

FOCUS

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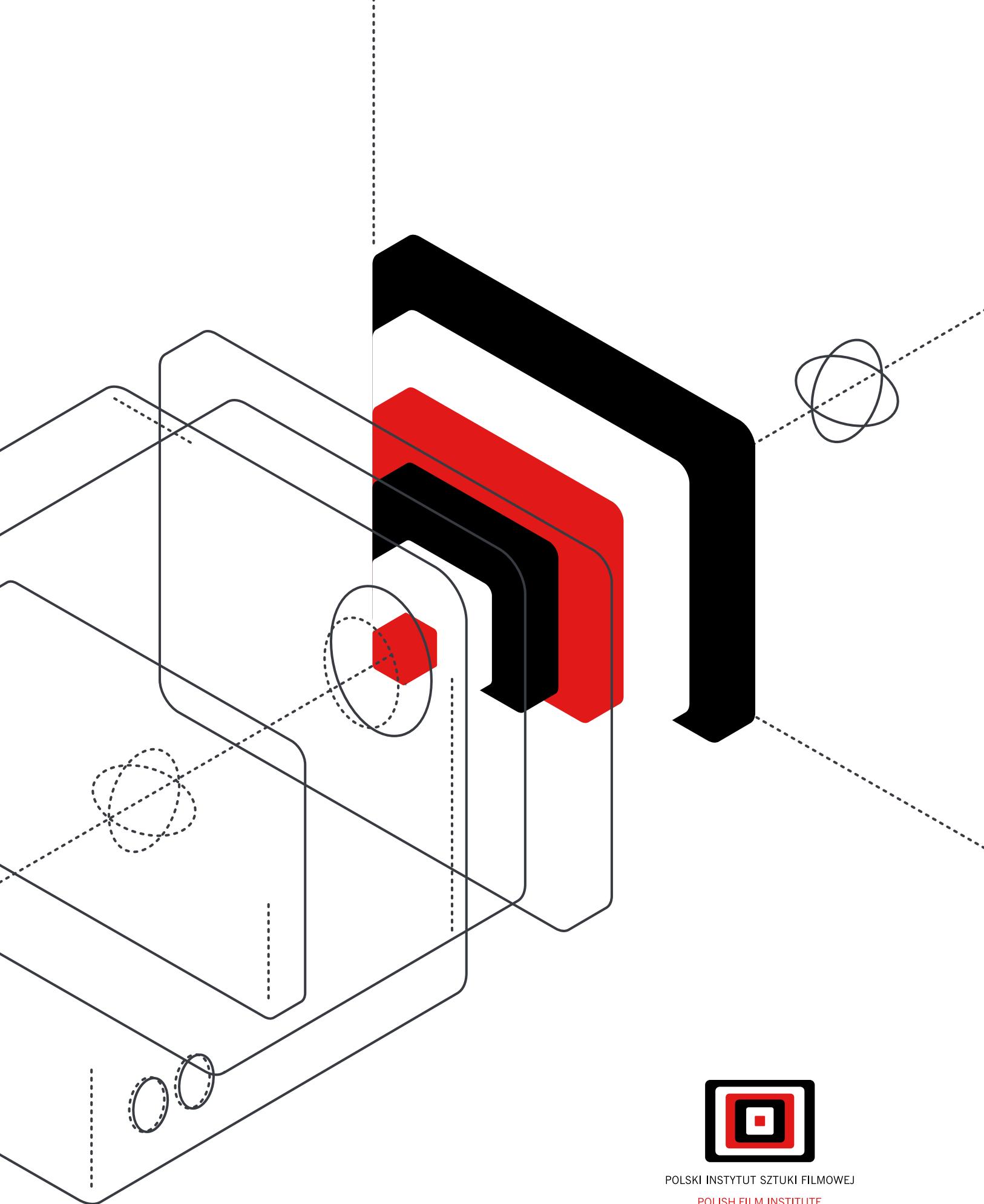


The Ugliest Car dir.: Grzegorz Szczepaniak

Krzysztof Gierat
talks with
the directors
of **The Prince**
and the Dybbuk

Animating
Van Gogh –
an interview with
the authors of
Loving Vincent

How to make
an **independent**
short in Poland



POLSKI INSTYTUT SZTUKI FILMOWEJ

POLISH FILM INSTITUTE

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AS ALWAYS, AUTUMN BRINGS AN ABUNDANCE OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS. We started the season with great news about *The Prince and the Dybbuk*, the latest film by Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski, receiving an award in Venice. Krzysztof Gierat interviews the authors about the film. Other than that, there have been many global documentary releases. Dagmara Marcinek and Katarzyna Wilk write about those which will be screened at international film festivals in the coming months. Many of them are made by cinematographers, who often use the documentary as an authorial form of expression. Daniel Stopa discusses this phenomenon further. We are well into the year that marks the 70th anniversary of Polish animation. On this occasion, we write extensively about a film that combined both artistic and commercial success – *Loving Vincent*. Zofia Jaroszuk interviews Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman, the film's creators. We take a closer look at the successful animation house Fumi Studio and the feature-length *Moomins*, co-produced by a Polish company. This year also marks the 15th anniversary of one of the most successful film schools in Poland – the Wajda School. For this reason, we write more about the way the school works, who it educates, and the successes it has achieved abroad. We also examine independent producers of short films. Dagmara Romanowska writes about whether a film can be made outside the official funding system. Enjoy!

KATARZYNA WILK



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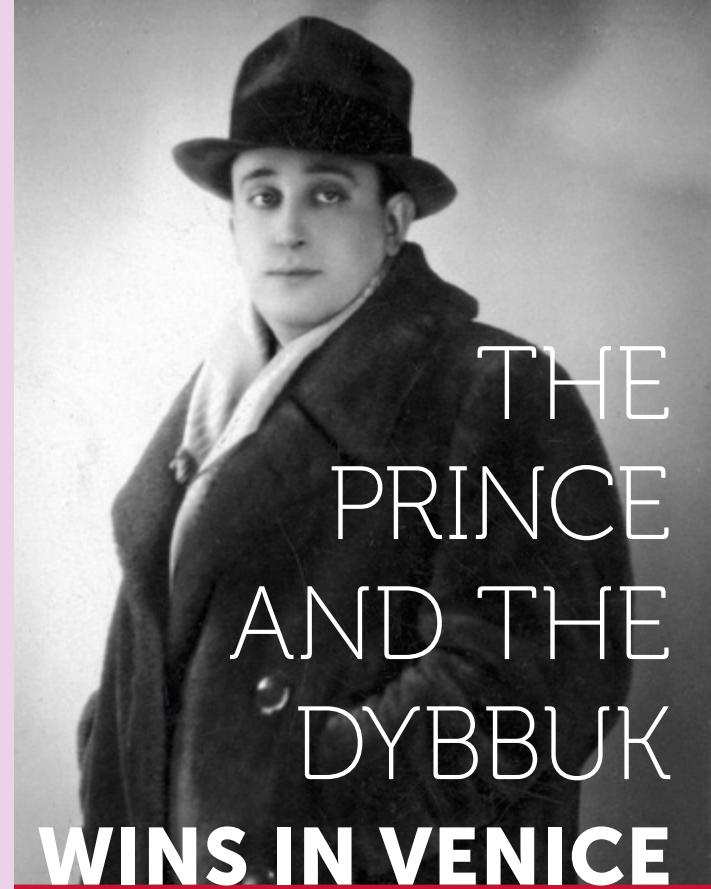
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THE PRINCE AND THE DYBBUK WINS IN VENICE

The documentary film ***The Prince and the Dybbuk*** directed by Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski was the only Polish representative at this year's edition of the Venice IFF. It was presented in the Venice Classics Documentary section. The screening was the world premiere. Awards in the Venice Classics sections were given by the Jury consisting of Cinema History students and chaired by a director and screenwriter Giuseppe Piccioni.

The Prince and the Dybbuk is a cinematic journey following the steps of Michał Waszyński, the author of the renown pre-war films with Eugeniusz Bodo, the director of the mystic Jewish ***Dybbuk*** and the producer of Hollywood blockbusters starring Sophia Loren and Claudia Cardinale. Niewiera and Rosołowski's film tries to unravel the mystery of Waszyński, who in his lifetime was constantly switching identities and writing anew his own biography. People who had the opportunity to meet him remembered him as a dignified nobleman, a notorious liar, a wandering Jew and finally a homosexual and Italian countess's husband in one person. The film's directors and screenwriters are Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski, the authors of e.g.

Domino Effect, documentary movie awarded in Poland and abroad. The cinematographer is also Piotr Rosołowski. Film is a Polish-German co-production. The project took part in the ArchiDoc workshops and was presented at the Pitching du Réel – Visions du Réel, IDFA Forum 2015, MIA Market Rome 2016 and DOCS TO GO! – a part of DOC LAB POLAND 2017 in Krakow.

The DOK Leipzig festival decided to honor the Polish documentary cinema at its 60th edition. This time, as a part of 'A Declaration of Love to the Polish Documentary Film' program, the 12 best Polish middle and full-length films presented in the last 5 years will be screened, including, among others: *Deep Love* by Jan P. Matuszyński, *Entangled* by Lidia Duda, *A Diary of a Journey* by Piotr Stasik, *15 Corners of the Worlds* by Zuzanna Solakiewicz, *Communion* by Anna Zamecka, *Father and Son* by Paweł Łoziński, and the Golden Dove winner – *Brothers* by Wojciech Staroń. Additionally, *Call Me Tony*, the documentary debut of Klaudiusz Chrostowski will have its world premiere, and the film *How to Destroy Time Machines* by Jacek P. Bławut will be presented in the International Program. The Polish presence at the festival will be heralded a week before by the screening of three classic Polish films: *The Musicians* by Kazimierz Karabasz, *Uwaga, chuligani!* by Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski and *Workshop Exercises* by Marcel Łoziński. At the Kassel Documentary Film & Video Festival, the 'Polish Docs Distribution Portrait' program will be presented, including six films by debutants which have been successful at international festivals – *Rogalik* by Paweł Ziemiński, *Last Season* by Sławomir Witek, *Object* by Paulina Skibińska, *Close Ties* by Zofia Kowalewska, *Polonaise* by Agnieszka Elbanowska and *Volte* by Monika Kotecka and Karolina Poryzata. In addition, the following full-length documentaries will be shown: *Brothers* by Wojciech Staroń, *Communion* by Anna Zamecka, *You Have No Idea How Much I Love You* by Paweł Łoziński and *Casa Blanca* by Aleksandra Maciuszek.

POLISH DOCUMENTARIES IN GERMANY



COMMUNION SHORTLISTED FOR EUROPEAN FILM AWARD

Communion, directed by Anna Zamecka, was included on the shortlist of 15 documentary films for the European Film Award! From among hundreds of entries, the members of EFA selected the list of 15 titles, from among which, 5 nominations will be chosen. The film has already been presented and won many awards at international film festivals, among others Locarno Film Festival 2016 (Semaine De La Critique Best Film), Warsaw Film Festival (Best Documentary Award), DOK Leipzig Film Festival (Young Eyes Award), Bratislava International Film Festival (Best Documentary Film), Trieste Film Festival (Best Documentary Film), It's All True International Documentary Film Festival (Best Documentary Film), TRT Documentary Awards (Best Documentary Award) and Polish Film Academy Awards – Eagle (Best Documentary Film). The European Film Awards ceremony will be held on December, 9th in Berlin.



8 POLISH MOVIES AT IDFA



Call Me Tony dir.: Klaudiusz Chrostowski

POLONAISE SHORTLISTED FOR CINEMA EYE HONORS AWARD

On 14 September, the list of ten films competing for the Cinema Eye Honors awards in the Outstanding Achievement in Nonfiction Short Filmmaking category was announced. Among the shortlisted titles is also the film by Agnieszka Elbanowska, *Polonaise*.

Cinema Eye Honors awards have been given to the best documentary films since 2008. For a film to be nominated for the award, it must be shown at any of the following film festivals: Sundance, Berlin, True/False, SXSW, Full Frame, Tribeca, Hot Docs, Cannes, Silverdocs, Los Angeles, Toronto, Sheffield and IDFA. Candidates for Cinema Eye Honors awards are selected by the representatives of large documentary film festivals, and the winners are chosen every year by about 200 representatives of documentary film industry, invited to vote by Cinema Eye. Ten shortlistees, among them *Polonaise* by Agnieszka Elbanowska, were announced at the opening ceremony of the Camden Film Festival. However, five films from this list will be shown at SFFILM Doc Stories in San Francisco; these films will be nominated for the Cinema Eye Honors award. The award ceremony will be held in January in New York.



Just like every year to date, a strong representation of Polish cinema is expected at the biggest documentary film festival in the world – IDFA. The world premiere of ***Over the Limit*** by Marta Prus will take place here and this film qualified for the Competition for Feature-Length Documentary. In the Music Documentary section ***Ethiopiques. The Revolt of Soul*** by Maciej Bochniak will be screened, its world premiere. A foreign audience will have its first chance to watch ***The Ugliest Car*** by Grzegorz Szczepaniak and ***Zhalanash – Empty Shore*** by Marcin Sauter, which are competing, respectively, in the Competition for Mid-Length Documentary and the Competition for Short Documentary. Regarding the Competition for Student Documentary, two titles will participate in it: ***Call Me Tony*** by Klaudiusz Chrostowski and a co-production ***The Celebration*** by Alexandra Wesolowski. ***Volte*** by Monika Kotecka and Karolina Poryzała qualified for the Competition for Kids & Docs, while in the section Best of Fest, the most recent Film Festival in Venice Laureate will be presented, namely ***The Prince and the Dybbuk*** by Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski. As usual, several titles are available at the DOCS FOR SALE market.

PRIX ITALIA FOR ICON

The documentary film *Icon* by Wojciech Kasperski won the Prix Italia Award in the TV documentary category of the 69th edition of the festival. This year it was held in Milan from 29th September to 1st October. The Prix Italia is one of the oldest and the most prestigious international awards for radio, television and Internet creators. *Icon* tells the story about a psychiatric hospital in the Siberian countryside. The place, which was inaccessible for film crews, can be shown thanks to its residents, some of whom spent several decades at the hospital.

FOCUS ON POLISH CINEMA at the 40th Mill Valley Film Festival

This year, the Mill Valley Film Festival celebrates its 40th anniversary. The festival – held 5-10 October – featured a Focus on Poland program, with a lot of Polish productions, including *Loving Vincent*, an animated story of Vincent van Gogh by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman. In the Under the Radar section, we will see a live performance by Poland's leading contemporary animator Mariusz Wilczyński, accompanied by live music by Trans Mission and with a mini-retrospective of Wilczyński's work. Also shown will be animations by other artists like Walerian Borowczyk, Jan Lenica, Ryszard Czekala, Zbigniew Rybczyński, Tomek Bagiński, and Renata Gaśiorowska. The animation program is a part of the 70th Anniversary of Polish Animation.

POLISH DOCUMENTARIES & ANIMATIONS IN ASIA AND SOUTH AMERICA

Sisters dir.: Paweł Łoziński



As a part of the POLISH DOCS AND POLISH ANIMATIONS INTERCONTINENTAL project coordinated by the Krakow Film Foundation, Polish documentaries and animations will be shown in China, Japan, Korea and Columbia. At the **Asiana ISFF in Seoul (2-7 Nov. 2011)** a number of animation programs will be presented, including some classic films (such as those by Jan Lenica, Ryszard Czekala, Witold Giersz, Zbigniew Rybczyński, Jerzy Kucia or Piotr Dumala) as well as some contemporary animation and a masterclass by Robert Sowa. During the **Polish Film Week in Tokyo (21-27 Oct. 2017)** Krzysztof Kieślowski's short documentaries will be screened, including, among others, such famous films as *Hospital*, *Talking Heads* or *Seven Women of Different Ages*. The screenings will be accompanied by an overview of the most recent Polish documentaries and animations made by debuting film-makers. At the **Bogoshorts festival in Bogotá (5-1 Dec. 2017)** classic films from the 'Masters from Kraków' program will be presented, including the laureates of the Kraków Film Festival – Kazimierz Karabasz, Wojciech Wiszniewski, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Bogdan Dzworski, Marcel and Paweł Łoziński, as well as the most successful and recent documentaries made by young artists. Poland will be the special guest at the **GZDOC festival (11-14. Dec. 2017)**. The Focus on Poland program will include a retrospective of Marcel Łoziński and the film program of Polish cameramen and documentary-makers – Bogdan Dzworski, Marcin Koszałka and Wojciech Staroń – connected with the exhibition of their photographs.

The Polish animated TV series called ***Agi Bagi*** is slowly taking over the world in terms of sale – now it's not only Europe, Africa, Middle East, Australia and the USA but also China (where it is broadcast by two companies), as well as in Vietnam, India and South Korea. The first 13-episode season of ***Agi Bagi*** was initially released in 40 countries in 2015. Two years after the premiere, the distribution is still speeding up. Currently, the series has contracts that enable broadcast all over the world, and it has been already present on the screens in 64 countries (on 2 or more channels in some of them!). ***Agi Bagi*** is a TV series aimed at children at the age from 2 to 5, co-financed by the Polish Film Institute. It shows the adventures of the citizens of a planet that has two sites: Agi and Bagi, and the mutual relations between them, the tribes of Agingas and Bagingas. Each episode tells a story related with the natural environment and shows how the creatures can cooperate to live in harmony with nature. Through the adventures of the protagonists it presents some of the important educational elements which are so important at that stage of a child's development, and, at the same time, often overlooked in shows dedicated to this age group.

AGI BAGI TV SERIES TAKES OVER ASIA





POLAND AS THE HONORARY GUEST AT THE CARTOON FORUM 2017 AND THE POLISH STAND AT MIP.COM

Between 11-24 of September, the Cartoon Forum 2017 was held in Toulouse, one of the most important industry events dedicated to animated films. This year Poland was the honorary guest of the event, which was the part of the 70th anniversary of Polish animation celebrations. The Cartoon Forum is the most prestigious event in this industry, gathering people who work in animation: producers, distributors and media. The selected productions are presented by their authors to representatives of media and production companies as well as distributors in the form of 45 minute presentations to the audience.

Poland was represented, among others, by WJTeam, Grupa Smacznego / GS Animation, Alchemiq Studio, Letko, Badi Badi, Studio Miniatur Filmowych, Fumi Studio, Human Ark, EGo Film and as much as 6 projects were presented to public. The Poland-related events taking place at Cartoon Forum 2017 were organized by the Polish Animation Producers Association (SPPA) supported by Polish Film Institute (PISF). Another event related to Polish animation will take place in Cannes: the SPPA is organizing a Polish stand at the MIPCOM fair.

