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**Mountain wind headlines the Krakow Film Festival opening ceremony**

"The wind. A documentary thriller" directed by Michał Bielawski will open the 59th Krakow Film Festival. It is an emotional story about the "halny" wind - one of the most unpredictable winds in the Polish mountains. The film will be showcased as a part of the international documentary competition and the Polish competition. The opening gala for the Festival will take place on 26th May at the Kijów.Centrum cinema and it will also be the Polish premiere of this picture.

"When it comes it forces its own laws on reality, it becomes the conductor of events and music. Maybe that is why when people mention halny it seems like a distant relative that you want to avoid: someone difficult, conflicted and brutal, someone who you need to adjust to. The fact that the meeting with this wind will open this year's Festival in Krakow is wonderful to me" - says Michał Bielawski, the director of the film.

When the halny wind blows trough Podhale it leaves a trail of destroyed homes and woods behind it. The rapid changes in the atmospheric pressure strongly influences the wellbeing of people and animals. The creators of this documentary are fascinated with the mysterious power and observe how the disastrous wind changes the lives of several inhabitants of the small towns located in the Tatra Mountains.

Michał Bielawski created not only a story about the power of nature, but also about the very strong connection that humans have with it. The film showcases different stories immersed in the incredible highlander folk culture, full of fears, passions, love and dread, a full image of human weakness in the face of unpredictable forces of nature.

"For our opening ceremony we always choose a spectacular film, one that will grasp the audience and inspires them to stay in the cinema for the next week. "The wind" is especially close to us, as we feel the blows of halny even here, in Krakow. We feel better about it, as it wards of the smog and its presence usually isn't as ominous, but in Zakopane it is always awaited with anxiety", the Director of the Krakow Film Festival, Krzysztof Gierat explains the choice.

Michał Bielawski is a screenwriter and documentary and TV filmmaker. He was awarded by the Polish Film Institute for his series of interviews with accomplished Polish filmmakers entitled "One scene". He made his debut in 2013 with "Mudial. The highest stakes". In later years he directed documentaries: "1989" - a film about a crucial year in the history of political and social changed in Poland and the CEE region, "The team" - a film about the Polish volleyball national team and "In The Blink Of An Eye" - a film made to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Gdynia Film Festival.

"Wind. Documentary Thriller" is a co-production between Telemark and HBO Europe Nextra Film in cooperation with the Krakow Festival Office and support of the Polish Film Institute and Slovak Audiovisual Fund. The film was successfully presented during the Docs to Start session in 2015 and Docs to Go! in 2017, as part of the DOC LAB POLAND program at KFF Industry event. It received the DOK LEIPZIG Award and the prize of the Krakow Technology Park. The world premiere of the film will take place in the main competition of the prestigious Visions du Réel festival in Switzerland in April 2019.

The 59th Krakow Film Festival will take place on May 26 - June 2, 2019.

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