he used for years and was able to bring Dostojewski/Kafka-ish psychological nuances to the screen with it.

Zbigniew Rybczyński holds a very important place in the Polish animation scene. He constantly sought out new techniques and ways of expression, forcing ‘a liquidation of reality... so that he could create everything himself’, stated his friend Andrzej Barański. That force brought him an Oscar for creating the crafty, (hard to believe) not computerized *Tango*. Twenty years later Tomasz Bagiński won an Oscar nomination for his computer generated *Cathedral*.

It is wonderful that the Program Board of the Krakow Film Festival will honor two masters of Polish animation, Witold Giersz and Daniel Szczechura, this year with the prestigious Dragon of Dragons award. Their fantastic works have accompanied the festival practically from the beginning. The Krakow Film Festival will kick off the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Polish animated film. The beginning is officially counted as Zenon Wasilewski’s puppet film, *In the time of King Krakus* (1947). Who says that Krakow wasn’t built in a day? ■



How a Sausage Dog Works dir.: Julian Antonisz (1971) © Studio Miniatur Filmowych



BOROWCZYK

MASTER OF ESCAPE

BY JAKUB MIKURDA

Walerian Borowczyk is one of the most mysterious figures in European cinema history. He was a graphic designer, painter, sculptor, writer, animator, director, a Titan of work, restless experimenter. In the 1970's, he was hailed as 'the most outstanding creator from behind the Iron Curtain', mentioned in the same breath with Buñuel, Bresson, and Eisenstein. As an artist, he fought his whole life against being labeled, and yet ended up in the exceptionally tight and uncomfortable pigeonhole of an erotic cinema maker.

Borowczyk's work, for more than three decades available only in a truncated form, has been experiencing a renaissance for the past few years. New DVD releases, restored film copies, books, and festival reviews all contributed to this. A retrospective review of Borowczyk's films in the Centre Pompidou in Paris that lasted several weeks, together with seminars and discussions, ended in March. 'How could we have forgotten him?', a moved viewer asked after a film showing.

Borowczyk was born in Kwilcz near Poznań. After the Second World War, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, together with, among others, Andrzej Wajda. He quickly gained recognition for his satirical drawings, lithographs and cinema posters. In the 1950's, together with another renowned graphic designer, Jan Lenica, he started

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The turning point in Borowczyk's career was a surreal short film entitled *House*, made with Lenica in 1958, that included elements of animation, collage, and live action. *House* earned him the grand prize at the Brussels Experimental



The Astronauts (1959) © Argos Films

Film Festival, beating films by such giants of later avant-garde cinema such as Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage, Maya Deren, Ken Russell, or Agnès Varda.

After the success of *House*, Borowczyk settled in Paris. He accepted an offer from Les Cinéastes Associés film studio and immediately started working. In the 1960's, he made film after film. His mind was overflowing with ideas. Each film was different from the previous one and in each one he tested a new technique, a new style. *The Astronauts* (*Les Astronautes*, 1959), *Renaissance* (1963), *Angels' Games* (*Jeux des anges*, 1964), or *Mr. and Mrs. Kabal's Theatre* (1967) extended the limits of the animated film. After a screening of Borowczyk's films, André Breton, the so-called 'Pope of Surrealism', embraced him and told him: 'you have a fulgurant

imagination'. The French critics struggled with pronouncing his last name, so he accepted the nickname 'Boro'.

In his 1966 *Rosalie*, the camera is fixed for a dozen minutes on Ligia Branice-Borowczyk's face while she expounds. The film had a hypnotizing power, similar to the finale of Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928). It won the Silver Bear award at the Berlin International Film Festival.

In May 1968, when entire Paris buzzed with revolutionary statements, Borowczyk locked himself and a film crew in the abandoned factory of Marie and Pierre Curie. In the chambers that once served to source radium, he constructed the Goto island world, ruled by a grotesque dictator. Borowczyk transferred methods from his studio to the film set. He controlled everything to the last detail, painting decorations and constructing paraphernalia on his own, directing actors during shots, issuing short, technical commands as if he wanted to 'animate' their bodies. The crew was disoriented, but also fascinated. Camera and lamp operators



Renaissance (1963) © Friends of Walerian Borowczyk

along with assistants asked, 'Is he a genius or crazy?' After the premiere, no one had any doubts. The French critics loved *Goto*. They wrote: 'A rare example of real surrealism!' 'Beauty and mystery!' 'A dystopian, claustrophobic fairy-tale'. *Cahiers du cinema* dedicated its cover and a large block of text to Borowczyk. Poland and Spain forbade the distribution of the film – Poland on the pretext of anti-communist, and Spain – anti-fascist content.

His next film, *Blanche* (1971), set in a 13th century castle, only solidified opinions on Borowczyk as a demiurge-director. Borowczyk hand-made most of the 'medieval' props, from illuminated prayer books to weapons.

Two years later, Borowczyk surprised again. Though the majority of his earlier films pulsed with subtle sexual energy,

The turning point in Borowczyk's career was a surreal short film entitled *House*, made with Lenica in 1958, that included elements of animation, collage, and live action.

in 1974 his *Immoral Tales* for the first time brought sex to the forefront. The *Tales* touched on various sexual taboos, from Renaissance to modernity. The shots left much exposed, but they were far from erotic. Critics were divided – some praised the artistic sensibility and eccentric view, others wrote about a false step. Spectators voted with their feet. In 1974, *Tales* drew more than a million viewers to cinemas.

In the same year, Borowczyk returned to Poland to make *The Story of Sin* (1975), another story of insane love after *Goto* and *Blanche*. He toyed with the church and the Party



Photo: PAP/CAF

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

Once There Was / *Był sobie raz* (1957, with Jan Lenica)

House / *Dom* (1958, with Jan Lenica)

School / *Szkoła* (1958)

The Magician / *Magik* (1959)

The Astronauts / *Astronauci* (1959)

Renaissance / *Renesans* (1963)

Angels' Games / *Gry aniołów* (1964)

Rosalie / *Rozalia* (1966)

Blanche / *Blanka* (1971)

Immoral Tales / *Opowieści niemoralne* (1974)

The Story of Sin / *Dzieje grzechu* (1975)

The Beast / *Bestia* (1975)

who expressed, 'justified concerns' about the project and the director. Someone from the projection booth reported to the censorship authorities that a 'pornographic film' was being made. Borowczyk used the projection possibilities of Polish cinematography and made one of his most achieved films. *The Story of Sin* made it to the main competition of the Cannes Film Festival and turned out to be one of the most bankable films in Polish cinema history.

In parallel with *The Story of Sin*, he worked on *The Beast* (1975) – a Buñuelesque satire on aristocracy, hypocrisy, and traditional morality. The dreamy sequence in which the French heiress succumbs to a humongous, hairy beast with a huge penis, for many spectators, even those accustomed to transgressions in art (remember, we're talking about the 1970's!),

WALERIAN BOROWCZYK (1923–2006) – visual artist, director of animated and full-length feature films, production designer, photographer, and writer. Considered the greatest creator of erotic cinema in the world, as well as the co-founder of the 'Polish School of Posters', 'Polish School of Animation', and a pioneer of surrealist cinema featuring the absurd. Multiple prize-winner for his visual art and film works, recipient of honorary distinctions, such as a Golden Medal from the President of Italy and the Max Ernst Lifetime Achievement award for animated film.

proved to be too controversial. In most countries, *The Beast* was subject to censorship if it made it to cinema screens at all.

What happened later? Did the market change? Or the moral climate? Spectators' expectations? Critics' tastes? What did Borowczyk do to deserve exile? Why was he, for many a year, unable to achieve his most personal projects?

I've been working on a documentary film which tries to resolve the mystery of Borowczyk's career for four years. The clues led me to France, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, and Spain. I've talked to his co-workers and other directors who, despite the fact they never met him, owe much to his films. My investigation brought some surprising results. The details will follow in Autumn. ■

He controlled everything to the last detail, painting decorations and constructing paraphernalia on his own, directing actors during shots, issuing short, technical commands as if he wanted to 'animate' their bodies.



Strange Case

Zofia Jaroszuk talks with Zbigniew Czapla, the director of animated films about snorkelling, the role of coincidence in life, painted animation and about his new film.

ZOFIA JAROSZUK: Do you dive?

ZBIGNIEW CZAPLA: No, but I swim a lot. Unfortunately, I was forced to do it; it's the consequence of my workstyle. Some physical activity is necessary when you sit for many hours in an uncomfortable position day after day, month after month.

In your film *Strange Case* the protagonist cuts off the noise of the world and its relentless movement by going diving and immersing himself in the water. To what extent did your experience translate into that character?