A SELECTION OF THE LATEST AWARDS

- Canal+ Award for Short Films and Rail d'Or Award at Semaine de la Critique of Cannes FF, France: ***The Best Fireworks Ever*** by Aleksandra Terpińska (fic./2017/30')
- Audience Award at Outfest Los Angeles LGBT FF, USA: ***Pussy*** by Renata Gaśiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Best Actrees at Bangalore Shorts FF, India: ***Tenants*** by Klara Kochańska (fic./2015/30')
- Best Actress, Best Actor, Best Cinematography at Frame/Sound Festival, Dominican Republic: ***Adaptation*** by Bartosz Kruhlak (fic./2016/30')
- Best Animation Short Film Jury Prize at Seattle International Film Festival, USA: ***Pussy*** by Renata Gaśiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Jury's Choice for Short Film Award at Bucheon International Fantastic FF, South Korea: ***16.03*** by Natalia Siwicka (fic./2016/16')
- Best Animation at International In the Palace FF, Bulgaria: ***Woolen Cogwheels*** by Bartosz Kędzierski (anim./2014/13')
- Best Director at Lucarnia Film Festival, Italy: ***Adaptation*** by Bartosz Kruhlak (fic./2016/30')
- Best International Short Film at Euganea FF, Italy: ***The Return*** by Damian Kocur (fic./2016/21')
- Best Sound at Fantoche International Animation FF, Switzerland: ***Impossible Figures and Other Stories II*** by Marta Pajek (anim./2016/15')
- Best Short Film at Filmfestival Kitzbuehel, Austria: ***The Dogcatcher*** by Daria Woszek (fic./2015/30')
- Best Short Film at Taratsa International FF: ***Disorder*** by Julian Tałandziewicz (fic./2016/12')
- Best Short Foreign Film at Monnouth FF, USA: ***Mother*** by Piotr Gołębowski (fic./2016/28')
- Judge's Award at The Iron Mule Short Comedy Film Festival, USA: ***Pinky*** by Tomasz Cichoń (fic./2014/24')
- Grand Prix at Trickfilms Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film, Germany: ***Impossible Figures and Other Stories II*** by Marta Pajek (anim./2016/15')
- Grand Prix of the Student Competition at SICAF, Korea: ***Locus*** by Anita Kwiatkowska-Naqvi (anim./2016/10')
- Jury Prize for Best Animated Short at Annual Indie Street FF, USA: ***Pussy*** by Renata Gaśiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Special Jury Prize at SANTIAGO Del Estero FF, Argentina: ***Adaptation*** by Bartosz Kruhlak (fic./2016/30')
- Student Jury Special Mention, Audience Award at International Film Schools Festival, Uruguay: ***Pussy*** by Renata Gaśiorowska (anim./2016/8')
- Student Competition Winner at Anibar Animation Festival, Kosovo: ***Oh Mother!*** by Paulina Ziolkowska (anim./2017/12')
- ZIZZ – Prix du public at Festival International du film de Nancy, France: ***Pussy*** by Renata Gaśiorowska (anim./2016/8')



ANNA GAWLITA / KIJORA FILM IN THE EMERGING PRODUCERS PROGRAMME

Emerging Producers is a programme focusing on education and promotion, dedicated to talented documentary film producers from the European Union, which accompanies the festival in Jihlava. The aim of the project is to integrate the new generation of producers with professionals who have been working for many years in different fields of the film industry, which is to bear fruit in the future and result in European documentary film co-productions. This year, producer and production manager Anna Gawlita has qualified to enter the program. Gawlita is responsible for producing films like: **Doctors** and **The Palace** by Tomasz Wolski, **A Diary of a Journey** by Piotr Stasik and **Casa Blanca** by Aleksandra Maciuszek. Recently she has finished working on an experimental documentary film **Opera about Poland** directed by Piotr Stasik. She is also working on Agnieszka Polska's debut feature **Hura. Wciąż żyjemy!!!** while finishing directing her own documentary debut **Krzyżaki**. Polish producer Maciej Kubicki from Telemark participated in the previous edition of the programme. Emerging Producers, organised and co-ordinated by the Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival, is held from 26 to 28 October 2017.

FOR POLISH FILMS

- Special Mention at VIS Vienna Independent Shorts, Austria: **Impossible Figures and Other Stories II** by Marta Pajek (anim./2016/15')
- White Goose Award for the Best Documentary Film at DMZ IDFF, South Korea: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/72')
- Special Jury Mention at Flahertiana IDFF, Russia: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/72')
- Prix Italia Award at 69th Prix Italia, Italy: **Icon** (doc./2016/51')
- Jury Award at the ARKIPEL Jakarta International Documentary and Experimental FF, Indonesia: **Two Worlds** by Maciej Adamek (doc./2016/51')
- Best Directing Award at Bosi Fest, Serbia: **Daniel** by Anastasia Dąbrowska (doc./2016/24')
- Nomination for Prix Europa Award, Germany: **Two Worlds** by Maciej Adamek (doc./2016/51')
- Onion Award for the Best Film at MakeDox, Macedonia: **21 x New York** by Piotr Stasik (doc./2016/71')
- Honourable Mention at Hot Docs, Canada: **Volte** by Monika Kotecka and Karolina Poryzata (doc./2017/14')
- Jury Prize at the 34th Busan International Short FF, South Korea: **Between Us** by Maciej Miller (doc./2017/30')
- Best Documentary Award at It's All True IDFF, Brasil: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/72')
- Golden Lion for the Best Documentary of Venice Classics at 74th Venice FF, Italy: **The Prince and the Dybbuk** by Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski (doc./2017/79')
- The Robert and Frances Flaherty Prize – Grand Prix at Yamagata IDFF, Japan: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/72')
- Honorable Mention for Short Documentary at It's All True IDFF, Brasil: **Polonaise** by Agnieszka Elbanowska (doc./2016/16')
- Grand Prix Award at Herceg Novi FF, Montenegro: **Close Ties** by Zofia Kowalewska (doc./2016/19')
- What the Doc Award at DocsBarcelona, Spain: **You Have No Idea How Much I Love You** by Paweł Łoziński (doc./2016/80')
- The Best Documentary at TRT Documentary Awards, Turkey: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/72')
- Award SOS-Kinderdorfer Weltweit at DOK.fest IDFF in Munich, Germany: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/72')
- Main Award and Audience Award at CinéDOC-Tbilisi, Georgia: **You Have No Idea How Much I Love You** by Paweł Łoziński (doc./2016/80')
- Best Feature-length Documentary at NYC Greenpoint Film Festival, USA: **Two Worlds** by Maciej Adamek (doc./2016/51')



The Prince and the Dybbuk

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF MOSZE WAKS

The Prince and the Dybbuk was the only Polish film in the main programme of this year's Venice International Film Festival. It outclassed its competitors in the Venice Classics section, and the jury awarded it the Golden Lion for best documentary. Krzysztof Gierat interviews the film's creators – Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski.

KRZYSZTOF GIERAT: It's not a traditional portrait film and that was probably your premise. The film shows a lot when it comes to Michał Waszyński's professional life, but you obviously didn't want to make a straightforward biography about him.

ELWIRA NIEWIERA: No, because in film we are always interested in personal stories, the experiences of characters. Here we were dealing with someone who had deliberately hidden

and obscured things, who gave us a fragmented story and so we had a much greater challenge in terms of piecing together this mosaic of his life. Making a purely biographical film has never crossed our minds. It seemed to us that we had to go deeper into this character. It's a bit metaphysical, but Jola Dylewska (a brilliant cinematographer, the author of *Po-Lin* – editor's note) told us before shooting that when you're making a film about someone who's dead, it's not completely indifferent to them. While working on this film, we felt that Waszyński accompanied us, and he also needed time for us to take up certain themes.

KG: What you said is very beautiful, because this film is very metaphysical, but also, what's highlighted by the final caption – 'in memory of Michał Waszyński' – it's also made with great sensitivity and respect for him.

PIOTR ROSOŁOWSKI: We're fascinated by this character, the mystery and complexity of a man who had so many different faces and was, at the same time, a very delicate person inside;

We're fascinated by this character, the mystery and complexity of a man who had so many different faces and was, at the same time, a very delicate person inside; someone who paid a great price for the luxury of being invented from the ground up.

someone who paid a great price for the luxury of being invented from the ground up.

EN: While reviewing the film in the editing room, after we had edited the final scene, I burst into tears, and that gave birth to the idea of adding the dedication ‘in memory of Michał Waszyński’. Personally, I am very grateful to fate that I was able to explore such a story.

KG: The motif of the Dybbuk, given to Polish culture by Ansky, but popularised by Waszyński, fascinates Polish artists despite the fact that it comes from a different religious and cultural area. But we also had our ‘dziady’, we had our Gustaw who transformed into Konrad, so it’s not that distant, isn’t it?

PR: This is the phenomenon of Waszyński’s *Dybbuk*. The film, which captivated the Polish audience at the end of the 1930s, was shot completely in Yiddish and, despite taking place in Poland, these Polish contexts are completely absent. It is set in a Jewish shtetl and remains completely immersed in this world. It was almost completely isolated from its Polish neighbourhood. Already at that time the critics were surprised by this paradox: exotic, and at the same time close and understandable. The word ‘dybbuk’ is also present in Polish culture: a ghost that can follow and haunt you. The culture of Ashkenazi Jews is also part of Polish culture and this legacy makes up the richness of the place where we were growing up.

KG: As you are well aware, a few years ago Łukasz Maciejewski wrote a great screenplay for a feature film which was supposed to focus on Dybbuk’s production. The film has not yet been made. How was it in your case, where did this idea come from?

EN: The first impulse was Samuel Blumenfeld’s book *Człowiek, który chciał być księciem* (‘The Man Who Wanted to be a Prince’), which was released in Poland in 2008, but we learned that a film about Waszyński was being made, a Polish-German co-production. When we were finishing the *Domino Effect*, it turned out that the project had fallen through during the financing stage. We started the preliminary research almost overnight, which was very time-consuming and continued almost until the last day of editing. This was mainly due to the fact that our hero passed away 50 years ago, so many people who could actually say something about him, unfortunately, are also dead. A breakthrough came when we reached his family in Israel and foster family in Italy.

KG: Did your attitude towards him change during production, or did you constantly have in mind Jola Dylewska’s words that he would accompany you at all times and you had to be wary not to harm him?

EN: We never thought that we had to be careful. I was constantly accompanied by a sensation of encountering difficulties along the way, but at some point we felt that we had gained Waszyński’s trust and had his permission to go on. For example, we started working on the issue of homosexuality very late. This was the aspect that met with the most resistance.

PR: Our attitude towards him evolved. At first there was a fascination with this Leonard Zelig alter ego of sorts, the human chameleon, the man who always landed on his feet, who made almost no bad calls throughout his life, and wherever he appeared – he was always in the spotlight. However, when analysing his films, while coming more and more new material, his secret began to emerge. Everything that he pushed into his subconsciousness – the Jewish shtetl, the roots he renounced, his love for a boy which appeared quite early and also left a mark on him, all this added bitterness and sadness to the character. Almost simultaneously we started looking for things that would bring us closer to his personality, but it wasn’t easy.

EN: Naturally, we needed time to understand this complex personality of his.



Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosotowski at 74th Venice FF © Film Art Production

PR: Downright schizophrenic. For example, during the production of *Dybbuk*, he used Yiddish interpreters – despite growing up in a Jewish shtetl in Kovel, where everyone spoke Yiddish.

KG: And did he also hide his pre-war film past?

EN: Everybody who met him after the war had no idea that he was a director.



PR: That he was such an important director in Poland. After he settled in Rome, he did not maintain any relationship with the Polish diaspora. He simply created his new identity of Prince Waszyński, and was well aware that the Polish community would be able to expose his masquerade, so he mainly kept to film and aristocratic circles.

KG: We have a hero who wears different masks. A Jew pretends to be an aristocrat, a gay man marries a countess. However, wouldn't it have been easier for him in the film world to have the past of a prolific creator of the Polish interwar period?

EN: No one we talked to knew of his pre-war achievements. He probably assumed that 'aristocrat' did not rhyme with 'director'.

KG: But it does with 'producer', of all things. (laughs)

EN: That's why the role of a producer was so important for him later on and he no longer aspired to direct films.

PR: In fact, these are all our speculations, we don't really know that. However, we've often heard about his motto that what's ahead, new challenges, was the most important. He always tried to give the impression of someone who does not

He simply created his new identity of Prince Waszyński, and was well aware that the Polish community would be able to expose his masquerade, so he mainly kept to film and aristocratic circles.

look back. Many people said very similar things about him – always very elegant, always drew attention to himself, that he was a very exceptional person, charismatic, friendly, and that he was able to find a common language with everyone.

EN: Imagine that we once went to Las Vegas for an interview with a production manager, who told us over the phone – 'I used to drink coffee with him every day! How could I not know him?' No questions asked, we flew straight to Las Vegas, and this old man...

PR: He was about 90 years old.

EN: ... he says – 'You know, that's amazing, I actually used to drink coffee with him every day, but I can't really say anything about him'.

KG: My first reflection after watching the film was that you made a classy film. This term refers both to your relationship with the hero and the narration, the artistic qualities of the film. The fact that it's extremely rich not only in terms of the terrific interviewees in various location is one thing, but you have an incredible amount of archival material, which the viewer fully identifies only at the end, by reading in the end titles that there's e.g. Munk or even Poręba in the film! (laughs)

EN: 28 different sources, imagine that.

PR: Even Man Ray is there!

KG: This allows you to locate these stories in particular places and at a particular time. Newsreels are featured from time to time. You didn't tinker with them at all? These were all verbatim comments from those reels?

PR: There was relatively little footage with Waszyński from the interwar period. On the other hand, we found quite a lot of press releases, conversations with him, and interviews. We composed

two short newsreels from them, which served to convey important information to the audience, and at the same time maintain a certain formal consistency with the entire film.

KG: The film is built a bit like an investigation, but it's not a dry, matter-of-fact study, but rather a metaphysical tale, and it feels that you are not interested in discovering the complete story, only the truth...

EN: There is none!

KG: But through a tale you suggest a way of interpreting these events, with compassion and sympathy towards the hero, understanding his escape into masks...

EN: In our opinion, Waszyński disowned himself because it was too difficult for him to bear the burden of his own past. And that's why he decided to reinvent himself.

ELWIRA NIEWIERA – director and researcher. Her feature documentary debut, *Bulgarian Stories* was presented at a number of international film festivals and had art-house cinema distribution in Germany. Elwira worked also as first assistant director and researcher on the Academy Award nominated documentary *Rabbit à la Berlin*. Since 2008 she is Executive Director of the Polish-German cultural foundation Nowa Ameryka.



Photo: Leszek Zych, Polityka

PIOTR ROŚOŁOWSKI – graduated as a cinematographer from the Katowice Film School. Awarded with a scholarship of the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. Co-director of the documentary *The Art of Disappearing* (premiere at Visions du Réel 2013), co-author of *Rabbit à la Berlin* – Academy Award nominated short documentary film. Director of photography of many awarded feature and short films, among them: *On the Line* by Reto Caffi – Academy Award nominated short fiction and *Nowhere in Europe* by Kerstin Nickig – main prize at the Sarajevo Human Rights Film Festival. He was a participant of European Film Academy Master Class 2006, Ex Oriente Film 2005 and Documentary Campus 2007.

Elwira and Piotr co-directed a feature documentary *Domino Effect*, shown worldwide at more than 50 festivals and won many awards, among them Golden Dove award at the DOK Leipzig and the Golden Horn at Krakow Film Festival.



PR: This film is a bit like the complex figure of Waszyński, it has different layers. On the one side, there's some investigating, and on the other there is a spiritual layer, an attempt to enter his psyche. This is the more metaphorical layer. We were looking for a balance that would combine it all. In his book, Samuel Blumenfeld devoted a lot of attention to yet another of Waszyński's faces – the man who pulled lots of financial scams during these big productions. We could not find enough footage to put it into the film. Ultimately, I guess that some kind of emotional bond with him took the upper hand.

KG: It shows in how it is produced, the symbolism of individual shots, the mysticism of journals, the shadows, the pervasion, the vagueness, and the clashes of various, seemingly very distant, film scenes, such as the fall of the Roman Empire and the collapse of the pre-war world of the Jews in Poland. But... somehow all this is – to say in the language of film – 'developed'.

EN: Yes, that's true.

KG: And you always emphasize this duality. The hero himself speaks about the magic of cinema here. A king may become a shepherd, and a beggar may become a rich man. Since a film is a dream, since a film is a great lie, why not lie in life if it does not hurt others? Although, as you mentioned, it could sometimes hurt, as he dabbled in some financial scams.

EN: He also had a gift of sorts; he appeared and disappeared at precisely the right moment. When these financial problems came up, he died. Just like that.

PR: During a party, while sipping champagne, he teleported to another space. Waszyński died two weeks before the bankruptcy of Samuel Bronston Production, where he played a key role, while its main owner was dragged around by various debt collectors and prosecutors for the next 10 years. As always, he knew when to appear and when to disappear. ■

BY DANIEL STOPA

DOCUMENTARY FILMS MADE BY LONE AUTHORS

Stasik, Rosołowski

Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski's award-winning documentary *The Prince and the Dybbuk* at the 74th Venice Film Festival confirms that Polish documentaries made by lone authors – directors and cinematographers – have become one of the most globally recognized showcases of our culture. These productions, which often broaden the boundaries of the genre, are authorial, sincere, intimate, and their distinctive style is recognizable within the first few shots. Their authors – Marcin Koszałka, Michał Marczak, Piotr Rosołowski, Wojciech Staroń, Piotr Stasik, Marcin Sauter, Tomasz Wolski (to mention only few) – are among the most talented cinematographers, as well as some of the most interesting documentary filmmakers.

BOGDAN DZIWORSKI

Films created by lone authors started to appear in Poland relatively recently. At first, light film equipment had to be developed and adopted more widely. With the advent of digital cameras and portable computers equipped with editing programs, director-cinematographers could finally allow themselves to record reality without any constraints. Before this technical revolution, documentaries made by lone authors were not that popular, but some important works that could be classified as such were released.

These were mainly the masterpieces of Bogdan Dziworski – documentary shorts produced by an outstanding cinematographer. *Ice Hockey* (1976), *Skiing Scenes with Franz Klammer* (1980), *Scenes from a Life of a Man* (1983), *Szapito* (1984) – productions that have an original style based on the image provided rather than the words. These poetic and elaborate shots dedicated to sports masters constitute ambiguous and succinct essays on human existence, feelings, emotions, fighting against fate and overcoming one's limits. Although Dziworski did not make films purely by himself (he cooperated with exceptional

cinematographers: Wit Dąbal, Ryszard Lenczewski, Krzysztof Ptak, Piotr Sobociński, Zbigniew Rybczyński), over the years he became the Polish documentary filmmaker par excellence, with the status of both director and cinematographer.

