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The Wind. A Documentary Thriller. dir.: Michał Bielawski

Krzysztof Gierat talks
with **Michał Bielawski**
about ***The Wind.***
A Documentary Thriller

Acid Rain.
Interview
with **Tomek**
Popakul

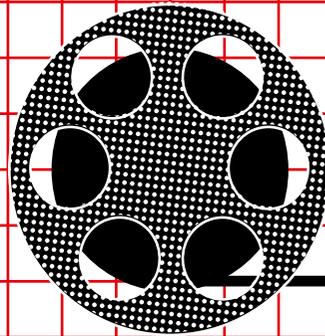
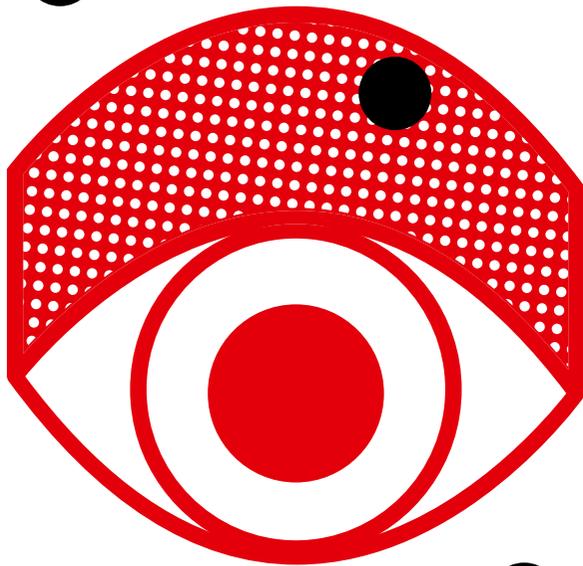
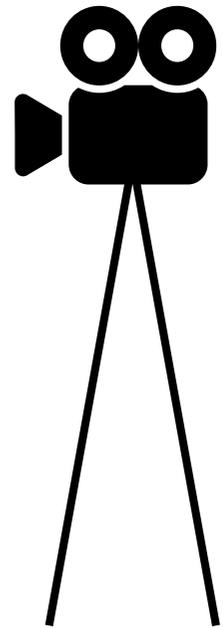
Upcoming
Polish docs
Catalogues
of **new films**



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A DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENT AS THE PROTAGONIST of a documentary film? Why not? Michał Bielawski talks about his latest film, *The Wind. A Documentary Thriller*, why he was fascinated by the *halny* wind and why he put his story in the framework of genre cinema. An interesting conversation with Tomek Popakul, the creator of *Acid Rain*, which has triumphed at festivals all over the world, will take us back to the 1990s. If we go back even further in time, we will get to know the history of Documentary and Feature Film Studio (WFDiF), which celebrates its 70th anniversary this year. 21 Chełmska Street in Warsaw is the history of Polish documentary film in a microcosm, with great names and excellent films. Now the younger generation is learning from WFDiF masters at the Film School in Katowice, which we present in this issue and which is celebrating its 40th anniversary. The projects of new Polish documentaries seem to very promising – let's read what Polish documentary filmmakers will show us next year. Marta Świątek writes about the short filmmakers who will present their films during the Polish Focus at the Short Film Festival in Clermont-Ferrand. Finally, we are delighted to present the catalogues of the latest Polish documentaries, animations and short feature films. We hope you enjoy the read!

BARBARA ORLICZ-SZCZYPUŁA
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POLSKI INSTYTUT SZTUKI FILMOWEJ
POLISH FILM INSTITUTE

POLISH DOCS, POLISH ANIMATIONS AND POLISH SHORTS
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ACID RAIN AND MARTA PAJEK AWARDED IN OTTAWA

At the Ottawa International Animation Festival – the oldest and the most important event dedicated to animated film in North America – the animated film *Acid Rain* by Tomek Popakul was appreciated for its script, and the Polish animated film director Marta Pajek enchanted the jury with the most interesting commercial animated film advertisement, one aimed at promoting the Austrian Tricky Women festival.



The programme of one of Europe's largest festivals – DOK Leipzig – will have an abundance of Polish animated and documentary films. Attendees of the German festival will have the chance to watch two Polish documentary films: ***In Touch*** by Paweł Ziemilski is included in the International Programme, and ***The Wind. A Documentary Thriller*** by Michał Bielawski will be presented in the Late Harvest section. Three Polish animated films were selected for the international short film competition. Among the lucky ones there are ***Guilt*** by Marcjanna Urbańska, ***Portrait of Suzanne*** by Izabela Plucińska and ***Last Supper*** by Piotr Dumata. In the section KIDS Dok, the screening of the animated film ***The Kite*** by Martin Smatana awaits young and old viewers alike. As part of Homage Brothers Quay, the audience will have the chance to watch ***Splinters*** directed by Jerzy Kucia and two Polish co-productions made by the Quay Brothers duo: ***Inwentorium of Traces*** and ***Maska***. In addition, thanks to the many years of the festival's co-operation with the Krakow Film Foundation, there will be also Polish Docs programme in DOK Market. There will be no lack of Polish films at the DOK Co-Pro Market, either. As many as three Polish projects were invited to participate: ***Together*** by Marek Kozakiewicz, ***The Last Expedition*** by Eliza Kubarska and ***Grace*** by Eri Mizutani.

POLISH FILMS



AT DOK LEIPZIG

Guilt by Marcjanna Urbańska



WEIGHTLIFTER HAS A CHANCE OF WINNING THE EUROPEAN FILM AWARD

The short film ***Weightlifter*** by Dmytro Sukholytkyy-Sobchuk, produced in Munk Studios, was chosen by the Jury of the International Short Film Festival in Drama, Greece as the film which will get a chance to be nominated for the European Film Award in the Short Film category. Thanks to 'the strong directing and the power of the protagonist's situation in the universe of Ukrainian weightlifting,' which is how the jury of the competition justified the film's award, ***Weightlifter*** is included on the longlist of 24 films, from which five nominated films will be selected.

POLISH DOCS PRO

A NEW PROJECT PROMOTING THE POLISH FILM INDUSTRY



Polish Docs PRO is a new initiative created as part of the cooperation between the Krakow Film Foundation (KFF), Polish Public Television (TVP) and the Doc Lab Poland programme, the aim of which is to continue and to develop the activities initiated by KFF within the framework of the Polish Docs project. Polish Docs PRO focuses primarily on the wide ranging promotion of the Polish documentary film industry at international events and is addressed to film professionals. It supports filmmakers and producers in developing their projects by facilitating access to markets abroad, coordinating the trips of delegations to pitching forums and co-production markets like Pitching du Réel, Sheffield Marketplace, Sunny Side of the Doc, DOK Leipzig and IDFA, presenting the projects, productions models and co-production opportunities with Poland, organizing networking meetings, participating in lectures, panel discussions, workshops and training sessions. The aim of the Polish Docs PRO is to establish the brand of Polish documentary film in the international film environment and to develop international co-operation. The project is substantively and financially supported by the Polish Film Institute and TVP – Polish Public Television.



ŁUKASZ DŁUGOŁĘCKI IN THE EMERGING PRODUCERS PROGRAMME

The Emerging Producers is a programme focused on education and promotion, dedicated to talented documentary film producers from the European Union countries, which accompanies the festival in Jihlava. Its aim is to integrate a new generation of producers with professionals who have been working in different fields of the film industry for many years, which is to bear fruit in the future and result in European documentary film co-productions. This year, the Polish producer Łukasz Długołęcki, will participate in it. Łukasz Długołęcki produced and co-produced several dozen student films, both feature as well as documentary ones. His first short film he made in 2011. In 2018, he produced the documentary film *In Touch*, shown at the international film festivals around the world and awarded at IDFA in the Netherlands and Skjaldborg in Iceland. He is the founder of the NUR company.



The Tough by Marcin Polar

SILVER EYE NOMINATIONS FOR THREE POLISH DOCUMENTARIES

Eleven feature-length documentary films and the same number of short documentary films are nominated for the Silver Eye awards, given to the best productions from Central and Eastern Europe. This year, three Polish documentary films have been nominated for the Silver Eye awards. In the short film category, *The Tough* by Marcin Polar and *Infinity is 50 Meters Away* by Daniel Światty have a chance to win awards, and the title of the best feature-length production may go to *The Wind. A Documentary Thriller* by Michał Bielawski. The award is intended to support the promotion and international distribution of the film. The winners of the 11th edition of the awards will be announced during the Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival.

Family² wins the Student Oscar

On the 13th of September, the winners of the Student Academy Awards were announced. The Student Academy Award was established in 1972. Every year, the Academy gives awards in 4 categories: animated, documentary, feature and alternative film. In addition to the categories for film school students from the USA, there are parallel categories for students from abroad, with winners able to apply for an Academy Award nomination. This year, the Student Academy Award in the foreign documentary film category went to the documentary film *Family²* by Yifan Sun. *Family²* was made at the Polish National Film School in Łódź. This is not the first success of the Łódź Film School in the Student Academy Awards. In 2016, Klara Kochańska won the award for her film *The Tenants*.

5 POLISH FILMS AT IDFA

This year's IDFA programme featured 5 Polish films. Additionally, several titles will be available for watching at Docs for Sale. Two Polish films were invited to the IDFA Mid-length Documentary Competition. The jury will judge Paweł Chorzępa's **Sonny** and Maciej Cuske's **The Whale from Lorino**. Both productions will have their world premiere at the festival. Małgorzata Golińska and Katarzyna Mateja will show their debut film at IDFA – **Lessons of Love** will have its world premiere in the First Appearance competition. Polish films will also be featured in the non-competition sections. The documentary **One Day in People's Poland** by Maciej Drygas will be presented as a part of Focus: Re-releasing History, and the short film **The Tough** by Marcin Polar, after numerous festival successes, will be presented in the Best of Fests section.

Lessons of Love AWARDED AT THE DOK INCUBATOR

This year, only eight projects were selected to participate in the Dok Incubator workshops. One of them is the award-winning Polish production **Lessons of Love** by Małgorzata Golińska and Katarzyna Mateja, the producer of which is Anna Stylińska (Widok). During the public presentation at the Nordisk Panorama festival in Malmö, the Polish project won the award in the form of financial support for the post-production of the film. It has also been presented before at the East Doc Platform and at the DOK Leipzig Co-Pro Market. The project was developed within the frames of the Doc Lab Poland programme and participated in the pitchings held during the KFF Industry: Docs to Start, where it received the HBO Award, and Docs to Go, where it won the Coloroffon Award. The world premiere of the film will be held at IDFA 2019 in the First Appearance Competition.



Sonny by Paweł Chorzępa



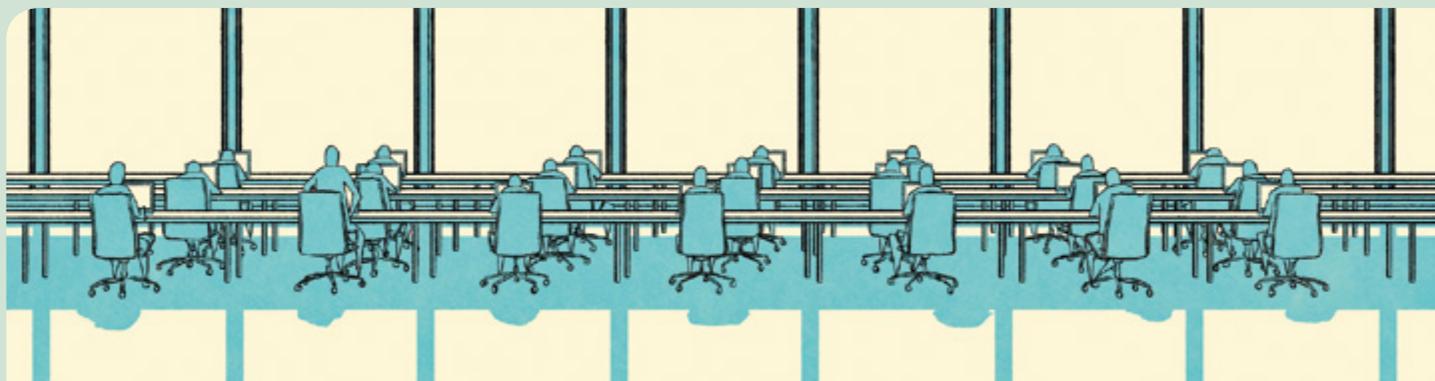
POLISH PROGRAMME AT THE ANIMATOU

This year, Poland is the guest of honor of the Swiss festival Animatou – International Animation Film Festival in Geneva. In the special programme, the advertising slogan of which is ‘Beautiful Poland,’ there is a review of the most interesting animated films created in Poland. The audience will have a chance to watch **The Baths** by Tomek Ducki, **Signum** by Witold Giersz, **To Thy Heart** by Ewa Borysewicz, **A Documentary Film** by Marcin Podolec, **Summer 2014** by Wojciech Sobczyk, **Sexy Laundry** by Izabela Plucińska, **Dokuanimo** by Małgorzata Bosek, **Luke and Lotta** by Renata Gąsiorowska,

Shivering Trunks by Natalia Brożyńska, **Sunshine and Water** by Wojtek Wawszczyk, **Casting** by Kacper Zamarto, **Dry Standpipe** by Wojciech Bąkowski, **Gyros Dance** by Piotr Loc Hoang Ngoc, **In Times of Krakus King** by Zenon Wasilewski, **The Lost Town of Świtez** by Kamil Polak and **Black Cap** by Piotr Dumata. Two films by the duo Katarzyna Kijek and Przemysław Adamski will also be presented: **Pirate’s Life** and **Shugo Tokumaru Katachi**, as well as three productions by Janek Koza, such as **An Unforgettable Night**, **The Stubs** and **Dogs**. Viewers who particularly enjoyed the style of the films by Marta Pajek and Tomek Popakul will also have the chance to watch their earlier films: **Ziegenort** by the latter and **Sleepincord** by the former.

A SELECTION OF THE LATEST

- Best Documentary at Go Short, The Netherlands: **Love 404** by Agata Baumgart (doc./2018/17’)
- Best Short Film at Pärnu Film Festival, Estonia: **Radwan** by Teresa Czepiec (doc./2018/15’)
- Best Music Doc at Pärnu Film Festival, Estonia: **Sing** by Olga Korotkaya (doc./2018/52’)
- Best Student Film at Pärnu Film Festival, Estonia: **Casting** by Klaudia Kęska (doc./2018/18’)
- FIPRECI Award at Goeast IFF, Germany: **Strip and War** by Andrei Kutsila (doc./2019/68’)
- Best Editing at Moscow IDFF DOKer, Russia: **Diagnosis** by Ewa Pogórska (doc./2018/77’)
- Grand Jury Prize at Medal Pro, Spain: **Sisters** by Michał Hytroś (doc./2018/20’)
- 2nd Jury Prize at Medal Pro, Spain: **Their Voices** by Eri Mizutani (doc./2017/26’)
- Grand Prize at Pärnu Film Festival, Estonia: **Summa** by Andrei Kutsila (doc./2018/50’)
- Best Documentary at Cineglobe, Switzerland: **Dust** by Jakub Radej (doc./2017/25’)
- Best Documentary at Fano IFF, Italy: **Horse Riders** by Anna Gawlita (doc./2018/20’)
- Best Documentary Film at BEAST IFF, Portugal: **Sisters** by Michał Hytroś (doc./2018/20’)
- Best Short Film, Audience Award at Molodist Kyiv International Film Festival, Ukraine: **Unconditional Love** by Rafał Łysak (doc./2018/40’)
- Best Short Film at Kalmthout ISFF, Belgium: **Sisters** by Michał Hytroś (doc./2018/20’)
- The Best International Doc at Aegean Docs International Documentary FF, Greece: **The Case of Johanna Langefeld** by Władysław Jurkow and Geburg Rohde-Dahl (doc./2019/91’)
- Best Short Documentary Film at Message to Man IFF, Russia: **Connected** by Aleksandra Maciejczyk (doc./2018/18’)
- Best Short Documentary at Atlantic International Film Festival, Colombia: **Sisters** by Michał Hytroś (doc./2018/20’)
- Student Academy Award for the Best International Documentary: **Family²** by Yifan Sun (doc./2019/25’)
- Best International Documentary at Regina International Film Festival & Awards, Canada: **The Case of Johanna Langefeld** by Władysław Jurkow and Geburg Rohde-Dahl (doc./2019/91’)
- Grand Jury Prize at Skjadborg Film Festival, Iceland: **In Touch** by Paweł Ziemilski (doc./2018/61’)
- Best Documentary at Neisse FF, Germany: **Unconditional Love** by Rafał Łysak (doc./2018/40’)



