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Polish films and Polish film-makers at the 56th Krakow Film Festival

**From among several hundred Polish documentary, animated and short films, submitted to the festival, on the festival screens of Krakow, several dozen of the best films will be shown, made both by beginner film-makers as well as artists recognised in Poland and abroad.**

Polish films will participate in all four festival competitions: the international short film competition, the international documentary film competition, DocFilmMusic competition and the national competition. There will also be non-competing screenings: Panorama of the Polish Film, Krzysztof Kieślowski documentary film retrospective, the screening of the best films by the Dragon of Dragons winner, Marcel Łoziński, and a special series dedicated to the works of Andrzej Wajda. The opening film of the 56th edition of the festival is the latest film by Piotr Stasik, "21x New York City."

In recent years, it is clear that Polish documentary film-makers are interested in the world. In the competition, there will be, among others, the film which was made in Ukraine and in an emotional way tells about the tragic experiences of the war in the east of the country ("**Alisa in Warland**," dir. Alisa Kovalenko, Liubov Durakova). The film "**Icon**" by Wojciech Kasperski is set in the far-way Siberia in a psychiatric hospital, which functions as a shelter for social outcasts, whereas "**Monk of the Sea**" by Rafał Skalski is a story which takes place in a Buddhist monastery in Thailand. The protagonist of the film by Daria Lipko, "**State of Mind**" is a psychiatrist from Bosnia, who travels back in time in order to settle accounts with his own life, but also with the history of the former Yugoslavia. The film which crowns this list is "**21 x New York City**" by Stasik, an attempt to deal with the problems of the contemporary human condition, based on the stories of 21 characters, met in the New York City subway.

There will also be films dealing with deep and often extremely difficult family relationships. One of them is the latest film by Paweł Łoziński, "**Nawet nie wiesz, jak bardzo cię kocham**," which is a record of the uneasy process of healing the relationship between mother and daughter. "**Three Conversations on Life**" by Julia Staniszewska is also a painful ideological conversation between a mother, who is a doctor, and her daughter, a happy mum of children conceived by the IVF. The story of a couple, married for 45 years, who had their ups and downs, is told in the short documentary film "**Więzi**," which also participates in the international competition. In turn, "**Morgenrot**," (dir. Michał Korchowiec), presented within the frames of Panorama of the Polish Film, is a film about discovering, after many years, intimate and often embarrassing family secrets.

An interesting motif dealing with issues of the borderline with esoterica, exorcisms and the paranormal will be shown by three films: "**Dar**" by Przemek Kamiński - the story of an Ukrainian healer, who makes a commercial career in Poland, "**Z pogranicza cudu**" by Tomasz Jurkiewicz - the story of the seeker and explorer of ghosts near Krakow and the film by Konrad Szołajski, "**The Battle with Satan**," which acquaints the viewer with the world of exorcists and their "patients."

A large part of the documentary films are portraits of eminent figures from the world of culture and art. Among them, there are productions dedicated to Jonasz Kofta ("**Jonasz w brzuchu Lewiatana**," dir. Krzysztof Wierzbicki), to Stanisław Dygat ("**My Father from Neverland**," dir. Andrzej Dudziński), to Sławomir Mrożek ("**Mrożek. Życie warte jest życia**," dir. Paweł Chara), and to the bard and musician Przemysław Gintrowski ("**Gintrowski**," dir. Arkadiusz Bartosiak). One of the competing documentary films is the road movie by Adam Sikora, a poetic story about Ryszard Krynicki ("**Nadal wracam. Portret Ryszarda Krynickiego**").

The films "**Dwa światy**" by Maciej Adamek, "**Cheerleaders**" by Sławomir Witek and "**Daniel**" by Anastazja Dąborowska are stories of protagonists who face various kinds of disability. The first one is a portrait of deaf parents, told from the point of view of their teenage daughter, who can hear. The second is a record of the challenge, taken up by a beautiful, athletic and ambitious young woman, who wants to start the first cheerleading team in Poland, in which girls on wheelchairs will participate. The film, the eponymous character of which is Daniel, a boy afflicted by Down's syndrome, tells about the problems of teenagers, loneliness and the first desires.

Traditionally, among the short feature films submitted to participate in the Festival, the majority are productions made by students, mainly of the school films in Katowice, Lodz and Gdynia, as well as the Wajda School and Munk Studio, operating within the structures of the Polish Filmmakers Association. Masterful acting deserves attention, also by the leading Polish artists, such as: Anna Dymna ("**Grandma's Day**," dir. Miłosz Sakowski), Beata Fudalej and Julia Kijowska ("**The Tenants**," dir. Klara Kochańska), Małgorzata Hajewska-Krzysztofik ("**Otwarcie**," dir. Piotr Adamski), and Janusz Chabior in the film by Daria Woszek "**The Dogcatcher**."

As usual, animated films are strong during Krakow Film Festival. From among 13 animated films qualified for the national competition, 4 films will compete for the Golden Dragon statuette in the international competition, all of them are made by women. "**Xoxo - Hugs and Kisses**" by Wiola Sowa is a beautiful tale about intimacy, fascination and bodily expression, as well as about emotions and setting emotional boundaries. "**Impossible Figures and Other Stories II**" by Marta Pajek is the image of the world full of paradoxes and illusions, based on the concept of the impossible object. The film by Aneta Kwiatkowska-Naqvi "**Locus**," presents an extremely interesting visual form and animation technique, whereas "**Sexy Laundry**" by Izabela Plucińska is an erotic comedy, made using the traditional stop motion animation.

10 films will vie for awards in the music documentary film competition. **In addition to the Academy Award winners, Morgan Neville and Barbara Kopple**, a duo of young Poles will strive for the awards, namely, Szymon Uljasz and Magdalena Gubała and their film "**The Internal Ear**," presenting the work of Mikołaj Trzaska and the essence of improvisation.

Every year, the list of films qualified for the national competition at Krakow Film Festival awakens the most intensive emotions. For many film-makers, the Festival is a stepping stone to international career. This year, 45 films will participate in the competition: 24 documentary films, 8 short feature films and 13 animations. In Panorama of the Polish Film, 20 films will be shown, the majority of which will constitute Polish and international premieres.

**56th Krakow Film Festival is held from May 29 to June 5, 2016.**

A detailed programme will be published in the first days of May.

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