A FILM NOTEBOOK

Films made by lone authors often take on the character of a film essay, they are sketches, poems written with a camera. Their authors try to set a personal tone in each of their works, emphasize that the films they make are in a deep sense ‘their films’. This is the case with the last two documentaries by Piotr Stasik. *21 x New York* (2016) and *Opera about Poland* (2017) are original film collages combining purely documentary footage with staged scenes, archival materials with contemporary ones. In them Stasik uses his own notes, statements made by the people he encounters, he experiments at the limits of the feature film and the documentary. All these efforts are undertaken for one purpose: to discuss the human condition of the residents of the metropolis of New York (*21 x New York*) and contemporary Poland (*Opera about Poland*).

Piotr Rosołowski’s works also fit perfectly within the form of a film notebook. *Art of Disappearing* (2013, co-director: Bartosz Konopka) and *The Prince and the Dybbuk* (2017, co-director: Elwira Niewiara) resemble a broken mirror in their form. Confronting the Haitian Voodoo priest Amon Frémon, who

visited the People’s Republic of Poland in 1980 (*Art of Disappearing*), and Michał Waszyński, the creator of many famous pre-war films (including *The Dybbuk*, 1937), and the producer of Hollywood hits (*The Prince and the Dybbuk*), seems quite a challenge. Rosołowski, having a great sense of film form, takes the existing discord as an asset rather than an obstruction. Various interpretations of their protagonists’ storied pasts do not form a whole, but rather conflict with one another. Their film tale – just like the lives of the characters who have changed their identities and rewritten their biographies from scratch more than once – is based on the principles of an intellectual and sophisticated contrast.

AUTOBIOGRAPHISM

Together with the appearance of works created by lone authors, a trend of autobiographical documentalism was born in Poland. The films by Marcin Koszałka and Wojciech Staroń, two exceptional cinematographers who have worked on highly acclaimed feature films in Poland and abroad, are undoubtedly autobiographical. Already in his debut (*Such a Nice Boy I Gave Birth To*, 1999), a half-hour-long family drama, Koszałka unveiled, in a direct and even exhibitionistic manner, his privacy by portraying his difficult – but not devoid of love – relationship with his mother. Through his subsequent films: *Till It Hurts* (2008), *Let’s Run Away from Her* (2010), *The Existence* (2007), *The Declaration of Immortality* (2010), he proved

Koszałka, Staroń



Opera about Poland dir.: Piotr Stasik



to everyone that his oeuvre is more than just shock and cheap sensation. His films have an auto-therapeutic dimension, it is a kind of therapy for both the director and the audience. Wojciech Staroń's films also stem from autobiography, from personal experiences. His two autobiographical works – *The Siberian Lessons* (1998) and *Argentinian Lesson* (2011) – are records of journeys made in the company of his family, records which form a model poetic diary. Unlike Koszałka's films, there is no sensation and exhibitionism in them; these are documentaries directed towards the image, involving few words, above all depicting their protagonists in action, the characters whom the author, along with his family, meets during these long journeys.

FILMS BY DOCUMENTARY DIRECTORS

The advent of light and widely available film equipment made it possible for documentary directors, who work with cinematographers on a daily basis, to boldly take on a new role as a filmmaker – the role of a lone author. *The Way It Is* and *The Sisters* (both from 1999) by Paweł Łoziński, Jacek Bławut's *Rat in a Crown* (2005), *The Warrior*, and Maciej Cuske's *III. Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep It Holy* (2008) and *Far from the City* (2013) – are all examples of documentaries in which the directors themselves took the camera, proving that sometimes all it takes to create valuable cinema experiences

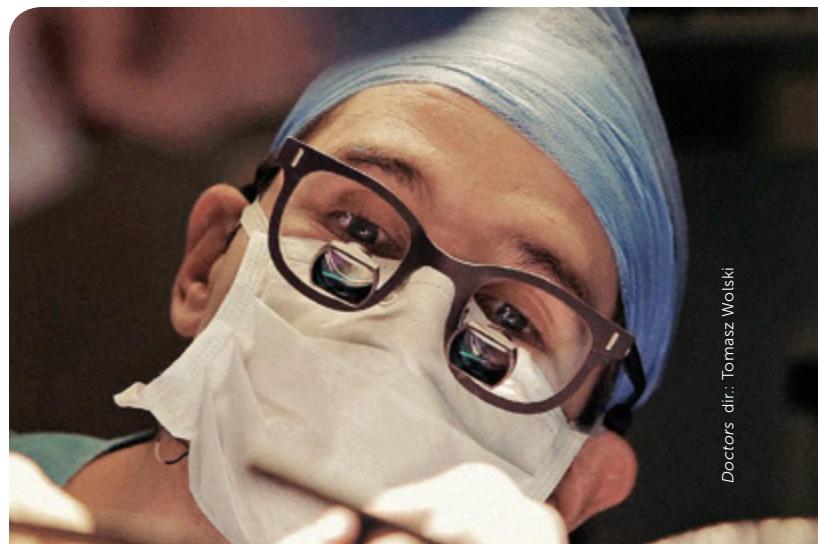
The advent of light and widely available film equipment made it possible for documentary directors, who work with cinematographers on a daily basis, to boldly take on a new role as a filmmaker – the role of a lone author.

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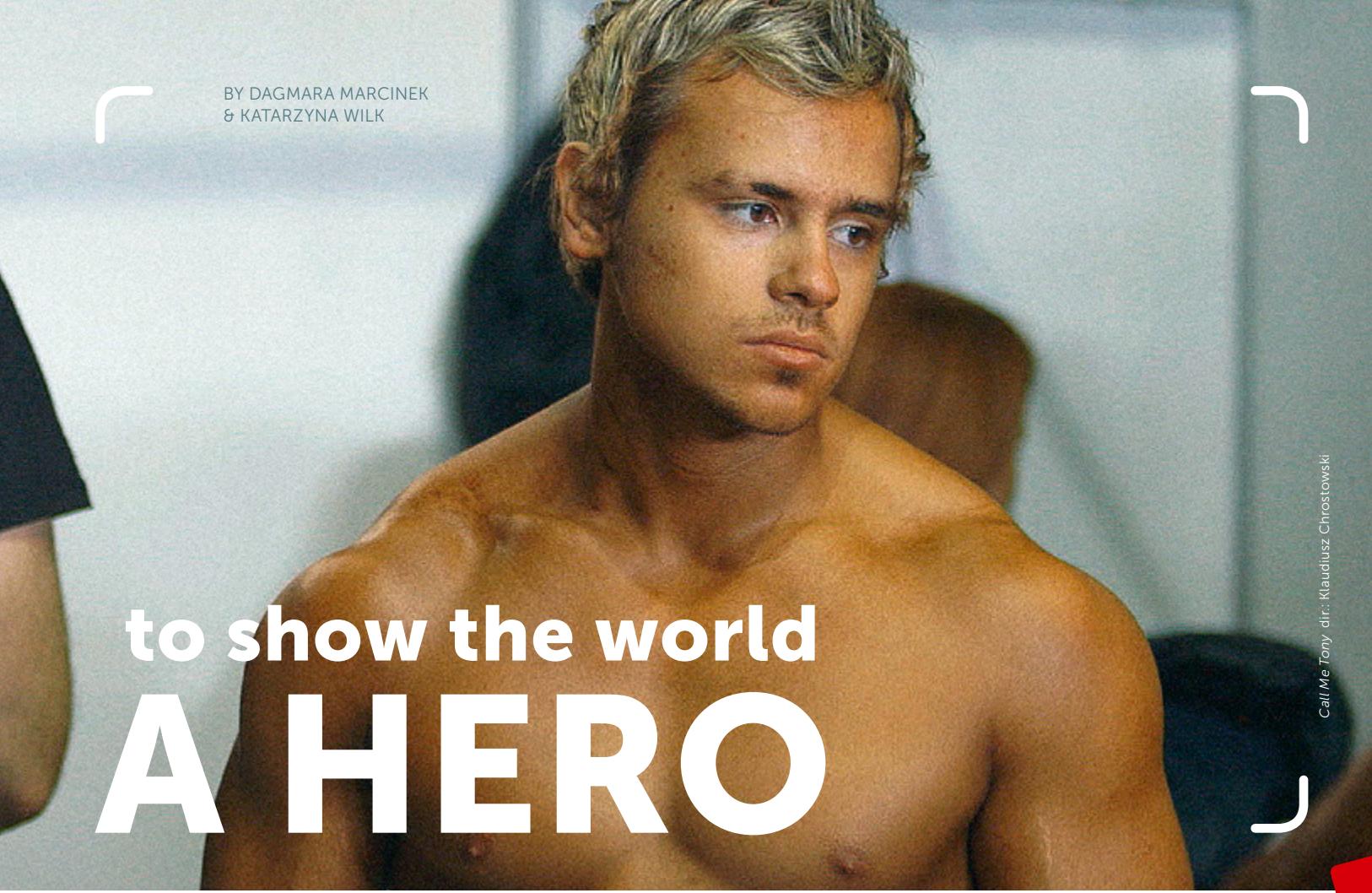
is to meet their hero and have an ordinary conversation. Their films are mainly fuelled by the curiosity of other people, their heroes primarily include ordinary, anonymous people: neighbours, an alcoholic, a group of children spending their holidays in the countryside. None of the creators forces anyone to confess, but still the protagonists open up before them. Few people – like Łoziński and Bławut, creating films alone or with a cinematographer – can create such an almost intimate atmosphere on the set.

OBSERVATION

'I feel the best when I can watch and record amazing moments through the camera which are directed by someone else. By whom? I don't know, probably someone from above' – says Wojciech Staroń in a conversation with Jakub Socha. For Staroń, as well as for Marcin Sauter and Tomasz Wolski, an insightful observation of life determines the impact of their work. Not only are people the heroes of their films but also the landscape, nature (*Brothers*, 2015 – Wojciech Staroń, *Zhalanash*, 2017 – Marcin Sauter), or a place (*The Clinic*, 2006, *Doctors* 2011 – Tomasz Wolski). Patient observation results from the cinematographers' fascination with an image, with how much emotion it can carry. That is why their films constitute universal, touching, and formally original documents, where what is important lies in the image. ■



Doctors dir.: Tomasz Wolski



to show the world A HERO

Why drive a car which breaks down constantly? Where does obsessive thoughts about suicide come from? Why hide one's true identity? What can be heard in the sounds made by nature? The heroes of some Polish documentaries hide dark secrets and fascinating pursuits. Attendees at the DOK Leipzig, IDFA, or Jihlava festivals, where the latest productions are being premiered in the near future, will be able to discover and try to understand them.

FOUND PORTRAITS

Polish documentaries have entered the autumn festival season with a bang, starting with the Venice Film Festival. There *The Prince and the Dybbuk* by Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski received the Venice Classics Award. The filmmakers traced the life of Michał Waszyński, the director who discovered the talent of Sophia Loren and Audrey Hepburn whilst constantly changing his identity and hiding his homosexuality, together with his Jewish ancestry. Whilst Waszyński tried to erase or disguise many facts of his life, Zdzisław Beksiński was the opposite. The artist, fascinated by technical innovations, documented every moment of his life on camera. The everyday life he recorded will be shown in Marcin Borchardt's documentary *The Beksińskis. A Sound and Picture Album* at the festival in Cottbus. However, this won't be a happy family idyll, but rather a story filled with unease, and ended by three tragedies: suicide, illness, and murder.

DIRECTION: PASSION

This autumn, Polish documentary filmmakers will also present the portraits of people whose lives are guided by passion. Jeph Jerman, from Jacek Piotr Bławut's *How to Destroy Time Machines*, is one of them. To him, the world exists thanks to sounds: leaves rustling in the wind, stones hitting each other, tree branches rubbed like strings. It is with these sounds that the musician builds songs, and the effects of his experiments captured on film will be presented at the DOK Leipzig festival.

Call Me Tony, directed by Klaudiusz Chrostowski, will also be screened in Leipzig. It is the story of a young boy who dreams of becoming a famous actor and starring in a role similar to Tony Montana. At the same time, Konrad is trying his hand as a bodybuilder, but instead of finding success, his figure gains a reputation of one of 'the most embarrassing'. Pursuing his passion collides with the brutal reality, and a complex relationship with his dubious parents does not help at all.



Family relations are also presented in Grzegorz Szczepaniak's *The Ugliest Car*, presented at IDFA. What makes the discussions between the mother and her son unique and the plot come together is their car – a fifty-year-old Wartburg, which regularly wins competitions for the ugliest car. It is both their love and a witness to extraordinary situations.

POLE, MEANS WHO?

The heroes of *Opera About Poland*, which will be screened in Jihlava this autumn, says more about Poland than a mother and her son in a Wartburg. In Piotr Stasik's creative documentary, they answer the question of what it means to be Polish. Through a collage of interviews, newspaper advertisements and music, emerges a music video that shows everyday life and traditions, inviting both laughter and reflection.

The question about Polish identity is also asked in Wojciech Klimala's documentary *Hugo*, which premiered in Busan. It's a touching story of a young half-Polish half-Chinese boy who, after his mother's death, is taken under the wing of his grandfather. Together they live in an abandoned amusement park on the outskirts of the city. Their confrontations with the Polish authorities and, above all, with the child's father upon his release from prison, makes the struggle to raise the grandchild all the harder.

OVER THE HORIZON

Polish productions also show characters living in remote locations in the world. This is what Adriana F. Castellanos has done, taking the audience in *Dos Islas* on a journey from Cuba to the island of El Hierro, confronting reality with childhood memories and stories told by her 102-year-old grandmother. This touching and beautifully framed film will be presented at the RIDM festival in Canada.

Equally gorgeous frames, but with a completely different emotional impact, appear in Marcin Sauter's film *Zhalanash - Empty Shore* which will be screened before a wide audience at IDFA. Picturesque images of the Aral Lake present the heroes' sad stories. In place of a once-prosperous city, only a ship graveyard remains, and their hopes for the future are disappearing together with the declining lake.

WITH ART IN THE BACKGROUND

Polish documentary filmmakers talk about the world of other artists frequently and willingly, although art often tends to be only a background and pretext to tell other, more intimate and personal stories, like in the latest film by Marta Prus – *Over the Limit*. Presented in recent years at the most important forums and pitching events in Toronto, Amsterdam, Sheffield and others, the film is one of the most anticipated Polish releases. The director examines the circles of Russian artistic gymnasts, although her attention is mainly focused on Margerita, who – despite her young age – has already enjoyed considerable international success. Despite the fact that the film generally does not venture beyond observing the young sportswoman while training or preparing for competitions and championships, it is largely a universal tale of a young, determined, and ambitious woman, overcoming her own physical and mental barriers, growing up in an atmosphere of great expectations, and gaining the ability to cope both with failure and spectacular success. The film will compete for an award at the IDFA, where it will also have its world premiere. Another interesting and indirect look at art is found in the film *Noisless. Desert Extras* by Gilles Lepore and Maciej and Michał Maďracki, who turn the spotlight on those that otherwise serve only as a background to leading film roles. The film, in a visually remarkable form, shows the inhabitants of a small Moroccan

town, which – due to its geographical location – is a year-round film set for the largest Hollywood productions, and its citizens make their living out of appearing as extras in films they have no chance to watch since, paradoxically, there is not a single cinema in the area. The film will premiere at the Jihlava IDFF, and shortly afterwards during the RIDM in Montreal.

Maciej Bochniak's *Ethiopiques. The Revolt of Soul* will also be screened for the first time at the IDFA, a film telling the story of a specific genre of jazz which was born in Ethiopia in the 1960s. The director invites us on an extraordinary musical journey through the decades – guided by Girma Beyene, a former star, and Francis Falceto, music producer and enthusiast of Ethiopian jazz, who want to renew their cooperation after 30 years. The background for their fascinating tales is the political history of a country where free artistic expression was not easy during the communist rule.

Undoubtedly, the heroes of new Polish documentaries have a lot to say: about their lives, failures, or passions. Have the filmmakers succeeded in presenting their stories on screen in a way that enchants the audience and the festival jury? We will find out in the autumn. ■



The Beksińskis. A Sound and Picture Album dir.: Marcin Borchardt



The Ugliest Car dir.: Grzegorz Szczepaniak

WHERE TO WATCH NEW POLISH DOCS

THE BEKSIŃSKIS. A SOUND AND PICTURE ALBUM

DIR.: MARCIN BORCHARDT

COTTBUS FILM FESTIVAL GERMANY (7-12.11) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

GÖTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL SWEDEN (26.01-5.02)

ETHIOPIQUES. REVOLT OF THE SOUL

DIR.: MACIEJ BOCHNIAK

IDFA THE NETHERLANDS (15-26.11) WORLD PREMIERE

OVER THE LIMIT

DIR.: MARTA PRUS

IDFA THE NETHERLANDS (15-26.11) WORLD PREMIERE

THE PRINCE AND THE DYBBUK

DIR.: PIOTR ROSOŁOWSKI, ELWIRA NIEWIERA

IDFA THE NETHERLANDS (15-26.11)

NOISLESS. DESERT EXTRAS

DIR.: MACIEJ MĄDRACKI, MICHAŁ MĄDRACKI, GILLES LEPORE

JIHLAVA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FF CZECH REPUBLIC (24-29.10) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

RIDM – MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL CANADA (9-19.11)

DOS ISLAS

DIR.: ADRIANA F. CASTELLANOS

RIDM – MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL CANADA (9-19.11) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

OPERA ABOUT POLAND

DIR.: PIOTR STASIK

JIHLAVA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FF CZECH REPUBLIC (24-29.10) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

COTTBUS FILM FESTIVAL GERMANY (7-12.11)

HOW TO DESTROY TIME MACHINES

DIR.: JACEK P. BŁAWUT

DOK LEIPZIG GERMANY (30.10-5.11) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

CALL ME TONY

DIR.: KLAUDIUSZ CHROSTOWSKI

DOK LEIPZIG GERMANY (30.10-5.11) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

IDFA THE NETHERLANDS (15-26.11)

ZHALANASH – EMPTY SHORE

DIR.: MARCIN SAUTER

IDFA THE NETHERLANDS (15-26.11) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

THE UGLIEST CAR

DIR.: GRZEGORZ SZCZEPANIAK

IDFA THE NETHERLANDS (15-26.11) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

HUGO

DIR.: WOJCIECH KLIMALA

WARSAW FILM FESTIVAL POLAND (13-22.10) WORLD PREMIERE

BUSAN FILM FESTIVAL SOUTH KOREA (12-21.10) INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

BY KATARZYNA WILK



10 YEARS OF FIRST DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMME

Ten years, dozens of personal stories



Object dir.: Paulina Skibińska

They are not interested in sensational stories and don't look for topics on the other side of the world. The debutants from the Munk Studio talk about the reality around themselves: the protagonists of their short documentaries are their friends, families, relatives, neighbours. Although they differ stylistically, all the films made as a part of the 'First Documentary' program may move you deeply and will certainly not let you remain indifferent.

