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## **Film Łódź – permanent exhibition**

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**Part I: *Film Łódź – the City of Attractions***

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**Part II: *Film Łódź – the Capital of Film***

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Printed by: **Oltom**

© Film Museum in Łódź 2021  
ISBN: 978-83-88820-71-7

Publisher: **Film Museum in Łódź**  
pl. Zwycięstwa 1, 90-312 Łódź  
[www.kinomuzeum.pl](http://www.kinomuzeum.pl)



**Muzeum  
Kinematografii  
w Łodzi**

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ŁÓDŹ

Permanent  
exhibition  
catalog

Film  
Museum in  
Łódź







FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTER OF CULTURE, NATIONAL HERITAGE AND SPORT  
Prof. Piotr Gliński

Łódź was and remains the capital of Polish film – dozens of significant titles created here have shaped the imagination of Poles, evoked their emotions and taught them Polish history over subsequent decades. It was in Łódź that the post-war film industry developed. Each year, a new group of artists would graduate from the Polish National Film School, and the Feature Film Studio, the Se-Ma-For Studio and the Educational Film Studio would employ young professionals who created Polish film culture. The films made in Łódź have been highly rated not only by Polish viewers, but also by international film experts, as evidenced by long lists of awards granted at festivals, competitions, polls, as well as Oscar nominations and, finally, the Oscars themselves.

People employed in film, starting from the first post-war feature productions created by the Polish Film School to the last films produced at the studio in Łąkowa Street, recall the unique atmosphere of those years. It was created not only by directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, actors, but also representatives of many professions related to film, from set and costume designers, props masters, editors, and sound engineers through technical teams creating elements of film worlds in carpentry and painting workshops, to stuntmen, pyrotechnists, and numerous anonymous laboratory employees, without whose contribution it would not have been possible to achieve the high artistic level of Polish cinema. They all shared the same passion for filmmaking. Łódź was a melting pot where personalities met, genres and styles mixed, and tradition coexisted with the avant-garde.

The new permanent exhibition mounted by the Film Museum, created as part of a two-year project co-financed by the Minister of Culture, National Heritage and Sport (*The Supporting Museum Activities Programme*) is the first exhibition in Poland devoted to the film history of Łódź. It seeks to tell this complex story, to which subsequent generations of artists add new chapters.





**MAYOR OF THE CITY OF ŁÓDŹ**  
**Hanna Zdanowska**

Each of us probably remembers their first visit to the cinema, the first film watching which they shed a tear, the first movie star to whose photograph they sighed before falling asleep. The constant repetition of the word “first” is by no means accidental. For many years, Łódź has been number one when it comes to Polish cinema.

The production scale of the Feature Film Studio in Łąkowa Street have been compared to Cinecittà, Mosfilm, and even Hollywood (the name Hollyłódź did not come out of the blue). Several generations of Poles have been raised on the animated films from Łódź “Se-Ma-For”, and the advice given by *Teddy Floppy-Ear / Miś Uszatek* helped even the most playful preschoolers fall asleep. Graduates of the Łódź Film School have conquered the film world, winning the most important film laurels, stealing the hearts of critics, and – even more importantly – of audiences.

The film has always been very important to the inhabitants of Łódź. I am glad that the new permanent exhibition at the Film Museum emphasizes the great role of Łódź in the history of Polish cinema. All the more so, as it also reminds us of how the inhabitants of our city used to spend their time a hundred years ago and more – before they could go to the cinema. A wonderful Kaiserpanorama, meticulously renovated cameras, projectors, and other technological wonders will bring us closer to the world we cannot remember.

I would also like to emphasize that the Film Łódź exhibition, co-financed by the city of Łódź, can be seen in the renovated interiors of the Scheibler Palace, the historical residence of one of the greatest industrialists in Łódź. Renovations, I always emphasize, are not only about walls. First and foremost, they signify new spaces that are to serve the inhabitants of Łódź and tourists, who are cordially invited to visit our beautifully developing city.

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Allan Starski

## **You must love the cinema**

I was lucky to spend my childhood years in a great place, namely, a tenement house at 67, Narutowicza Street in Łódź, where all the major filmmakers lived. They shot films that were later watched by many generations of Poles. Apart from my father Ludwik Starski, a screenwriter, there were also some directors, Leonard Buczkowski, Aleksander Ford, Jerzy Bossak, and a few outstanding production managers from among whom I remember Ludwik Hager the most. I played with their children in the yard, but I also participated in family and social meetings with adults. Evenings of discussions about films, telling jokes – I have fond memories of that time. It was then that I was swept away by the magic of cinema. The film set for *Graniczna Street / Ulica Graniczna* at the Feature Film Studio in Łódź made a great impression on me. I believed this city, which stood at the back of the studio, was real, and it was only my father who showed me that the façades of the houses were supported by scaffolding, and that the film city was a fiction. I was pretty cut up by the round-up scenes – some German soldiers, i.e. the extras dressed in Wehrmacht uniforms, loaded people onto the back of a vehicle. I still remember these scenes.

I also remember the visit to the set of Leonard Buczkowski's film *The Treasure / Skarb*, and seeing Danuta Szaflarska – her beauty was dazzling. To see a real star was a delight for me, even though I was just a little boy. At the studio in Łódź, I also had a chance to go for a ride on a huge American film crane. Together with Buczkowski, we rose above the set structures – it was a great experience. I remember the shooting of the railway carriage scene, built for the film *Forbidden Songs / Zakazane piosenki*: the “location” travelling on a belt outside the window, the model of the station, flashing lights – all this made a huge impression on me. At that time, Łódź was a “dream factory” modelled on Hollywood studios. In the following decades, everything deteriorated, a completely new system of making films developed, but, in the late 1940s and 1950s, the studio in Łąkowa created films on a great scale.

I recall the times when my father's and his friends' screenplays lay around at home, and I read them in secret. My father was passionate about film, and also aimed to become a master screenwriter. He believed that screenwriting was the most important part of the process of preparing for a film. In his view, the film was born the moment the screenwriter created the plot. Ludwik Starski assumed that the director carefully discussed each change with the screenwriter. Then films d'auteur started to be made. Directors would write the screenplays themselves, often improvising on the set. I remember the arduous creative process. My father wrote comedies – which seems a light and fun job, but is quite the opposite. Since it took place many years before the invention of portable computers, my father would use scissors to cut the script, assemble the sheets, glue them in, throw away some scenes, and return to them again. Then he and Leonard Buczkowski would talk about how the scenes were to be filmed. Back then the shooting script was written meticulously. The screenplay contained the plot of the film, while the shooting script was an implementation description: in one column – dialogues, in the other – a description of the camera movement, close-ups, long shots. I remember my father as a sociable family man who played the piano beautifully. Everything I recollect is very subjective and emotional.

Initially, I did not think about working in film; I studied interior architecture, then exhibition design. I learned about set decoration at home. Roman Mann and Anatol Radzinowicz, great art directors, were among my father's friends – I still have their drawings. The first film on which I worked as an assistant set decorator was Jan Rybkowski's *The Polish Album / Album polski*, a demanding training ground of film set work. I was lucky that Witold Sobociński was the cinematographer there. The knowledge – about colour, light, a film frame – I acquired at that time, I owe him, then my master, and later, for years, my friend.

Finally, I would like to emphasize what, apart from knowledge, talent and artistic skills, is important in the work of a filmmaker: the ability to lead a team of people and use money from the film budget in such a way that it becomes visible on the screen. And, of course, you must love the cinema.

Bogusława Bronowicka / Agata Mendrychowska / Kornel Nocoń / Zuzanna Woźniak

## ***Film Łódź* – about the permanent exhibition at the Film Museum in Łódź**

The first part of the exhibition *Film Łódź – the City of Attractions* presents the concept of “the double birth of cinema”. Initially, the cinema was a technological novelty, which, in the entertainment system of the 1890s, functioned in parallel with stage shows, or illusion shows. Short films were screened both in cabinets of curiosities, variéte theatres, as well as by seasonal entertainment companies. The owners of venues with attractions used films as a cheaper alternative to “live” shows. A filmed performance of jugglers, acrobats, or magicians could be screened repeatedly without having to pay the artists each time. It was not until the 1910s, when cinema became an institutionalized form of entertainment, that the era of cinematography, as we know it today, began. The industry gained a new infrastructure: there sprung up cinema theatres with a regular repertoire and audiences fascinated by the stories from the silver screen.

By including historical devices, such as a kinoscope, magic lanterns, optical toys, and home projectors in the exhibition narrative, it has been possible to recreate the atmosphere of Łódź of those times, which was then a rapidly developing centre offering its residents access to interesting developments in the world of technology and entertainment. The main “character” of this part of the exhibition is a working Kaiserpanorama – a device for viewing three-dimensional slides. This original Kaiserpanorama from August Fuhrmann’s workshop, along with the restored 19<sup>th</sup> century orchestrion, and other period exhibits, constitute the highlights of this exhibition part. *Film Łódź – the City of Attractions* is a presentation of leisure activities until 1939, as well as a story about people who created the richness and diversity of the entertainment system: about the Krzemiński brothers, Władysław and Antoni, or Teodor Junod and Eugeniusz Vortheil, about the first Łódź cinemas, film productions, and private, innovative initiatives related to cinematography. One such project was the film *The Promised Land / Ziemia obiecana* directed by Aleksander Hertz (1927), shot on location in the factory town. The surviving fragments of the film can be seen at the exhibition.



A part of the exhibition is the historical interiors of the Film Museum, where two stories meet: one concerns pre-film toys from Scheibler's times, used by the bourgeoisie for entertainment purposes, the other – the film palace as a setting for about 30 films. The most famous of them is *The Promised Land / Ziemia obiecana* by Andrzej Wajda (1974), another film adaptation of Reymont's novel shot almost 50 years after Hertz's film. *The Scheibler's film palace* is made up of the original rooms of the factory owner's residence, included in the narrative of the exhibition through a collection of unique memorabilia concerning the making of *The Promised Land*. These are the director's handwritten notes, Barbara Ptak's costume designs, or the dress of Mada Müller, played by Bożena Dykiel.

The other part of the exhibition *Film Łódź – the Capital of Film* is devoted to Łódź film institutions established after 1945, when the city became the centre of Polish cinematography. Specialized production studios, the Film School, plants producing cinematic equipment were founded, and the cinema network was rebuilt and developed.

The most famous films were shot in Łódź – from Leonard Buczkowski's *Forbidden Songs / Zakazane piosenki* to Paweł Pawlikowski's Oscar-winning *Ida* or his Oscar-nominated *Cold War / Zimna wojna*, which is why film locations constitute one of the key topics of the exhibition. It is an introduction to the story of the Polish capital of film based around the following main themes: education at the Łódź Film School, film production shown through the prism of the Feature Film Studio, Opus Film, Educational Film Studio, "Se-Ma-For" Studio of Small Film Forms, and the development and collapse of the cinema network in Łódź.

Each of these institutions has its own characteristics and its own space at the exhibition. The Film School is presented through a story about student life, including entrance exams – one of the most exciting events commonly associated with the school, when hundreds of candidates compete for admission in the elite fields of study: directing, direction of photography, acting. In the following years, students undergo many tests determining their student fate, until the submission of their diploma films, which is why the exhibition presents materials related to students' creative output, also in the area of the avant-garde, represented by the Workshop of the Film Form, initially operating as a school science club.

As part of the presentation of the Feature Film Studio, the exhibition includes a collection of artifacts related to various stages of film production – from pre-production, through production, to the documentation of making a film print. Moreover, the exhibits that once belonged to the filmmakers and employees of the studio are displayed, including set decorations used in popular films by Juliusz Machulski, or props and costumes from epic communist productions – *Knights of the Teutonic Order / Krzyżacy* directed by Aleksander Ford and *Pharaoh / Faraon* by Jerzy Kawalerowicz.

In addition to the production colossus, i.e. the Feature Film Studio, the exhibition also presents the contemporary “heir” of the studio legacy – the Opus Film, a production company with international success, the winner of the Oscar for *Ida* directed by Paweł Pawlikowski.

In the space devoted to the Educational Film Studio, the variety of film genres made there is presented – typical examples of scientific, didactic and popular science films, as well as films d’auteur of independent filmmakers, including Bogdan Dziworski, Wojciech Wiszniewski, or Andrzej Barański. Among the exhibits, visitors can find stills and production photos from film sets, as well as original technological solutions, such as a camera housing for underwater shots, or the stand made by the director Karol Marczak to film chicken embryo development inside an egg.

Independent small film forms and the richness of animation techniques are the main topics of the Se-Ma-For and auteur animation room. The creators associated with the studio and its predecessors (including the Puppet Film Division of the Feature Film Studio in Tuszyn), did not only produce animated fairy tales for children. For this reason, animators from Łódź are presented at the exhibition from a different, less popular side. Among the exhibits there are puppets, celluloids, graphic materials, and stills from the dreamlike productions of Zenon Wasilewski – a pioneer of puppet film, experimental films by Daniel Szczechura, Stanisław Lenartowicz, or Piotr Dumąła, and from Zbigniew Rybczyński’s Oscar-winning *Tango*.

The theme connecting pre-war and post-war film Łódź are the stories of Łódź cinemas. As part of the narrative about cinemas, the exhibition includes original advertising materials from the most elegant pre-war cinema theatres, as well as the reconstructions

of the neon signs of post-war cinemas in Łódź are displayed. Moreover, the activity of “Prexer” Łódź Cinematechnical Plant, thanks to which you see what projection devices looked like before the digital era, is presented.

The opening of the exhibition at the Film Museum signifies the state-of-the-art presentation of a variety of unique objects, archive documents, and interviews with filmmakers conducted especially for this occasion.

The catalogue complementing the exhibition is also entitled *Film Łódź*. Its first part contains original essays by our consultants, while the other part – a collection of photographs of the most valuable exhibits that can be seen at the exhibition.

Łukasz Biskupski

## ***The Promised Land. A grand vision of life in Łódź***

The pre-war history of Polish film is full of gaps that are difficult to fill. It is so for the simple reason that most films from the earliest period have not survived, unfortunately. Recent years have seen many spectacular discoveries and digital reconstructions, but you will only be able to get a rough idea of what Polish silent cinema was like.

That is why each surviving film is a valuable monument of Polish film culture, regardless of its artistic value. The remains of our lost films are also precious, such as the fragment of *The Promised Land / Ziemia obiecana* from 1927, recently found in the United States. These scraps allow at least a brief glimpse of the film, which may never be seen in its entirety.

This film is particularly important to the inhabitants of Łódź. Not only is it the first adaptation of the most important novel about Łódź, but also a large part of the shoot took place in this city – which was rare, as the most important Polish film production centres were located in Warsaw and, due to high costs, sets were reluctantly located outside the capital.

In 1927, along with the economic boom in the country, Polish film production took off. Just like every year, the Sfinks studio – the oldest and, for a long time, the most important Polish centre of the film industry – announced the release of a new title. However, it was not supposed to be yet another bankable, sloppy melodrama, as was usually the case with this production company. This time, the film announced was to herald the moving of Polish cinema to the sphere of high culture. Aleksander Hertz, the owner of Sfinks, emphasized in press interviews that the filming of *The Promised Land* was one of his greatest dreams. The twentieth anniversary of the studio's existence was the right occasion to make that dream come true.

The press reported the jubilee super-production – “a grand vision of life in Łódź”, according to promotional materials. A series of study visits to major European studios

was announced in order to learn about the latest achievements in film technology and production. The producers boasted about importing state-of-the-art equipment from abroad.

For the purposes of shooting, it was planned to build a theatre (for the opera scenes) and a factory that would burn down completely. It would have been a precedent in the history of Polish cinema devoid of spectacular feats in the area of set design.

Jadwiga Smosarska, the main film star of Sfinks, was cast as Anka Kurowska. The character of Karol Borowiecki was played by Kazimierz Junosza-Stępowski, Maks Baum – by Stanisław Gruszczyński, and Bucholc – by the doyen of the Polish stage, Ludwik Solski (it was his film debut). It was decided that the action would be moved to the present day, probably due to the lower costs as compared to the production of a film recreating the realities of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, women's skirts were shortened, and the characters travelled by plane or car.

Location shooting in Łódź began in mid-July. The crew stayed at the Grand Hotel, where, as reported in a promotional article, there were “pilgrimages” of those who “wanted to get into the film”, as well as of autograph hunters tormenting the hotel doorman for details about the stars. Filming in the streets also attracted crowds. Due to large numbers of fans, Smosarska's lonely drive through Łódź in a Fiat had to be shot at four in the morning. Factory scenes were shot in the factories Widzewska Manufaktura and the Scheibler and Grohman United Industrial Plants. Country scenes – in Drwalew and in the vicinity of Łowicz. Studio scenes – in the Sfinks studio in Warsaw. “In the evening, a glow of light comes from the glazed studio on the eighth floor of the tenement house in Zbawiciela Square”. reported “Kurier Warszawski”. The same one where Pola Negri made her debut before World War I.

The condition of the film leaves much to be desired. Less than 15 minutes of the film has survived to our times; just a few fragments of the film tape spliced together haphazardly without maintaining any scene continuity. Two of them, however, partially compensate for the general disappointment: the scene in the factory hall when Kessler (Kazimierz Justian) chooses Zośka Malinowska, and the other one, when Zośka's father (Jan Szymański) puts up a tragic fight

against the factory owner. The first of the scenes, shot in a real factory environment and most likely with the participation of real textile workers, whose worn-out faces the viewer can look for a moment, has an undeniable documentary charm. The dramatic and tragic fight between Kessler and Malinowski was announced as one of the film's strongest moments. It was reported that, during the shooting, the engineer supervising the machinery began to scream in terror, and the horrified cameraman momentarily stopped filming. Indeed, the number of shots and camera angles create an impression of dynamic editing. The effect is enhanced by superimposed shots, thanks to which death – in the form of a skull – looks into the eyes of the characters. In the next moment, the flywheel scatters their remains and it does not matter much that they are clearly the legs of a mannequin rather than the blood-covered fragments of a body...

There is no chance to see, however, the more spectacular scene of a factory fire. It was filmed in an unfinished factory building. Apparently, the shots were technically difficult, filmed, as the press used to say on such occasions, on "the American scale". The cameramen positioned themselves at two points (filming from several cameras was rare at the time). Military pyrotechnicians were located inside the building and in front of them, a crowd of extras in working clothes waited for the signal. A journalist described it as follows:

«Let's begin!» sounds the command. The lights rattle, hiss and cast a beam of silvery rays [...]. A pre-arranged whistle sounds. The cameras start filming. Through a megaphone, a command is heard, «Fire!» A double whistle again. Flames burst from gaps in the windows. A triple whistle. It's for «smoke». And, indeed, clouds of smoke start coming from the building walls to obscure the fiery tongues ... A trumpet. It's for the fire brigade. A mighty steam fire engine pulls up. The firefighters jump down quickly, set up multi-storey ladders in the blink of an eye, and climb the burning scaffolding...

Now, it is the turn of the actors and extras. [...] The extras run in a crazy rush. Then, a command can be heard, «Get down!». Specially appointed extras fall to the ground. Others rush to them and carry them out of the set. Someone collapses in the foreground. The command, «Smosarska!». Obedient to the command

of the «commander-in-chief», Smosarska runs courageously towards the «wounded» one, and, breaking through the dense crowd of extras, kneels in front of him and bandages his «mutilated» arm. Other extras glance jealously at their colleague who was lucky to be playing the injured one”.

You will not see the opening sequence in which Smosarska appears on horseback in the countryside: “a wonderful girl of the Polish countryside, modern, because full of energy and independence – but whose features are based on the tradition of the landed gentry”. “She attends to the harvest and grain threshing, beaming with beauty at the same time”, as the press wrote. You can only read reports about the documentary presentation of Łódź: “a footage of the city shrouded in fog and smoke at dawn, factory whistles, the first tram, workers with tin bottles crossing the factory gate ...” It is impossible to judge whether you – like the audience at the premiere – can be moved by the scene at old Borowiecki’s house when Anka wants to conceal the fire distracting her father by playing the piano nervously, while the glow of the fire is already reflected in the room. You will not see how Solski – Bucholc, in a critically acclaimed performance, flees from the ghosts of the workers chasing him during his factory round before his death. You will miss the ball scene at the factory owner’s place, immortalized in stills, where women with tomboy haircuts are dancing some modern dance... You can only hope that the rest of the film is lying somewhere in forgotten cans.

On November 10, 1927, the day of the premiere, the advertising poster of the film with the characters played by Smosarska and Junosza-Stępowski shown against the background of smoking Łódź chimneys, commissioned from the well-known illustrator Stefan Norblin, was displayed at the entrance of the modern Palace cinema in Warsaw. Paid journalists could not praise the film highly enough and reported crowds waiting in front of the box office. There are, however, reasons to believe that it was not a complete success.

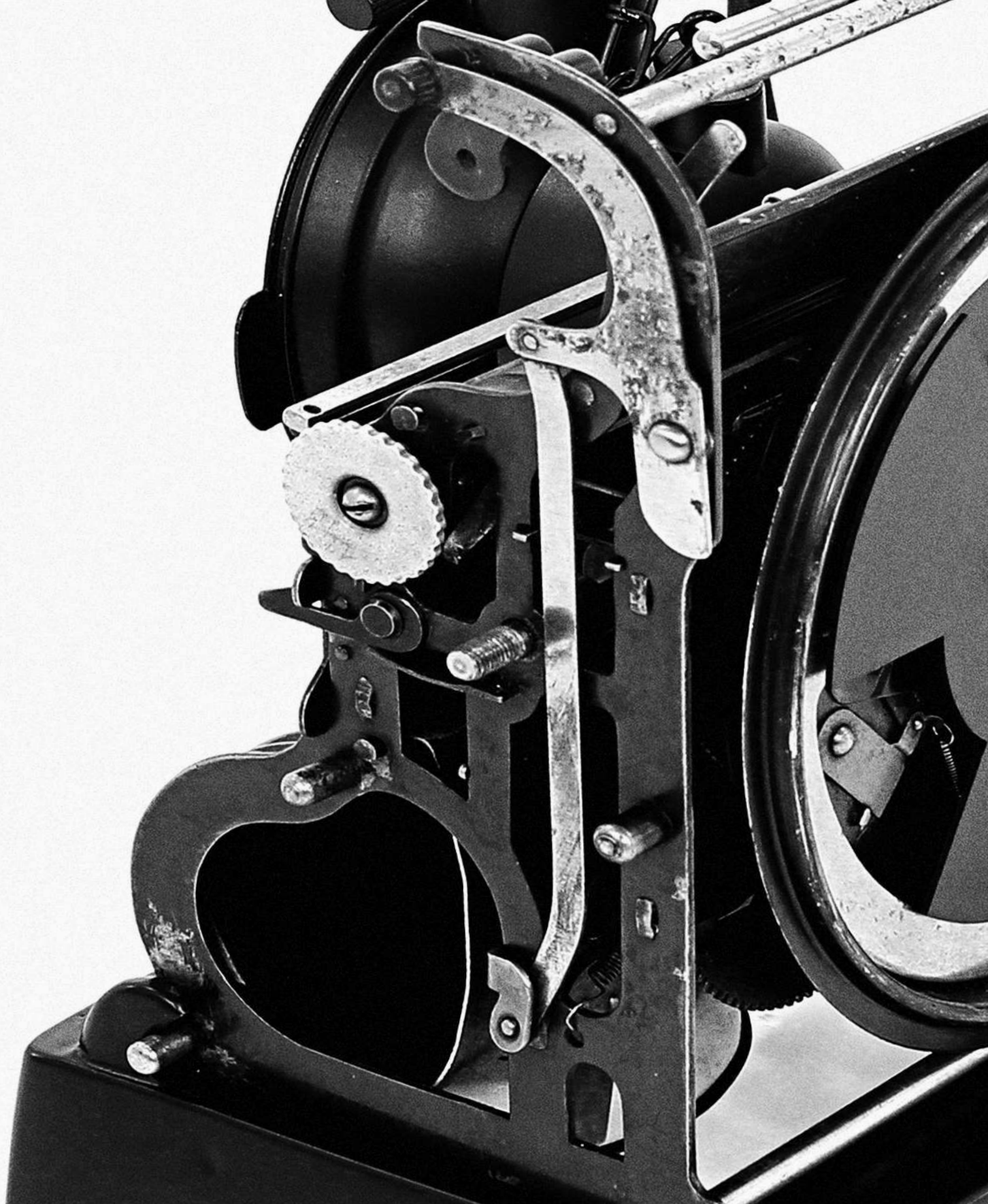
The well-known reviewer Maria Jehanne Wielopolska praised the cinematographic technique, which, in her opinion, was “completely European at times”. Nevertheless, she criticised the film for not being an adaptation, but a “cinematic illustration”, a cluster of scenes not connected by a clear narrative line, and, moreover, very archaic

in terms of film style. She found the fire scene amusing, especially the fragments shot not in real locations, but with the help of a mock-up (“the view of this edifice made up of toothpicks and matches is unforgivable”).

