

# FOCUS

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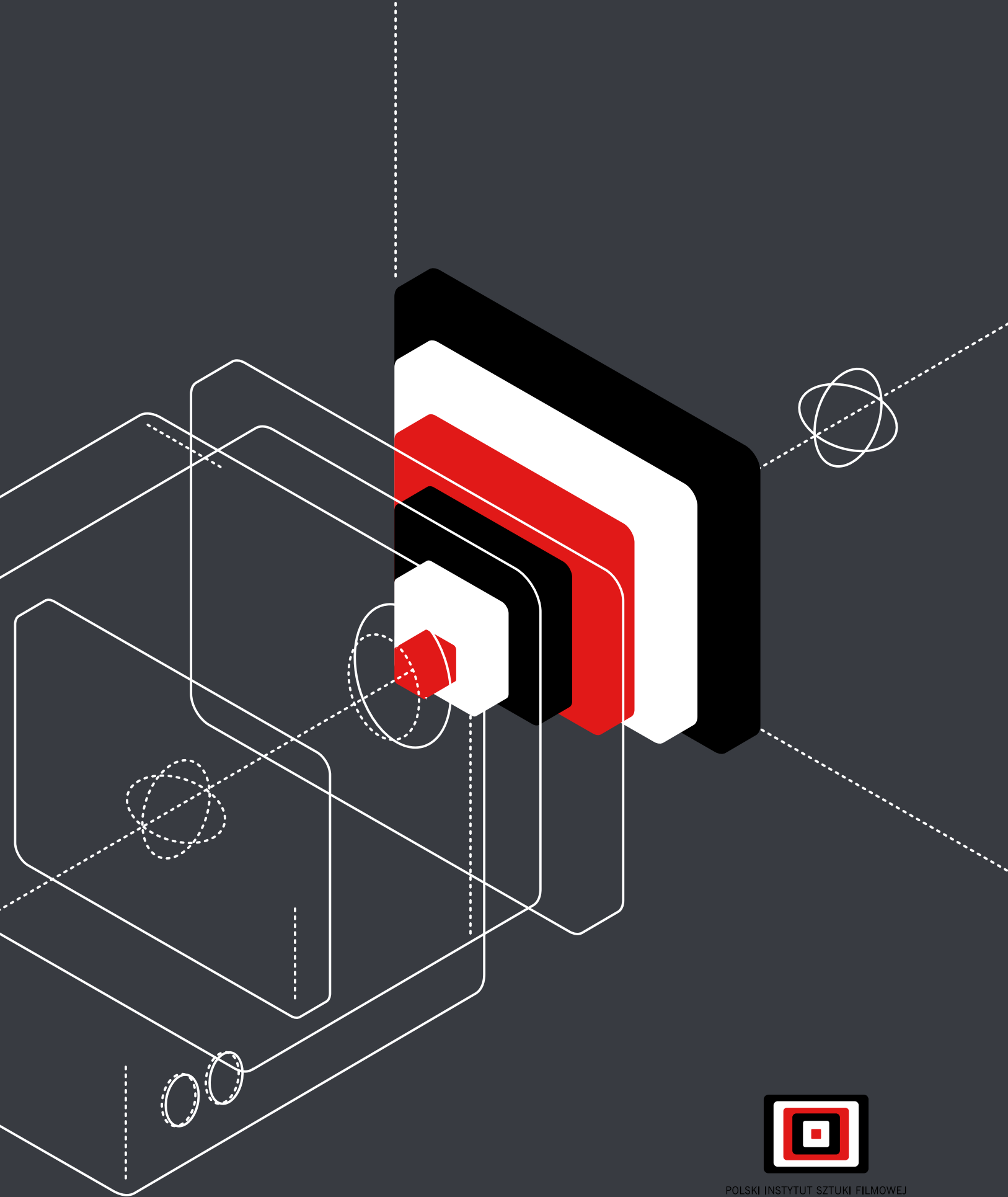
Bless You! dir. Paulina Ziobkowska

Krzysztof Gierat  
talks **about love**  
with **Grzegorz  
Zariczny**

**The Future  
of Forever** –  
case study of the  
interactive project

**Women**  
in Polish  
**animated**  
world

Catalogue  
of **new  
films**



POLSKI INSTYTUT SZTUKI FILMOWEJ

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WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA, WOMEN CREATING ANIMATIONS, WOMEN MAKING DOCUMENTARY FILMS... This issue is filled with texts about female authors. They have been on a roll since the great success of Anna Zamecka, who received the European Film Award for her documentary *Communion*. Paulina Ziółkowska was honoured with a Special Mention at the Berlinale for her *Bless You!*, Marta Pajek's animated film *III* and Marta Magnuska's *The Other* will feature in Cannes, and Marta Prus has been showing her film *Over the Limit* at festivals around the world, and receiving many awards for it. And that isn't everything. Ana Brzezińska is about to finish her interactive project, *The Future of Forever* which is already garnering considerable attention. So this spring belongs to women! In turn, Krzysztof Gierat and Grzegorz Zariczny talk about how to teach others how to love, on the occasion of the premiere of Zariczny's *The Last Lesson* in Krakow. We write about Polish music documentaries and two important anniversaries: those of the Munk Studio and Łódź Film School. Enjoy!

BARBARA ORLICZ-SZCZYPUŁA  
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Leocadia's Dream dir.: Krzysztof Nowicki

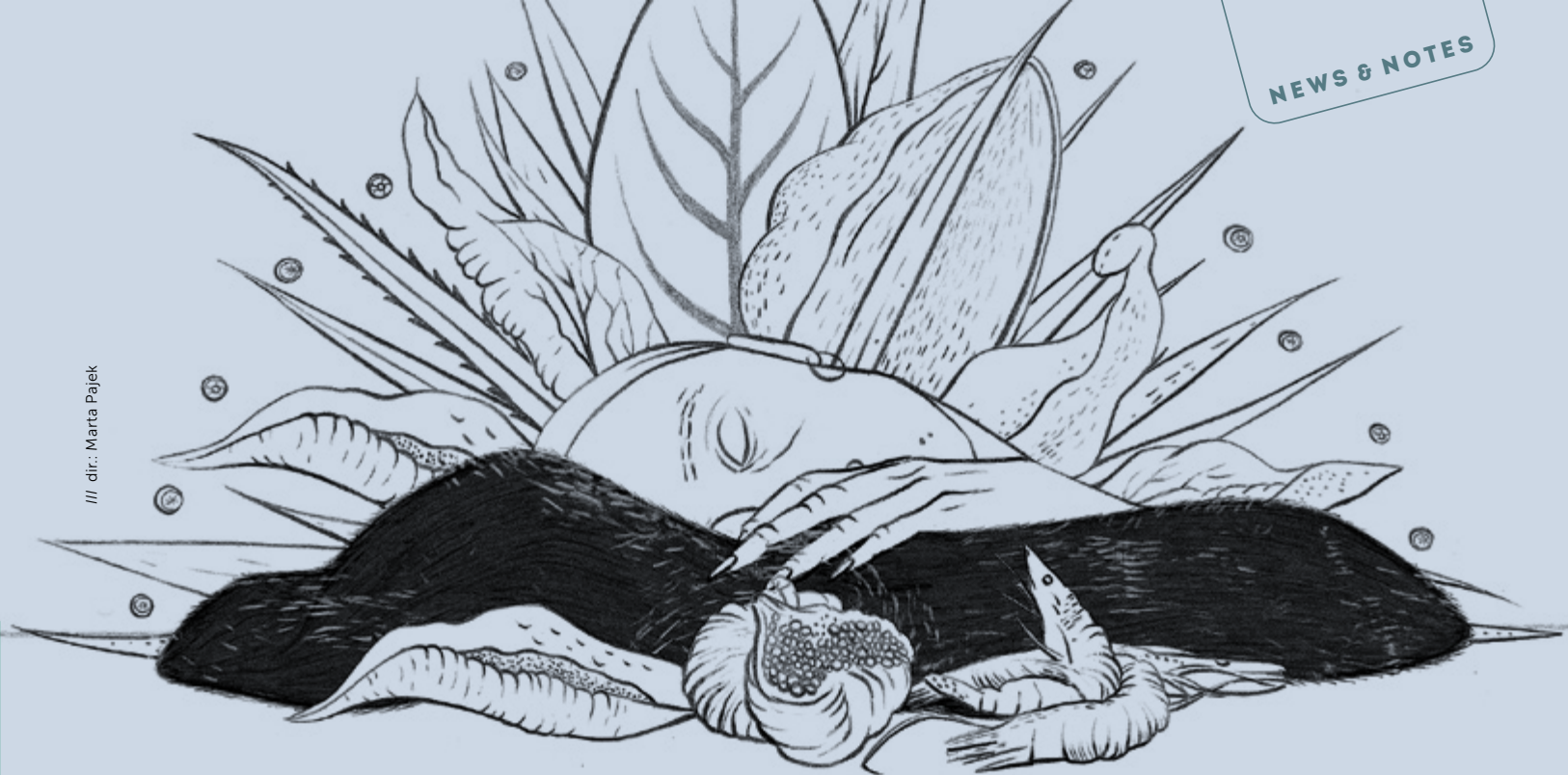
## 5 POLISH FILMS + 1 PROJECT AT HOT DOCS

In the programme of this year's edition of Hot Docs, the largest documentary film festival on the American continent, there are five Polish documentary films and as many as two of them will be shown in the section 'Artscapes': ***The Beksińskis. A Sound and Picture Album*** by Marcin Borchardt and ***The Prince and the Dybbuk*** by Elwira Niewiera and Piotr Rosołowski. In addition, ***Leocadia's Dream*** by Krzysztof Nowicki will compete for Best Short Award in the international short programme and ***Hugo*** by Wojciech Klimala and Mateusz Wajda and ***Over the Limit*** by Marta Prus will appear in the World Showcase section. It is also worth mentioning that a work-in-progress by Ana Brzezińska, the interactive documentary project ***The Future of Forever***, will appear in Canada and be pitched at the Hot Docs Forum. In recent years, several Polish projects have been presented at this pitch: ***War Watchers*** by Vita Maria Drygas, ***Over the Limit*** by Marta Prus, ***Reporter*** by Magdalena Szymków and ***Rocket Man***, produced by Fundacja Moma Film and the company Digital Sputnik.



*The Future of Forever* dir.: Ana Brzezińska

/// dir.: Marta Pajek



## POLISH ANIMATIONS IN THE OFFICIAL SELECTION OF THE **CANNES** FILM FESTIVAL

Two Polish short animated films have been selected for the Cannes Film Festival, one of the most important film festivals in the world. Marta Pajek's **III** produced by Animoon will take part in the Short Films Competition, and **The Other** by Marta Magnuska from the Łódź Film School will be presented in the Cinéfondation Selection. It is worth mentioning that of the 25 films in the official selection, there are only four animations, and two of these are from Poland.

The Other dir.: Marta Magnuska



## ... AND AT THE **ANNECY** FESTIVAL

One of the world's leading animated film festivals, Annecy, has revealed its list. As with every year, Polish animations are among the films that have been selected for this year's programme. Marta Pajek's film **III** is the only Polish film selected to the main short film competition. Five Polish animations will be competing in the student competition: **The Other** by Marta Magnuska, **Squaring the Circle** by Karolina Specht, **Bless You!** by Paulina Ziótkowska, **Tango of Longing** by Marta Szymańska and **Oh God** by Betina Bożek. The films will compete for the title of the best short, TV, commissioned and graduation film and the winners will receive Cristal awards. This year a Polish delegation of filmmakers and producers of animated films will once again be present at the MIFA market, which takes place during the festival. The Polish stand is organized by Polish Animation Producers Association with the support of PFI.



Lesson of Love dir.: Małgorzata Goliszewska, Katarzyna Mateja

## DOC LAB POLAND HONOURRED WITH



Doc Lab Poland – Docs to Start Pitching in Krakow, 2017 Photo: Tomasz Korczyński

THIS YEAR'S **DOCS TO START** AND **DOCS TO GO!** PITCHING WILL TAKE PLACE **31.05–1.06**  
WITHIN A FRAME OF **KFF INDUSTRY** AT 58<sup>TH</sup> KRAKOW FILM FESTIVAL

## THE EAST DOC PLATFORM

# THE SUCCESS

## OF POLISH PROJECTS

This year, eleven Polish projects qualified for the events held within the framework of the East Doc Platform – an industry event, dedicated to documentary film, organised by the Institute of Documentary Film in Prague. As many as three of them were awarded after their pitches. The main prize, the East Doc Platform Award of 7,500 euro, went to the project ***The Last Relic***, directed by Marianna Kaat, produced by Dorota Roszkowska. Two awards were given also to the project ***Angels of Sinjar Yazidis – 21st Century Genocide***, directed by Hanna Polak, produced by Hanna Polak and Simone Baumann. The project won the Česká Televize Co-production Award and HBO Europe Award. Another Polish project, ***Lesson of Love*** by Małgorzata Goliszevska and Katarzyna Mateja and produced by Anna Stylińska, was given the DOK Leipzig Co-Production Market and DOC Preview Award.

## THE EDN AWARD!

During this year's Docs in Thessaloniki, DOC LAB POLAND, a training programme for the development and support of documentary films, and its creators Adam Ślesicki and Katarzyna Ślesicka from The Władysław Ślesicki Film Foundation, were honoured with the EDN – European Documentary Network award in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the development of the European documentary culture. DOC LAB POLAND is the largest and most multi-faceted program for documentary filmmakers organized in Poland for Polish projects, supporting auteur, creative documentary filmmaking while focusing on the production aspect. It features an annual comprehensive program for the development of film projects, based on workshops, individual consultations and panel discussions, as well as a workshop leading to a pitch. DOC LAB POLAND is also a platform for the presentation of those projects to leading Polish and world experts, producers, distributors and festival representatives giving the opportunity for individual meetings with them. Another important component is an International Co-Production Market offering meetings among international producers, professional exchange and a chance to find partners for film production. Pitching sessions – Docs to Start and Docs to Go! – as well as the Market are organized together with the Krakow Film Festival as a part of KFF Industry. Most of the Polish documentary films that have recently won awards abroad had taken part in the workshops or START or GO! pitching sessions: ***The Prince and the Dybbuk***, ***Communion***, ***The Ugliest Car***, ***Call Me Tony***, ***Volte***, ***Miss Holocaust***, ***21 x New York***.



Over the Limit dir.: Marta Prus

# MARTA PRUS

## ON THE VARIETY LIST OF TALENTS

Marta Prus, the director of the feature length documentary ***Over the Limit*** which is her debut, has been included on Variety magazine's prestigious list of 10 European talents whose careers should be followed closely – 10 Europeans to Watch 2018. In February there was a special gala in their honour co-organised by Variety magazine and Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg at Berlinale. ***Over the Limit*** – the story of Margarita Mamun, an elite Russian rhythmic gymnast, who is struggling to become an Olympic champion – premiered at last year's IDFA and has been awarded at many international film festivals so far.

# POLISH FILMS AWARDED

## in Amsterdam, Berlin and Clermont-Ferrand



Tremors dir.: Dawid Bodzak

## A SELECTION OF THE LATEST AWARDS

- The Best Central and Eastern European Documentary Film at Ji.hlava IDFF, Czech Republic: **Opera about Poland** by Piotr Stasik (dok./2017/40')
- The Silver Eye Award at East Silver Market, Czech Republic: **Dust** by Jakub Radej (doc./2017/25')
- Grand Prize at Ânû-rû Âboro FF, New Caledonia: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73')
- Best Documentary in the DocSchool Competition at Astra FF, Romania: **Education** by Emi Buchwald (doc./2016/20')
- Best Documentary in The Central & Eastern Europe Competition at Astra FF, Romania: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73')
- Best Direction in the DocSchool Competition at Astra FF, Romania: **Urban Cowboys** by Paweł Ziemilski (doc./2016/29')
- Jury Award at DOCMX, Mexico: **Icon** by Wojciech Kasperski (doc./2015/51')
- Audience Award at CinEast – Central and Eastern European FF, Luxembourg: **Close Ties** by Zofia Kowalewska (doc./2016/19')
- Cinema Eye Honors Nomination: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73'), **Polonaise** by Agnieszka Elbanowska (doc./2016/16') and **You Have No Idea How Much I Love You** by Paweł Łoziński (doc./2016/80')
- The Best Film in the Student Film Competition at IDFA, The Netherlands: **Call Me Tony** by Klaudiusz Chrostowski (doc./2017/63')
- The Best Film in the Short Film Competition at IDFA, The Netherlands: **Zhalanash – Empty Shore** by Marcin Sauter (doc./2017/40')
- Golden Frog for the Best Short Film at Camerimage IFF, Poland: **Zhalanash – Empty Shore** by Marcin Sauter (doc./2017/40')
- Best Student Film at Verzio IHRDFF, Hungary: **Urban Cowboys** by Paweł Ziemilski (doc./2016/29')
- Best Film at IFF – Listapad, Belarus: **Close Ties** by Zofia Kowalewska (doc./2016/19')
- IMAGO Award for Best Cinematography in Documentary Film: **Icon** by Wojciech Kasperski (doc./2015/51')
- The Best Documentary Short at Bogoshorts, Colombia: **Close Ties** by Zofia Kowalewska (doc./2016/19')
- European Film Award – Best Documentary: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73')
- Best Film at Budapest IDFF, Hungary: **Zhalanash – Empty Shore** by Marcin Sauter (doc./2017/40')
- Best Film at Budapest IDFF, Hungary: **Communion** by Anna Zamecka (doc./2016/73')
- Academy Award Nomination and Golden Globe Nomination: **Loving Vincent** by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman (anim./2017/95')
- European Film Award – Best Animation: **Loving Vincent** by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman (anim./2017/95')



The winning streak continues for Polish films. The end of the year brought great news in terms of documentaries: as many as 9 Polish films featured in the official IDFA programme and, what is more, Marcin Sauter's **Zhalanash – Empty Shore** received the best short film award, and Klaudiusz Chrostowski's **Call me Tony** was voted best film in the student competition. One of the most important distinctions in the world – the European Film Award – went to Anna Zamecka, who directed **Communion**, which was unanimously voted the best documentary of 2017 by members of the academy. As many as three short film titles: the feature **Deer Boy** by Katarzyna Gondek, the animation **Black** by Tomasz Popakul, and the documentary **Volte** by Monika Kotecka and Karolina Poryzala were included in the short film competition at Sundance FF, which for several years now has been showing and awarding Polish shorts. The Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival awarded as many as two Polish films: Dawid Bodzak received the Grand Prix for **Tremors**, and the best documentary award went to Jakub Radej for his **Dust**. The icing on the cake turned out to be the special mention for the Polish short animation **Bless You!** by Paulina Ziótkowska at the Berlinale, where the film was presented in the Generation 14plus section.