Everybody who has tried their hand at directing knows that the first step, the debut, is the most difficult. A whole future career can depend on the realization and reception of one's first film. The Polish Filmmakers Association has been offering professional help to debuting film makers for 10 years, including the 'First Documentary' programme. The programme is coordinated by the Munk Studio, created to help young film directors with their first professional steps. The first round of documentaries no longer than 15 minutes was first announced in 2008. Previously the studio had offered the '30 Minutes' Programme dedicated to feature-makers and since the formula seemed to work, an offer for documentary-makers was prepared.

Each year around 50 projects are submitted to the programme, and around 10 of them are then produced. The selection is made by the programme board of acclaimed film makers and producers. Each film is supported to the tune of 15,000 Euro. The remaining money is added by the executive producer who also takes over all the duties related with the organization of the production. 'It happened to us that we produced a film all by ourselves, but these were the exceptions we want to avoid,' underlines Agnieszka Ptaszyńska, the production coordinator in Munk Studio. 'It is more beneficial to give the project to a third party, since, at the same time, the budget increases and we accomplish our main goal, which is activating the film industry'.

Although the films' budgets are modest, one can't deny that they are made professionally. A low budget is challenging, both in terms of art and production, but it teaches creativity. 'I am always astonished to see how both film makers and executive producers are able to work 200% with those low budgets and make films whose form, content, and

professionalism make them look as if millions were spent on them' – adds Ptaszyńska. 'We have more and more projects that are difficult in terms of realization, where specialist equipment is needed and therefore the production costs should be huge. Somehow, the creators are able to make such films in the frames of our programme.'

The documentaries from Munk Studio are successful all over the world, although they are made by film-makers who are not very experienced. Anna Kot, responsible for promotion in Munk Studio, enlists: 'Our biggest successes were two positions on the Oscar shortlist in the Documentary Short Subject category, namely *Starting Point* by Michał Szcześniak in 2015 and *Close Ties* by Zofia Kowalewska a year later. Documentaries made in the Studio have also been awarded the most important prizes in the world: the Grand Prix at the Sundance Film Festival for *The Whistle* by Grzegorz Zariczny, Special Award for *Object* at the same festival, Golden Dove Awards at DOKLeipzig for *A Piece of Summer* by Marta Minorowicz and *Close Ties*, Special Jury Award for *Close Ties* at IDFA or the nomination to IDA Documentary Award for the film *Object* by Paulina Skibińska, or the European Film Awards for *Glass Trap* by Paweł Ferdek.'

'Since the very beginning, nomination for our short features have enjoyed considerable renown and had successes at festivals. When it comes to documentaries, we did not expect it that much.' – adds Liwia Małdzik, the manager of the Programme for Young Creators. 'This is why we were surprised by the popularity of the programme and many invitations for festivals, both in Poland and all over the world. And when we started in 2007 nobody dreamed for a second about the awards from the festivals like Sundance or that year after year our films would be shortlisted for the Oscars!' ■



Mother dir.: Jakub Piątek

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL FILMS FROM THE FIRST DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMME

SELECTED AWARDS

GLASS TRAP DIR.: PAWEŁ FERDEK • 2008 • 15'

SCREENED AT 35 FESTIVALS

- THE NOMINATION FOR THE EUROPEAN FILM AWARDS

MOTHER DIR.: JAKUB PIĄTEK • 2009 • 11'

SCREENED AT 35 FESTIVALS

- 'CINEMA VERITE' IRAN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FF – GRAND PRIZE
- IN THE PALACE INTERNATIONAL SHORT FF, BULGARIA – BEST DOCUMENTARY

A PIECE OF SUMMER DIR.: MARTA MINOROWICZ • 2010 • 23'

SCREENED AT 49 FESTIVALS

- DOK LEIPZIG, GERMANY – GOLDEN DOVE
- CLERMONT-FERRAND SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, FRANCE – GRAND PRIX

THE WHISTLE DIR.: GRZEGORZ ZARICZNY • 2012 • 16'

SCREENED AT 41 FESTIVALS

- ZINEBI INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY AND SHORT FILM OF BILBAO, SPAIN GOLDEN MIKELDI FOR DOCUMENTARY
- SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL 2013, USA – GRAND JURY PRIZE

THE VISIT DIR.: MATEJ BOBRIK • 2013 • 11'

SCREENED AT 20 FESTIVALS

- IN THE PALACE INTERNATIONAL SHORT FF, BULGARIA – BEST DOCUMENTARY

STARTING POINT DIR.: MICHAŁ SZCZEŚNIAK • 2014 • 25'

SCREENED AT 31 FESTIVALS

- OSCARS – ACADEMY AWARDS SHORT LISTED
- SHEFFIELD DOC/FEST, UK – SHORT DOC AWARD

OBJECT DIR.: PAULINA SKIBIŃSKA • 2015 • 15'

SCREENED AT 76 FESTIVALS

- SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, USA – A SHORT FILM SPECIAL JURY AWARD FOR VISUAL POETRY
- IDA AWARD

CLOSE TIES DIR.: ZOFIA KOWALEWSKA • 2016 • 19'

SCREENED AT 52 FESTIVALS

- OSCARS – ACADEMY AWARDS SHORT LISTED
- DOK LEIPZIG, GERMANY – GOLDEN DOVE
- IDFA, THE NETHERLANDS – IDFA SPECIAL JURY AWARD FOR STUDENT DOCUMENTARY



Close Ties dir.: Zofia Kowalewska



The Visit dir.: Matej Bobrik



Starting Point dir.: Michał Szczęśniak



The Beksińskis. A Sound and Picture Album

Beksińscy. Album wideofoniczny

DIR.: MARCIN BORCHARDT • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 80'

They made notes, wrote memoirs, painted, recorded cassettes and films about themselves. They documented their emotions, shared their thoughts on everyday life and philosophy; sometimes obliquely, and sometimes very explicitly, they discussed their dreams and fears. It is rare for documentary filmmakers to be able to sift through such a wealth of materials. It is also rare for directors to do so little and so much at the same time with archival materials to tell a formally cohesive and engaging story that equally captivates viewers who are hearing it for the first time and those who are already very familiar with anecdotes about the Beksińskis.

Marcin Borchardt does not comment on the archival footage from today's perspective, but lets his heroes speak for themselves. However, he composes the sounds and images to get as close as possible to them and understand them. The result is tremendous. The documentary about the Beksińskis is incredibly intimate and authentic, without feeling impenetrable. There is a kind of perfection to it that appears from the combination of confidence and coolness, something which is particularly interesting since Zdzisław, Tomek, or Zosia Beksińska possessed none of these things.

The tale the heroes have woven about themselves is made up of fears, insecurities, light paranoias, anger, frustration, and fantasies. The latter is by no means the least important – fantasy played a key role in the lives of the painter, his son, a radio journalist, and Zosia – the wife and mother. It served as an escape from life for all of them. Fortunately, it wasn't for Borchardt, who created a work of art which touches upon something true by finding irony, darkness, and a certain odd charm in the archival recordings – the elements that best reflect the nature of the Beksińskis.

ANNA BIELAK



A Stranger on My Couch

Obcy na mojej kanapie

DIR.: GRZEGORZ BRZOZOWSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 53'

At first, they discuss trivial and everyday topics but soon begin to touch on more intimate issues. It is said to be easier to talk about difficult issues when you are sure that you will probably never see the listener again in your life. In the documentary *A Stranger on My Couch* Grzegorz Brzozowski observes how the relations between couchsurfers and their hosts emerge, develop, and end in the blink of an eye. He portrays the clash of cultures and personalities.

In front of Magda Kowalczyk's camera two modest sisters discuss the nature of relationships with a handsome boy who's open to sexual adventures. A student who has a grudge against his father spends a day talking to an older man who is struggling with a difficult relationship with his son. A single mother tells about her dreams and fears to a man who has recently ended his relationship. An older woman asks a young boy about his plans for the future. He's surprised that she lives alone. Doesn't she feel lonely? Is it not the reason why she invites travellers to stay at her place? It's difficult to ask a more accurate question. What do people who host strangers on their couches hope for? What do they usually get in return? What do people, who travel alone but do not decide to spend their night in Warsaw in the comfort of a hotel room, expect? Do each of these people miss being close to somebody? Can it be created within a few hours?

Brzozowski gently introduces us into the topic, and gracefully builds a parallel narrative. He behaves in part like a psychotherapist and in part like a sociologist. On the one hand, he presents a series of meetings; and on the other – records emptiness and loneliness on camera. He thus manages to create a full-fledged portrait of young people who are looking for themselves and their place.

ANNA BIELAK



Call Me Tony

DIR.: KLAUDIUSZ CHROSTOWSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 62'

In one of the scenes in the documentary *Call Me Tony*, a remark is made that ‘emotions cannot be played out, you have to allow yourself to feel them.’ This sentence is of great importance for the hero portrayed by Klaudiusz Chrostowski, as he himself is looking for a role, wondering who he could play in life. The director examines him, and we see the true drama unfold – Konrad’s search is sincere and passionate, but each of the characters played by the young boy is lacking something. Konrad also feels that he’s not finding himself; he repeats that he probably never will, but he does not stop searching. He’s doing it desperately and devotes himself to the cause – whatever it may be. And this means that we just can’t take our eyes off him.

We start with a fascination of Sylvester Stallone, but it soon emerges that it’s not about his legendary acting, but rather bodybuilding. Konrad starts training and wants to find the time for a competition for debuting bodybuilders somewhere between his high-school prom and final exams. His mum doesn’t like it, but he sticks to his guns, believing that he has talent. What would it mean for an 18-year-old to stand on the podium? How could defeat affect his psyche? Is his passion strong enough to try again in case of failure? Or perhaps his dreams will come true not through bodybuilding, but acting? You could ask Konrad a lot of questions. None of them will be answered. It isn’t the right time. Chrostowski manages to tell the story of a man who struggles for something, confronts something, and goes somewhere in every scene. He makes a great effort to prove his uniqueness, although he does not have to do so, as it can be seen at first glance that there is something peculiar about him – from which, with a little honesty towards oneself, true individuality can flow.

ANNA BIELAK

Zhalanash – Empty Shore

Zhalanash – pusty brzeg

DIR.: MARCIN SAUTER • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 40'

You can hear every rustle, every whisper; the steady clopping of horse hooves, people sighing. An open space is in the foreground. The steppe stretches as far as the horizon. The wind blows from time to time, bringing only sand and dust. It’s calm – as if before a storm or that the place portrayed in the documentary *Zhalanash – Empty Shore* had fallen victim to a quiet apocalypse. ‘There’s nothing there now, just dust. They have taken everything from us,’ – says one of its protagonists.

Marcin Sauter portrays a place that is slowly dying. The partially dried Aral Sea, where Zhalanash is located, does not hold out much hope for things to go the right way. In Kazakhstan, there are many places that are miles from anywhere. There is a lot of steppe, which at first glance gives a sense of freedom, but if one were to surrender to its allure, it would turn out that they go hand in hand only with limitations. The steppe is ruled by its own laws. It imposes a rhythm and a lifestyle. Those who try to oppose it put their lives at stake. Even if there’s someone who dares to rebel here and there, Sauter has no place for them in his frames. He is not looking for sensation. His protagonists endure all. They will survive everything.

The people who live by the titular empty shore probably don’t have much to look forward to in life. Every day passes in stagnation, sometimes boredom. However, there is something genuinely touching in their attachment to the land where they were born. Zhalanash is a haven where modernity is dominated by tradition – but not the one we often tend to talk about – oppressive, questioning individual freedom, and arguably imposing a code of conduct. It’s a tradition that tells people to love their land. A beautiful one.

ANNA BIELAK



Land of the Homeless

Ziemia bezdomnych

DIR.: MARCIN JANOS KRAWCZYK • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 50'

'We, the homeless, will do something beautiful. In a year, maybe two, we will sail on a beautiful adventure.' – says one of the protagonists of Marcin Janos Krawczyk's documentary. The director portrays a group of homeless men who are building a yacht. Together with their carer, Father Paleczny, they wanted to embark on a cruise around the world. The director not only documents their work in the port; he looks at their everyday struggles. He sees people who try to face their homelessness, alcohol addictions, weakness of will. He notices those who have managed to return to society. They started families, remembered the warmth given by having a home. Now they are trying to help their friends, although they are well aware that nothing can push a man forward until they decide to do it themselves. A priest tried to do it. He made the homeless dream up a beautiful idea. He passed away shortly afterwards, but Krawczyk's film seems to fill his place, managing to turn the twists and turns of everyday life into a charming metaphor.

Against a background drowning in greys, dirty blues, browns, and greens, the director tells the story of these modern-day Odysseus's who wander the earth. Seduced by pleasures and defeated in the battles they had to fight, they do not know how to find their loved ones and which way to go to find home. But they are getting ready for the journey. Some do this in honour of the memory of the late Father Paleczny; others believe that since they have nothing here and now, perhaps a new, better world awaits them over the horizon. Will they ever reach it? I don't know. But doesn't the old saying go that the road and the journey is much more important than the destination?

ANNA BIELAK



The Prince and the Dybbuk

Książę i dybuk

DIR.: ELWIRA NIEWIERA, PIOTR ROSOŁOWSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND, GERMANY • 2017 • 79'

Michał Waszyński lived in a dream, because cinema is a dream. Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski recapture this dream – its phenomenal form and original, extraordinary contents. In the documentary *The Prince and the Dybbuk* – which received the award for Best Documentary on Cinema during the 74. International Film Festival in Venice – they tell the story of one of cinema's most mysterious heroes.

Moshe Waks – later known as Prince Michał Waszyński – created himself just like the best film characters are created. He was born to a Jewish family, confronted life's adversities, made some right decisions, underwent change, and began his life anew – first in Warsaw and then on an international scene. He was not selfish in pursuing his fantasies – he discovered talent in Poland, and learned and worked in the company of cinema masters across Europe.

Niewiera and Rosołowski's documentary is full of stories, photographs, and archival materials of outstanding quality. A narration built from fragments of Waszyński's diary adds depth to them. It reveals an artist who faces loss, nostalgia, and being torn apart. Thanks to him, questions about identity start to be asked. Is it possible to forget where one comes from or knowingly ignore it? Was *Dybbuk*, shot by Waszyński in Yiddish, made because the director could not free himself from the guilt he felt about forgetting his roots?

The oneiric nature of editing and emotions – joy and melancholy, films and realities – makes Waszyński's portrait simultaneously seem complete and woven out of fragments; filled with secrets that are forever hidden between the lines. As with Waszyński, the film is torn apart in an oddly beautiful way. There is also incredible charisma in it, perhaps exactly the same kind with which Waks used to charm all those he met.

ANNA BIELAK

POLISH DOCS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

2017



The Prince and the Dybbuk

DIR.: **ELWIRA NIEWIERA, PIOTR ROSOŁOWSKI** • POLAND, GERMANY • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY
• 79' • PROD.: FILM ART PRODUCTION, KUNDSCHAFTER FILMPRODUKTION GMBH BERLIN •
CONTACT: WIDE HOUSE FILMS, ANAIS CLANET, AC@WIDEHOUSE.ORG

Who was Moshe Waks? A golden boy of cinema, a fraud or a man who constantly confused the illusion of film with reality? The son of a poor Jewish blacksmith from Ukraine, died in Italy as Prince Michael Waszyński, Hollywood producer and exiled Polish aristocrat. He made more than 50 films including cinema hits with Sophia Loren and Claudia Cardinale. However, only one film was his true obsession – *The Dybbuk*, based on an old Jewish legend, the most important and mystical Yiddish film ever made, directed by Waszyński shortly before the outbreak of the WWII.

American Dream

DIR.: **MAREK SKRZECZ** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 26' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Głuchołazy – a small town, which was full of life in the nineties, is now dying. The flood has destroyed local spas and factories. There is high unemployment and lots of citizens have left their town. In this place of no opportunities, teenage Szymon decides to achieve his biggest dream. He wants to become an American wrestler. Will his American dream come true?

How to Become a Pope?

DIR.: **JUSTYNA MYTNIK** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 16' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

A warm-hearted comedy about a ten year old boy who wants to become the Pope. The protagonist is an altar boy, who finds out about an audition for the part of John Paul II in a musical. The boy approaches this task as if it was a holy mission, but his parents do not treat him seriously. What is he going to learn?

A Stranger on My Coach

DIR.: **GRZEGORZ BRZOZOWSKI** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 55' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • WORLD SALES/CONTACT: KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA WILK, KATARZYNA@KFF.COM.PL (FESTIVALS); DAGMARA MARCINEK, DAGMARA@KFF.COM.PL (SALES)

An image of a contemporary city from the couchsurfers' perspective. Warsaw is becoming a meeting place for people from different corners of the world, of different ages, with different life stories. What they have in common is a feeling of being lost and a dire need to escape from their solitude. Couchsurfing is becoming a platform of communication for totally different worlds – what other reason would a Polish engineer in his fifties and a German student have to assemble a Chinese model of a helicopter together?



Their Voices

DIR.: **ERI MIZUTANI** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 26' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The film invites us to experience a mysterious world, carefully hidden from us behind the walls of a Polish boarding school. The young students have their own magic world, barely accessible for the others, the 'normal' ones. By means of subtle observation and without a spoken word we access their everyday life throughout the year. Getting to know their habits, gestures and facial expressions, we access the environment full of acceptance, understanding and light – so different from the world outside. The film allows us to share the childrens' emotions, their visions of the world and, eventually, to hear their voices.



Leocadia's Dream

DIR.: **KRZYSZTOF NOWICKI** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 22' • PROD.: RAGUSA FILM • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Leocadia has been running a small family music shop on Las Ramblas for many decades. The camera observes the last, very hard months of her work because her shop is closing down. Her shop sells classical music albums on vinyl. She begins to throw away her old records, leaving them on benches along Las Ramblas as she takes her beloved little dog for a walk. By leaving the records, she leaves traces of her past behind her.



Zhalanash – Empty Shore

DIR.: **MARCIN SAUTER** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 40' • PROD.: KRONIKA FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The eponymous Zhalanash is a port city by the Aral Sea. This place, between a great body of water and a vast desert, used to be a prosperous link in the chain of the Soviet economy but is now just a shadow of its former glory. In Marcin Sauter's film, Zhalanash is not only about the evocative landscape, but, above all, about the fates of people who invested their hopes and expectations into the place between the sea and the desert and now are left to ponder their solitude among the wrecks of ships and port cranes.



Long Way

DIR.: **WERONIKA MLICZEWSKA** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 58' • PROD.: ROCK AND ROLL PRODUCTION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

A story of a certain meeting in two scenes. The director Weronika Mliczewska decides to search for a woman whom she met six years before in Israel, by the Jordan river. Back then, the Pole received a rosary from her, a few years later the rosary became the beginning of a spiritual adventure and the symbol of a challenge: can she find the woman with whom she shares only an intangible, metaphysical bond, in India?