The Rain by Piotr Milczarek



In Touch by Paweł Ziemiński



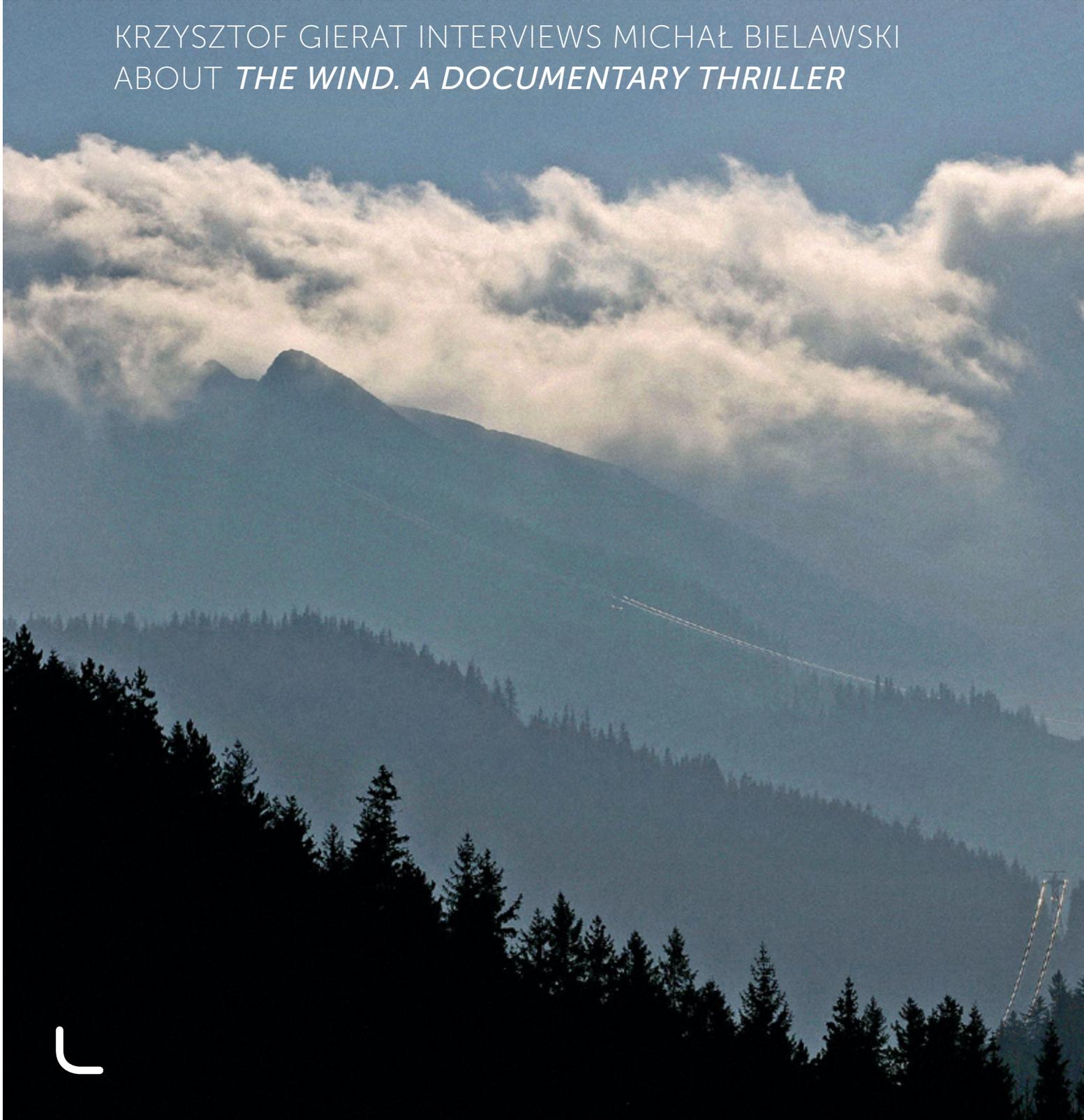
Connected by Aleksandra Maciejczyk

AWARDS FOR POLISH FILMS

- Best Documentary Film at Shanghai International Film & TV Festival, China: **I Grew Up As You Slept** by Marcin Sauter (doc./2018/52')
- Best Short Film at Neisse FF, Germany: **Sisters** by Michał Hytroś (doc./2018/20')
- Best Mid-Length Documentary Award at Hot Docs, Canada: **Symphony of the Ursus Factory** by Jaśmina Wójcik (doc./2018/60')
- Nomination to Focal Awards: **I'm Writing to You, My Love** by Magdalena Szymków (doc./2018/26')
- Jury Award at Busan ISFF, South Korea: **Horse Riders** by Anna Gawlita (doc./2018/20')
- Best Documentary at Budapest International Documentary Festival, Hungary: **Over the Limit** by Marta Prus (doc./2017/74')
- Best Animated Short Film at Monterrey IFF, Mexico: **Acid Rain** by Tomek Popakul (anim./2019/28')
- Best Animation Award at International Short FF in Drama, Greece: **Story** by Jolanta Bańkowska (anim./2019/5')
- New Visions Short Award at San Francisco IFF, USA: **Cold Pudding Settles Love** by Urszula Palusińska (anim./2018/19')
- Best Script at Ottawa IAFF, Canada: **Acid Rain** by Tomek Popakul (anim./2019/28')
- Golden Horseman Sound Design at Filmfest Dresden: **Oh, God** by Betina Bożek (anim./2017/3')
- Grand Prix at GLAS Animation FF, USA: **Acid Rain** by Tomek Popakul (anim./2019/28')
- Grand Prix, Audience Award: Animafest Zagreb, Croatia: **Acid Rain** by Tomek Popakul (anim./2019/28')
- Jean-Luc Xiberas Best Film Award at Annecy IAFF, France: **The Rain** by Piotr Milczarek (anim./2019/5')
- Silver Lynx for the Best Animation Short Film at FEST New Directors, New Films Festival, Portugal: **You Are Overreacting** by Karina Paciorkowska (anim./2018/4')
- Unofficial Jury Vimeo Award at Sundance FF, USA: **Acid Rain** by Tomek Popakul (anim./2019/28')
- High Risk Award at Fantoche, Switzerland: **Acid Rain** by Tomek Popakul (anim./2019/28')
- Third Prize for the Best Film of Cinefondation at Cannes FF, France: **Little Soul** by Barbara Rupik (anim./2019/9')
- Best Short Film at Anima Brussels, Belgium: **III** by Marta Pajek (anim./2018/12')
- Best Short Film at Prague Short FF, Czech Republic: **Tremors** by Dawid Bodzak (fic./2017/21')
- First International Danzante Award at Huesca IFF, Spain: **Atlas** by Maciej Kawalski (fic./2018/28')

AN IMPOSSIBLE

KRZYSZTOF GIERAT INTERVIEWS MICHAŁ BIELAWSKI
ABOUT *THE WIND. A DOCUMENTARY THRILLER*



PROJECT



KRZYSZTOF GIERAT: The film, which is about a force of nature, attempts to combine two cinematic elements: a quick reporter's intervention, a rapid recording of events that are happening before our eyes, and on the other side – an attempt to make the story into something of a universal reflection, something which requires entirely different means.

MICHAŁ BIELAWSKI: When we were presenting this project at various international pitch sessions, together with the producer, Maciek Kubicki, we were trying to get our heads around how to talk about it, so that it wouldn't be seen as just a local topic. And here in Krakow, at Doc Lab Poland, we were understood by foreign tutors like Leena Pasanen, Rada Šešić, and Peter Jäger. However, we fell into a trap – we had developed an interesting, attention-catching pitch, but the question of how to make an equally interesting film remained.

KG: So, you had a topic, you 'sold' it, but you still didn't know how to do it.

MB: We knew that the main topic would be the wind, but told through the stories of people who experience it. From the outset it was certain that we would want to avoid a TV formula – don't ask any questions, don't talk in front of the camera, just observe. We felt that – for the credibility of such an emotional story – it would be necessary to create the impression that we are recording reality from the inside, that we are not interfering with it. But this required us to be fully prepared. You had to be there, in the mountains, exactly when the wind was coming – walk it out and sit it out.

KG: It must have been very time-consuming. It took a long time until we got the finished film...

MB: We started working on the film in 2015 and by the end of the year we did our first shoots. Afterwards we worked intensively through the spring and autumn of 2016 and then everything stopped for a while. Somehow, intuitively, I felt that I wasn't quite ready to go between all the situations and emotions we've witnessed so far with a camera. Confronting the material with HBO's editors, Hanka Kastelicová and Iza Łopuch, proved very helpful, though not necessarily nice at the time. It forced me to make a decision that it was time to conquer a certain shyness towards a foreign world and approach the characters. That was in 2017.

KG: You had to be aware from the very beginning that there would be two types of narration and that these would be two differing energies you'd have to submit to, because – on one side – if you have chosen these people, you have to follow them patiently. And on the other – you'll have to catch what's fleeting, which makes you a filmmaking emergency service.

MB: Yes, but from the beginning I tried to select protagonists whose lives intersect with the wind. A lot of situations that I expected actually happened.

KG: Don't say you wanted your protagonist's house destroyed.

MB: No, of course not, I didn't think about it. Rather, I expected the windmill to fall apart because I had seen how flimsy it was. The fire was a complete surprise, as was the destruction



of Teresa's forest. With her, I followed another topic, let's call it an emancipatory one, because she was attempting to get a driver's license. I assumed that she would pass her exam and start driving around with her poetry.

KG: And a tree falls in front of her car during a storm...

MB: ...and she can't move anywhere. But she came up with something more interesting to do with her life which I wasn't prepared for at first. She decided to buy a forest. After the last storm, about 20% of it remains. Fortunately, a new one is already growing...

KG: Weren't you tempted to follow people from emergency hotlines? They'd probably be more 'cinematic' – suicides, drunks...

MB: The phones came up later... My protagonists had already opened up, they had strong stories. At first there were a dozen or so, but some were clearly taking the stage. Weaker stories inevitably gave way to them.

KG: A highlander poet, a shepherd, a medical rescuer, and the fourth, featured the least...

MB: The first three personalities began to throw elbows so hard that we had to make room for them. And the fourth one became just a weather guy, a symbolic figure who watches from somewhere up high in a small observatory that's swaying and creaking whenever there's a stronger gust.

KG: Let's go back to the *halny*. There are so many – let's be honest – more photogenic forces of nature in the world.

What is it in your project and in your film that goes beyond a local problem concerning people from Zakopane?

MB: With Maciek Kubicki we had the privilege that wherever we showed up with our project (for example, in Lisbon),

we were welcomed as filmmakers from Poland, and since it's Poland – it must mean that the project's good.

KG: A mark of quality earned by generations.

MB: It was a great but stressful feeling. Naturally, there were various reactions. There was a group of scouts, sales agents, editors – many wanted to re-edit it and make a completely different film, but there was also a group that grasped our intentions perfectly and shared our feelings that a story about a wind is something of an impossible project, but one worth undertaking. Among them was Hanka Kastelicová from HBO. It was much easier with her on board.

KG: Do you think that the genre idea worked here? To make a wind thriller, if you will?

MB: These intended genre borders were very helpful because they organised the story for us, and on the other hand – we saw how it affects the audience.

KG: Your film is a, let's call it, a socio-psychological thriller. Someone said that *halny* is death in opposition to life or – at least – chaos in the orderly life of these people. They have to struggle with it, try to repair these moments of *halny's* interference in their lives.

MB: This wind performs a social function. It is an existential constant that you can't do without when trying to explain or justify something.

KG: But it can also be an excuse or an alibi for something that you haven't done or have done wrong. I also see this film as a metaphor for life, our small way of the cross, like the shepherd's journey with his windmill. It's quite an uplifting reflection that one can be harassed by often very cruel adversities in life, but we can still get back up again and carry on.



MB: Of course, such an interpretation was my intention... On the one hand, *halny* is a destructive force, and on the other – it gives new plants a chance, so it devastates and creates at the same time. I really wanted this point to be conveyed in the film.

KG: I think that here lies the answer to the question why this film is so attractive at important international festivals. I'm proud that it opened the Krakow Film Festival. It was screened in Nyon, in St. Petersburg and in Leipzig. You certainly had signals of its beyond-local appeal already during production, when the Slovaks joined the project, when the crew was shaping up – a Slovak sound engineer and composer, a Hindu colourist residing in Poland...

MB: It was a great compliment that Péter Kerekes, who is a great documentary filmmaker and producer, found time

for himself with our film. He helped us recruit Martin Merc, a great sound engineer, and Lukáš Kobela, a very talented composer. In Krakow, Glen Castinho, a brilliant colourist, joined us...

KG: You invited someone who isn't an experienced cinematographer, but comes from Zakopane, to work with you?

MB: We sort of invited him, and he sort of invited us – because we entered his territory, a world he knows like the back of his hand. It turned out that Bartek Solik is an extremely talented filmmaker, a one-man band, but until recently a lone wolf. Bartek is able to put other things aside, grab a camera, get somewhere and start shooting before an hour has passed.

KG: And who came to whom, you to the producer or the producer to you?

MB: The producer came to me. Apparently, a long time ago, at one of the Krakow Film Festivals, he was telling stories until day break about the *halny* and a film that he saw as somewhat a crazy and impossible project. I also thought it would be an incredible experience in every respect. And it was. ■



MICHAŁ BIELAWSKI – director, scriptwriter, author of creative documentaries, producer. A graduate of the Inter-Faculty Humanities Studies at the University of Warsaw. A longtime collaborator of TVP Kultura and the Planete Doc Review festival. Co-author of the television format *Jeden scena* nominated for the awards of the Polish Film Institute and Grand Press. Filmography: *The Wind. A Documentary Thriller* (2019, Poland/Slovakia, doc., 74') *Fans* (2016, TV doc. series, 8x45') *In the Blink of an Eye* (2015, Poland, doc., 65') *1989* (2014, Poland, doc., 60') *The Team* (2014, Poland, doc., 70') *Mundial. The Highest Stakes* (2013, Poland, doc., 96')



Scars by Agnieszka Zwiefka

POLISH DOCS-IN-PROGRESS

The interest in Polish documentary cinema has certainly not waned, and the international film industry has an opportunity to follow the actions of Polish filmmakers long before the premiere screenings of their productions, since many of them are presented at the most important pitching presentations and co-production markets around the world even when they are at the production stage.

Most of them can be seen every year at the presentations ending Doc Lab Poland, like the Docs to Start and Docs to Go in the frames of KFF Industry at the Krakow Film Festival, since this programme aims at supporting the development of Polish projects at different stages of production. Films that have been consulted at Doc Lab Poland and shown in Krakow to international sales agents, distributors and festival programmers, are often successful worldwide, like Anna Zamecka's *Communion*, *21x New York* by Piotr Stasik, *Over the Limit* by Marta Prus or the latest premieres: *Lessons of Love* by Małgorzata Goliszewska and Katarzyna Mateja, Paweł Chorzępa's *Sonny*, *The Wind. A Documentary Thriller* by Michał Bielawski and *In Touch* by Paweł Ziemilski.

SCARS BY AGNIESZKA ZWIEFKA

At the beginning of the new year, you can expect a long-awaited premiere of Agnieszka Zwiefka's *Scars*. It is a story about a Tamil Tiger fighter who fought for the independence of Sri Lanka for 18 years. Now, after being released from prison, she wants to find her terrorist companions who have become her family, in order to tell the world the true, uncomfortable story of her country. 'The idea came to me during my holidays in Sri Lanka,' the director recalls. 'One of the local residents told me that hundreds of people had been killed just a few years ago on the paradise beach, where I was just sunbathing with a colorful drink. I realized that there is a real hell underneath the surface of the paradise that we associate Ceylon with, so I interrupted my vacation and started a film journey that has lasted almost four years so far.'

THE WALL OF SHADOWS BY ELIZA KUBARSKA

Eliza Kubarska will also take us to Asia. Her film *The Wall of Shadows* is a portrait of the sherpas living at the foot of the Himalayas, who help climbers during their dangerous struggle to the top. The director assures us: 'This story combines interesting issues, like the price of passion, man in nature, the clash of cultures from distant worlds. The film will tell a story of two men: a Polish mountaineer and a Nepalese carrier, each of whom is a father of a large family. I want to create a multifaceted story about the most important things in life.'



In Volte by Monika Kotecka and Karolina Poryzata

WHAT WE WILL SEE **NEXT YEAR?**



No Elephant in the Room by Clara Kleininger

POLISH PROJECTS PRESENTED AT INTERNATIONAL PITCHINGS, FORUMS AND MARKETS

WHEN EAST MEETS WEST

THE WIND. A DOCUMENTARY THRILLER

BY MICHAŁ BIELAWSKI

EAST DOC FORUM

WIKAI! BY AGNIESZKA ZWIEFKA

US AND THEM BY SANDEEP RAMPAL BALHARA

DOCS IN THESSALONIKI

NO ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM BY CLARA KLEININGER

DOCUMENTARY CAMPUS

ABORTION IS OK BY PAULINA REITER AND

KAROLINA DOMAGALSKA

EBU PITCHING SHEFFIELD

SHADOWBOXING BY MICHAŁ HELWAK

SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC

ESCAPE TO THE SILVER GLOBE BY KUBA MIKURDA

BALTIC SEA DOC

NO ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM BY CLARA KLEININGER

UNPAVED BY MIKAEL LYPINSKI

DOK INCUBATOR

LESSONS OF LOVE BY MAŁGORZATA GOLISZEWSKA

AND KATARZYNA MATEJA

LISBON DOCS

NANGA DREAM PROD. KAROLINA ŚMIGIEL

DOK CO-PRO MARKET

GRACE BY ERI MIZUTANI

TOGETHER BY MAREK KOZAKIEWICZ

THE LAST EXPEDITION BY ELIZA KUBARSKA

IDFA FORUM

WIKAI! BY AGNIESZKA ZWIEFKA

NO ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM BY CLARA KLEININGER

No Elephant in the Room, directed by Clara Kleininger, is a story about an inevitable change and how difficult it is to adapt oneself to it. After the ban on the use of animals in circuses, the trainers working in the popular Romanian Globus have to re-train in order to keep their jobs and not give up their passion.

IN VOLTE BY MONIKA KOTECKA AND KAROLINA PORZYŻAŁA

Monika Kotecka and Karolina Poryżała, the directors of the film *In Volte*, also worked on the history of change, but this time the change is connected with growing up. The film is a continuation and development of their popular film *Volte* – a short documentary about girls who work in vaulting and to whom growing up can be an obstacle for their passion. The protagonists also face a serious challenge – international competition, the preparations for which will determine the careers of some of the team members.

ORDINARY COUNTRY BY TOMASZ WOLSKI

Tomasz Wolski's *Ordinary Country* is a *found footage* project based on materials recorded by Polish security officers who created an unusual portrait of communist Poland between 1960-1980's. 'I visited the Institute of National Remembrance archive three years ago, after I read the news that Lech Wałęsa had been a collaborator,' says Wolski. 'I was interested in this faith in documents and, at the same time, I asked myself: how did the officers of the security service see the world, how did they portray it, and above all, whether it is possible to tell a story about the present day through the events that took place 30-40 years ago.'

ESCAPE TO THE SILVER GLOBE BY KUBA MIKURDA

Another film based on archive footage also promises to be very interesting. *Escape to the Silver Globe* by Kuba Mikurda tells the story about Andrzej Żuławski's unfinished film *On the Silver Globe*, which was announced as a masterpiece of sci-fi genre in the 1980's, one comparable with Kubrick or Tarkowski. Investigating why Żuławski's film was inconvenient for the authorities at the time is also a pretext for Mikurda to tell a story about difficult times for artists, such as the communist regime. ■



Ordinary Country by Tomasz Wolski



Escape to the Silver Globe by Kuba Mikurda



The Musicians by Kazimierz Karabasz (1960) © WFDiF Source: FINA

BY JERZY ARMATA

(ALMOST) EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN POLISH DOCUMENTARY CINEMA

Chełmska 21

This is where Poland's greatest filmmakers, including Andrzej Munk, Kazimierz Karabasz, Władysław Ślesicki, Irena Kamieńska, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Marcel Łoziński and many others, shot their films, making Polish documentaries known and appreciated far beyond the country's borders. One of the most important addresses of Polish cinema – 21 Chełmska Street in Warsaw.