## FOR POLISH FILMS

- Grand Prix International at Clermont-Ferrand ISFF, France: **Tremors** by Dawid Bodzak (fic./2018/21')
- Best Documentary at Clermont-Ferrand ISFF, France: **Dust** by Jakub Radej (doc./2017/25')
- Best Short Film at Febiofest, Slovakia: **Dust** by Jakub Radej (doc./2017/25')
- Documentary Award at LuxFilmFest, Luxembourg: **Over the Limit** by Marta Prus (doc./2017/74')
- Little Stamp Award at Zagreb Dox, Croatia: **Over the Limit** by Marta Prus (doc./2017/74')
- Emile Awards Nomination: **Oh Mother!** by Paulina Ziótkowska (anim./2017/12')
- Best Animation at Bogoshorts, Colombia: **Foreign Body** by Marta Magnuska (anim./2016/7')
- Special Mention at Berlinale, Germany: **Bless You!** by Paulina Ziótkowska (anim./2018/5')
- Audience Award at Ann Arbor Festival, USA: **Strange Case** by Zbigniew Czapla (anim./2017/14')
- Finistere County Council Award at Bresty ISFF, France: **Play-off** by Tomasz Gąssowski (fic./2016/30')
- Audience Award and TSFF Short Award at Trieste IFF, Italy: **60 Kilo of Nothing** by Piotr Domalewski (fic./2017/30')
- Best Cinematography at Küstendorf Festival, Serbia: **It's Really Awesome** by Katarzyna Warzecha (fic./2017/28')



*Zhalanash – Empty Shore* dir.: Marcin Sauter



*Bless You!* dir.: Paulina Ziótkowska



*Dust* dir.: Jakub Radej



*Call Me Tony* dir.: Klaudiusz Chrostowski



## INTERVIEW ON THE LAST LESSON

# I want to teach people HOW TO LOVE

*The Last Lesson* directed by Grzegorz Zariczny, the winner of Grand Jury Prize at Sundance Film Festival for his short film *The Whistle*, is one of two documentaries selected to the international documentary film competition at the 58<sup>th</sup> Krakow Film Festival where it will have its world premiere. The Festival Director, Krzysztof Gierat, talks to the director of the film.

**KRZYSZTOF GIERAT: Did you have a master in your life?**  
GRZEGORZ ZARICZNY: As a young boy growing up in a rural area, I met Jerzy Ridan and it was he who believed in me; I have always appreciated Marcel Łoziński's so-called 'long observation', and Jacek Bławut taught me that films shouldn't be made against people.

**KG: So when you speak about boundaries in a documentary, you mainly mean not hurting the protagonist?**

GZ: These stories are often so personal and painful that I can't use them purely for my own satisfaction of making a cool film.

**KG: But if you, let's say, clean up your protagonists, you don't show them as they really are.**

GZ: I only protect them. One of the protagonists of *The Dog Hill's* gave me a lot of himself, but I cut out a couple of things in the editing; perhaps not enough. Two years after the film's release, he hung himself. I live with the feeling that maybe I could have saved him. Not only through my film, but also beyond it. Perhaps I missed the moment where I could have steered him away from this decision.

**KG: A documentarian's responsibility is a burden that Kieślowski experienced as well when he shied away from the documentary form...**

**GZ:** The protagonists' lives cumulate inside me. I have no more room in my head to carry it all. There is a box inside every human that can only fit so much and that's it. No, I am not announcing the end of my documentary career here, but I know this moment will come.

**KG:** You once provided the following definition of a documentary: 'no off-screen sounds, no music, no talking to the camera'.

**GZ:** Telling stories about the world through film has value to me when the director and the whole production effort are invisible. That's when the viewers watch it and don't think to themselves 'what cool images and nice music'.

**KG:** So you want to create an illusion of entering the real world.

**GZ:** To stir emotion to the point where we forget we are watching a film.

**KG:** Yet you have to create the image.

**GZ:** I do create and I am aware of the means I am using for that purpose. I like long shots and a broader view, because they don't judge the protagonist. A close-up is a frame through which the director tries to penetrate the soul of the protagonist. I personally prefer it when viewers find what is hidden in that soul on their own. I don't like music in a documentary, as it suggests what the protagonist is feeling. Happy music – happy protagonist. Sad music – sad protagonist.

**KG:** After your first two films: *The Dog Hill* and *The Whistle*, it has been said that you have an excellent feel for the provincial. Besides, you also declared that you don't know the city, and yet you moved to a city.

**GZ:** I moved to a city, but quite a particular one. Nowa Huta is a district of Krakow which was built by people who came from the provinces and this is why I was able to find myself there. Obviously, the rural areas and suburbs will always be closer to me.

**KG:** Is the school from *The Last Lesson* a school in Nowa Huta?

**GZ:** Yes, I was a student of this high school in Nowa Huta. I spent a great deal of good time there, I received a lot from this school, and so I decided to tell its story after all the years.



**GRZEGORZ ZARICZNY** – graduated from the Faculty of Radio and Television at the University of Silesia in Katowice and a documentary course at the Wajda School where he made his documentary debut *The Dog Hill* (2010) awarded in Poland and abroad. He has directed the feature film study *Our Bad Winter* (2012, Special Award at the Young Cinema Competition at the Gdynia Film Festival) and *The Whistle* (2012), a documentary which won the Grand Jury Prize of the Sundance Festival. In 2016 he made his feature debut *Waves*, which was presented at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. He was a scholar of the City of Krakow and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

To describe the experiences and emotions – both mine and my classmates'.

**KG:** Did you find your former teachers there?

**GZ:** ... and the same emotions; the students were only a little bit different, but the problems of adolescence, love, and overcoming shyness remained the same.

**KG:** Are the young people selected from different classes and years at the school?

**GZ:** No, it is one group. For a year, I went there for documentation; I participated in various classes and watched those students. I wondered which class group would be the most tight-knit and thus similar to mine.

**KG:** You started picking those protagonists out in the crowd, as the camera shows them cautiously. No violence takes place in these portraits, no clichés in our minds about how brutal and inhumane young people are, nor is bullying referred to.

**GZ:** Sometimes, I witnessed this violence off-camera, but to tell the story of how a school is bad, how people are bad? It is not me. I prefer to say that people need to change something about themselves, provide something to each other. This is what is important to me in the world and in film.

**KG:** So before you turned the camera on...

**GZ:** I talked to them, asked where they lived, how they lived, what they coped with and what they didn't. And after a year, we started shooting in the class. After a few months, when they got used to me, I started penetrating their internal world, but I talked to them about it beforehand. I would meet them outside school, and tell them: 'This is cool, you could talk about it with your pal in the religion class. If you feel like wanting



to say it during the class, feel free to.' And we were ready, the camera was set up, and we waited. Me in front of a monitor.

**KG: Microphones, boom poles, crew?...**

GZ: The teacher took up their attention. We accompanied the classes, we didn't change them. There were no classes prepared at my request.

**KG: Did you know from the beginning that you wanted to section it that way? Classes, then conversations during the breaks...**

GZ: Yes, I assumed this would be the rhythm of the film.

**KG: Did you usually film them in twos because this is when they were most sincere, without witnesses?**

GZ: Yes, but I was also aware that a collective portrait is the hardest part. Marcel Łoziński said this was practically impossible. It is easier to follow an individual.

**KG: Once or twice I felt you provoked a situation...**

GZ: Yes, they performed small things at my request – 'Go, you have to go up to that girl and talk to her.' It is the so-called 'thickening', as Marcel Łoziński says.

**KG: You treat all those teachers and students with respect. You try to show something positive.**

GZ: It is easy to show a dirty sidewalk, but hard to show the person who cleans it up. I follow the latter.

**KG: It is a collective portrait of young people before they make the most important choices. Right on the threshold.**

GZ: The last moment of innocence. Once they pass 'Matura' and leave high school, they will start to lose their innocence. I wanted to capture the moment when all of us are still sincere, good in a way, and when we are about to face decisions about the future.

**KG: You once said that Haneke is a director, the Dardenne brothers are directors too, yet you are merely a challenger.**

**Do you still think so?**

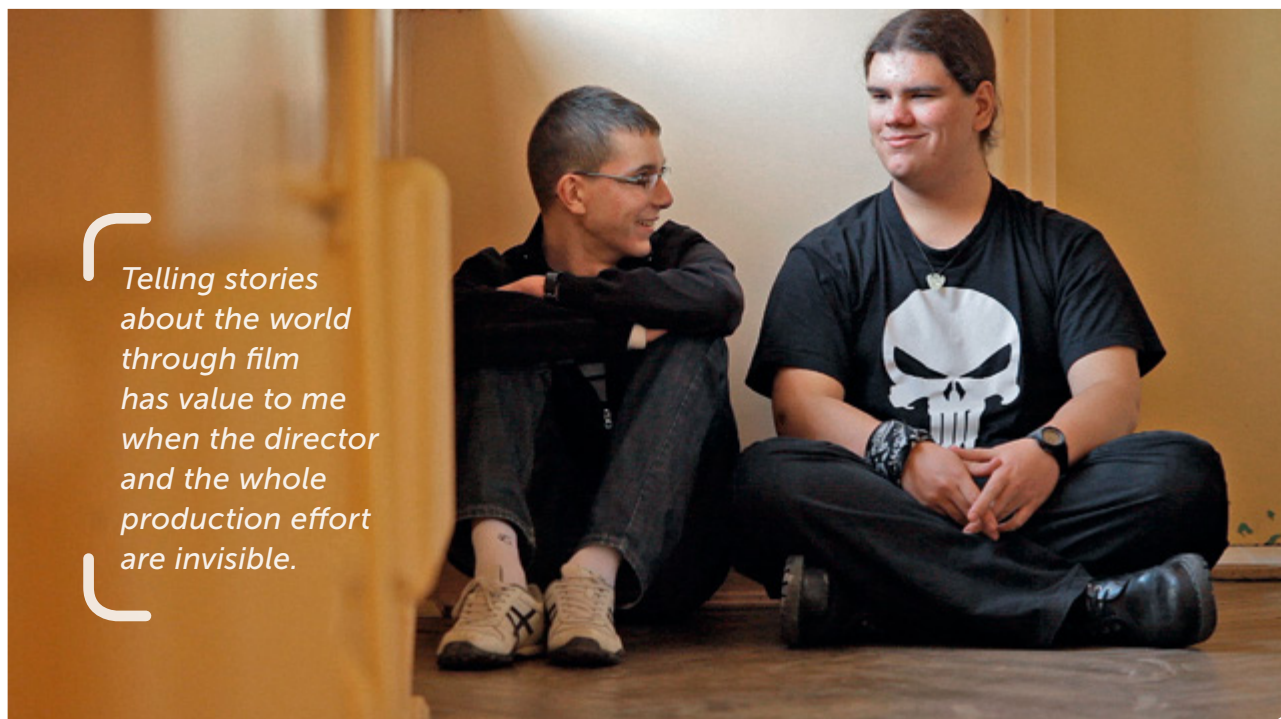
GZ: I still feel I am somewhere far behind them. I lack the knowledge and skills that would allow me to amass everything I need in a single material called a film.

**KG: I am really curious about how the future of *The Last Lesson* will unfold, as it seems very universal.**

GZ: I want to make films in such a way that an Inuit would understand them and for them to be translated into English. I want this film to reach everyone, not only the few Poles who spend their lives in Parliament and understand nothing but their own world.

**KG: And films that talk about love.**

GZ: Yes, about building love, searching for each other. Once you get to this desert island, it would be nice to be there with a group of 5-6 people close to you, then it is possible to live. ■



*Telling stories about the world through film has value to me when the director and the whole production effort are invisible.*

# Women with a Camera

FEMALE DOPs IN POLISH  
DOCUMENTARIES

BY DANIEL STOPA

**Weronika Bilka, Vita Drygas, Jolanta Dylewska, Magdalena Kowalczyk, Hanna Polak, Małgorzata Szyłak** – the Polish camerawomen without whom it is difficult to imagine contemporary documentaries, just to mention such titles, as *Close Ties* (2016) by Zofia Kowalewska, *Piano* (2016) by Vita Drygas, *Po-Lin: Slivers of Memory* (2008) by Jolanta Dylewska, *The Whistle* (2013) by Grzegorz Zariczny, *Something Better to Come* (2015) by Hanna Polak, *Communion* (2016) by Anna Zamecka. One cannot deny the international success of those movies, as well as the fact that these camerawomen contributed to the individual form and character of each of those films.



**JOLANTA DYLEWSKA** – one of the best known Polish female cinematographers. In her documentaries, including *Po-Lin*, she looks into the story of Polish Jews. She will soon finish working on a documentary which she was preparing with Andrzej Wajda.



**HANNA POLAK** – her first film *The Children of Leningradsky* was nominated for an Academy Award. She is also the director and cinematographer behind the famous *Something Better to Come*, which she was working on for 14 years.



**VITA DRYGAS** – she is not afraid of cinematographic challenges. Her film *Piano*, shot during the Euromaidan, was well received by the audiences around the world. Currently she's been working on a documentary about war tourism.

**CAMERAWOMEN AND DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS**

Among Polish camerawomen there are those who not only stand behind the camera, but also successfully direct documentaries.

**JOLANTA DYLEWSKA** is one of the most outstanding amongst them and she has worked with Agnieszka Holland (*In Darkness*, 2011; *Spoor*, 2017), Sergey Dvortsevov (*Tulpan*, 2008; *Ayka*, 2018) and Przemysław Wojcieszek (*Louder than Bombs*). As a camerawoman and documentary filmmaker she has made five films. These are mostly works that try to talk about the Holocaust in a new way, from a time perspective and without ideological prejudices. One should mention two full-length documentaries that almost completely comprise of archive materials. *Chronicle of the Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, according to Marek Edelman* and *Po-Lin: Slivers of Memory* are examples of the perfect artistic transformation of archive materials – films that were once made in the ghetto by the Nazis (*Chronicle of the Uprising...*) and amateur films made by Jews, home movies created before the outbreak of the war (*Po-lin...*). Those pictures were confronted with a verbal commentary, in *Chronicles of Uprising* you can hear the voice of Marek Edelman, the last living leader of the uprising, and in 'Po-lin...' the narrator reads the fragments of *The Book of Memory* recorded by the Jews who survived. As a result, this old material somehow gets a new life and lets the viewer notice an individual with their universal history.

Another interesting camerawoman and documentary filmmaker is **HANNA POLAK**. Her films open up a broader discussion on the relation between the author and the protagonists chosen by her. In the Oscar-nominated *The Children of Leningradsky* (2005) she told the story of the children who live in Moscow's railway stations and their everyday life which is marked by alcohol, drugs and violence. While she was working on the film, she started a foundation in Russia that helps children living on the streets. She is an author who not only stands behind the camera, but also tries to show her protagonists' ups and downs. When we talked, she described the moral dilemmas she encounters while making a film: 'There are moments when I have to decide, whether to help or to shoot and often I do those things simultaneously. Probably helping is always more important. Anyways, when I shoot, I help too, since who will show it all if not me?'. In 2015 Hanna Polak made a documentary *Something Better to Come* that was awarded at the IDFA in Amsterdam, in Munich and Chicago, among others. It is a unique film, an exciting microcosm of human fates, the effect of more than 14 years of the director's friendship with Julia who lives on a landfill site near Moscow. For all those years, Polak has visited the inhabitants of this place, brought them medication and food, collected money to help them and documented their life. The result is an individual chronicle of a life, a portrait of a girl who becomes a woman before our very eyes. This picture is coloured with the warm and insightful perspective of the author. Currently, the director is working in Iraq on her new project about the massacre of the Yazidis. This project has won awards from Czech Television and HBO Europe.