Miss Holocaust

DIR.: **MICHALINA MUSIELAK, IRENA SIEDLAR** • POLAND, GERMANY • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 22' • PROD.: FURIA FILM • CONTACT: MEDIA MOVE, JUSTYNA KORONKIEWICZ, JUSTYNA.KORONKIEWICZ@MEDIAMOVE.PL

Haifa is about to witness probably the most peculiar beauty competition. Women who are Holocaust survivors and live in Israel are preparing for a show to the rhythm of a Bee Gees' disco song from the musical *Staying Alive* (1983). Each of the women has her own motivation and explanation for her participation in the competition: for some, it is a way of dealing with the trauma, for others, a unique form of propagating the memory of war crimes, especially among young people.



Runners

DIR.: ŁUKASZ BOROWSKI • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 72' • PROD.: WAJDA STUDIO •
CONTACT: AGNIESZKA ROSTROPÓWICZ, AROSTROPÓWICZ@WAJDASTUDIO.PL

The film illustrates the community of long-distance runners to show their motivation, formidable ambition and willpower. It focuses on radical emotions – fatigue, fear, doubt, fortitude and ultimately the joy of overcoming our self-limitations. '240 kilometers in 52 hours' seems to be an extreme goal for three participants in an ultramarathon in Poland. They stop only for short breaks and never sleep. During the route to the finish line, they wrestle with unbelievable exhaustion and acute pain.



Between Us

DIR.: MACIEJ MILLER • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 30' • PROD.: GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL
• CONTACT: MARTA DRANKIEWCZ, INFO@GSF.PL

A young couple in their 20s are expecting a child but don't know they will cope. Faced with unexpected pressures and emotions they decide to separate and give the child up for adoption. They do not make this decision easily, with only two months remaining until the baby is due. The situation they find themselves in leads to conversations and experiences, that will have a lasting impact upon the rest of their lives.



Hugo

DIR.: WOJCIECH KLIMALA • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 80' • PROD.: FILM BUNCH

Zdzisław Misiak, known as Dzidek, is the retired king of amusement parks. After his daughter's death his 7 year-old grandson Hugo comes to live with him in one of the left over barracks. In the enchanting surroundings of the amusement park a bond grows between the boy and his grandfather. This helps them both heal wounds caused by their tragic loss. But this cannot last. Soon, they are brought to the attention of the System and the peace of Dzidek-land is disturbed. *Hugo* is a film about love and the courage to live this life by one's own rules, and to undermine traditional upbringing models in which most of us are still entrapped.



Call Me Tony

DIR.: KLAUDIUSZ CHROSTOWSKI • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 62' • PROD.: KLAUDIUSZ CHROSTOWSKI, MICHAŁ ŁUKA • WORLD SALES/CONTACT: KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA WILK, KATARZYNA@KFF.COM.PL (FESTIVALS); DAGMARA MARCINEK, DAGMARA@KFF.COM.PL (SALES)

The film is a coming of age story about the time when the whole world expects us to have answers but all we have is questions. The star is Konrad, an 18-year-old bodybuilder who wants to be an actor. He lives in a small mining town and desperately fights for his absent father's attention. In his attempts to get noticed he looks up to his favorite action movie heroes, spends hours on the gym and signs up for a body building competition. An inner conflict between who he is and who he thinks he should be soon leads to depression. Will he find his own way?



Volte

DIR.: MONIKA KOTECKA, KAROLINA PORYZAŁA • 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.



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.



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.: **ŁUKASZ 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 Rafał: 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. Rafał 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?



Tourists

DIR.: **MATEUSZ ROMASZKAN, MARTA WÓJTOWICZ-WCISŁO** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 72'
• PROD.: TAKFILM • CONTACT: KUBA KOSMA, KUBA@TAKFILM.EU

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: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION,
KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

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 SZCZEPAŃIAK** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 51' • PROD.: ANAGRAM PUBLISHING COMPANY, TVP • CONTACT: INA ROSSOW, DECKERT DISTRIBUTION, INFO@DECKERT-DISTRIBUTION.COM

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.



Land of the Homeless

DIR.: **MARCIN JANOS KRAWCZYK** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 53' • PROD.: JANOS FILM PRODUCTION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

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 Bogusław, 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 DIKI BIURO POMYSŁÓW, TVP • WORLD SALES/CONTACT: KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA WILK, KATARZYNA@KFF.COM.PL (FESTIVALS); DAGMARA MARCINEK, DAGMARA@KFF.COM.PL (SALES)

When Zdzisław Beksiński started to record his family's everyday life, he could not have imagined that each of his family members' story will come to such a tragic end. Plane crash, illness, suicide and murder contributed to the Beksińskis family being dubbed 'cursed'. Beksiński, by documenting his family's life in letters, photographs and voice recordings but mainly videos, unwillingly created an extremely intimate and authentic family portrait.



The Mine

DIR.: **MARIA ZMARZ-KOCZANOWICZ** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 59' • PROD.: ATM GRUPA SA, CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

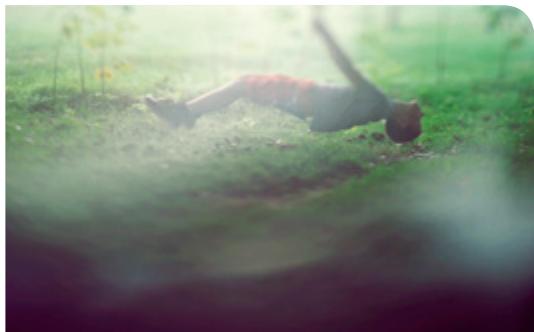
A portrait of three women of different ages working at the same place. Sorting coal in the Rydułtowy Coal Mine is a hard way to earn a living, but the protagonists are role models when it comes to fortitude. Unfortunately, their daily struggles are not only limited to shoveling the raw material, but 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.



Noisless. Desert Extras

DIR.: **MACIEJ MĄDRACKI, MICHał MĄDRACKI, GILLES LEPORÉ** • 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 • 41' • 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 •
WORLD SALES/CONTACT: KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA WILK, KATARZYNA@KFF.COM.PL
(FESTIVALS); DAGMARA MARCINEK, DAGMARA@KFF.COM.PL (SALES)

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. 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-suècès.



By Stanley for Stanley

DIR.: **MONIKA MELEN** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 53' • PROD.: TVP •
CONTACT: MONIKA MELEN, 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 BŁAUT** • 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.



His painting was a mirror image of the artist's life. His pictures present all his surroundings, which is very personal and full of meaning.

A Life in Paintings



ANIMATING VAN GOGH

The film *Loving Vincent* has been in production for almost 7 years, with over 125 painters working in 3 studios having painted 65,000 pictures in total. The first full-length, fully painted film about Vincent van Gogh was sold for distribution all over the world. Zofia Jaroszuk talks to the film's directors Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman about the behind-the-scenes aspects of the production, as well as the enduring fascination with the figure of Vincent van Gogh.

ZOFIA JAROSZUK: Why did you choose to make a film about Vincent van Gogh? Why him?

DOROTA KOBIELA: First and foremost, because his painting was a mirror image of the artist's life. His pictures present all his surroundings, which is very personal and full of meaning. Additionally, I have been always fascinated by the painter's letters, since the real portrait of the painter emerges from them.

HUGH WELCHMAN: It fascinated me that anyone could have that much willpower and belief to pick themselves up after failing so miserably. He started being an artist when he was already 29 and had such passion to keep going, even though he hadn't sold a single painting. The other thing is that

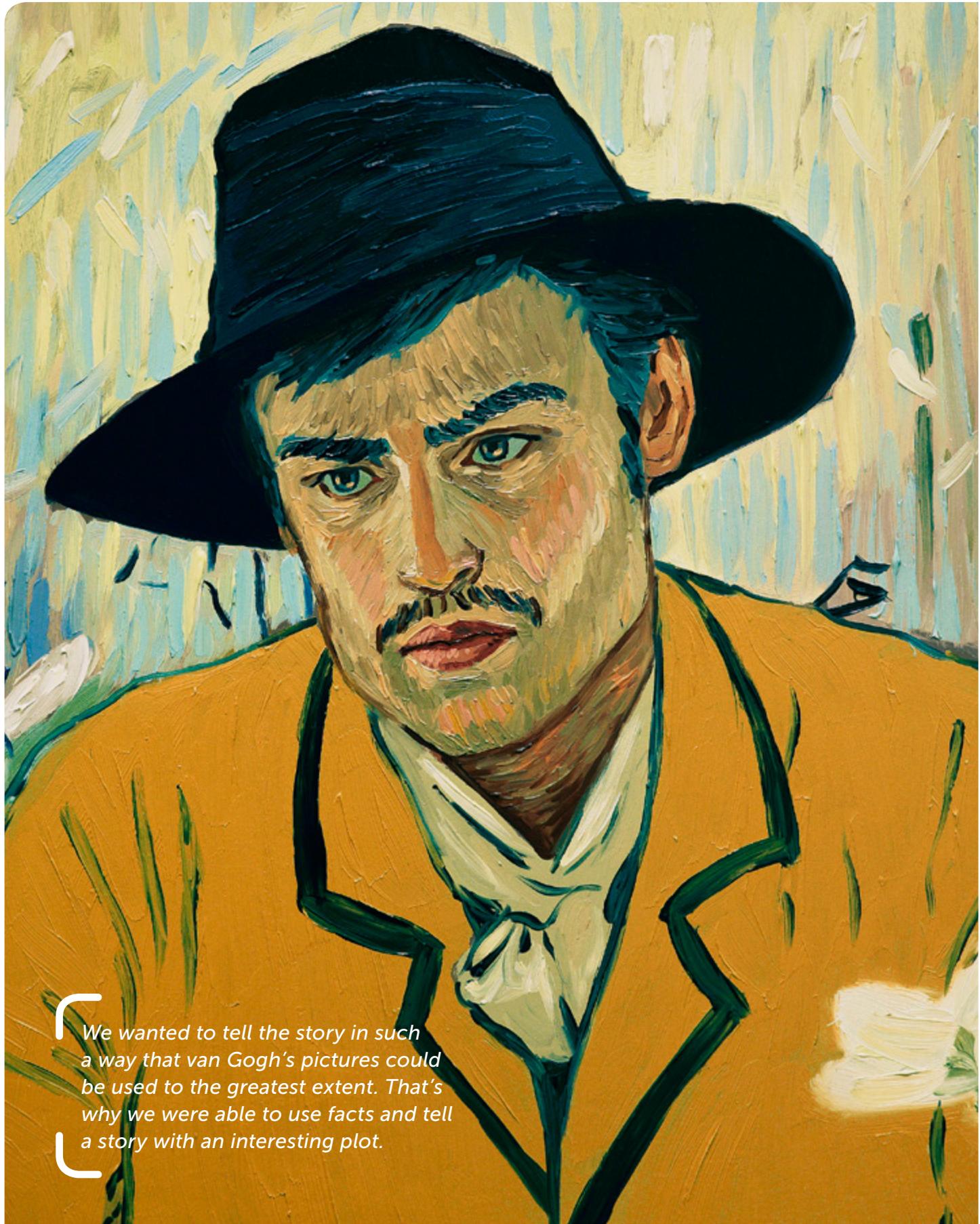
he wasn't cynical for a moment – this was a person who had mental health issues, had failed in love and yet he maintained his humble character.

ZJ: For how long had you been planning to make a pictorial film?

DK: Painting has always been most important to me. I entered the film world slowly – I started to study and learned a lot on my own, while making small commissions. But I felt how much I missed painting all the time – I didn't want to leave this chapter of my life unfinished. Then I came up with the idea of a featurette about Vincent van Gogh. Initially, I worked on the film with a Polish producer, but before the production started I went to London to work with BreakThru Films. I had a long conversation with Hugh – this is how we met. The breakthrough happened when Hugh realized how rich this topic was and that a film about Van Gogh's life could really be financed.

The production of such a complex film required huge financial resources. What difficulties did you have connected with the film budget?

HUGH WELCHMAN: I was shocked to see how difficult it was to raise the budget for this film. I've read many statistics that show how popular Vincent is and how many fans he's got. For me, it was really a no-brainer that we're going to have an audience for the film. I went to see many financers but they've all asked me to show them the proof that people would like to watch the film. We struggled every month to see if we're going to make it until there was an accidental leak of our



We wanted to tell the story in such a way that van Gogh's pictures could be used to the greatest extent. That's why we were able to use facts and tell a story with an interesting plot.

teaser trailer. Within 24 hours, the trailer had been seen by 2 million people and, after two months, almost 200 million people had seen it. That was the moment that changed everything. Then we were immediately able to sell the film all over the world.

ZJ: 64 Van Gogh's pictures are shown in the film. How did you select those most important ones and what was the rule in terms of combining them with the story being told?

DK: The selection of the pictures was a laborious process. The work on the scenario was not the typical creative work you expect with a film – it was more about analyzing and arranging stories from different fragments. You have to remember that Vincent painted in different styles. We realized that we had to make a film that would be coherent in terms of visual style. We wanted to tell the story in such a way that van Gogh's pictures could be used to the greatest extent. That's why we were able to use facts and tell a story with an interesting plot. The action was supposed to be set in particular spaces and it also influenced our choices. When it comes to the setting, our rule was to place Van Gogh's pictures in the times contemporary to the main protagonist of the film – Armand Roulin.

ZJ: The plot of the film is based on the investigation movie formula, while the character of Armand and the black and white retrospections remind the viewer of the noir genre. How did you look for a proper narrative form for the film?

DK: The detective convention appeared quite naturally.

I found Vincent's death intriguing from the very beginning, since the moment when he committed suicide was completely unexpected. Our goal was to tell a story about him by shedding new light on different events in Vincent's life and trying to find out what actually happened. It was very important to us to tell this story in a very classical, and therefore, clear

way – mostly due to the artistic part that might be very demanding to many viewers.

ZJ: 125 painters worked on this film in Gdańsk, Wrocław and Athens. How did you manage to collect such a huge group of animators?

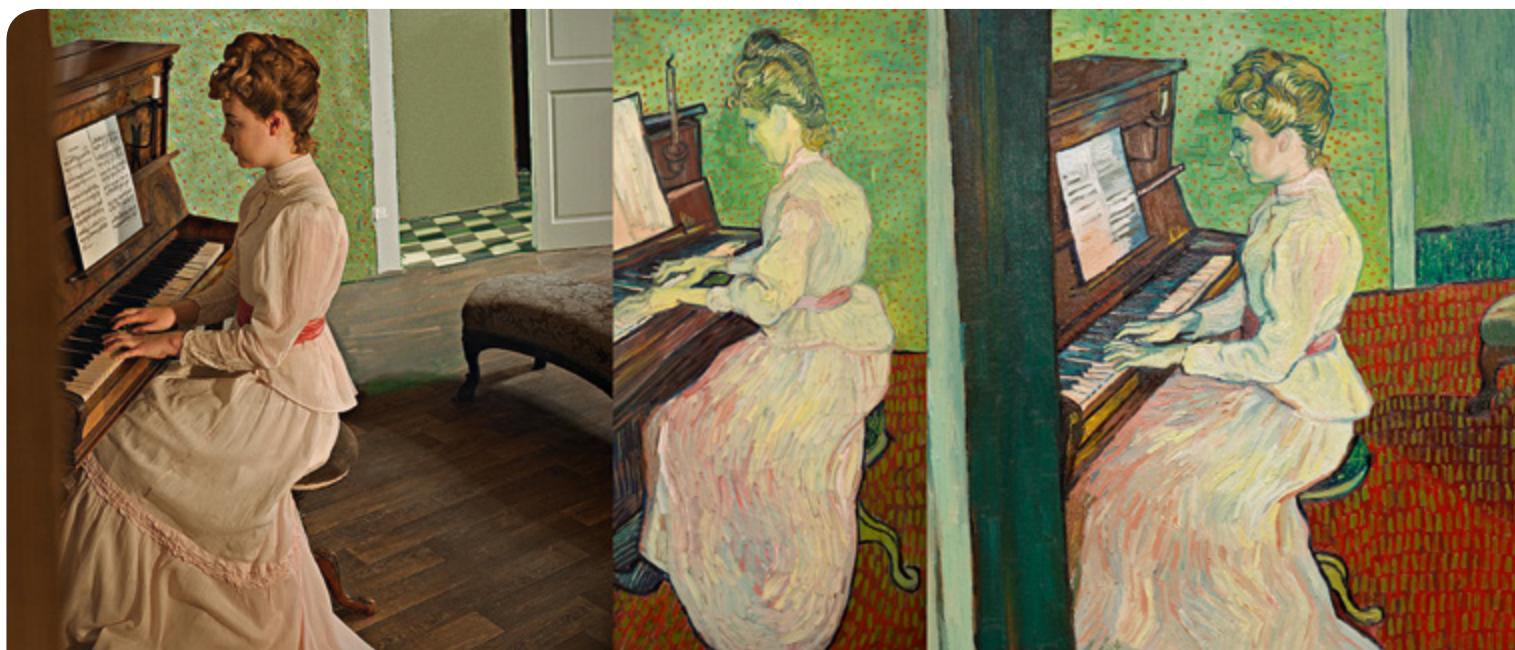
HW: Logistically, it involved a lot of organization. Dorota obviously couldn't paint the film herself as that would have taken her 81 years. So we needed a lot of painter/animators to make this film and since there are not that many of them, we had to train them. We started with four people and Dorota suggested that if she could train those four people we might as well do that with a hundred.

ZJ: A British company named Trademark is the co-producer of the film. How did you split the work between Breaktru Films and Trademark?

HW: As this was our first feature film, their feedback and experience was very precious for us. They also had to raise half of the money. Then they were responsible for the casting as they have a very good experience with approaching actors. I think that the fact that they are a very well-established producer gave the actors the confidence to get onboard. Then they were line producing the two-week live action shoot which we made as a reference for the painters.

ZJ: The film has already been awarded at festivals in Annecy and Shanghai and recently had its premiere in the USA. How did the audience react? What are your future distribution plans?