Witold Wandurski, on the other hand, wrote in the avant-garde “Dźwignia” that *The Promised Land* is the first Polish film truly worthy of attention. Above all, he liked the depiction of the world of labour, capital, and machines. “In this film, there is a pathos of overcoming obstacles, the charm of building, a harbinger of the coming constructivist culture”, he wrote. He praised (cautiously) the skills of the filmmakers, editing, trick photography, and, above all, the images of machines, which he lovingly enumerated: spin machines, spool machines, automatic looms, etc. What he did not like about the film was the fact that it criticized industry and favoured the folk nature of the Polish manor house with “Łowicz cutouts”, and did not show the real, very difficult working conditions of textile industry workers.

In the journalistic summary of the season, *The Promised Land* was considered a “missed and unsuccessful” project. The reviewer also pointed out that the film did not achieve the financial success of the earlier Sfinks blockbusters which starred Smosarska, such as *Iwonka*, or *The Leper / Trędowata*. Perhaps this production was indeed a manifestation of Hertz’s ambitions, a man who, despite his belief that melodramas – which was a genre he specialized in – are more successful, ultimately wanted to make an art film. He declared *The Promised Land* was to be the crowning achievement of his career – and, indeed, it was. He died in January 1928, less than two months after the film’s premiere.





Jakub Wiewiórski

## Łódź as a location

The presence of film crews has been an inseparable element of the landscape of Łódź for decades. It is impossible to count the feature films, series, documentaries, educational, instructional and student films shot in the city. It would be hard to find places in Łódź that have not heard the command “Action!”.

Actresses and actors, cameras, microphones, catering buses and the sound of a clapperboard attract the attention of cinema lovers and ordinary passers-by. Most often, this attention is kind, but there are many Łódź inhabitants who consider filmmakers to be contemporary plunderers, who will cause problems, make a mess, and, when it comes to paying for it, they will raise arguments about the need to support national culture. To quote Osgood Fielding III, the protagonist of Billy Wilder’s *Some Like It Hot*: “Well, nobody’s perfect”.

Before 1939, only a few films had been made in Łódź. Among them *The Promised Land / Ziemia Obiecana* from 1927, directed by Aleksander Hertz, found by Kamil Stepan and Jerzy Maśnicki at the Library of Congress archives in Washington. The surviving fragments – a must-watch at the Film Museum’s exhibition – contain almost no location shots, so you must trust the press reporting that the film was shot in Scheibler’s and Grohman’s factories and in Widzew Manufaktura, among others. You can admire the pre-war Łódź in the melodrama *I Lied / Skłamałam* directed by Mieczysław Krawicz (1937). Following the protagonist (Jadwiga Smosarska), you can see the Łódź Kaliska railway station, and, through the window of a tram no. 5 – Piotrkowska Street and Wolności Square with the statue of Tadeusz Kościuszko, and, finally, the gate to the tenement house at 11, Andrzeja Street with the signboard of Józef Mencil’s photographic studio.

### This is how the city has changed

Guessing addresses visible in films, especially the non-obvious ones, is a great joy and also a pretext to explore the history of Łódź, observe how architecture, public

transport, and people have changed. It is best to watch films where the period of the film setting and the period of the film shooting match, and there is little or no interference caused by the film set design. If you were to go on a journey through time, it might look like this.

In the diploma film *End of the Night / Koniec Nocy* directed by the Film School students Julian Dziedzina, Paweł Komorowski, and Walentyna Uszycka (1956), and shot entirely in Łódź, it is worth paying attention to the Wisła cinema at 1, Tuwima Street, along with the constant presence of ticket touts offering viewers tickets at an inflated price, as well as to the newly built tram terminus in Północna Street, officially known as the Suburban Tram Station.

As soon as the opening credits of the film *Their Weekday / Ich dzień powszedni* by Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski (1963) disappear, you can see an emergency services doctor (Zbigniew Cybulski) running into the building at 2, Moniuszki Street, miraculously avoiding being hit by a car (the road traffic in both Moniuszki and Piotrkowska Streets is quite heavy). It is worth knowing that the famous Honoratka Café run by Stefania Brudzińska was located at this address – a meeting place for the bohemians of Łódź, including filmmakers, from 1948 to 1975.

You can also take a look at numerous Łódź locations in the popular series *Far from the Road / Daleko od szosy* by Zbigniew Chmielewski (1976), as well as in the film *Go Beyond the Orchard / Pójdiesz ponad sadem* (1974), which opens Waldemar Podgórski's triptych, and the film *Wedding's Off / Wesela nie będzie* (1978) that ends it (all the parts are linked by the character played by Krzysztof Stroiński). Among the locations, there is the "Uniwersal" department store in Niepodległości Square, Narutowicza Street with a street telephone, or Tuwima Street, along which trams run, and to park a motorcycle there you must pay the fee collector.

In the film *Closer to the Sky Every Day / Co dzień bliżej nieba* directed by Zbigniew Kuźmiński (1984), apart from the environs of Polonia at 67, Piotrkowska Street, one of the 24 cinemas operating at that time in Łódź, Sienkiewicza Park and the dilapidated buildings on the southern side of Armii Czerwonej Street (today Piłsudskiego Avenue) near Sienkiewicza Street, the camera also captured the Górniak

marketplace, Northern Bus Station and the funfair (no longer in existence) in Na Zdrowiu Park, with shooting ranges and a terrifying roller coaster.

Out of numerous locations in the film *Aleja gówniarzy / Absolute Beginner* by Piotr Szczepański (2007), let us highlight the party thread which included: the wall at 7, Tuwima Street, where young people used to drink alcohol bought at the nearby petrol station (it was joked that it was the only one in Poland selling more alcohol than fuel); the predecessor of OFF Piotrkowska, i.e. China Town, which owed its name to kiosks with Asian food; the Łódź Kaliska pub in the decade of its greatest popularity.

It is worth expanding your knowledge about the city from newsreels, student films, as well as documentaries, out of which Stanisław Kokesz's *Ballad about Łódź / Ballada o Łodzi* (1957), Edward Pałczyński's *Sunday in Łódź / Łódzka niedziela* (1962) or Krzysztof Kieślowski's *From the City of Łódź / Z miasta Łodzi* (1969) are the minimum to get you started. It is also necessary to watch *The Palaces of Promised Land / Pałace Ziemi Obiecanej* by Leszek Skrzydło (1967), which inspired Andrzej Wajda to make *The Promised Land* in 1974 – the film (and series) most associated with Łódź, based on Władysław Reymont's novel. Of the over one hundred locations used in the film, most were in Łódź. Wajda's film featured locations such as Poltex Cotton Industry Works (today's Manufaktura Center) together with the Palace of Izrael Poznański (Museum of the City of Łódź), Karol Scheibler's Palace (Film Museum), Karol Poznański's Palace at 32, Gdańska Street (Music Academy), Maurycy Poznański's Palace at 36, Więckowskiego Street (Art Museum), Księży Młyn (Priest's Mill), Moniuszki Street... The list can go on.

### **Polish filmmakers are as rich as Croesus**

You can often hear Andrzej Wajda's anecdote: what aroused strong emotions among filmmakers from abroad was the search for an answer to the following question: How much must everything that can be seen on the screen have cost? American producers found it hard to believe that the nineteenth-century buildings, along with huge factories from the beginning of the century, forming complexes separated by walls from the rest of the city, with railway stations, palaces and warehouses, remained practically unchanged up to the 1970s. In the Uniontex factory (the weaving mill

on the corner of Kilińskiego and Milionowa Streets, today in disrepair), it was enough to replace fluorescent lamps with lamps reminiscent of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to go back almost a hundred years. What was a curse for the inhabitants of Łódź, i.e. the neglected quarters in the centre of the city, was a real attraction for the filmmakers (*In Darkness / W ciemności* by Agnieszka Holland from 2011, *Warsaw 44 / Miasto 44* by Jan Komasa from 2014). In the Oscar-winning film *Ida* by Paweł Pawlikowski (2013) takes you back to the 1960s. The section of Legionów Street between Gdańska and św. Jerzego streets appears in the film with shop windows and reconstructed signboards: “Meat. Sausages”, “Haberdashery”, “Rywal Chocolates”, “Umbrella Repairs”, “Społem Delicatessen”; you can see, among others, a tenement house at 13, Dowborczyków Street, St. Josef’s church at 22, Ogrodowa Street, gloomy Braterska Street, or the Jewish cemetery, as well.

In addition to the palaces of former factory owners, railway stations are among the most filmed locations. Łódź Fabryczna Station, as it used to be, is remembered by audiences mainly thanks to Krzysztof Kieślowski and the scenes in his *Blind Chance / Przypadek* (1981), in which Witek Długosz (Bogusław Linda) runs along the platform with a bag over his shoulder, chasing the departing train. Łódź Fabryczna station can also be seen in *Walkover / Walkover* by Jerzy Skolimowski (1965) or in the series *07 Come In / 07 Zgłoś się* by Krzysztof Szmagier (1976–1987), where Borewicz (Bronisław Cieślak) and Zubek (Zdzisław Kozień) spot among travellers popular actors coming from Warsaw to shoot at the Feature Film Studio in Łąkowa Street. This is how a fragment of the Łódź film reality was captured.

The characteristic neon of Fabryczna Station appeared for the last time in the feature film *Weekend* by Cezary Pazura (2010), while the building of Łódź Kaliska Station can be seen in its original shape from before the reconstruction in *Killing Auntie / Zabicie ciotki* by Grzegorz Królikiewicz (1984). New Kaliska station featured in Marek Kotowski’s *Love Ya / Ajlawju* (1999) and Henryk Dederko’s *The Fairy Land / Bajland* (2000).

### **In a different role**

Let us go back to 1959, when Jerzy Kawalerowicz shot the film *Night Train / Pociąg*. In the background of the opening credits, you can see passengers walking up the station stairs, filmed with a fixed camera located above their heads. Then, the ones who get

on the train are: first, the doctor (Leon Niemczyk), and the last one, when the train has already started, Staszek (Zbigniew Cybulski). I recall this scene not only because it shows the Kaliska train station beautifully, but also because it is a film in which Łódź substitutes for a different city (in the case of the film *Night Train*, it is Warsaw). Other examples? Here are a few.

In Antoni Bohdziewicz's *Lucky Boots / Kalosze szczęścia* (1958), the aforementioned Honoratka Café became the seat of the Hanseman funeral home at 20, Goldstrasse in Munich. A garden gazebo located at the back of Schweikert's Villa at 262/264, Piotrkowska Street (today's European Institute), substituted for a funeral home in Portugal in the film *Aria for an Athlete / Aria dla atlety* by Filip Bajon (1979).

The wooden house in Scalenkowa Street in the Ruda Pabianicka district, later transferred to the Łódź City Culture Park at the Central Museum of Textiles, terrified the viewers of the American thriller *House* (2008), directed by Robby Henson, as an abandoned guesthouse in a remote area in Alabama. In *Thr3e*, made two years earlier by the same director, Józek's Shepherd's Hut in the vicinity of Rudzka Góra, and the then abandoned Ramisch's factory, today's OFF Piotrkowska, among other locations, pretended to be in America.

The action of *Inland Empire* by David Lynch (2006), partially shot in Łódź (including the post-factory halls of Poltex and the Herbst Palace), is probably set in Hollywood. The title and the plots may be a clue, but the director's specialty is providing confusing hints, so please treat this paragraph as a mere supposition.

In one of the first scenes of the film *In the Shadow / W cieniu* by David Ondříček (2012), boys kick a ball in the playground of an elementary school at 12a, Tuwima Street, which "played" a backyard in the Czechoslovak capital in 1953.

During the shooting of Paweł Pawlikowski's *Cold War / Zimna Wojna* (2018), the front of the sports hall in Skorupki Street, decorated with Polish, German, Czechoslovak, Soviet and Korean flags, transported viewers to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Berlin in 1951. The German capital can also be seen, next to *The Promised Land* by Andrzej Wajda (1974), *How Far, How Near / Jak daleko stąd, jak blisko* by Tadeusz Konwicki (1971), or *Pavoncello* by Andrzej Żuławski (1967),



in numerous film incarnations of Karol Scheibler's Palace (the seat of the Film Museum since 1986). The ballroom – decorated with Nazi emblems – appears in *More Than Life at Stake / Stawka większa niż życie* by Janusz Morgenstern and Andrzej Konic (1967) as a representative interior, where Captain Hans Kloss is decorated with the Iron Cross.

Also in *More Than Life at Stake* the ballroom became Café Rose in Istanbul, the staircase – the entrance to the café, Scheibler's study – the owner's (Rose – Alina Janowska) room, while the Mauritanian room appeared in the series as a room for playing cards.

The ballroom of Karol Scheibler's Palace also featured as Wokulski's hotel room in Paris in the film *The Doll / Lalka*, directed by Ryszard Ber (1977). The Parisian passages from the 1950s, which appeared in Paweł Pawlikowski's *Cold War* (2018), were staged in Hotelowa Street by the Grand Hotel. The signs "Café" and "Antiquités" were placed on the facades, and stylish tables were put in front of the Le Balto bar. Set decorators arranged the Parisian interiors at 1, Kościuszki Avenue and at 21, Sienkiewicza Street. They also used the staircase in the villa at 38, Wróblewskiego Street, which, coincidentally, belonged to the French manufacturer Leon Allart in the nineteenth century, and, in the twentieth century, to Ernest Saladin, an entrepreneur and the consul of the French Republic in Poland.

A short text allows only an outline introduction to such a broad topic as films shot in Łódź locations. Nevertheless, it is also worth paying attention to such titles as *What Will My Wife Say to This? / Zadwońcie do mojej żony* by Jaroslav Mach (1958), *Return to Earth / Powrót na Ziemię* by Janusz Nasfeter (1966), *Candlelight Dinner / Party przy świecach* by Antoni Krauze (1980), *Vabank* by Juliusz Machulski (1981), *Bermuda Triangle / Trójkąt bermudzki* by Wojciech Wójcik (1987), *Soccer Poker / Piłkarski poker* by Janusz Zaorski (1988), *Escape from the 'Liberty' Cinema / Ucieczka z kina "Wolność"* by Wojciech Marczewski (1990), *Kroll* (1991) as well as *Pigs / Psy* (1992) by Władysław Pasikowski, *Edi* by Piotr Trzaskalski (2002), or *Courage / Wymyk* by Greg Zgliński (2011).

Katarzyna Mąka-Malatyńska

## **Shades of gray. Łódź in documentary films of students of the Łódź Film School**

“The natural environment of a film director is the city. It has been like that since the medium of film was born. And it is not only because film-making is an extensive industry, connected with many administrative, financial and cultural institutions, whose centres are located in the city. The city means pace, dynamics, movement, a training ground for technological and civilizational changes in their greatest and most monstrous form. It is also a human melting pot, a conglomerate of all manifestations of social life, and at the same time, the drama of loneliness in a crowd”<sup>1</sup>. The natural environment of a trainee filmmaker and student of the Łódź Film School is Łódź. A special city – delightful and repulsive. A city of constant growth and perpetual, painfully visible decay. Both sides of the city have fascinated young filmmakers coming to Targowa Street. Both have inspired and provided not only the backdrop, but also the subject of their documentary student films.

### **Red Łódź**

Before Socialist Realism was proclaimed in Poland, Kazimierz Sheybal had presented the interior of the Kohn Palace – which is still the main school campus building – in his student film *First Etudes / Pierwsze etudy* (1949), as well as the growing film industry in post-war Łódź. Smiling and satisfied with their conscientiously prepared screenplays, the students eagerly get into the back of a truck to go to the film studios, where their first films are to be made. There is little time to carry out their work, as new projects are constantly being made in Łódź. However, it is not the developing film industry that will become the subject of future school productions. Łódź assumes the colour red – banners are waving, rallies and parades are organized. The slogans attributed to Lenin, Stalin and Bierut are mounted in the Film School: “Of all the arts, film is the most important”, “Film helps the working class and the Party educate workers



in the spirit of socialism“; “The fundamental task of our generation is to make all cultural achievements available to the masses by building socialism”. Edward Pałczyński, one of the students of first Film School cohorts, recalled: “In the May Day parades our ranks shone with shirts white as snow, on which red ties bloomed. You could count people wearing plain clothes, that is, those who were not fully indoctrinated yet, on the fingers of one hand”<sup>2</sup>. Obligated, but sometimes also willing to fulfill their duties towards the socialist homeland, the students documented Łódź as the city of birth and development of the new system. In accordance with the requirements of Socialist Realism, they produced reportages saturated with propaganda content and accompanied by intrusive commentary, as well as staged documentaries. *Academics of the Red Łódź / Akademicy czerwonej Łodzi* (dir. Ewa Petelska, 1950) is a peculiar amalgam of a report of the first district conference of Academic Union of Polish Youth, which took place in Łódź on April 2, 1950, in Moniuszki Street (today’s YMCA building), with a fictionalized story about Zygmunt Kowalczyk, an active member of Academic Union. Nevertheless, at that time, Łódź was not only a city of intellectuals, but, above all, of labourers, where, in the summer of 1950, a meeting of representatives of International Association of Trade Unions of Textile and Clothing Industry Workers was held. It constitutes the subject matter of the film *The World Congress of Trade Unions / Światowy Zjazd Związków Zawodowych* (dir. Jan Riesser, 1950) – a record typical of Socialist Realism, showing the congress proceedings, and accompanied by commentary and music. The delegates not only held discussions, but also “visited the Łódź textile factories to familiarize themselves with the working conditions of their comrades”. Little can be learned from these films about life in Łódź during the Stalinist era and the true appearance of the city. Neither is such knowledge provided by two other films of that period, showing, according to the rules of Socialist Realism, an optimistic vision of the city where libraries (Janina Hartwig’s film *In the New Library / W nowej bibliotece* from 1950, presents the activity of the Ludwik Waryński Municipal Library in Łódź – today, The Marshal Józef Piłsudski Provincial Public) and new residential buildings for workers [*New Homes / Nowe domy* by Stanisław Kokesz, (1950)] are sprouting up. In the latter film, you can see poor, grey yards in Łódź, dilapidated

tenement houses, where the poor once lived, contrasted with former factory owners' palaces. However, it was not mentioned that those tenement houses were still inhabited. In this film, Łódź appears as a great construction site "for all working people".

Slightly more images from the real life of the city can be found in student films the poetics and themes of which are closer to the "black series" of Polish documentaries. In *Sky for the City / Niebo dla miasta* (1959) by Stanisław Olejniczak, the problem of air pollution in Łódź, causing diseases of its inhabitants and destruction of buildings (dirty facades and dust drifts on the roofs can be spotted), is mentioned for the first time.

### Łódź becomes multi-coloured

The image of the city in students' films began to change before *Sky for the City* was made. That metamorphosis was closely related to the period of the Thaw (1953-1964). Agnieszka Osiecka, who studied film directing at the school in Targowa at the time, mentions three facets of Łódź: working class Łódź, Łódź Chicago and Łódź Hollywood<sup>3</sup>. The Film School seemed to have belonged to the latter sphere of the city, but its students peered out from behind the fence surrounding the school. In 1957, Roman Polański made the student film *Break Up the Dance / Rozbijemy zabawę...* He showed a dance party organized by the fountain at the back of the school building – a multicoloured crowd full of sophisticated and elegant students belonging to the bohemian community of the city, separated from grey houses and dirty yards. Polański collided the world he belonged to himself with the Łódź hooligans' underworld, previously present in the "black series" films and the debut feature film *End of the Night / Koniec nocy* (1956), produced by the school and directed by its three graduates, Julian Dziedzina, Walentyna Uszycka and Paweł Komorowski. The thugs quickly broke up the elite party, and Polański was reprimanded for jeopardizing the safety of his peers. Years later, Marek Hendrykowski wrote: "He [Polański] was the first to show, in such a brutal form, designed as a happening, the artificiality of the symbolic isolation of the school territory from the rest of the city"<sup>4</sup>.

The multi-coloured character of Łódź, which did not belong only to the world behind the school wall, was discovered by students of film directing and direction of photography

3 Ibidem, p. 156.

4 Marek Hendrykowski, *Filmowa Łódź w oczach studentów i profesorów PWSFTviT*, „Images” 2013, no. 21.

at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. The cityscape became the background for the extraordinary experiments of the Workshop of Film Form. One such experiment was conducted by Józef Robakowski at Bałucki marketplace – he observed that bustling place from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. on November 25, 1970, shooting 2 frames every 5 seconds (*The Market / Rynek*, 1970). Three years later, Ryszard Waśko made *Wacław Antczak's Journey to the Kiosk in Główna Street / Podróż Wacława Antczaka do kiosku przy ulicy Główniej*. Here, you can see fragments of Targowa and Główna streets (today Piłsudskiego Avenue) shot on colour film and limited by a specific frame, as the camera was placed on a moving bicycle. For the Workshop artists, who focused on researching new formal solutions, the city was not the main topic of the film, although its character corresponded to their investigations.

In the late 1960s, Zbigniew Rebzda reached for an experimental form – nevertheless, focused on a specific “here and now”. In his student film *Jotes* (1969), he showed the interior of J. Strzelczyk Mechanical Plant in Łódź, specialising in the production of grinders. In that film, the director combined animated fragments with the observation of the rhythm of working machines, flowing metal alloys, falling sparks, as well as a colour film with a black and white one. The images are accompanied by a non-diegetic sound – the effects arranged in the melody of a working factory. In his view, an enterprise was not only a modern workplace, but almost a futuristic laboratory, which showed his fascination with the factory as the heart of the city.

Almost ten years later, the students of the Film School again managed to capture the vitality and multi-coloured character of Łódź in a joint project under the supervision of Kazimierz Konrad. In *Lodz Sketches / Szkice łódzkie* directed by Waldemar Szarek and Jacques Senney (1978), the shots of old factory halls shrouded in smoke and Łódź streets laid with cobblestones are juxtaposed with the images of a modern weaving mill. To the rhythm of electronic music that was popular at the time [similar music was used by Andrzej Wajda for the soundtrack of *Man of Marble / Człowiek z marmuru* (1976)], the camera moves around the machines, glances at thousands of looms, and exits into a crowded Piotrkowska Street. For a moment, the melody of *The Spinner / Przędzniczka* by Stanisław Moniuszko, the city anthem, emerges from among the sounds to transform into contemporary dance music. In the colourful sequence of the film, you can see

multicoloured neon lights, shop windows, modern underground passages, fashion shows, and entertainment venues. Łódź is a modern metropolis bustling with life.