*Losing Sonia* dir.: Radka Franczak



*The Dog Hill* dir.: Grzegorz Zariczny

One of the most interesting films in terms of camerawork and directing is the documentary *Piano* by **VITA DRYGAS**. This unusual film tells the story about a piano that is being carried to the barricades on the Maidan. It is saved by a student of the Music Conservatory in Kiev and becomes a symbol of the revolution in Ukraine, and the resistance against authoritarian rule. The Maidan was a polygon of documentary makers who, in the times of digital cameras, produced new film materials as if on a factory line. In this tangle of documentaries, *Piano* offers a different type of film story-telling: symbolic, poetic and distant. The construction of the pictures is torn: once you see the pictures from Maidan in this very spontaneous moment and then the film lets you take a breath and the poetic pictures make you shift your thoughts somewhere else.

### TENDER OBSERVERS

Bilska, Kowalczyk, Szyłak – each of these camerawomen has her different way of painting the microcosm of human issues in documentary cinema. Nevertheless, the creative activity of those artists has a lot in common. All of them peep under the lining of things with particular thoroughness and sensibility, abandoning the formula of intervention footage and try to create something more on the screen – an emotional portrait of their protagonists.

In Grzegorz Zariczny's film *The Whistle* (2013), an unpretentious documentary, the camera watches a representative of the young and excluded, who cannot find his place in the world. Almost 30 years old, Marcin lives with his mother in a provincial town near Kraków and works as a football referee in the



*Piano* dir.: Vita Maria Drygas



**WERONIKA BILSKA** – she enjoys working with young, debuting and talented documentary filmmakers. She was the director of photography in films that received supreme accolades, including *The Whistle* which won Grand Jury Prize at Sundance and *Close Ties* which was shortlisted for Academy Awards.



**MAGDA KOWALCZYK** – she collaborates with beginning directors as well as Polish documentary masters like Marcel Łoziński, with whom she made *Tonia and Her Children*.



**MALGORZATA SZYŁAK** – cinematographer behind the *Communion* by Anna Zamecka, which enjoyed enormous international success including, most recently, the European Film Award.

lowest league every week, quarrelling with local football fans and amateur football players alike. Marcin's cheerfulness is visible in his relations with others, his mother and girlfriend. **WERONIKA BILSKA'S** camerawork focuses on intimate matters, confirming the power of the 'pure' and the long observation of reality.

Another intimate film with Bilaska's camerawork is *Close Ties* (2016) by Zofia Kowalewska. This is a bitter-sweet story of a 45-year-old marriage, a picture of intimate emotions, carefully recorded with due respect to the protagonists' privacy. When I asked the director of the film about the kind of shooting in *Close Ties*, she answered: 'we shot with a long lens, the camera was always in another room, never close to the protagonists. We did not want the grandparents to feel uncomfortable because of the camera. This method helped us minimise the camera's influence on their behaviour. On the set, the camera was on practically all the time. Most of the scenes shown in the film are the moments when the protagonists 'forgot' that they were being filmed'.

An example of tender observation in an intimate space is the documentary *Bon Appetit* by Jakub Maciejko with **MAGDALENA KOWALCZYK'S** camerawork. The camera observes the owners and clients of a mini-bar off the beaten track in Warsaw. It does not interfere in their world, but observes it from the side, not commenting upon their behaviour. This observation created not only a documentary record of the everyday life of a certain place, but something more – a moving, funny and thorough portrait of people to whom work is an opportunity to meet other human beings and chat about matters both big and small.

A camerawoman who is unusually sensitive to real reactions, behaviours and emotions is **MALGORZATA SZYŁAK**, the author of the pictures *End of the World* (2015) by Monika Pawluczuk and *Communion* by Anna Zamecka, which received the European Film Award. In *End of the World* Szyłak's pictures create a profound essay on human condition. Resigning from the simple, intrusive poetics of a footage and focusing on capturing the nightlife of a city and scenes accompanying an audition at the end of the world, lets her lose insignificant details – faces, names, labels – and bring to the forefront the most beautiful and universal aspects of humans. In turn, in *Communion*, Szyłak accompanied 14-year-old Ola and her family with a camera. At first glance, this film can be associated with the cycle of intervention documentaries that accuse the world of something. However, the director and camerawoman focus on the world of children: Ola and her younger autistic brother. While watching subsequent scenes, you do not feel that the images accuse the social services, the mother or the father of anything in particular. They rather show the inner world of children, their emotions, feelings, sorrow, the need to feel loved in a family. This is a type of film that – like all the films mentioned in this text – talks about people and not their problems. ■





Ethiopiennes – Revolt of the Soul dir. Maciej Bochniak

BY ANITA PIOTROWSKA

# Wanderings and Legends

## A POLISH MUSIC DOCUMENTARY

Five years ago, both the jury and audience of the Krakow Film Festival bestowed the title of best Polish documentary upon *Love* by Filip Dzierżawski – a moving story of a legendary band playing their own genre of music called yass. It was obviously not the first Polish film of this type to have featured in Krakow, yet it proved how inspiring and vital a native music documentary can be.

In recent years, this genre has been thriving in Poland more than anywhere else. Its most popular form are, obviously, portraits of musicians and an exceptional variety of titles is to be found among them: Katarzyna Kościelniak's *Bard* (2013), about the poet and singer Jacek Kaczmarski who died tragically young; *Minkowski | Saga* (2013) by Rafael Lewandowski, about the outstanding French music director; *The Dream of Warsaw* (2014) by Krzysztof Magowski, which talks about the charismatic Polish vocalist Czesław Niemen; Zuzanna Solakiewicz's *15 Corners of the World* (2014), an original visual experiment about Eugeniusz Rudnik and his sound explorations, which was

awarded at the Locarno Festival; *Młynarski, the Final Song* (2017) by Alicja Albrecht, about the legendary songwriter; or *Mieczysław Karłowicz: Lonely Trek* (2017) by Tomasz Knittel, telling the story of one of the most important Polish composers. An interesting one is also *The Internal Ear* (2016) by Szymon Uliasz and Magdalena Gubała, which is a portrait of a jazzman, Mikołaj Trzaska, that breaks out from TV convention and looks for a new language of expression in film in order to translate the richness of sounds into images. Along with the stories of famous music bands, such as Edyta Wróblewska's *Small Instruments* (2013) or Ryszard Kruk's *Republika – Birth of a Legend* (2017), Polish documentaries



Love dir.: Filip Dzierżawski

also present various accounts of important music events. In *Festival* (2017), Anna Gawlita and Tomasz Wolski take a peek (with a pinch of salt) behind-the-scenes at the a classical music festival, while Marek Gajczak's and Leszek Gnoiński's *Jarocin, Rock for Freedom* compares the past to the present of a major Polish rock music event started in 1980. The native documentarians also pay greater attention to folk music, something which has recently been enjoying

a resurgence. Monika Skwirtniańska's *Słowiński Music Triangle* (Słowiński Trójkąt Muzyczny) stands out from the other titles exploring this field – it is about a Cracovian family of artists who cultivate traditional music in various ways; the same can be said about Tomasz Knittel's *Bandmasters* (2016), where a whole spectrum of the Polish ethno-music environment can be found. It is worth mentioning that the latter director is also the author of *Elektro\_sonda* (2016), a feature



Festival dir.: Tomasz Wolski, Anna Gawlita

Leocadia's Dream dir.: Krzysztof Nowicki



and documentary hybrid that introduces the viewer to the contemporary Polish electro-music arena.

Polish documentarians are increasingly looking beyond Poland's borders for their subject matter, including musical inspirations. The Polish-Russian *To Sing* (Śpiewać, 2017) by Olga Korotkaya talks about how the guttural singing typical of the Tuva region is increasingly being practiced by women, despite the sexist stereotypes which abound. The short documentary, *Leocadia's Dream* (2017) by Krzysztof Nowicki, also takes us on a musical journey outside Poland to meet the main protagonist, an elderly lady who owns a vinyl shop in Barcelona – a place that is slowly fading into oblivion.

This year, at the Krakow Film Festival, two titles represent Poland in the DocFilmMusic competition. Maciej Bochniak's *Ethiopiques – Revolt of the Soul*, produced by HBO, is an enthralling journey through time and space. In the 1970's, in the country ruled by Haile Selassie, there was an explosion of a unique music mixture, in which local sounds blended with jazz, soul, and rock'n'roll. Using archive recordings, animation, and interviews with Ethiopian artists, the director recreates the atmosphere of those past years which were destroyed by the emergence of a military dictatorship. He also shows the revival of this music, appreciated by Jim Jarmusch among others, who used it on the soundtrack to *Broken Flowers*.

An entirely fresh approach to the music documentary is offered by Tomasz Drozdowicz's *Concerto for Two*, which opens the Krakow festival this year. It is a 'double portrait',

focused on the world-famous Polish music director and composer Jerzy Maksymiuk and his wife Ewa, his companion in both life and art. The two films paint quite distinct faces of the Polish music documentary as something which may be both spectacular and intimate, local and open to the world, and which features a wide variety of both musical genres and approaches to depicting them on the screen. ■



15 Corners of the World dir.: Zuzanna Solakiewicz



# The Future of Forever

## A CASE STUDY OF INTERACTIVE DOCUMENTARY PROJECT

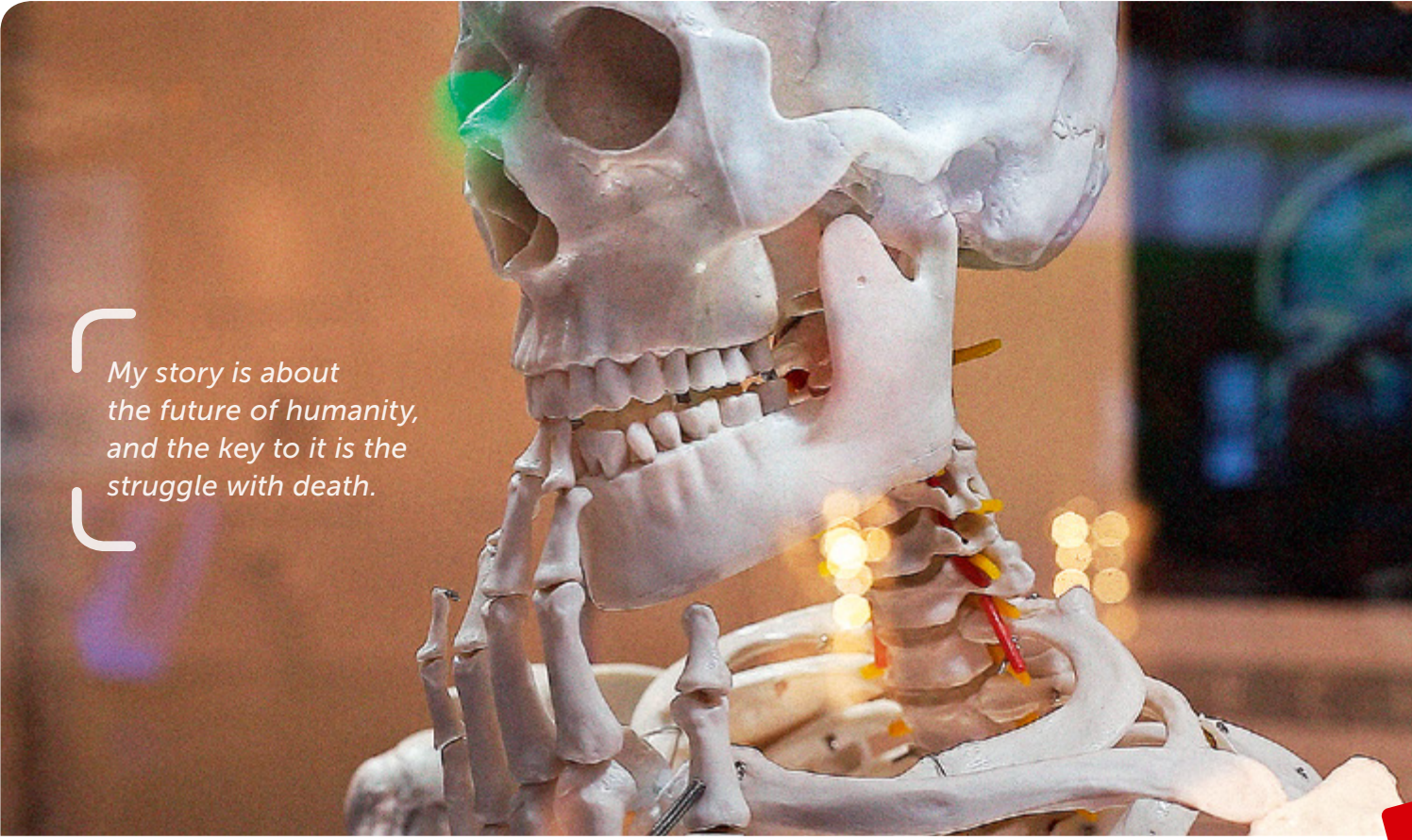
Ana Brzezińska has been working on her interactive documentary *The Future of Forever* for several years. Recently she was invited to the prestigious Hot Docs Forum. Intrigued by her presentations during international industry events we decided to invite her to talk about her project.

I have been developing the project *The Future of Forever* for more than two years with my collaborators and partners. Its central part is a full-length documentary. At the structural level, it is a personal odyssey into the world of technology and science in search for solace after the loss of a father. My story is about the future of humanity, and the key to it is the struggle with death: ours, our loved ones and the mortality of our species itself. In my film I mostly investigate technology and science, but there is much more to it. After visiting the most interesting places which deal with innovation (Silicon Valley, space research centres, companies dealing with artificial intelligence etc.) I ask about the price

of this accelerated development and I change my perspective from enthusiasm to criticism.

I gathered the documentation with the support of a great scientist, Dr Aleksandra Przegalińska, who helped me in the matter of content-related preparation and gave me advice at many crucial moments. Her knowledge and passion helped me understand the assumptions of contemporary transhumanism, to choose some locations and protagonists. Our project is unique, since it asks questions about metaphysical and spiritual matters. Technology gives us many possibilities, but how to use them is an existential challenge. Thanks to the fact that both Aleksandra and I graduated from Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities, *The Future of Forever* is not just the next documentary about machines, but a debate on the state of the human spirit and an invitation for critical reflection.

The topic of technological struggle with the fragility of human life turned out to be so rich and multifaceted that I decided to add a VR experience and non-fiction play to it. Both those elements deepen some of the themes of the film in a way which affords viewers a more personal engagement in the narrative. The VR experience (*The Future of Forever*:



*My story is about the future of humanity, and the key to it is the struggle with death.*

*Welcome to the Other Side*) is a virtual journey to the world after death. Its aim is to arouse the user's emotions connected with their past, their important life experiences and to reflect on the value of the time they have ahead of themselves in the reality. The project presents the viewer, in a poetic way, with how they will feel at the moment of death and how the other world may look like when understood as a place of reflection. After a few minutes of exploring the other world, the user gets back to reality with the information that they have been brought back to life and have a second chance.

In turn, the non-fiction game (*The Future of Forever: Mars from Zero to One*) is a documentary simulation of the colonisation of Mars shown from the perspective of an individual equipped with all of the requisite tools and machines. Its goal is not only to make the players familiar with the reality of space exploration, but, most of all, to deepen their awareness of the uniqueness of the living conditions on our planet, how we can protect them, skilfully manage limited resources and solve potential social problems.

*The Future of Forever* is an ambitious hybrid with tremendous international potential, something which attractively presents the theme of how human activities influence the future of themselves and the society they live in. This is the first such proposition from Poland to date and our effort exceeds the standard working methods, financing models and

types of audio-visual distribution. This has both good and bad sides, since the project is frequently perceived as very interesting but its realisation is quite difficult. Therefore, we have worked with a film marketing specialist (Joanna Solecka – Alphapanda) from the outset who has advised us how to manage the project. Thanks to her, the project has been widely presented in the industry: East Doc Platform, Visions du Réel, Cross Video Days, Venice Production Bridge, Documentary Campus, Hot Docs Forum, it also gained a couple of awards. The film was granted financing from the Polish Film Institute (PISF) and the National Film Archive-Audiovisual Institute (FINA). Currently, we are discussing co-production with our partners from Europe and the USA. Thanks to my skills in the milieu of new media, we are negotiating with partners from abroad regarding VR and the game. As a result of the financial support we have received in the framework of the ministerial programme 'The Development of Creative Sectors', we have been able to make a prototype of the VR experience. It is being produced with the help of a young, award-winning team from Pictureworks Studio (*Crossed-Out Warsaw*). The premiere of the film and VR are planned to debut at an international film festival in 2020. The game will have its premiere after the initial stage which presents the two first elements. ■



## Concerto for Two

Koncert na dwoje

DIR.: TOMASZ DROZDOWICZ • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2018 • 75'

A portrait of a remarkable Polish conductor, pianist and composer Jerzy Maksymiuk is a compelling story of a clash of two forces. He is eccentric, hot-tempered, even demonic while on stage. She is sensible, composed and adamant. Together they have an unusual, stormy and very intense relationship.

The charismatic artist lives off music only. He feels best with his baton and surrounded by the orchestra in the rehearsal space, where he retains an absolute control. He does not adopt the other roles with the same effect, though. The everyday life turns out to be more complicated than commanding score and musicians. In the ordinary world Maksymiuk feels helpless and lost. His wife Ewa supports him in all everyday activities and practical matters. She can control his temper and makes sure he does not get lost in the real world. A little bit on the side, but still in the foreground. They don't always agree, but they can't live without each other, and the feeling between them never loses its intensity.