Documentary Film Studios was established at this address on December 29, 1949 – and has been in operation ever since, i.e. for almost 70 years (it was rebranded as to WFDiF – ‘Documentary and Feature Film Studios’ in 1989, although feature films have been shot there since 1960). The history of this Warsaw-based institution encapsulates almost everything that really matters in Polish documentary cinema.

It was here that the renowned ‘black series’ was born (among others, Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski’s *Look out, Hooligans!*, 1955; Kazimierz Karabasz and Władysław Ślesicki’s *Where the Devil Says Goodnight*, 1956), which paved the way for the ‘black trend’ in Polish feature film – with *Noose* (1957) by Wojciech Jerzy Has at the forefront.



Family of Man by Władysław Ślesicki (1970) © WFDiF Source: FINA

Here, the best documentaries by Kazimierz Karabasz – *The Musicians* (1960), *The Year of Frank W.* (1967), *The Saturday* (1967) – were created, based on long-term observation and with creative elements reduced to a minimum, as well as documentaries shot by the followers of his method, including Krystyna Gryczelowska and Władysław Ślesicki. Beautiful stories about ordinary people, their everyday joys and worries, the passage of time. This is also where the ‘angry young men’ made their films – Krzysztof Kieślowski (*Factory*, 1970), Tomasz Zygałto (*Primary School*, 1971), Grzegorz Królikiewicz (*Don’t Cry*, 1972), who articulated their rebellion at the Krakow Film Festival in 1971. «We will rip your throats out» – shouted Grzegorz Królikiewicz, purple with rage, waving his finger at the current rector of the film school. «You are the ones who teach



First Love by Krzysztof Kieślowski (1974) © WFDiF Source: FINA

us conformism» – Krzysztof Kieślowski and other young documentary filmmakers echoed him, bashing their teachers and older colleagues’ – reports a witness to those events. In turn, their documentaries heralded ‘the cinema of moral unrest’, an extremely important trend in Polish feature film, which led to such significant titles as Krzysztof Kieślowski’s *Camera Buff* (1979), Agnieszka Holland’s *Provincial Actors* (1978), and Feliks Falk’s *Top Dog* (1977).

This place also saw important Polish documentaries such as: Andrzej Chodakowski and Andrzej Zajączkowski’s legendary *Workers ‘80* (1980), shot in the Gdańsk Shipyard during the fateful August strike, Marcel Łoziński’s *Katyń Forest* (1990) inspired by Andrzej Wajda, or the classic documentaries by Krzysztof Kieślowski – *From a Night Porter’s Point of View* (1977), *Seven Women of Different Ages* (1978), and *Talking Heads* (1980). Finally, it was here that for half a century (until the end of 1994), the black and white Polish Film Chronicle was

It was here that the renowned ‘black series’ was born, which paved the way for the ‘black trend’ in Polish feature film.

produced, with special episodes shot in colour to record the construction of the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw (1952), the reconstruction of the Old Town (1953), Poland’s Millennium Parade (1966), or the flight into space by the first Pole – Mirosław Hermaszewski (1978).

I’d like to return to my previous statement: in the 70-year history of the Warsaw-based studio, one can find almost everything that really matters in Polish documentary cinema. Almost – because equally interesting documentaries were made in the Educational Film Studio in Łódź, which was established just three days later (January 1, 1950). It is enough to mention the extremely original documentaries, which searched for new means of expression, by Wojciech Wiszniewski, Bogdan Dziworski, Piotr Szulkin, or Jacek Bławut.

If we were to reach for the famous division of artists formulated by André Bazin – the famous French film critic and theoretician and the spiritual father of new wave – into creators who ‘put their faith in reality’ and those who ‘put their faith in the image’, the documentary filmmakers gathered at 21 Chełmska

Beautiful stories about ordinary people, their everyday joys and worries, the passage of time.

THE GOLDEN 10

THE MUSICIANS BY KAZIMIERZ KARABASZ • 1960

THE FAMILY OF MAN BY WŁADYSŁAW ŚLESICKI • 1966

CORK-SCREW BY MAREK PIWOWSKI • 1971

PRIMARY SCHOOL BY TOMASZ ZYGADŁO • 1971

DON'T CRY BY GRZEGORZ KRÓLIKIEWICZ • 1972

A CARPENTER BY WOJCIECH WISZNIEWSKI • 1976

SEVEN WOMEN OF DIFFERENT AGES

BY KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI • 1978

FEMALE WORKERS BY IRENA KAMIEŃSKA • 1980

CHILDREN'S DAY BY PAWEŁ KĘDZIERSKI • 1981

PRACTICE EXERCISES BY MARCEL ŁOZIŃSKI • 1986

Street in Warsaw (the Documentary Film Studios) would be closer to reality, and those from 210 Kilińskiego Street in Łódź (WFO – the Educational Film Studio) – closer to the image (thanks to Wiszniewski's unconventional films, the term 'creative documentary' was born – although contradictory in terms of semantics, it reflects their nature well). On the other hand, filmmakers often changed sides. For example, Wiszniewski, closely tied to the Educational Film Studio, made one of his best films – *A Carpenter* (1976) – at the Documentary Film Studios. The output of the Warsaw-based studio also includes achievements in feature film. After all, the adjective 'feature' was officially added to its name thirty years ago. It was here that not only the masters of documentaries but also feature films made their films, including Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Zanussi, Jerzy Hoffman, Wojciech Smarzowski, or Krzysztof Kieślowski, Marek Koterski – who felt at home in both documentary and feature films.

The Warsaw Documentary and Feature Film Studios values and nurtures its history but, above all, it lives in the present, working for the 'future'. Just look at www.wfdif.pl to see what a broad and attractive offer can be found at 21 Chełmska Street. ■



Happy End by Marcel Łoziński (1973) © WFDIF Source: FINA



The Whale from Lorino by Maciej Cuske

BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE...

Lessons in Closeness



WHAT POLISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

Complicated family relationships, important life decisions, longing for loved ones or struggling with untamed nature – Polish documentary filmmakers aren't afraid to tackle difficult topics and often talk about them in far from obvious ways. This autumn, several unusual Polish films will be screened at the world's largest documentary festivals, such as Doclisboa, DOK Leipzig or IDFA.

The family in a wide range of sense is a frequent topic in Polish cinema. Young filmmakers are also eager to work on this subject. The three debuts, which will be presented to an international audience for the first time this autumn, touch upon themes of mutual dependence, a sense of loss or a lack of closeness.

This year's Doclisboa competition will feature a short documentary **WE'LL BE HAPPY ONE DAY** by Krzysztof Woźnański, a student of the Warsaw Film School. It is an extremely intimate portrait of a family dealing with the situation of a dying mother. It was filmed in an amateur way, from the shadows, and shows the unusual situation of adolescent children – the director and his sisters – caring for their terminally ill mother and trying to cope with the incomprehensible behavior of their father. The form of the film reflects an emotional situation that takes place almost in front of the viewer – we see a dedicated and loving scene of children taking care of their mother, we hear personal, difficult conversations on important issues, we follow a complicated and incomprehensible situation that unexpectedly stroke the children just after the death of the person closest to them.

Paweł Chorzępa's **SONNY**, which will be shown for the first time in the IDFA Mid-length competition, also talks about difficult family relations. Chorzępa, previously known mainly as a cinematographer of numerous documentary films (e.g. *A Piece of Summer* and *Zud* by Marta Minorowicz, or Agnieszka Elbanowska's *Polonaise*), makes his directorial debut this time. The title character is a teenager, raised in a family of alcoholics, who was put in an orphanage after his mother's death and now returns to his father and try to repair their relationship. The director encourages the viewer to observe this attempt in an extremely warm and empathetic way. He makes us cheer on both characters, but only one of them can win. Whatever decision the protagonist makes, whether he follows his dreams or adapts his dreams to the current situation, the viewer has a sense of fulfillment and closure, but with hope for a positive future.

WHERE TO WATCH NEW POLISH DOCS

AND WE'LL BE HAPPY AGAIN BY KRZYSZTOF WOLŻAŃSKI
DOCLISBOA PORTUGAL • INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

IN TOUCH BY PAWEŁ ZIEMIŃSKI
DOK LEIPZIG GERMANY

THE WIND. A DOCUMENTARY THRILLER
BY MICHAŁ BIELAWSKI
DOK LEIPZIG GERMANY DOCSMX MEXICO DOC NYC USA

THE TOUGH BY MARCIN POLAR
IDFA THE NETHERLANDS KASSELER DOKFEST GERMANY
BOGOSHORTS COLOMBIA

THE WHALE FROM LORINO BY MACIEJ CUSKE
IDFA THE NETHERLANDS • WORLD PREMIERE

OUR LITTLE POLAND BY MATEJ BOBRIK
WARSAW FF POLAND • WORLD PREMIERE

LESSONS OF LOVE
BY MAŁGORZATA GOLISZEWSKA AND KATARZYNA MATEJA
IDFA THE NETHERLANDS • WORLD PREMIERE

SONNY BY PAWEŁ CHORZĘPA
IDFA THE NETHERLANDS • WORLD PREMIERE

Also at IDFA, in the First Appearance competition, a feature-length documentary **LESSONS OF LOVE** by Małgorzata Golińska and Katarzyna Mateja will have its world premiere. It has already been popular at the project stage and awarded at many pitching shows around the world. The film by debutting directors tells a story of Jola, an elderly lady whose appearance, elegance, smile and self-confidence at first glance do not reveal the great drama she is going through in her life, what enormous dilemmas she is dealing with, how fragile and delicate she is inside. Throughout the film, the protagonist tries to understand what has happened to her and what is happening to her now. Guided by both reason and her heart, she tries to solve the situation in harmony with her beliefs and conscience. The finale of the film will show whether Jola has passed the love lesson exam.

The problems in relationships are not the only subject of interest for directors, but also feelings evoked by distance. Longing for loved ones is shown in the award-winning Paweł Ziemilski's film **IN TOUCH**, screened at DOK Leipzig, while nostalgia for a country one has fallen in love with without knowing it is the theme of Matej Bobrik's full-length debut **OUR LITTLE POLAND**, presented at the Warsaw Film Festival. Ziemilski's film shows how to deal with loneliness and longing in a visually sublime way, while Bobrik's film in a characteristic, humorous style tells how to feel like a citizen and love a country that is a few thousand kilometers away, and which you have never visited.



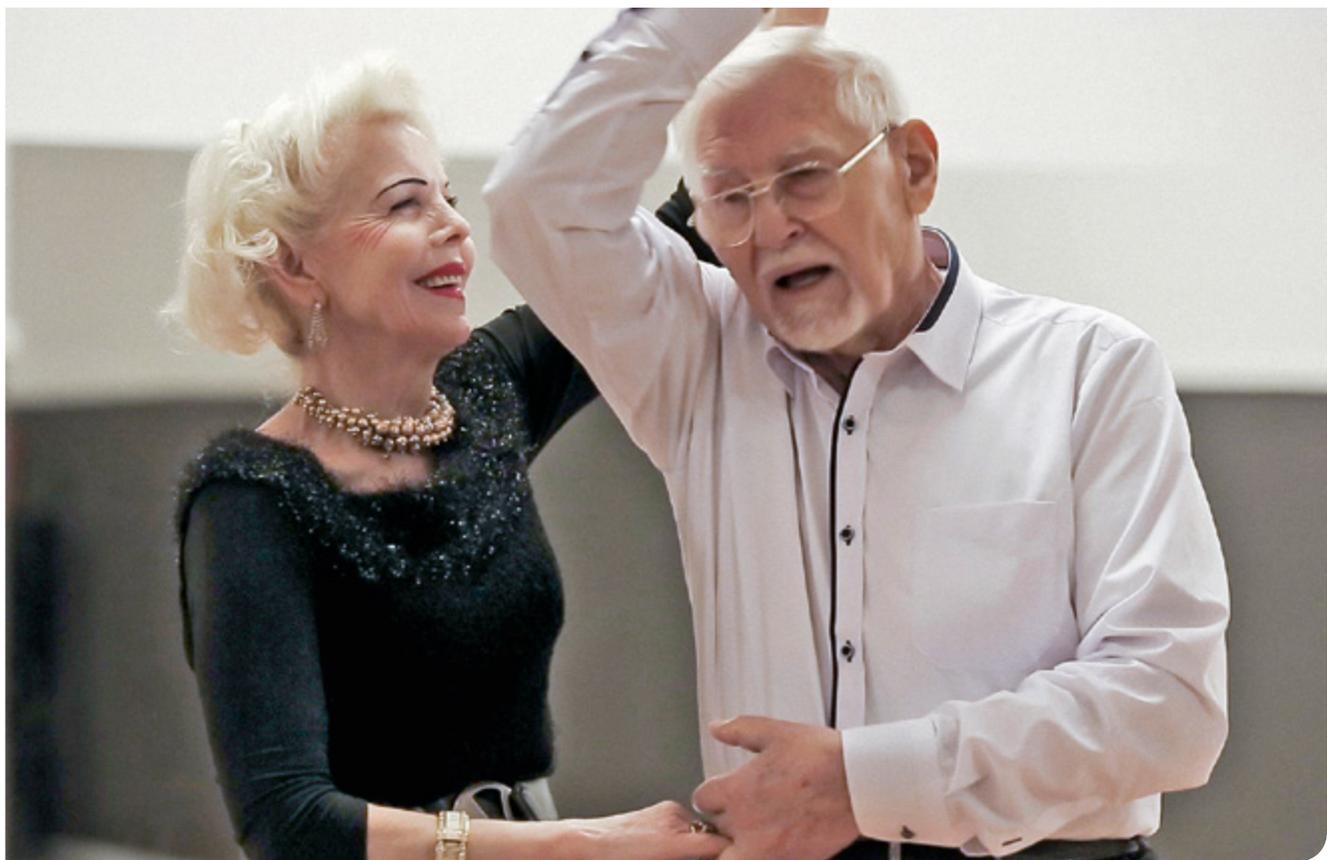
Sonny by Paweł Chorzępa

The unusual relationships between man and nature also fascinate the filmmakers. During DOK Leipzig, DocsMx and DOC NYC you will be able to see **THE WIND. A DOCUMENTARY THRILLER**, which had its world premiere during the Visions du Réel. Michał Bielawski documents the life of the inhabitants of the Tatra Mountains, who are strongly dependent on the destructive element of the *halny* wind that blows there several times a year and destructively affects not only everyday life, but also the psyche of the characters. The protagonist of **THE TOUGH** by Marcin Polar's short documentary is also struggling with the untamed element of nature. A pot-holer, who, despite the forces of nature, tries to tame and explore a newly discovered mountain cave, struggles with the adversities posed by the resistant matter of nature, but also with his own weaknesses, which he manages to overcome with extraordinary efficiency, arousing fear, admiration and fascination in viewers at the same time. Polar's film that had its premiere at Sundance, was also presented at film festivals all over the world, so it was not without reason that it went to the prestigious IDFA Best of Fests section that presents the best films of the year. In the IDFA Mid-length competition, you will see **THE WHALE FROM LORINO** by Maciej Cuske, who also works on the subject of interacting with the forces of nature and living in accordance with the rhythm of nature. Cuske takes us to one of the most remote isolated corners of the world, to Chukotka, located at the very end

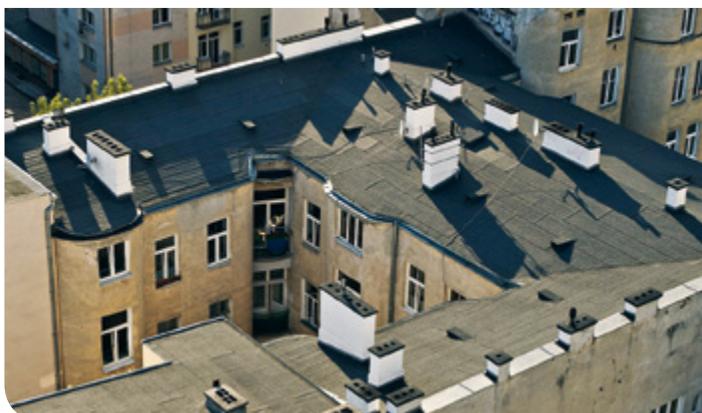


The Tough by Marcin Polar

of Siberia, where he observes the life of a small town in a very classic, patient, documentary way. The inhabitants have their fixed rhythm of living – they learn, work, play, get married, die. Yet their whole lives are organized around certain rituals connected with whaling, which gives them a chance to survive in the difficult and tough conditions of those regions. ■



Lessons of Love by Małgorzata Golliszewska and Katarzyna Mateja



Złota Street Złota

DIR.: TOMASZ KNITTEL • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2019 • 84'

Polish documentary filmmakers have recently been accused of ignoring the socio-political reality – but this simply isn't true. Instead of showing the country's internal tensions and disputes, Tomasz Knittel's documentary prefers to ask questions. What does it mean to be Polish today? Why doesn't everyone feel at home here? How does the current political situation affect these moods?

A pre-war tenement house in the centre of Warsaw, where the lives of several characters intersect, is the lens that brings these problems into focus. The director creates an extensive panorama of individual stories, but the camera focuses primarily on Krzysztof – a thirty-something whose family has recently regained the property, which had been nationalized just after the war. He himself regained something more: his Jewish identity. However, it turns out that in an increasingly nationalistic and xenophobic country, it may prove to be a sizeable burden. At the same time, newcomers from other countries or cultures are increasingly becoming neighbours to Poles and, as the film shows, they do not feel bad here at all. Thus, *Złota Street* presents a somewhat paradoxical situation where birthplace does not guarantee a sense of security or belonging to a community.

Knittel manages to capture the anxieties and doubts that accompany many young people who fall outside the current definition of 'a real Pole'. He also touches upon the past, which still hasn't been completely worked through in the collective consciousness (Krzysztof's tenement house is adjacent to the wall of the former ghetto). The main character's adaptation problems or the story of his difficult relationship with Ida become the basis for a much broader story – about politics that break into people's lives and destroy their peace, and about the gentrification of modern cities. The director's epic approach to these issues is truly impressive.