Another joint student project concerning Łódź – this time of students of directing – was created three decades later under the artistic supervision of Maciej Drygas and Mirosław Dembiński. *Łódź from Dawn till Dusk / Łódź od świtu do zmierzchu*<sup>5</sup> was produced four times: in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2011. Each of the films consisted of several short films. They testify to how much the art of documentary film has changed over the years, as well as the attitude of young filmmakers towards the city which fascinates and inspires, but rarely delights. The most striking features of the films are related to their original character, a tendency to search for an intriguing individual protagonist, an interest in the phenomena that do not fit into the mediatic image of Łódź, and, finally, the selection of original points of view. Jennifer Malmqvist focused on the paradoxical beauty of the city and made a film in a sewage treatment plant, stressing the rhythm and pace of operating devices. In almost abstract frames, she captured colourful liquids mixing with each other. In *Black Chicken / Czarny kurczak*, David Makowski tells the story of love, rejection and separation between two stuffed toy chickens. The scenes were shot against shopping center Manufaktura, one of many large, grey and neglected underground passages in Łódź, and the former Łódź Fabryczna station, one of filmmakers' favourite places. In the student films *Pigeons / Gołębie* (dir. Igor Chojna) and *Star Watcher* (dir. Magnus von Horn), you can see the city from its roofs. Undoubtedly, it is this specific perspective, from which you do not usually see Łódź on TV, that distinguishes all the editions of the project, and resonates with a variety of topics. The directors do not analyze the social structure of the city, do not try to determine the causes of its stagnation, do not tell its history, although all these themes appear in the student films indirectly in the background.

### Łódź shades of gray

One of the protagonists of Matylda Kawka's student film *The Polish Lesson / Lekcja polskiego* from the series *Łódź from Dawn till Dusk*, a foreigner, indicates Łódź Fabryczna

5 The 2011 edition was entitled *From Dawn to Dusk / Od świtu do zmierzchu*. In 2007–2009, the project was also under the artistic supervision of the editor Dorota Wardęszkiewicz.

railway station as his favourite place in the city: “Why? Because there are trains there which leave Łódź”. Many years earlier, an outstanding lecturer at the Film School, Jerzy Mierzejewski, remarked: “I received the honorary citizenship of the city of Łódź, which meant that I was entitled to free tram rides and a place in the cemetery, but I must admit that I do not know the city at all except for the Grand Hotel, where I have always stayed. This city is terrible, I move around with my eyes shut”<sup>6</sup>. And yet it did attract attention, especially of those young filmmakers who caught the documentary film bug. Krzysztof Kieślowski recalled: “There was so much fascinating ugliness there. Faces reminiscent of Dostoyevsky: terrible experiences and suffering, and, at the same time, acceptance of it all. The greyness of walls, sadness in faces, spaces of sheds, yards, corridors, a special tariff on the tram for the transport of a cabbage shredder. I wandered around Łódź with my camera day in day out”<sup>7</sup>. It was the images of Łódź from the student films made by the future director of *Blind Chance / Przypadek* and those shot over the next decade by other directors that were instilled in the audience’s memory. Indeed, they were continued in well-known documentaries created by filmmakers after graduating from the Film School [*From the City of Łódź / Z miasta Łodzi*, dir. Krzysztof Kieślowski (1969), *Our Friends from Łódź / Nasze znajome z Łodzi*, dir. Krystyna Gryczelowska (1971), *Łódź Biography / Łódzki życiorys*, dir. Danuta Halladin, Lidia Zonn, (1984)]. Łódź turned out to be a „pars pro toto” for the country – a perfect place to create films in the spirit of the “New Change” pointing out the errors of the socialist system, such as failed or never completed investments [*Łódź Downtown 1972 - April / Śródmieście Łodzi 1972 - kwiecień*, dir. Jerzy Matula, (1972)], as well as documentaries questioning the untrue image of the labourer created by propaganda. In *Tomorrow. April 31 - May 1, 1970 / Jutro. 31 kwietnia - 1 maja 1970* (1970), Wojciech Wiszniewski created a bitter collective portrait of young people, distant from the image disseminated by television and the film chronicle. They were the children of workers who did not want to follow in their parents’ footsteps. According to the official message, Wiszniewski’s protagonists – Łódź “shirkers” – did not exist, hence Wiszniewski emphasised in the title that the action of the film took place on April 31, which is a day that cannot be found in the calendar.

6 *Filmówka...*, op. cit., p. 157.

7 *Ibidem*, p. 180.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Dorota Kędzierszawska's moving film *Beginning / Początek* (1982) was made in the spirit of the previous decade, but more intimate, focused on the individual. It was, actually, an experimental film in which the use of shape, light and shadow is of fundamental importance. Its protagonist does a monotonous, exhausting job in a textile factory, and returns home in a hurry to her crying baby. The director succeeded in capturing the depersonalizing nature of the work. The sphere of the film image is dominated by objects, while the sound layer – by the clap of heels on the pavement and the monotonous sounds of machines. In the end, the movement freezes abruptly. In the freeze-frame, you can see the protagonist – a Łódź spinner. Off-screen, her voice is heard: she has no time to talk, she has children, she is hurrying home. And, again, the crying baby can be heard.

In the student films from the 1970s and 1980s, Łódź is a city of greyness, tired faces, and worn-out hands of workers. In the following decade, this image will be complemented by deserted factories.

### ***And Łódź will stay anyway*<sup>8</sup>**

Łódź is not merely a backdrop – not only a topic. It is a place that, sometimes for a certain period of time, sometimes for life, defines the identities of the Film School students. Although, today, they can easily go with the camera to remote corners of the country, travel beyond its borders to carry out documentary tasks, they often stay in Łódź. They still look into its nooks and crannies, follow the beaten paths leading along Piotrkowska Street, factory buildings turned into lofts and shopping malls, through the moonlike, post-industrial landscape. More and more often, they do not just observe the city making their films. Łódź becomes internalized in them. HeOg Kim, the director of the student film *Łódź. In Search of One's Own Time / Łódź. W poszukiwaniu własnego czasu* (2006), concludes: “Łódź appears to me like a fairy tale, and yet, I find this city a strange place. I stayed there for four years and it seemed to me just like a day and as if in a dream. I have the impression that the time was dancing in the air like waves of heat that disappear into the water”.

8 This is the title of a student film by Marcin Podolec made in 2010, in which he combined animation with documentary in a form characteristic of his films. Podolec portrays Łódź, making his heroes wander to places far from tourist routes, not found in guides.





Konrad Klejsa

## **Feature Film Studio in Łąkowa Street – workplace, art space**

Nearly 600 full-length feature films and about 1,000 episodes of TV series were shot at the Feature Film Studio in Łódź. All the full-length feature films produced between 1945 and 1955 were made in Łąkowa; later, the studio employees were responsible, among others, for the Oscar-nominated super-productions: *Pharaoh / Faraon*, *The Deluge / Potop*, *The Promised Land / Ziemia obiecana*, and *Nights and Days / Noce i dnie*. The last three films were made in 1974, which can be distinguished as one of the best years in the history of the studio. The second particularly successful period concerned the very beginning of the 1980s, when two wonderful – but costly and not easy to produce – costume series were filmed in Łąkowa: *Queen Bona / Królowa Bona* and *The Career of Nikodem Dyzma / Kariera Nikodema Dyzmy*, and, shortly thereafter, several excellent and important full-length feature films (*Blind Chance / Przypadek*, *The Mother of Kings / Matka Królów*, *The Inn / Austeria*, *The Quack / Znachor* and *Vabank*). Probably, not everyone knows that two films – *Tango* and *Peter and the Wolf* – both of which received an Oscar in the Best Short Animated Film category, were also shot in the studio at 29, Łąkowa Street.

The output of the Feature Film Studio is enormous – and it is all the more amazing that so little has been written about it. In addition to the 2013 album *Dream Factory / Fabryka snów*, an “oral history” written by Stanisław Zawiśliński and Tadeusz Wijata, and a dozen anecdotes collected in the volumes about set design masters published by the Film Museum, there are only a few dozen press articles. The obstacle to undertaking studies on the history of the studio is certainly the scarcity of sources. The imagination of historians is still ignited by stories about piles of “waste paper” – which probably included unique production materials – thrown away during the mythical “ownership transformations”. Although the documentation of the studio in the municipal archives runs to several hundred files, they concern only a part of its activity. In turn, in the company archive of Łódź Film Centre, the legal successor of the studio, almost exclusively personal files are found, which, due to the provisions on the protection of personal data, are unfortunately, rarely made available.



## From “Barakowo” (the barracks) to “Hollyódź”

Paradoxically, quite a lot is known about the beginnings of the Feature Film Studio. From 1944, a group of filmmakers from General Berling’s army, commanded by Colonel Aleksander Ford (who, before the war, was a member of “Start” Art Film Lovers’ Association), made documentary shorts, initially choosing Lublin as the location of the film “headquarters”. As the front line advanced towards the West, it became necessary to decide where to permanently locate the studio: in Kraków or Łódź (the destroyed capital was out of the question). Ultimately, Łódź was chosen – probably because of its proximity to Warsaw and because of the “proletarian” social structure of the city complying with the ideological doctrine of the new government. The fact that Ford knew Łódź from his childhood was probably of some significance, as well (it is usually assumed that he was born in Kyiv – although in the questionnaire kept in the Feature Film Studio personal file he indicated Łódź as his birthplace).

The headquarters of “Polish Film” State Company, established at the end of 1945, which had a monopoly on both the production and exploitation of films, was situated in Targowa Street (in today’s building of the Film School Rector’s Office) until the end of 1947. The laboratory and the editorial office of the biweekly “Film” magazine were located at 88, Narutowicza Street, while the copy rental office and cinema management – at 33, Sienkiewicza Street. Nevertheless, the most important thing was the studio. The sports hall at 29, Łąkowa Street, where the Hitlerjugend rallies were held during the war, was adapted for this purpose. It is not certain who indicated this location to Ford at the beginning of 1945 (according to an account, it was Olgierd Samucewicz, according to another one – Stefania Koprowicz). There is no doubt, however, that the city authorities initially blamed Ford for “seizing” the building (the Łódź press did not hold back on their criticism of the filmmakers, either). The official opening of the Polish Film studio, with the participation of Warsaw officials, took place in early December 1945.

The main problem of the film industry in the first years of the The Polish People’s Republic was the shortage of staff able to operate the technical equipment, mostly requisitioned in the “regained territories”. Before the war, Warsaw was the centre of film production. Many professionals died during the occupation, some ended up in the West; the survivors flocked to Łódź, where they shared their knowledge with their young apprentices. Among

the pre-war specialists contributing to the Feature Film Studio (the name appeared in 1947) in Łódź, one should mention Stefan Dękierowski (in the 1930s, a co-owner of the “Falanga” film studio), Ludwik Hager (a production manager, later, the production manager of the “Kadr” Film Unit), Czesław Grabowski (assistant cameraman), the sound engineers Stanisław Urbaniak and Józef Bartczak, the set decorators Józef Galewski (he made the first painted backgrounds for films before World War I), and Czesław Piaskowski (later, a non-professional actor known from minor roles), and the make-up artist Jan Dobracki (he worked on his last films in the 1960s in Wrocław).

In 1948, the studio gained another small studio (270 m<sup>2</sup>), and, in 1950, yet another one (770 m<sup>2</sup>). They had to wait a bit longer for the next one: when the fourth one (of almost 900 m<sup>2</sup>), known as “czwórka” (“Four”), was made available in 1960, it was the most modern film studio in Poland (with a trapdoor and a water tank for special scenes). And yet, the working conditions left a lot to be desired – the studio employees fumed at the comparisons with the Czechoslovakian Barrandov, claiming (in “Głos Robotniczy” of April 27, 1965) that a more appropriate name for the Łódź studio was “barakowo” (“the barracks”). The turn of the 1960s and 1970s brought a further expansion of the studio, where new administrative rooms were built, and, above all, a modern Sound Department, designed by the engineer Jakub Kirszensztajn, and was put into operation in 1970.

Initially, all filmmakers working in the film industry were employed by “Polish Film” State Company, later, they became employees of individual units. In 1949, the “Polish Film” Production Department was divided into Feature Film Studio in Łódź, Educational Film Studio, and Documentary Film Studio in Warsaw. In 1954, the Wrocław studio, established only a year earlier, became independent. The Feature Film Studio in Łódź also comprised Post-Production Dubbing Studio, which was moved to Warsaw in 1955 (with a branch in Łódź). A year later, Puppet Film Studio (later “Se-Ma-For”) and Animated Film Department (it would next become part of the Animated Film Studio in Bielsko-Biała) separated from the Łódź film studio.

In 1965, the Łódź studio produced more films than the Wrocław and Warsaw ones combined, but, only a decade later, the total number of films made by those cities was almost equal to the annual production in Łódź (while the number of feature-length films produced in Wrocław remained more or less at the same level, a gradual production

increase at the Warsaw studio was noticeable). In turn, as far as Polish cinema premieres are concerned, there were almost as many films from Warsaw as from Łódź in 1985. The number of TV series produced in Łąkowa Street also decreased – from the mid-1970s onwards, Polish Television commissioned their production to its own studio (“Poltel”) more and more frequently.

An important aspect of the film relationship between Łódź and the “headquarters” in Warsaw was related to film units. The concept – known in both Nazi Germany and the USSR, and later adopted by the film industries of the Eastern Bloc – consisted in the formation of small creative groups. The first units were created in 1948, initially operating at the Łódź studio, but were closed down during the Stalinist period. During the Thaw, in 1955, five film units were formed – this time in Warsaw – which were initially conceived as a form of self-governance of filmmakers. A year later, a separate company was founded – Film Artists’ Units (from 1969 under the name of “Film Units” Film Production Company – which acted as a producer of feature films for cinemas and took over the employment of creative film employees: directors, production managers, cinematographers, set decorators... The studios employing technical and manual workers switched to provision of services, i.e. they were obliged to provide jobs to people delegated by the units to shoot a given film.

Warsaw was the seat of almost all the units. On the one hand, such a design of the production system bore many hallmarks of a colonial relationship: the central management ordered the production of a product to a skilled, though lower-paid workforce from the periphery, retaining the exclusive right to trade in it (in this case – to accumulate profits from the exploitation of the film). At the same time, the arguments in favour of the above-mentioned interpretation became clearer in the capitalist reality of the Third Polish Republic – in the national film industry, costs and profits finally fell into one basket (from 1957 – of The Film Industry Executive Board). The justification for the “colonial” relationship between the units and the studio was the fact most of the creators lived in the capital (which attracted them in a more powerful way with the development of television). Of course, Łódź benefited from their visits – also, because many of them taught at the Film School. The latter functioned in a certain symbiosis with Łódź studios – also with Łąkowa. Students could make their films at the studio, do their

internships there, and earn some money as extras, while learning the secrets of the craft, and, sometimes, having classes there (for example, the famous “hasówki” – workshops on master-shot and various methods of editing the footage shot in this way conducted by Prof. Wojciech Jerzy Has). Wiktor Budzyński, the director of the studio for many years, was also the head of the Film Production Organisation Study – he “caught” the most talented graduates and entrusted them with tasks in Łąkowa.

Interestingly enough, many directors living in Warsaw on a permanent basis valued the opportunity to work in Łódź – not only because the entire production cycle of the film could be completed in one place, but, in addition, there were fewer distractions that might have kept them away from professional matters. When staying in Łódź, they could concentrate on work. Perhaps the film industry was not the only one that reversed the typical trajectory of commuting to work – the famous “film train” departed from Warsaw to Łódź (apparently, at 7.20 a.m.), filled with directors and actors heading either to Łąkowa or Targowa street. Those who stayed longer in Łódź, most often used the nearby Mazowiecki Hotel, built in the mid-1960s. Before, (and also in the second half of the 1980s, when the Mazowiecki had already deteriorated a bit), the city’s main “film” hotel was the Grand.

### People and films

The Feature Film Studio in Łódź can be considered a relatively large production facility. Between 1956 and 1989, it employed around 900 people (the studio staff was less numerous at the end of the 1950s and 1980s, slightly larger – in the 1970s). In practice, the relationship between the Feature Film Studio and film units was such that shooting crews – consisting of filmmakers formally employed by Warsaw and crew members from the studio – were appointed to make a specific film. All the creative workers received a basic salary for “being on call”, while bonuses and overtime concerned the duties carried out by specific shooting crews. Available workspaces (shooting studio, sound studio, editing room) and technical means (materials for building the set, lights, microphones for shooting, etc.) were distributed by a manager who had actual “power” over daily production.

The Feature Film Studio was an enterprise typical of a people’s democracy in many respects. First of all, it was bound by the absurdities of the planned economy – that

is, the requirement to predict how much material (in this case – how many kilometers of film stock, bulbs for lights and prefabricated elements for set decoration) will be used in the following year. However, the product that came out of that particular factory was atypical – dependent both on orders placed by units and on the allocation of film stock, and, finally, requiring each time a specific “raw material”, often difficult to obtain, especially when it came to set decoration and costumes.

All that had to be supervised by film production managers, overseeing everyday activities from the rooms with “FPM” signs. The rooms were occupied by outstanding professionals (some linked to Łódź more strongly, others less)<sup>1</sup>: Mieczysław Wajnberger (*The Last Stage / Ostatni etap, More Than Life at Stake / Stawka większa niż życie*), Wilhelm Hollender (*Farewells / Pożegnania, The Leper / Trędowata*), Stanisław Adler (*Canal / Kanał, Innocent Sorcerers / Niewinni czarodzieje*), Jan Szymański (*The Depot of the Dead / Baza ludzi umarłych, The Burning Border / Pogranicze w ogniu*) Jerzy Rutowicz (*Night Train / Pociąg, Through and Through / Na wylot*), Urszula Orczykowska (*Innocent Sorcerers / Niewinni Czarodzieje, The Hostage of Europe / Jeniec Europy*), and Zygmunt Wójcik (*Death of the President / Śmierć prezydenta, Mr. Blot's Academy / Akademia Pana Kleksa*) who often collaborated with her, Lechosław Szuttenbach (*The Ashes / Popioły, The Haunted / Niech cię odleci mara*), Konstanty Lewkowicz (*Birth Certificate / Świadectwo urodzenia, Memoirs of a Sinner / Osobisty pamiętnik grzesznika przez niego samego spisany*), Jacek Szeligowski (*Blind Chance / Przypadek, Between the Cup and the Lip / Między ustami a brzegiem pucharu*), Andrzej Sottysik (*Inspection of the Crime Scene 1901 / Wizja lokalna 1901, Pigs / Psy*) or Michał Szczerbic (*Provincial Actors / Aktorzy prowincjonalni, The Young Magician / Cudowne dziecko*).

It was no secret that many people of Jewish origin worked in the production manager's section, especially until 1968. One of them was the legendary Henryk Szlachet.

In the closing credits of many films (from *Matter to Be Settled / Sprawa do załatwienia* to *The Ascended / Wniebowzięci*), he is listed either as a “set manager” or “second production manager”. In fact, he was almost a “do-all”, and was particularly good at buying things which

1 At this point, and beyond, I intentionally abandon the custom of naming film titles with the names of directors; I am also not writing about actors or cinematographers. Let this text be an opportunity to mention the names of those cinema artists who represent less high profile professions (ergo: whose work for the studio – on and off the set – is too rarely remembered). As a rule, I put two film titles next to each name mentioned – one older and one of the last, on which a given person worked in Łąkowa.

were necessary for the production but not available on the market. He did not speak perfect Polish, which led to many misunderstandings and, as a consequence, anecdotes (after Szlachet's death, they were collected and retold by the weekly "Szpilki").

Also, amazing sets were created in Łąkowa, designed by most eminent set designers, such as Anatol Radzinowicz (*Forbidden Songs / Zakazane piosenki, The Ashes / Popioły*), Roman Mann (*Canal/Kanał, Goodbye, Till Tomorrow / Do widzenia, do jutra*), Jerzy Skrzepiński (*Pharaoh/Faraon, Vabank*), Jerzy Skarżyński (*Story of the Golden Boot / Historia żółtej ciżemki, The Hourglass Sanatorium / Sanatorium Pod Klepsydrą*), Tadeusz Wybult (*Birth Certificate / Świadectwo urodzenia, The Structure of Crystal / Struktura kryształu*), Zdzisław Kielanowski (*Walkover/Walkower, More Than Life at Stake / Stawka większa niż życie*), Wiesław Śniadecki (*Love the Mermaids / Kochajmy syrenki, The Cruise / Rejs*), Bolesław Kamykowski (*Face of an Angel / Twarz anioła, Black Clouds / Czarne chmury*), Ryszard Potocki (*Night Train / Pociąg, How Far, How Near / Jak daleko stąd, jak blisko*), Wojciech Krysztofiak (*Free City / Wolne miasto, The Deluge / Potop*), Jerzy Groszang (*Women's Republic / Rzeczpospolita babska, The Finger of God / Palec boży*), Janusz Sosnowski (*Madhouse / Dom wariatów, Kingsize / Kingsajz*), Andrzej Kowalczyk (*Aria for an Athlete / Aria dla atlety, Escape from the 'Liberty' Cinema / Ucieczka z kina Wolność*), Andrzej Przedworski (*Point of No Return / Vabank II, czyli riposta, Farewell to Autumn / Pożegnanie jesieni*), or Bogdan Sölle (*Provincial Actors / Aktorzy prowincjonalni, The Case of Bronek Pekosinski / Przypadek Pekosińskiego*).

The realization of all those projects was made possible thanks to the involvement of the employees of Set Construction Department, which included painting, carpentry, and stucco workshops. When the studio first started its activity, models of capital city streets were built in Łąkowa (at that time not separated from the Poniatowski Park by the W-Z route), used in the films *Forbidden Songs / Zakazane piosenki* or *Adventure in Mariensztat / Przygoda na Mariensztacie*. Soon after, the films *Canal / Kanał* and *Night Train / Pociąg* were shot in the Feature Film Studio. Specialists from Łąkowa also built set decorations on locations – in nearby towns (in Aleksandrów near Łódź, a model of the Brandenburg gate was built for the films *Heading for Berlin / Kierunek Berlin* and *The Last Days / Ostatnie dni*, as well as in other cities (for example, in Kraków, a borderland town was recreated for *The Hourglass Sanatorium / Sanatorium Pod Klepsydrą*, but also

on distant continents (a crew of several dozen Feature Film Studio employees were delegated to film *Pharaoh / Faraon* on locations in the Uzbek desert).

The visuals of a film are also greatly influenced by costumes and make-up. Ewa Braun worked for the studio for almost ten years – as an interior designer (*Queen Bona / Królowa Bona*) or a costume designer (*Jealousy and Medicine / Zazdrość i medycyna*). The Feature Film Studio crews included the most prominent representatives of the latter profession: Jerzy Szeski (*A Generation / Pokolenie, The Ashes / Popioły*), Barbara Ptak (*Pharaoh / Faraon, Nights and Days / Noce i dni*), Ewa Gralak-Jurczak (*Hubal, Vabank*), Gabriela Star-Tyszkiewicz (*The Leśniewski Family / Rodzina Leśniewskich, Medium*), Magdalena Testawska (*The Deluge / Potop, The Story about Master Twardowski / Dzieje Mistrza Twardowskiego*) and Danuta Hałatek (*Mr. Blot's Academy / Akademia Pana Kleksa, Burial of a Potato / Pogrzeb kartofla*). Professionals active in the industry to this day, such as the costume designers Ewa Krauze and Małgorzata Braszka, or the make-up artists Waldemar Pokromski and Liliana Gałązka, started their career in Łąkowa. It can be said that they are the heirs of the traditions of the masters of these professions: Tadeusz Schossler (*The Two Who Stole the Moon / O dwóch takich co ukradli księżyc, Karate Polish Style / Karate po polsku*), Irmína Romanis (*The Crew / Załoga, Madhouse / Dom wariatów*), Maria Lasnowska (*Walkover / Walkower, The Deluge / Potop*), Janina Sękowska (*The Cruise / Rejs, The Case of Bronek Pekosinski / Przypadek Pekosińskiego*), Irena Kosecka (*A Matter to Be Settled / Sprawa do załatwienia, The Voyages of Mr Blot / Podróże Pana Kleksa*) or Teresa Tomaszewska (*Night Train / Pociąg, Sexmission / Seksmisja*). When it turned out that some detail was missing from the set, the reliable props master Tadeusz Kunikowski (working continuously from *Forbidden Songs / Zakazane piosenki* to the series *The Career of Nikodem Dyzma / Kariera Nikodema Dyzmy*), whose cavernous pockets contained much more than you might have imagined, would come to the rescue.