The film *Concerto for Two* registers a dynamic creative process confronted with a routine of an everyday life. The camera follows the artist in his work with outstanding musicians and orchestras, takes us behind the scenes to show the fascinating world of the musical genius absorbed, to the point of insanity, by his music score. It is also a colourful story of great passion and talent, but most of all it is a double portrait in which the leading role is played by love.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

## Over the Limit

DIR.: MARTA PRUS • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND, GERMANY, FINLAND • 2017 • 74'

*Over the Limit* shows a year in the life of the Russian gymnast Margarita Mamun, who on her way to the Olympic gold in Rio de Janeiro not only has to face her rivals but most of all her own doubts and inhibitions.

The director Marta Prus managed to enter the closed, hermetic world of Russian sport and portray difficult relations between gymnasts and their charismatic coaches. Apart from the gruelling physical work that takes most of their time, the gymnasts have to work on their emotional strength and learn how to cope with extreme stress. During training words of brutal, vulgar critique are more common than the words of praise or approval. The bigger the talent, the higher the expectations of the coaches are, while the rising pressure increases the risk of making a mistake. The success depends not only on mastering the routine, but also on the ability to establish a proper relation with the ruthless coaches. Can the young athlete raise to the challenge and win the Olympic gold?

Following the training regime of the 20-year-old Mamun is an absolutely unique chance to look closely behind the scenes at artistic gymnastics in the homeland of the biggest gymnastic talents. We witness the struggle in and outside of the gym, everyday rituals and emotional, spontaneous reactions. All the nuances, slips and mistakes that cannot happen during the big sports events. Yet those everyday struggles in the gym are a true test of talent.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



## Hugo

DIR.: WOJCIECH KLIMALA • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 80'

Dzidek is a retired king of funfairs. Nowadays he lives in a beat-up trailer next to the gas station somewhere near Poznań. Damaged relics of a long gone funfair are still scattered around his house. In his trailer Dzidek lives with Hugo, his 8-year-old grandson, who he has taken care of since the death of his mother. The boy's father is Chinese but he cannot take care of his son as he is serving a sentence in a Spanish prison. As a result, Hugo was sent to Poland to live with his grandfather, initially intended to be just a temporary solution. The story of a relationship between the two main characters revolves around intimate moments, regular conversations and trivial everyday events. In these seemingly insignificant moments, the shared intimacy and devotion are fully exposed. Despite his advanced age, difficult financial situation and the unsuitable living conditions, Dzidek tries to provide for his grandson. A close strong bond is created between them, although not without some moments of bitterness and disappointment. However, the relation is soon to be confronted with the legal system. Dzidek decides to fight for the custody of his grandson, yet the state is not satisfied with the conditions he wants to raise the small child in. The man is constantly traveling between Poland and Spain, trying to come to terms with Hugo's father. He asks his friends for help and advice and tries everything to stay in touch with the boy. If the father comes out of jail and takes his son with him, Dzidek won't be able to see him on a regular basis anymore. And if that happens, he won't have anything left to live for.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



## The Sisters Siostry

DIR.: MICHAŁ HYTRÓŚ • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2018 • 20'

Do nuns have a sense of humour? Do they play Scrabble? Apart from praying, how do they spend time behind the closed doors of the convent?

Documentary film *The Sisters* invites us inside the oldest women's enclosed convent in Poland – Benedictine Monastery in Staniątki, near Krakow. The convent consists of twelve nuns most of which have spent there their whole lives. They are not completely cut off from the rest of the world as reality uses different ways to get through the massive wall surrounding the sanctuary. People come or call asking them to pray for their families, and pass by to say hello. Time passes there more slowly, worries and troubles of the fast-paced modernity give way to contemplation and spiritual matters.

In the atmosphere of silence and concentration, small and trivial things, as well as simple pleasures that pass the time between activities, carry a deeper meaning. Preparing meals, spending the evening together, walking, being surrounded by nature or... riding a water bike on the lake. The reality presented in the film is far from the stereotype and difficult to assess. The director manages to grasp moments of joy and emotion. Despite their advanced age, the nuns are full of positive energy which they share with others. They are happy to reflect on their past life and youth, they like to joke around. In their everyday lives they consistently follow the ten centuries-old principle: 'ora et labora'.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



## Leocadia's Dream *Sen Leocadii*

DIR.: KRZYSZTOF NOWICKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 18'

Leocadia runs a vinyl store in the very centre of Barcelona. The family business started over eighty years ago, but soon it will close down. Nowadays, when you can shop online without going out of the house, no one needs the store anymore. The film documents its last days, its last customers and the last stories told by the owner.

Although the small store has a perfect location, it is now mostly visited by tourists. They come in out of curiosity, because they won't be able to find popular music here – Leocadia only sells classical music records. And also out of sentiment, to hold the vinyl records in their hands and for a moment go back to another century. Because Leocadia sells not only music. She likes to talk to her clients, share her family history and her vast knowledge of composers or arias. She is proud to tell who has visited her along the years. And there were world famous artists, musicians and actors among her guests. For Leocadia closing down the store means retiring and starting a new chapter in her life. Now she will have time just for herself and her faithful companion – her dog Neska. Even though the protagonist came to terms with her fate, it also means coming to terms with emptiness and loneliness. Together with the store its microcosm will also come vanish. All is left is music. But can Leocadia even imagine her life without the place she has always been in? Even before she was born, in her mother's womb.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

## Ethiopiques – Revolt of the Soul

DIR.: MACIEJ BOCHNIAK • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2017 • 70'

*Ethiopiques – Revolt of the Soul* is a film about the beginning of a musical phenomenon – Ethiopian jazz. In the 1970's in Ethiopia, under the rule of the emperor Haile Selassie, the artistic life starts to bloom. Musicians are drawing from the new, western influences, yet soon a separate music genre is born: Ethio-jazz, original combination of rock, funk and jazz with the characteristic elements of the Ethiopian music, which years later inspired Jim Jarmusch to make the film *Broken Flowers*, Patti Smith to record the album *Radio Ethiopia* and Tom Waits, Elvis Costello and Robert Plant to experiment with their music.

The golden age of Ethio-jazz finishes in 1974 together with the downfall of the emperor. Political transformation puts an end to the musical progress; the situation in the country is too tense for new experiments. However, thanks to a coincidence, the music genre was brought back to life: in the '80s a French producer Francis Falceto stumbles upon a record of the Ethiopian musicians and fascinated with this original discovery decides to once again release the album. Thanks to his years-long efforts experimental music from Africa reaches other continents where it quickly gains its devotees who admire its freshly discovered style.

Maciej Bochniak's documentary takes the audience on an extraordinary journey following the story of one of the most original music genres of the 20th century. Interviews with the pioneers, promoters and enthusiasts of Ethio-jazz are complemented with colourful animations presenting the artistic climate in Ethiopia during the '60s and '70s. In the film we hear several life stories from people like: Girma Beyene, Amha Eshete, Mahmoud Ahmed and Melake Gebre.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



# POLISH DOCS

## CATALOGUE OF FILMS

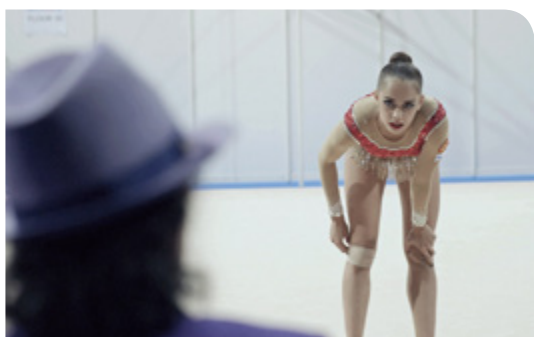
### 2017–2018



### Ethiopiques – Revolt of the Soul

DIR.: **MACIEJ BOCHNIAK** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 70' • PROD.: POKROMSKI STUDIO, HBO EUROPE • CONTACT: CAT& DOCS, MAËLLE GUENEUGUES, MAELLE@CATNDOCS.COM

*Ethiopiques – Revolt of the Soul* tells the story of the beautiful and swinging seventies in Ethiopia. Despite their dreams, our main characters will have to choose between survival under a murderous regime or exile. Their love for music will connect them on three different continents to continue the fight to preserve a unique musical treasure.



### Over the Limit

DIR.: **MARTA PRUS** • 2017 • POLAND, GERMANY, FINLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 74' • PROD.: TELEMAR, VENTANA FILMS, MARIANNA FILMS, TVP, YLE, ARTE G.E.I.E. • CONTACT: AUTLOOK FILMSALES, SALMA ABDALLA, SALMA@AUTLOOKFILMS.COM

Margarita Mamun, an elite Russian rhythmic gymnast, is struggling to become an Olympic champion. It is the most important year of her career and her last chance to achieve the ultimate goal, the Olympic gold. The film creates a captivating portrait of a young woman who is desperately trying to handle her own ambitions and meet the expectations of the official Russian training system. It offers an exclusive access to the hidden world of the elite gymnastics and a unique insight into the triangle between the young sportswoman and her two trainers.



### Idea Is Paramount. The Architectural Passions of Andrzej Wajda

DIR.: **JACEK LINK-LENCZOWSKI** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 55' • PROD.: ATELIER INGARDEN • CONTACT: KFF SALES & PROMOTION, DAGMARA MARCINEK, DAGMARA@KFF.COM.PL

The film discovers Andrzej Wajda as an architecture enthusiast who initiated bold changes in Krakow's public spaces and promoted Japanese and Far Eastern culture in Poland. The documentary was inspired by the meeting between the director and an architect, Krzysztof Ingarden, in 1987, which resulted in friendship and long-lasting creative cooperation. That led to the construction of buildings which are already emblematic when considering modern design in Poland.

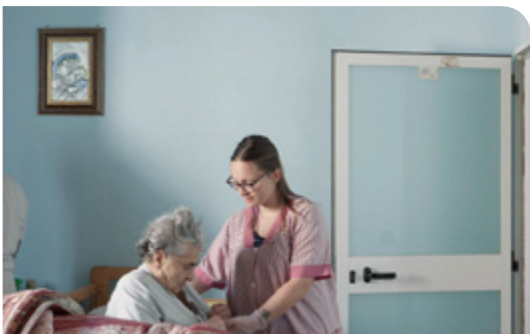


### Concerto for Two

DIR.: **TOMASZ DROZDOWICZ** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 75' • PROD.: STUDIO FILMOWE AUTOGRAF • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Jerzy Maksymiuk – a conductor, a composer, a pianist. At 80 he is excessively active. Demanding of himself and others, merciless to poor performers, focused on his scores till it borders madness. We will accompany the main character in his surprising journey in search of the fundamental definitions of music is and how it affects us. His wife, Ewa, is a character of equal importance as she, although not sharing his gift, is absolutely indispensable for him, being a condition on which his art and existence are contingent. A story of great passion and talent, and an even greater price paid for that talent.

Photo: Jan Ingarden



## Eventide

DIR.: **GIOVANNI PIERANGELI** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 30' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

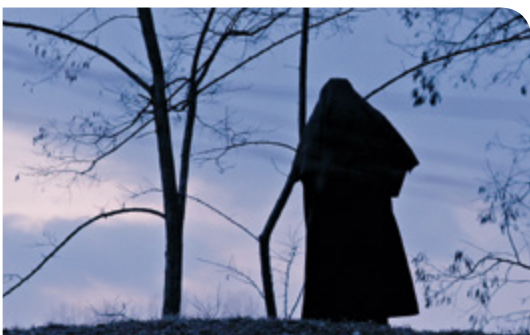
Ada and Angelo both 83 years old, lived the last decade in the retirement house 'Il Fiore'. Ada likes the warm, feeling of her duvet, Angelo can't stray too far from his tomatoes that are growing on the garden outside. Both of them try to preserve a sense of dignity and humanity that with age is slowly fading away.



## Grandpa

DIR.: **ANDRZEJ ŚWIĘCH** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 17' • PROD.: WARSAW FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

*Grandpa* is an intimate portrait of a man as he faces the trials of old age with devotion and spirit. Focusing on the day-to-day challenges he meets, the film offers inspiration, humor, and some insights into one man's determination to never give up.



## Sisters

DIR.: **MICHAŁ CHYTROŚ** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 20' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Behind the wall of the oldest enclosed convent in Poland the life of twelve nuns in their 70s goes on. Despite their age and the world of rapid change, they try to comply with the rule set over ten centuries ago 'ora et labora' each day. Our protagonists, nuns Anuncjata and Benedykta (40 years in a convent), introduce us to the world behind the wall telling us about their lives and decisions in a specific way. They show us the world of a convent in true colours, without stereotypes, often touching and amusing at the same time. This is the film about silence said aloud.



## Komodo Dragons

DIR.: **MICHAŁ BORCZUCH** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY, FICTION • 73' • PROD.: MICHAŁ BORCZUCH, NOWY TEATR • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

*Komodo Dragons* is based on the director's fantasies about two films. The first is a documentary focused on the observation of a group of autistic adults living at the Farm Life (therapy center), and the second one is an impossible story about young parents who want to sacrifice their own son. The story about the family is informed by the fantasy about the primordial sacrifice. What may become a sacrifice in this secular world – without God or any universal idea? How are reality and film ready for such an uncomfortable, human fantasy?



## Guest

DIR.: **SEBASTIAN WEBER** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 30' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

A portrait of a Polish farmer, shown through the eyes of his new friend – a young Swiss filmmaker. A film about the spirit of the Polish countryside, still present in our modern world, which upholds the values of family, friendship, hospitality and loyalty.



## In a Lion

DIR.: **KAROL LINDHOLM** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 12' • PROD.: PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

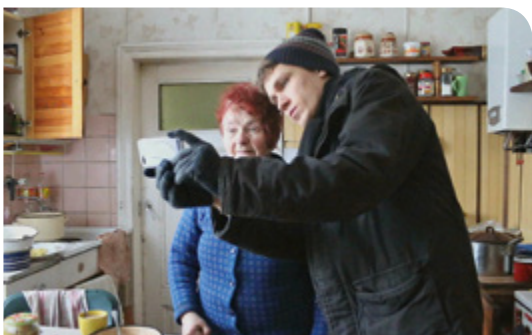
You can spend a wintery Sunday afternoon with your child at a Danish zoo. On this particular day, a unique attraction awaits you. The staff at the zoo have set up a remarkable, mystic event involving the body of a young lion. Animals are also beautiful on the inside. But not all the spectators succumb to the magic of the show...



## George and George on the Lake

DIR.: **PIOTR MALECKI** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 27' • PROD.: SHORT DOCS MEDIA • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

They share the same name, George, and are both 83. Enough to feel a bit old, but not enough to stay at home i in front of the TV set. They have sailed each summer together for over 20 years. On their own boats, carefully repaired and improved. Now it's July and a happy time again – the water is crisp clear and the lakes as beautiful as ever. They sail, sit by the bonfire, chat, enjoy the beauty of life. One of the friends gets weaker, his hands tremble, eyes don't see well enough, body has trouble keeping his balance. The other one is stronger and gently takes care of him. Slowly they both begin to realize that this will be their last holiday together on the lakes.



## Unconditional Love

DIR.: **RAFAL ŁYSAK** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 40' • PROD.: JACEK BŁAWUT PRODUKCJA FILMOWA • CONTACT: VICTORIA OGNEVA, VICTORIAOGNEVA@GMAIL.COM

Rafał, the director of the film, was raised by his grandmother, Teresa, who is like a second mother to him. Teresa focused all her love and attention on her beloved grandson... until he told her he is gay. This confession broke her heart. Is it possible for the 80-year-old extremely religious woman and her gay grandson to come to an understanding? Are they ready to put aside their faith and convictions in the name of love?



## Krzyżoki

DIR.: **ANNA GAWLITA** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 20' • PROD.: KIJORA FILM • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Creative documentary telling the story of a Polish village. Thirty farmers begin an equestrian journey touring the boundaries of nearby villages and fields. Fatigue and inebriation mix with religious ecstasy. A marriage of the sacred and the profane.



## Family

DIR.: **PATRYCJA WIDLAK** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 27' • PROD.: WARSAW FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: BARBARA PAWŁOWSKA, INFO@SZKOLAFILMOWA.PL

The film about a marriage of two different people from two different places. She is from Nigeria and he is from Poland. When their baby is born some problems will arise.



## Love and Empty Words

DIR.: **MAŁGORZATA IMIELSKA** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 77' • PROD.: KRONIKA FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: BARBARA ŁAWSKA, SFKRONIKA@ONET.EU

A story of love confronted with terminal illness that robs you of everything. Love in spite of suffering, anger and helplessness. Love full of sacrifice. The film protagonists are Adam and Wanda. He is healthy, she has been suffering from Alzheimer's for five years. Adam takes care of his wife every day. He stays up at night when she can't fall asleep. He calms her down when she keeps shouting. He always remembers that she likes to wear lipstick.



## World Champion

DIR.: **KACPER LISOWSKI** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 65' • PROD.: IRON FILMS • CONTACT: KRZYSZTOF SZPETMAŃSKI, KRZYSIEK@IRONFILMS.PL

Jurek Górski's life story is a fascinating road from hitting rock bottom to getting to the top. When he was doing drugs, they were calling him the King of Junkies. When he became a sportsman, he decided to be a champion. He was winning and facing consequences. *World Champion* is a film about the relentless pursuit of a goal and the price of success.