Swimming carves out a certain insight into reality within you. You are focused on basic activities. What counts most

is rhythm and correct breathing. It is a certain kind of meditation, balancing at the limits of two worlds. Sometimes, willingly or not, we dive into various states – from films or from life; they crop up in our subconscious.

***Strange Case* is maybe the most philosophical of your films. There are echoes of various concepts, and the narrative and form themselves characterize a philosophical search for answers.**

Looking for answers to questions such as where we come from, who we are, and where we're going is a never-ending story. It's both an intimate and universal experience. I hope the form of my film is sufficiently capacious and open to associations. I'd like for everyone who immerses themselves in it to get a chance to live out their own story. I'm open to any interpretation and association from spectators and those are often a great surprise to me. Possibly thanks to that I can better understand where I am and who I am.

What inspired you to tell this story?

I see all my films so far, and especially this one, as a sum of my experiences and possibilities. Even if the preliminary concept and screenplay is limited to a particular, closed story, I often forget about the original intent during filmmaking. In fact, all my experiences, desires, and inspirations are, in a sense, included in what I do. While working on a film, I try to stay as focused as possible, although it's incredibly difficult in such a long process. Certain events from my life, especially from my childhood, are a sort of key to this story. A long time ago, during a summer vacation, I jumped into the water and almost drowned. I experienced that both terrifying and fascinating moment when all your life flashes before your eyes as in a fast motion film. I remember there were exceptionally intense images from the past and the future, but maybe also those that could've happened to someone else.

What does the strange coincidence mean for you?

It took me disturbingly long to decide on the title; actually, till the last days of making the film. Coincidence to me is a term that is so capacious and ambiguous; one into which you can fit almost anything. We all know the great impact of coincidence on anything that happens to us, so isn't it strange?

Despite rewriting and tweaking the story multiple times, I still treat it as an open subject and loosely interrelated matter. The film has a ragged and multi-thread structure but I hope the sequence of scenes complete and supplement each

A PARTICULAR INSIGHT INTO REALITY

other. For me, it's a sort of pulsing stream of consciousness and an intense sequence of images. Despite its character of a stream of consciousness that you are talking about, the film has a very distinct, five-fold structure that I find corresponds with the consecutive phases of human life.

The division into phases, or maybe the respective acts, seemed to me quite natural from the beginning. These parts are correlated with each other and co-make several films in one, in a manner of speaking. My aim was to play out all the threads in such a way that they refer to something we could call the 'collective memory', to the experiences that are not only mine but, in a sense, common to all of us.

In the film, a separate order is introduced through the hero's monologue, which on the one hand, is an attempt to name or organize reality, and on the other – becomes the expression of a certain helplessness. What is its role in the film?

There are a few meanings. For sure, it's a kind of interior monologue, a conversation of the main protagonist, but also of the author, with himself. It is also an attempt to superpose an additional narrative layer which will produce a different, maybe deeper meaning to the story told with images. I wanted a resonance between what is seen on-screen and what is beyond it. This is why I waited till the very end with the final version of the text. Of course, I had a refined screenplay and a preliminary suggestion of the text, but after having edited the film, I had to re-write it again in order to sketch in some things that seemed unclear, or sometimes even completely missed the mark to me in the image itself.

Let's talk for a while about the technique. You work with paint, which, despite a precise workmanship, has an intrinsic element of randomness and uncontrolled expression.

What did your work on the animation look like?

I worked mainly on paper for this film. I've tried to develop my skill in this – still – primitive technique for a few years. As I searched for the adequate equivalent for each short scene, I tried at the same time to give it an internal order – beginning, climax, and the appropriate ending – hoping that it would allow us later to edit the material into something coherent, yet quivering at the same time, something woven with scenes of various dynamics. I work with very small formats – half an A4 size. I use diluted acrylic paints and ink, so the effect of floating spots and uneven edges results from the technique



ZBIGNIEW CZAPLA – born in 1972, he is a graphic designer, screenwriter, painter and animator. He graduated from the Faculty of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. He is an author of experimental animated films for which he received numerous awards at international film festivals. A scholar of Ellizabeth Greenshields Foundation (Canada), DAAD (Germany) and Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. He is a member of International Animated Film Society ASIFA.

FILMOGRAPHY: *The Ritual* (2010), *Paper Box* (2012), *Toto* (2013), *This World* (2014), *Strange Case* (2017).

itself. At the same time, I like the element of surprise when the film frame, in reality a bit bigger than a stamp, becomes something completely different when it's highly magnified on the cinema screen and an image from the borderline of abstraction takes on a very realistic dimension in motion.

I don't start my work with the contours. I try to quickly paint the whole frame at once; I hope this way, I gain the appropriate expression. There's also a lot of uncontrolled gesture and randomness in it. To the extent it was possible, I tried not to repeat the scenes if something didn't work well. With this volume of material I couldn't really allow myself repetitions. I already know myself a bit, and I never work on a film in chronological order. I chose particular scenes from various places in the screenplay that I could work on at a given moment. If I were forced to work chronologically from the first to the last scene, I suspect in the middle of the film it would already turn out that the beginning is rotten, and a few months of work have been wasted. The first stage is usually the weakest or completely rotten. Usually, with time, I manage to mature to the subject and go deeper.

The image is complemented with music composed by the Oleś brothers, with whom you collaborated on your earlier film, *Ritual*. How did this collaboration turn out?

Indeed, it was our second common encounter with film. To be honest, I couldn't wait to collaborate again with Marcin and Bartek, though I knew this time it would look completely different. I went to their concerts, listened to their following records, and I heard how their music style has evolved and matured

Despite its character of a stream of consciousness that you are talking about, the film has a very distinct, five-fold structure that I find corresponds with the consecutive phases of human life.



My aim was to play out all the threads in such a way that they refer to something we could call the 'collective memory', to the experiences that are not only mine but, in a sense, common to all of us.

within the past few years. I was very open to any suggestions and full of concern at the same time. In the case of this film, we waited with music until the last minute. It's incredible, but during the sound mix, I saw my film for the first time in a completely different light, as if it were not my film anymore. It broke away from me and finally came into its own. I feel that the music has introduced new content into the film, adding different meanings that surprised me. Then, at the last stage of editing, we switched the place of some pieces in order to avoid an overly illustrative character. It was perhaps worth it as such a solution usually brings about unforeseen and surprising effects.

The sound editor is Michał Fojcik with whom you worked for the first time, correct?

I watched many films that Michał co-worked on, so I highly respected his capabilities, methods of work, and professionalism. I'm really happy that he agreed to work on the film and despite the fact that he is a very busy man, we managed to find time and the fitting collaborative format. When I work on the image, I always, simultaneously, have somewhere in my head ready-made solutions and ideas about the sound, so some motives are recorded by myself. I'm very happy that Michał agreed with some of these ideas and incorporated them into the soundtrack, imparting a really powerful and expressive form to the entirety. After the music and sound joined, I finally realized the film was finished and that it even stopped being my film any longer. It was an extraordinary moment of huge relief – when I felt the film started a life of its own, and I have nothing more to say here. ■



Escape Ucieczka

DIR.: JAROSŁAW KONOPKA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2017 • 15'

The sound of creaking doors, the first-person camera perspective, darkness and claustrophobic atmosphere – the animation style makes one think of *Escape* by Jarosław Konopka or a well done horror film. Unfortunately, the events the animation alludes to actually happened.

The film refers to the bloody massacres of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia, but it could equally be an illustration of any historical event involving violence and genocide.

The animation opens with unsettling images of a destroyed village and burning houses. In this landscape of degradation, we notice bleeding characters receiving final stabs, and then slowly crawling out of their hiding places. Can anything save an elderly woman and her son? Does their world still exist? The protagonists, suspended between life and death, try to redeem their memories and themselves.

Gloomy images, terrifying sounds and shrill music build an atmosphere of uncertainty and constant peril. With each hand-held shot, regardless of whether the camera cautiously penetrates a house or lashes in fright, shivers course down our spine. The realism of the animation is intensified by the scenography for which authentic elements of nature have been used: stones, wood, or flowing water.

The characters of this film, shown using slow-motion technique are puppets that have already made an appearance on screen. They were used in *Underlife*, the director's previous animation, also made in a horror film convention. Though in *Escape* they are the ones who are victims of the brutal acts, their sallow skin, tousled hair, and empty eyes are disturbing. The characters don't talk with each other, and their relationships are shown through movement and gesture. Besides, what can actually be said about unjustified violence experienced from other people, sometimes even from those closest to us?