DK: The film had a very warm reception during the festival in Telluride. Some viewers watched it twice, which took a lot of effort, since it is hard to buy the tickets for this festival's screenings. Now we are waiting for the cinema distribution all over the world and the festivals to come. ■





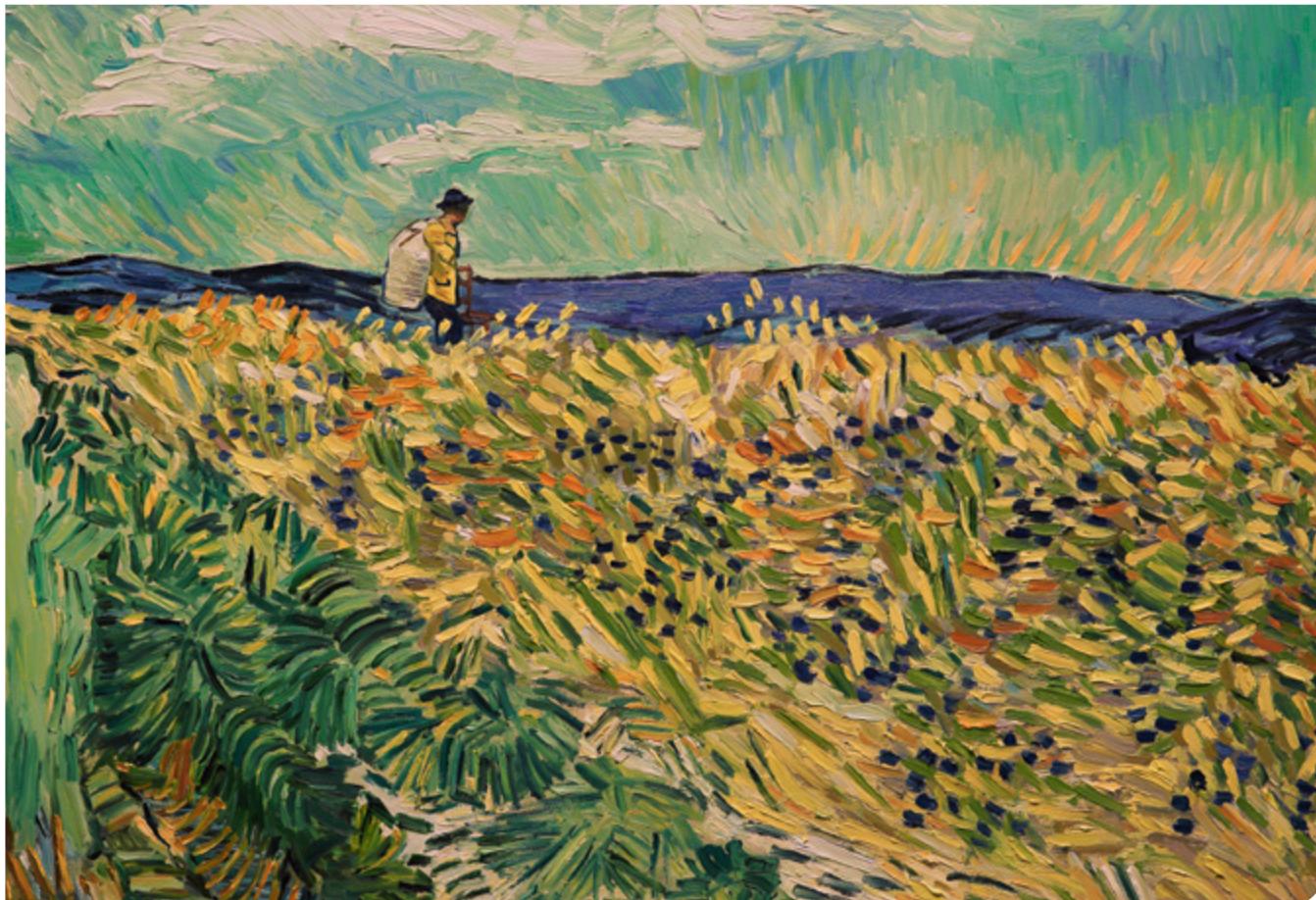
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DOROTA KOBIELA – a graduate from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and The Warsaw Film School, Direction Faculty. She has directed one live action short film, *The Hart in Hand* (2006) and five animated shorts – *The Letter* (2004), *Love Me* (2004), *Mr. Bear* (2005), *Chopin's Drawings* (2011) and *Little Postman* (2011). *Little Postman* was the world's first, and to her knowledge still only, Stereoscopic Painting Animation film, and won Stereoscopic Best Short Film at the LA 3D Film Festival, 3D Stereo Media (Liege), 3D Film & Music Fest (Barcelona). For her sixth animated short, *Loving Vincent*, Dorota aimed to combine her passion for painting and film, and intended to paint the entire film herself. However once she expanded the project into a feature film the task of writing and directing was such that she had to content herself with directing the 125 painters. *Loving Vincent* is her feature film debut.



HUGH WELCHMAN – graduated from Oxford University in Politics, Philosophy & Economics and sought out training at The National Film & Television School, Producing Department. He got his first professional experience producing short films for Monty Python, and then set up BreakThru Films. In 2008 Hugh was awarded an Oscar for BreakThru's first major production, *Peter and the Wolf*. The film also picked up several other top prizes including the Annecy Cristal and the Rose D'or. His next film, *Magic Piano & the Chopin Shorts* has been performed in 30 major venues around the world with live solo piano accompaniment.





Galaxy Taxi dir.: Jan Steluzuk

FROM A LUMBERJACK TO HIPPOS

THE STORIES TOLD IN THE FUMI STUDIO

The Warsaw-based animation studio Fumi was established almost 10 years ago. It was in this studio on Puławska 61 Street that the first films of the new generation of Polish animation artists – Paweł Dębski, Agnieszka Borowa, or Jakub Wroński – were created.

I talked to Piotr Furmankiewicz and Mateusz Michalak, the founders of Fumi, which took its name from the first letters of their surnames. Currently there are 13 animators at work in the studio's office in Warsaw's Mokotów, which has a beautiful view of the district. Just as many work remotely.

Initially, the company mainly developed by producing advertisements but from the very beginning Furmankiewicz and Michalak chose their projects very carefully, so as to show the full range of their abilities, and at the same time build a coherent portfolio of the company.

Fumi Studio made a successful festival debut in 2012 with the release of Paweł Dębski's *Lumberjack*. Directed as a thriller, the story of the relationship between a young boy and his unapproachable father enjoyed enormous popularity at festivals in Poland and abroad. Further films followed the success of *Lumberjack*, and Fumi started specializing in producing debuts and artistic animated films by cooperating with both established creators – like Piotr Dumała, as well as young authors like Piotr Loc Hoang Ngoc, or Paulina Ziółkowska.

The successes achieved at festivals by films produced by Fumi are plain to see. Over the past 9 years, the studio has won 100 awards, including 12 Grand Prix, and 27 special mentions at festivals in Poland and abroad. The studio's most popular films include: *The Mystery of the Malakka Mountain* by Jakub Wroński, *Fat & Lean* by Aleksandra Brożyna, or Piotr Dumała's *Hippos*. 'The studio has its own department dedicated to festivals and responsible for submissions and promotion. Each of our films is submitted to approximately

300 festivals, including many paid ones. We believe it's an investment that pays off.' – Michalak adds.

Producing short films is not the only activity of the studio. Fumi also produces animated series. Their first production was a 39-episode series *Preschoolers*, co-produced by Leszek Gałysz's J&P Studio.

'We try to create animated series on our own – create something out of nothing. We are not interested in adaptations. In our opinion, the true value of working with this format lies in creating a series from the ground up.' – Mateusz Michalak admits.

A production which will reach its end in the coming months is *Galaxi Taxi* – a 13 episode series directed by Jan Steliżuk. It follows the adventures of three heroes who traverse the cosmos in a galactic taxi and will soon be distributed in Poland and abroad.

Fumi's first step towards feature animations was *The Man Who Knew 75 Languages*, which tells the story of Georg Sauerwein – a brilliant linguist. With a runtime suitable for television, the film was a Norwegian-Lithuanian-Polish co-production made using rotoscoping, and animated in its entirety in Fumi Studio. Currently Fumi is also preparing to produce the animated feature *Bik & Bak* about two brothers who live on an island, and whose parents die at sea as a result of an unfortunate accident. The project has already marked its international presence by taking part in the Cartoon Movie event three years ago. When asked about plans for the near future, Piotr Furmanekiewicz mentions the latest film by Piotr Dumała – *Last Supper*, and the series *Historyjek na tropie* – a unique project, intended for the youngest children, about interesting titbits from Polish history with the comical professor Historyjek as its main character. ■



Last Supper dir.: Piotr Dumała



Oh Mother! dir.: Paulina Ziółkowska



Hippos dir.: Piotr Dumała



Vikander and a pair of Skarsgårds in Moominvalley

While the Moomins look a bit like hippopotami, in reality they are charming trolls. They were created by the Finnish writer Tove Jansson and appeared for the first time in the 1940s in her comic books and novels and later to be translated into more than 30 languages. The Moomins also became the stars of theatre, cinema and TV shows – even finding a home in amusement parks. Now they are returning to the big screen thanks to a joint Polish and Finnish production entitled *Moomins and the Winter Wonderland*.

'The idea of the film was a Finnish initiative. Tom Carpelan from Filmkompaniet, whom I have known for a couple of years, offered me the joint production. From the very beginning I felt that we should be a part of this unique project. Although it has been a Finnish production, it has been closely tied to Poland, since all of the output materials were created in Poland,' says Grzegorz Waclawek, a producer from the Animoon studio. It may be surprising that the film material to *Moomins and the Winter Wonderland* was created as early as... 40 years

ago. The full-length film will be based on 4K-resolution reconstructed scenes from more than 40 episodes of the *Moomin Stories* (*Opowiadania Muminków*) series produced in Łódź's Se-ma-for studio between 1977-1982.

The cinema version of the Moomins will, however, have a completely new, animated intro. A new song promoting the film has also been composed and it was released simultaneously in 23 languages! The project is even more prestigious thanks to the Hollywood names that will give their voices to the main characters. The double role of Little My and Sorry-oo dog will



be played by Oscar-winner Alicia Vikander, while Moomin and his Father will be played by Bill and Stellan Skarsgård. The film will be directed by Jakub Wroński and Ira Carpelan, and produced by the Finnish Filmkompaniet in collaboration with the Polish Animoon studio.

'We were initially engaged in the production as a minor producer, but the work on the film was completely made in Poland – including the reconstruction, special effects, post-production, sound and music. Therefore the artistic contribution of Poland is huge,' adds Wacławek.

The premiere of *Moomins and the Winter Wonderland* is planned for December 2017, since the atmosphere of the story is very Christmassy. This time, the Moomins decide

not to fall asleep for the winter and thanks to this they can observe how the world changes when summer is gone. Soon, they realize that everybody is getting ready for the arrival of a special guest... which is Christmas.

'The preparation of the scenario and the editing was definitely the most demanding stage of working on this film. We were aware of the limitations that existed. First, it was key to preserve the atmosphere of the stories written by Tove Jansson. Second, we had to stick to the film materials we had at our disposal. When writing the scenario, we tried to take care of little details, and, at the same time, look at the project as a whole. I hope that the story we told will be important for the audience,' says Piotr Szczepanowicz, screenwriter and producer of the film. ■





Fish Shop Sklep z rybami

DIR.: MARIA KULPA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2017 • 3'

Most young children love visiting pet shops. The heroine of Maria Kulpa's animation does not. When looking through the glass of an enormous aquarium, the girl sees only sad and suffering animals instead of creatures joyfully waving their fins. She then decides to free the fish from their torture and certain death, which leads to a clever and unpredictable finale. The animation's style resembles a cartoon for children. However, we shouldn't be deceived by its friendly-looking characters, the little heroine, and charming fish, as the seemingly innocent film quickly turns into a macabre one. The fish, which have just inspired our pity, become bloodthirsty monsters, and the joyful shop owner and his customers must face the animals that have just got out of control.

There is a surprising amount of twists and turns for just a three-minute animation. When the time comes for the confrontation between people and fish, we don't know who will emerge victorious until the last scene. The heroes turn from oppressors to victims, but at the same time life outside their natural habitat is deadly to the animals. This makes it hard to tell whether the film is an environmental manifesto or rather a statement that nature has to be controlled to prevent it from harming itself and harming us.

Fish Shop is an animated black comedy, not only because of the large number of brutal – and at the same time funny – situations. There are also scenes that parody common film tropes, such as a fin 'glued' to the aquarium glass, like the classic image of a prisoner's hand on a glass partition after a prison visit is over. At times, it is a short, nicely drawn 'Piranha 3D'. Maria Kulpa's animation is energetic and unpredictable, just like the enormous wave that suddenly floods the titular fish pet shop. It's worth getting carried away by it and riding it towards its conclusion.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

Room

DIR.: MICHAŁ SOCHA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2017 • 6'

The titular 'room' is a cube drifting freely through dark space. There are no windows, doors, nor furniture inside. There is only a Head that persists in its attempts to get out, a seemingly impossible task without arms or legs. The last hair sways on top of the Head, eventually falls out and lands on the floor next to the piles of hair that came out long ago.

Michał Socha's animation uses a symbolic room suspended in a vacuum to show a situation that seemingly has no way out. The trapped hero, despite numerous attempts, is stuck in the same place, and there's no help coming his way. *Room* is also a film about the struggle against time, as highlighted by the last hair whose movement resembles a clock hand, echoed by the ticking sound heard in the background. The number of hairs on the floor depicts the days that have passed, and the desperate attempts at collecting them and putting them back illustrates the fear of what fades away irrevocably.

The universe outside the cube contrasts with the black-and-white, claustrophobic room where the Head is trapped. The abstract space in which the room is suspended looks like the cosmos, but with colourful shapes and lines instead of stars and planets. The animals, items, and buildings that move without purpose are also built from geometric shapes. This surreal space resembles somewhat Joan Miró or Wassily Kandinsky's paintings, although the atmosphere of David Lynch's films can also be felt in the animation. The Head itself brings *Eraserhead* to mind, and the room situated in an undefined location is reminiscent of the Red Room from *Twin Peaks*. In the final scene, a bird appears in the room. Will it help the hero escape from his predicament? Or perhaps the confines of his prison are only in his head?

DAGMARA MARCINEK



Three Women on a Bench

Na językach

DIR.: KAROLINA BORGIASZ • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2017 • 4'

What do housewives talk about for hours while socializing in the yard? Given the choice – about others. About their secrets, failures, and shortcomings. Forgetting the fact that no one is perfect. In her animation, Karolina Borgiasz discusses the human tendency to gossip.

Three Women on a Bench features three women who spend all their days on a local bench. Sometimes they twitch their fingers nervously, sometimes they freeze in silence, all this while impatiently waiting for a neighbour, a passerby, anyone... Whenever someone appears on the horizon, the main heroines whisper, gossip, and laugh out loud. Finding flaws in others is their main occupation. Until it turns out that they are actually laughing at themselves.

The animation reveals the hypocrisy of the main characters by showing the pleasure people can take in their friends' failures, while at the same time emphasizing how little it takes to poke your finger at someone. *Three Women on a Bench* is also a sarcastic commentary on people who live the lives of others, instead of their own. Here, excessive interest in one's neighbours is caused by boredom, inactivity, lack of interest, and an overabundance of free time.

The author made sure that the dolls playing the lead characters bring out the absurdity of the situation. They are far from the notion of 'ideal'. It's not that they are ugly, but simply repulsive: they have crooked teeth, tangled hair, and plenty of wrinkles, which contrasts with how they look down on others. *Three Women on a Bench* mocks neighbourly relations and criticises the need to build one's own worth on the harm of others. The Biblical 'to see the mote in your brother's eye but not the beam in your own' is shown here with both irony and humour.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

Master Class

DIR.: GRAŻYNA TRELA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2017 • 7'

What makes an artist? How many failures do they have to suffer before finding their way? The animation *Master Class* tells of the process of the maturing of the artist, their subsequent stumbles and the mistakes that must happen in order to achieve mastery. In this animation, Roman Polański is the master.

We learn whose master class we are going to watch during the first scenes. The tenement house shown in the first frame aims to bring *The Tenant* to mind, in a similar manner to the piece of meat falling from the window, as well as the artist, himself also falling. Meat symbolizes the as-yet unshaped material that has to suffer a painful drop before getting up and climbing to the top again to achieve an adequate form. The greyness of the motionless building contrasts with the blood-red meat which, as living matter, can change as a result of accumulated experience. The surreal, abstract beginning of the animation is the introduction to the master class – a presentation of the artist's work.

In the second part of the animation we can see a master who is already fully formed. Instead of another fall, the character jumps perfectly and lands firmly on his feet. Roman Polański finally appears in person, takes a camera and walks along a street in Łódź. We then see a pageant of characters who are well known from Polański's films: *Chinatown*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Pianist*, or *Two Men and a Wardrobe*. During the references to his classic works, we can hear Astor Piazzolla's *Libertango* playing in the background, the lead theme of the film *Frantic*. Full of energy, anxiety, but also surprises, the music accompanies the rapidly increasing number of characters appearing out of nowhere, and the scenery's transition from shades of grey into a broad palette of colours accentuates the gradual process of attaining perfection.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

POLISH ANIMATIONS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

2017



Room

DIR.: **MICHAŁ SOCHA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 6' • PROD.: LETKO – PIOTR SZCZEPANOWICZ, JAKUB KARWOWSKI • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A bearded head, the main character of the film, is trapped in a room with no way out. In a symbolic and funny way, the film speaks about loneliness, isolation, losing hair, friendship with an animal, and inevitable passage of time. Finally, the main character is released by a bird, who creates a nest on a bearded man's head.



Three Women on a Bench

DIR.: **KAROLINA BORGIAZ** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 4' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A small town. Three women are sitting on a bench in front of an old apartment building. They are laughing and critically judging people until they notice something.



REM

DIR.: **ARTUR HANAJ** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 3' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

REM – the stage of sleep during which dreams occur. The film is an attempt to depict hallucinations, when our mind creates images that do not have any narrative to them. Fragments of unconsciousness are mixed together and deconstructed, leading to the dream being erased from memory.



Incarnation

DIR.: **BARBARA RUPIK** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 5' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A man is left alone with nature, teetering on the edge between life and death.



Master Class

DIR.: **GRAŻYNA TRELÀ** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 6' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Animated film about the formation of the Master, inspired by the work of Roman Polański. Surrealistic picture with elements of macabre absurdity, metaphorical struggle of matter in shaping man and creator. A 'body substance' slides off the window, like the main character of the film *The Tenant*. Paradoxically, every new fall shapes a human figure who finally performs a pitch perfect somersault and strongly lands on the ground. The fully formed protagonist is Roman Polański – famous film director.



Guest

DIR.: **ALEKSANDER JÓZEFczyk** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 2' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A film étude about a painter who's visited by a person that came out of his picture. The eponymous 'guest' breaks borders between the real and the created world and it changes the perspective of our perception. The man alone in his room tries to paint a picture, but it causes him unexpected troubles. An unknown man from the painted reality doesn't agree with the interruption into his world, and he visits the painter.