The best set design would not look good on the screen, if it was not for the efforts of the camera department. It also included lighting specialists from the Department of Lighting Technology, responsible – both in the studio and on location – not only for the electrics, but also for the transport and positioning of the heavy lights. From among the many employees of this department, let us just mention Tadeusz Zajęc (*Forbidden Songs / Zakazane piosenki, More Than Life at Stake / Stawka większa niż życie*), Aleksy



Krywsza (*Soldier of Victory / Żołnierz zwycięstwa, How Far, How Near / Jak daleko stąd, jak blisko*), Julian Zwieryński (*The Five from Barska Street / Piątka z ulicy Barskiej, Countess Cosel / Hrabina Cosel*), and Stanisław Matuszewski (*Eroica, Burial of a Potato / Pogrzeb kartofla*).

The pride of Łąkowa has always been sound. From 1952 to 1970, the Department of Sound Technology and Editing at the Feature Film Studio was headed by the legendary Jerzy Blaszyński. It was his surname that gave rise to the informal name of the Sound Studio (“Palace under Blacha”)<sup>2</sup>. Prominent sound engineers have worked there: Stanisław Piotrowski (*Eva Wants to Sleep / Ewa chce spać, The Deluge / Potop*), Wiesław Ćwikliński (*Where Is the General / Gdzie jest generał, How I Unleashed World War II / Jak rozpętałem II wojnę światową*), Jan Czerwiński (*Mr. Anatol’s Hat / Kapelusz Pana Anatola, The Story of Sin / Dzieje grzechu*), Janusz Rosół (*Vacations with Ghosts / Wakacje z duchami, Career of Nikoś Dyzma / Kariera Nikosia Dyzmy*), Mikołaj Kompan-Altman (*Walkover/Walkover, Polonia Restituta*), Krzysztof Wodziński (*The Finger of God / Palec boży, The Curse of Snakes Valley / Klątwa Doliny Węży*), and Leszek Wronko (*The Treasure / Skarb, Kornblumenblau*), and, from the late 1970s, also his son, Marek. Among others, the music consultant (the “link” between the director and composers) was Anna Łżykowska who usually worked in tandem with Zdzisław Szostak, who, from the 1970s, usually conducted the orchestra at the “Palace under Blacha” (for almost 200 films!). A separate profession was represented by Foley artists – the famous “Nowak clan” (Zygmunt Nowak and his sons, Bogusław and Wiesław – the latter was permanently employed at Se-Ma-For), and, later, Henryk Zastróżny. Thanks to them, we know that the sound of horse hooves can be obtained using coconut halves, and the squeaking of footsteps – potato flour. From the mid-1970s, Piotr Domaradzki, Barbara Domaradzka, and Piotr Knop were responsible for post-synchronization and the sound-mixing of an entire soundtrack (the latter is still in charge of sound editing for films in the building in Łąkowa).

Most of the Feature Film Studio employees were men, but the editing profession was traditionally dominated by women. Editors who have gone down in the history of the studio and Polish cinema are: Zofia Dwornik (*Under the Phrygian Star / Pod gwiazdą frygijską, The Promised Land / Ziemia obiecana*), Alina Faflik (*Knights of the Teutonic Order / Krzyżacy, Swan Song / Łabędzi śpiew*), Wiesława Otocka (*The Five from Barska Street*



*/ Piątka z ulicy Barskiej, The Inn / Austeria*), Janina Niedźwiecka (*Unvanquished City / Miasto nieujazmione, An Epitaph for Barbara Radziwiłł / Epitaforium dla Barbary Radziwiłłówny*), Halina Nawrocka (*Canal / Kanał, Trees / Drzewa*), Lidia Pacewicz (*Winter Twilight / Zimowy zmierzch, The Story of Sin / Dzieje grzechu*), Wanda Zeman (*The Magnate / Magnat, Pigs 2. The Last Blood / Psy 2. Ostatnia krew*), and Mirosława Garlicka (*Little Dramas / Małe dramaty, The Book of Great Wishes / Księga wielkich życzeń*).

All these great artists – and dozens of others that cannot be mentioned in such a short text – would meet in Łąkowa. Janusz Sosnowski recalled: “When you walked through the corridors of the studio during the day, people would run into each other, because doors would open all the time, people rushing from one room to another, from top to bottom, to studios, to warehouses, to workshops – the canteen was besieged. There were crowds of people everywhere.” The accounts of the studio from the Polish People’s Republic period often contain similar descriptions, emphasizing the ubiquitous buzz and noise. No wonder that social life flourished in that atmosphere, concentrating around the “tram” (the canteen in the passage between the buildings), and in the bar in the sound building (many employees remember Czesława Wróbel, the head of this haunt, who often “saved lives” of the artists after a night of heavy drinking).

The socialist factory offered its employees an extensive social base – the “team” was to be “built” also after working hours. The employees of the studio would receive booklets of cinema tickets (during the crisis, they constituted a “bargaining chip” when doing everyday shopping). Special screenings of films were organized for the employees’ children in Łąkowa, including pictures that were not in a normal distribution. In the 1950s, there existed a fourth league football team “Filmmaker”, and in the 1970s – a sailing club. The studio also owned two holiday resorts (in Sarbinowo and Kąty Rybackie), and a summer camp centre in Inowłódz near Tomaszów. They were put “under the hammer” in the turbulent 1990s.

## **The Fall and the heirs**

The Film Industry Act of 1987 (and the accompanying Act on Film Institutions) maintained state control to be exercised by the Film Industry Committee, while, at the same time,

it prepared the ground for a “producer-orientated” cinema. In 1989, film units were transformed into studios and granted the rights to the films produced by them under the name “Film Units” Film Production Company. The old studios were forgotten<sup>3</sup>.

Considerable costs of operating with modest and irregular income plunged the Łódź studio into debt, also to Social Insurance Institution, which made it impossible to receive support from the state budget. The situation was worsened by the purchase of expensive equipment from the Swiss company Sondor. In 1994, on the basis of the decision of Film Industry Committee, Łódź Film Centre was established, which then took over the assets of the Feature Film Studio and Sound Post-Production Studio (a branch of the Warsaw-based Sound Post-Production Studio, dealing, among others, with dubbing). Although several films were shot in the Łódź Film Centre studios, it was not possible to attract the production of a large blockbuster there. In 1998, liquidation proceedings were initiated. The assets were divided into parts and put up for sale, subject to a prudent condition that the new owners had to be involved in audio-visual production.

Nevertheless, the “genius loci” of 29, Łąkowa Street survived – Opus Film and Toya Studios are welcoming places for those who “live and breathe” the film. Certainly, what is regretful is the loss of scale – including the hundreds of professionals who worked in the old studio that no longer exists.

In my mind, the most beautiful epitaph for them is Władysław Pasikowski’s statement contained in the volume *Dream Factory / Fabryka snów*. It goes as follows: “By joining the studio, you joined an order with an unwritten but very clear rule, strictly followed by all the filmmakers. Money is important, but what is the most important is the film itself. Now, there is no studio, the order has been secularized... Money is the priority. And only from time to time, among new, noisy, and insubordinate crews, you spot the old, wrinkled and generally silent face of someone you knew from the old studio, and then, an enemy or not, both of you smile lightly and secretly to each other, as the last members of a dying, secret brotherhood”.

Let us cherish its memory.

3 The history of the “displacement” of copyrights to films made in the People’s Republic of Poland closed in October 2019, when the last film units – Kadr, Tor and Zebra – were incorporated into the Documentary and Feature Film Studio in Warsaw, following the order of the Minister of Culture, Prof. Piotr Gliński. Thus, the Warsaw studio became the owner of the property rights to all the films made by these studios, including the films from the PRL period (half of which were created at the Feature Film Studio in Łódź).

Doszli do dółki, osiedlanowatej Willi dowództwa. W furcie  
Borkiewicz otrzymał się, zdziwiony. Pod płotem, w grupie chłopów,  
siedzą ludna blondynka o pocągłej, śniadej twarzy, ugrabna w os-  
rym kombinacjami.

- Ta! A co ty tu robisz?  
- Dziecięta odrzuciła się gniewnie.  
- Dziaś! - usmiechnęła się. - Jestem w powstaniu! Ale  
ty co tu robisz?  
- Siadnie idę do pułkownika - odparł z dumą Borkiewicz.  
- Czy - zdumiała się. - Myślałam, że siedzisz przy Zosi,  
w Salezju. No, no, dziwi! Zawsze mnie ostrzegano, żeby nie mówił  
z tobą o konspiracji...  
- Borkiewicz usmiechnął się z politowaniem.  
- Fanno, na twój szczęśliwy... - powiedział.  
- Borkiewicz usmiechnął się z politowaniem. - Przeproszam  
bardzo się spieszę. W razie czego... gdzieś cię można śledzić?  
- dwa domy dalej, w odroliku łączności. Siedzą tam na cen-  
tronicznej. Mój pseudonim Jagódka. Pamiętaj, Jagódka.  
- i! Prędszym się spodziewała tutaj mojej babci

Jej słyszmy głowę i wazę do Willi.  
- i się sady. Borkiewicz przytępnął dumnie  
- ach wewnątrz do do dowódcy. W dużym, jasnym  
- szym stole siew pułkownik nad planem  
- tro. Między grały mu na policzkach.  
- hodzą z Salezju. Tam są wgrzy...

- No to co? - burknął pułkownik  
z uśmiechem, spoważniał.  
- Nie - odparł urażony. - Tylko chcę  
Dalszą część tysięcy ludzi. Z armatami.  
W oczach pułkownika zapaliły się błyski.  
- Co takiego?  
- Sałatki byłym tą sprawą - powiedział ni-  
- ale oni sądają pisemnego pełnomocnictwa do  
powstania.

Pułkownik wyprostował się.  
Mówię wszystko od początku - rozkazał.  
Borkiewicz opowiedział. Pułkownik wstał gwałt-  
szedł do drzwi.  
- Jest łączność ze Śródmieściem? - zawołał.  
- Radiowa ciągle przez Londyn - odpowiedziano z  
pokojem. - Nie udało się na fali przysięmej...  
- Co? - zdziwił się Borkiewicz. - Do Śródmieścia  
Londyn?

Przez Londyn - zaczęli się sami pułkownik - zawa-  
I wyszedł. Borkiewicz usiadł przy stole, spojrsał na plan Wa-  
szary. Łatwo było domyśleć się, że czerwonym ołówkiem zaznaczo-  
wizane posycje, niebieskim zaś niemieckie. Naprzeciw Sadyby  
ryglowała drogą do Wilanowa szeroka niebieska krecha.  
- Co - westchnął Borkiewicz.  
W sąsiednim pokoju dzwoniły telefony i kilka osób mówiło  
na raz. Pułkownik wrócił po dwudziestu minutach.  
- Zaczekajcie na majota Gramota. - powiedział świdrując

Krzysztof Jajko

## **A few stories about the Educational Film Studio**

The history of the Educational Film Studio has two beginnings. Officially, it was inaugurated on December 29, 1949, when the Order of the Minister of Culture and Art regulating the principles of educational film production in post-war Poland was signed. In fact, the institution had already operated as the Educational Film Department of the Film Institute at 210, Kilińskiego Street as early as 1945. The Educational Film Studio is, therefore, one of the oldest post-war production centres in Poland.

In the Polish People's Republic's system of film production, which was formed in the second half of the 1950s, and functioned for the next several dozen years, studios such as the Educational Film Studio and Documentary Film Studio in Warsaw operated on completely different principles than feature film studios in Łódź and Wrocław. The latter served as a service provider for film units affiliating filmmakers, recommended films for production, and were responsible for their artistic shape. The task of the feature film studios was limited to providing the units with space, equipment, and technical staff. It was different with the Educational Film Studio. Although a large part of the studio's production was so-called commissioned films, made at the request of individual ministries (educational and instructional films), the most prestigious for the studio were popular science films, screened in cinemas and broadcasted on television. In most cases, the studio itself decided which films to make, approved their production at the internal editorial staff level, and supervised the filming in artistic and financial terms. Moreover, the Educational Film Studio was a self-sufficient production centre with creative staff, technical and logistic facilities related to the shooting, as well as post-production and film processing sections. As a result, more than 100 films a year were made there from the late 1950s.

After 1989, the Educational Film Studio underwent numerous organizational changes. The restructuring plan resulted in a significant reduction in the number

of jobs and production capacity. Currently, the studio operates as a company subordinated to the Marshal's Office of the Łódź Voivodship<sup>1</sup>.

## 210, Kilińskiego Street

The post-factory buildings at 210, Kilińskiego Street were chosen as the headquarters of the Educational Film Department, established in 1945. Due to the poor condition of the premises, employees were initially crammed into one small room. By the end of the 1940s, however, the headquarters of the department were enhanced by the addition of offices for educational filmmakers and specialists in various fields working on scripts, in the editing rooms, laboratories, an animation studio, as well as an auditorium.

The further development of the production base took place after the institution was renamed as Educational Film Studio. Its heart was a ground-floor building housing Department of Biological Films, Special Effects and Animation, which functioned from 1957. It was here that, under the supervision of Jan Susłowski, the most complex nature and biological films were made in microscope and time-lapse photography laboratories<sup>2</sup>. The story of Krzysztof Ptak, who at the beginning of his cinematic career took part in the production of a film about the growth of the *Chlorella* algae, testifies to how tedious the work was: "They were time-lapse shots. A shot of each frame was taken every five minutes. And it turned out that when these algae developed, the specimen placed under the microscope came out of the depth of field every now and then. So every five minutes I had to look into the microscope and pull focus. To make things worse, the algae development process was to take a week. So I ended up spending eight days in the studio. I had two or three alarm clocks, a camp bed, sandwiches, and the porter would bring me milk and check if I was awake. I remained "on duty" until the algae filled the entire frame"<sup>3</sup>.

1 The detailed institutional history of the Educational Film Studio is presented in the book by Michał Dondzik, Krzysztof Jajko and Emil Sowiński *Elementarz Wytwórni Filmów Oświatowych*, Łódź 2018.

2 Interview with Jan Susłowski recorded in Łódź in 2016. The interview was conducted by Krzysztof Jajko.

3 Interview with Krzysztof Ptak recorded in Łódź in 2014. The interview was conducted by Jacek Schmidt.

An important place on the premises of the studio was also the Sound Department, the building which was located just behind the porter's lodge. It consisted of three parts: the mixing room, where the entire soundtrack of the film was mixed, the copying room, where the sound effects were copied, and the rooms for specialists responsible for sound design. Nevertheless, the most important part of the department was the sound library. In that large, high room, on rows of shelves, tapes with two types of recordings, music and sound effects, were kept. Musical pieces were obtained mainly through exchange with educational film studios from other Eastern Block countries, although, sometimes, original musical scores were also commissioned to Polish composers, including Krzysztof Penderecki and Krzysztof Komeda. As for the archive of sound effects, it was expanded with each subsequent film production, as sound recordists were required to transfer all the recordings recorded on sets to the sound library. It is also worth mentioning that, in the early 1990s, the first Dolby Stereo post-production studio in Poland was launched as part of the Educational Film Studio's Sound Department. Unfortunately, in 1994, when the the Sound Department was incorporated into Łódź Film Centre, the studio was deprived of both modern equipment and the sound library. A few years later, the rich collection of the Educational Film Studio's sound archive was completely destroyed as a result of flooding caused by a failure of the hydraulic system<sup>4</sup>.

As a large production centre, at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, the Educational Film Studio had its own shooting studio built. Following its opening, Janusz Star shot a series of films about space exploration there. For the purposes of the series, a huge set decoration showing the surface of the moon was built in the studio, which made it possible to present a hypothetical landing of man on the natural satellite of the Earth on the screen. In the following years, in addition to the Educational Film Studio's films, the studio also hosted external productions, TV shows and feature films. For example, in 1986, the films *The Magnate / Magnat* by Filip Bajon and *On the Banks of the Niemen / Nad Niemnem* by Zbigniew Kuźmiński were shot there. One of the last Educational Film Studio productions shot in the studio at 210, Kilińskiego Street was the TV series *Socialist District Film Archive / Socjalistyczna Filmoteka Powiatowa*. In 2010, there was a fire in the neighbouring building which damaged the studio and led to its closure.

4 Interview with Andrzej Żabicki recorded in Łódź in 2017. The interview was conducted by Michał Dondzik.

A great advantage of the Educational Film Studio was the fact that, in addition to substantial production resources, the studio had an extensive technical base. There was both a mechanical workshop and a carpentry shop, as well as a transport department, equipped with vehicles for film crews. The only weak point of the branch was its transport fleet, which included, among others, rather uncomfortable Robur vehicles. As Andrzej Żabicki recalled: “Travelling in them was an ordeal. Eight people in the front and the whole back for gear, mostly for lights. The camera and sound equipment were placed in the front. In addition, this vehicle was very slow (it travelled at up to 70 km per hour), loud and shook all over”<sup>5</sup>. The film processing laboratory had a much more positive impact on the operation of the studio. Thanks to it, the Educational Film Studio produced film prints for its own use, and also developed negatives for external institutions, such as the “Se-Ma-For” Studio of Small Film Forms, or the Łódź Film School. Moreover, students from Targowa could count on the studio’s support in the production of their student films, as well as obtain from assistant directors an additional allocation of film stock, not used in the production of educational films<sup>6</sup>.

An office building, put into use in 1961, towered over the entire Educational Film Studio’s area. It housed the management, accounting and human resources offices, and, above all, the editorial staff’s rooms. It was there that the most important decisions regarding the production of individual films were made. As Teresa Oziemska recalled: “It often happened that the editorial office turned into a confessional, a sort of melting pot, in which something was happening, boiling. Artists would come round and talk about their ideas, ask for advice, or to discuss things. There was such an atmosphere here that people came to us eagerly”<sup>7</sup>. Another place in the office building that was conducive to creative processes was the canteen in the basement. According to Bogumiła Kłopotowska’s account: “The canteen was always full of people. You gossiped there, but, most of all, you held very important professional conversations. Everyone wanted to talk about their

5 Ibidem.

6 Interview with Roman Dębski recorded in Łódź in 2016. The interview was conducted by Krzysztof Jajko.

7 Interview with Teresa Oziemska recorded in Łódź in 2014. The interview was conducted by Jacek Schmidt.

films, find out what someone else thought about them. Everyone ran to the canteen, especially, after a pre-release screening of a film at the studio. They were enjoyable and fruitful discussions, because you could share your impressions without limitation”<sup>8</sup>. Often, on clear days, the discussions that started in the canteen continued in the yard in front of the building, where there was a bench on which Zbigniew Wichłacz and Wojciech Wiszniewski would hang out, among others<sup>9</sup>.

Just how big and vital an institution the Educational Film Studio was is best evidenced by Teresa Oziemska’s account of her first visit there in the mid-1970s: “Life was vibrant there, things were happening. Crews would come and go. There were also loud conversations in the corridor that never happened in any other institution. The exchange of ideas”<sup>10</sup>.

### The Educational Film Studio people

From its inception, Educational Film Studio was one of the pillars of post-war Polish cinema. Future masters of the 10<sup>th</sup> muse, such as Wojciech Jerzy Has, or Krzysztof Zanussi, began their careers there. The studio also gathered a whole galaxy of filmmakers devoted to short films, who, over the following decades, passionately familiarized the Polish audience with the most interesting and most important issues in such fields as technology and science, socio-cultural studies and ethnography, biology and natural science, as well as culture and art. They were both directors belonging to the oldest generation of post-war Polish filmmakers, e.g. Włodzimierz Puchalski, Karol Marczak, Zbigniew Bochenek, and Jarosław Brzozowski, and the first graduates of the Łódź Film School including, among others, Jerzy Popiel-Popiołek, Aleksandra Jaskólska, Józef Arkusz, Bolesław Bączyński, Stanisław Kokesz, Edward Pałczyński, Bohdan Mościcki, Wiesław Drymer, Jadwiga Żukowska, or Witold Żukowski. In the following decades, with the loosening of the Educational Film Studio’s programming policy, more and more bold and experimental documentary films were created at 210, Kilińskiego

8 Interview with Bogusława Kłopotowska recorded in Łódź in 2014. The interview was conducted by Jacek Schmidt.

9 Zbigniew Wichłacz, *Ławeczka w Oświatówce*, [in:] Wojciech Wiszniewski, ed. Marek Hendrykowski, Poznań 2006, pp. 67–68.

10 Interview with Teresa Oziemska, op. cit.



Street by Antoni Krauze, Edward Etler, Władysław Wasilewski, Andrzej Szczygieł, Andrzej Papuziński, Wojciech Wiszniewski, Bogdan Dziworski, Piotr Szulkin, Marek Koterski, Piotr Andrejew, Andrzej Barański, Grzegorz Królikiewicz, Tadeusz Junak, Henryk Dederko, Andrzej Różycki, Anna Górna, Lubomir Zajac, Tamara Sołoniewicz, Jan Jakub Kolski, Lechosław Czołnowski, Andrzej Czarnecki, Jacek Bławut, Paweł Woldan, or Maciej Drygas. Also, new generations of filmmakers turned up at the Educational Film Studio who, like Włodzimierz Puchalski or Zbigniew Bochenek, focused on making educational films. They were, among others, Leszek Skrzydło, Eugeniusz Ronikier, Wanda Rollny, Barbara Bartman-Czecz, Jerzy Bezkowski, Grzegorz Dubowski, Zygmunt Skonieczny, Roman Dębski, Ryszard Wyrzykowski, or Andrzej B. Czulda. During the film-making process, directors were supported by cinematographers who regularly collaborated with the studio (including Janusz Czecz, Kazimierz Mucha, Seweryn Bącała, Witold Powada, Stanisław Śliskowski), editors (including Anna Nawrocka, Józefa Strześniewska, Dorota Wardęszkiewicz), and sound recordists (including Jan Freda and Andrzej Żabicki).

As the Educational Film Studio enjoyed a lot of autonomy in terms of programming policy, the editorial staff had a huge impact on shaping film production. Mostly editors-in-chief who, like Władysław Orłowski or Maciej Łukowski, opened up the studio to new genres and topics, as well as editors responsible for individual programming departments, including Maria Pakuła, Maria Tymowska, Aleksander Nieśmiałek, Teresa Oziemska, or Eugeniusz Danielewski. The subsequent directors of the Educational Film Studio, Eugeniusz Pasiecznik, Marek Garlicki, and Zbigniew Godlewski (nicknamed “Gun” due to his ability to make quick decisions) also contributed to its development, and, thus, its artistic successes<sup>11</sup>.