DAGMARA MARCINEK



Traces of the Ephemeral Ślady ulotne

DIR.: AGNIESZKA WASZCZENIUK • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2016 • 8'

This animation by Agnieszka Waszczeniuk is a poetic narrative about the relationship between man and the world around him. The lost and lonely protagonist is facing Mother Nature who is mighty and rules over plants, animals, and atmospheric phenomena. He is weak and doesn't even control what he, himself, created.

The house built by this man, as in the fable of the Three Little Pigs for children, is left with no chance against the forces of nature – it gets blown away by a mighty wind. From that time on, the hero is condemned to an unequal battle: he has no place to hide from the cold, and every step is a struggle. Nature, in contrast, even though subject to destruction, constantly regenerates itself. Broken trees bear seeds that germinate into new plants, and dying animals become feed for living ones. The circle of life is unbroken. The animation shows, nevertheless, that man is a part of nature, so rather than fight, he should find relief in it.

Instead of paint, computer animation or 3D effects, the author chooses to tell her story with finely ground coffee on a backlit glass background. The choice of natural material and traditional animation technique consorts with the film's subject. After all, how better to show the ephemeral quality of human fate in confrontation with the forces of nature than through coffee grounds blown about by the wind?

This technique also gives a dreamy feel to the film. Thanks to the delicate material, the shapes are soft, and their blurry contours are reminiscent of a dreamy vision. The music is full of anxiety, accompanied by direful sounds of nature: crows cawing, cracking of breaking trees, or blasts of wind. All this creates a sense that the film story is set between an illusion and a glance from another world.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



A Lexicon of Thoughts

Leksykon myśli

DIR.: **URSZULA RESZCZYŃSKA** • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2016 • 7'

A for aggression, B for baggage, D for depression, I for interpretation – *A Lexicon of Thoughts* is a collection of alphabetically ordered, short, humorous stories about emotions or feelings. Urszula Reszczyńska's animation uses humorous images to depict the meaning of notions that are sometimes difficult to describe verbally.

What is depression? Perhaps it is the moment when you unfold an umbrella but instead of the expected raindrops, a huge elephant falls on your head, weighs you down and won't let you break free. What are struggles? Maybe an attempt to walk six dogs at the same time, where each one is of a different size and pulls the leash in a different direction? Short scenes such as these make up *A Lexicon of Thoughts*, and thus prove that animation is able to explain the world around us in a simple and accurate way.

The film would be less suggestive if not for the great imagination of the author. Her visions are not only accurate, but also amusing. The drawings remind one of comic strips in newspapers; they bring a smile to our faces and prompt reflection. The protagonists are people, animals, and weird creatures drawn in black line, and the fictional universe has been limited to minimum, in the name of the rule that genius lies in simplicity. The dominance of image over words is emphasized by the sound effects of the film – the protagonists use incomprehensible sounds or 'blah blah blah'. The characters also communicate via text in speech balloons, but it is their shape, rather than the text written in them, that decides on what the sense of the utterance is. Therefore, the animation by Urszula Reszczyńska becomes an ode to the art of animated film itself, thanks to which one can 'talk' about the most difficult matters using a sheet of paper and a marker pen.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

Oh Mother! O matko!

DIR.: **PAULINA ZIÓŁKOWSKA** • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2017 • 12'

They play, shop at the marketplace, and feed birds together. She watches over him while crossing the street, he protects her against a dog she is scared of. It seems the mother and the son in Paulina Ziółkowska's animated film function in a perfect symbiosis: at times she takes care of the child, at other times he looks after his mom so that she doesn't get hurt. However, the relationships between the characters of *Oh Mother!* are far more complicated than that. The idyll comes to an end when the son grows up and tries to (literally) let go of his Mother's apron strings, and a woman he wants to bond with appears on the horizon. His jealous Mother weighs him down with responsibilities and remorse, trying to keep her child close to her. The animation lays bare the weaknesses of motherly love that can change into a toxic relationship. It shows a possessive mother who can't come to terms with the fact that her son wants to become autonomous.

Paulina Ziółkowska tells the whole story without words. The changing roles of the mother and the son at different stages of their life are shown through visual manipulation of the height and age of the characters. However, the contrast is built not only on the large-small or young-old oppositions, but also on the play with shadowing and black and white stylistics. The only things that are of pink color in the film are a lollipop and feminine nipples – the symbols of childhood and adulthood, the two stages fighting against each other in the boy's life. The narrative is fluently built upon the surrealist scenes permeating each other: the son's legs that pierce through walls while his Mother still keeps him in a cot, or a picture of a gigantic woman installing a house for her child under her skirt. Each of these scenes is in fact yet another metaphor for complex family relationships. On the one hand, *Oh Mother!* seems absurd and funny, but on the other hand – real, and therefore very terrifying.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



Strange Case Dziwny przypadek

DIR.: ZBIGNIEW CZAPLA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2017 • 14'

'The only thing that is constant is change' – this quote by Heraclitus that crowns the animation is at the same time its best summary. In *Strange Case*, the only certain thing is that everything changes, like in a kaleidoscope, and that Zbigniew Czapla offers the viewers of his film a visual and fictional vertigo.

The story in this animation is told through stream of consciousness which gives way to the freely interlinked thoughts, memories, and doubts of the main protagonist. Universal meditation on the human condition breaks forth from the scenes that, at first, appear chaotically related. The hero returns to the stages of his life that impacted him: adolescence, love, passions, traumas, and historical events. The animation shows the monotony and the repetitiveness of human life, situations you cannot escape, failures you cannot avoid, and memories you cannot get rid of. Everything is narrated with voice-over while posing questions about what we live for and where we go.

Controlled chaos dominates the visual layer of the film as well, which emphasizes the free flux of illusions mixed up with memories. In this beautiful, paint-like animation, the fictional universe is created by gentle brush strokes and spots of color. The realistically rendered characters are shown interchangeably with abstract images of nature. Those paint-like improvisations are complemented by music lacking distinct rhythm or sense of direction. All these elements create a perfectly produced, philosophical animation. We gather from it that life is a game and provides an infinite number of combinations. This remains true for *Strange Case* itself – its ending depends solely on the viewer's interpretation.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



Bernard

DIR.: ANNA OPARKOWSKA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2016 • 6'

A huge polar bear has a big problem. He feels alone because no animal at the whole North Pole wants to befriend him, or even talk. The reindeer run away when they spot him, the fish swim away in panic when he jumps into the water, and the seal jumps away in fear at the sight of him. Bernard decides to talk about his great sadness on a psychiatrist's couch.

Anna Oparkowska's film speaks, in an original manner, about submitting to stereotypes and treating others in a superficial way without trying to see deeper. While at the end of a classic animated cartoon, the animals would discover that the terrifying bear is in fact a gentle and kind bear, a happy end is not an option here. The animation doesn't convey full optimism and hope. Quite conversely – it talks about one's innate nature that cannot be changed or tricked, and about social maladjustment that cannot be helped.

The film's advantage is not only its paradoxical punch-line, but also the visual side. Despite its bitter message, *Bernard* appears to be a cartoon for children and can equally be taken as such. The protagonists are cute, clumsy animals; the arctic landscape adds charm, and the funny scenes evoke a smile on our faces. Simultaneously with the image, Bernard's story is being told through music composed by the jazz artist Mikołaj Trzaska – calm at the beginning, then escalating the tension with irritating sounds, and falling into a nostalgic mood at the end. The universal message and beautiful execution make this animated variation on a theme of loneliness and good intentions a perfect proposition both for children and adults.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

POLISH ANIMATIONS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

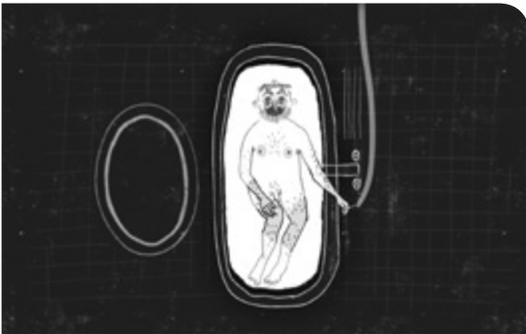
2016–2017



XOXO – Hugs and Kisses

DIR.: **WIOLA SOWA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 13' • 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' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