ANITA PIOTROWSKA

The Wind. A Documentary Thriller

Wiatr. Thriller dokumentalny

DIR.: MICHAŁ BIELAWSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND, SLOVAKIA • 2019 • 75'

Spectacular weather events have always fascinated filmmakers, becoming the inspiration for horror or disaster films. In documentary films, their presence was limited mainly to nature films or presenting natural disasters as a social problem. And what if a documentary story about a local natural phenomenon was combined with a popular genre? That's what Michał Bielawski has done, making the wind called *halny* – characteristic mainly of Podhale, a mountainous region in southern Poland – the main focus of his film.

Legends have always been circulating around the *halny*, attributing almost demonic properties to it. Although the increase in suicide attempts or decreased well-being at times when this turbulent wind is occurring are a fact and find rational justification, the filmmakers are more interested in the quasi-magical impact on the behaviour of humans and animals. The cinematography, editing, and music work together to bring out the tension and horror, while the characters, having different backgrounds and belonging to different generations, act as if they were dealing with something more than just a devastating element. Shepherds, rescuers, and a local poet are helpless against its mystery. Also, in the case of the filmmakers whose work often took place in very dangerous conditions, minute by minute the fascination with the *halny* gives way to humility in the face of a natural phenomenon. Thanks to this, Bielawski's documentary makes Podhale, known primarily as a tourist attraction, with its ski lifts and highland folklore, reveal a completely different and much darker face. It's a film that cures arrogance, reminding us of man's place in the face of uncompromising forces of nature.

ANITA PIOTROWSKA



The Antarctic Syndrome

Syndrom zimowników

DIR.: PIOTR JAWORSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2019 • 73'

Some experiments in the field of stress psychology can cause a lot of controversy today. Mainly, when there was serious abuse of the subjects during when conducting them. However, not always and not everywhere have they raised doubts of ethical nature. During the Cold War, and especially during the era of first space flights, testing and stimulating human behaviour in extreme conditions could be done without any particular restrictions. For example, in communist Poland in the 1970s, when the national research station in Antarctica became an experimental laboratory, in which the scientists and technical workers working there became the 'rabbits'.

Piotr Jaworski's documentary reconstructs these experiments on several narrative levels. Professor Jan F. Terelak, the brain behind the entire project, and its participants, appear in front of the camera, reminiscing about their stay at the base as well as the rules and customs prevailing at the time. Many of these are spicy anecdotes, as long-term isolation, overwhelming emptiness, and extreme temperatures resulted in a variety of unconventional reactions. Their memories are accompanied by rich archival shots from King George Island, while puppet animations add an extra metaphorical layer to the story.

The Antarctic Syndrome is also a modern reflection on the humanitarian limits that science should observe, even when serving purposes benefiting all of mankind. The situation of the overwinterers, manipulated and cut off from the outside world, strikes a chord with the Polish reality of the time – that of a totalitarian state and an economy of shortages. Social engineering may, as can be seen, have very different faces.

ANITA PIOTROWSKA



Letters to A. Listy do Artura

DIR.: WIKTORIA SZYMAŃSKA • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2019 • 56'

People experiencing homelessness often appear in the lens' of Polish documentary filmmakers. Rarely, however, does a creator manage to build such a unique relationship with their protagonist. And it's rare to meet someone like Artur on the street. Perhaps you just have to look more closely?

The director, Wiktoria Szymańska, calls him 'The Little Prince', because a delicate, smiling boy wandering around today's Warsaw looks like he came from another planet. At first, we know little about him, and we can't really know the truth about Artur – how he found himself on the street and what happened to him before. What we learn, though, is sad enough. The camera accompanies him during his wanderings around the city, meeting other homeless people and spending nights on stairwells and visits to social care institutions. We can almost feel the overwhelming cold, which is a daily experience of a person without a roof over their head. Artur's reflections on happiness, human nature and life in the urban jungle serve as a commentary, and so do the director's letters to the hero, which will probably never reach him.

Despite being in a difficult situation, Artur is able to maintain a sense of humour and even a large dose of self-irony. However, the image of contemporary Warsaw as a ruthless, inhospitable behemoth adds a bitter message to this tale: this isn't a world for sensitive people. It's good that a documentary can sometimes stand up for them, although Szymańska's film also asks difficult questions about the filmmaker's responsibility towards their protagonist.

ANITA PIOTROWSKA



In Touch

DIR.: PAWEŁ ZIEMIŃSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND, ICELAND • 2018 • 60'

It is said that today's technology only seemingly brings people together. The film's creator, Paweł Ziemilski, decided to prove that the internet and all of the related inventions can be more than a tool for quick, superficial contact. And he did it. He got help from the residents of the village of Stare Juchy in north-eastern Poland. As many as a third of them emigrated to work in Iceland, with some having been there for 20 years. How to make a family Skype call feel even more intimate? The film records an interesting experiment. With 2,500 kilometres between them, the interlocutors are filmed in their ordinary surroundings, and the family watches these moving images displayed on various objects. Buildings' walls and house interiors, gyms, playgrounds, trains, and marinas become large cinema screens. A family meal at a Polish table coincides with an Icelandic meal, bedrooms meet, the silhouettes of close, though physically distant people overlap. Can such virtual touch replace real closeness? Of course not. That's why all the intimate conversations between long-unseen relatives sound so touching. About illnesses, about friends, about everyday events. And about a kind of longing that no film projection can fully cure.

Ziemilski found an original way to describe the painful experience of today's emigration. It turns out that modern tools make the world shrink even more, but significant differences in the standard of living have remained, and the need to really be together did not disappear. While telling this story, the filmmaker not only triggers strong emotions in the audience, but also achieves an intriguing visual effect.

ANITA PIOTROWSKA

Shadows of the Empire

Cienie imperium

DIR.: KAROL STARNAWSKI • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2019 • 73'

Although almost 30 years have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's imperial ambitions are still evident. They were most strongly experienced by the residents of Ukraine, Georgia or Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan, where the Kremlin granted itself the role of a peacekeeper in a territorial dispute. Karol Starnawski's documentary looks at this geopolitical strife from the perspective of individual heroes and their family dramas. As a result of wars and forced migration, Alexei, Timur, Alexander, and their loved ones, have been forced to live a life of misery that seems to have no end.

Such is the film's intimate point of view, allowing us to touch the life of the protagonists in its usual and unusual dimension. We witness brief returns to their hometowns and emotional reunions, more relocations and decisions to go to the frontline, memories of what the war has taken, and timid plans for the future. All three plot lines have a single common denominator: the desire for stability, which – for the time being – has to remain only a dream in these areas of the former empire.

One of the co-writers of the film is reporter Tomasz Grzywaczewski, who wrote a book about post-Soviet unrecognised states. In it, he gave voice to ordinary people who had the misfortune to be born in Russian influence zone. In Starnawski's documentary, the opening shot with Stalin's statue and a quote from the French Sovietologist Alain Besançon, become not only a grim diagnosis of the recent past but also a warning for the future.

ANITA PIOTROWSKA

POLISH DOCS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

2019



The Tough

DIR.: **MARCIN POLAR** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 14' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, LELE CROSMEDIA PRODUCTION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The Tough carries a lot of meanings: defiant, vicious, resistant, relentless, strong, resilient, cold, hard. The film's protagonist had a good reason to choose this name for his discovery – a place he has to face where he tangibly learns about all those characteristics, and also literally the hard way. It stirs his imagination while abruptly and obsessively pushing him forward. The camera follows him, step by step, taking part in the exploration of spaces never seen before, which increasingly resist the delicate human matter.



19.91

DIR.: **EMILIA ŚNIEGOSKA** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 24' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

19.91 is a quiet and modest story of a meeting between 19 year old Jette from Germany and a 91 year old Pole – Mrs. Zofia. During Jette's one year annual voluntary service in Warsaw, she regularly visits Mrs. Zofia, who spent her teenage years in concentration camps in Auschwitz and Ravensbrück.



Fat Kathy

DIR.: **JULIA PEŁKA** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 14' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

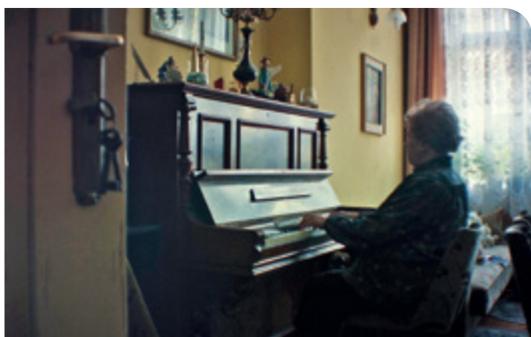
There are 8 clams in the city water pump. The lives of millions of people depend on them. In case of the contamination of water supply, the clams will close and automatically shut off the water to the city. The main scientist-malacologist watches over the system's operation. The film is a philosophical essay on the dependence of people on nature and the world around them.



Breathe

DIR.: **DARIA KASPEREK** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 25' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

In one of the districts of Łódź, where almost seventy-one thousand people live, a small thorn house was built between the concrete buildings. This small, wooden structure becomes a place to observe the wonders of everyday interactions. The taste of the sun, salt and concrete fills the conversations. There is space to breathe.



We Will Talk Again

DIR.: **MATEUSZ BUŁAWA** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 21' • PROD.: WAJDA SCHOOL&STUDIO, APOFI • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Two brothers on the cusp of adulthood are still under the custody of their mother, strongly supported by their grandmother. In a cluttered flat, they fight for even the smallest scrap of autonomy, each of them applying different tactics to maneuver in this difficult territory. The family portrait is incomplete – the absence of their father becomes synonymous with the dial tone of the telephone.



Under the Sky

DIR.: **MARTA SKIBA** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 13' • PROD.: WAJDA SCHOOL&STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

An old man in a twilight of his life longs for his greatest passion – flying. He does not remember people or events from the past anymore, but his feelings remain the same when he looks up at the sky. A former ace, now all that he has left are memories.



Weirdy

DIR.: **PAWEŁ DYLLUS** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 29' • PROD.: DYLLUS FILM • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Paweł Dyllus, a cinematographer collaborating with the eminent documentarist Bogdan Dziworski, portrays his director. The Polish documentary master returns behind the camera to direct *Plus Minus or Fly Trips to the East*. During the shooting breaks, he devotes himself to his greatest passion – photography.



Fuck, It's Biology

DIR.: **VERONICA ANDERSSON** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 29' • PROD.: WARSAW FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Mariusz Tarkawian has had 120 art exhibitions all over the world and yet his parents have not been to any. His girlfriend tries to make her first documentary and hopefully bring the family closer together. *Fuck, It's Biology* is an intimate portrait of a famous Polish contemporary artist seen through the lens of his Swedish and not so famous filmmaker girlfriend.



My Country So Beautiful

DIR.: **GRZEGORZ PAPRZYCKI** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 19' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLOWSKI FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: DAGMARA MAGIERA, DAGMARA.MAGIERA@US.EDU.PL

The ironic title of the documentary refers to the exacerbation of radical sentiments in Poland in the last few years. According to the information at the beginning, it is a 'non-chronological documentation of selected social events'. The director juxtaposes rallies, demonstrations and street riots as well as speeches at antifascist organizations.



The End of the Season

DIR.: **STANISŁAW CUSKE** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 19' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, BKF NEWSREEL • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

An old married couple sails out on a cruise on the lakes where they have spent their whole married life. The enclosed space of the yacht brings about reflections on the future as well on what has passed. In the evenings old melodies resound.



Eye of God

DIR.: **IGOR KAWECKI** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 17' • PROD.: ANIMATION STUDIO – JAN MATEJKO ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW • CONTACT: ROBERT SOWA, ANIMATIONSTUDIO@ASP.KRAKOW.PL

Olaf is 25 years old and lives with his mom and grandmother in a tenement house in the Kazimierz district in Krakow. Their home is actually quite dilapidated yet the young man dreams that the house in Brzozowa Street is the center of the universe. The unique narrative is enhanced by a surreal impression of living in an abandoned house. Olaf notices the metaphysical consequences of living in the vicinity of a square shaped like the 'eye of god': 'There are moments when my mind transcends time and space', he says.



Shooting Stars

DIR.: **MAGDALENA JAROSZEWICZ** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 16' • PROD.: MATATA STUDIO • CONTACT: MAGDAJAROSZEWICZ@POSTEO.NET

The viewer is an observer of one night on one street. He sees only what he can imagine, and he hears what he wants to hear. The distant eye is getting closer and makes the images sharper but the interpretation stays inside the observer's head. What one makes out of that night is their own story. One can discuss the content according to their own experiences, conscious of how their point of view shifts due to media manipulation and external factors. The starting point is an image provided by the observing eye. The eye is a guide. The viewer gives the night meaning.



Sonny

DIR.: **PAWEŁ CHORZEPA** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 41' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, BEES FILM HOUSE • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

This film is a very subtly told story about a difficult love between father and son, as well as the image of a constant struggle for freedom. Marcin, the main character, has been deeply hurt by his parents. He was born with FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) and at the age of twelve, because of his parents' addiction to alcohol, he was taken away from them and spent his childhood in an orphanage. Despite many bad experiences, after reaching adulthood, he decided to return to his father and try to fix their relationship.



Family²

DIR.: **YIFAN SUN** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 25' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Lola was adopted into a Belgian family eleven years ago when she was an infant. Over the years, she has been imagining the reunion with her birth family in China. This summer, her dream finally comes true. When Lola's two families finally meet for the first time, how will they spend the time together? What will Lola's birth parents tell her?



The Vibrant Village

DIR.: **WERONIKA JURKIEWICZ** • 2019 • POLAND, HUNGARY • DOCUMENTARY • 7' •
 PROD.: WERONIKA JURKIEWICZ, UNIVERSITY OF THEATRE AND FILM ARTS IN BUDAPEST
 • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

In a quiet Hungarian village, men gather to swill beer at the bar. Meanwhile, the women are busy at work, contributing their time to the mass production of sexual satisfaction.



Halo Effect

DIR.: **PATRYCJA POLAKOWSKA** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 14' • PROD.: POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The main characters of this film are residents of the Studzieniec youth detention centre. It is an open facility, resembling a compulsory summer camp rather than a high-security prison. In places like this, the residents are not given sentences in years. They cannot leave until the day of their 21st birthday. They stay in touch with the outer world mainly by use of a landline phone in the supervisor's room.



A Short Story

DIR.: **MICHAŁ CIECHOMSKI** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 14' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: DAGMARA MAGIERA, DAGMARA.MAGIERA@US.EDU.PL

The film's protagonist operates on the border of two worlds. During the day, he works at a well-known shop selling home furnishings, while after hours he is hired by a 'cleaning company' to clean homes after the deaths of their residents. The title *A Story of Short Duration* is a reference to the diagnosis of contemporary capitalism provided by Kacper Pobłocki in his book. In the film, it acquires an additional meaning by contrasting the image of a life's end with the beginning of one's path related to moving into a new flat.



Shadows of the Empire

DIR.: **KAROL STARNAWSKI** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 73' • PROD.: KADR FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Three separate stories of people variously bruised and uprooted by Russia's never-ending war on small states that are unwilling to comply with its imperial politics, *Shadows of the Empire* is ultimately a story of hope in the face of the cruelty of history.



The Wind. A Documentary Thriller

DIR.: **MICHAŁ BIELAWSKI** • 2019 • POLAND, SLOVAKIA • DOCUMENTARY • 73' • PROD.: TELEMAR, PÉTER KERÉKES FILM, HBO EUROPE • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

There is a place where emotions burst out several times a year and the life of the local community is changed forever. The halny wind comes in cycles every spring and autumn. One never knows if or when it will turn into a destructive gale. The film is a multi-thread story on the clash between people and the forces of nature, woven into a documentary thriller.



Today, Tomorrow... Yesterday

DIR.: **DIANA KADŁUBOWSKA, KRZYSZTOF KADŁUBOWSKI** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 52' • PROD.: PLUS TV FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

This is the story of a family and difficult relationships set against the background of the Holocaust, of a grandmother, a mother and a granddaughter. Three generations, three women, three different worlds, all connected through the same story. The oldest of the women is trying to understand the fate of her family, the middle one is avoiding any direct confrontation with the topic of the Holocaust and the youngest one is looking for a Jewish identity in an Orthodox community.



Letters to A.

DIR.: **WIKTORIA SZYMAŃSKA** • 2019 • POLAND, UK, SWITZERLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 60' • PROD.: LUNA W., CATPICS AG • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

The modern alien, whom everyone calls an idiot, lives on the outskirts of reality. He wanders around the jungle city, struggling for his humanity, which every day is taken away from him. The world around is incapable of embracing his wisdom. And Artur deludes himself with the beauty of life, finding happiness all around him. Just like a little prince lost in the streets of Warsaw. Can his story have a happy ending?



Złota Street

DIR.: **TOMASZ KNITTEL** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 84' • PROD.: STRIKTFILM, OMPRODUCTIONS • CONTACT: KATARZYNA WILK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), KATARZYNA.WILK@KFF.COM.PL

Krzysztof and Ida inhabit and administrate an old tenement house in Złota Street, in the heart of Warsaw, which Krzysztof inherited from his Jewish ancestors. The property has been restored to the descendants of its lawful owners during the reprivatization process. Their story intermingles with the stories of their multicultural neighbors, a 94-year-old retired accountant, an Afghani man and his Ukrainian wife or a refugee from Syria. *Złota Street* is a story about contemporary Poland, about looking for your own place in the world and about painful relationships with loved ones.



The Antarctic Syndrome

DIR.: **PIOTR JAWORSKI** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 73' • PROD.: KALEJDOSKOP FILM, TVP • CONTACT: KAMIL SKAŁKOWSKI, KAMIL@KALEJDOSKOP.ART.PL

Does Dr Jan Terelak belong to an 'elitist' group of the most unethical experimenters? The Polish scientist tested the boundaries of human mental resilience in extreme conditions of solitude in Antarctica. The starting point for Piotr Jaworski's documentary is the psychologist's journal. The project from forty years ago was focused on studying the mental condition of polar explorers at the Polish station. Men were in a situation of complete confinement, one comparable to a space mission. The film reconstructs these events, referring to the then contemporary context and changes in the perception of science.



Pure Art

DIR.: **MAKSIM SHVED** • 2019 • POLAND, BELARUS • DOCUMENTARY • 52' • PROD.: SQUARE FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: MAGDALENA BOROWIEC, MAGDA@SQUAREFILMSTUDIO.COM

A film about contemporary Belarus, freedom and art. A mysterious artist appears on the streets of Minsk and starts to paint. Passers-by, intrigued, want to know what he is creating, but the artist will not reveal his secret. Step by step, the viewers learn more about him. His name is Zahar Cudin and he is one of the most promising Belorussian painters.