Oh Jesus

DIR.: **BETINA BOŽEK** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 4' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

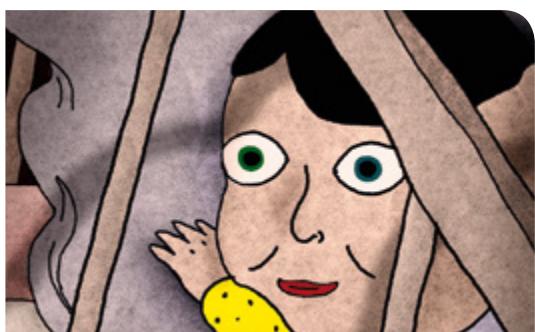
Unfulfilled love, desires and constant disagreement with reality is what we can see in the film *Oh Jesus*. We follow the story of ordinary people who are filled with a lot of passions, still waiting for the true 'great fulfillment'. Spending time on ordinary unnecessary activities with so much need for love. Music plays... The characters are drowned in emotions and spilled drinks. Waiting for true love. Oh Jesus...



Loneliness

DIR.: **IGOR KAWECKI, BETINA BROŽEK** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 8' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

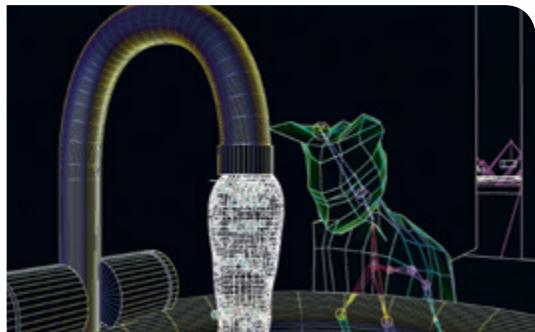
Loneliness, based on a short story by Brunon Schultz, is a compilation of literary world and authors' own emotions and experiences. The work of this famous Polish writer inspired the directors, becoming a starting point for a psychological character study. *Loneliness* is an attempt at reflecting the tangles of undescribed emotions and internal feelings of a human being in the metaphysical experience of life.



Event Horizon

DIR.: **MICHał ORZECHOWSKI** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 13' • FUMI STUDIO • CONTACT: ANNA WASZCZUK, FUMI STUDIO, FESTIWALE@FUMISTUDIO.COM

The event horizon, the door to our world. A place on the edge of space where time stops and the faintest ray of light ceases to exist forever. Behind this boundary there's a totally different world. A place where the boundaries of perception are stretched.



A Cat's Consciousness

DIR.: **ANDREA GUIZAR** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 14' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KRYSZTOF BRZEZOWSKI, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ, PROMO@FILMSCHOOL.LODZ.PL

Film essay, a mockumentary about a cat's consciousness or its simulacrum.



Tango of Longing

DIR.: **MARTA SZYMAŃSKA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 4' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KRYSZTOF BRZEZOWSKI, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ, PROMO@FILMSCHOOL.LODZ.PL

A portrait of the emotions and extraordinary tension which underlie the tango – 'the sad thought that is danced'. The main characters lose themselves in dance and discover deeply-hidden longings and melancholy as they desperately strive to satisfy their desires and find solace.



Last Stop Is the Moon

DIR.: **BIRUTĖ SODEIKAITĖ** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 9' • POLAND, LITHUANIA • PROD.: LIKAON SP. Z O.O. • CONTACT: JUSTYNA RUCIŃSKA, LIKAON SP. Z O.O., JUSTYNA@WJT.COM.PL

Last Stop Is the Moon is a coming of age story, picturing how we grow up and lose our imaginary worlds and friends. A story of a girl who is trying to deal with illness inside her imagination. Imagining illness as a Lion and herself as a Unicorn she goes through different stages of accepting illness.



Fish Shop

DIR.: **MARIA KULPA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 3' • PROD.: UNIVERSITY OF ARTS IN POZNAŃ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

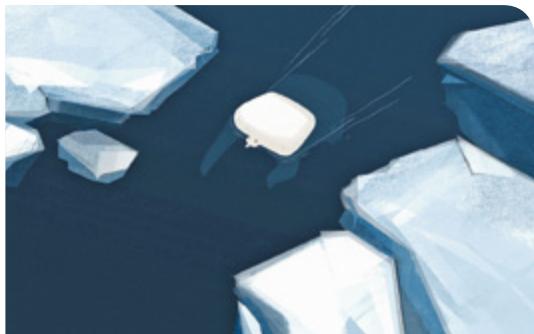
A little girl comes to the fish shop with her mom. The mother is so focused on shopping that she forgets about her daughter. When no one shows interest in the girl, she has time to look around. She is terrified when she sees fish hanging on strings, dying fish in buckets, dead fish in jars... and finally the live fish in the aquarium. The fish in the aquarium look very unhappy, they don't seem to have strength to live longer in such conditions. The girl wants to help the suffering creatures and set them free. She has no idea what a great mistake she is making...



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

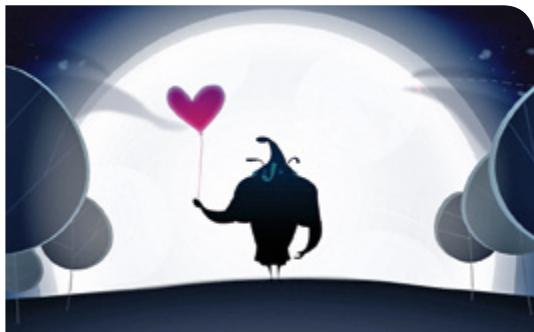
The composition of the film is based on a lexicon – short humorous scenes show personal observations and reflections on a dozen watchwords. All of them refer to different physical and intellectual states that we all know from experience.



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.



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.



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.



Traces of Ephemeral

DIR.: **AGNIESZKA WASCZENIUK** • 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?



OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM

INDEPENDENT POLISH SHORTS

BY DAGMARA ROMANOWSKA

The market of professional short films which are exceptional in terms of their production and artistry, although made outside of the system of public financing, is only in its infancy. There are, however, creators and producers who choose independence and do so successfully.

For more than 10 years, Polish cinema funding, in simple terms, has been focused around the Polish Film Institute, the Polish Filmmakers Association, and their partners, including film schools and the Munk Studio. It is quite a complex system based on public funds collected pursuant to the Act on Cinematography of 2005 and the budget of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The domestic creative potential goes far beyond the financial capacity of this structure, not to mention its thematic priorities. Its

formal expectations and potential in terms of artistic content and production do not appeal to everyone. What then? Another way remains: the independent one.

In theory, it is more difficult. – ‘You take a higher risk, but eventually the rewards are bigger. You follow your own voice and vision, and surround yourself with people who care about the project as much as you do. You don’t have to wade through formalities and requirements you disagree with. This gives the film a different energy. In my view it is not easier to produce independently, but without a doubt more convenient and pleasant’ – says Daria Woszek, whose black comedy *The Dogcatcher* won the Rhode Island International Film Festival, thus qualifying for an Academy Award.

From the beginning Woszek wanted her film to be professionally produced: with famous actors, perfect artistry and form. She found two private production companies: All Muses and Cor Leonis Production, who invested their own funds



Bogdan and Rose dir.: Milena Dutkowska

The system provides ready-made solutions and imposes limitations at the same time. Independent work opens other doors and teaches the ins and outs of the industry.

and helped in finding co-producers. Those, in turn, entered production with in-kind contributions. As a matter of fact, it is one of the most common forms of completing independent budgets. Short films are an investment that rarely turn a profit but with a good film (and involvement in its creation) you can acquire something else. ‘You don’t do these things for the money. It’s an investment in yourself, your name, brand, business, development’, admits Olga Chajdas, a theatre and television director who founded the company Wild Mouse Production and already produced two of her own shorts: *3xLOVE*, awarded in Los Angeles and Dublin, and *Morning Has Broken*, an intriguing psychological drama with an expressive female lead (played by Iza Kuna), and edited by Kasia Adamik, which is only starting out on its festival journey. Currently, Chajdas is working on her feature directorial debut – *Nina* and intends to support projects carried out by others. – ‘Wild Mouse aims to be a creative, cooperative platform where films can be made outside of state institutions, connecting directors and producers with similar sensibilities. A place like that is needed. We also need new

financing platforms, unrelated to the Polish Film Institute. There is a lot going on among the young generation of Polish filmmakers. There are many young producers with a completely different approach to the profession, with foreign contacts and ambition. They believe that nothing is impossible, and funds can be acquired’ – Chajdas adds.

This perspective is also shared by the producers from Centrala Film (established in 2004) who had recently been working on Katarzyna Gondek’s oneiric *Deer Boy* (her previous short *Figure* was screened at Sundance). Her new production awaits international release. Such is also its funding. – We have gathered it thanks to our contacts and participation in co-production fairs and pitching events, including Euro Connection in Clermont-Ferrand and Luxembourg’s Short Film Pitch. We started out locally, and then continued developing the project abroad. The image was post-produced in Belgium, and the sound in Croatia – producer Paweł Kosuń describes the journey behind *Deer Boy*. – The system provides ready-made solutions and imposes limitations at the same time. Independent work opens other doors and teaches the ins and outs of the industry. If a short is to constitute a training ground, the independent road will be the best’ – Kotuń emphasizes.

The Poznań Film Commission and Stern Pictures Production were among the co-producers of Gondek’s film. They have also engaged in producing Bartosz Nowacki’s short thriller *On the Road* – made by a creator who had never been in film school, but had experience as Andrzej Wajda’s assistant on

the set of *Walesa: Man of Hope*. His short has already been awarded at festivals in the United States; it has a sales agent (Premium Films) and gained the interest of TV stations. ‘I have always wanted to be a screenwriter, not a director or producer, however, the market forced me, as no one wanted to produce my screenplays. I started my own company, Alistan Productions’ says Nowacki, who is preparing his next film. He will probably produce them on his own once more. ‘It is much more difficult to get public grants with no formal education’, he notes. Piotr Gołębowski, an attorney by trade and director by choice, has similar impressions. He founded the company W Productions to create his short debut: the bilingual drama *Mother* inspired by the history of his own family during World War II. ‘You have to be able to deal with certain difficulties in this industry. It’s difficult. A modern director must know everything; be a manager. Producing a film on my own was very instructive. I can recommend it to everyone who wants to fully realize their artistic vision’, says the creator. *Mother* received domestic and international awards, and was screened at the HollyShorts festival in Hollywood where it competed for an Academy Award nomination. Currently, the director is working on a feature film *Advocate*.

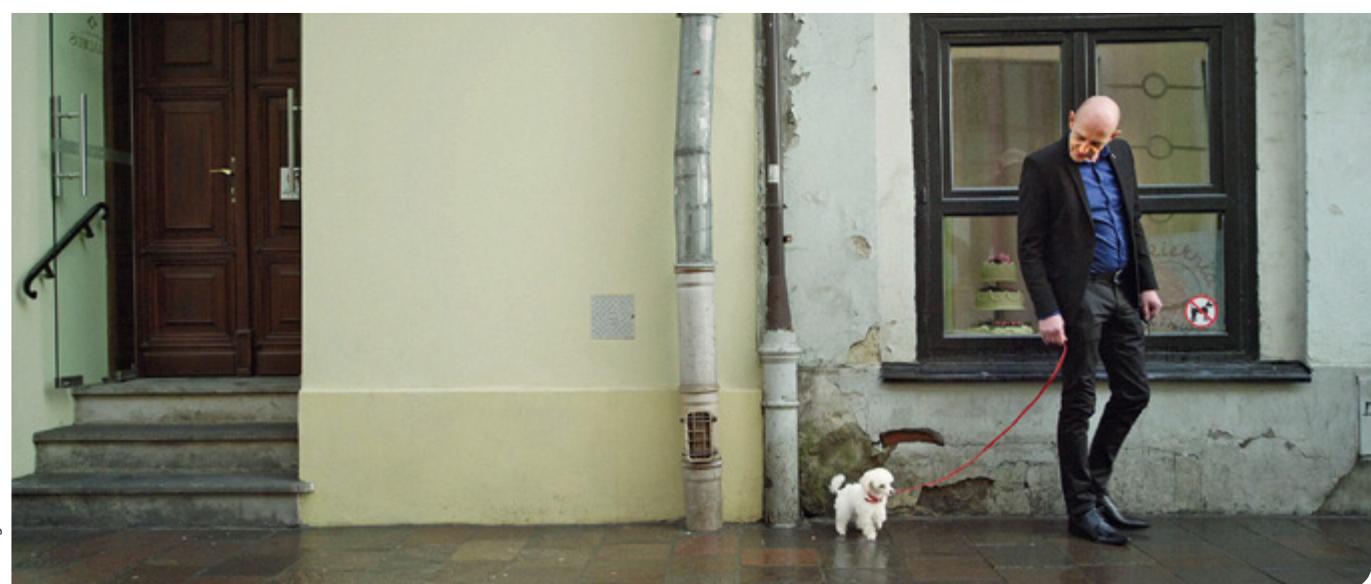
Milena Dutkowska, a student of film directing, isn’t thinking about her company yet. As it happened, she did not receive any backing from her university and made *Bogdan and Rose*, a tragic farce about a conflicted marriage, using her private funds. – ‘It was an exercise in persuasion. An acquaintance

Short films are an investment that rarely turn a profit but with a good film (and involvement in its creation) you can acquire something else.



Deer Boy dir.: Katarzyna Gondek

lent me equipment, a hotel offered a place to stay in exchange for producing a promotional film, a store provided paint, and the city of Łódź – business premises. I prepared the set and other things myself – says the director. She would rather not repeat this experience and wants to debut at the Munk Studio. Maybe she will find a capable independent producer? Gradually new entities and companies emerge that can and want to support independent creators. Cities and regional funds, associated with the Polish Film Institute on slightly different terms, are opening up to such activities. A clear artistic vision, enthusiasm, integrity, mental strength for subsequent refusals and openness towards alternative sources of financing: from crowdfunding, through in-kind contributions, to foreign partners, can lead to a happy result. ‘Independently’ does not mean ‘amateurishly’, and in short – that it’s a ‘student exercise’. Increasingly, there are more and more interesting things happening outside the system. ■



The Dogcatcher dir.: Daria Woszek



BY SAMUEL NOWAK

not only a film school

When the Andrzej Wajda Master School of Film Directing was established in 2002, it was clear that film education was entering a new era. Today, it is not only a prestigious place of learning, but a thriving institution that has become an international brand. Welcome to the school that you know from films such as *Joanna*, *Three for the Taking*, *Communion* and, most recently, *The Reconciliation*.

It was a unique place from the very beginning – back then it was the first private school of its kind in Poland, emphasizing teamwork, and based in the legendary Documentary and Feature Film Studios in Warsaw. It was founded by Wojciech Marczewski and Andrzej Wajda, who passed away last year. After 15 years, currently as the Wajda School and Wajda Studio, it has produced over 300 films, including 100 feature films. The teaching staff includes, among others, Volker Schloendorf, Agnieszka Holland, Paweł Pawlikowski, Denial Hasanovic, Ildikó Enyedi, and from this year – Agnieszka Smoczyńska. What are the origins of its success?

FILMS ARE A TEAM EFFORT

The creators and organizers of the school wanted to teach its students teamwork and how to put their

ideas before larger groups. ‘The school continues the traditions of film teams that have previously existed in Poland’ – emphasizes Artur Cichmiński, head of Public Relations and Marketing at the Wajda School. Graduates say that the Wajda School bears absolutely no resemblance to traditional film schools, and stress that the intensive curriculum is very creative and similar to a workshop. ‘It was a revelation, we discussed the problems together, and voted on which solutions to choose’ – says Bartosz Konopka, graduate of one of the first years and author of the Oscar-nominated *Rabbit à la Berlin*. Konopka stresses that learning in the Wajda School means teamwork and the pursuit of the goal of making a good film. ‘It’s probably the first school without a school, and I really like going back there’ – he adds. Agnieszka Smoczyńska, who made *Aria Diva* while still at the school,



15 YEARS OF WAJDA SCHOOL

speaks in a similar vein: ‘Teamwork, thinking about films as a joint effort are the most valuable lessons I learned there.’

FILM FROM A TO Z

The school offers several pathways of learning which correspond to the different stages of making a film. Courses last a year, and meetings are organised three to five times a month. They are held in Polish. Aside from ‘Film Kindergarten’, the courses require some knowledge and experience as they are held at MA level.

The ‘Development Lab’ is a programme which prepares a short or feature for filming. The course is multi-tiered, including workshops with renowned directors, analysis and development of treatments submitted by the participants, working with an actor. Working on a professional film set and directing scenes is a key element. *The Erlprince*, directed by Kuba Czekaj, and *The Performer*, by Maciej Sobieszczanski and Łukasz Ronduda, are among the films realized as part of the ‘Development Lab’.

The DOK PRO programme was made for filmmakers with experience in documentaries who would like to make their next project. The programme helps find the best formula for the

submitted project at all stages – from documentation, through development, shooting, to post-production. The school provides complete technical facilities and it is here that films such as *Joanna*, directed by Aneta Kopacz, *Paparazzi*, directed by Piotr Bernaś, and Anna Zamecka’s *Communion* were made. ‘Creative Development’ is a programme for future producers. During a year-long course, participants learn how to analyse

DOK PRO / Two-stage recruitment; applications are accepted until 30 September. Tuition is 7,000 PLN.

DEVELOPMENT LAB / Three-stage recruitment; applications accepted until 30 September, tuition is 2 x 3,200 PLN.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT / Applications are accepted until 30 September; two-stage recruitment. The tuition is 5,000 PLN.

EKRAN+ / Thanks to EU support the course is free of charge, and you have until December 1, 2017 to apply for admission.

literary material and dramatize it, as well as acquiring practical and business skills. Therefore, the programme involves numerous meetings with industry specialists, during which skills in public speaking, building a festival strategy, or project management are taught. A producer works with artists, institutions, and companies – the ‘development’ programme shows how to smoothly operate in various areas of the film ecosystem.

NOT ONLY IN POLISH

The ‘Ekran+’ programme, which is held in English, occupies a separate spot. Over the course of 22 days, directors/writers-directors work together with the cinematographer and producer on visualizing the future film. Łukasz M. Maciejewski, screenwriter, says: ‘There’s no leniency. That’s the most important thing. During the classes everyone can ask uncomfortable questions concerning the screenplays. At first participants defend themselves, but soon they have no way out and start to see holes in the text’s logic. It only benefits the screenplays. And that’s how films get made – in a group.’ The classes are designed to help find the right atmosphere and tone of the film. The result is a film treatment and two completed scenes.

FILM NETWORKING AND MARKETING

The fully professional Wajda Studio, whose independence was highlighted during the name change, constitutes a key part of the school. The studio serves as an executive producer, while some post-production work is outsourced. ‘Our films have started to become more and more recognizable, and we didn’t want them to be treated like student assignments. The more because they are known for their high quality’ – explains Agnieszka Rostropowicz-Rutkowska, in charge of festivals and distribution. The international nature of the institution is highlighted not only by the teaching staff and the participants, but also by the Wajda School and Wajda Studio’s strong presence at industry fairs, participation in pitching events, and cooperation with institutions that support film production. ‘We approach established contacts with care, prepare co-production meetings, co-operate with institutions that help send our directors abroad’ – Rostropowicz-Rutkowska adds. It is also worth noting that the studio also works on its own projects, and provides artistic care by prominent European filmmakers, as well as promotion and distribution, to its productions.