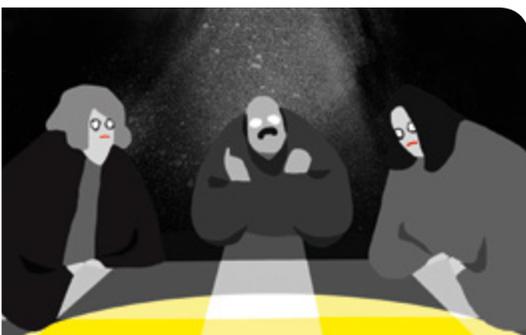
Pencilless Case is a story about feeling different and the consequences resulting from confronting this feeling. We meet our protagonist when he decides to step beyond the confines of his loneliness and to go out to people, which turns out to be a rough experience tinted with both happiness and madness. 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' • 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 busy 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' • 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' • 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' • PROD.: ANIMOON • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

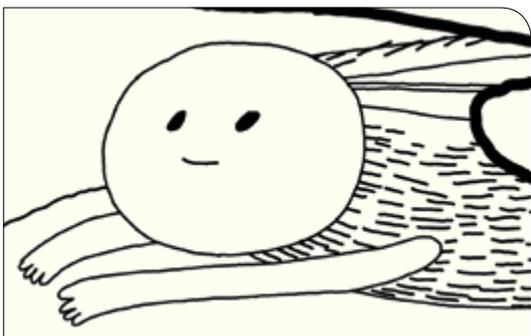
One of many similar, yet an entirely unique courtyard that brings back dozens of vivid memories. For the protagonist – a young boy – it is a safe place where he grows up and first experiences joy, curiosity and friendship. Years later, as a grown man he tries to bring back the memories of those happy 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' • 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' • 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' • 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' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

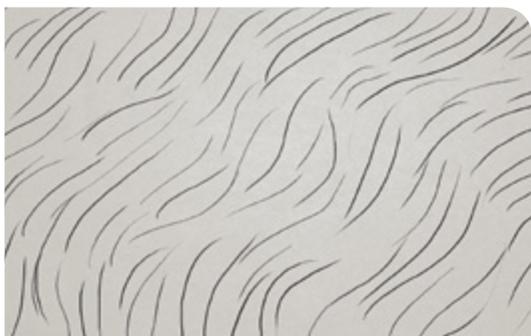
A story of five people that are considered 'weirdos'. What if their compulsions and obsessions have more sense than anyone would think? Perhaps they know something about the world that the rest of the so-called 'normal people' simply can't see.



The Shavings

DIR.: **AGATA MIANOWSKA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 6' • 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 MAGNUSKA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 7' • POLAND PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

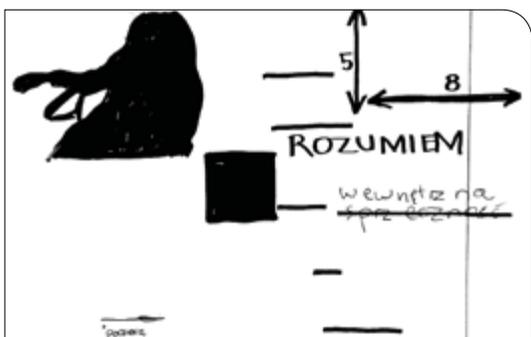
A foreign body lives its own life. You're not able to get rid of it, it's always with you, you need it. Caress that odd part of yours, don't try to shave off its long tousled fur. This is a story about something that you consider strange at first, but with time it becomes the dearest thing to you; a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



Hail Mary

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

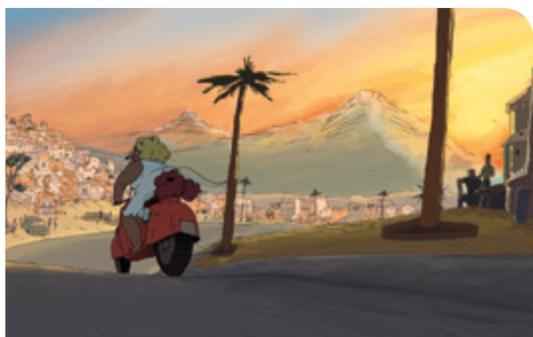
Hail Mary is a story about children's fears fuelled by village superstition. Little Boy, who is the main character, is convinced that the Crone has a significant impact on his life. She goes around the village and, one time, she casts a spell on his Mother. Even death can't stop the Crone.



Yesterday's Record

DIR.: **MICHAŁ SOJA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 5' • 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' • 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' • 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' • PROD.: WJTEAM • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

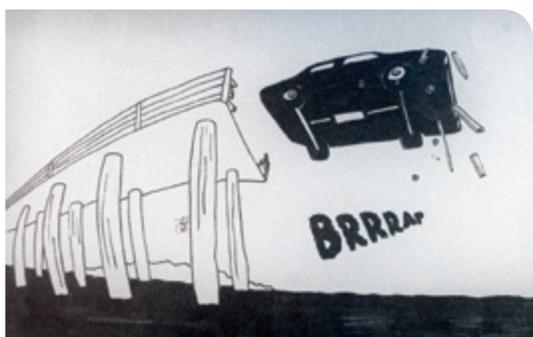
The Wizard of U.S. is an animated collage, a social satire referring to a popular American story by L. F. Baum *The Wizard of Oz*. A mysterious tornado transports Dorothy to an unusual place full of prosperity and danger. She follows a yellow brick road to meet the wizard, who will surely make her dreams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



Black

DIR.: **TOMASZ POPAKUL** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 14' • 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' • 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' • 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' • 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' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KRZYSZTOF BRZEWOSKI, 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' • 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' • 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' • 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.



Traces of Ephemeral

DIR.: **AGNIESZKA WASZCZENIUK** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 8' • PROD.: UNIVERSITY OF ARTS IN POZNAŃ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

This film is the story of man and his relationship with nature – the nature of which we are all part which has the ability to renew itself, dying and returning to life. The unreal atmosphere and constantly blowing wind can destroy, but it also gives hope for the birth of something new and raises the question – are we watching the moment when the main character awakens or the moment when he collapses into eternal sleep?



Evening

DIR.: **IZABELA PLUCIŃSKA** • 2016 • ANIMATION • 3' • POLAND, GERMANY •
 PROD.: CLAYTRACES • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION,
 MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

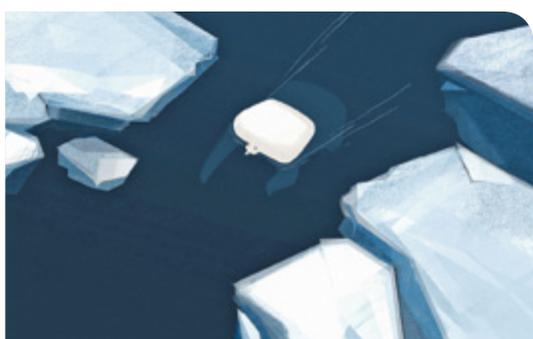
A man and a woman have obviously run out of words to say to each other – so they take action. He throws her favourite dinnerware out of the window; she smashes his hunting trophy... Furniture, clothes, walls – nothing is safe from them. In Izabela Plucińska's plasticine animation the quarrelling couple join forces to smash the whole household to pieces. But can people who argue so passionately really just part ways at the end of the day?



Lexicon of Reflexions

DIR.: **URSZULA RESZCZYŃSKA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 7' • PROD.: ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN WARSAW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The composition of the film is based on a lexicon – short humorous scenes show personal observations and reflections on a dozen watchwords. All of them refer to different physical and intellectual states that we all know from experience.



Bernard

DIR.: **ANNA OPARKOWSKA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 6' • PROD.: GS ANIMATION •
 CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A short story about loneliness, maladjustment and the desperate need of closeness, set in a severe winter landscape. Bernard faces the stereotype of an animal predator, one you wouldn't cross paths with. Feeling resigned, he tries to express the truth about his isolation, and suppress the call of the wild in him.



Ant Gets Married

DIR.: **MICHAŁ PONIEDZIELSKI** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 15' • PROD.: ANIMOON SP. Z O.O., GS ANIMATION, MICHAŁ PONIEDZIELSKI, LSW, STUDIO SPOT, NATIONAL AUDIOVISUAL INSTITUTE
 • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Ant lives in an anthill which, actually, could be any typical European metropolis and Ant could be any typical ambitious, well-educated, young European woman. She works for a corporation, goes to a beautician, attends yoga classes, watches TV, reads tabloids and is trying to lose some fictitious weight. She dreams of being a successful woman: independent, professionally fulfilled, beautiful and happy. Unwittingly, however, she longs for great love, maybe even kids and a family...



The New Day

DIR.: **KATARZYNA K. PIERÓG** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 7' • PROD.: UNIVERSITY OF ARTS IN POZNAŃ
 • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Do we live our life to the fullest or do we merely exist? This is a movie about the life of a man, stuck in schemes, in passive activity, incarcerated by the on-going days which are only meaningless copies of the previous ones. Wake-up, a cup of coffee, a cigarette, a tram to work, work, a cigarette, a pub, back home, wake-up... A seemingly easy, unreflective life becomes a trap for the character – a new day, and another, and one more.