And We'll Be Happy Again

DIR.: KRZYSZTOF WOLŻAŃSKI • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 22' • PROD.: WARSAW FILM SCHOOL
 • CONTACT: JAROSŁAW GRZYMAŁA, JAREKGRZYMALA@SZKOLAFILMOWA.PL

A portrait of family life in the face of the death of the mother. Three growing children, including the film director, have accompanied the ill woman for good or for bad, while in the background there are incidents, incomprehensible at first sight, related to the conflict with the confrontational father. The documentary utilizes means typical for home video and takes shot using a mobile phone, which are arranged into a non-chronological reconstruction of the state of mind of the three young people.



The Last Mountain

DIR.: DARIUSZ ZAŁUSKI • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 83' • PROD.: NATIONAL CENTER FOR CULTURE • CONTACT: RAFAŁ WIŚNIEWSKI, NCK@NCK.PL

In January 2018, the Polish expedition to K2, one of the last eight-thousand meter peaks not to have been summited in winter, began. Veterans of Polish Himalayan mountaineering, including Krzysztof Wielicki, Adam Bielecki or Denis Urubko, took part in it. The film is a recording of an ascent in extreme conditions, long days spent in the base camp and discussions and arguments between climbers. It also shows the spectacular rescue operation that saved the life of Élisabeth Revol, who was stranded near the summit of Nanga Parbat, together with Tomasz Mackiewicz.



Last Swing

DIR.: TOMASZ GARNCAREK • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 67' • PROD.: GANGSTAREK FILMS • CONTACT: TOMASZ GARNCAREK, TOMASZGARNCAREK@TLEN.PL

Witold Sobociński, who died last year, was an unsurpassed master of cinematography, a genius of light and a co-author of many of the works of Andrzej Wajda, Wojciech Jerzy Has or Roman Polański. Rather than a typical biography, the film is the protagonist's portrait made, to a large extent, using film material only. Recollections from film sets are intertwined with the artist's comments recorded not long before his death. While working with young people or surrounded by family members, he shares the secrets of his filmmaking technique with them.



The Polish Missionaries

DIR.: SIMON TARGET • 2019 • AUSTRALIA, POLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 75' • PROD.: HANDHELD FEATURES • CONTACT: BEATA ZATORSKA, SOOZI@HANDHELDFEATURES.COM

They have abandoned safe and comfortable lives to preach the gospel and also provide real help. For a number of years, Sister Davida and Father Jan have been working in Papua New Guinea where poverty, diseases and lack of education hinder the development of the young state. Missionaries from Poland build roads, hospitals and schools there. The weakest of the island's inhabitants are among their charges, such as a girl accused of sorcery or AIDS patients. Although the eponymous protagonists struggle with numerous difficulties and have often experienced dangerous situations, faith and good humor help them to survive the most difficult moments.



Long Day Tomorrow

DIR.: PAWEŁ WYSOCZAŃSKI • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 79' • PROD.: BLACK AND WHITE PRODUCTIONS • CONTACT: PAWEŁ WYSOCZAŃSKI, PAWEŁ.WYSOCZANSKI@GMAIL.COM

In Jeevodaya, there is an educational and therapeutic center for lepers and their families. Helena Pyz came here from Poland thirty years ago to help sick and hungry children. Over the years, she has begun to feel her weakness more and more acutely but the strength of her character does not allow her to surrender to her own illness. A long-lasting documentary observation helps to understand the unique role of the missionary and the doctor. Surrounded by reckless people, Dr Helena seems to be the only person who can see the significance of the center and its selfless nature.



Of Animals and Men

DIR.: **ŁUKASZ CZAJKA** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 56' • PROD.: AUTOGRAF KAROL WOŹBIŃSKI • CONTACT: ANNA WEREDA, ANNAWEREDA@GMAIL.COM

This story was recently told in the feature film *The Zookeeper's Wife* starring Jessica Chastain. Now, we can learn more about its real-life protagonists – Antonina and Jan Żabiński. Before WWII, they ran the Warsaw zoo which gave shelter to many people during the war, mostly Jews. This extraordinary tale of courage and great passion is told using archived materials, staged fragments and testimonies of witnesses and survivors. There is also an underlying story, a slightly surreal take on the common fate of people and animals.



Fateicz and the Sea

DIR.: **ALINA RUDNITSKAYA, SERGEY VINOKUROV** • 2019 • RUSSIA, POLAND, FINLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 76' • PROD.: PROLINE FILM, ARKANA FILM STUDIO, ILLUME OY • CONTACT: DOROTA ROSZKOWSKA, ARKANA@ARKANASTUDIO.PL

The Peter the Great Gulf in the Sea of Japan has no secrets for the film protagonist. Despite his old age, Fateicz runs a seafood farm and delivers dishes made from his produce to the passengers of luxury yachts. He is relentless in his struggle with local poachers who regularly steal from his underwater farms. The film is a portrait of an old sea dog who, apart from his everyday grind, needs to deal with lawlessness and the arrogance of the authorities. Although he has a quick temper, he does not stop delighting in the beauty of nature and, just like Hemingway's heroes, feels the best when at sea.



Searching for Tereska

DIR.: **KAMA VEYMONT** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 65' • PROD.: KRONIKA FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: BARBARA ŁAWSKA, SFKRONIKA@ONET.EU

A story of one photograph. Aneta and Patryk follow in the tracks of a photograph taken in 1948 by David Seymour. The famous portrait of a girl who survived World War II becomes the target of the film characters' investigation. Who is Tereska, what happened to her and how did she become captured by the lens of a documentary photographer? The documentary reveals consecutive layers of the post-war trauma that go far beyond the single story of Tereska. Meeting people who are linked to Aneta and Patryk's investigation in different ways is a value in itself, regardless of its results.



Lessons of Love

DIR.: **MALGORZATA GOLISZEWSKA, KATARZYNA MATEJA** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • 70' • PROD.: WIDOK FILMS, HBO EUROPE, MX35 • CONTACT: ANNA STYLIŃSKA, STYLOWA@GMAIL.COM

Free-spirited Jola, after escaping from a marital nightmare is letting loose with her girlfriends and finds herself thrust into a new romance at a latino dancing class. The drama evolves when the conservative powers of her generation try to justify her abusive husband. A highly cinematic and joyful journey into a woman's battle to reinvent herself in her best age of life, when she is 69.



The Whale from Lorino

DIR.: **MACIEJ CUSKE** • 2019 • DOCUMENTARY • ##' • PROD.: POKROMSKI STUDIO • CONTACT: MIKOŁAJ POKROMSKI, MIKOLAJ@POKROMSKISTUDIO.PL

The Whale from Lorino is a film about the descendants of the oldest of Siberian tribes on the far away land of Chukotka. For them, the yearly hunt for the endangered whale is not only a tradition, but a necessity for surviving winter in a fragile place devastated by Soviet influence. The clash of two disappearing worlds: Chukchis civilisation and the universe of monumental and majestic whales in a story about the paradox of history and a harsh fight for survival.



FAST, LOUD AND

Acid Rain is one of the most popular Polish films of the year. Since its premiere at the festival in Rotterdam, the film has been screened at nearly 50 festivals, including prestigious ones such as Sundance, Palm Springs or Annecy. The film has been awarded 14 times so far, including the Grand Prix of GLAS and Animafest Zagreb festivals. The film was produced by Animoon in co-production with FINA and the support of the Polish Film Institute. We talk to its author, Tomek Popakul, about parties in the forest, nostalgia for the nineties and polyamide tracksuits.

ZOFIA JAROSZUK: When did you start thinking about *Acid Rain*?

TOMEK POPAKUL: My main intention was to do something completely new. I felt that black-and-white, depressive films weren't good for me anymore, so I wanted to do something I would be happy to work at, to choose a topic I like. I listen to electronic music and often go to parties with such music – they turned out to be the new subject of my film.

The natural consequence of this choice was the inspiration connected mostly with the beginning of the rave scene in the world and its special Central-European character. My goal was to show the atmosphere of those years – starting from fashion, through music up to the landscape, presenting the

unique nature of this retro, post-Communist style with its rawness and melancholy. I wanted to reconstruct the atmosphere of that time, which many people called the second summer of love, but this time in polyamide tracksuits, with stimulants, different colors and, above all, with louder and livelier music.

ZJ: Can you tell us more about the documentation work you did while working on the film?

TP: The research was both pleasant and rewarding. To me, the main reference was the notion of 'duchologia' (lit. spiritology) as popularized by Olga Drenda as the aesthetics of something of the past that was experienced as vague memories from childhood in which you actually never participated. Drenda connects this term with the years of transformation, where the

I like genre cinema and I agree that 'Acid Rain' is a road movie, and my aim was also to make it a teenage movie – one of my favorite genres of all. While starting with a certain genre, I like to mess with it in order to break the convention.

remains of communist reality became mixed up with the blindly adopted capitalist system. The beginning of the rave scene and the start of electronic music in Poland coincided precisely with the beginning of freedom and with the moment when Polish people were excited about everything that was new.

I personally remember this time dimly, but it became a strong point of reference for the film. While preparing myself for the film I conducted a series of interviews with my friends who remember the atmosphere of those years very well. However, the film is achronological and doesn't take place in one specific moment – these are rather my ideas and visions of the nineties.

ZJ: *Acid Rain* is one of the first color films after black and white and monochromatic *Ziegenort* and *Black*.

How did you work on the color concept of the film and how did you achieve the retro effect in the picture?

TP: Having control over colors was both a big problem and a challenge to me. Limiting the color range was a crucial issue. While working on this aspect, I watched old printing techniques, including Japanese art of woodcut, in which the technique imposes great restrictions on the artist, since every layer of the color is a separate copy. This restriction gives a very

exceptional aesthetic effect that allows to avoid the color chaos. From the very beginning, I wanted *Acid Rain* to be strongly stylized. To achieve it, I used the colors of fluorescent paintings and gadgets characteristic for psytrance, combining them with shades of grey that reflect the shades of Eastern Europe with its messiness, rust and negligence. I connected those two palettes and this way I achieved the target colors of the film.

Additionally, I cared about the effects of blurring and granularity while stylizing the picture. There is practically no blackness in the film because I consistently applied the effect of fading which can be compared to colors diluted with time.

ZJ: You make films, using a very original technique that connects the possibilities of 3D technology with 2D animation. It is a very time-consuming technique. What does this tool give you in terms of art?

TP: In the technique I use, the possibility of working with a camera is important and this is exactly what 3D technology gives me. I talk with a camera a lot – I do matestershots and very film-like shots, which are difficult to achieve in 2D animation due to the difficulty of some foreshortenings and captures that are terribly difficult to draw.

FULL OF COLORS



The second and definitely more complicated stage of the work is to make a 3D material look similar to animation. Personally, I enjoy this stage the most. When it comes to visual arts, the most interesting reference for me is book illustration with flat colors, strong contours and the synthesis of shapes, so in my films I always try to achieve a similar effect.

ZJ: Let's talk about the script for a while. The story you tell in *Acid Rain* is very plot-oriented and one can clearly see the inspiration with such genres, as road movie or teenage movie.

TP: While thinking about the script I start with a strong image. In this case it was the scene, in which the protagonists swims in an overgrown pond, smokes a pipe and empties it into a can. On one hand it is a very holiday image, and on the other hand it presents some element of degeneration, which, in my opinion, has determined the atmosphere of the film very well.

I like genre cinema and I agree that *Acid Rain* is a road movie, and my aim was also to make it a teenage movie – one of my favorite genres of all. While starting with a certain genre, I like to mess with it in order to break the convention. I like simple constructions and strong relationships. I usually play my stories between two protagonists: a boy and a girl whose relationship is undefined. There is always a third figure who spoils this relationship. While working on the script, I always try to write a couple of strong scenes which the viewer will remember after leaving the cinema. The next stage is to weave those scenes and elements into the thread of a consistent plot.

ZJ: The film is also recognizable due to a fantastic soundtrack. You also make music, beside making animation. Why you didn't make the music to this film yourself?

TP: I didn't make the music to this film, since I wanted to use the work on the film as an opportunity to get in touch with people who I admire and have been listening to for ages. Amongst the artists you can hear in the film, there is Jerome Hill – a veteran of this genre, Andy Jenkinson – a cult author of acid pieces working under the pseudonym Ceephax Acid



TOMEK POPAKUL – director of animated films and screenwriter. He graduated from the Department of Animation Films and Film Special Effects at the Łódź Film School, while he also has been studied scriptwriting for one year. He is the author of several films, and his graduation animation project, *Ziegenort*, has been presented at many international festivals and has won numerous awards. He participated in Animation Artist in Residence Tokyo 2014 residency programme organised by Japan Image Council (JAPIC) where he made the film *Black. Acid Rain* (2019) had its world premiere in Rotterdam. Filmography: *Acid Rain* (2019), *Black* (2016), *Ziegenort* (2013).

Crew or Lou Karsh from Australia who proves that nostalgia for the 1990s is still alive and well. Despite his young age, Lou creates pieces which are taken straight from that time. While choosing the music of Polish authors, I reached for the pieces of a friend of mine – Artur Oleś – Chino and Karol Su/Ki, whose pieces are deeply rooted in that time, place and state of mind. I'm really happy that he agreed for his music to be used in the film.

ZJ: Since January, the film has been presented at festivals, receiving awards and the recognition of both critics and audience alike. What emotions did you feel before the first screenings?

TP: During every screening, I feel a bit nervous, since there are some controversial scenes in the film. I really calmed down when some girls came to me after the screening and said they had understood the motivation of the main character or that they were in a similar relationship. I was anxious about whether I would be able to show the female character in the film fairly, and this is why I was glad to hear those first reactions.

I wanted the film to be fast, colorful, loud and full of pop culture and I have the impression that I succeeded, evidence being the two audience awards the film received. To me, this is the only true, unquestionable award. Here, the situation is simple and you can compare it to dance parties – people either like what you do and dance or they go outside to smoke a cigarette. ■



THE LUCKY SEVEN

BY ZOFIA JAROSZUK

Love by Jakub, Socha and Michał Socha



SUMMARY OF THE 7TH EDITION OF THE ANIMATED IN POLAND PITCH SESSION

This year, as always, the 59th edition of the Krakow Film Festival was full of industry events, including those devoted to animated film. It has been a very important part of the film festival's programme from the very beginning. The centrepiece of the animated segment was the seventh edition of Animated in Poland – Poland's only pitch session for films in the last stage of production.

The formula has remained unchanged for years – creators and producers are given brief, ten-minute speeches to present their short projects before international experts – festival programmers, sales agents, distributors, and representatives of film institutions. For professionals, participating in pitching is a chance to find interesting proposals at a very early stage, which is very important matter – especially for festival programmers. Polish short animated cinema is a brand in its own right. That's why we are seeing more and more international guests in Krakow every year. This year, seven projects produced using various animation techniques by students and graduates of animation faculties qualified for the pitching.

The theme that appeared in as many as three of them was family. *Everything Is As It Should Be*, a moving animated documentary made by a student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, Maria Yakimovich, is a trip back to childhood times in order to find a lost bond with her disease-stricken father. The collage style of animation emphasizes the documentary and chronicle-like dimension of the story.

In her latest film, Paulina Ziółkowska, the author of the award-winning *Oh, Mother!*, also returns to the topic of family and succession. *Family Mechanisms* is Ziółkowska's next cooperation with the Warsaw-based Fumi Studio. It's a story about how we are inextricably linked with our loved ones and the marks left on us by our blood ties. *Family Mechanisms*



has a uniquely synthetic form and a distinctive artistic style, with great potential for success at festivals.

Anastazja Naumenko's project, *I Hope You Won't Need to Come Back*, is at the opposite end of the thematic spectrum. The story, told from the perspective of emigrants, shows how many shades of life far away from home there are. The student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow is a very talented director, whose accomplishments should be followed closely in the future.

A different kind of loss is discussed in Michalina Musialik's latest project – *Dog Field*. Intimate and kept in a classic, cartoon form, the story follows animals orphaned by their owners, who must find a new place for themselves in a house that may soon be theirs no more. The film is produced by Fumi Studio.

Ola Szmida, known primarily as an illustrator, debuted at Animated in Poland with *Medusas* – a subversive tale about the emancipation of two Muslim heroines that is deeply rooted in film and music videos.

Two main awards went to films produced by the Letko studio from Warsaw. This young company has achieved its first big festival successes thanks to this year's *Story* by Jola Bańkowska.

Tomasz Siwiński's latest film *Love in the Time of Coal-Based Economy* won the prize awarded by the Sound Mind post-production studio. In his new film, Siwiński, whose *A Blue Room* received numerous festival awards, tells a love story taking place during the winter of the century, once more creating a statement underlined by a very strong visual language.



Participants of Animated in Poland 2019 Photo: Agnieszka Fiejka



Paulina Ziótkowska presenting *Family Mechanisms* Photo: Agnieszka Fiejka

ANIMATED IN POLAND 2019 SELECTED PROJECTS

LOVE IN THE TIME OF COAL-BASED ECONOMY
BY TOMASZ SIWIŃSKI • PROD.: LETKO • POLAND • 2020 • 12'

EVERYTHING IS AS IT SHOULD BE BY MARYIA YAKIMOVICH
• PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO, ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS
IN KRAKÓW • POLAND • 2019 • 10'-15'

FAMILY MECHANISMS BY PAULINA ZIÓŁKOWSKA •
PROD.: FUMI STUDIO • POLAND • 2019 • 8'

MEDUSAS BY OLA SZMIDA • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH
FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • POLAND • 2020 • 8'

I HOPE YOU WON'T NEED TO COME BACK
BY ANASTAZJA NAUMENKO • PROD.: ANIMATION FILM STUDIO,
ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKÓW • POLAND • 2019 • 8'

DOG FIELD BY MICHALINA MUSIALIK • PROD.: FUMI STUDIO •
POLAND • 2019 • 12'

LOVE BY MICHAŁ SOCHA AND JAKUB SOCHA • PROD.: LETKO
• POLAND • 2020 • 5'



The second prize – a CETA production grant – went to *Love* by brothers Jakub and Michał Socha. The duo is famous for numerous award-winning projects – including the intro to *Path* or the cult *Simpson* couch gag. In Krakow, they presented a short film about the theft of an expensive diamond, heavily inspired by Saul Bass' posters and typography. The Sochas' project has the chance to become a festival favourite thanks to its vivid visual style and a funny, anecdotal story.