The Educational Film Studio also had its quiet heroes, often absent from film credits. At this point, it is worth mentioning the “studio handymen”, i.e. the people who, thanks to their ingenuity and technical knowledge, assisted filmmakers in the implementation of their original and unconventional creative visions. In addition to the employees of the special effects and animation department,

11 Interview with Zbigniew Godlewski recorded in Łódź in 2017. The interview was conducted by Emil Sowiński.

i.e. Stanisław Kaczmarek, Bogdan Chamczyk, Jan Szabela and Stanisław Kwiatkowski, the head of the Film Technology Department, contributed greatly to expanding the creative possibilities of the film medium. For example, he proved his extraordinary ingenuity and inventiveness by constructing an elaborate camera housing for underwater shots: “Janusz Czecz came once and said that he was making a film about beavers and needed a camera to shoot underwater. How to do it? The housing must be tight and large enough for the camera to fit in. Finally, I had an idea – a milk can. It had one advantage: it was tight and had a solid lock. Such a can was bought and an aperture was made in it covered with a sufficiently durable glass – a 35mm Arriflex camera was placed inside. We attached some wings, a switch on the outside, and Czecz could film his beavers swimming under the water”<sup>12</sup>.

This great potential constituted by the Educational Film Studio people is best reflected in the words of Lechosław Czołnowski: “Back then, people didn’t compete with each other. There was no competition. We passed our co-workers to one another. It was an exchange. Someone would ask: «Who would you suggest?» I would say, «Take this assistant, take this driver. They are great people»”<sup>13</sup>.

12 Interview with Stanisław Kwiatkowski recorded in Łódź in 2017. The interview was conducted by Krzysztof Jajko.

13 Interview with Lechosław Czołnowski recorded in Łódź in 2014. The interview was conducted by Jacek Schmidt.



STATION

1  
2  
15

AM IN RE ONLY

AUTOMATIC  
LEVEL  
CONTROL

PILOT FREQ.  
PILOT  
PLAYBACK  
SWITCH

LEVEL

LEVEL NEGATIVE  
VOL. / GAIN  
COMPRESSION

LFA 2  
LFA 1

FLAT

MAGNETIC  
LINE

PLAYBACK

Jerzy Armata

## Se-Ma-For – animation in the leading role

Animation produced in Łódź, with a strong position on both the domestic and global markets, as evidenced by two Oscar statuettes, is not only the achievement of the legendary “Se-Ma-For” Studio of Small Film Forms. It is also that of the Łódź Film School where animation has been taught for 60 years now, and its graduates have often found employment in “Se-Ma-For”.

“Łódź was like that – rough, brutal. You ask me what my city is like? If I were to present it in a concise and, at the same time, vivid way, I would say that it reminds me of Havana. When you walk around, you can see its greatness. As they taught us at school, for three months, it was a place with the greatest income in the world; it was a city which then had a greater output than New York – such wealth. The palaces have remained, but it is all dying...”<sup>1</sup> – this is how Łódź is recalled by Mariusz Wilczyński, the author of the Polish animation blockbuster *Kill It and Leave This Town / Zabij to i wyjedź z tego miasta* (2019), made not in his home town, but “in exile” – in his studio near Warsaw. The film won awards in, among others, Annecy, Ottawa, Sapporo, or Vienna, as well as at the Polish Feature Film Festival in Gdynia.

Łódź is the city of “Wilk” (“Wolf” from Wilczyński) – he was born and went to school there, and it is there that he finally returned to after many years as a lecturer at the Film School, which, incidentally, he never attended (he is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź). He often returns to his city in his films, especially in the last one. Although it is an animated film, you can see a frozen – as in a daguerreotype – almost documentary image of Łódź, which he remembers from his childhood, both in physical and spiritual terms. Things are a bit different for Balbina Bruszezewska, also from Łódź (daughter of Wojciech, a co-creator of the famous avant-garde group Workshop of the Film Form). In her film *The City Sails on / Miasto płynie* (2009), a brilliant collage neatly combining various animation techniques, Łódź is alive, pulsating, rushing forward, not always collision-free...

There is also an eccentric series of one-minute episodes – *Adventures of Stanisław from Łódź / Przygody Stanisława z Łodzi* (2016–2017) by Bartosz Ostrowski, inspired by Marek Raczkowski's satirical works. There are more traditional animated views of the city: *Łódź 1423–1973* (1974) by Stanisław Lenartowicz, *Łódź in the year 1905 / Łódź 1905 roku* (1980) by Henryk Ryszka, and *The Łódź Legend / Łódzka legenda* (1973) by Andrzej Piliczewski, according to which a devil nestled in the city's constantly smoking chimneys. The latter titles were made at "Se-Ma-For", where Polish animation was born over 70 years ago.

### **It started before Se-Ma-For**

The history of post-war Polish animation actually started with the puppet film *Under the Reign of King Krakus / Za króla Krakusa* (1947) by Zenon Wasilewski, made in the artist's apartment in Łódź, in Radwańska Street. This apartment saw the beginning of "Film Polski" Puppet Film Studio, later transformed into Puppet Film Department of the Feature Film Studio. In January 1950, also Animation Department was opened at the studio, subsequently transformed into Puppet Film Studio in 1956 with its seat in Tuszyn near Łódź. This is the prehistory of the "Se-Ma-For" Studio of Small Film Forms, which operated under this name from 1961. "While still a student, I started working for «Se-Ma-For». The head of the studio, Ryszard Brudzyński, together with Prof. Jerzy Mierzejewski, would watch student films, looking for people to cooperate with. [...] It was them – Brudzyński and Mierzejewski – who created the studio. [...] Brudzyński got the authorities' approval and money, and Mierzejewski was to watch over the artistic level. They decided to create a studio that would make not only animated films for children, but also short feature films, experimental films, animation for adults, etc. Obviously, the plans were very ambitious. I talked a lot with the managing director Brudzyński, who was a man with broad horizons dreaming of a studio on a European scale, something like the Canadian National Film Board"<sup>2</sup>, recalls Daniel Szczechura, who was faithful to „Se-Ma-For” all his professional life.

## Not only animation

In line with the full name of “Se-Ma-For”, various short films were made at the studio. Naturally, animation – especially puppet animation – occupied a privileged position, but short fiction films, documentaries, and experimental films were also produced. This is where prominent, “not animated” Polish directors, such as Roman Polański, Janusz Morgenstern, Andrzej Brzozowski, Janusz Nasfeter, Janusz Majewski, Jerzy Antczak, Jerzy Passendorfer, Władysław Ślesicki, Andrzej Kondratiuk, Józef Robakowski (and many of his colleagues from the Workshop of Film Form), Andrzej Barański, Andrzej Warchał (from Kraków’s Piwnica pod Baranami), Piotr Andrejew, Filip Bajon, Wojciech Marczewski, or Krzysztof Krauze, began their careers.

It was in “Se-Ma-For” that Janusz Morgenstern made his poignant short feature film *Ambulance / Ambulans* (1961) about the extermination of a group of Jewish children, according to Tadeusz Łomnicki’s script, which was later honoured with an award in San Francisco. Moreover, the studio was behind the award-winning documentary impression *Remah Cemetery / Cmentarz Remu* (1961) by Edward Etler, Polański’s *Mammals / Ssaki* (1962), showered with festival laurels (both with the music of Krzysztof Komeda, who was at the start of his fantastic, albeit short career), or the masterly screen adaptation of Zofia Nałkowska’s short story *By the Railroad / Przy torze kolejowym* (1963), directed by Brzozowski and starring Halina Mikołajska (not allowed to be screened for 30 years). It was here that Jadwiga Kędzierzawska made her high quality short feature films addressed to children, an example of which is the charming picture *Little Sorrows / Małe smutki* (1968); Bajon created his impressive cinematic pastiche *Videocasette / Videokaseta* (1976), and the unconventional documentary *Inhale - Exhale / Wdech - Wydech* (1981) by Bogdan Dziworski and Zbigniew Rybczyński, or the experimental *First Film / Pierwszy film* (1981) by Józef Piwkowski, inspired by the famous *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* by August and Louis Lumière were made. Also, an intriguing film essay on art *Spatial Compositions of Katarzyna Kobro / Kompozycje przestrzenne Katarzyny Kobro* (1971) by Józef Robakowski, and documentary monographs devoted to the pioneer of puppet animation, *Władysław Starewicz* (1986), and *Władysław Starewicz’s Puppets / Lalki Władysława Starewicza* (1988) by Wadim Berestowski.

Various films – in terms of both content and form. The „Se-Ma-For” artists persistently searched for new means and forms of expression, new narrative methods. The common denominator of those films – feature shorts, documentaries, experimental films – was their originality and a high level of artistry.

### Animation has many names

It was similar with animated films, with the exception, of course, of the production of series, the essence of which lies in commercialism, which makes it rather craftsmanship than art. Nevertheless, craftsmanship can be solid and valuable, as evidenced by the leading “Se-Ma-For” series, such as *Magic Pencil / Zaczarowany ołówek* (1963–1977), *Teddy Floppy-Ear / Miś Uszatek* (1975–1987), *The Strange World of Filemon the Cat / Dziwny świat kota Filemona* (1972–1974) and *The Adventures of Filemon the Cat / Przygody kota Filemona* (1977–1981), and above all the multi-episode stories produced under the artistic supervision of Tadeusz Wilkosz – *The Adventures of Colargol the Bear / Przygody Misia Colargola* (1968–1974), *Three Bears / Trzy misie* (1982–1986), *A Little Penguin Pik-Pok / Mały pingwin Pik-Pok* (1989–1992).

The studio preferred the puppet technique, but there were also films made using drawing, cut-outs, or combined techniques (a collage of various animation techniques, as well as combining animation with live action). It began – as I mentioned – with Wasilewski, the author of *Under the Reign of King Krakus*, but also with ... the first “banned” animated film: the innocent tale *Mr. Feather is Dreaming / Pan Piórko śni* (1949) about a dreamy official who flies over the city at night in his bed.

Tadeusz Wilkosz quickly became a classic of puppet animation, mainly addressed to children. In his rich oeuvre, however, the impressive *Sack / Worek* (1967) can be found, interesting also for adult viewers. The title object of the film irretrievably consumes a variety of attractive material goods – and it is coloured... red.

Edward Sturlis’ auteur films, full of wit and eccentric ideas, such as *The Beach / Plaża* (1964), setting seamen’s tattoos in motion, *Quartet / Kwartecik* (1965), combining the modern world with the ancient one, or *Damon* (1958), *Bellerofon* (1959), *Orpheus and Eurydice / Orfeusz i Eurydyka* (1961), *Danae* (1969) directly drawing upon mythological themes, implemented a variety of techniques, e.g.



puppets, cut-outs and combined methods. Stefan Schabenbeck, who also used a variety of animation techniques, gave his films – such as the cut-out film *Everything is a Number / Wszystko jest liczbą* (1966), or the puppet film *Stairs / Schody* (1968) – the form of philosophical-reflective parables.

Equally versatile was Stanisław Lenartowicz, involved in drawing, cut-out and combined animation at “Se-Ma-For”, who also made actor films and documentaries. Apart from his works for young audiences, he made artistically sublime animated films for adults, the best examples of which are *The Luncheon on the Grass / Śniadanie na trawie* (1975), inspired by the famous painting by Édouard Manet, or *Portrait / Portret* (1977), a poetic impression about the inevitability of passing time.

The cinema of Daniel Szczechura is uniquely diverse in terms of both content and form. It started with a satirical, mocking description of reality (*Armchair / Fotel*, 1963), however, the “buffo” tone was quickly replaced by a more serious attitude, and documenting the “external” was substituted by penetrating the matters that lie hidden in the depths of the human being (*Chart / Wykres*, 1966; *The Journey / Podróż*, 1970; *The Leap / Skok*, 1978; *Mirage / Fatamorgana 1 and 2*, 1981 and 1983).

There are two basic models of artistic attitude in animation – actually, in any other creative practice, as well: the artist makes the same film over and over again, deepening it more intensely and more thoroughly each time, or looks constantly for new topics, or new forms of expression. Artists from Łódź are closer to the latter attitude; while creating auteur cinema, they seek to make their new films – mainly in terms of form – different from the previous ones.

A clinical example of a director for whom the creative process itself is more important than the final effect is Zbigniew Rybczyński, the hottest name in Łódź circles, an outstanding artist, but also an unconventional scientist, constructor, visionary, inventor. The studio in Łódź became a fantastic testing ground for him – it is where he made, among others, the surreal film *Soup / Zupa* (1974), the film *Oh! I can't stop! / Oj! Nie mogę się zatrzymać!* (1975) using the motif of the so-called speed camera; the funny story *The New Book / Nowa książka* (1975), told on a screen divided into nine parts; the grotesque film *Holiday / Święto* (1976), mocking the customs



of the communist era, and, finally, the famous *Tango* (1980). This condensed story about the memory of a certain room, constituting an impressive metaphor about the interdependence of the human life and the passing of time, was honoured with an Oscar (1983), as well as an absolute avalanche of awards at the most prestigious festivals (Annecy, Huesca, Kraków, Oberhausen, Ottawa, Tampere). Although Rybczyński's work looked as if it had come straight out of the computer, it was made using most traditional techniques. The director planned every frame in the smallest detail, and, what is more, that precisely created structure was perfectly transferred onto the screen. It was not the result of his carefree frolicking in the virtual space, but of long months of backbreaking work in front of a traditional camera.

Into Rybczyński's footsteps follows Hieronim Neumann, a restless artist, constantly experimenting, and with equal success practicing a variety of animation techniques, from classical methods to computer transformations, the best examples of which are: *Block / Blok* (1982) where the artist uses tricks to show cross-sections of apartments similar to one another in the frame, creating a "memory" of the title building, or *The Event / Zdarzenie* (1987), in which he treats photographs as the material for animation.

A different creative path has been chosen by Piotr Dumala, Szczechura's best student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, who pursues an artistic "crop rotation", both in form and content. With his full of nonsense humour cartoon jokes in surreal poetics, such as *Little Black Riding Hood / Czarny Kapturek* (1983), or *Nervous Life of the Universe / Nerwowe życie kosmosu* (1986), coexist definitely more serious stories, realized in the plaster tile technique of his own invention, e.g. the expressionist *Walls / Ściany* (1987) and the surreal *Freedom of the Leg / Wolność nogi* (1988).

### **Se-Ma-For – closed biography**

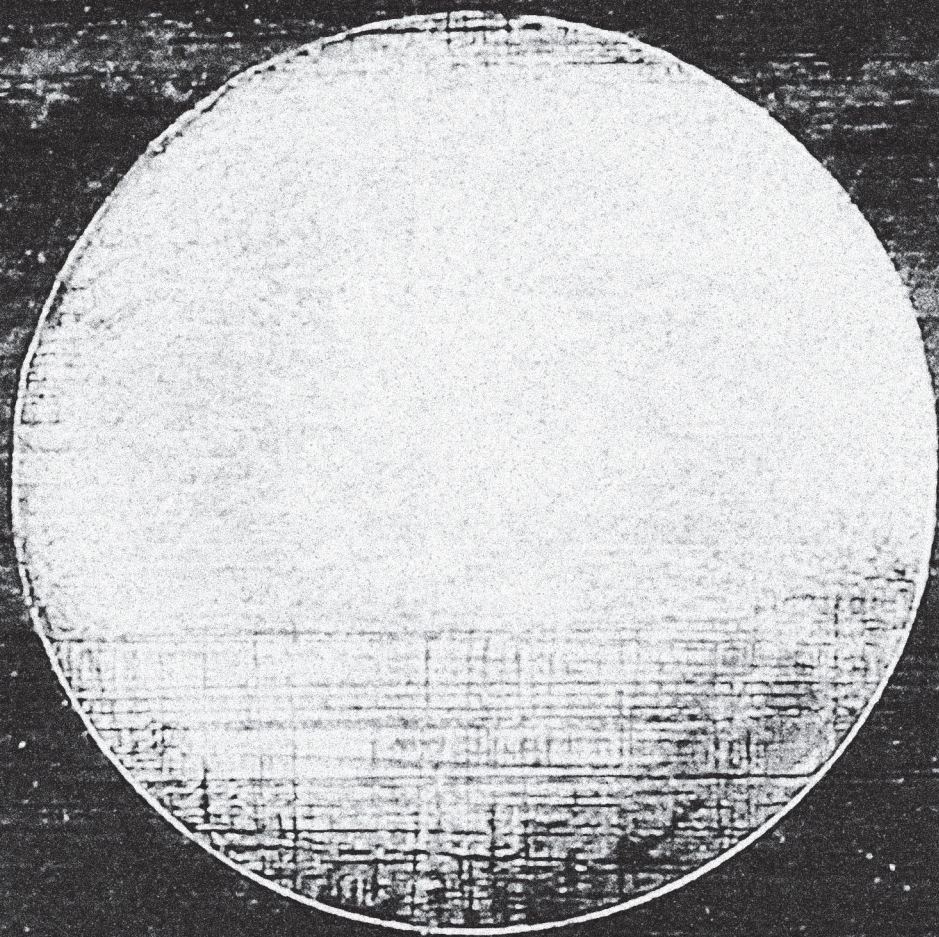
The Studio of Small Film Forms ceased to exist in 1990, when Jacek Gwizdała, its managing director at the time, changed the name to "Semafor" Film Studio and the nature of the facility, where feature-length films were also to be made. Only the stage of the superpower plans was reached. In December 1999,

“Se-Ma-For“ Film Production was established, a company founded by the well-known producer Zbigniew Żmudzki. In 2008, “Se-Ma-For” Film Foundation was launched, the Animation Museum was established, and, ten years later, the Foundation suspended its operation. Such are the dry facts.

Finally, one more fact – a more “thrilling” one. *Peter and the Wolf / Piotruś i wilk* (2006), a puppet animation inspired by the famous ballet by Sergei Prokofiev, directed by Suzie Templeton, with a significant contribution from Marek Skrobecki (set design), produced by the British company Break Thru Films and the Łódź company “Se-Ma-For” Film Production, was awarded an Oscar in 2008.

“Se-Ma-For” is gone, the creators are gone – some forever, some scattered over other studios, but the memory, contained in nearly 1,500 films and many valuable trophies headed by two Oscars, remains. The beautiful pages from the history of Polish animation, which the Film Museum in Łódź would like to introduce you to at the exhibition.







Anna Michalska

## **Film opens the world. Stories about Łódź cinemas**

For the last two years, I have been collecting memories of Łódź cinemas<sup>1</sup>. I garnered the reminiscences of the film-makers who were either born in Łódź or lived here for some time. Everyone I asked agreed to be interviewed – my interlocutors recalled with great pleasure their first film impressions and the emotions they felt at the cinema. What follows are their stories that make up the image of the favourite entertainment, underlain by a note of nostalgia and concern for the future of cinema.

### **Dorota Kędzierzawska – director, producer**

In Łódź, there was a cinema in almost every street. The Tatry, 1 Maja, Gdynia and Wiśła, which were beautiful structures, but also the Polonia and Bałtyk. Or the fantastic, tiny cinemas where, in the absence of an audience, it was enough to buy just 3 tickets – I used to do it sometimes – and the projectionist would screen the film.

When I was in elementary school, entire groups of children attended screenings after school without any supervision. In secondary school, almost everyone in my group watched films together. My whole family would go to the cinema very often – my mother [Jadwiga Kędzierzawska] had employee tickets. Actually, almost nobody went to cafes – everybody frequented the cinema.

### **Wojciech Marczewski – director, screenwriter, teacher**

In the beginning of the 1950s, the cinema was magical for me. In grey Poland, in grey Łódź, I could compare the cinema to a trip to Madrid, Rome, or Paris. It felt like an escape into an unknown world, another reality. It appeared like a great, real journey. That's why it was easier to get emotional while watching films, it was easier to cry – everything seemed more real on the screen.

1 The interviews with the filmmakers about Łódź cinemas were conducted especially for the purposes of the *Film Łódź* exhibition in 2020 and 2021.

I remember my first cinemas. First of all, the Rekord in Reymonta Square, a small, grotty cinema in Chojny, a working-class district. In winter or autumn, an iron stove stood inside. During the projection, a lady would come in to add some coal, but it did not bother us at all – we were happy about it because it would get a little warmer. We would come to the cinema earlier to take the seats in the vicinity of the stove. This cinema is gone now, closed down. Another such cinema “of mine” from those days was the Roma in Rzgowska Street, more visible, with a larger foyer. There, in turn, we would go with Primary School No. 80. Sometimes, when I am in Łódź, I drive up to the school, but also to the former cinema. There are some shops there now. During religious retreats, we would sneak out of the church to go to the cinema. This is how I remember my childhood.

In my youth, I would go from provincial Chojny to the city centre, where cinemas were different. For me, the most important were the Gdynia and the Wisła in Tuwima Street. At the Wisła cinema, I saw Federico Fellini’s *Eight and a Half*. I was enchanted. After the screening, I left the cinema, stopped in the street, turned around, and went back to watch it again. An outstanding film that let you dream. The Wisła and Gdynia were located almost opposite each other. It was a good place because, after a screening, you could immediately go to see another film in the other cinema. Even with my parents’ ridiculously low income, we would always conjure up four zlotys for a ticket. Unless, a very successful film came out – then, groups of ticket touts would appear in front of the cinema. This practice lasted a long time in the Polish People’s Republic. It was almost an occupation. They often had tickets to several cinemas – I have no idea how they managed to do it.

When I was preparing for the *Escape from the ‘Liberty’ Cinema / Ucieczka z kina Wolność* project, I really wanted the action of the film, where the characters enter the screen – which means that something great, poetic is happening – to occur, by contrast, in a grey and somewhat common place, where trams run, there is traffic, people are busy with work, or shopping. Therefore, I chose the Włókniarz cinema on the corner of Próchnika and Zachodnia Streets. This cinema also closed down, defeated by time. In *Escape from the ‘Liberty’ Cinema*, the censor says: “I like small cinemas”. This is also my personal opinion.

**Mariusz Wilczyński – animated film director, artist, performer, art director**

At the age of 6, I went to the Świt cinema in Bałucki Rynek for the first time to see *The Legend of Lobo*. This film made a huge impression on me. There were no commercials. The Polish Film Chronicle and some short film were screened. I must have seen an animated film, because, I remember, it was very colourful. Years later, I tried to reconstruct those images and, as it seems, they must have been created either by Julian Antonisz, or Witold Giersz, whom my father was friends with.

I used to go to the big Przedwiośnie cinema to see Confrontations. It was an annual festival of the best international films. There, I saw *Stalker* by Andrei Tarkovsky, an outstanding – and a very long – film. Martial law was introduced the night after the screening.

The screening room at the Film School also became important to me. I had nothing to do with the school, as I studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in the class of Prof. Stanisław Fijałkowski and Andrzej Bartczak, but I was friends with Paweł Edelman and Władysław Pasikowski. Films from all over the world were shown at the Film School in the famous auditorium in the old building. Thanks to the School's cooperation with embassies of various countries, students had access to the latest films. It was there that I saw all of Antonioni's, Fellini's, and Bergman's work.

The last of the cinemas important to me was in Górna. A dangerous district. I lived in the block on the corner of Przybyszewskiego and Sosnowa Streets, near the Wolność cinema, where I saw Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Iron / Człowiek z żelaza* and *Man of Marble / Człowiek z marmuru* for the first time. There was an amazing atmosphere there. Even as I recall it today, I am moved – cinemas in multiplexes are, naturally, much better, have better projectors, sound, but those cinemas had a soul.

**Ewa Braun – costume designer, interior designer, art director**

In the 1970s and at the turn of the 1980s, I used to come to Łódź to the studio in Łąkowa Street for 5 days a week. At that time, I was almost a permanent resident at the Grand Hotel. Professional duties finished around 5 or 6 p.m. and then you would return to the hotel and try to have some fun in your life in exile, in a sense.

If it was possible to make it on time for one of the last screenings, then you looked through the Łódź press to see what was on. I have been a film lover all my life. I have always tried to watch newly released films, and, above all, to watch Polish films, because I have always been interested in what my fellow directors and set designers have been up to.