Strange Case

DIR.: **ZBIGNIEW CZAPLA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 14' • PROD.: WARSZTAT FILMOWY – TOMASZ WOLF • CONTACT: ZBIGNIEW CZAPLA, INFO@ZBIGNIEWCZAPLA.PL; TOMASZ WOLF, TWW@INTERIA.PL

A surreal journey in several acts. The sequence of events like a stream of consciousness, full of reflections and memories. The sum of random experiences and echo of the collective memory.



The Escape

DIR.: **JAROSŁAW KONOPKA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 15' • PROD.: STUDIO FILMOWE ANIMA-POL
 • CONTACT: PIOTR KRÓLAK, INFO@ANIMAPOL.PL

A woman and a child – two people saved by remembrance. An apocalyptic annihilation has happened in their world and afterimages of those traumatic events interfere with the perception of reality. The woman and child are haunted by a constant sense of insecurity and danger. The surrounding world gives them no chance for survival. The main characters exist, but as if they were dead. They meet, but they can't see each other. They live only in blurred images of human memory, dulled by time.



Oh Mother!

DIR.: **PAULINA ZIÓŁKOWSKA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 12' • PROD.: FUMI STUDIO
 • CONTACT: ANNA WASZCZUK, FUMI STUDIO, FESTIWALE@FUMISTUDIO.COM

Mother and son change places and roles constantly: once, the mother is an adult, then the son matures and takes care of his suddenly childish mother. The arrangement works fine until the boy decides to let go of the apron strings of his over-protective mother and start an independent life.



I was striving for a simple, naturalistic film, in which emotions are the most important thing, emotions which arise when two people live together in one apartment. All elements of the film were subordinated to this goal.

INTERVIEW WITH ZOFIA KOWALEWSKA

Bitter-sweet

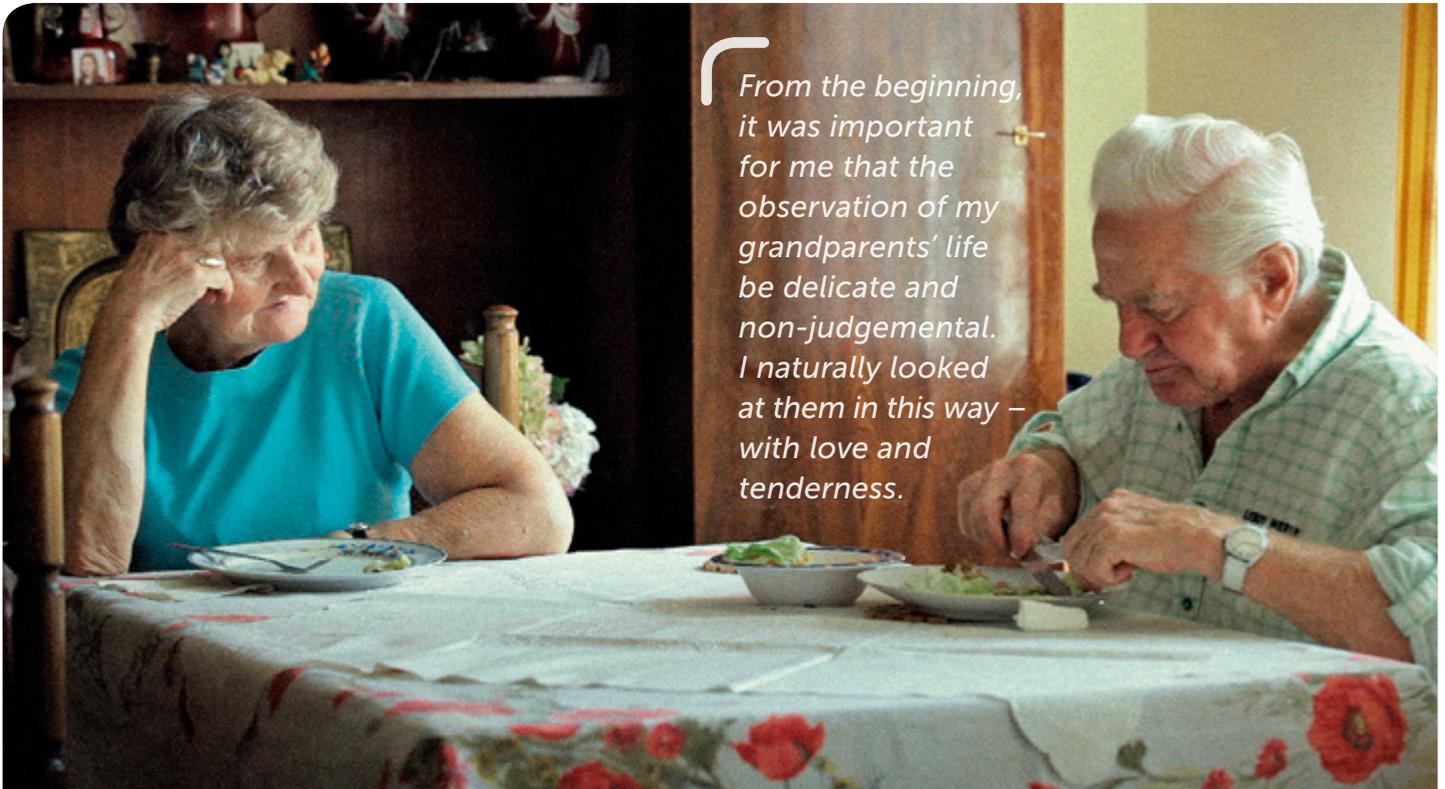
STORY THAT CONQUERED THE WORLD

DANIEL STOPA: *Close Ties*, your documentary film debut, has had an exceptional journey: awards and screenings at the most important international film festivals, inclusion in the Academy Award short-list. Which moment in particular do you remember?

ZOFIA KOWALEWSKA: For me, the most important screening was the first one, at the Krakow Film Festival. *Close Ties* was made in Krakow, the city of my grandparents. I was born in Krakow, too, and I came here on holidays every year. Therefore, the opportunity to have a festival debut here was wonderful. The film's protagonists, friends and family participated in every screening. The audience and the jury liked the film, so I left Krakow with the Silver Dragon.

The protagonists of the film *Close Ties* are your grandparents. Do you remember the moment when you first thought about portraying them?

I was looking for an idea for my first documentary film. After several unsuccessful attempts, I went to visit my grandparents in Krakow, with a small video camera. One day, I recorded this situation: Grandpa Zdzisław bought an ironing board and a clothes dryer without the consent of Grandma Basia. Because of this, a two-hour quarrel broke out, at times funny and charming. In the end, without reaching an agreement, Grandma Basia cut the argument short by saying: 'You came back after eight years with your girlfriend and now you'll turn my house upside down.' The atmosphere got tense immediately, my grandparents sat down in silence to eat dinner and neither of them spoke again. That was the first impulse – that was the moment when I felt that a film could be made about it. I used the recorded and edited material as the documentation of the project which I submitted to Munk Studio. As far as the choice of the subject matter is concerned, it's not a coincidence that I engaged with



From the beginning, it was important for me that the observation of my grandparents' life be delicate and non-judgemental. I naturally looked at them in this way – with love and tenderness.

this story. In my immediate surroundings, I've observed a lot of relationships which have broken up. However, my grandparents decided to do something which others do not do after a break-up – they tried to rebuild their bond and be together anew. Their courage and their difficult decision were moving for me. I rooted for them very much. Their 45th marriage anniversary became the pretext to tell about their relationship.

You also showed great courage portraying people so close to you. Did your grandparents immediately agree to participate in the film? Did they agree to your entering their private, everyday life with the camera?

I am tremendously grateful for the trust and openness which they showed during the making of the film. There was no specific moment or one conversation in which I asked them for their consent to make the film. It was a gradual, continuous process. From time to time, I came to them with the camera – first on my own, and then with the film crew. A lot of time passed from the idea and the submission of the project to the final decision about making the film and I think that they gradually got used to the idea. What helped us was our close relationship and the trust which they naturally gave me. I also think that they wanted to help me as their granddaughter. When we learnt that the project was approved for implementation, my grandparents rejoiced together with me.

I think that your grandparents were in a comfortable situation, for them, you were a guarantee that the camera would not hurt them...

From the beginning, it was important for me that the observation of my grandparents' life be delicate and non-judgemental.

I naturally looked at them in this way – with love and tenderness. I knew that as long as I stuck to this, I would not cross a moral boundary. With the camera, we looked not only for moments of conflict, but most of all, for times when my grandparents tried to find common ground. I hope that this is clear in the film.