Held since 2012 as a part of KFF Industry, Animated in Poland is Poland's only pitch session for films in the last phase of production. A pitch session allowed, among others, Marta Pajek (the *Impossible Figures and Other Stories* triptych), Wiola Sowa (*XoXo – Hugs and Kisses*) or Anita Kwiatkowska-Naqvi (*Locus*) to present their later award-winning films for the first time. The next edition of the pitch session is planned for the jubilee 60th edition of the Krakow Film Festival in May 2020. ■



Medusas by Ola Szmida



Acid Rain

DIR.: **TOMEK POPAKUL** • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2019 • 28'

Young runs away from home, because she is fed up with her surroundings. Skinny has long since made a camper van his home. They meet by chance – on a bridge, balancing on the guardrail and toying with their lives. They both seem to have nothing to lose. They embark on a journey together – without any plans for the future or questions about the past.

From the first joint they smoke together, it is clear that drugs will become an integral part of the trip. They collect, sell and, of course, take them themselves, exploring new states of consciousness. Thus, the border between reality and narcotic visions very quickly becomes blurred, and fairytale elements begin to appear in the animation: a house with chicken feet or a figure of the Red Riding Hood's grandmother.

The story told by Tomasz Popakul might be taking place in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 20th century or in a post-apocalyptic future. Grey streets, looking like disaster-stricken landscapes, and faded green trees are combined with fluorescent colors of acid rain drops and pinks and purples of the partying protagonists' hallucinations.

The essence of the animated film is a trip – understood as a state after consuming intoxicants, as well as the camper van journey itself, the destination of which is unknown to anyone. Although *Acid Rain* is a twenty-eight-minute feature film, the director does not try to explain the psychology of the characters or the relationship between Young and Skinny to the viewer, nor does he tie the scenes into a logical whole. The central element of this film is a few-minute long party scene with hypnotic images and trance music. In the finale of *Acid Rain*, however, an unexpected twist awaits us, which turns it from a narcotic road movie into a dark thriller.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

Metro

DIR.: **NATALIA KRAWCZUK** • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2019 • 10'

Train operator Arsenij undoubtedly loves his work. In a beautiful, pea-colored underground car, he takes great care of his plant and a goat, which he accidentally finds. He likes to work in the dark and analyze maps of big metropolises like Tokyo and London. He listens to classical music and waves joyfully to his colleagues at work. Only a skeleton-shaped pendant hanging from above the steering wheel suggests that the journey with Arsenij may not end happily.

Arsenij loves the subway, but hates the people who drive it. He has his reasons: people are rude to each other, they don't help each other, they hurt each other. That's why the operator decides to teach them a lesson, which is the starting point for a story full of black humor.

However, under the cover of a black comedy, the director hides much more than just sophisticated entertainment. The film is also a satire on workaholicism, adhering to the principle that 'you get a job and become a job' and the attitude of a 'work leader'. There is also a lot about being an outsider, not fitting in with the society and OCD. Although the film lasts only a few minutes, the director builds up the motorist's character with numerous digressions, explaining his behavior with situations from the past, relations with women or family.

The humorous character of the animated film is created by the minimalism of the means used – off-screen narration and a simple black line as in cartoon jokes. In the frames there are many visual associations with railways, and even trains gain a human face here. Finally, the film speeds up, accelerating like the eponymous metro, to take the viewers to the crazy finale in the rhythm of the rattling of rails and fast-changing frames.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



Story

DIR.: JOLANTA BAŃKOWSKA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2019 • 5'

The slowly rising sun will not have time to awaken the hero, because the annoying sound of his smartphone will manage to do it earlier. This little 'technical miracle' will now accompany the man through the day until he falls asleep. Inside it, like in a magic ball, all his friends and their stories are hidden. So does he need anything else?

Jola Bańkowska's film is constructed like an Instagram 'story'. It seems to be a collection of chaotic scenes, viewed on the screen of a smartphone, which in their entirety create a story about the life of the characters and the contemporary world. We watch a musician whose piano has been replaced by virtual reality, or a painter whose VR devices have become a substitute for a brush. We see a playground where the smartphone is more interesting for a child than a swing, an art gallery where screens hang instead of paintings, and office buildings where everyone is locked in their own box.

However, while the animation at first seems to be just an ironic commentary on reality, humorous images quickly give way to macabre scenes and the story is interwoven with supernatural elements. A grotesque giant rabbit, a cat with a laptop or crazy and burning devices present a warped image of the dangerous consequences of blindly following new technologies. As in the contemporary world, the reality of the animated film intermingles with the virtual, and real interpersonal contacts give way to online meetings.

To show this pessimistic vision of the world, Bańkowska chose minimalist frames and an almost cartoon-like style. Charming characters, intense colours and comedy gags stand in opposition to the thoughtful message in the finale: in a world full of likes and online friends, there is mostly loneliness.

DAGMARA MARCINEK



The Little Soul Duszyczka

DIR.: BARBARA RUPIK • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2019 • 9'

From a dead, decaying body, a soul is released and takes the audience on a journey through the land of the dead. She follows the star's light on horseback until it reaches a mysterious place, one full of bizarre creatures and references to art and religion. The animation is woven from symbols and characters originating not only from various religions, but also from mythology, fairy tales and ancient beliefs. In the land created by Barbara Rupik, both the figure of Charon, who ferries the dead across the Styx and the figure of the Virgin Mary appear. Together they form a colorful mosaic of depictions of death from many generations and cultures.

Rupik draws just as much from art history. The animation is inspired by the works of Hieronymus Bosch, Peter Brueghel and paintings such as John Everett Millais's *Ophelia* or Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox*. The animation technique is also painterly, with texture becoming important in addition to color. The frames, covered with thick layers of paint, perfectly convey the atmosphere of the sticky, unpredictable and marshy world of the dead.

The director uses the macabre aesthetics to produce an ugliness which is both repulsive and fascinating. The revolting images of the interior of a human body or flies circling over a corpse draw the viewer into the dark but alluring world of death. The sensory discomfort is deepened by the soundtrack, whose sharp, rough sounds irritate the sense of hearing and cause anxiety.

The animation forces the viewer to confront the subject of dying, the concepts of death, and their own attitude towards the subject. Is there anything waiting for us after death? Will it be a place like in *The Little Soul*? And what exactly is this place – a waiting room for souls or the gates of hell?

DAGMARA MARCINEK



Vitae Azilia

DIR.: JOANNA WAPNIEWSKA • ANIMATION • POLAND • 2019 • 7'

An empty place at a table, hangers on which, until recently, someone's clothes were hanging and a place in bed, which, at least for the time being, will remain empty – all these things recall a recently lost love. The heroine cannot find a place in an empty apartment, and everything around her brings to life a feeling that has not yet cooled.

Vitae Dubiae Azilia are former funeral homes where bodies were stored to make sure they were dead. It also gave those closest to the deceased more time to get used to their death and say goodbye to their loved ones. In the animated film, the symbolic role of such a house is played by the protagonist's flat, which becomes a zone suspended somewhere between life and death. This is what the life of the protagonist seems to be like as she is overcome with stagnation and indifference.

Visually minimalist animation, almost ascetic cinematography and sparse set design emphasize the feeling of emptiness with which the protagonist struggles. The frames are close to the loneliness captured in Edward Hopper's paintings. The dominant colors here are grey and deep, piercing green. They are contrasted with a red dress and heels, emphasizing the longing for physical love. At the climax, the animation becomes also extremely sensual and the memories of sex, although drawn only with a white line on a black background, are full of desire and passion.

The space in which the protagonist is placed is closely connected with her feelings – the world turns upside down, disintegrates and there is no way to put it back together. A nostalgic and melancholic film about passing and accepting loss.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

Portrait of Suzanne

Portret Suzanne

DIR.: IZABELA PLUCINSKA • ANIMATION • POLAND, GERMANY, FRANCE • 2019 • 15'

Suzanne is a great but lost love for the animated film's protagonist. A man longing for her spends his lonely days in a hotel room, trying to fill the sense of emptiness with a huge amount of food and alcohol. However, plates full of cold cuts and fruits do not help to satisfy the hunger for love. One evening the hero goes out to a restaurant, but instead of dinner he gets new shoes. These hurt his feet, but unexpectedly out of the wound grows... Suzanne. From now on, they are inseparable: a big man and a miniature woman who has replaced his left foot. Izabela Plucińska perfectly captures the surreal atmosphere of Roland Topor's short story, of which her film is an adaptation. It is not only the plot that blurs the line between reality and the imagination of the protagonist. The world created by the director is also sometimes absurd, even though it is set in the atmosphere of a small French town. Plasticine, from which the story is made, gives the director the opportunity to create scenes from imagination and juggle visual associations of the human body with food. In this rich set design, every detail stands out: from the texture of the wallpaper to the facial expressions of the characters.

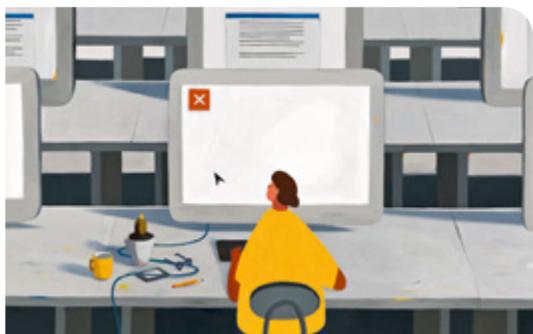
Carnality plays an important role here, which is even emphasized by the colors used in the film. Plucińska is not afraid to show the human body with all its imperfections, she does not idealize it, on the contrary – we see every wrinkle, unevenness on the skin or drop of sweat. The characters are ugly, corpulent, exaggerated. Their grotesque appearance is entertaining, especially when the viewers observe their romantic evenings in bed or scenes of jealousy. However, this darkly humorous story is imbued with melancholy. *Portrait of Suzanne* is not only a story about the hardships of living in a relationship, but also about loneliness and a need for love that drives one crazy.

DAGMARA MARCINEK

POLISH ANIMATIONS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

2019



Story

DIR.: **JOLANTA BAŃKOWSKA** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 5' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION, LETKO • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Story is a reflection about modern man in an age of omnipresent technology. Looking through the stories – a popular function in many social media platforms – we see people who are lonely, lost or already indifferent about the reality surrounding them. The action takes place over the course of one day and it's told by short, often (auto)ironic scenes, where the virtual world merges with reality.



Acid Rain

DIR.: **TOMEK POPAKUL** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 26' • PROD.: ANIMOON, NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE – AUDIOVISUAL INSTITUTE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Somewhere in Eastern Europe. A young girl runs away from her depressing hometown. Her early enthusiasm about the hitch-hike falls when she finds herself on the outskirts of a city in the middle of the night. On a bridge she meets a figure balancing unsafely on the guardrail. That's how she meets Skinny – a kind of unstable weirdo. Skinny lives in a camper van, which he uses to run his not-so-legal job errands. Together with him, she sets out on a journey with no destination. As the ride continues, a particular affection grows between the two of them.



The Little Soul

DIR.: **BARBARA RUPIK** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 9' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

A dead body became stuck by a river bank. Its decaying insides still hide a human soul – a miniature version of the deceased. The rotting organs part and a tiny creature emerges. Standing on the river bank, it says goodbye to the corpse and sets off on a journey through the post-mortem land.



Guilt

DIR.: **MARCJANNA URBAŃSKA** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 6' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Guilt is a story about the difficult relationship between a mother and daughter. A childhood full of love is confronted with a parent's depression. Although she is a loving mother on a daily basis, alcohol turns her into a wolf. During her transformation, she becomes unpredictable, losing her humanity. Full of metaphors and sensitivity, the story leads us through the child's difficult experiences. It is a bittersweet story of two lost women who try to triumph over the demons of everyday existence.



Ovule

DIR.: **NATALIA DURSZEWICZ** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 4' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

A story of a woman whose fears and obsessions are taking over her everyday routine, transforming her life into all-embracing jungle. It symbolizes the struggle with personality disorders while being in a relationship with a beloved one. When the woman is left alone at home, and the absence of her man became longer than usual, her paranoia grows. She becomes suspicious, insanely jealous and fearful. This leads to the creation of a new reality, one which is much more vibrant and colorful than her everyday life. It shows how the subconscious can be dangerous and unpredictable.



Metro

DIR.: **NATALIA KRAWCZUK** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 10' • PROD.: WJTEAM, THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

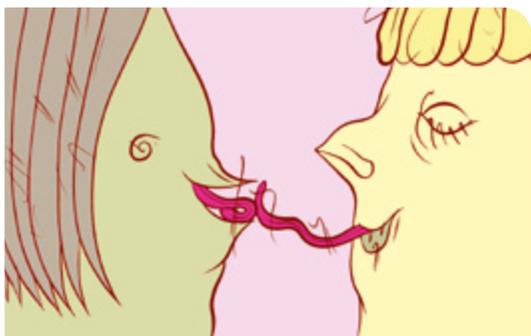
Metro is a short story about the life of a train operator named Arseniy. He loves his job but there is just one thing that keeps bothering him: passengers. One day, he decides to teach them a lesson.



Red Light Train

DIR.: **ALICJA KOT** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 10' • PROD.: ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW, ANIMATION FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

A young stewardess works on a luxurious, long distance train. Its destination is Paris and the travelers are mostly couples on their way to the capital of love. The stewardess becomes the unintentional witness of their quiet intimacy and intense tenderness. Overwhelmed by her own loneliness and her burning need to love and to be loved, she starts to watch the lovers more closely, in an increasingly obsessive way.



The Land of Whim

DIR.: **BETINA BOŹEK** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 8' • PROD.: ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW, ANIMATION FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

The Land of Whim, the main character in the film, is a planet invented by the director and ruled by a whim. Everything that exists on the planet is unobvious, chaotic, and changes both shape and properties. The mutual penetration and transformation of forms, change of places of creatures and objects – these are words that can be used to describe the character of the film. Despite the apparent mess that prevails on the planet, it is a happy place, where clear and pure colors prevail. The picture of the strange and fairy-tale reality is an explosion of joy and surrealism.



Observation Point

DIR.: **ALEKSANDER JÓZEFczyk** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 9' • PROD.: ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN KRAKOW, ANIMATION FILM STUDIO • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

A photographer is bored with his previous work. Accidentally, he notices an announcement in the newspaper about a prize for a photo of a mysterious creature. He recalls that he once took such pictures, but they were blurred and he had completely forgotten about them. To search for the creature, he returns to an observation point that he built when he was a young, ambitious man. He also tames a lonely, lost and somewhat feral dog.



Tunnel

DIR.: **JULIA BENEDYKTOWICZ** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 5' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

The main character lives in isolation. He seems like an ordinary man, but he has an odd habit before sleep – he gets rid of his thoughts. He starts a journey inside himself, going deeper into the tunnel of his mind. Suddenly, he hears a voice – it turns out there has been someone close to him, closer than he'd thought – just behind the wall.



Re-Cycle

DIR.: **MATEUSZ LENART** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 6' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Living a solitary life in a world without light or hope, the central character is engrossed in the pursuit of his lost past. A daily pattern repeats itself. Many hours of effort on a home-made exercise bike enable him to create a momentary illusion of his former life, one filled with happiness. The cycle he fell into after losing everything he loved is the only one he knows. It is also a personal prison he cannot free himself from and, indeed, he has no wish to do so. Does moving on mean forgetting?



The Flood

DIR.: **SOFYA NABOK** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 9' • PROD.: LIKAON, THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Three sisters go to the river on Kupala Night, to fulfill the rite of throwing a wreath to see the elder sister's future. To do so, the girl goes onto the bridge where she hears a voice that prophesies her death in this river. Terrified, she turns around to flee, only to fall into the water.



The Windows of That House

DIR.: **URSZULA DOMAŃSKA** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 7' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

An old lady finds an injured bird. She takes care of him and gives him shelter. They quickly make friends with each other. One day the bird finds out that he is in danger: in the other room, the old lady keeps hundreds of birds, locked in cages.



Such a Beautiful Town

DIR.: **MARTA KOCH** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 8' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Morning. A woman wakes up, goes to the window and, to her surprise, notices her boyfriend kissing another woman on the street. Disoriented, she runs out of the apartment to confront him, but the man is not there anymore. In order to find him, she embarks on a lonely journey throughout the city, which with each subsequent street becomes more stifling and unsympathetic. The streets tighten, the people she passes seem to have hostile intentions towards her. Terrified, she watches as the world she knew changes, and more dangers lurk around every other corner. A lonely journey leads to tragic consequences.



Paradise Mall

DIR.: **MARTA WIKTOROWICZ** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 2,5' • PROD.: MARTA WIKTOROWICZ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Paradise Mall is a shopping center where the customers are surrounded by hundreds of advertisements. The animation focuses on the problem of omnipresent manipulation. It illustrates how the world of the media cleverly influences peoples' opinions and decisions, having a big impact on their lives.



Vitae Azilia

DIR.: **JOANNA WAPNIEWSKA** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 7' • PROD.: ANIMATED FILM STUDIO IN BIELSKO-BIALA • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

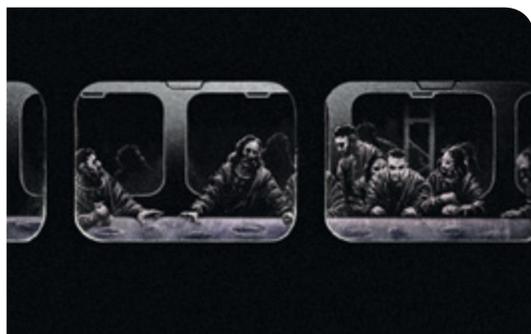
Vitae Azilia is a film about a lost but still very much alive relationship between two people. The main character is a young woman, left alone with her own feelings and yearnings, who is trying to redefine herself after losing a person close to her.



Portrait of Suzanne

DIR.: **IZABELA PLUCIŃSKA** • 2019 • POLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY • ANIMATION • 15' • PROD.: FUNDACJA LAS SZTUKI, CLAYTRACES, FILMS DE FORCE MAJEURE • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

In a small hotel, there is a man who tries to allay his hunger for love by eating excessively. But his longing for his love, Susanne, will not be soothed by the plates of meat, vegetables and fruit that he puts before him. When the protagonist goes to town in search of food, he accidentally hurts himself in the foot, which unexpectedly transforms into Susanne. From that moment on, they are inseparable. Still, this is just the beginning of a surreal story about loneliness, jealousy and love. Every single detail of this grotesque plasticine adaptation of Roland Topor's short story enchants the audience.