One of my memories regards the Bałtyk cinema in Narutowicza Street, where a friend of mine and I went to see the film *Gone with the Wind*. The screening ended with my utter embarrassment, as I, a cinematic “crybaby”, wept so much that, when I left the cinema, my entire décolleté area was wet. I was terribly self-conscious about it – during the screening, I could still wipe my tears evoked by the fate of Scarlett, but when the lights came on, I had a feeling that it was really embarrassing for a person working in the film industry to react so emotionally.

### **Zbigniew Wichłacz – cinematographer**

Cinema did not exist in my family at all, there was no such tradition. I lived in Widzew, opposite the Pokój cinema, and, probably, I had been to this cinema maybe once. It all started with the film *Eight and a Half* when I was in the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade. After the screening, there was a lively discussion in our class. The film made an electrifying impression on everyone. Then, I saw all of Bresson’s, Antonioni’s, and Fellini’s films. But also Japanese films by Kurosawa, Kobayashi’s *Samurai Rebellion*, and Teshigahara’s *Woman in the Dunes*.

We were drawn to the Stylowy cinema, which was the venue of a Film Discussion Club. On the occasion of the premiere of Antonioni’s film *Blow-up*, people who wanted to get in – the cinema was quite small – were standing in the street and the tram could not get through. The cinema was run by Janusz Bujacz who had connections in embassies and brought fantastic films to the Film Discussion Club, later also shown at the Film School. I was very fond of the Polonia cinema, too, mainly because they displayed stills from the currently screened films at the gate. I loved looking at stills. Good films were also shown in the Studio cinema in Lumumbowo. It was a cold cinema, heated with two tiled stoves, but nobody seemed to mind. We were craving new films.

### **Milena Fiedler – film editor, the Łódź Film School Rector**

There were a lot of cinemas in Łódź and they were divided into categories. There were premiere cinemas – elegant, with better screens, but there were also a lot of third and fourth-grade suburban cinemas with the cheapest tickets. As a matter of fact, they were the cinemas I preferred. Films would come off the premiere cinema screens and be distributed for subsequent two years, finding their way to worse and worse venues. I visited them all. I used to buy a daily newspaper with a cinema repertoire that took up almost the entire page. Sometimes, I would cross the city on a tram to watch a film. My beloved cinema was Non-Stop – one film was shown over and over again, you could enter at any time, stay as long as you wanted, and watch the film as many times as you liked. At weekends, they screened films that had some common theme: either actors, or directors, or genres. It would begin at nine o'clock in the morning and end at nine o'clock at night. I sat for 12 hours and watched the Marx brothers' comedies for the price of one ticket, and not the most expensive one either, because it was not a first-class cinema.

In half of the cinemas, when they saw a little girl who wanted to buy a ticket for an adult movie, they chased her away, but in the other half, nobody bothered to look – the cashier would sell me a ticket, and the gentleman who checked tickets would let me in.

Of course, there were also Film Discussion Clubs, which I would be thrown out of as a primary school pupil, but a few times I managed to enter a screening. Discussions that took place after the screenings were very valuable to me, so I did my best to find a way to get into those clubs. I saw how the film opens the world and I found myself among people to whom I would never have had any access otherwise.

### **Jarosław Kamiński – film editor**

I was a huge film fan. I went to the cinema often, from the early age of 10-11. I looked mature for my age, so I had no trouble getting in to see films in the 16- to 18-year-old category. The bolder they were, the more they interested me. In this way, by sheer coincidence, I discovered Fellini, because someone told me that “in the Italian film



you can see a house of ill repute“. It was *Roma*. I must admit that I played truant a lot because I visited various cinemas, even some distant ones, such as the Rekord, or Muza in the Ruda Pabianicka district. I remember that I was “hunting“ for *Barbarella* and finally caught up with it at the Energetyk cinema, located in Politechniki Avenue.

I once had an adventure at the Confrontations Festival. It was probably 1975. At that time, I did not have a pass for all the film screenings, and the film *Jaws* was going to be shown. An additional morning screening of the film was announced. I left home at 7 a.m. to go to the Polonia, and there was a gigantic crowd that filled the entire cinema courtyard. The box offices were not open, but the crowd pressed against the door to the point that they opened the cinema.

It was a year later, that I started buying film passes. The closest to me was the Iwanowo cinema, to which I went at 2 a.m. Apart from me, there were 70, maybe 80 people queuing. When they opened the cinema at 9 a.m., I bought passes for myself and my girlfriend. It was easier to get passes in the following years, as they were no longer rationed.

### **Zbigniew Żmudzki – production manager, producer**

I was born in Łódź, but I spent my entire childhood in Rąbień, a village near Łódź. A travelling cinema would come to the village once a week. It was my first encounter with film. I remember the wailing and rattling projectors very well, because a projector use to be placed on the stage in the hall, so you could hear it working. One of the first films I saw was Eisenstein’s *Alexander Nevsky*. I was very impressed by the scene in which the Teutonic knights were drowning in the lake, because the ice had broken. This film is also important to me because the music was composed by Sergei Prokofiev, the same composer whose music we have used in the greatest success of “my“ Se-Ma-For, i.e. *Peter and the Wolf / Piotruś i wilk*.

### **Piotr Szczepański – director, cinematographer, producer**

The first film screening in my life that I remember was Bergman’s *The Seventh Seal*. I was 7 years old. My father [Tadeusz Szczepański] took me to the cinema at the Łódź Film School. It is not hard to guess that it was an amazing experience for

a boy: the darkness of the auditorium, a black and white film, and a black-clad figure on a rocky beach, who turned out to be Death playing chess with a knight for his life.

Then, as a child, I would very often go to the Iwanowo cinema in the neighbourhood, located in Limanowskiego Street. I remember seeing both *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* there, and then films like *The Terminator*, or *Aliens*. It was very difficult to get to these screenings. Back then, tickets were sold at the box office outside the cinema building through a small semicircular window. As a result, only a few lucky ones were allowed in. Then you entered the spacious, luminous hall and further on, up the wide stairs, the auditorium – as if you were entering a temple.

Ever since I graduated from the Film School, I have dreamed of having a home cinema. I waited a long time for the moment when I would be able to watch new titles that interest me from a legal source. The 2020 pandemic have caused major changes in the film distribution market. Today, I can see most of the premieres I find important on the home screen, and in conditions often better than those offered by classic cinemas.

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Piotr Sitarski

## **The film is dead, long live the film!**

### **The Film Past of Łódź: World Film Museum. New Film Łódź. The year 2121**

For us, living in the 22<sup>nd</sup> century, the unquestionable position of the Polish audiovisual entertainment industry in the world is clear. Our competitors, China and India, look with envy at the successes of the filmmakers working in New Film Łódź. Our city's place on the world map of cinema seems to be similarly obvious. Although films are also made and interesting initiatives emerge in other Polish centres, for example, in Rzeszów, or Słupsk, undoubtedly, it is New Film Łódź that dominates, and, when it comes to the ability to use its creative potential, it is a giant – the city to which screenwriters, animators, models of gesture and facial expression (known as “actors” in the old days), as well as representatives of all other film professions make pilgrimages from all over Europe and the world.

However, this was not always the case – the death of film had been announced many times before. Hundreds of thousands of tourists visit Łódź every year to peep inside the legendary “screenwriters’ cafes”, or, at least, have a look from a distance at the vast complexes of animation factories, feed on various legends. Nevertheless, I would like to present an outline of the history of film Łódź based on a synthesis of selected facts, following the principle, well-known in our city, that success consists in skillful transformation of the past into the future. For such were the humble beginnings of today's empire: when the first film industry in our city collapsed at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only a few enthusiasts believed that it would be possible to regain its former glory. Still, the memory of past successes survived and became the basis for new, dazzling triumphs.

Undoubtedly, the creative and intellectual impulse, best expressed by the slogan from one hundred years ago: “We do not want to keep up with progress, we want to create it”, was the beginning of New Film Łódź. The slogan was coined when it seemed that the film Łódź was really becoming a thing of the past. At first, it was repeated jokingly,

but soon became the actual motto of a group of creators, producers, and audiovisual culture animators from various Łódź institutions, which were, at that time, still small, and, in fact, quite marginal. The slogan made it possible to find opportunities in every transformation, to see gaps in the market, as well as to anticipate upcoming changes and, finally, to get ahead of them. Of course, the motto alone was not enough. What was needed was the awareness, which the Łódź film community surprisingly quickly acquired, and even articulated directly in their books and films, which, today, are not only monuments of the Polish and global reflection on audiovisual art, but also continue to inspire.

In the long run, audiovisual education turned out to be crucial, as emphasizing it enabled the mobilization of incredible creative forces within one generation. Chinese children learned to programme space rockets, and played “astronauts” after school, while Polish children – calculated and processed digital face models in class, and played at making films later. It is well known how tragically the attempts to conquer space have ended, while the audiovisual industry is doing great around the world, and there is no indication that mankind will ever give up producing and watching films.

The first and most important factor in changing the minds of Łódź filmmakers was the idea, instilled in almost all of them from elementary school, that there was no individual success. It was not easy to make a community of individualists come round to that idea, but thanks to the efforts of producers and organizers of film culture, even the most original filmmakers eventually realized that it was easier for them to climb the career ladder, if it was a collective effort. Of course, stars continued to walk on red carpets, but people began to understand how this spectacle could be used for everyone’s benefit. Efforts were also made to maximize achievements. Of course, they still put those who achieved global success by making films abroad on a pedestal, but those who had such successes in Łódź were appreciated even more.

The second reason for the changes was not just that filmmakers reconciled themselves to the fact that the needs of the audience are more important than the creators’ needs – it was almost a celebration of this truth. Also in this respect,

the key role was played by producers who began to understand the audiovisual market better and better, and, moreover, in line with the motto promoting “progress creation”, they looked ahead more often and more boldly. Thanks to this, it was predicted how the role of cinemas would change and how significant home and mobile entertainment would become. Cinemas had, of course, survived various turmoils of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but, today, they are just a hobby and curiosity, special occasion entertainment, without any significance for the audiovisual industry. Pessimists claimed that, with the collapse of cinemas, the film would also die, but, of course, they were wrong.

By the time this transformation began to take place all over the world, the Łódź film industry had already devised a ready-made entertainment and art offer, which almost immediately conquered the European, and soon – practically the global market. Even then, the importance of those changes was not fully realized. Polish audiovisual series was watched from London to Tokyo and from Oslo to Johannesburg, but global media conglomerates continued to hold their position. Today, the headquarters of almost all of these companies are located in Piotrkowska Street – they were taken over by Łódź’s financial and intellectual capital gradually. This happened thanks to the understanding of the key role of screenplays in newly emerging forms of entertainment.

This is the third source of the success of New Film Łódź. It was realized, not for the first time in history, that stories are the priority, and the actual medium used is of secondary importance. It also turned out that diversity is essential. While other global media industries clung to specific screenplay patterns, trying to achieve an ideal form, the screenwriters from Łódź focused on flexibility. Many different schemas were developed, which could be easily adapted to different media formats. Then, another border could be easily crossed: the one dividing the media. Although convergent processes had been underway since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until half a century later that it was possible to achieve complete flexibility of the stories told, including in them the recipient themselves and their actions. Not only did subsequent technical changes not cause any problems, but they

actually revealed the strength of this approach. The old distinctions between film, video games, and virtual reality disappeared; also, newer audiovisual forms, such as surround series, or shows with individualized cameras, were eventually absorbed into a new coherent form of audiovisual communication based on flexible screenplays. The Łódź school of screenwriting also took advantage of the mechanism that had been tested earlier in Hollywood: nowadays, authors not only prepare original screenplays but also collect and process texts coming from all over the world to transform them into material for new productions.

The fourth element of the new awareness was related to technical problems, but, in some respects, it was the most difficult to accept. It concerned, of course, giving up the tradition of a live set film. From the perspective of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century, it is difficult to imagine, since even holiday or wedding films are now made with the use of improved backdrops and locations, as well as sets of facial expressions, and filming actors live is virtually impossible due to labour law and health and safety regulations. Yet, only a hundred years ago, film set decorations were painstakingly built and real actors performed in such surroundings. As predicted by some 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers, however, the practice of making films using live sets was only an episode in the history of cinema, which is primarily a natural animation (“any-mation” – as it was called when English was still the supranational language of filmmakers). Today, of course, film production is completely different. Living models, who provide the layout of gestures and facial expressions, still play a key role in this process. Their movements and muscle tensions, however, are scanned, mixed, and entered into archives, from which they are transferred to new projects, gaining almost true immortality. Most animators from Łódź are involved in combining character layers (and sometimes there are hundreds of them) into a coherent whole, much more perfect, interesting and engaging than any single actor’s role.

The film industry cares about its stars, which is why many models become celebrities, but it is common knowledge that behind their great roles there is other people’s work. Formerly, a star had doubles and stuntmen replacing him or her in difficult or dangerous shots. Nowadays, there is a set of gestures and faces of other models



that can be used to more convincingly recreate specific movements or emotions of a character, as well as, of course, the work of animators combining it all into one character, or rather – a spectrum of characters adapted to a specific cultural area. The teamwork principles developed earlier are useful here, but, this time, they are applied to the field that, traditionally, used to be the most individualized one. While that revolution was taking place, the malcontents complained that it really was the end for film. It turned out, however, that not only did it not die, but on the contrary – it took on a completely new life.

While the live set film has virtually completely disappeared, traditional animation is doing very well. Thousands of Łódź animators not only have a job but are free to experiment with various forms and techniques, although, of course, only some of these films are distributed internationally. Most of them are circulated in narrow artistic circuits and constitute a background from which future blockbusters may draw.

These factors have brought about a fundamental change in thinking about what audiovisual art is and how it should be used. It must be admitted, however, that external circumstances in the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century greatly facilitated the construction of New Film Łódź. It was then that both local authorities and subsequent governments noticed that the film industry could become one of the driving forces behind the development of the city and the country. The government programme, known colloquially as “The whole film community head for Łódź”, facilitated the concentration of institutions and enterprises, and, above all, creators and managers, so that the necessary critical mass could be created. Investment in film education and film culture increased, while subsidies for production and distribution decreased gradually: they were not needed, as the demand for films and audiovisual programmes was increasing, and viewers themselves were willing to pay for new titles. Soon, an export invasion began, initially involving only Europe and Russia, and then the two key areas for the film industry: South America and Africa. Successful expansion to both these continents meant that after a long-standing hegemony, both Hollywood and Asian audiovisual industries were marginalised. It is, of course, extremely symbolic that the Polish remake of *Isaura: Slave Girl / Niewolnica Isaura*, shot as a surrounding series, with a cast modified depending on the cultural area,

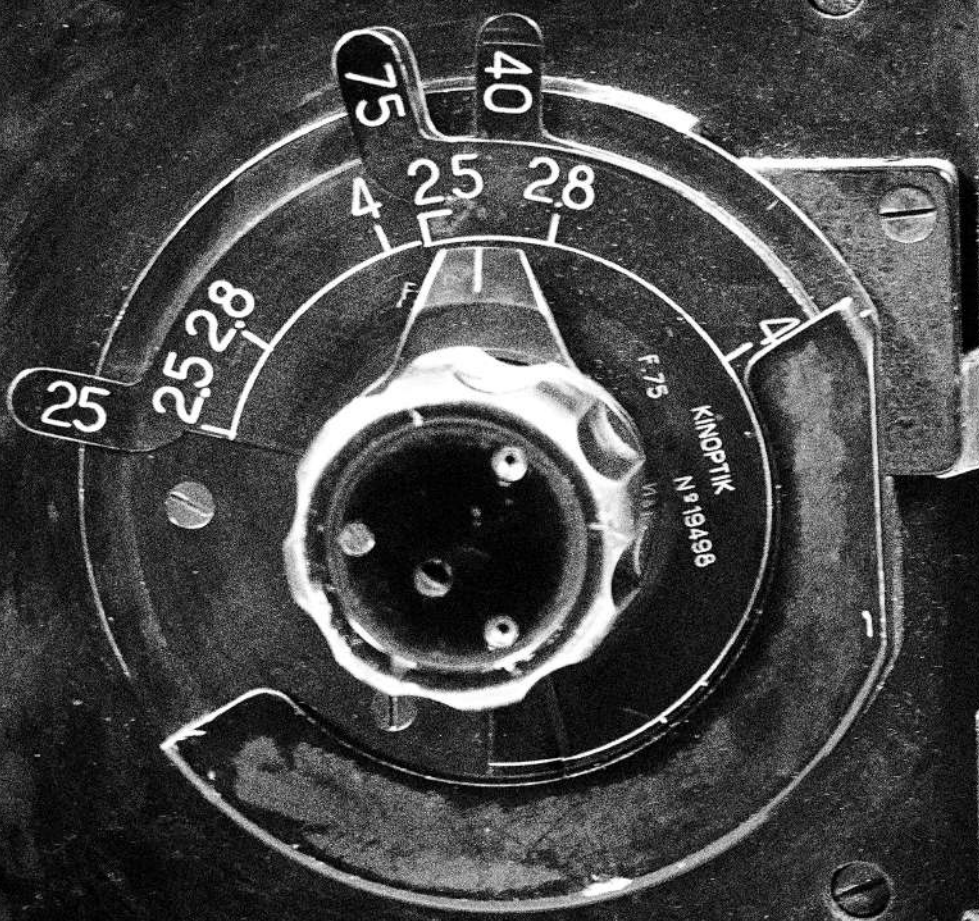


was the biggest hit on Brazilian television of the decade, and is still a cult piece there, while few Brazilians have heard about the original from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Thanks to the involvement of the authorities, New Film Łódź gathered practically all Polish institutions and film companies together (then, of course, others from all over the world). There were protests and animosities, but, in fact, things went quite smoothly: when it was decided to transfer the Polish Film Institute (later transformed into the Polish and World Audiovisual Arts Institute) and the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute to our city, all enterprises actually followed. The reorganization united smaller institutions, strengthening them, although a considerable margin was left for small companies whose creativity and energy allowed them to quickly respond to changes. Nevertheless, cooperation was crucial, both horizontal, between various sectors of the film industry and audiovisual culture, and vertical – between decision-makers and their subordinate entities. One must admit that the Łódź film industry passed this exam with flying colours: internal debates and disputes did take place, but the focus was always on the common interest.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the appearance of the city itself also changed, and the audiovisual industry was integral to it. Large animation companies took over most of the buildings of the former Łódź factories: those that were ruined a hundred years ago or were dying (for example, Uniontex where the New Universal studios are now located), as well as those refurbished, for which attempts were made to find new functions – such as for the famous Manufaktura, which was deserted when shopping centres collapsed, and then turned into a vibrant film culture centre. Now, the city centre is full of cafes and clubs with crowds of screenwriters and writers who come here from all over the world: some of them work diligently or discuss new ideas, others recall past triumphs, but the most numerous group dream about a career that is yet to come. Finally, the Film Museum has grown (initially not preceded by the term “World”) to occupy a large part of the former Scheibler’s empire, and almost reaches Piotrkowska Street, where an interesting and informative museum has been set up in the building of the former multiplex.

The second century of the film industry in Łódź is underway. It has turned out to be much more durable than the textile factories that built the city – nobody remembers them today. On the other hand, New Film Łódź is known to billions of devoted viewers all over the planet. That is why it is sometimes good to realise how difficult it was to achieve this success and appreciate those who, a hundred years ago, had the courage to start implementing a bold vision, as well as to remember that the transformations of the film are inherent in it, and what seems to be a collapse is, in fact, always a new beginning.



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# Photoplasticon

**inventor: August Fuhrmann**

**1885-1900**

The Kaiserpanorama, i.e. the “Imperial Panorama”, in the Film Museum’s collection, is one of the first devices built by the precursor of cinema and the inventor August Fuhrmann (1844–1925).

An elegant, monumental piece of furniture in the shape of a cylinder is used to view slowly moving stereoscopic photos (producing a three-dimensional effect). As many as 25 viewers sitting around a Kaiserpanorama can look into the viewfinders at the same time. Its mechanism, operated by a tower clock with weights, powers the device for three hours. A 13-minute show allows you to view 50 photos that change every 16 seconds.

The first such stereoscopic viewers were constructed in the 1860s; two decades later, they were popular as an attraction at city fairs and entertainment venues.

They were a window to the world – black and white or hand-coloured photos presented pictures of life in distant, exotic countries. In 1976, the only original Fuhrmann Kaiserpanorama in Poland was transferred from Kielce to the Museum of the City of Łódź. It is one of the six surviving specimens in the world. It appeared in Juliusz Machulski’s feature debut *Vabank* (1981) and in the film *Red Snakes / Czerwone węże* directed by Wojciech Fiwek (1981). Since 1986, it has been a pride of the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź, which has 700 stereoscopic glass photographs in the format compatible with the Kaiserpanorama. Most of them are over a hundred years old. The Museum’s Kaiserpanorama was renovated and restored in 2016.







250 × 380 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź



8,5 × 17 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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# Magic lantern

## factory product, unknown manufacturer

### 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century

The magic lantern is a 17<sup>th</sup>-century invention that displays images from glass slides. In 1646, the device was described by Athanasius Kircher in *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae* (*Great Art of Light and Shadow*).

The lantern on a wooden base consists of a condenser, i.e. an optical system used to evenly illuminate a slide, a lens, and oil or gas lighting. There is a chimney in the upper part of the casing so that the vapours released during combustion can escape to the outside. Pictures of fairy tales for children, scenes from everyday life, mythological themes, and educational topics, e.g. in astronomy, are painted on glass slides in the shape of squares, less often circles. Magic lanterns were popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many factories were producing these devices in Europe. Their popularity ended in the 1950s with the spread of diascopes.

The magic lantern in the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź, along with a complete set of slides, is a specimen listed under number 1 in the Museum's film

collection, which includes, among others, relics from the pre-film era.



8,5 × 8,5 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź





46 × 16 × 39 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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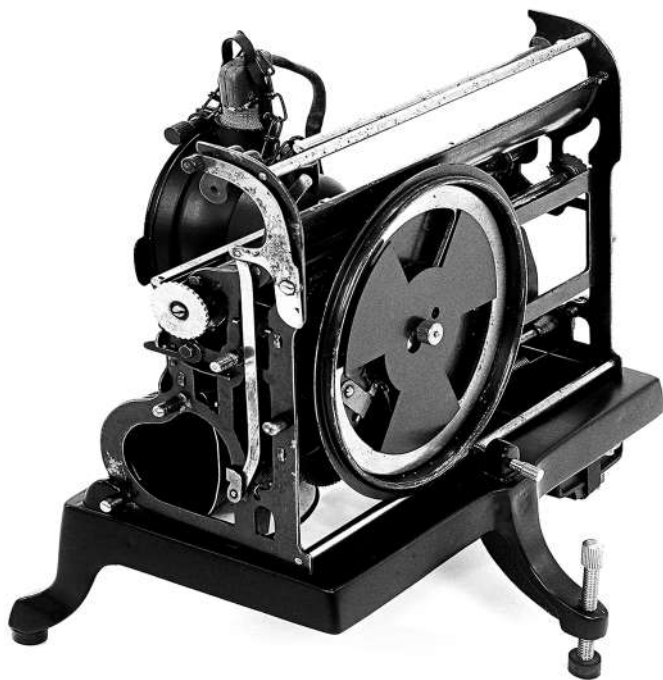
# “Eye” (“Oko”) film camera and projector

## inventor: Kazimierz Prószyński

1912

“Eye” camera is a device that combines the functions of a film camera and a projector. Cheap and easy to use, it encouraged the making of amateur films. Its creator was Kazimierz Prószyński (1875-1945), a cinematographer, engineer, and director who invented many devices in the field of film technology. In 1894, as a student at the University of Liège, Prószyński constructed a pleograph – the world’s first machine for registering and projecting an image. The film used in “Eye” had an unprecedented width of 120mm, and images with the dimensions of 5 x 7mm were exposed across the film. There were 15 frames in each row. Prószyński’s film strip contained as many images as 150 metres of the popular 35mm film.