It is visible, among others, in the scenes which give the impression of 'pure' observation. We look at the protagonists from a distance, e.g. we're separated by a corridor or the image of the protagonists is covered by an object. Did you stage any situations or did patient observation take the lead?

We made the film using a long lens, the camera was always located in another room, never close to the protagonists. We didn't want to make my grandparents feel ill-at-ease because of the camera's presence. This method allowed us to minimise the camera's influence on their behaviour. On the set, the camera was turned on practically all the time and the camerawoman, Weronika Bilska, and I tried to be 'invisible.' Most of the scenes which are included in the film are the moments when the protagonists 'forgot' that they were being filmed. Of course, I made the film with some assumptions and specific ideas for scenes, which resulted from earlier observations of my grandparents' everyday life – the rhythm of their days, activities, even topics to talk about often repeated themselves. Sometimes, in private, I asked Grandpa to take up a matter which he had already discussed with Grandma when I was present, but this intervention always referred to something that I had observed earlier, I didn't embellish the story by artificial staging. My grandparents are extremely charismatic 'film' characters, there was no need to invent anything more than that.

The tale about your grandparents is bitter-sweet, the moods and atmosphere of the film perfectly capture the relationship between the protagonists...

I was striving for a simple, naturalistic film, in which emotions are the most important thing, emotions which arise when two people live together in one apartment. All elements of the film were subordinated to this goal. The bitter-sweet moods that you mentioned arose naturally, because this is what this story looks like and this is what its protagonists are like. Their funny teasing and quarrels hide deep, difficult emotions, which they try to work out. I edited the film in such a way as to highlight this duality. As a result, we laugh watching the first half of the film, whereas in the second half, it gets more serious and sadder, though humour does not disappear in the end.

For me, *Close Ties* is primarily a very universal story about the emotions of two elderly people. I would like to ask you how the film was received by audiences abroad?

At the DOK Leipzig festival, where the first screening abroad was held, the audience didn't laugh at all during the screening. It was a big surprise for me, because after the screenings in Poland I was used to very lively reactions. At the Academy Awards screenings in Los Angeles and at Sundance, the reactions were even more spontaneous than in Poland. In the USA, I was often asked the question whether I wrote the dialogues in the film. It is great to watch how, beginning from a certain moment, the film starts to live its own life, how differently it is experienced and received.

Did your grandparents watch the film for the first time at the Krakow Film Festival? What were their impressions after the screening?

My grandparents watched the film for the first time at the premiere organised by Munk Studio in Kino Kultura in Warsaw. They experienced the screening in a very emotional way. The film portrays an important moment in their relationship, so watching it in a room full of people was a challenge for them. I think that what helped them to overcome embarrassment was the reaction of the audience and family after the screening: big applause, congratulations from strangers, sincere praise. For them, it was important to feel that they weren't judged by the audience. After the screening, they were very



ZOFIA KOWALEWSKA – a third-year student of Film Direction at The Łódź Film School. Director of *Close Ties* – short documentary that has been shortlisted for the 2017 Academy® Awards. Up to date, the film has won 17 awards, including Golden Dove Award at DOK Leipzig 2016, Silver Dragon at Krakow Film Festival 2016 and IDFA Special Jury Award for Student Documentary. The film was also selected to screen at Sundance Film Festival 2017. Other works by Zofia include short documentary and fiction studies, including *My luv, Mikki* and *Don't Call Me Mom*. She is currently developing her next fiction short at The Łódź Film School as well as participates in Wajda School Documentary Film Program with her next documentary project.

moved. Now, every new award for the film is a source of pride and joy for them. After the short-list was announced, *Close Ties* was on everybody's lips in the media and my grandparents were famous in their neighbourhood.

Finally, I would like to ask about your plans for a new film. I'm working on a screenplay of a short feature film, which I will make this year at the Łódź Film School. It will be a tragicomic story about a broken family who is forced by external circumstances to be together again. I'm also taking the documentary film course at the Wajda School, where I am working on a new documentary film project.

Thank you very much for the interview. ■

10 YEARS OF FIRST DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMME

The First Documentary program for debut directors of documentary films, organized by Munk Studio, working with the Polish Filmmakers Association (SFP), started in 2007. Within 10 years, 50 short documentary films were made, and another 15 titles are still in production or in postproduction stages. The films were made under the supervision of renowned Polish documentary makers, among others Karolina Bielawska, Paweł Kędzierski, Paweł Łoziński, Marta Minorowicz, or the Munk Studio – SFP art director, Jerzy Kapuściński. Each year, two recruitment periods are held for the program, and a maximum of 10 films are accepted for production. Films from First Documentary have been recognized at international festivals since the very beginning of the program. The greatest successes were the two Oscar Documentary Short Subject shortlist nominations for Michał Szcześniak's *Starting Point* in 2015 and Zofia Kowalewska's *Close Ties* in 2016, Sundance Film Festival Grand Prix for Grzegorz Zariczny's *The Whistle* by (2013), Golden Dove and DOKLeipzig awards for Marta Minorowicz's *A Piece of Summer* (2010) and for Zofia Kowalewska's *Close Ties* (2016), as well as the IDA Documentary Award nomination for Paulina Skibińska's *Object*.

GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL

is a new spot on the Polish film map and what's more, it's different than all the others. We invite you to the school that brings you to the heart of film culture in Pomerania, and which, to boot, is located a few steps from the beach.

MORE

The Gdynia Film Center has its home in a slightly extravagant building on the Baltic coast. The institution was created almost 7 years ago on Leszek Kopeć's and Jerzy Rados' initiative, and currently offers a two-year, intensive course in Film Directing. In film circles the school is viewed as a young center full of new ideas. Films from the school have already won dozens of awards in Poland and worldwide. What is the secret of their success in such a short time?

FILMMAKER, A VERSATILE CREATOR

From the very beginning, the school's founders aimed for a complex education model, which is reflected in the rich curriculum. This includes feature and documentary film direction, work with actors, cinematography, elements of screenwriting, sound and music in film, film production

BY SAMUEL NOWAK



THAN FILM

technology, and film history and aesthetics. The school's staff consists not only of recognized filmmakers – among them, directors Juliusz Machulski, Jacek Bławut, Sławomir Fabicki, editor Milenia Fiedler, actor Katarzyna Figura – but also, among others, writer Paweł Huelle and film theory specialist Mirosław Przyłipiak. 'We have great freedom in teaching classes, the program is individualistic and has an original character', says one of the school's lecturers, Paweł Łoziński. He goes on to emphasize, 'I try to teach my students that films are not made for festivals – it's very important to make them in a sincere manner'. Sławomir Fabicki points to the individualistic education

style, 'We start the learning as a team, and it gets more and more individualized as the year progresses. I try to follow the students' sensibilities', he says. The director highlights that the lecturers do not force their own style on the students. 'We try to discover what the best is in them', he adds.

Robert Gliński watches over the entirety of the GFS curriculum, and Leszek Kopeć is its director. The interdisciplinary approach is fostered by the location of the school, the proximity of the Gdynia Film Festival and academic centers (such as the University of Gdańsk (UG)) and cultural centers. Students have modern lecture halls, professionally equipped film, editing, photography, and sound studios, a library, and a film archive at their disposal. A noteworthy point is that the school program is free.

The Gdynia Film School seems to me an exceptional place thanks to its coziness. I haven't been so impressed with such a highly individualized approach to students in any other school. It also permeates the films themselves, which, compared to other student etudes, stand alone with their freshness and realism of presentation.



FROM GDYNIA TO THE WORLD

With all this in mind, the success of films made in Gdynia shouldn't come as a surprise. One of the most prestigious success stories was the reception of *Olena*, by Elżbieta Benkowska, at the 66th Cannes Festival in the short film category (2013). Further productions have strengthened the school's reputation: *Mother* (directed by Łukasz Ostalski) made it to dozens of festivals, such as Helsinki, Cottbus, and Brno. The warm reception of *Grandma's Day* (directed by Miłosz Sakowski) has proven the outstanding capability of school graduates to work with actors.

Sławomir Witek, a GFS graduate and maker of *Seven Men at Different Ages*, draws attention to the versatile education model. 'I was very surprised by the depth of the curriculum. The school consumed me for two years. Since documentary film is my passion, I worked under Paweł Łoziński's and Wojciech Staroń's direction'. Witek relates his time at the school, 'This collaboration didn't end with the graduation ceremony. Wojtek Staroń encouraged me to work further on documentaries,

and his wife, Małgorzata, became the executive producer of my debut film *Last Season* in the Munk Studio'.