Last Supper

DIR.: **PIOTR DUMALA** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 13' • PROD.: FUMI STUDIO • CONTACT: ANNA WASZCZUK, FESTIWALE@FUMISTUDIO.COM

A drama based around a group of men seated at a table, moving to the rhythm of modern music by a string quartet, or: the Last Supper of Jesus and the Twelve Apostles.



The Rain

DIR.: **PIOTR MILCZAREK** • 2019 • ANIMATION • 5' • PROD.: FUMI STUDIO • CONTACT: ANNA WASZCZUK, FESTIWALE@FUMISTUDIO.COM

The Rain is a simple animated film on collective consciousness. It talks about how a lack of accountability for our actions pushes us to thoughtlessly follow the crowd, something which may lead to tragedy. The film also depicts the struggle of an individual with collective hypnosis and its consequences for both the individual and the crowd.



The Hunt

DIR.: **MATEUSZ JARMULSKI** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 8' • PROD.: ANIMOON • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

A north-eastern Polish village, surrounded by forests and lakes; with only a few houses, several farm households, and a small Baroque church. This is where the main character, an 11 year old boy, spends his last month of summer. He is fascinated by adventure books about the Wild West and craves adventures and experiences. He explores the surroundings, equipped with a cassette recorder and a bow. His innocent adventure suddenly stops being a childish game – what the boy lives through on one summer night will stay long in his memory.



Tango of Longing

DIR.: **MARTA SZYMAŃSKA** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 5' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

The film is a painted story about the extraordinary nature of tango, which is not only erotic, full of desire and aggression, but mainly full of sorrow. Tango is longing, it is 'a sad thought that is danced'. It can reveal our most intimate stories, innermost longings and needs, our secrets. It triggers powerful emotions in film characters, great longing, grief and melancholy. They lose themselves in the dance, trying to find some relief, going after something lost, unreachable and absent. They can never be satisfied, however, they are always left longing.



You Are Overreacting

DIR.: **KARINA PACIORKOWSKA** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 4' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

You Are Overreacting is a hand-drawn animation that attempts to ask questions about the place of women in the modern world. The film is (unfortunately) inspired by everyday life, the statements of public figures, and the media.



Leather

DIR.: **KAROLINA BORGIA SZ** • 2018 • ANIMATION • 5' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Human skin is a leather cover for the interior. We will leave the covers just like abandoned coats in wardrobe.



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Steal Ideas and Run!

40 YEARS OF THE KATOWICE FILM SCHOOL

In the new academic year, the Faculty of Radio and Television at the University of Silesia in Katowice has opened a new chapter: it is now officially the Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School. In February, production studies in English will start, and the school has already settled into a new building. Please join us on a tour presenting a school located in one of the most picturesque regions of Poland, one crucial for its history of film.

YOU ARE NOT AN ARTIST

Before the films of the graduates of K. Kieślowski Film School are screened at Cannes (*The Best Fireworks Ever* by Aleksandra Terpińska), Sundance (*The Lure* by Agnieszka Smoczyńska), Karlovy Vary (*Waves* by Grzegorz Zariczny) or nominated for an Oscar (*Rabbit à la Berlin* by Bartek Konopka), they will probably hear from their teachers: you are not an artist. And this is what they learn in courses: directing, film making and production. From the very first year, you can count on intensive training with the best professionals, like Krzysztof Zanussi, Bogdan Dziworski, Filip Bajon and Adam Sikora. So what is the

philosophy behind the education in this school? Marcin Kozzałka, a graduate of the school, director, cinematographer and cinematography teacher puts it this way: 'I tell my students: steal from us, take from each of us what you like. Develop your own style on the basis of those experiences. And don't believe too early that you are already artists, first you should become craftsmen'. The dean of the school, professor Krystyna Doktorowicz, has a similar opinion: 'Very talented young people come to us. And everyone is convinced that he or she is a great artist. So they work on topics, like love, death, destiny, and yet it takes time to learn how to work on them. The basic thing is the workshop. Our film school provides excellent learning



Workshops with Marcin Koszałka

I tell my students: steal from us, take from each of us what you like. Develop your own style on the basis of those experiences. And don't believe too early that you are already artists, first you should become craftsmen. (Marcin Koszałka)

conditions. Students have modern production and post-production studios at their disposal, both film and television ones, a modern television and film studio, a screening room and a two-storey cinema studio, among others'.

A PASS TO THE INDUSTRY

'Studying in Katowice was a unique experience, especially thanks to the opportunity to work with 35 mm film. It is especially important for a cinematographer to learn how to work with a material that is not immediately visible,' says Marcin Polar, a graduate, whose latest documentary *The Tough* was recently screened for the first time at Sundance FF. And he adds: 'You have to know how to plan, see with your eyes and measure with a light meter what will be visible on the tape only later. Working with digital technology is much easier this way. Although the courses of study are very specialized, the students can count on a very comprehensive education. Thanks to the school, as a cinematographer,

I understand cinema much better from the point of view of directing, and how to tell a story with a picture. This is thanks to the high level of openness of the lecturers.' It is also a pass to enter the industry, because lecturers who are active artists themselves engage students in their projects. Sometimes it even happens too fast: 'The film and television sector, which is looking for professionals, offers our students jobs when they are still students of the last years,' says professor Krystyna Doktorowicz. 'The school is also an important film and culture hub in Silesia, we cooperate with a self-government institution Silesia Films, the Academy of Music, the Academy of Fine Arts, Wyspiański Theatre, and outside the region with the Krakow Film Foundation, Munk Studio and Polish Film Institute, among others.'

TECHNO-ARTISTS

When asked about the recipe for success of the School she manages, professor Doktorowicz enumerates the following

THE MOST FREQUENT SCREENED AND AWARDED FILMS IN RECENT YEARS

- EVIL DEEDS** BY PIOTR DOMALEWSKI • FIC. • 2016 • 24'
- TWIST AND BLOOD** BY KUBA CZEKAJ • FIC. • 2010 • 30'
- ALL SOUL'S DAY** BY ALEKSANDRA TERPIŃSKA • FIC. • 2012 • 18'
- DANIEL** BY ANASTAZJA DĄBROWSKA • DOC. • 2016 • 24'
- DUST** BY JAKUB RADEJ • DOC. • 2017 • 25'
- KILLING AUNTIE** BY MATEUSZ GŁOWACKI • FIC. • 2013 • 30'
- MAGMA** BY PAWEŁ MAŚLONA • FIC. • 2013 • 30'
- OUR BAD WINTER** BY GRZEGORZ ZARICZNY • FIC. • 2012 • 21'
- ROLLERCOASTER** BY MAREK MARLIKOWSKI • FIC. • 2013 • 14'
- SHITEATERS** BY AGATA WOJCIEROWSKA • FIC. • 2014 • 17'
- SUMMER OF LOVE** BY MARCIN FILIPOWICZ • FIC. • 2014 • 23'
- THE FOURTH MAN** BY KRZYSZTOF KASIOR • DOC. • 2010 • 22'
- THE SHADOW FOREST** BY ANDRZEJ CICHOCKI • FIC. • 2014 • 14'
- AMERICA** BY ALEKSANDRA TERPIŃSKA • FIC. • 2015 • 30'
- BITTERSWEET** BY MICHAŁ WAWRZECKI • FIC. • 2014 • 19'
- ECHO** BY MARCIN FILIPOWICZ • FIC. • 2012 • 20'
- KNIFE IN THE WIFE** BY VITA DRYGAS • DOC. • 2014 • 11'



Evil Deeds by Piotr Domalewski

factors: 'excellent candidates, very good lecturers who are also creators. And the management, and that's what I'm here for,' she laughs. However, film art and craftsmanship are in an interesting moment now – completely new models of production and distribution are appearing (online platforms), digital technologies significantly shorten and facilitate realization, but also the clear division into film and other media fades away. How does the School find itself in this situation? 'We try to take all these changes into account, and finally we educate artists and technologists,' says Prof. Doktorowicz.

Although the courses of study are very specialized, the students can count on a very comprehensive education. Thanks to the school, as a cinematographer, I understand cinema much better from the point of view of directing, and how to tell a story with a picture. (Marcin Polar)



Dust by Jakub Radej



Twist and Blood by Kuba Czekaj

She emphasizes the fact that the school does not educate only filmmakers, so it has to be prepared to work in different environments. ‘Technology also influences aesthetics, which poses new challenges for directors. We try to prepare ourselves for them as best we can,’ she adds.

MORE LIGHT!

The uniqueness of the Katowice Film School is also determined by its location. The school is an important cultural point on the map of Upper Silesia. For a filmmaker, it is probably hard to find a better place to learn than the capital of a multimillion-person agglomeration, one bustling with life and at the border between cultures. And the new seat of the school is an architectural work of art that has already been appreciated by international experts, and it was nominated, among others, for the prestigious Mies van der Rohe award. The design of the building refers to Silesian brick architecture and uses the existing building of the pre-war lightbulb factory. Thanks to the openwork structure of the façade, the interior almost drowns in light. Interestingly, the investment brought the district back to life, since it had previously enjoyed an exceptionally bad reputation. And there are many icons of architecture in vicinity: the amazing modernist Spodek, a monumental NOSPR building that resembles a spaceship stuck into the ground, the Congress Centre and the Silesian Museum which has been made in a former mine. ■

THE MOST FAMOUS ALUMNI OF KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FILM SCHOOL

MARIA ZMARZ-KOCZANOWICZ A DOCUMENTARY FILM DIRECTOR

MARCIN WRONA A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

AGNIESZKA SMOCZYŃSKA A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

MACIEJ ŚLESICKI A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

MICHAŁ ROSA A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

MACIEJ PIEPRZYCA A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

MAGDALENA ŁAZARKIEWICZ A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

ANDRZEJ JAKIMOWSKI A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

URSZULA ANTONIAK A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

BARTEK KONOPKA A DOCUMENTARY AND FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

MARCIN KOSZAŁKA A DOCUMENTARY AND FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR
AND CINEMATOGRAPHER

KRZYSZTOF LANG A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

KUBA CZEKAJ A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

ADAM PALENTA A CINEMATOGRAPHER

KAROLINA BIELAWSKA A DOCUMENTARY FILM DIRECTOR

MAGDALENA PIEKORZ A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

PIOTR DOMALEWSKI A FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR

JAN P. MATUSZYŃSKI A DOCUMENTARY AND FEATURE FILM DIRECTOR



Daniel by Anastazja Dąbrowska



Domestication by Sylwia Gawet

TURBULENT & CAPTIVATING

POLISH FOCUS IN CLERMONT-FERRAND

Each year in February, Clermont-Ferrand, a city in central France, becomes the world capital of short film for ten days. Thousands of professionals take part in the festival and film market organised here, and viewers queue in long lines to watch the films chosen for them by the selectors. In 2020, Poland will be the special guest of the festival, with its cinematography promoted during cinema screenings and numerous accompanying events.

Film screenings are, of course, the key element of the Polish focus – the predominantly French audience will get to watch as many as 19 titles arranged according to 5 thematic programmes. After the recent review of short films made by the most famous students of the Łódź Film School, including Roman Polański, Krzysztof Kieślowski, and Andrzej Wajda, this time the focus will be on contemporary cinema – all films invited have been made over the last 10 years.

The festival organisers stress the fact that Polish cinema is both ‘turbulent and captivating’, and young Polish filmmakers are appreciated chiefly because of their ‘extremely humane vision of the world’. Following this key, they have included documentaries such as *Charcoal Burners* by Piotr Złotorowicz, which focuses on

observing the difficult everyday life of the title characters involved in the production of charcoal in the Bieszczady Mountains, or *Mother* by Jakub Piątek, a film portraying an elderly woman’s regular visits to her son who is serving out a long prison sentence.

Family relations is one of the most frequently discussed topics in Polish films. *Our Curse* is a very intimate picture, whose director, Tomasz Śliwiński, points the camera at his own family just after the birth of his son. The boy suffers from Ondine’s curse – a rare disease that causes him to stop breathing when he falls asleep. The topic of family is also tackled by other filmmakers, such as Julia Kolberger in *The Easter Crumble*, where an Easter family meeting reveals numerous mutual suspicions and unfulfilled expectations, or Urszula Morg’s *Milk*, where plans to celebrate the eighteenth



The Easter Crumble by Julia Kolberger

birthday of the main character's daughter are unexpectedly disturbed by the birthday girl's boyfriend. Also, in Anna Kazejak's *A Few Simple Words* or Jan Wagner's *Son* we observe the relations between parents and their children, here shown in the context of male-female relationships.

Young Polish filmmakers prove that interpersonal relations can be complicated not only within the family. In *Faithfulness* (*Wierność*) Iwo Świłło shows a sensitive young boy in love with an older married woman, and Maciej Cendrowski in *Ring* – a boxer who fights to overcome his low self-esteem. The unforeseen consequences of an accidental meeting between two women are shown in *Hot and Cold*, a 35-minute story filmed without a single cut. Marta Prus, the film's director, was invited to the festival jury and the organisers are also planning on hosting a discussion with her.

Particularly interesting is the fact that the programme includes several genre films, of which there aren't many among Polish shorts. This group includes Justyna Mytnik's period musical *Fascinatrix*, whose protagonist is seeking to wreak her revenge on her tormentors, and Kordian Kądziała's *Larp*, which takes the audience into the world of outdoor fantasy games. Other represented genres include the black comedy *The Dogcatcher* by Daria Woszek, in which the titular character kidnaps dogs for ransom, and Jakub

Radej's historical drama *Ricochets*, set during Martial Law, depicting the 1982 events in Lubin.

History, although in a more general sense, also appears in Wojciech Sobczyk's animation *Summer 2014*. The director perceives it as an endless series of wars caused by human pride. In her *The Other*, Marta Magnuska refers to contemporary



Fascinatrix by Justyna Mytnik

times, showing how easily the fear of everything that is unfamiliar develops and what harm it can bring.

Other animated films included in the programme are slightly more intimate and all pertain to the subject of loneliness. In *Portrait of Suzanne* by Izabela Plucińska, based on Roland Topor's short story, it is the loneliness of a man who begins to notice his beloved woman in his own foot. In Natalia Durszewicz's film *Ovule*, the fear of loneliness takes on a tangible form of an overwhelming jungle, while in Sylwia Gawel's *Domestication*, the jungle, created everywhere around by the protagonist, is supposed to tame the fear.

The screenings will be complemented by a rich programme of accompanying events: a Polish film poster exhibition, a Polish stand at the film market organised during the festival, a trade show of the latest films for industry insiders, numerous meetings and industry discussions, as well as a reception with Polish culinary delicacies and Polish music, which will be an excellent opportunity for networking. The organisers are also planning an unusual surprise for their guests: a greasy spoon café will be built on the festival grounds, where Polish cooks, brought over especially for the occasion, will serve dumplings and other typical Polish dishes to everyone who is interested.

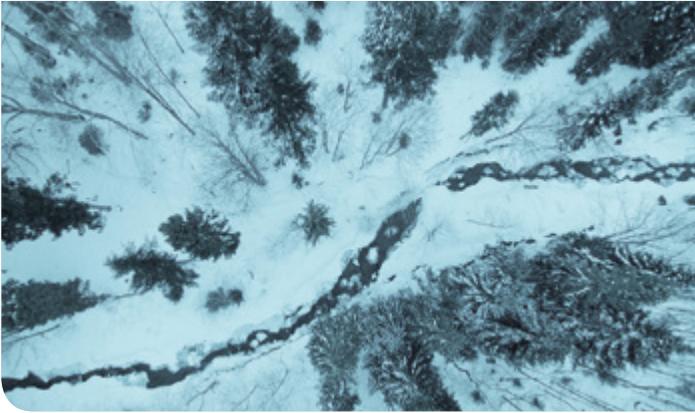
The event is co-financed by the Polish Film Institute and the Krakow Film Foundation is the Polish partner and co-organiser. ■

Polish short films are very powerful – not only fiction films, but also animations, documentaries and experimental movies. What we appreciate in Polish films the most are, first of all, their cinematographic qualities, like pictures, visual and aesthetic sensitivity, creativity, ability to tell stories, the topics presented, a certain form of independence in the art of filming. And, second of all, the sense of humanity understood as a more complex vision of life and a very strong quality of teaching in film schools. Empathy, natural goodness, appropriate tone and language, the sense of freedom, understanding, tolerance and approachability make a very tasty cocktail!

(Eric Wojcik and Marie Puyo-Gay, the curators of the Polish Focus at Clermont-Ferrand ISFF)



Milk by Urszula Morg



The Tough Harda

DIR.: **MARCIN POLAR** • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2019 • 14'

The majestic High Tatras and a man. Jarosław Surmacz, spelunker, and one of the titular cave explorers. For several years, this man has been exploring Harda's ('Tough') long, dark, and narrow corridors with extraordinary passion and dedication. Its name isn't accidental. The cave's purity fascinates, but its very nature pushes away. It is a very difficult place. Chilly, hard, and adamant. No wonder that it was discovered only a few years ago, and in order to get to it you have to be perfectly prepared and endowed with above-average agility. Polar's documentary is a unique opportunity to experience an extraordinary expedition in which the viewer delves into the depths of this mysterious world. The camera accompanies the spelunker in his work, peeking inside the most inaccessible caves, the nooks and crannies that the Polish mountains have kept to themselves for thousands of years. The director doesn't need to make the film any more attractive with an unnecessary score. The film's strength lies in its visual layer and a silence which is interrupted only by the sighing of the wind, the sound of tumbling, splintered rocks or the panting of a climber engaged in arduous work.

When we first see Surmacz, he is climbing the snow-covered Tatra Mountains. A moment later we spot his silhouette from a bird's eye view. He's just a tiny figure confronted by the vastness of the mountains. It is extremely moving to see a man who devotes himself to his passion with such dedication. No wonder that our hero named the cave the 'Tough'. Undoubtedly, there's no shortage of toughness in him as well.