Attempts to mass-produce the “Eye” failed. From its creation, most probably 100 copies of the camera were made. Individual copies differed from each other, as Prószyński constantly experimented introducing changes and improvements to the design. Fewer than 10 specimens have survived to our times. The original device in the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź underwent maintenance and reconstruction in 2019, according to the description in the patent document. A film strip of Prószyński’s idea was also recreated. The original film strips are kept in the collection of the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute in Warsaw.



20 × 11 × 27 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

## Programme for the film

### *Evening Bells. Roses and Thorns of Forbidden Love* */ Dzwony wieczorne. Róże i kolce zakazanej miłości*

dir. Józef Maszycki  
Emes-Film Studio

1927

*Evening Bells. Roses and Thorns of Forbidden Love* is the only production of the Emes-Film Studio in Łódź. The title was advertised as an erotic drama in 10 acts, based on motifs from fiction operas by Stanisław Moniuszko. It was shot in Łódź, Łagiewniki and Łowicz.

The film has not survived. Józef Maszycki wrote the screenplay, Władysław Beme was responsible for cinematography, and Leon Helman – for art direction. The main roles were played by Nina Wirska, Stanisław Dębicz and Kazimierz Jarocki, artists of the Łódź city theatre. The soldiers from the 28<sup>th</sup> Kaniowski Rifle Regiment took part in the film. The pre-premiere screening took place in November 1926 at the Luna cinema at 1, Tuwima Street in Łódź. It was reported in “Głos Polski” that the premiere was attended by representatives of the city authorities, the press, and numerous guests.

The newspaper’s reporter expressed the hope that due to the local character of the film, it would be enthusiastically received by the inhabitants of Łódź. On the screen, Łódź looked “unusually picturesque”. The Film Museum has a collection of over 20,000 film programmes for Polish and foreign titles. Many of them, which are 22.5 x 30cm in size, are the only traces of the films, which have not survived.



22,5 × 30 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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## Postcard with a still from the film

*The Promised Land / Ziemia obiecana*

dir. Aleksander Hertz

Sfinks Film Studio

1927

Fragments of Władysław Reymont's novel *The Promised Land* were printed in "Kurier Codzienny" of Łódź from 1897 to 1898, and, in 1899, the book was published in two volumes. The first screen adaptation of *The Promised Land* was made by the Sfinks Film Studio in 1927. The action of the film was set in the 1920s. It was shot, among others, in Łódź: at the Scheibler and Grohmann industrial plants and Widzewska Workshop. The cast included a galaxy of the stars of the day – Jadwiga Smosarska, Kazimierz Junosza-Stępowski and, debuting on the screen, Ludwik Solski and Loda Halama. The premiere was accompanied by an extensive promotional campaign. Posters, film programmes, leaflets, and postcards with stills of the most interesting scenes and actors' portraits were printed. Until recently, the film was considered lost. It was only in 2002 that the researchers Kamil Stepan and Jerzy Maśnicki found a nearly 15-minute fragment of the over two-and-a-half-hour adaptation of the book in the Library of Congress archives in Washington.

The Film Museum's collection of nearly 3,000 film postcards includes six ones relating to *The Promised Land* from 1927. In the still presented here there are, from the left: Stanisław Gruszczyński (Maks Baum), Kazimierz Junosza-Stępowski (Karol Borowiecki), Jadwiga Smosarska (Anka Kurowska), Władysław Grabowski (Moryc Welt), and Maria Arnoldówna (Grynszpan's daughter).



8,7 × 13,8 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź



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## Jadwiga Smosarska's dress, handbag, gloves and shoes manufacturer unknown the 1920-30s

This elegant outfit belonged to Jadwiga Smosarska (1898–1971), a star of the interwar cinema, frequently referred to as “the Queen of the Polish screen” by the public and critics. Until the outbreak of World War II, Jadwiga Smosarska acted in the theatre, but it was her film roles in melodramas, comedies, thrillers, and historical dramas that made her so famous. Most of these productions have not survived.

This outfit is one of several sets of garments and personal memorabilia donated to the Film Museum by Danuta Dąbrowska-Przybylska, who wrote in her memoirs: “Zygmunt Protassewicz (Jadwiga Smosarska’s husband) studied with my uncle Józef Żebrowski at the Warsaw University of Technology. They became friends and remained so for the rest of their lives. After my father’s death, Jadwiga Smosarska and Zygmunt took care of me. They sponsored my ballet school and vocal studies in Vienna. Due

to my artistic profession and wearing the same sizes of dresses and shoes as Jadwiga Smosarska, I inherited almost her entire wardrobe. Her majestic figure and wonderful blue eyes will remain in my memory forever. With confidence, though with a tear, I hand over the entire archive of documents and clothing to the Film Museum in Łódź”.



Handbag: 12,5 × 21 cm, shoes: 27 × 9 × 15 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź



152 × 41 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź



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# Camé 300 Réflex film camera

serial number 047

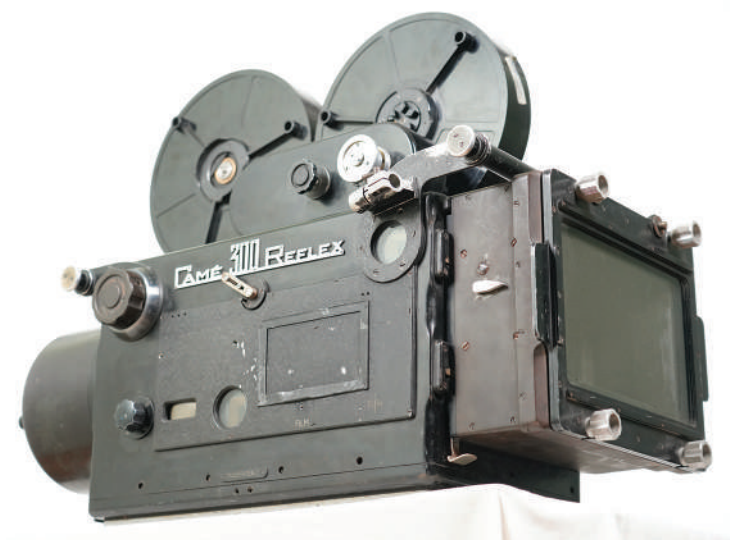
production: Eclair International Diffusion

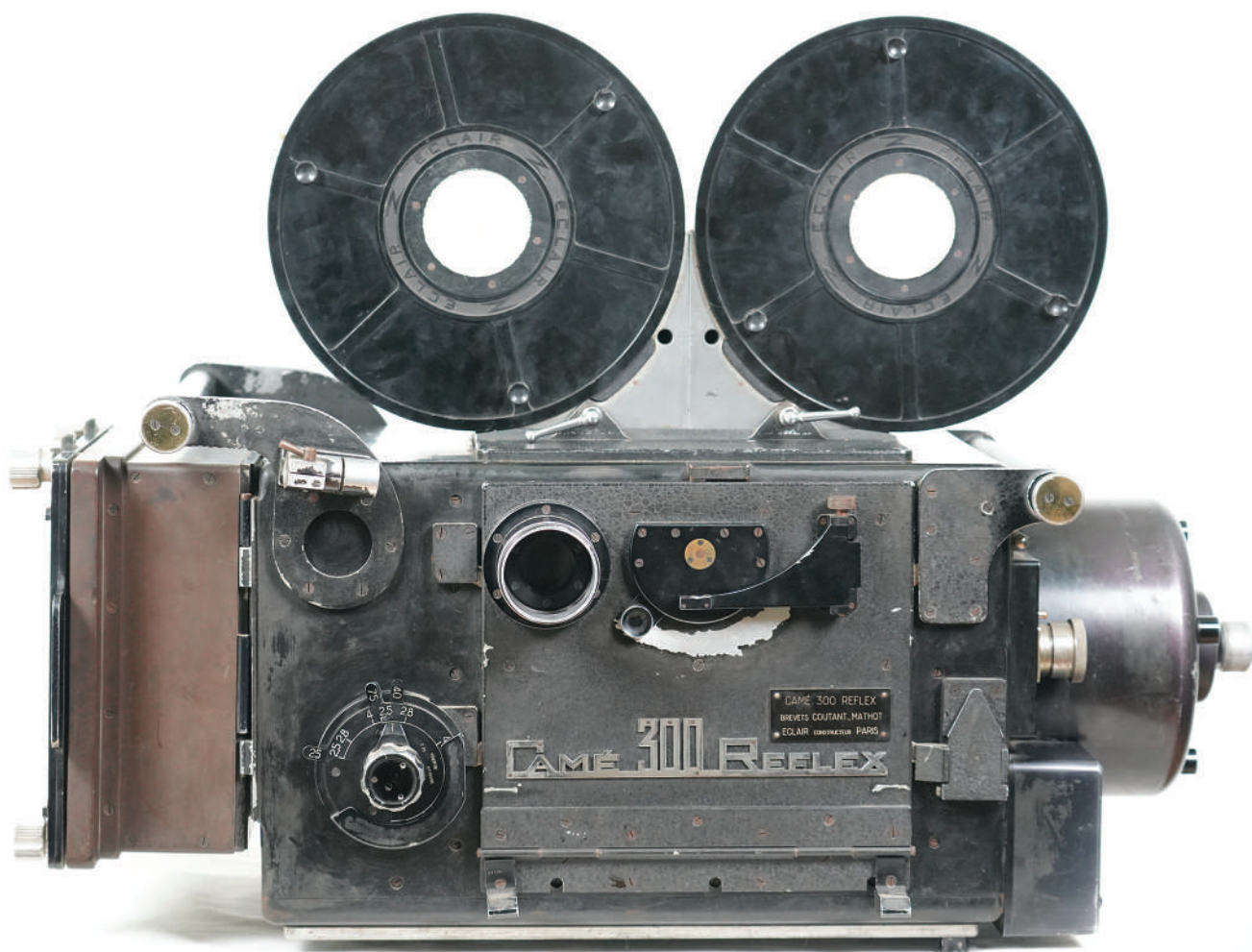
the 1950s

The Camé 300 Réflex is a French professional sound camera for 35mm film that was put into production in 1946. Its housing, which eliminated the noise and vibration of the mechanism, made it possible to make clear sound recordings and guaranteed excellent quality filming. Due to the weight and dimensions of this model, it was used primarily for indoor filming.

The first Camé 300 Réflex cameras were brought to the Feature Film Studio in Łódź for the making of *Eroica* (1958) directed by Andrzej Munk. In the production of the film *Knights of the Teutonic Order / Krzyżacy* (1960), directed by Aleksander Ford, the cinematographer Mieczysław Jahoda used the camera on location for the first time. The Camé 300 Réflex could be used with wide-angle lenses, which made it possible to shoot the first Polish film in a panoramic format and in Eastmancolour. The camera was still used in Poland in the 1970s – the cinematographer Witold Sobociński used

it on the set of *The Hourglass Sanatorium / Sanatorium Pod Klepsydrą* (1973) directed by Wojciech Jerzy Has. The model was best suited for a widescreen system. It was not until the appearance of the new generation Arriflex and Panavision cameras, which offered excellent image quality and were more compact, that the career of the Camé 300 Réflex came to an end.





65 × 45 × 83 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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## Wojciech Jerzy Has's typewriter produced by: **Maschinenfabrik G. F. Grosser (GROMA)** 1950–1959

The Kolibri typewriter belonged to Wojciech Jerzy Has (1925–2000), a director and a Rector of the Łódź Film School. W.J. Has used it at home and when travelling; it was perfect for working on short texts. The director's wife, Wanda Ziembicka-Has, recalled: "It is still in good condition. If it had broken, Has would have thrown it away and bought a new one. He was a perfectionist. On this typewriter, he typed applications to the Minister of Culture so that he would be allowed to make films. He handwrote letters to friends and scripts with his favourite pen. He mostly worked at noon when there was good daylight". The typewriter was manufactured in the German factory Maschinenfabrik G. F. Grosser (GROMA) in Chemnitz, opened in 1872. The plant became famous for the production of portable Kolibri typewriters, which were popular thanks to their solid but light construction and elegant design.



Wojciech J. Has's typewriter (on loan) is in the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź as one of the mementoes of the director of films such as *How to Be Loved / Jak być kochaną* (1962), *The Saragossa Manuscript / Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie* (1964) and *The Hourglass Sanatorium / Sanatorium Pod Klepsydrą* (1973).





9 × 35 × 30 cm  
Artifact deposited by Wanda Ziembicka-Has

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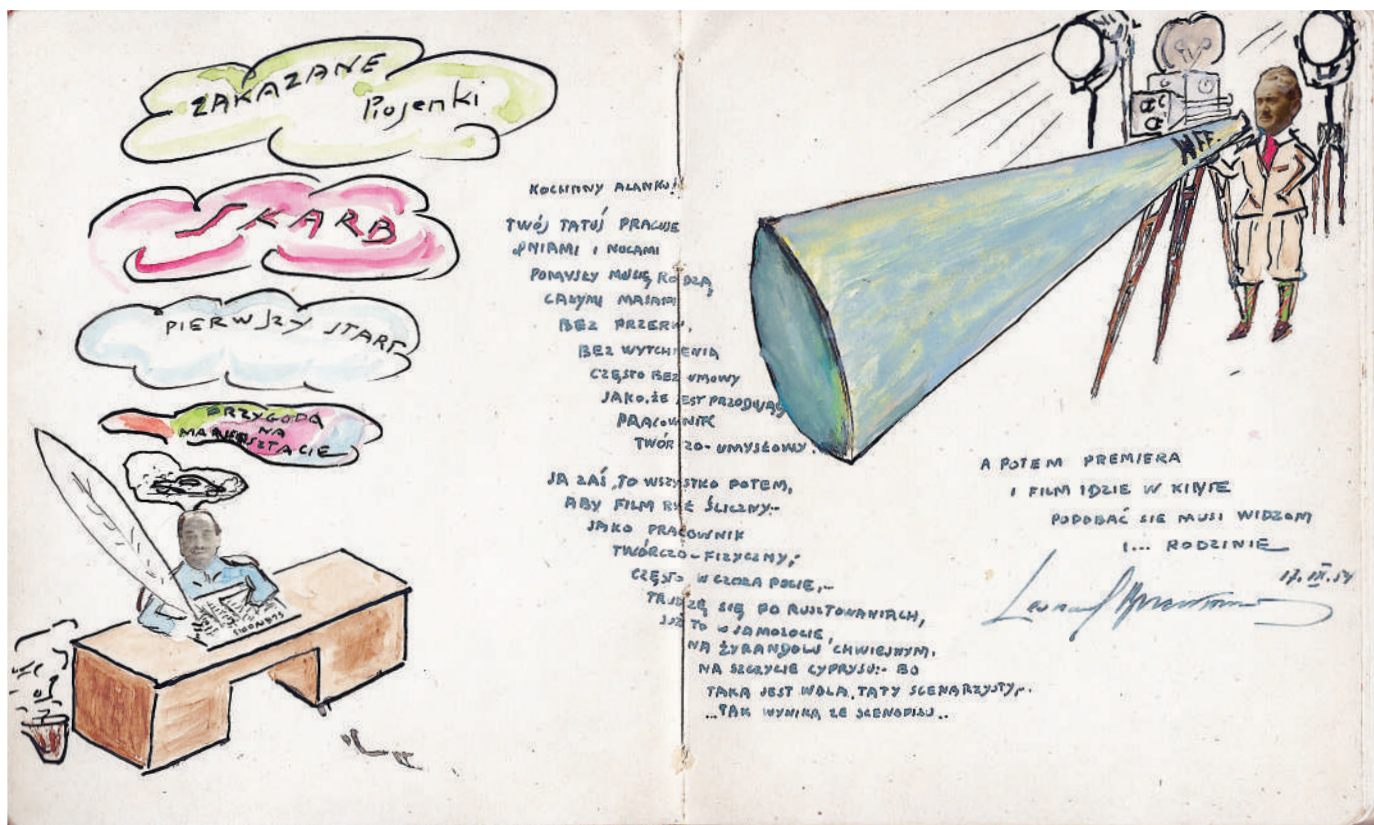
## Entry in the diary of Allan Starski

author: Leonard Buczkowski

1954

The diary, bound in a red leather cover, belongs to Allan Starski, a world-renowned film and theatre set designer, the Oscar winner for Best Art Direction for *Schindler's List* directed by Steven Spielberg (1993). As a child, Allan Starski lived with his parents in Łódź. He collected diary entries from his family and friends, including famous filmmakers, writers, and musicians. The protagonists of the illustrated poem from September 17, 1954 are Leonard Buczkowski (1900 – 1967) – a director and family friend, and Ludwik Starski (1903 – 1984) – a screenwriter, Allan's father. Buczkowski, the author of the entry, humorously explains to the boy what the film work is all about.

Leonard Buczkowski made his directorial debut with *Madmen / Szaleńcy* (1928). His *The Starry Squadron / Gwiazdzista Eskadra* (1930) was the most expensive Polish film of the interwar period, and, at the same time, the first one addressing the topic of aviation. Not a single copy of this title has survived to our times. Buczkowski became famous as the creator of *Forbidden Songs / Zakazane piosenki* (1947), the first post-war full-length feature film, as well as *The Treasure / Skarb* (1948), and *An Adventure in Mariensztat / Przygoda na Mariensztacie* (1954) – the first Polish colour film. Ludwik Starski, a master of comedy and the screenwriter for these three films, began his career in the film industry in the 1930s as a screenwriter for comedies and music films, such as *A Songster of Warsaw / Pieśniarz Warszawy* (1934) with Eugeniusz Bodo in the leading role. He wrote lyrics of popular songs, such as *I'm just such a cold bastard / Już taki jestem zimny drań*, *If an adventure, then only in Warsaw / Jak przygoda, to tylko w Warszawie*, or *Cyraneczka*. The crowning achievement of the screenwriter's film career was *Hello, Fred the Beard / Hallo Szpicbródka, czyli ostatni występ króla kasiarzy* (1978), directed by Janusz Rzeszewski and Mieczysław Jahoda.



18 × 15 cm  
Allan Starski's private archive

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## Screenplay for the film

### *Eroica. Heroic Symphony in Two Parts*

### */ Eroica. Symfonia bohaterstwa w dwóch częściach*

dir. Andrzej Munk

screen writer: Jerzy Stefan Stawiński

1956

The unique typescript with the short stories *Scherzo alla polacca* (as a chapter entitled *Hungarians*) and *Ostinato - Lugubre* (as a chapter entitled *Escape*), which became the basis of the film *Eroica*, also includes an additional short story *Con bravura* (as a chapter entitled *Masquerade*). The latter was not included in the film because the director considered it “artistically unsuccessful”. In addition to the three short stories, the screenplay also incorporates a two-page story depicting a scene in a crowded Warsaw street. The typescript also contains many handwritten amendments. The screenwriter of *Eroica* Jerzy Stefan Stawiński (1921–2010) took part in the September campaign in 1939 and in the Warsaw Uprising; he wrote, among others, the screenplay for the film *Canal / Kanał* (1956) directed by Andrzej Wajda.

Andrzej Munk (1921–1961) spent the German occupation in Warsaw and, like Stawiński, fought the Warsaw Uprising. In 1951, he graduated from the Photography Direction Faculty of the Film School in Łódź. He worked at the Documentary Film Studio, first as a camera operator for the Polish Film Chronicle, and then as a director of documentary films. After *Man on the Track / Człowiek na torze* (1956), based on the screenplay he wrote together with Stawiński, Munk decided to make a film of a lighter genre. Stawiński was supposed to prepare a comedy script about girls from a ballet school for him, but he wrote a series of war stories that became the basis of the screenplay of *Eroica*.

In an interview with Stanisław Janicki, published in the book *Polish filmmakers about themselves / Polscy twórcy filmowi o sobie* (1962), Munk said: “Those who accuse me of representing anti-hero tendencies in my films do me a lot of harm. In *Eroica*, nowhere is there any bad talk about heroes, even if their actions are irrational, always sympathetically, sentimentally portrayed”. *Eroica* is considered an outstanding work of the Polish school of film. Martin Scorsese recognized it as one of the masterpieces of Polish cinema and showed it at the Masterpieces of Polish Cinema festival in 2014 in the United States and Canada.



niewielką polaną. Obok szałasów płonął kilka ognisk. Po śród-  
ku stała niewielka chata. Z lasu ciągnęli na nartach ludzie w  
bieli. W słońcu błyszczała brzoza. Z szałasów wyszedł wysoki męż-  
czyzna w kożusku, wywróconym kłakami na wierzch.

- Cześć, Samuraj - powiedział Andrzej - Gdzie Łosoś?

- W <sup>szlenc</sup> ~~chacie~~ - odparł tamten - Przyszedłeś w ostatniej  
chwili.

Andrzej zdjął narty i wpadł do chaty. W kącie, przy małym  
pudełku radiostacji młody chłopak wystukiwał kluczem tekst z  
kartki. Dokoła stołu siedziało kilku mężczyzn nad mapą Tatr.

- Jest i pan hrabia - powiedział Łosoś - Zarządzi Właśnie  
wyruszący. Jedzie kolumna transportowa. Pięć ciężarówek i eskorta.  
Obejmujesz drugi pluton. Zaraz ci pokażę na mapie.

- Rozkaz - odparł Andrzej stukając obcasami. - Coś nowego?

- Wiesz już, że Niemcy wkroczyli na Węgry? - zapytał Łosoś.

- Nie - wzdrygnął się Andrzej. - I co?

- Nie, <sup>pod koniec z jutra</sup> ~~likwidujemy~~ przyszedł rozkaz wstrzymania wszystkich  
kurierów. Zabrali się za Polaków. Baza się likwiduje.

~~xxBxxxxxxxkxxxxxxx~~ <sup>Tuła pociąg do transportu likwidacji</sup> ~~Andrzej~~ <sup>Wszystko w porządku</sup> ~~Andrzej~~ <sup>Wszystko w porządku</sup>

- ~~Wszystko w porządku~~ <sup>Wszystko w porządku</sup> ~~Wszystko w porządku~~ <sup>Wszystko w porządku</sup> ~~Wszystko w porządku~~ <sup>Wszystko w porządku</sup>

- Nie - odparł Łosoś. Taka ona zakonnica jak ja. Wyrzyna  
Siada. Gdyby się ją doprowadzili z dołu, zatrzymać. Siada, Andrzej.

- Kiedy ja... muszę lecieć. Właśnie. <sup>na Węgry!</sup> ~~Właśnie~~ <sup>Właśnie</sup> ~~Właśnie~~ <sup>Właśnie</sup>

- Siadaj, Andrzej! - warknął Łosoś - Nie twoja sprawa. Zaj-  
mujesz stanowisko na tym zboczcu...

Z daleka ~~z daleka~~ <sup>z daleka</sup> ~~z daleka~~ <sup>z daleka</sup> ~~z daleka~~ <sup>z daleka</sup>

Zadudniły wybuchy. Andrzej chwycił pistolet maszynowy. Wypadli  
przed chatą.

- ~~Wszystko w porządku~~ <sup>Wszystko w porządku</sup> ~~Wszystko w porządku~~ <sup>Wszystko w porządku</sup> ~~Wszystko w porządku~~ <sup>Wszystko w porządku</sup>

- Kiedy będzie goty?  
- Już jest.  
- Siada, Andrzej.  
- Siada, Andrzej.  
- Kiedy ja muszę lecieć!  
- Siada, Andrzej.  
- Siada, Andrzej.