The high quality of films released by GFS was confirmed to us by one of the selectors for an important international festival, 'The level of these productions leaves no doubt that it is a professional film school. The films that made it to our festivals are incredibly promising, even more so since their makers are very young'. Among recent successes, the qualification of the film *Between Us*, directed by Maciej Miller, for the 34th Busan International Short Film Festival is noteworthy.

WALL-TO-WALL PROFESSIONALS

What may come as a surprise is the fact that the school doesn't use the help of external executive producers, but rather produces all the films on its own. As Marta Drankiewicz, the GFS office director explains, the point is to engage students in all the stages of filmmaking. 'An important component of the educational process in our school is to learn the future profession in practice, rather than only in theory', clarifies Drankiewicz. Theoretical lectures are a starting point to master and polish practical abilities; therefore the emphasis is on practical exercises, workshop rehearsals, as well as scene and etude making. Equally vital is the individual, master-disciple work mode. Michał Oleszczyk, former art director at the Gdynia Film Festival, explains, 'The Gdynia Film School seems to me an exceptional place thanks to its coziness. I haven't been so impressed with such a highly individualized approach to students in any other school. It also permeates the films themselves, which, compared to other student etudes, stand alone with their freshness and realism of presentation.'

A FILM AND MEDIA HUB

Due to its relationship with the Gdynia Film Center, the school has become an important hub where young Polish film culture emerges. The creators are nonetheless aware that they cannot limit themselves merely to the film medium. Two years ago, in collaboration with the University of Gdańsk, the school created another field of study: Film and Audiovisual Culture Studies. Some classes are led by the Gdynia Film School lecturers, and the UG students participate in workshops organized for them in the new school building. In 2015, a postgraduate course in audiovisual film production was co-created with the Gdańsk Managers Education Foundation (GFKM). It is a two-year extracurricular course. The school already recruits future students from among lower-secondary and secondary school pupils by offering them various workshops and organizing the 'Albatrosy' Student Amateur Film Competition. Michał Oleszczyk has no doubts that the GFS is more than a school. 'Leszek Kopeć and Jerzy Rados have created an extraordinary place that has all the possibilities to become the epicenter of invigorating changes within Polish cinema'. ■

GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL: ACHIEVEMENTS

Graduation films by graduates of the first two years of the Gdynia Film School have been presented at over 200 competitions at national and international festivals, and received over 70 awards altogether. The greatest success was the presentation of Elżbieta Benkowska's *Olena* in the short competition of the Cannes Film Festival. This success was repeated by Grzegorz Motłda's *Time To Go*, which will compete for the Palme d'Or this year.

THE MOST SCREENED AND INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED FILMS FROM GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL

- THE WALK** DIR.: FILIP JACOBSON • DOC. • 2011
- REAL HONEY** DIR.: SŁAWOMIR WITEK • FIC. • 2012
- SEVEN MAN AT DIFFERENT AGES** DIR.: SŁAWOMIR WITEK • DOC. • 2013
- OLENA** DIR.: ELŻBIETA BENKOWSKA • FIC. • 2013
- MOTHER** DIR.: ŁUKASZ OSTALSKI • FIC. • 2013
- THEM** DIR.: MARTA GRABICKA • FIC. • 2013
- TENDERNESS** DIR.: EMILIA ZIELONKA • FIC. • 2015
- GRANDMA'S DAY** DIR.: MIŁOŚZ SAKOWSKI • FIC. • 2015
- FAST FOOD** DIR.: ERYK LENARTOWICZ • FIC. • 2015
- TREVELLING** DIR.: KAROLINA ZALESZCZUK • FIC. • 2015
- IN THE CORNER** DIR.: MACIEJ BARTOSZ KRUK • FIC. • 2015
- RAP BRADERS** DIR.: ADRIAN APANEL • FIC. • 2015



Photo: Sławomir Pultyn



Volte Wolta

DIR.: **MONIKA KOTECKA, KAROLINA PORZYŁA** • DOCUMENTARY
• POLAND • 2017 • 14'

The heroines of this documentary are competitors from the Warsaw equestrian acrobatics team. A new season is beginning, along with intense practices. The grace and lightness with which the girls move are the result of their hard work, constant overcoming of fears, and also teamwork.

Zuzia is one of the best competitors on the team. Due to her body shape and young age, she is lifted up by her older teammates and crowns the acrobatic pyramid mounted on the trotting horse. During recent practices it appears, however, that Zuzia has more and more of a problem with the correct execution of movements. She can't harmonize with the other girls and with the rhythm of the cantering horse. The atmosphere on the team becomes tense and negative emotions arise among the other vaulters and the coaches.

The camera accompanies the competitors in their daily struggles, recording simultaneously their multidimensional relationships during practices and intermittent breaks from work. In the sports world, friendship inevitably clashes with rivalry. Team travels, time spent together and helping each other during warm-ups are only a prelude to the rivalry that follows. Weaker athletes are immediately replaced by better ones, a moment of distraction may decide on a further career; no rank is bestowed forever. For the young girls, it means a total dedication to their work, and a crash course in adolescence. Success requires full focus, clearing one's mind, as well as the ability to manage one's emotions in stressful situations. Every practice is not only a lesson of joint responsibility and learning new routines, but also a way of embracing one's own weaknesses.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

Me and My Father Mój tata i ja

DIR.: **ALEKSANDER PIETRZAK** • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 30'

This is a bitter-sweet family story about attempts to mend a broken bond while facing a lethal illness. Dawid is thirty-eight, married, with two little children, working in a high-profile corporate position. His father, Edward, is seventy-nine, and after his wife's death, he moves in with his son and his family. For both of them, it is an opportunity to finally restore their relationship which has been damaged since Dawid's childhood. Unfortunately, soon after the move, Edward is diagnosed with Alzheimer's. The illness slowly starts to take-over his and his loved-ones' lives. The roles reverse: it is Dawid who now takes care of his father and teaches him how to live again.

The illness triggers a reflection on the nature of relationships among all the members of the family. When Dawid was young, Edward worked as a captain of large sailing vessels; he was responsible for commercial navy ships, which caused him to stay away from home for the majority of the year, not seeing his wife and his son. The care of his father thus becomes an opportunity to make up for lost contact. Dawid realizes that his father's condition worsens every day and that he remembers less and less; so he tries to spend as much time with him as possible in order not to lose forever those precious memories. This, in turn, affects Dawid's and his wife's relationship and his situation at work. How much of his well-organized life will he be willing to sacrifice to spend the last moments of his father's life by his side?

The director, Aleksander Pietrzak, lightens the drama with humor, thanks to which the difficult subject takes on lightness, and the burden is transferred from the illness onto the relationships between the protagonists. In this history about leaving, the time that is left is what counts, as well as the reflection on priorities in our lives.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



Miss Holocaust

DIR.: **MICHALINA MUSIELAK, IRENA SIEDLAR** • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND, GERMANY • 2017 • 22'

Is it possible to juxtapose two such disproportionate topics as a beauty pageant and the Holocaust? Director Michalina Musielak, in her debut documentary, follows a celebration where the participants are the residents of the Yad Ezer retirement home for Holocaust survivors in Haifa. They are women who survived the Shoah, and the celebration is a beauty pageant for the survivors. They are all in their eighties, are originally from Poland, Russia, Czech Republic, and Romania, and each one of them carries with her a different story of the war period.

As they prepare for the competition, they learn to move and speak appropriately, they are given numbers and are dressed and have their make-up done suitably to the occasion. The grand finale of the event gathers a full audience and is an embodiment of *clichés* about this type of event: the women elegantly walk the stage in the limelight to the flash of cameras. In short personal interviews, they talk about themselves and call for world peace— the flagship beauty pageant slogans, however, take on a completely different tone when uttered by them. The audience's reaction also deviates from what one might expect: there is chatter in the room, some are busy eating, others are clearly bored and ignore the candidates.

The Miss Holocaust competition is an attempt to commemorate which takes into account the character of the time we live in. We are accustomed to building memorial monuments, yet we still struggle when serious themes are expressed in a lighter form. Musielak's film does not try to evaluate the chosen way of commemoration; it rather documents the atmosphere and the reactions it triggers. Times change and a new generation is allowed to speak. Are we ready for new ways of expressing reverence to heroes?

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



Spitsbergen

DIR.: **MICHAŁ SZCZEŚNIAK** • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 23'

Magda is an emergency medical rescuer. After several months off work caused by personal tragedy, she returns to her job. Every day and every night she gets in the ambulance in order to help when lives are threatened. However, the difficult past marked by a significant one's death returns in the very moments when the heroine tries to save others from death, which creates a serious threat to the patients.