MAGDALENA WALO



Loved Ones Bliscy

DIR.: **ZOFIA KOWALEWSKA** • FICTION • POLAND • 2018 • 14'

A dog barking, chaos, anxiety, and feverish attempts to reach an absent father. Something is going on. One of Olga's daughters requires immediate medical attention. Tensions are rising at the hospital; the doctor evades answering any questions. They need to be patient and wait for the results. They play a game by the patient's bedside to kill the boredom. Unexpectedly, the father shows up. The man, somewhat reluctantly, rejoins his family. He's nervous, as if suspended between parental responsibility and the ungrateful role of an ex-husband.

The new situation places the adults in an uncomfortable position, turning their existing arrangement upside down and starts requiring cooperation. All the more so, since their daughter's conditions seems to be serious and demands long-term commitment. But will they both be ready for this? The couple doesn't talk much, they'd rather avoid each other. At some point, the man wanders off, stops answering calls, moves away from the family in need. The wife escapes into silence, which is supposed to hold back her bitterness and grievance. The people whom she accidentally meets in the elevator seem closer, at least physically, than her ex-husband, whose support the heroine is instinctively seeking. Their breakup doesn't stop them from being parents, after all.

Zofia Kowalewska consciously shifts the teenager's illness into the background to focus on the relationship between the former spouses, subtly showing the tension between them and their mutual resentment. It's them, and not the teenage patient, or her worried sister, who are the main characters in this extremely moving, and yet very intimate family drama, in which the synonymous notions of family and closeness have to be redefined.

MAGDALENA WALO



Vacancy Pustostan

DIR.: AGATA TRZEBUCHOWSKA • FICTION • POLAND • 2018 • 14'

A new suburban housing estate with almost identical single-family houses. One of them belongs to a married couple and their two daughters. The couple seems harmonious, the husband is great with the kids, the woman is a bit withdrawn, but able to scold the defiant offspring when need be. Their rather orderly suburban life is interrupted by the heroine's unexpected disappearance.

Sounds like the beginning of a thriller or a good *domestic noir* detective story. Meanwhile, the audience knows exactly where the main character went. What remains a mystery are the reasons why she decides to remain 'missing'.

On an impulse, Anna decides to take a peek into the unfinished building next door. She goes inside and... stays there. Fascinated by the view from the windows, she spends time watching her loved ones and neighbours. Her daughter eating unhealthy delicacies in secret, her anxious husband talking to the police, or the back-and-forths between the lovers next door. The woman is in no hurry to return. On the contrary – she spends another day in the vacant property.

The director gives the viewers a few clues that help to interpret the woman's behaviour – for example, by expanding Anna's backstory with a mysterious event from her past and an earlier failed relationship. There's also a clear hint of emancipation. Her stay in the vacant building allows the protagonists to catch her breath for a moment, to distance herself and break away from the routine of home. Although she smiles with affection when seeing her daughters, she becomes fascinated with her new-found independence and starts yearning for it, which is personified in the character of the attractive female neighbour. Despite the clues, we don't get a ready answer. We look at the heroine, we follow her gaze. The opportunity to escape from life is becoming more and more tempting, it's right at her fingertips. All it takes is to leave home and never return, leaving behind only a void that can easily be filled by a different woman.

MAGDALENA WALO

Love 404

DIR.: AGATA BAUMGART • DOCUMENTARY • POLAND • 2018 • 17'

A cramped, cluttered communal apartment somewhere in Łódź. It is inhabited by two women who have been threatened with eviction for some time now. The adolescent Rena is a newbie youtuber, and her mum, Danuta, indulges herself on virtual dates with foreigners for hours at a time. Both of these activities allow them to break free from the misery of everyday life, where there's no prospect for any change.

When we meet them, Rena is prancing around the apartment like a model while her dreamy mother is sitting in a chair and smoking a cigarette. They both imperceptibly imagine themselves in different, better worlds. Danuta probably has visions of ecstatic elations in the embrace of one of the strangers, and the teenager devotes herself to inventing her next selves – a model, a stewardess, or a princess. Earlier, she checked if she would fit in with these incarnations by awkwardly making over her photos on the computer. Instead of looking for a boyfriend, she seeks to reinvent herself. Her mind isn't on flirting. She describes herself as asexual, which is certainly a result of her low self-esteem and lack of experience in dealing with people in the real world. The mother accepts her daughter's choices but without giving it any thought. There is no intimate relationship between both women. They share an indebted apartment and a bond over trivial stories about on-line life. The director tries not to turn her heroines into a joke. Instead, even when we see them at their most sincere and vulnerable, she saves both women from ridicule. She gives them a voice, allows to make intimate confessions about the fear of being touched or left alone. It is the latter that seems to be the most moving. Suddenly, the problems of these two quite original women start to seem familiar, more universal.

MAGDALENA WALO



Bitten Ukąszenie

DIR.: HELENA OBORSKA • FICTION • POLAND • 2019 • 24'

They say that you don't forget your first love. However, Oborska's film isn't about love, but rather about memory. About what we remember, how we attach ourselves to memories, how much hurt, unspoken regret, or even need for vengeance remains with us.

A scorching summer. Zosia and her friend Ewa are spending their holidays in a fashionable holiday resort. The programme includes healthy meals, relaxation exercises, and yoga. Unexpectedly, Zosia faints during one of the sessions. It wasn't the lack of air that made her collapse. The woman noticed someone. The silhouette she saw is accompanied by a pregnant partner. The man doesn't recognise Zosia but this doesn't bother the main character. She watches Emil closely at all times, as if she were looking for some kind of clue to confirm her suspicions. The uncertainty concerning the man's identity is all the more suspenseful due to the high temperatures and the mosquitoes' unbearable buzzing. Zosia confides in her friend. Someone broke her heart back in high school. And that's something you never forgive, despite the years that have passed. Perhaps Emil is that high school student, although he denies it. A confrontation between them is inevitable.

There is something disturbing about Zosia's behaviour. On the one hand she keeps joking around with her friend, downplaying what happened in the past, and on the other – she cannot let go and allow that feeling to drift away for good. It is not the affairs of her heart that make her nose bleed in Emil's company, but the humiliation and a certain kind of guilt that do not want to go away easily. Only a reunion with Emil may dispel her doubts. In the symbolic final scene, Zosia sends the man to the bottom of the sea with her look. Is it an act of unfulfilled revenge, or a final attempt at coming to terms with the past and drowning it in the depths of memory?

MAGDALENA WALO



It's Good Like That

Tak jest dobrze

DIR.: MARCIN SAUTER • FICTION • POLAND • 2019 • 23'

'Dad, will you take me there?' whispers a little boy who misses his father dearly. The man travels the world as a photographer. His output is documented by framed photographs. Apart from photos from distant journeys, there's also room for less impressive but more personal ones. One of them show the hero holding his son in his arms, another – his wife hugging the child. This last photo will accompany the man on his next expedition. The photographer is heading north. In Spitsbergen's freezing tundra, he will meet his son.

A backpack, a tent, his inseparable camera, and an obligatory rifle are all his equipment. The man wanders through the wilderness in solitude, accompanied only by wild animals that he tries to capture in his photographs. The landscape, apart from stunning nature, consists of abandoned mines, decrepit railroad tracks and buildings inhabited by seagulls. Surprisingly, a small boyish figure appears in the distance in front of his camera. The hero recognises his child and takes the boy with him. In spirit, this meeting has something from Stanisław Lem's famous novel. The dead tundra becomes the planet Solaris for a brief moment. The father's meeting with his son is possible, indisputable.

Sauter's film is a stunning black-and-white story about loss, an attempt to work through it, and regret. Towards oneself and the world. Although the journey into the depths of tundra is a very tangible and physical experience, its spiritual dimension is what becomes the most important aspect. This expedition is the last chance for an adult to fulfil a childhood dream.

MAGDALENA WALO

POLISH SHORTS

CATALOGUE OF FILMS

2019



Ricochets

DIR.: **JAKUB RADEJ** • 2019 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: STOWARZYSZENIE LUBIŃSKA GRUPA FILMOWA UISEL STUDIO • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Poland, 1982, the politically heated days of communist martial law. Two coal miner brothers react differently to the oppressive police state. While Tadek prefers to retreat into neutrality, Janek chooses active engagement in the democratic underground. When Janek asks Tadek to store some anti-government leaflets on the second anniversary of Solidarity's 1980 strikes, he triggers a spiral of events that will severely test everyone's allegiances and characters.



Bad Night Story

DIR.: **NAWOJKA WIERZBOWSKA** • 2019 • FICTION • 15' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLOWSKI FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Julia is a lonely 7 year old girl who is trying to prepare herself for her First Holy Communion in the best possible way. But everything is about to change the day she hears the biblical story of the shepherd and his lost sheep, leading her to the conclusion that God seems to prefer sinners.



Me Voy

DIR.: **SARA BUSTAMANTE DROZDEK** • 2019 • FICTION • 27' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Klara (23) and Adrian (25) are a couple who spend their free time taking care of their dog and watching a 90's TV series set in a fictional paradise. The pompous and luxurious life of the protagonists is also a space where they can freely express their emotions and feelings. For Klara, they constitute an unattainable model to which she subconsciously strives. When Adrian proposes to her in unusual circumstances, the girl doesn't know how to deal with it. Inspired by the TV series, she tries to end the relationship in various, absurd ways.



Settling the Score

DIR.: **ZUZANNA GRAJCEWICZ** • 2019 • FICTION • 13' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

The film tells a story of elderly woman Halina, who makes a difficult decision and stands up for justice and her own dignity. Settling the score is an attempt to address the problem of marginalization of elderly people's needs and their quality of life. In its form, the film is consistent and well thought through. It allows the viewer to freely interpret the plot and bitterness of its humorous finale.



The Crossword

DIR.: **JAN BUJNOWSKI** • 2019 • FICTION • 15' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

A crossword is a puzzle that usually takes the form of a square or a rectangular grid of white and black squares. The game's goal is to fill the white squares with letters, forming words or phrases, by solving the clues which lead to the answers. An old man is solving a crossword containing various clues. Some of them are easier, some tougher, but they are all related to events in his life. Is it just a way to kill time or perhaps it is going to be something more important for him?



Let's Cry

DIR.: **TADEUSZ KABICZ** • 2019 • FICTION • 25' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚŁOWSKI FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Maciek, a boy from nowhere, leads his own investigation of his sister's disappearance. Despite everyone's objections, he decides to apply for a controversial tv program, in which a charismatic reporter solves the problems of ordinary people. As his application is accepted, soon the famous TV reporter comes to the village, followed by her crew.



Vacancy

DIR.: **AGATA TRZEBUCHOWSKA** • 2019 • FICTION • 29' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Anna, an average resident of a gated community, enters a deserted house situated in front of her own and eventually finds herself unable to return. By observing her family, not only does she discover their secrets but also learns more about herself.



Dog Days

DIR.: **ZUZANNA GRAJCEWICZ** • 2019 • FICTION • 15' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

What is lacking in a world in which animals no longer exist? The two protagonists of *Dog Days* decide to establish a company which provides services for those who need a replacement for animals that are already extinct. It transpires that all kinds of emotions are involved in the relations between human and animals. As well as friendship and attachment, there is always a certain amount of violence which seeks an outlet.



Bitten

DIR.: **HELENA OBORSKA** • 2019 • FICTION • 24' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Zofia is spending summer holidays in a holistic center far from civilization. It is supposed to be a purifying week but she starts feeling strange... Suddenly, a man from her past appears at the hotel. Zofia recognizes his face, but he acts like he is seeing her for the very first time. The water in the shower is burning hot, the cicadas are calling, and the heat is becoming unbearable. He is there and he is watching. The difference between past and present blurs.



Hi, How Are You

DIR.: **MICHAŁ CHMIELEWSKI** • 2019 • FICTION • 23' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLOWSKI FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

50-year-old Stawek quits his job. His day now consists of running errands for his wife or taking care of the house. Sometimes he wanders around the neighborhood looking for his missing cat. One day he meets Camilla, a rather peculiar girl who lives nearby. She promptly invites Stawek to stay in her garden.



It's Good Like That

DIR.: **MARCIN SAUTER** • 2019 • FICTION • 23' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

It's good like that – Nikodem whispers to his son. They've wound up at the world's end, in the harsh, deserted landscape of Spitsbergen. A town inhabited only by seagulls. They roam the tundra, the snowy wilderness, along frost-warped rails. Is it the real world? Or their recollections? Or their imaginations? Fragments of their memories accompany their strange, aimless wanderings.



My Heart

DIR.: **DAMIAN KOCUR** • 2019 • FICTION • 30' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Rozalia is an actress. A professional opportunity makes it essential for her and her seven year old son, Kazik, to move from Warsaw to the small city of Wałbrzych in south-east Poland. The new city means a long-term contract for her in the local theatre and a new school for Kazik. As they settle in, Rozalia begins to strike up a friendship with Kazik's new teacher, also called Kazik. However, problems start cropping up at the school. Unexpected events in Rozalia's life become intertwined with her onstage role.



Marcel

DIR.: **MARCIN MIKULSKI** • 2019 • FICTION • 26' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK (KFF SALES & PROMOTION), MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

No one ever notices Marcel. Invisible to a ticket inspector, overlooked by his boss, ignored by a couple smooching in the lift. One morning, this perfect, carefree life with no responsibility falls apart like a house of cards when Marcel prevents his female neighbour from jumping off a rooftop.



Never Good

DIR.: **PAWEŁ POWOLNY** • 2019 • FICTION • 18' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLOWSKI FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: DAGMARA MAGIERA, DAGMARA.MAGIERA@US.EDU.PL

Marta and Michael are a young couple expecting a baby. They don't want to raise him in the flat they share with roommates but they can't afford to rent their own apartment. They decide to visit Wiesław, Martha's grandfather, who lives alone since his wife died, and suggest that they swap apartments. Wiesław initially agrees, but after some time he makes one condition.



Roots

DIR.: **KUBA GRYŻEWSKI** • 2019 • FICTION • 14' • PROD.: KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLowski FILM SCHOOL
• CONTACT: DAGMARA MAGIERA, DAGMARA.MAGIERA@US.EDU.PL

Stefan visits his adult daughter who lives in another city. She has met her new boyfriend there but her father does not approve. The next time Marta takes her boyfriend to show him her hometown and meets her father for dinner, Stefan decides to act and to do everything to dissuade his daughter from her pursuing new love.



Ondine

DIR.: **TOMASZ ŚLIWIŃSKI** • 2019 • FICTION • 40' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

Cezary still lives with his mother and he is in love with Emilia, a rock singer. He also has a dark secret. One day, all three of them have to deal with the mythical Ondine and her curse.



Home Sweet Home

DIR.: **AGATA PUSZCZ** • 2019 • FICTION • 21' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

Ten-year-old Olaf auditions for Rent A Life, a company that offers the wealthy a chance to hire family members and friends. He has a plan and, no matter what the cost, he absolutely has to be cast in a role in someone else's life.



The Exam

DIR.: **BARTOSZ PADUCH** • 2019 • FICTION • 27' • PROD.: MUNK STUDIO – POLISH FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION • CONTACT: MICHAŁ HUDZIKOWSKI, M.HUDZIKOWSKI@SFP.ORG.PL

We've all been there. When you're twenty, everyone – aunts, teachers, neighbours, friends – keeps asking you the same questions: who do you want to be? What do you want to do? Are you in love? Bastek knows. He wants to study Fine Arts but things are a little complicated.



On Strike!

DIR.: **STANISŁAW HORODECKI** • 2019 • 23' • PROD.: GDYNIA FILM SCHOOL • CONTACT: MARCIN BORCHARDT, AKME@OP.PL

A day in the life of a 19-year-old boy called Karol who looks after his grandfather with Alzheimer's disease. Unexpectedly, Karol learns the family secret related to the dramatic events during the Polish workers' protests in December 1970. The past forces him to make the most important decision in his life to date.



Don't Change the Topic

DIR.: **HUBERT PATYNOWSKI** • 2019 • 30' • PROD.: AMA FILM CENTER • CONTACT: JOANNA BRODAWKA-ZYGMUNT, PRODUCTION@AKADEMIAMULTIART.PL

Polish tower blocks in 2019 and 'good guys against the disintegration of rules'. There are three simple ones that need to be obeyed in the neighbourhood: 'First of all: never deceive your mates. Secondly: do not be a loser and always respond to an attack. Thirdly – and the most importantly: do not report to the police. And whoever breaks them, they will suffer.' The film shows a housing estate jungle, a hood reality, rap from the block, loyalty and betrayal.



Border Crossing

DIR.: **AGNIESZKA CHMURA** • 2019 • 15' • PROD.: AMA FILM CENTER • CONTACT: JOANNA BRODAWKA-ZYGMUNT, PRODUCTION@AKADEMIAMULTIART.PL

The humming, sluggish summer of 1989. A car with a caravan reaches the Czechoslovakian-Polish border and joins a long queue. Bees are buzzing in the grass. Enclosed in a small space, a family bicker as the atmosphere thickens. On the back seat, a little girl is absorbed by the world of nature. With her, we wade into the incomprehensible world of the adults, glimpsing a fear that grows as they approach the border.



Bitter Herb

DIR.: **MARIA ORNAF** • 2019 • FICTION • 17' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: KRZYSZTOF BRZEZOWSKI, KBRZEZOWSKI@FILMSCHOOL.LODZ.PL

When wanting to stop breastfeeding a child, a mother in the old times would rub wormwood ointment into her bosom. Upon tasting the bitterness, the child would never desire for the mother's milk again.



Camouflage

DIR.: **ALEKSANDRA ŚWIERK** • 2018 • FICTION • 19' • PROD.: SHIPSBOY • CONTACT: JOANNA SZYMAŃSKA, SZYMANSKA@SHIPSBOY.COM

An intimate story about a mother and a daughter, about mourning and acceptance. A subtle psychological drama embedded in the Polish reality. It has just been 6 months since Weronika's father died. The women deal with the sudden loss in completely different ways. They live under one roof, but somehow apart. Only when they are detached from their routines, which are unbearable for them both, and forced to confront each other, can they talk to each other honestly. It is a short film directorial debut.



Loved Ones

DIR.: **ZOFIA KOWALEWSKA** • 2018 • FICTION • 14' • PROD.: THE POLISH NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL IN ŁÓDŹ • CONTACT: MARTA ŚWIĘTEK, KFF SALES & PROMOTION, MARTA.SWIETEK@KFF.COM.PL

Olga's teenage daughter suddenly goes to the hospital. The mother needs to face not only the child's disease, but also her ex-husband who she has not contacted for years.

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