## The Last Lesson

DIR.: **GRZEGORZ ZARICZNY** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 53' • PROD.: KATARZYNA ZARICZNY PRODUKCJA FILMOWA • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

A story of a group of students during their final year of high school. These young people have to face not only the most important exam in their life, but also their everyday weaknesses and dreams. They also have to make their first serious decisions on their way to adulthood.



## Universam Grochów

DIR.: **TOMASZ KNITTEL** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 39' • PROD.: STRIKTFILM • CONTACT: TOMASZ KNITTEL, KNITEL@WP.PL

Before it closed down Universam Grochów was the first district shopping centre, opened in the '70s in Praga Południe in Warsaw. Tomasz Knittel documents the last months of Universam and tries to grasp the unique human mosaic in the midst of great changes. It is a story about passing and about the seemingly excluded people for whom there is no place in the modern metropolis.



## Dam

DIR.: **NATALIA KONIARZ** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 27' • PROD.: RADIO AND TEEVISION DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: DAGMARA MAGIERA, DAGMARA.MAGIERA@US.EDU.PL

Son takes his estranged father on a journey. They go to a mountain hideaway, to a place where they once built a cabin. Surrounded by raw nature, together they face their weaknesses.



## Radwan

DIR.: **TERESA CZEPIEC** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 15' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL  
Stanisław Radwan, a charismatic composer, works on the music for a theatre production. He creates it using not only musical notes but also sounds including actors' footsteps, whispers and screaming.



## I Grew Up As You Slept

DIR.: **MARCIN SAUTER** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 50' • PROD.: FUNDACJA BYDGOSKA KRONIKA FILMOWA • CONTACT: FUNDACJA BYDGOSKA KRONIKA FILMOWA, FUNDACJABKF@GMAIL.COM  
Karalina studies and works in Poland. She is an immigrant from Belarus. Only one of her classmates from Music School in Mińsk remained in the country. Everyone else emigrated. The entire young intellectual elite runs away from Belarus. The film shows the emigrants' faith: how they miss their country, family and friends.



## The Dragon Spring

DIR.: **JAROSŁAW WSZĘDYBYŁ** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 57' • PROD.: UNI-SOLO STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL  
25-year-old Paweł is a football coach at the beginning of his career, who dreams to one day become a manager of Arsenal. Yet there is still a long way ahead of him. For now he's coaching Czerwone Smoki Brwinów – the worst football team in Poland. It is a film about passion and overcoming adversities, a drama about hard and rigid rules governing sports, but also a universal story about dreams and dreamers, about outsiders who never give up, about friendship and solidarity. This film says that even when we hit the rock bottom in the final we can still become winners.



## Newborn

DIR.: **LIDIA DUDA** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 74' • PROD.: AURA FILMS, SILVER FRAME, SILESIA FILM • CONTACT: ANNA BŁAWUT, ANIA.BLAWUT@GMAIL.COM

Newborn is a film about not accepting your own life and learning how to live a new one. It is a film about a loser who decides to become a winner. A film about the strength of human character. A film about love that can change life. For him, she run away from home. For her, he broke with his traumatic past. For 11 years they have been inseparable. They have a son. The World Champion who can deadlift 420 kg, holds in his hands his firstborn child. Less than four kilos of a 'new life'...



## Briefing

DIR.: **FILIP DRZEWIECKI** • 2018 • DOCUMENTARY • 19' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL  
The young students begin their adventure with medicine during their summer doctor training camp. Ahead of them there is one of the hardest challenges, which they will keep meeting till the end of their carriers. This is the first time these young people have to face it in all seriousness. During the workshops they will have a chance to experience the obligation of fighting for health and life of another person. Will they rise to the challenge?



## 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.



## 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 Couch

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?



## Leocadia's Dream

DIR.: **KRZYSZTOF NOWICKI** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 18' • 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.



## 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)

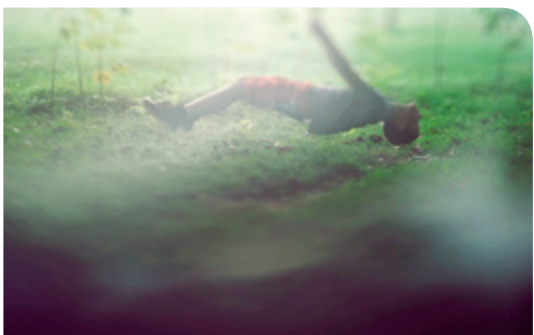
The film is a coming of age story about the time when the whole world expects us to have answers but all we have is questions. The star is Konrad, an 18-year-old bodybuilder who wants to be an actor. He lives in a small mining town and desperately fights for his absent father's attention. In his attempts 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?



## The Beksińskis. A Sound and Picture Album

DIR.: **MARCIN BORCHARDT** • 2017 • DOCUMENTARY • 80' • PROD.: DAREK DIKTI IDEAS OFFICE, 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.



## 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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-succès.



*Three Women on a Bench* dir.: Karolina Borgiasz

# Go, Girls!

## WHO RULES THE ANIMATED WORLD?

Women are at the forefront of Polish animation, with their films to be found at the Berlinale, Cannes, and Annecy film festivals. However, 2018 is by no means a revolution, but rather proof of a trend that has been ongoing for a number of years.

While there is global awareness of the need to support gender equality in the film industry, while there are organizations representing female creators in different fields of art, and while festivals increasingly apply gender quotas in their programmes, women have quietly and completely taken over Polish animation. Women have been gradually building their position in the animated film market for a number of years now. Men who are successful in the international arena (such as Zbigniew

Czapla, Marcin Podolec, or Tomasz Popakul) are not to be discounted but statistically it is female names that appear more often at festivals.

### BY WOMEN, NOT ABOUT WOMEN...

So what do women talk about when their voice is so clearly heard? Paradoxically, most frequently it is not about women. The majority of the animated films made by women touch upon universal subjects, and it is far from easy to put them in the 'cinema for women' box. They are neither told from a woman's perspective, nor do they solely address a female audience. *The Other* by Marta Magnuska shows the mechanisms that come into play when a stranger enters a community; in *Bless You!* Paulina Ziółkowska shows the mark that every interaction with another leaves on a human, and *Oh God* by Betina Bożek talks about the need for love that arises regardless of sex. While Karolina Specht and Marta Pajek show the relationships



between a man and a woman in their films, they do so by using geometrical concepts and mathematical equations. Instead, *An Eye for an Eye* by Julia Płoch is a tale about a disciple and his master, drawing somewhat upon the Japanese cinematic tradition, although here the story is so moving that one may stereotypically consider it precisely as being made for women. This cannot be said, however, about the Oscar nominee *Loving Vincent*, co-directed by Dorota Kobiela, for this animated feature about Van Gogh is primarily an absorbing detective film.

### ... WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS

It doesn't mean, however, that women have not used the medium of animation to share some of their secrets. In *Norma* by Agata Mianowska, we witness the struggle with complexes related to looks, and attempts to meet the demands of contemporary standards of beauty, and *Three Women on a Bench* (by Karolina Borgiasz) uses irony to depict the girly tendency to gossip. 100% femininity is included in *Beautiful* by Weronika Kuc, where the heroine loses herself somewhere on the way to perfection. Not only is its imagery filled with pinks, but all kinds of feminine props can be found there (from a wardrobe full of furs to a dressing table with make-up products). Moreover, animated films openly addressing female sexuality from the previous year can still be seen at international festivals. Renata Gąsiorowska's *Pussy* shattered a taboo by talking explicitly about masturbation, and Wiola Sowa's *XOXO – Hugs and Kisses* invited the audience into an erotic threesome, depicting a relationship between a woman and a man in an incredibly sensual manner.

### EXPANSION AT FESTIVALS

The above-mentioned *Pussy* by Renata Gąsiorowska, which has been shown internationally over 200 times since its



*An Eye for an Eye* dir.: Julia Płoch

premiere, triumphed at the festivals in 2017. However, Marta Pajek's *Impossible Figures and Other Stories II*, Marta Magnuska's *Foreign Body*, Karolina Specht's *Beside Oneself*, or Paulina Ziółkowska's *Oh Mother!* also enjoyed considerable success in terms of Polish animated films.

None of these animation makers have rested on their laurels and they have begun to conquer more festivals already this year. Paulina Ziółkowska returned from the Berlinale with a special mention for *Bless You!*, Marta Magnuska's *The Other* and *III* by Marta Pajek will be screened in Cannes, and six more Polish animations will feature in Annecy, all made by women: along with *The Other*, *III* and *Bless You!*, *Tango of Longing* by Marta Szymańska, *Squaring the Circle* by Karolina Specht, and *Oh God* by Betina Bożek. *Oh God* will also be shown at the Oberhausen, VIS Vienna Short, and Melbourne Animation Film Festival. All we can say is: Go, Girls! ■



XOXO – Hugs and Kisses dir.: Wiola Sowa



## MARTA PAJEK

**Your new film is called *III*, even though it is actually the second part of the triptych *Impossible Figures and Other Stories* that you made. Why are the parts not being made in order?**

There is no need. I consider the entirety more as an altar triptych, where the middle part is seen as the main one. In this case, the second part was made first – it is the longest and most complex, while the side parts have fewer threads and are slightly shorter.

The order is also due to organizational reasons – the second part was the most complicated, so I wanted to complete it first. Plus, it will be more intriguing to the viewer.

**And when will the last part be done?**

The last, and at the same time the first part, should be ready in two years. Everything is actually thought through already – the screenplay is ready, as I have worked on the whole of the triptych idea from the very beginning, based on the concept of the impossible figure.

**Is the same woman the protagonist in the whole series?**

I wouldn't like to spell it out. Certainly, these heroines have a lot in common, but they also differ greatly. I would prefer not



## MARTA MAGNUSKA

**Who is 'the other'?**

'The other' in my film is a person who comes to a community from the outside. It does not really matter who that is, as it is not what the film is about; it is about the mechanisms emerging in a society when someone new is about to join it. The protagonists don't know the stranger, so they try to learn who she is, they exchange information. This film's purpose is to show how people perceive someone who is foreign, how many feelings it stirs up, unfortunately often negative ones.

**Is it supposed to teach tolerance? Nowadays, there is a lot of talk about the lack of it.**

No, I don't want to instruct anyone through it; this film is even perhaps a form of self-therapy. It presents my reflections and observations on what is happening around us but I don't want to provide clear-cut definitions. I chose the open format on purpose, as it allows for the audience a lot of leeway with their interpretations. The film was also not supposed to be political or to provide a commentary on any specific, current events. The mechanisms it shows are nothing new and they have been at work in the world for years.

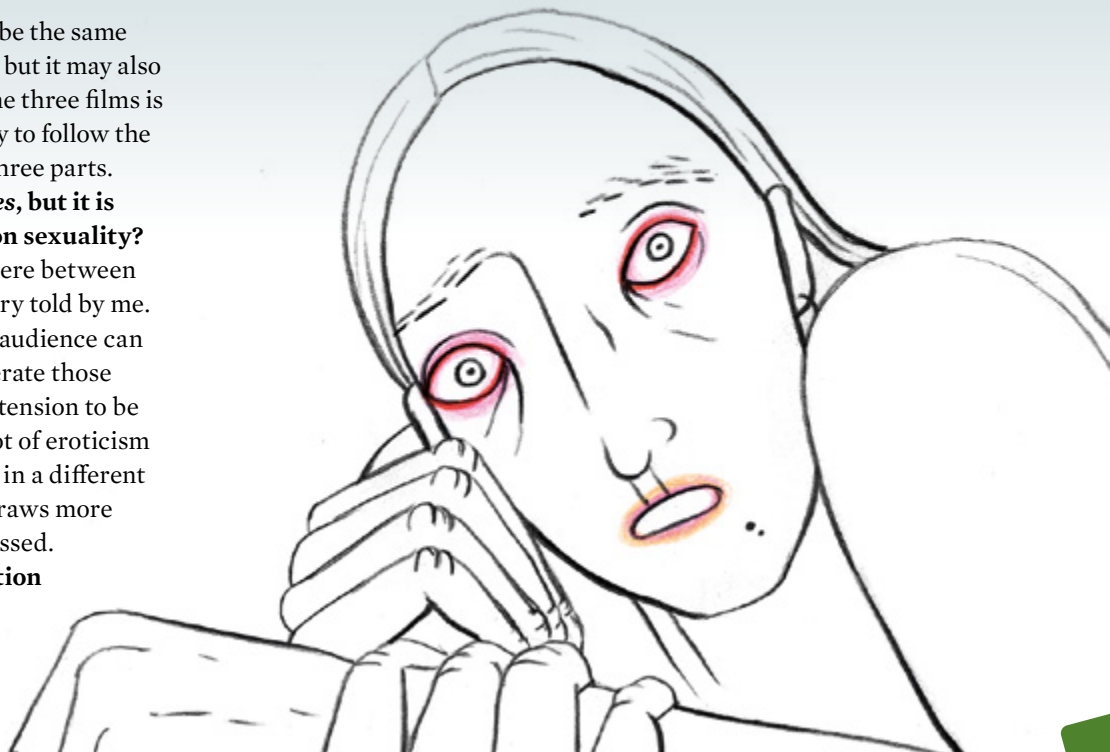
to provide a clear-cut answer. It may be the same woman, in different stages of her life, but it may also be someone else, just alike. Each of the three films is a complete work, so it is not necessary to follow the heroine's life events through all the three parts.

**There is a lot of eroticism in *Figures*, but it is quite subtle. Is it a feminine view on sexuality?**

I wanted this film to unfold somewhere between the viewer's imagination and the story told by me. I believe it is the most fun when the audience can form their own associations and liberate those naughty thoughts. I was looking for tension to be felt in the air. In general, there is a lot of eroticism in film, but women certainly show it in a different manner – often not explicitly, so it draws more attention when eroticism is so expressed.

**There are a lot of women in animation these days. Why is there such a wave of them at present?**

Because – why not?



**Regardless of sex?**

When working on a film, I try to tell the story in a universal way. I think the problems of our daily life should not be divided up depending on whether they are told from a woman's or from a man's perspective, as usually they touch upon all of us. However, I am very happy that there is a prominent presence of women in the film industry and that this is being emphasized: for years, the proportions were quite different. These days, it is noticeable in various domains of art and in different art schools that women have a lot to say.





## BETINA BOŻEK

### **Why do your protagonists sigh ‘Oh God’?**

The recurring ‘Oh God’ in my film, is not accidental – the animation’s protagonists are simply people who I watched in various social situations. I really like to pick up on various details and flavours which are often overlooked and dismissed by others – ‘oh God’ is a gem of a term in this respect. It is enough to listen to the background hum of the street and, sooner or later, our ears will pick up this beautiful moan.

### **Oh God has an entertaining form, and a rather pessimistic message. Why did you decide on such a contrast?**

I really like to play with contrasts in my art and it is also visible, as you rightly pointed out, in my film. It is very hard to construct a reality filled with boredom, hopelessness, and passivity, that would not overwhelm the audience within the first minute. Yet, when you offer them a whole panoply of references, both absurd and funny, the message of the film becomes more powerful. The contrasts magnify and emphasize the meanings.

### **In your film it seems as if the story is told in a universal manner, with no distinction made between the feminine**



## PAULINA ZIÓŁKOWSKA

### **In your film, people are infected by one other; every interaction leaves a mark. Is it bad?**

I am not trying to judge. I used the phenomenon of the contraction of a disease not in order to present it as something negative, but rather to highlight that it happens independently, we have no control over it. When meeting someone, we are unaware that the other person impacts us, it all happens naturally. On the other hand, sometimes we feel we act differently in certain situations, we follow patterns. Sometimes I get upset about it. But this is ruled entirely by accident as well, and we merely choose who we spend our time with.

### **I don’t want to spoil the ending, but it is not too optimistic.**

I wanted to show that it is possible to ‘get infected’ ourselves as well. Sometimes we get wrapped up in ourselves, like one of the protagonists. But I don’t want to explain why it happens, I didn’t want to convey one, specific moral from the film. Let everyone understand this film as they like. I am very happy when different interpretations of my animation emerge.

**and masculine points of view. Is it at all possible to talk about a women's perspective in animation?**

It is a very important question to me, since I always try to highlight the universal character of my creative undertakings. The expression 'feminine art' is simply unnecessary in my opinion – perhaps because I have a tendency to invert meanings, to distance myself rather than engage in specific points of view.

I think there are the so-called 'feminine' animated films, the best example of which would be Wiola Sowa's *XOXO – Hugs and Kisses* or Weronika Kuc's *Beautiful*. It is hard, however, to make a selection of what a feminine view is and what it is not – I believe it may seriously limit the scope of interpretations for a specific work.



**You are not trying to tell it from a woman's perspective.**

In *Bless You!* and in my films in general, I think more about what is of interest to me, rather than about the perspective I would like to tell it from. I am talking about a human from a human perspective, relationships between men and women don't matter here. Currently, I am making a new film: about three women, where each of them has a different, personal version of the same story; yet it seems to me that even though the protagonists are women, I will want it to be a universal animated film – about people.





# THE COSMOS

The Wizard of U.S. dir.: Barbina Bruszezwska

## HIDDEN IN PUPPETS

A PRESENTATION OF WJTEAM/LIKAON STUDIO

WJTeam/LIKAON is a studio run by three young producers from Łódź: Justyna Rucińska, Anna Mroczek, and Wojciech Leszczyński. The team has already won a number of awards for their short films, as well as for their collaboration on Wes Anderson's *Isle of Dogs*.