Her help is not always welcome either, and her traumatic experience only exacerbates the conflict between her and her patients. Her personal life starts to dangerously permeate her work. Magda also harbours a grievance against her boss for his decision a few months back, which only aggravated her trauma. Jacek, the new ambulance leader, who is Magda's teammate, tries to patch up the crisis. Not only does he help to save the patients, but he also tries to help Magda herself and little by little discovers the story behind her attitude. His presence makes Magda realize that the world hasn't ended yet.

Spitsbergen (directed by Michał Szczęśniak, author of the award-winning documentary *Starting Point*), is a film about loss and attempts to cope with it when it seems that one's chosen profession makes it an inherent part of life. It is also a story about a relationship built on a compromise between passion and love for the other person as well as about loneliness that comes when the worst happens. The worst that— despite all probability, premises, and mental preparation— we are not able to accept nor become immune to.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



Deer Boy

DIR.: **KATARZYNA GONDEK** • FICTION • POLAND, BELGIUM, CROATIA • 2017 • 15'

Everyone kills that which they love? A son is born into a hunter's family. It wouldn't be anything out of the ordinary if not for the fact that the boy is born with antlers on his head. Every day, the father patiently cuts off the horns, and every day they grow back with even greater force. The father, nevertheless, tries to raise a hunter and takes him hunting, teaching him from scratch the successive rituals and stages of dealing with the kill. The boy enters a world full of blood, revulsion, and the smell of meat, but at the same time full of delight and pleasure from killing.

In *Deer Boy*, reality intertwines with dream-like visions, and fairytale entwines with horror. The story about family and humanity is imbued with a deeply rooted longing to return to nature. It is a story that touches on the need to act out primeval, primary instincts that so often have to cede to civilized needs which are brought to the forefront. Finally, it is a poem about adolescence, told only with images and sounds, devoid of any words or commentary.

Ferocity and bravery are contrasted with motherly tenderness and first attempts to accept one's own otherness and resistance to imposed tasks. The boy dreams about deer, but every morning, in front of the mirror, he gets rid of a part of his body. Progressively, the personality conflict deepens and the time comes to make important life decisions. Will the boy be like his father? Will he follow his instinct and accept the way he was born?

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

Bogdan and Rose Bogdan i Róża

DIR.: **MILENA DUTKOWSKA** • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 15'

Is it possible to understand each other without words? Bogdan and Rose are an elderly married couple. They live together, work together in a school cafeteria, and spend most of the day together. Through all this time, they don't exchange a word. They go on in a silent existence, fanned only by slight vitriol. The couple knows each other's rituals perfectly and each day they set about making the other's life harder.

Every day starts in a similar way: an encounter in the kitchen doorway, difficulties in opening jars, stealing water from the kettle, an exchange of looks filled with reproach and resentment, solitary travel to the same workplace, separate meals. Back from work, each one hides on their own side of the room, divided by a curtain, and indulges in their favorite activities. It is not, however, possible to completely avoid contact; it seems that they cannot live without each other despite the mutual hurt they cause. They will see the strength of their bond finally thanks to... mouse poison.

Milena Dutkowska's film is an ascetic study of an already mature relationship; a relationship void of the attributes usually linked with being in love. Even the interiors in which the couple spends time together escalate the impression of isolation. The apparent distance between Bogdan and Rose is in fact the factor that brings them the most closely together. Does any emotion smoulder under the coldness and animosity? Or maybe the only factors that still keep them together are habit and the common space they've moved about in for years?

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

POLISH SHORTS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

2016–2017



Restless Wanderers

DIR.: **KALINA ALABRUDZIŃSKA** • 2016 • FICTION • 28' • 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' • 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" • 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' • 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' • 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' • PROD.: MARIA SURZYCKA • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

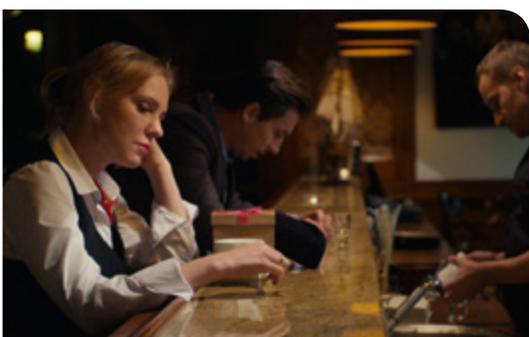
Antek and Julka are having a date at the theatre. The girl is waiting for her boyfriend who is running late – he is riding a bike through the rain-covered streets of Krakow. The bell rings for the third time but Antek is still not there. He doesn't know yet how unfortunate this evening will prove to 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' • 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' • 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, MICHAL.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' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLOWSKI 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' • 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' • 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.: **MALGORZATA SUWAŁA** • 2016 • FICTION • 18' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLOWSKI 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 KALAGATE** • 2016 • FICTION • 22' • 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' • 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' • 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' • 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 KĄDZIĘLA** • 2016 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIESŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, KRZYSZTOF KIESŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA, MICHAL.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' • 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' • 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.



Me and My Father

DIR.: **ALEK PIETRZAK** • 2017 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Edward – Dawid's father, was a professional sailor, able to see his son only a few days every year. Now Dawid has his own family and decides to take care of his father who has Alzheimer's. Even though there is time now for both of them to improve their relationship, the illness makes it almost impossible. Every day Edward has fewer of the memories that are so valuable for Dawid to fill-in the gaps from his past. How much of his present life will Dawid sacrifice to gain from his father's past and to spend the last moments with him and his vanishing consciousness?



Spitsbergen

DIR.: **MICHAŁ SZCZEŚNIAK** • 2017 • FICTION • 23' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

After a seven-month suspension from duty, Magda (33), a paramedic, goes straight back to work. In no time at all, conflict arises between her and the young, restrictive leader of the ambulance crew. Meanwhile, traumatic recollections are haunting her.



Total Harmony

DIR.: **ROMAN JAROSZ** • 2017 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Adam (42) is a contrabass player in a philharmonic orchestra. His wife Eva, plays first violin and is the concertmistress. During a concert, Adam has a heart attack. At the hospital, he tells his wife, that he faced the final judgement – a committee consisting of Chopin, Gershwin and Beethoven. The committee informed him that he could choose the way he would be judged – as an artist or as a 'normal' person...



Bogdan and Rose

DIR.: **MILENA DUTKOWSKA** • 2017 • FICTION • 15' • PROD.: MILENA DUTKOWSKA • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Bogdan and Rose are an old married couple. They live together in one room and work at the same school canteen, but they don't speak to each other. Their lives are filled with silence and daily reciprocal malice.



Let Me In

DIR.: **DOMINIKA GNATEK** • 2017 • FICTION • 16' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA, POLISH FILM INSTITUTE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Olga lives alone in her flat in an old town house. Occasionally she looks after an elderly neighbor. The woman says that someone lies wait upon her next to her door. Olga ignores her neighbor's doubts, yet she feels a strange restlessness herself. When her boyfriend comes over, and the neighbor comes to complain about the mysterious noise, Olga brushes her off. The next day, she finds her dead. Tortured by remorse, she starts succumbing to the same paranoia that plagued the old lady.



Nothing New Under the Sun

DIR.: **DAMIAN KOCUR** • 2017 • FICTION • 25' • KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Michał lives in the country, works at a cattle farm, comes back home, has dinner and rests. Every day in his life is the same. Every day except for the day when a girl that he met on the Internet is supposed to come to see him.



The Best Fireworks Ever

DIR.: **ALEKSANDRA TERPIŃSKA** • 2017 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The plot of the film takes place in the contemporary world of an European city. It depicts one day in the life of three friends who, facing a fictional military conflict in their country, must modify their plans for the future.



Deer Boy

DIR.: **KATARZYNA GONDEK** • 2017 • FICTION • 15' • POLAND, CROATIA, BELGIUM • PROD.: CENTRALA FILM • CONTACT: PAWEŁ KOSUŃ, CENTRALA FILM, KOSUN@CENTRALAFILM.PL

A hunter's son falls asleep counting jumping deer- one of them gets shot, one bleeds a little, another one limps away from the meadow. Antlers grow and grow on the boy's head each night, puncturing his pillow. *Deer Boy* is a horror fairy tale about instincts, about the first hunt, about blood and nature. Parental warmth meshes here with disgust, dreams with reality and childlike sensitivity with lessons on killing. The film is based on animal sounds, not giving a word to the characters trapped in its story. The deer are jumping over the sleeping boy's head. Eventually one of them will have to be killed, now won't he?

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