When critics are asked about the Wajda School, their answers are unequivocal. Piotr Czerkawski, film critic, says: ‘The names of the teachers at the Wajda School would make a dream line-up of even the most prestigious film festival. The school allows young creators to work with the masters and, at the same time, by focusing on production and script doctoring, helps filmmakers make themselves known on the difficult, European film market. This alone makes it a very unique place that Polish cinema really needs.’ ■



THE MOST SCREENED AND INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED FILMS FROM WAJDA SCHOOL

BEHIND THE FENCE DIR.: MARCIN SAUTER • 2004 • DOC. • 12'

AT THE DATCHA DIR.: THIERRY PALADINO • 2006 • DOC. • 26'

RENDEZ-VOUS DIR.: MARCIN JANOS KRAWCZYK • 2006 • DOC. • 8'

ARIA DIVA DIR.: AGNIESZKA SMOCZYŃSKA • 2007 • FIC. • 30'

THREE FOR THE TAKING DIR.: BARTOSZ KONOPKA • 2007 • FIC. • 39'

LITTLE BRIDE DIR.: LESŁAW DOBRUCKI • 2009 • DOC. • 18'

MOTHER DIR.: JAKUB PIĄTEK • 2009 • DOC. • 11'

GLASGOW DIR.: PIOTR SUBBOTKO • 2010 • FIC. • 30'

PAPARAZZI DIR.: PIOTR BERNAS • 2011 • DOC. • 33'

DECRESCENDO DIR.: MARTA MINOROWICZ • 2011 • DOC. • 26'

JOANNA DIR.: ANETA KOPACZ • 2013 • DOC. • 40'

WHEN I AM A BIRD DIR.: MONIKA PAWLUCZUK • 2013 • DOC. • 28'

SUPER UNIT DIR.: TERESA CZEPIEC • 2013 • DOC. • 19'

MILKY BROTHER DIR.: VAHRAM MKHITARYAN • 2014 • FIC. • 30'

END OF THE WORLD DIR.: MONIKA PAWLUCZUK • 2015 • DOC. • 40'

COMMUNION DIR.: ANNA ZAMECKA • 2016 • DOC. • 72'



WAJDA SCHOOL



Time to Go Koniec widzenia

DIR.: GRZEGORZ MOŁDA • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 15'

Marta works at her father's garage. Arek, her boyfriend, is in prison for smuggling drugs, and – for unknown reasons – refuses to testify, although it could help reduce his sentence. During short visits Marta tries to encourage him to explain himself, which results in her ultimately having to face an uncomfortable truth. As she learns a certain secret, it suddenly becomes her responsibility to make a decision that will affect the lives of all three of them.

In this classic, tragic impasse, Marta is placed between two beloved men. The situation turns out to be much more complex than she could have predicted, and each decision will also have negative consequences for her. The conflicts between feelings and morality, and love and duty comes to the fore. The girl may decidedly stand on the side of the law, or choose the lesser of two evils and forever live with remorse. The decision isn't made any easier by the fact that she's pregnant, and thus has to consider the potential future of the child.

Grzegorz Mołda's graduation film *Time to Go*, accepted for the Cannes short film competition, presents within fifteen minutes the entire complexity of the dramatic situation which the main character, entangled in a love triangle, has to go through. Over a very short period of time Marta has to check her existing feelings toward both men who were hiding parts of their lives from her. Will she follow her heart or her reason?

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

The Best Fireworks Ever

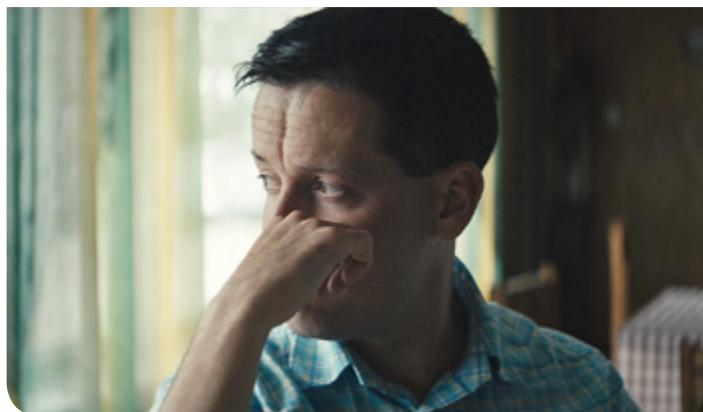
DIR.: ALEKSANDRA TERPIŃSKA • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 30'

War is coming. Constant rioting on the streets has turned into an armed conflict. The government declares martial law overnight and a curfew is introduced from now on. In the centre of these events are the three main characters. Three different personalities, three different attitudes. In the face of the threat, they must make a decision and support one of the parties in the conflict. But do they really have to do anything?

Aleksandra Terpińska's frighteningly contemporary vision manages to include not only our current concern for the fate of the world facing continuous threats but also a personal dimension of these fears. We learn the story of people who, in spite of everything, wish to retain some semblance of normality, and look for ways that enable them to decide their own fates even when facing life-threatening situations. Is today's generation, raised on the stories of wars that were never supposed to happen again, ready to experience them so quickly?

In Terpińska's film, instincts reign supreme – when decisions have to be made in split seconds, reflexes and initial thoughts come to the fore. There is no time for reflection, there is no time to think about morality and responsibility. 'What is your attitude towards the homeland' – the draft board raises the question at a certain point. The hero can't find any answers, he has never pondered over it. This realm is completely detached from his reality. War always takes us by surprise. Despite an escalating conflict and clear signals, the perspective of an ultimate solution is pushed out to the very end. The characters are stuck in their idyllic bubble, but their comfort zone is shrinking by the minute.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



Nothing New under the Sun

Nic nowego pod słońcem

DIR.: DAMIAN KOCUR • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 25'

In contrast to what the title suggests, the latest film by Damian Kocur is not a story devoid of originality, despite being about the mundane reality of everyday life. It tells the story of Michał, who lives in the countryside, works on a dairy farm, and meets with a group of friends in his spare time. He's a bit secretive and usually remains silent, somewhere on the sidelines. Each passing day is mostly the same, however, the daily monotony will soon be interrupted by the appearance of a mysterious girl from the Netherlands whom he met online. Although Michał has never seen or heard her, he hopes that her arrival will at least slightly change his fate and break the excruciating routine. Will her arrival finally make things different? The meeting turns out to be a breakthrough for both characters, although probably not in the way they were expecting. Is there hope for any feelings to appear between them?

In *Nothing New under the Sun* an insightful portrait of Polish countryside, sketched with documentary precision, becomes the starting point for a tale about loneliness, longing for love, great expectations and disappointments. The film stars amateur actors, granting the entire story an additional bit of raw realism, but simultaneously Kocur treats his characters with great sensitivity, which causes their relationship to take on increased depth and authenticity and makes it harder to categorize. Expectations turn into disappointments; disappointments, however, unexpectedly bring new hopes.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

My Name is Julita

Nazywam się Julita

DIR.: FILIP DZIERŻAWSKI • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 28'

Eleven years ago the title character of the film suffered a great family tragedy. Her mother is currently serving a prison sentence for murdering her husband and son and attempting to kill her daughter. Throughout her entire stay in prison she has consistently refused to see Julita. The daughter, however, finally finds a way confront her mother face-to-face. Therapy allowed her to face the demons of the past and work through the trauma. She has started a family, but still continues to try and rebuild the troubled relationship with the only relative from her past life.

Still the brutal background of the relation between the mother and the daughter is diverted away as we get only partial information about the abuse and violence that took place in the family home, eventually leading to the tragedy. Evaluating and judging the deed is not the main theme of the film. Besides, Julita has already forgiven her mother, and is now trying wholeheartedly to renew the connection with her, but primarily to find out whether it is even possible and how will it affect both of them. One of the reasons for her commitment is the fact that she is due to become a mother herself in a few months. The fictional debut of Filip Dzierżawski (the author of the award-winning documentary *Love*) is a story about feelings put to the greatest test, yet still unwavering. A touching story about yearning and forgiveness, about reaching out to the core of a deeply flawed relationship between two of the closest biological relatives: mother and daughter. A reunion after many years opens old wounds again, and creates new ones, but this experience will mark a new beginning for them both.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



Dust Proch

DIR.: JAKUB RADEJ • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 25'

Dust by Jakub Radej transcends the boundary of death. Analytical and raw in its form, it's a study of the steps taken after a person has been proclaimed dead. Before the body is laid in the ground, there are several processes that lead to arranging the space left after the deceased. Although the person is no more, the entire corporeal world remains. The final journey leads from a morgue, through a mortuary and a cemetery but also through an apartment, offices, or a landfill. What happens to the items left after the departed? Where does furniture unclaimed from an auction go? Full of emotion, mourning, and sadness, this stage is at the same time also a fully mechanized and bureaucratic process. In dark, gloomy rooms the corporeal sphere ousts the spiritual one. The individuality and intimacy of a person vanish right before our eyes, and all their possessions gradually disappear afterwards. In the face of these actions, the concept of loneliness becomes eternal. Loneliness accompanies man even after death.

Radej's observational documentary captures a progressively withdrawn presence with painful realism. First the body disappears, then the memory. Items will be sold or disposed of, the apartment renovated, and made ready for a new tenant. The entire process is no different than other processes that follow detailed procedures. However, it is the only process we ourselves cannot experience consciously, therefore coming across someone else's experience evokes a personal fear of the unknown and inevitable. Radej's film directs the camera towards events from which we would rather turn our heads away.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

How to Become a Pope?

Jak zostać papieżem

DIR.: JUSTYNA MYTNIK • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 16'

What do you want to be when you grow up – this is one of the many riddles of childhood. Michał, the 10-year-old protagonist of Justyna Mytnik's documentary, does not want to be a police officer, a firefighter, or a dancer. Instead, he sees himself as the future leader of the Catholic Church. Just as his peers surround themselves with the various bits and pieces of their dream professions, so does Michael. He decorates his room with portraits of John Paul II and spends his savings in a shop for religious items and his free time serving as an altar boy. So, when he learns after mass of an upcoming casting for a musical about John Paul II, he doesn't hesitate for a second. He begins meticulously preparing for the role, which provides an opportunity to explore the life of Karol Wojtyła and uncover at least some part of the mystery of how to fulfil his greatest dream. Amid all the preparations, Michał even begins to notice a growing physical resemblance to the Polish pope. Accompanied by his mother, he soon goes to faraway Krakow to present himself before the panel.

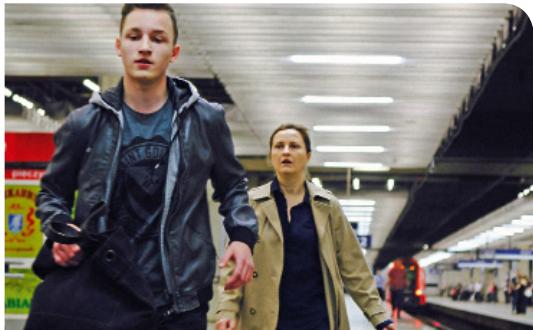
How to Become a Pope? is an extremely warm-hearted story about the kind of childhood dreams which children always see as within their grasp. They do not see obstacles, calculate risks, nor analyse the probabilities for accomplishing goals. The journey to the casting in Krakow turns out to be a more important lesson for Michał than a potential victory could ever be, while his dream will allow him to better understand his own needs and open the door to adulthood, where he will discover his first doubts and failures – vital elements in fulfilling one's dreams. Will this short adventure become a lesson in life?

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

POLISH SHORTS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

2017



Morning Has Broken

DIR.: **OLGA CHAJDAS** • 2017 • FICTION • 15' • PROD.: WILD MOUSE PRODUCTION •
CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The main character, a woman, stabs her husband to death and drowns her daughter. Quietly, no emotions. She goes to bed only to wake in the morning and discover that their cat is missing – that's where our movie starts... A short film about alienation, loneliness, losing oneself.



Time to Go

DIR.: **GRZEGORZ MOŁDA** • 2017 • FICTION • 15' • PROD.: GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL •
CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Marta works at her father's automobile repair shop. After her boyfriend is arrested, Marta is faced with a difficult choice: to stay loyal to her father, or to do what it takes to get her boyfriend released. Marta's situation is complicated by a secret that she needs to reveal to both of the men in her life.



Milk

DIR.: **URSZULA MORGÀ** • 2017 • FICTION • 15' • PROD.: GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL •
CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Ewa takes her daughter to their lake house to prepare for her birthday party. Julka brings along her boyfriend. The mother disapproves of his presence and wants him to leave. However, the hardest battle she will have to fight is the one with herself.



Arrival

DIR.: **JUSTYNA PELC** • 2017 • FICTION • 19' • PROD.: GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Alicja comes back home to take her daughter Zosia to a family therapy retreat, part of Alicja's rehab. Despite having agreed to the trip before, Zosia's grandmother does not want to let her go. Alicja stays home for the weekend in an attempt to restore her closeness with her daughter. However, Zosia does not feel ready to let go of the pain that Alicja had caused her.



My Name Is Julita

DIR.: **FILIP DZIERŻAWSKI** • 2017 • FICTION • 28' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The story of Julita Wołyniec, whose mother is serving a life sentence for murdering her husband and son and for the attempted murder of her daughter. Beset with a sense of guilt, her mother doesn't want to meet her and they haven't seen each other for ten years. Using a programme known as 'Testimony' as a pretext, Julita enters the prison in order to confront her mother and carry out a reckoning with the past.



On the Road

DIR.: **BARTOSZ NOWACKI** • 2017 • FICTION • 24' • PROD.: ALISTAN • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

During a long ride a woman picks up a hitchhiker. From the very beginning the man does not come across as trustworthy and the woman, anxious and feeling the growing threat, decides to pick up one more person. In the confined space of the car the three strangers begin a tense game. The characters hide some secrets that, revealed in small steps, will lead to tragic events.



The Frog King

DIR.: **AREK BIEDRZYCKI** • 2017 • FICTION • 17' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, MICHAL.HUDZIKOWSKI.FILM@GMAIL.COM

Julia and Robert meet over the Internet. For their first date, she has to take her ten-year-old son with her. Will she manage to make a good impression on Robert without ruining the relationship with her child? The film poses the question of how seemingly insignificant details affect the perception of the other person.



60 Kilos of Nothing

DIR.: **PIOTR DOMALEWSKI** • 2017 • FICTION • 27' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS' ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, MUNK STUDIO, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

A cold morning in an opencast ore mine. Krzysztof is starting his first day as a manager. To survive in this community of physical labourers, where he's patently a fish out of water, he plans to maintain discipline with an iron hand. But an unexpected accident with one of the workers as the victim puts his moral principles to the ultimate test. He comes to understand that it's easy to be firm in favourable circumstances, but hard to oppose wrongdoing when the consequences might prove tragic.



Jerry

DIR.: **ROMAN PRZYLIPAK** • 2017 • FICTION • 26' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS' ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, MUNK STUDIO, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

Jerry, a thirty-six-year-old energy therapist takes a blow to the face. With that solid thwack, Bartek, whose mother has been seeking a cure in Jerry's care, makes him painfully aware that his powers are gone for good. One day, his healer's powers return to him unexpectedly when he takes in a stray dog. He becomes a genuine, local miracle worker. But not for long. His powers vanish when the dog does. Will he regain his gift?



Dregs

DIR.: **KORDIAN KĄDZIELA** • 2017 • FICTION • 28' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, MICHAL.HUDZIKOWSKI.FILM@GMAIL.COM

Beata isn't the best at managing her life. Nevertheless, it doesn't stop her from advising hundreds of people on their own life choices. That's because she's a telephone fortune teller. Her life changes drastically when one of her readings almost leads to a tragedy.



Lev

DIR.: **TYMUR YASHCHENKO** • 2017 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS' ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, MUNK STUDIO, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

A Ukrainian village. A young man, Lev, lives with his mother, who runs a smallholding. He's close to marrying Marianna, but he has a sense of longing for something more, something which is opposed to happiness and love. He struggles to suppress it, choke it, neutralise it, but there comes a moment when an eruption proves inevitable.



It's Really Awesome

DIR.: **KATARZYNA WARZECHA** • 2017 • FICTION • 28' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, MICHAL.HUDZIKOWSKI.FILM@GMAIL.COM

Iga finds out about being awarded an overseas scholarship, for which her father applied without her knowledge. In anger she packs her bags and leaves her home. When she realizes that her father is seriously ill she comes back to spend the last week of his life with him and also confront herself.



Dreaming of Warsaw

DIR.: **MATEUSZ CZUCHNOWSKI** • 2017 • FICTION • 16' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The protagonists of the film are a father and his son. The man is struggling with basic financial problems and his child has diabetes. They are refugees who leave a closed immigration centre and try their luck or simply look for a quiet place to live in Warsaw. They find a desolate square where they may occupy a trailer, their temporary home. Their appearance, however, triggers the reluctance of the owners and the conflict with Polish neighbours escalates immediately.



Sweet Home Czyżewo

DIR.: **JAKUB RADEJ** • 2017 • FICTION • 27' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, MICHAL.HUDZIKOWSKI.FILM@GMAIL.COM

A day in the life of a man who, after 3 years of working and saving in the US, comes back to his hometown to set up a business – the deal of his life. Marcin has got the know-how and dollars for the beginning, but will he manage to repair his relationship with Krysia, his old flame?



Me and My Father

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

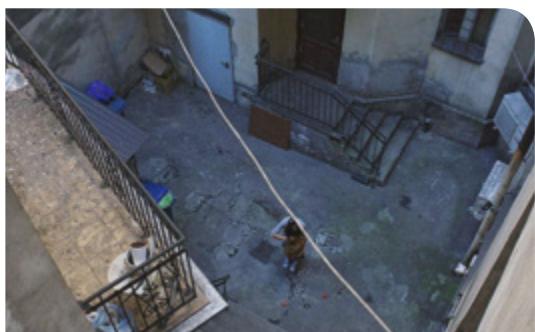
Adam (42) is a contrabass player in a philharmonic orchestra. His wife Eva, plays first violin and is the concertmistress. During a concert, Adam has a heart attack. At the hospital, he tells his wife, that he faced the final judgement – a committee consisting of Chopin, Gershwin and Beethoven. The committee 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 ŚWIĘTEK, 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 KIEŚLowski FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA, POLISH FILM INSTITUTE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK, 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 KOSUN, 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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from Pracownia.11 portfolio, animatronic puppet
for an exhibition "Curse of the Pharaohs",
amusement and educational theme park Farma Iluzji

from Marcin Jasinski's portfolio, puppet for
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