The three producers met in one of Łódź's animation studios – this is where they gained valuable experience and became passionate about live-action puppet film. With time, the need to work on their own projects compelled them to start their own studio. WJTeam has been active in the market since 2012. Their portfolio includes short films and featurettes made using various techniques, as well as a broad spectrum of services related to puppets, props, and stage design for animated and feature film

projects. The WJTeam members also run another studio together, LIKAON, which was established in 2014. WJTeam/LIKAON produces mostly auteur animated films, such as Barbina Bruszezwska's *The Wizard of U.S.* based on cut-outs, or Daria Kopiec's puppet film *Cosmos*. 'Most of the films we produce are auteur cinema, they tell personal stories, so understanding the director's intent is important to us during project selection', Justyna Rucińska says. The studio invites not only professionals to join common projects, but also film school students. 'We try to keep abreast of the development of talented individuals', Leszczyński adds. One of the most successful films from the studio is *Locus*, directed by Anita Kwiatkowska-Naqvi. The short film by Naqvi, based on puppet technology, is a poetic metaphor of life as a journey, which instead of bringing us closer to our destination, seems to move away from it. The animation was created using an interesting technique involving UV light.



The film won 10 awards, including the Grand Prix at the prestigious SICAF student competition in Korea, and was screened at over 25 festivals worldwide.

Among the short film projects carried out in the studio, there are also co-productions. *Last Stop is the Moon* by Birute Sodeikaite is an example here – a story that

*Puppet film is a niche specialization, so if we manage to present ourselves well, the partners are likely to come back with more collaboration proposals.*

unfolds in a child's imagination, the meeting place of two symbolic protagonists: the Unicorn and the Lion. 'The project came to us at a very preliminary stage. During the development stage, we found a co-producer from Lithuania – Agne Adomene from Art Short, with whom we established a connection based on similar thinking about auteur film. This co-production opened the door for us to collaboration with Lithuania', Rucińska adds.

Within the coming months, the studio plans to finish three short films. The first one is *The Bridge* by Izumi Yoshida, which tells the tragic story of orphaned children who lose their parents and have to grow up fast through the eyes of a 10-year-old boy. The featurette project – as long as 30 minutes – is currently in the development stage. The second project by WJTeam/LIKAON after *Cosmos*, made together with Daria Kopiec, is *Your Own Bullshit* (co-produced with Munk Studio). The 5-minute long

animation takes place during a family dinner. The film is being made using mixed techniques (puppet animation, multiplane, experimental photos), and its festival premiere is planned for the beginning of 2019.

Another short film that will have its premiere in 2019 is an original project by Sofya Nabok, *The Flood*. Made using the salt animation technique, it is an adaptation of a Slavic folk song telling the story of siblings who are tragically separated during a Midsummer night.

Auteur film production is merely a part of the activity of WJTeam/LIKAON which encompasses complex services in the field of puppetry and stage design. The WJTeam/LIKAON studio team collaborated on Wes Anderson's *Isle of Dogs*, and was awarded with the Silver Bear. For the purpose of the film, a few dozen dog puppets were created in the studio. When asked how such a big project found its way to their studio, Joanna Rucińska replied that the studio was given the chance to present its capacities thanks to the relationships established in the United States while making Balbina Bruszewska's *The Wizard of U.S.* The collaboration was so good that it allowed the WJTeam/LIKAON studio to extend the scope of the work they had been contracted to do.

The collaboration on Wes Anderson's film was not the first one where the studio was involved on a similar scale. For a few years, WJTeam/LIKAON has been contracted to supply the stage design for a Norwegian puppet project *Solan og Ludvig*. Last year, the Łódź-based studio created the set and miniature models for the third part of the film. 'Puppet film is a niche specialization, so if we manage to present ourselves well, the partners are likely to come back with more collaboration proposals', Justyna Rucińska comments. WJTeam/LIKAON is gaining increasing recognition within the European and international animation markets. *Isle of Dogs* is only the beginning, as the company plans to collaborate on further international projects. ■





## The Other Inny

DIR.: MARTA MAGNUSKA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2018 • 5'

Single whispers turn into loud noises and slight confusion becomes a nervous commotion. Someone new is supposed to appear and so there are more and more doubts. Who is he? Where has he come from? And, most importantly, why? However, it does not matter who 'the other' really is, because he is not the protagonist here. In the film he becomes an embodiment of the fear of the unknown and the confrontation with otherness. Marta Manguska uses the concept of 'the other' to demonstrate how society – one that does not want to let a stranger in – works. Doubts turn into accusatory insults, and negative emotions create a spiral of hatred. The 'other' means 'evil'.

The animation is a thriller in which the tension is built around a mysterious character. The atmosphere becomes tenser with every passing second. Elements of horror are also present: 'the Other' in the crowd's imagination is a bloodthirsty monster, their willingness to annihilate him resembles a witch-hunt or the mob hunting down Frankenstein. There is room for many associations and interpretations as 'the Other' has been portrayed in our culture for centuries, and being hostile towards strangers is far from unusual for many social groups today. The tension in the animation is created also with its images. In the first scenes, the audience can only see the characters' legs, later on they notice silhouettes and eventually they focus on the facial expressions. At first, the community is only a group of bystanders, but at the end everyone becomes an individual filled with hatred. Magnuska plays with colours and line width: thin lines are gradually transformed into much clearer outlines and black and white is combined with blood red. How will the hunt for 'the Other' end this time?

DAGMARA MARCINEK

## Bless You! Na zdrowie

DIR.: PAULINA ZIÓŁKOWSKA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2018 • 5'

Instead of saying 'Bless You!', the characters in Paulina Ziółkowska's animation keep making the 'Achoo!' sound. This sound is a sign of a spreading epidemic. A sneezing man joins a group waiting for a bus and, after a while, it is obvious that everyone will get sick.

The sickness in the animation is a metaphor for the changes that occur in people after they interact with others. People can share different things among each other: their passions, worldview or behaviour in certain situations. Yet it can also lead to the loss of individualism and standardisation.

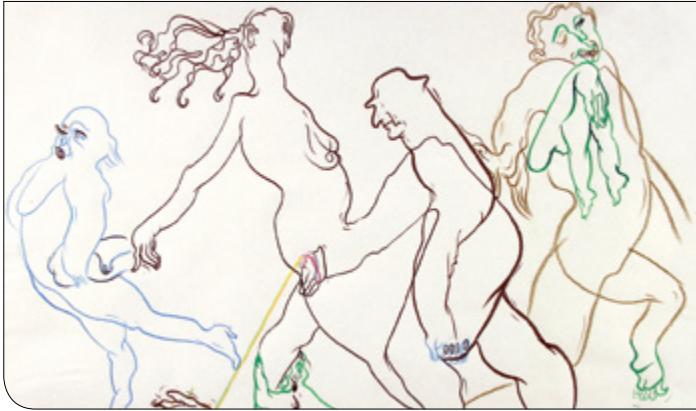
In *Bless You!* the characters do not change their personalities, they do not behave any differently. The transformation is visual – the infected people's clothes start to resemble those of the sick man's in both texture and colour. Sometimes the characters become transparent and at others they overlap, looking like hallucinations.

The animation is indeed like a dream vision, it is full of absurd and surrealistic elements, like a gigantic nose with legs or a human thermometer. The setting where the story takes place is chaotic and lacks the rules of perspective, while the characters can change their sizes and shapes freely. They also sometimes carry their cars on their heads. This abstract glance at the city, machines and crowds of similar looking people becomes a reflection on the modern society.

In *Bless You!*, Paulina Ziółkowska only uses vibrant colours: a yellow space is filled with blue and red characters. The cheerful colours try to distract us from the fact that this epidemic may have a tragic ending...

DAGMARA MARCINEK





## Oh God O Jezu

DIR.: **BETINA BOŻEK** • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2017 • 4'

When every day looks the same, nothing makes sense and there is no hope for things to get better, the only thing left to do is to sit at the bar and sigh – oh God...

Betina Bożek's animation consists of a procession of people who spend their time doing insignificant things. The evenings are wasted on bad dates, hours go by in front of a computer screen, and minutes are lost forever. They dream about a better job, they are longing for love and waiting for something extraordinary to happen. Will a businessman petting his rat-like dog or a woman constantly staring at the picture of her ex-lover finally find something that will give their lives meaning? The style of the animation recalls doodles in a notebook: the characters drawn with a ball and marker pens look like if they were created offhand, out of boredom. The drawings intentionally look unfinished, unpolished – characters' image seem to be as irrelevant as their stories. They appear like a cigarette smoke blown out at the bar: changing shapes, intermingling, fading away.

However, Bożek chooses from this mass of common people a few characters who become protagonists. She portrays them with a great sense of humour, creating contrast between their colourful, funny looks and sad lives they are living. The bitter-sweet situations the characters are experiencing, on the one hand amuse the audience, and on the other make the audience feel sorry for them. Also the background is hilarious – wallpapers covered with repetitive broken hearts, women's breasts or rat-like dogs emphasize the repetitiveness of characters' lives. The only winner in the animation seem to be the bartender who is more reminiscent of a cunning devil than a loser. But after all, he spends every evening always looking at the same faces. Oh God...

DAGMARA MARCINEK



## Impossible Figure

DIR.: **MARTA PAJEK** • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2018 • 12'

Impossible figure exists only in theory. You can draw it on paper but it cannot be constructed in real life. In the new part of her triptych Marta Pajek once again uses optical illusion, but this time to illustrate a relationship between man and woman. The characters meet in a room full of chairs which resembles a waiting room. Why did they come here? What are they waiting for? Marta Pajek will not tell. She does not say who the characters are: if their paths crossed before or if they have just met. The only thing that counts is the game that have just started between them – sensual, intriguing and at the same time frightening. The characters expose themselves psychologically and physically – they take off their clothes and reveal new faces.

Pajek does not give it to you straight, not only in the film narrative. Erotic tension, that can be sensed in every minute of the film, is hidden between the pictures: fingers getting lost in hair, hands touching the body and figures brought to life by viewer's imagination. There is no doubt that Pajek knows how to animate movement – characters' hands move like in a sensual dance and the exuberant vegetation that fills in the space winds its way like a snake trying to constrict them. The animation does not differ in style from its previous part: clear black line, limited use of colour and the soundtrack perfectly complementing the image. This time the whole animation is happening somewhere in between dream and reality. The meeting that could really happen turns into a hypnotic game of bodies, and the film ends with surrealistic images: a maze whirling above resembling an impossible figure.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



## Colaholic

DIR.: MARCIN PODOLEC • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2018 • 11'

Marcin is 26 years old and he's a colaholic. He can walk for miles and miles in a snowstorm in the middle of a night just to find his favourite bottle. Only to hear the sound of bubbles in a glass filled with a carbonated drink...

Cola addiction is no different from any other addiction, so the sequence of events presented in the animation is valid for all the cases where the addiction takes control of somebody's life. It shows how certain situations turn into everyday needs unnoticed, how hard it is to decide to quit and the emptiness that appears after you choose to do so. Addiction is also no different from love (or perhaps love is no different from addiction?), that's why the director chose the romantic comedy genre to talk about it.

*Colaholic* is a portrait of Marcin Podolec, the director himself, who once again decided to present real events through animation. However, rather than a documentary film, it is a movie based on a true story. It has a documentary narrative, yet the visual side is more of a funny variation on a theme. Some of the scenes are deliberately exaggerated to add to the dramatic effect, and others are simply made up to make the story funny: flying cola followed by the thirsty protagonist or an IV dripping from a gigantic bottle of soda.

The animation style is also funny in itself: a colourful world painted with clear black lines and characters with simple facial expressions comply with comic book aesthetics. Podolec makes references to Edward Hopper's paintings portraying the US in the 1920s. Comic book versions of *Morning Sun* or *Nighthawks* ironically present the loneliness in a big city that the protagonist suffers from after he stops drinking the iconic drink. Cola is also a symbol here for a consumerism which is hard to resist. So, with lemon and ice?

DAGMARA MARCINEK

## Squaring the Circle

Kwadratura koła

DIR.: KAROLINA SPECHT • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2018 • 4'

Squaring the circle, an impossible to solve problem which was proposed by ancient mathematicians, is today slang for something bound to fail from the start. In Karolina Specht's animation, he is a square, and she is a circle. Will they be able to prove the mathematicians wrong?

The characters in *Squaring the Circle* meet every day: passing each other on the staircase, bumping into each other on the street and riding the same tram. Yet she does not seem to notice him. A chance for love comes up when he discovers that they work in the same open space office...

From the first scene the viewer gets sucked into a whirlpool of colourful shapes and interpenetrating figures and from which the characters appear after a while. The abstract forms gain human features thanks to the addition of a pair of small black dots for eyes. Specht's animation is full of similar, seemingly simple yet witty effects. It is best visible in the final scene which is full of content even though the visual effects remain few and far between.

Sound also plays a big part in the film – it adds everything that isn't presented by means of squares, circles and triangles to the story. The sounds of the alarm clock, heels on the sidewalk or cars passing by help to place the events in time and space.

Karolina Specht is known for storytelling which employs straight lines and geometrical figures. This time, however, along with the characters represented by various shapes, we also see those which remind us of *The Incredibly Elastic Man* – Specht's first animation which achieved international success. In *Squaring the Circle* she combines abstract painting with humorous drawings, allowing this love story to be received both as a comedy and a drama.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

# POLISH ANIMATIONS

## CATALOGUE OF FILMS

### 2017–2018



#### The Other

DIR.: **MARTA MAGNUSKA** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 5' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

While waiting for the arrival of a mysterious newcomer, people speculate as to who he may be. The blurry vision of the stranger takes shape to the extent that his presence feels almost real. The initial excitement of the crowd turns into anxiety.



#### Norma

DIR.: **AGATA MIANOWSKA** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 7' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

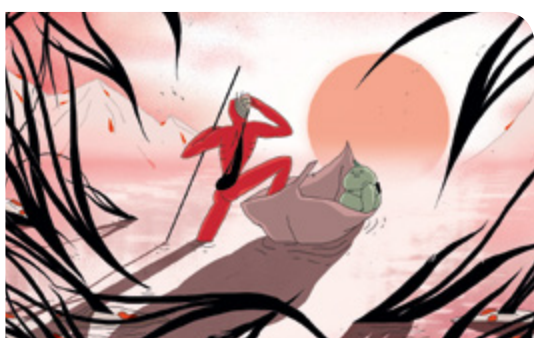
Two young girls are trying to fit into the modern canons of beauty. Each of them is different and neither feels comfortable in her own skin. Norma and her neighbour try different methods to gain the feeling of self-acceptance that they desire.



#### Eatself

DIR.: **EDYTA ADAMCZAK** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 14' • PROD.: ANIMASO • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

We inject a drop of the turbo-gene. We breed them in cages until their skinny legs snap like twigs. We bludgeon them, cut them open, we pull their guts out and slice them to pieces. We fry, boil and eat them. Next... Stop! An extraordinary encounter on the production line. The horrific reality of the meat industry is projected into a grotesque world. It is time to confront the contents of our plates. After all, we, humans, are conscious, thinking primates. We can afford a little danger... can't we?



#### An Eye for an Eye

DIR.: **JULIA PŁOCH** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 17' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, JAN MATEJKO ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKÓW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The film's action takes place around a large lake and one of its banks is inhabited by frogs. They tell stories about an ancient god – a huge catfish which lives on the other side. In the movie we follow the fate of two of its characters: Red Frog – a mythical hero who leaves home to seek the truth in his kin's beliefs, and Little Frog – a child who wants to follow in his hero's footsteps. As the plot reveals itself, their fates are intertwined and some of its secrets are revealed.



## Beautiful

DIR.: **WERONIKA KUC** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 7' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, JAN MATEJKO ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKÓW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A woman tempted by a pink ribbon loses herself in her own image. While building the strength of her image, she doesn't realise that her true self is heading for destruction.



## III

DIR.: **MARTA PAJEK** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 12' • PROD.: ANIMOON SP. Z O.O. • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

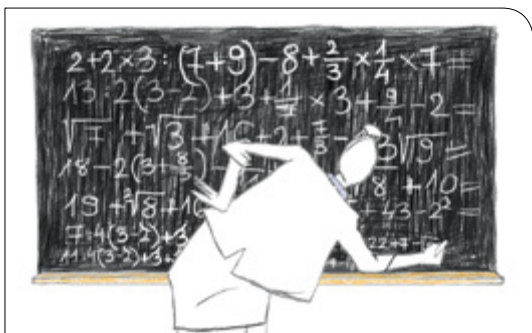
A man and a woman meet in a waiting room and start to seduce each other. Their game leads them further than they expect. III is a portrait of a woman in an exhausting relationship with a man who allures and repulses her at the same time.



## Colaholic

DIR.: **MARCIN PODOLEC** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 11' • PROD.: YELLOW TAPIR FILMS • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL; ANNA WASZCZUK, YELLOW TAPIR FILMS, ANIA@YELLOWTAPIRFILMS.COM

Colaholic is a documentary, a romantic comedy, and a memoir of a person who drinks way too much soda.



## The Notebook

DIR.: **ALEKSANDRA RYLEWICZ** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 6' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, JAN MATEJKO ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKÓW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

The action begins in the room of the main character who is deep in sleep. In front of his bed there is a notebook that opens and introduces us to a different world. Suddenly, we are in a school where demented teachers act like machines, not making contact with their pupils. Students treat prohibitions and school rules as obstacles that should be avoided or ignored. The interests of students and teachers are clearly divergent, they have only one thing in common: they are waiting for the last bell to release them from their shared torment.



## Thicket

DIR.: **ALEKSANDRA MATWIEJCZUK** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 4' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A young girl is struggling with extreme shyness. She spends most of her time at home, thinking and dreaming. One day she receives a phone call from a distant friend and decides to give herself one last try at overcoming her fears. There is a twist – when the protagonist becomes stressed, her body begins to cover itself with plants, the pace and power of which increases along with the level of stress.



## Squaring the Circle

DIR.: **KAROLINA SPECHT** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 4' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

At first glance, it seems that SQUARE lives among chaos and endless changes. But then we notice that the systems in which he functions are constantly repeated, that they introduce a routine, they hypnotize without allowing any movement. Just once, a new element sneaks into the pattern, allowing SQUARE to look a little differently at his reality for just a moment. Squaring the Circle is full of graphic metaphors, a semi-abstract story about an impossible feeling.



## My Strange Older Brother

DIR.: **JULIA ORLIK** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 13' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

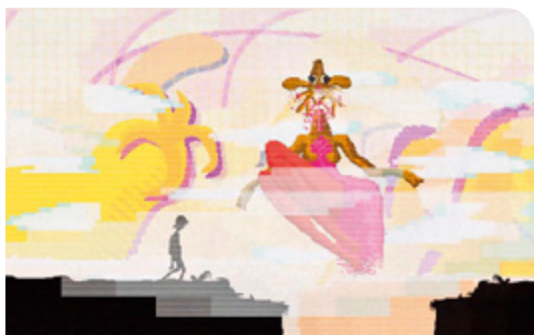
This movie is about a unique relationship between a young woman who really wants to succeed in her working life and her eccentric brother. They are complete opposites. She is a workaholic and, despite the fact that this way of life doesn't make her happy, she believes that this is the only right way to live. Her brother and his unique behaviour really drives her crazy and is also the cause of many uncomfortable situations in her workplace. He really wants to persuade her to change her life, but she has enough of his importunity and feels ashamed. Unfortunately, after one of their many arguments, they break off contact with each other.



## Bless You!

DIR.: **PAULINA ZIÓŁKOWSKA** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 5' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Everyone gets sick of everyone. But things become really bad when you get sick of yourself.



## Journey to the Magic Waterfall

DIR.: **BOGNA KOWALCZYK** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 13' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A sentimental journey through the vintage game aesthetic with a dark-comedy and fairy-tale vibe. Our character has a pitiful life. He works in a petrol station selling burned hot-dogs and coffee from a broken coffee machine until one day... he can make his biggest wish come true



## A World that Flew Away on the Back of a Cow

DIR.: **WOJCIECH A. HOFFMAN** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 7' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

In an asphalt-coloured world, cars hurtle through a village. Granny and Grandpa live a life choked by exhaust fumes. Grandpa has a cow but drinking the dirty water and breathing in the fumes makes her grow to a colossal size. Perhaps, thanks to her sheer size, she can transform the tiny community's fate.



## Comfort

DIR.: **WERONIKA BANASIŃSKA** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 10' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, JAN MATEJKO ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKÓW • CONTACT: ROBERT SOWA, ANIMATIONSTUDIO@ASP.KRAKOW.PL

A girl visits a mysterious place – her inner self. In her journey into sensory exploration, her excitement soon turns into feelings of anxiety, as overstimulation finally throws her into a child-like state.



## Cold Pudding Settles Love

DIR.: **URSZULA PALUSIŃSKA** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 19' • PROD.: URSZULA PALUSIŃSKA, MML • CONTACT: URSZULA PALUSIŃSKA, UPALUSINSKA@GMAIL.COM

People have stopped their daily occupations, the lazy revolution escalates and deconstructs the very fibre of the city. Against this backdrop, two figures appear, the King and the Superhero, both of whom represent order, at least according to tradition. While the world is getting out of control, they are both too occupied with their inner lives to fulfil their roles.



## TeBelgeza

DIR.: **TESSA WAS** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 3' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

*TeBelgeza* is a dance of freedom, the freedom of two interpenetrating elements, the feminine and the masculine, to transform and be born again perpetually. This is a semi-abstract film; it is improvised, stop-motion choreography of ink on tracing paper, a spectacle of transformation where there is no one 'right' way but, instead, there is absolute acceptance of the expression and cosmos of possibility.



## Opus Vitae

DIR.: **TOMASZ BOLEK** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 9' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARIOLA GAWINEK, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ, MG@FILMSCHOOL.LODZ.PL

In a distant, crumbling world, a powerful mechanism comes to life to save his descendants.



## 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 BORGIA SZ** • 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.: **EWA DRZEWICKA, DOMINIKA FEDKO, WERONIKA KUC, MAŁGORZATA JACHNA, MAŁGORZATA JĘDRZEJEC, ALEKSANDRA RYLEWICZ, GRAŻYNA TRELA** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 6' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, JAN MATEJKO 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 JÓZEF CZYK** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 2' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, JAN MATEJKO ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A film etude 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 God

DIR.: **BETINA BOŻEK** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 4' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, JAN MATEJKO 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 God*. 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 God...



## Loneliness

DIR.: **IGOR KAWECKI, BETINA BROŻEK** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 8' • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, JAN MATEJKO 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 ORZECZOWSKI** • 2017 • ANIMATION • 13' • FUMI STUDIO • CONTACT: ANNA WASZCZUK, FUMI STUDIO, FESTIWALE@FUMISTUDIO.COM

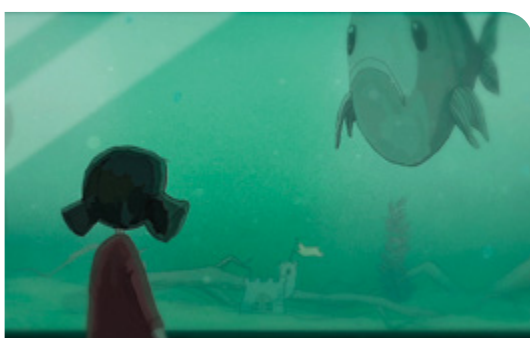
The event horizon, the door to our world. A place on the edge of space where time stops and the faintest ray of light ceases to exist forever. Behind this boundary there's a totally different world. A place where the boundaries of perception are stretched.



## 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.



## 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.

BY DAGMARA ROMANOWSKA

FROM A SHORT FILM TO A FULL-LENGTH FEATURE FILM DEBUT

# 10 YEARS OF STORYTELLING

Munk Studio, which was founded to support the filmmakers at the beginning of their careers, has been already present in Polish cinema for 10 years. During this time Studio produced almost 200 short narrative, animated and documentary films and several narrative features. We talk to the artistic director and co-founder of Munk Studio – the producer Jerzy Kapuściński.

**DAGMARA ROMANOWSKA:** During the last gala of the Orły Polish Film Awards, the ‘Oscar’ ceremony of the Polish Film Academy, the feature film *Silent Night*, produced by Munk Studio, gained as many as 10 awards.

**What a beautiful present for your tenth anniversary!**

**JERZY KAPUŚCIŃSKI:** We could not possibly have got a better gift. Since the beginning, the Munk Studio was supposed to be a kind of a platform between a film school and a full-length feature film debut.

**DR:** In 2005, when the initiative was born, the landscape of Polish film looked quite different to that of today.

**The Polish Film Institute had just started its work and, in turn, in film schools...**

**JK:** ... diploma films were 10-12 minutes long. Even 15-minute productions were rare. We needed more feature short films that would allow their creators to thrive, show off their skills, and be the first serious step towards a full-length feature. We had to take action.

## THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SHORT FILMS PRODUCED IN MUNK STUDIO

### SELECTED AWARDS

**GLASS TRAP** DIR.: PAWEŁ FERDEK • 2008 • 15' • SCREENED AT 35 FESTIVALS • EUROPEAN FILM AWARDS – NOMINATION

**HANOI – WARSAW** DIR.: KATARZYNA KLIMKIEWICZ • 2009 • 28' • SCREENED AT 66 FESTIVALS • EUROPEAN FILM AWARD FOR THE BEST SHORT FILM 2010

**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

**DRAWN FROM MEMORY** DIR.: MARCIN BORTKIEWICZ • 2011 • 24' • QUINZAINÉ DES RÉALISATEURS – CANNES FILM FESTIVAL OFFICIAL SELECTION

**THE WHISTLE** DIR.: GRZEGORZ ZARICZNY • 2012 • 16' • SCREENED AT 41 FESTIVALS • SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL 2013, USA – GRAND JURY PRIZE

**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

**THE BEST FIREWORKS EVER** DIR.: ALEKSANDRA TERPIŃSKA • 2017 • 30' • 56<sup>TH</sup> SEMAINE DE LA CRITIQUE DU FESTIVAL DE CANNES, FRANCE – CANAL+ AWARD FOR SHORT FILMS, RAIL D'OR AWARD

**VOLTE** DIR.: MONIKA KOTECKA, KAROLINA PORYZAŁA • 2017 • 14' • HOT DOCS, CANADA – SPECIAL MENTION, SUNDANCE FF – OFFICIAL SELECTION

**DR:** The studio has gone beyond those first assumptions, am I right?

**JK:** In 2008, the Munk Studio became a formal entity and immediately won two prizes at the Kraków Film Festival: *Aria Diva* by Agnieszka Smoczyńska was awarded the Silver Hobby-Horse in the National Competition and the Silver Dragon in the International Short Film Competition. Agnieszka has already had her full-length feature debut, *The Lure*, a production that was well received at Sundance Film Festival, among others. Today, the scope of the Munk Studio's activity has exceeded our expectations. We have launched programmes such as '30 Minutes' for features, 'First Document', 'Young Animation' and recently '60 Minutes'. We are supervising work on full-length feature debuts. We are still trying to be somewhere between a film school and a film market. We support the authors of the projects allowed for production by Artistic Councils of each of the programmes, at every stage of film-making, from a screenplay to promotion and distribution. The studio organises training sessions and workshops for young film-makers that are not limited to only our pupils. Such workshops were organised at the Młodzi Film Festival in Koszalin and the Krakow Film Festival, among others. There is also a Literature Team: writers help the debutants in their screenwriting attempts. Our promotion department is responsible for presenting the films at both national and world festivals. We also take care of distribution. Until last year, we were preparing 'Polish Debuts' DVDs, working on the launch of a VOD platform for all our films – it should be ready in autumn this year. Our films are also to be found on



Polonaise dir.: Agnieszka Elbanowska



such TV channels as Ale Kino, Canal+, TVP Kultura and Kino Polska. In November 2017 we signed an agreement with the film distributor M2 Films and some sets of our short films are regularly distributed in cinemas thanks to that. And the 30 minute-long films are still the central part of our activity.

**DR: Apart from festivals, it is not easy to have the opportunity to watch short films. One may even say – what is the point? Isn't it better to make a full-length feature?**

JK: Actually, there's a need for short films. Our films attracted as many viewers to cinemas as some Polish full-length features. They have their audience and not only at festivals. Probably they do not have a huge group of viewers yet, but the viewers search them out and want to watch them. The 30 minute films often show a world that is not described in full-length features. Their creators raise different topics, their form is more courageous, like *The Best Fireworks Ever* by Aleksandra Terpińska. Short films fill a certain gap in cinema, they forecast things that will come any moment – like in case of Piotr Domalewski, who made a short feature *60 Kilos of Nothing* with us before he made his *Silent Night*. For the creators themselves, short films constitute a test of their skills and a chance to show them to other people. They also teach

them the discipline of story-telling, they are the first conscious confrontation with cinema outside school and its protective umbrella, with viewers who are neither lecturers nor other students.

**DR: Does a short film facilitate the production of a full-length feature debut?**

JK: I believe that working with young artists at different levels not only makes sense, but also has rapid effects: thanks to this, the full-length feature debut is of better quality and is produced faster. It works when some frames are provided, the means that allow working in professional conditions. In such circumstances, the film is made quicker and opens the door to a career for the most prodigious artists. The question of time is very important here. The process cannot take too much, a young director should make their debut when they are still young, with their mind open to the world, reality, themselves and cinema. They can't have their ideas hidden away for years. I know some examples of promising directors who had to wait for their chance for so long that they finally burned out. This is a story of unfulfilled talent but in Munk Studio we want to write quite a different story. This is what the 30 minute films are for and, actually, it works. ■



*Pencilless Case* dir.: Magdalena Pilecka



*A Piece of Summer* dir.: Marta Minorowicz



BY KONRAD TAMBOR

The famous Łódź Film School celebrates this year the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. Among its graduates we can find a lot of acclaimed female filmmakers, including Małgorzata Szumowska, Jolanta Dylewska or Dorota Kędzierzawska. In recent years a new generation of ambitious female directors has been making their voices heard. Even though they have just finished the school, they have already achieved their first international successes.

Cinema is still full of prejudice and discrimination, things which the world should have got rid of a long time ago. They are still very real and visible for racial minorities and women and the protagonists of films are usually white men. If women appear in films, they are often in the kitchen or in the bedroom. The #metoo campaign and the selective policy of award giving prove that the film industry is still not free from this issue. In 2010, Barbra Streisand presented Kathryn Bigelow with the Academy Award for Best Director, the first woman to win in this category at the 82<sup>nd</sup> time of asking. When she did so, Streisand said: 'Well, the time has come.' Now the winds of change are blowing

# WOMEN FROM ŁÓDŹ

and in Poland too. Changes are visible already at the start of a filmmakers' career, during their education. The year 2017 was marked by the display of real talent from two Łódź Film School graduates – Jagoda Szalc and Marta Prus.

The feature debut of the former – *Tower. A Bright Day* produced by the Indeks Film Studio which is owned by the Łódź Film School – was one of the revelations of the Polish Film Festival. The film was compared to works by Lynch and von Trier, while Jagoda Szalc received the awards for best directing debut, screenplay and discovery of the festival. Apart from that, she received Polityka's Passport – one of the most recognized cultural awards in Poland.

Marta Prus says she chose the school in Łódź for its history and reputation. During her studies she was already a promising artist, taking part in extracurricular activities organised by the school and interested in the issue of exclusion, searching for happiness and acceptance. Prus recalls that the school gave her the confidence to make movies, but also made their production possible and allowed her own artistic growth. She also emphasizes that she could always count on her lecturers when she needed help. Her student films *Hot and Cold*, *Talk to Me*, *Eighteenth Birthday* and *Vakha and Magomed* received around 30 awards and special mentions. It is therefore not surprising that her first feature documentary, *Over the Limit*, produced by Telemark Sp. z o. o., was very well received during the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of IDFA. The production took many years and demanded exceptional determination. The filmmaker needed to gain the trust and agreement of the characters while dealing with a generally unwelcoming environment. The film tells the story of a rhythmic gymnast, Margarita Mamun, who won a gold medal in Rio in 2016, while portraying the world of Russian artistic gymnastics and showing the universal truth that on the way to perfection you not only have to beat



Jagoda Szelc



*... perhaps in the near future, the Łódź Film School will not only be 'the school of Wajda and Polański', but 'the school of Wajda, Polański, Szumowska, Szelc and Prus'.*

Joanna Satanowska on the set of her diploma movie. Photo: Przemysław Jękosz

Marta Prus



your rivals but first of all overcome your inhibitions. This led Variety Magazine to include Marta Prus on their 10 Europeans to Watch 2018 list. Today, Marta Prus is doing her PhD at the Directing Department of Łódź Film School.

Marcin Malatyński, Head of International Relations, says the school does not offer any separate feminist or gender courses: 'We profess artistic freedom, all students decide by themselves what they want to talk about and how they want to do that. I think that the School gives to women what it gives to men: a good film education and a chance for artistic and personal development.' The year Marta Prus began her studies was a breakthrough as the directing faculty admitted 4 women, which means they took half of the places available to Polish students (before, the majority were men). Today, 470 of the students are women and 391 are men. Hopefully it will lead to burying the myth of women being emotionally weaker than men and, as a result, unable to make films and win festivals. And, perhaps in the near future, the Łódź Film School will not only be 'the school of Wajda and Polański', but 'the school of Wajda, Polański, Szumowska, Szalc and Prus'. ■

## THE MOST INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FILMS FROM THE FEMALE STUDENTS OF THE ŁÓDŹ FILM SCHOOL FROM THE LAST 10 YEARS

**SIGNIFICANT OTHERS** DIR.: DARA VAN DUSEN • FICTION • 2009 • 12'

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

**BIRTHDAY** DIR.: JENNIFER MALMQVIST • FICTION • 2010 • 18'

**BEAR ME** DIR.: KASIA WILK • ANIMATION • 2012 • 6'

**EXIT POINT** DIR.: JAGODA SZELC • DOCUMENTARY • 2012 • 17'

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

**SUCH A LANDSCAPE** DIR.: JAGODA SZELC • FICTION • 2013 • 23'

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

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

**DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD** DIR.: KAROLINA SPECHT • ANIMATION • 2015 • 4'

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

**FENCES** DIR.: NATALIA KRAWCZUK • ANIMATIONS • 2015 • 7'

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

**PUSSY** DIR.: RENATA GAŚSIOROWSKA • ANIMATION • 2016 • 8'

**FOREIGN BODY** DIR.: MARTA MAGNUSKA • ANIMATION • 2016 • 7'

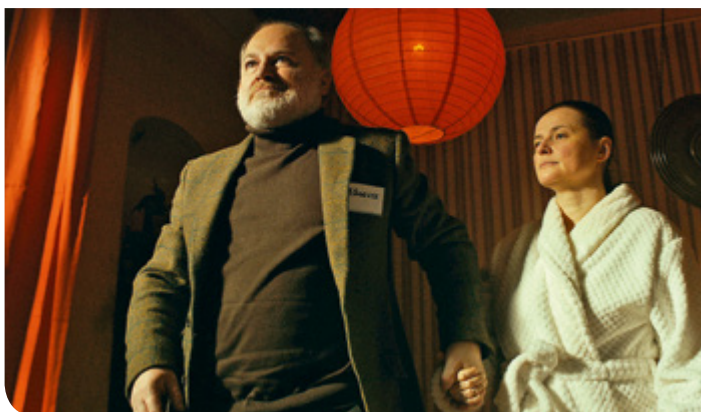
**BLESS YOU!** DIR.: PAULINA ZIÓŁKOWSKA • ANIMATION • 2018 • 5'



Hot and Cold dir.: Marta Prus



Education dir.: Emi Buchwald



## Happiness Szczęście

DIR.: MACIEJ BUCHWALD • FICTION • POLAND • 2018 • 24'

At first glance the characters in this tragicomedy have nothing in common. They differ completely apart from one thing: they are all searching for happiness. Among them are: Tadeusz, a middle-aged man, who is looking for a partner through speed dating (he only has few minutes to talk to each candidate), Joanna, attending a peculiar group therapy because of her marital problems, and the youngest, Julia, looking for a meaning of life at the motivational lecture with a charismatic personal development coach. And even though it doesn't look like these three people will ever cross paths, some by no means obvious circumstances will lead to that. *Happiness* is a story – full of humour, absurd and multiple threads – about various ways of living your life in a modern world. Each of the characters is lacking something, and their attempts to deal with loneliness start a series of unexpected events. Those spontaneous decisions, unexpected encounters and coincidences will turn out to be life changing for each one of them. Because sometimes all you need to be happy is some... happiness.

Maciej Buchwald talks about difficult topics and family tragedies with great lightness and gentle humour. He puts the clothes of a comedy on a drama, uses exaggeration instead of pathos, and the reality in his film does not conform to any rules. Not everything in life can be planned – that is the lesson the characters learn at the end of the film, when true feelings and mutual relations are revealed.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

## Atlas

DIR.: MACIEJ KAWALSKI • FICTION • POLAND • 2018 • 28'

A peculiar patient is brought to a psychiatrist hospital – an associate professor of astrophysics, Adam Prażmowski nicknamed 'Atlas'. We do not know anything about him. The man doesn't talk to anyone, doesn't react to any stimuli and all the time stands straight with his arms lifted. The doctors have difficulties giving a definite diagnosis or figuring out who he actually is. The hospital is full of rumours and theories about his history and the events that led to his current state. Is he really an associate professor? Is he standing like this because his whole world fell apart due to the unfaithful actions of his girlfriend, so now he is trying to keep the sky in its place? Or maybe he was held hostage for several months while on his special mission in Iraq? There are rumours that he is a miner who saved his fellow miners and a whole mine from collapsing by supporting its roof with his bare hands. Or perhaps Atlas is perfectly healthy and this way he just wants to comment on the human condition in the modern world? Disinformation grows larger every day and even other patients start to take interest in Atlas. It gets harder and harder to determine what is madness and what is normal. Yet there is still not enough evidence to make any firm decision concerning the curious case of the associate professor of astrophysics. Eventually the day comes to decide once and for all what to do with the patient with such a hard to diagnose condition. It will be the day that will change not only the life of the protagonist, but also the fate of the hospital and perhaps the world itself.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA





## Tremors Drzenia

DIR.: DAWID BODZAK • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 21'

'Imagine that you're in a forest, it is dark, quiet, and you have no idea how you got there. You want to leave really badly but suddenly you hear howling. Something is running in your direction and looking for something, but you are sitting still. You do not move because you don't want it to see you. Suddenly a wolf appears in the dark, and then another one and another one. They surround you. What will you do?'

A student film from the Łódź Film School, which was awarded the festival Grand Prix in Clermont-Ferrand, is a mysterious, unsettling image of growing up. We meet two young boys who wander around the school with no purpose in between classes in a drowsy summer atmosphere. Their mutual relation consists of constant pulling and pushing, endless tensions and misunderstandings. They have different temperaments: Karol is hot-tempered and aggressive, Janek is more secretive but more unpredictable in his behaviour. Insignificant events or conversations they have while skateboarding let us get to know them better. Spontaneous reactions reveal the truth about anxieties and fears.

The climax comes during a physics lesson – Janek starts to shake uncontrollably, and no one seems to know what is happening and how to help him. What will be Karol's reaction to the situation? What will he do? At the same time also the whole school starts shaking which causes all the objects to move. The tremors are the harbinger of something unsettling – something that shakes the world to its foundations.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



## Play

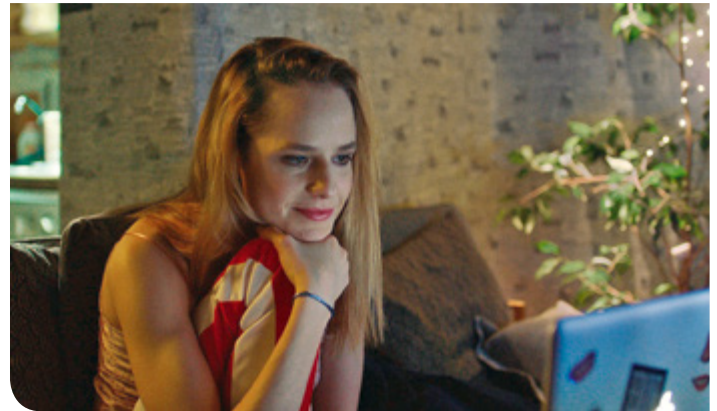
DIR.: PIOTR SUŁKOWSKI • FICTION • POLAND • 2018 • 13'

The film's protagonist, suffering from a childhood trauma, meets his past self in order to banish the overwhelming feeling of guilt that haunts him. When he was 10 years old he was too scared to protect his mother and as a result he witnessed something that changed his life forever.

The man lives in between past and present. The memories of the day when the tragedy happened keep coming back to him. Sometimes they are so distorted that it's impossible to tell what is real and what is a product of his imagination. In these visions he plays a psychopathic game with his past self, recollecting step by step the following events and details. Facing his own demons is a way to set himself free and discover who he really is. Was his psychopathic personality determined by the events from his childhood or are those events only the projection of his sick mind? Is he a victim or a villain? Or, maybe both at the same time?

Play takes the audience on a dangerous roller-coaster ride through the world without any rules. Gradually discovering the protagonist's story is a journey inside his memory, which hides, apart from his dark tendencies, the images of modern world flirted through television and pop cultural references. All of this creates a visual and musical montage presenting the complexity of the protagonist's mind, which hides inside a small child, a murderer and a dreamer.

PAULINA BUKOWSKA



## Casting

DIR.: **KATARZYNA ISKRA** • FICTION • POLAND • 2017 • 20'

Zofia is a young actress and mother. She lives together with her partner and their child in a small town, trying to lead a normal life. He is the breadwinner, she takes care of the baby. Yet Zofia is still hoping to return to her biggest passion – acting. So when she gets an opportunity to star in a film along a famous actress, she looks at it as an once-in-a-lifetime chance for her career to take off. She decides to go to the capital city, even though her choice disturbs the family harmony.

During the audition something happens and for a while it changes Zofia's life. Due to some unpleasant incident, Zofia and her little daughter spend the night in the house of the actress she was doing a scene with before. Even though at first glance they differ in every possible way – age, position, financial status – during the conversation we slowly discover the similarities between them. Marta – today a valued, recognizable actress – had very similar beginnings to Zofia. Will they develop a mutual understanding or, on the contrary, will they notice even bigger differences between them? Does Zofia really want to be like Marta?

Unexpectedly for Zofia, the film audition will turn out to be not only an attempt to get the role in the movie, but also a reflection on her own role in life. Do the career expectations even up all the sacrifices? And will Zofia manage to find a compromise between her family life and her dreams?

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

## Users

DIR.: **JAKUB PIĄTEK** • FICTION • POLAND • 2018 • 30'

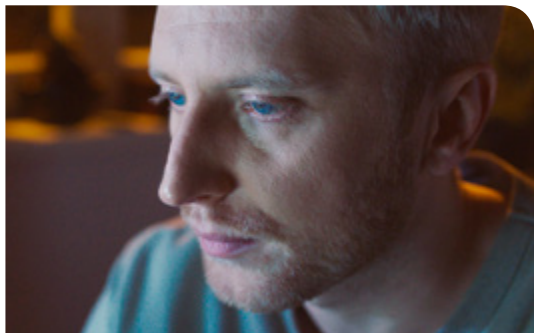
She and he. They don't know anything about each other. They meet by accident on New Year's Eve on video chat and start a casual conversation. At any moment they can finish it with one click and never find each other again. They can choose from thousands of other users from all over the world. It only takes few seconds to decide if they want to stay in touch or maybe try with someone new, chosen randomly by the system. With this kind of communication there's no time for hesitation and boring chit-chat; you constantly need to surprise, astonish or even humiliate people on the other side of the screen. The conversation between the main characters, at first consisting of nasty jokes and sarcastic remarks, slowly turns into a more daring and dangerous game. How close can they get and how well can they get to know each other in such a short period of time? Is hurting someone online the same as hurting them in real life? Everyone wants to feel something, but when two people are physically in two different places, they need to try much harder to really create an emotional connection. Even though the characters do not meet on the screen, the director is able to grasp the chemistry between them from the first moment of the conversation. The tension grows when they both – literally and figuratively – start to expose themselves. At first an innocent game, later on goes in an unexpected direction when other borders are crossed. Positive emotions mix with the negative ones, and a romance turns into terror. Who will dare to go further?

PAULINA BUKOWSKA

# POLISH SHORTS

## CATALOGUE OF FILMS

### 2017–2018



#### Users

DIR.: **JAKUB PIĄTEK** • 2018 • FICTION • 29' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS' ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

One night. A woman, a man, the Internet. A chance meeting, coupled by an algorithm. On the Web... freedom's final sphere. Anything goes. A single rule: if I don't like something, I'll <NEXT> you. I want to feel something. Can something be felt here?



#### Badylok

DIR.: **KAROLINA KŁAPKOWSKA** • 2018 • FICTION • 10' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Badylok is a sixteen-year-old boy who shares his life with his mother, grandmother, and sister. They live in a house isolated by water from the rest of the world. Badylok secretly creates a flying machine that will help him to flee the house. Will he finally decide to soar into the air? A short student film. The narrative voice in the film uses the characteristic Upper Silesian dialect and this is also reflected in the English subtitles.



#### Atlas

DIR.: **MACIEJ KAWALSKI** • 2018 • FICTION • 28' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS' ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

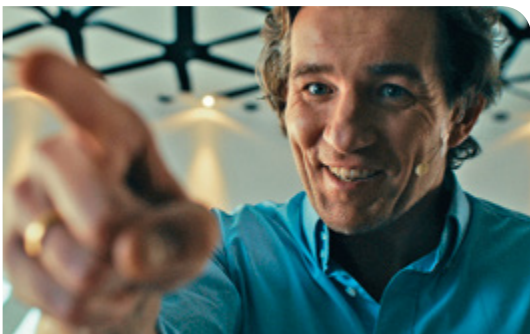
A remote and somewhat crazy psychiatric hospital receives a curious patient – he doesn't move or speak but spends his days standing with his hands raised. The only thing known is his nickname – 'Atlas'. In a word, he is a riddle and a riveting one at that.



#### Fascinatrix

DIR.: **JUSTYNA MYTNIK** • 2018 • FICTION • 19' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

*Fascinatrix* is a musical about a fugitive woman driven by revenge, who cross-dresses as a witch hunter and enters the Castle of the Inquisition...



## Happiness

DIR.: **MACIEJ BUCHWALD** • 2018 • FICTION • 23' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Three people of different ages are trying to achieve peace, success and love. However, sometimes happiness depends on luck.



## Play

DIR.: **PIOTR SUŁKOWSKI** • 2018 • FICTION • 13' • PROD.: FILM FICTION, POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A man consumed by guilt because he did not dare to defend his mother, he plays the role of a murderer and forces his ten-year-old self to confront this trauma.



## Tremors

DIR.: **DAWID BODZAK** • 2018 • FICTION • 21' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

Imagine that you are in the forest: it is dark, quiet, empty. You do not know why you are there. You suddenly hear a howl. You feel you do not want to be there. You are afraid. You see a wolf and a second one and a third. They come closer and closer to you and surround you. What are you going to do now?



## It's Summer

DIR.: **FILIP BOJARSKI** • 2018 • FICTION • 15' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: INDEKS FILM STUDIO, OFFICE@STUDIOINDEKS.PL

It's the last day of school and Ewa, a 40-year old teacher, has no plans for the summer holidays. She tries to convince her disillusioned husband to take a spontaneous bike trip to a nearby river. Will she be able to let craziness into her routine life?



## Skinny

DIR.: **DANIEL STOPA** • 2018 • FICTION • 8' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLOWSKI RADIO AND TELEVISION FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A poetic and nostalgic portrait of childhood seen through the eyes of siblings. A beautiful, sunny afternoon. A bunch of kids are playing football in the yard. Meanwhile, in an closed apartment, a boy is looking after his younger sister. Behind closed doors, the boy and the girl start a game of their own. What is hidden behind the games of children?



## Reflection

DIR.: **EMILIA ZIELONKA** • 2018 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

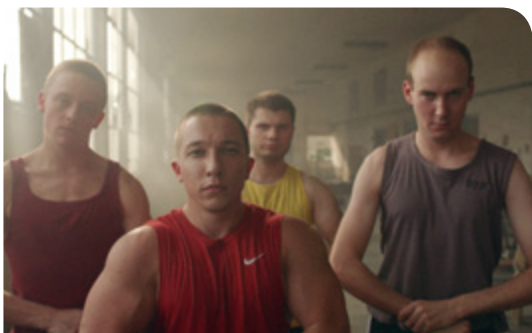
Valeria drives her daughter Martyna to Vienna. The teenager is going to spend the summer holidays with her father. Dramatic events on the way complicate their relationship and reveal deeply hidden secrets. The real reason for their journey comes to light.



## Weightlifter

DIR.: **DMYTRIO SUKHOLYTKYY-SOBCHUK** • 2018 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, POLISH FILM SERVICE • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

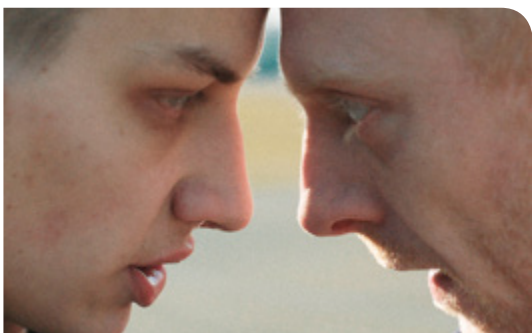
This is a story about a professional weightlifter, Petro, who is preparing for an important competition. Before the competition, Petro receives tragic news. This hard decision lays heavily upon his shoulders. His inner conflict makes Petro into something more than just a mechanical bundle of muscles.



## The Beast

DIR.: **KAMILA CHOJNACKA** • 2018 • FICTION • 22' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE • CONTACT: DAGMARA MAGIERA, KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FACULTY OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE, DAGMARA.MAGIERA@US.EDU.PL

*The Beast* is a story about a clash of two different worlds. 19-year old Christopher, a frequent gym visitor and local brawler, gets a job as a security guard at an opera festival. Touched by the beauty of opera, he decides to take up a singing course. This passion affects not only Christopher's musical interests but his whole lifestyle. A short student comedy filled with music.



## Short Distance

DIR.: **GIOVANNI PIERANGELI** • 2017 • FICTION • 20' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A short-tempered running coach is granted temporary custody of his athletic younger brother from a juvenile correctional facility. The complicated relationship between the brothers will have an huge influence on their collaboration towards a common aim.



## Casting

DIR.: **KATARZYNA ISKRA** • 2017 • FICTION • 20' • PROD.: GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A young Polish woman is forced to choose between her family and her career as an actress.



## Heimat

DIR.: **EMI BUCHWALD** • 2017 • FICTION • 24' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ  
 CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIATEK@KFF.COM.PL

A short work of fiction about five members of a unique family. They meet at a police station where the three grown-up children have to testify against a man who beat up their father.



## 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 MORGA** • 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.



## 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.



## 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.



## On the Road

DIR.: **BARTOSZ NOWACKI** • 2017 • FICTION • 24' • PROD.: ALISTAN • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĄTEK, 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.



## Jerry

DIR.: **ROMAN PRZYLIPIAK** • 2017 • FICTION • 26' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS' ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, MUNK STUDIO, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFFP.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?



## Me and My Father

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

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



## Spitsbergen

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

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



## Bogdan and Rose

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

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



## Let Me In

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

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



## Nothing New Under the Sun

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

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



## The Best Fireworks Ever

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

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



## Deer Boy

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

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



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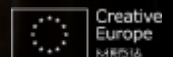
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