32 x 22,5 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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## Script of the student film

*Break Up the Dance / Rozbijemy zabawę...*

**dir. Roman Polański**

**author: Roman Polański**

**1957**

The author of the four-page typed script is Roman Polański, then a third-year student of film directing at the Film School in Łódź. While working on the student film *Break Up the Dance*, he disregarded the rules of a documentary film. He carefully planned and directed the situation, which was then filmed. Years later, he described the preparations for the film and the events on the set in the book *Roman by Polański* in the following way: “I organised [...] an open-air dance party on the school premises. My peers thought I just wanted to show them having fun – only the film crew knew what I was really up to. I contacted a well-known gang of hooligans, invited them to come and do their job. They were to mingle discreetly with the crowd of guests and gradually start stepping into action. The scenario of the entire operation, however, was spoiled by their overzealousness. As soon as they jumped over the gate, they began blindly dealing blows left and right, tearing girls away from the dancers, shoving students into the pool. My crew operating a single camera was doing their best to get the most out of this highly concentrated action, and ran out of the film just as the dancing turned into a general brawl”. Several participants of the party were injured, and what was left after the party was a total shambles. The school teachers’ board reprimanded Polański.

A few years later, as a school graduate, the director received the first Oscar nomination for a Polish film for his feature debut *Knife in the Water / Nóż w wodzie* (1961). Among numerous awards for his later works are the Palme d’Or from Cannes and the Oscar for Best Director for *The Pianist* (2002).

Roman Polański

III reż.

Scenopis filmu p. t.

Rozbijony zabawę...

Uj. 1. Ogólny. 10 m

na ziemi leżą sznury z lampionami. Przes kadry przechodzą dwaj chłopcy niosący stolik. Od kamery, wkadrowuje się, na czworaka, dziewczyna wtręcająca żarówki.

Uj. 2. Ogólny. 5 m

stoliki na trawie. Chłopcy przykrywają je obrusami.

Uj. 3. Bliski. 2 m

ktos zanięta podium. w głębi, niżej stoliki.

Uj. 4. Od półzbl. do pełnego - odjazd. 3 m

ktos odkręca fontannę. 3 planie dwa lampiony.

Uj. 5. od półzbl. do ogólnego - odjazd. 5 m

przymocowują do drzewa sznury z lampionami. Lampiony na tle nieba.

P R Z E S T A W I E



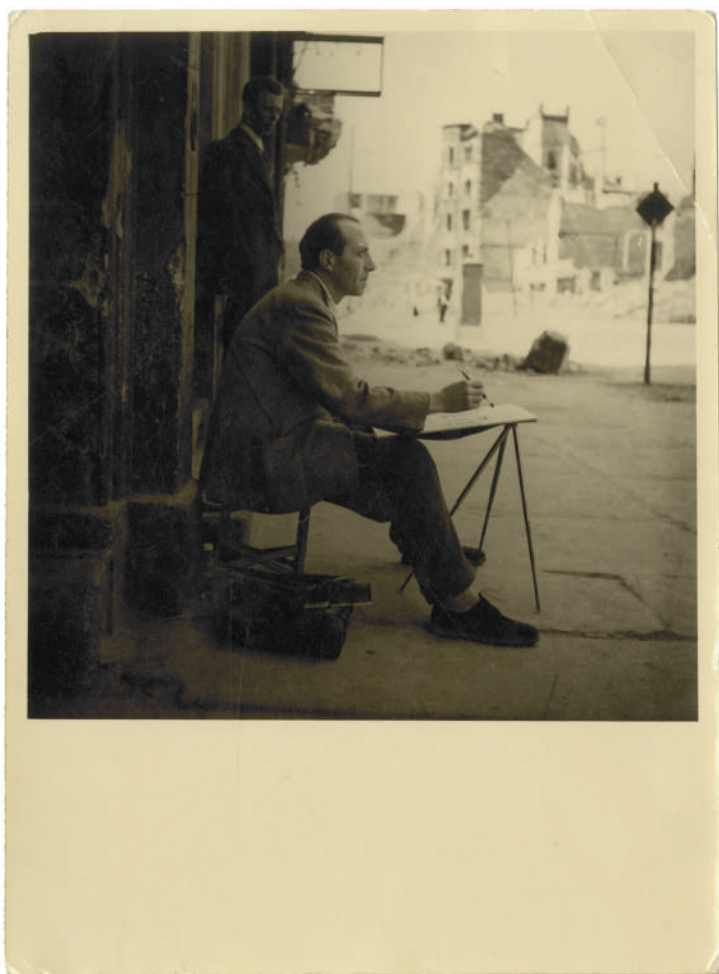
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# Tadeusz Wybult's employee ID Card

## Feature Film Studio in Łódź

### 1958

Tadeusz Wybult (1921–2008) was one of the most outstanding Polish film set designers. He collaborated with such directors as Janusz Majewski, Stanisław Różewicz, Krzysztof Zanussi, Aleksander Ford, Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Andrzej Wajda or Edward Żebrowski. His colleagues and friends remember him as a quiet, calm person



who would become a visionary and a titan of work when designing for films. This is how Ewa Braun remembers him: “Tadeusz Wybult was very important to me, he was a mentor and master for many later set designers. An unusual personality. Extremely educated – an architect by profession, able to identify any object. He often acted as a consultant for antique galleries when their owners were not entirely sure if what they had was an item from one decade or another”.

Tadeusz Wybult was the head Set Construction Department at the Feature Film Studio in the years of 1958–1959. He designed sets for over 60 feature films and ended his professional career in 1981; he retired in protest against the imposition of martial law.

12 × 9 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

LEGITYMACJA Nr 607



Ważna na rok

19 58

19 59 r.

(podpis posiadacza legitymacji)

Ważność legitymacji przedłużona na rok:

30. VI.

19 58

30. VI.

19 58

30. VI.

19 59

19

Wytwórcza Filmów Fabularnych

Przedsiębiorstwo Państwowe

Dzika Ewidencji

Łódź, ul. Łakowa Nr 29

(pieczęć podłużna - wystawcy)

Jadeusz

(imię)

Wybralt

(nazwisko)

Kierownik Wydziału

(stanowisko)

w Wytwórci Filmów Fabularnych

Łódź, dnia 19. VI.

(miejscowość i data)

19 58 r.

DYREKTOR

(pieczęćka i podpis)

CWD - Os-113a. Zam. 2366/P

2638 - Łak - 20.11.57 - 20.000 + 20.000

11 × 15 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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# Student's book of Krzysztof Kieślowski

## National Film and Theatre School in Łódź

### 1964

Before he became the world-famous, award-winning director of the feature films *Double Life of Veronique / Podwójne życie Weroniki* (1991) and the trilogy *Three Colours: Blue, White, Red / Trzy kolory: Niebieski, Biały, Czerwony* (1993–1994), Krzysztof Kieślowski (1941-1996), studied at the Łódź Film School. When he began his studies in 1964, he intended to be a theatre director: “You could study theatre directing only after graduating from a university. I thought that the most logical path would be to study some other directing that would prepare me for theatre directing. Therefore, after finishing secondary school, I applied to the Film School in Łódź”.

Under the influence of Prof. Kazimierz Karabasz, a master of the Polish school of documentary, Kieślowski started making documentaries that he considered more interesting than fiction films. His *From the City of Łódź / Z miasta Łodzi* (1968), *From the Night Porter's Point of View / Z punktu widzenia nocnego portiera* (1979) or *Talking Heads / Gadające głowy* (1980) are now Polish documentary film classics. He said about the School: “For me, the Film School is primarily the people I met there, endless discussions about the meaning of what we learn, conversations about life and art. Meeting people, friendships. It meant a lot to me. Thanks to the Film School, I've learnt to look at the world and people. Before, I didn't really know how to do it”.

After the feature film *Camera Buff / Amator* (1979) and *Blind Chance / Przypadek* (1981), Kieślowski made a series of films *Decalogue / Dekalog* (1988), which brought him international recognition. He received many awards and distinctions for his work, including the European Film Award “Felix” and the Golden Lion in Venice. In 1994, he was nominated for an Oscar for *Three Colours. Red / Trzy kolory. Czerwony* (1994) in the categories “Best Director”, “Best Cinematography” and “Best Original Screenplay”.





PAŃSTWOWA WYŻSZA SZKOŁA TEATRALNA I FILMOWA  
im. Leona Schillera w Łodzi

Wydział REŻYSERII FILMOWEJ  
Nr alb. 376/64

**I N D E K S**  
*Krzysztof*  
Imię  
*Kiesłowski*  
Nazwisko

Imię ojca Roman ur. dn. 27 czerwca 1941 r.  
w Warszawie pow. wsch.

*Jeżewski*  
Rektor  
Łódź, dn. 9 października 1964 r.  
Pieczęć Dziekan *[Signature]*

11 × 15 cm  
From the collection of the Łódź Film School



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## **Prop from the film *Pharaoh* / *Faraon***

**dir. Jerzy Kawalerowicz**

**manufacturer unknown**

**1964**

The pectoral worn in the film by Pharaoh Ramses XIII (Jerzy Zelnik) resembles the original from the tomb of Tutankhamun, discovered in 1922 in the Valley of the Kings in Thebes. The breastplate depicts the goddess Nekhbet in the form of a vulture with outstretched wings. Nekhbet was the patroness of Upper Egypt; in the solar cult she appeared as the daughter of the god Ra, who, together with the goddess Wadett (Uto) formed the Uraeus – a symbol of divine and royal power.

During the preparations for the production of *Pharaoh*, Jerzy Kawalerowicz (1922–2007) appointed teams of specialists who were to recreate the realities of ancient Egypt. Seven content consultants were headed by the world-famous archaeologist and Egyptologist – Prof. Kazimierz Michałowski. The set decoration workshop was managed by Jerzy Skrzepiński, and the costumes were designed by Andrzej Majewski, Barbara Ptak, Lidia Rzeszewska and Maria Czekalska. It took several months to collect the documentation. Skrzepiński and Prof. Michałowski repeatedly visited the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and the Museum of Ancient Egypt in London. While exploring the local collections, Skrzepiński made thousands of drawings. On their basis, the set was built at the Feature Film Studio in Łódź. The film was shot for seven months in such locations as Bukhara (Uzbekistan), the Kara-Kum desert (Turkmenistan), Luxor, and Cairo (Egypt), as well as in Błędowska Desert and Masuria. *Pharaoh* was released in Poland on March 11, 1966. In the same year, it was nominated for an Oscar.



54 × 16 × 0,5 cm  
From the collection of Łódź Film Centre

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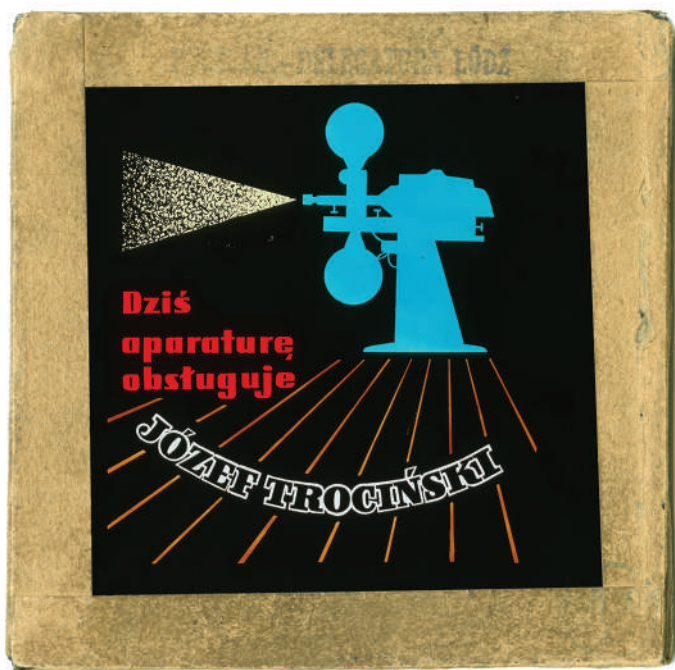
# **Projectionist's business card on a glass slide Film**

## **Advertising and Slides Company**

### **1970s**

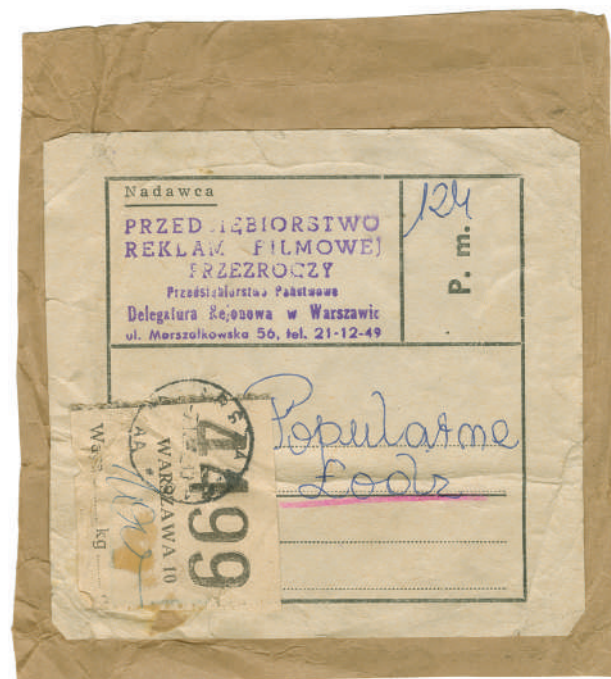
The slide belonged to the projectionist Józef Trociński (1939–2021), a long-time employee of the Popularne cinema at 18, Ogrodowa Street in Łódź. The practice of showing slides of business cards before the screening does not exist anymore, although the place of work of the projectionist, who operates the projection equipment in the projection room, is still located behind the audience in the cinema.

In the early days of cinema, projection rooms usually had two projectors, a rewinding and a splicing machine, and other devices enabling projection. Screenings were handled by two projectionists who underwent courses and training, progressing from the position of an assistant to an independent specialist, authorised to operate all types of cinema equipment. Film stock was made of flammable nitrocellulose, while arc lamps, used as a source of projection light, emitted high temperatures causing frequent fires. Only the development of film technology, the replacement of arc lanterns with xenon lamps, and flammable film with flame-retardant film, improved the working conditions of projectionists. The projectionist could work independently, reviewing and splicing the film before the screening. Depending on the cinema equipment, the image was projected from one or two projectors. Cinemas with one projector could use a plate that allowed projectionists to load an entire edited film on it. Otherwise, the projectionist watched over the smooth transition of the image from one projector to the other. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, analogue cinema was replaced by digital technology. Films are now delivered to cinemas on external disks or via the internet, and for screenings a digital projector is used. Nowadays, few cinemas in Poland are equipped to screen films from photosensitive tape. The profession of a projectionist is becoming a thing of the past – people working with projection must be IT literate and be authorized to operate electrical devices.



8,5 × 8,5 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź





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## Set design for the film *The Journey / Podróż*

dir. Daniel Szczechura

designer: Daniel Szczechura

1970

*The Journey* is a cut-out film by Daniel Szczechura – an artist whose name is associated with the greatest successes of Polish animation in the 1960s. Already his first film *Conflicts / Konflikty* (1960), made using the cut-out method, was hailed as a masterpiece. According to Szczechura, the cut-out technique revolutionised the animated film, made animation more sophisticated, and opened it up to more serious topics. The making of *The Journey* (1970) is of particular importance in his work. Szczechura stripped the narrative of symbols and created a story about a man on a monotonous train ride. This is how he recalled its genesis: “I live in Warsaw and work in Łódź. I keep commuting by train between these two cities.” He said about the film, “It would seem that it is simple because there is only one movement, one set. A regular train, second



class. A normal window. A normal man. I've always wanted to make each of my films as good as possible. And this film is made well. But I didn't realize the importance of this film. Only years later, do I see that this is it. If there's anything I'll leave behind, it's *The Journey*”.

Critics deemed *The Journey*, produced by the “Se-Ma-For” Studio in Łódź, an innovative animation. The design is one of the artifacts successively handed over by the artist to the collection of the Film Museum.

12,5 × 12,5 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź



27 × 40 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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## A still from the film *The Market / Rynek* dir. Józef Robakowski in collaboration with Tadeusz Junak and Ryszard Meissner (Workshop of the Film Form)

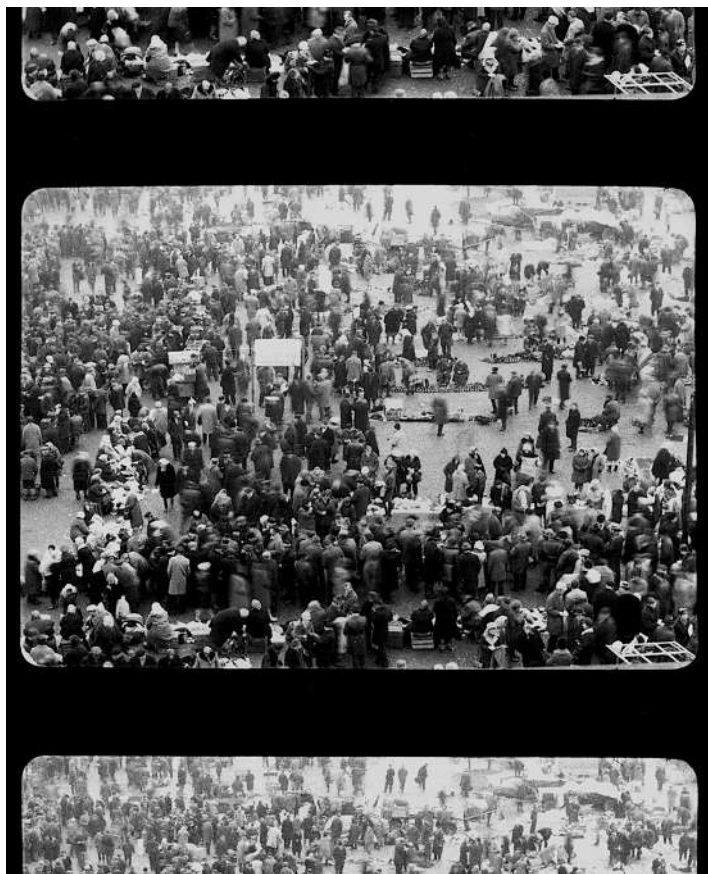
1970

*The Market* is the first conceptual film made by using stop-motion animation in an urban space. It was made by Józef Robakowski in collaboration with Tadeusz Junak and Ryszard Meissner. The creators were active in the avant-garde artistic group Workshop of the Film Form, which was established as a study circle at the Film School in Łódź in 1970.

The founders and members of the Workshop were school students

and graduates. In defiance of the school's methodology and official film production methods, their films were created on the fringes of cinema and contemporary art: analytical, devoid of literary content. The group significantly influenced the art of the 1970s and the following decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*The Market* is a film lasting only 4 minutes and 20 seconds. It uses a mechanical method of filming: 2 frames every 5 seconds. The camera records the marketplace in Łódź with a continued exposure of the image. The film was shot on 25 November 1970, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thanks to this method of animation, you can watch a record of actual reality, impossible for the director to foresee. Crossing the limits of human imagination with the use of cameras was one of the principle ideas of the filmmakers from the Workshop of the Film Form.



Original media: 35 mm, duration: 4'20''  
The film is available in the public domain



## Costume design for the film

### *The Hourglass Sanatorium / Sanatorium Pod Klepsydrą*

dir. Wojciech Jerzy Has

designers: Lidia Minticz-Skarżyńska, Jerzy Skarżyński

1972



The design shows a man in a bird mask, the character from the film *The Hourglass Sanatorium* (1973).

The designers of the sets and costumes were Lidia Minticz-Skarżyńska and Jerzy Skarżyński, theatre and film set decorators, painters, and educators. The outstanding artistic duo had collaborated with Wojciech Jerzy Has since the production of *The Saragossa Manuscript / Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie* (1965).

The couple Skarżyński paid great attention to the costume-mask and the characterization of characters, and their works were inspired by Surrealist painting. In one of his last interviews, Jerzy Skarżyński described the cooperation with his wife in the following manner: "It seems to me that if we had worked and developed separately, each of us would be a different author of different set designs. Lidia had delicate poetry in her, and I had more tartness, irony, sarcasm. [...] We signed everything together. We worked together, with the provision that I would choose to design film sets and Lidia would design costumes – it was easier for me to control all the technical equipment". The sets and costumes for *The Hourglass Sanatorium* were made at Feature Film Studio in Łódź.

53,7 × 26,7 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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# Nagra 4.2 reporter tape recorder

## inventor: Stefan Kudelski

1972

The Nagra 4.2 is a portable, battery-powered tape recorder designed for radio, cinema, and television recording. The device was constructed in 1951 by the Polish electronics engineer and inventor Stefan Kudelski (1929–2013), then a student at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. The prototype was built over a period of two years in the workshop at the back of his family house in Prilly, western Switzerland. The name comes from the Polish verb “to record” (“nagrywać”). In 1979, Kudelski received an Oscar for the development of sound recording technology.

The Nagra revolutionised the world of cinematography. Its compact and portable construction meant that filmmakers no longer had to transport heavy equipment to the set. The tape recorder in conjunction with a camera ensured perfect synchronisation of the sound with the film, while maintaining excellent recording quality. It could be used anywhere. Since the 1960s, the device has been used by radio and TV broadcasters and film studios around the world, as well as by special services. Nagra recorders have been used on Mount Everest, in the Mariana Trench, and on the Moon. The company founded in the 1950s by Kudelski still exists today.



The Kudelski Group website states that the company “is a world leader in digital security and media solutions for the delivery of digital and interactive content”.



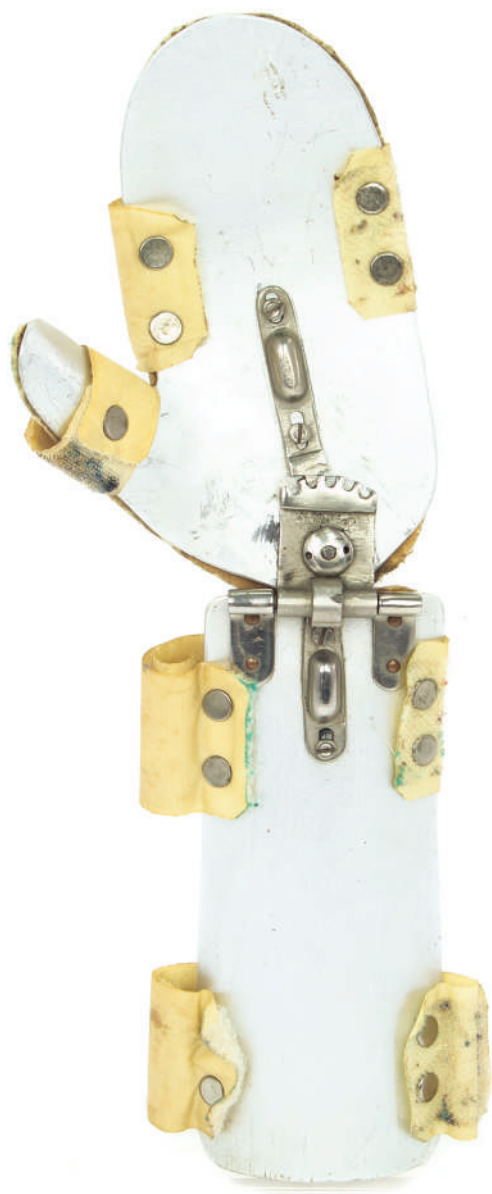
12 × 31 × 22 cm  
From the collection of the Educational Film Studio

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## Stunt's "paw" constructor: Władysław "Dziunek" Barański the 1980s

The "paw", a metal hand and forearm protector, was constructed by Władysław Barański, known in the film community as the king of stuntmen. He has worked on over 400 productions, both Polish and foreign ones, including: *The Pearl in the Crown / Perła w koronie* (1971) directed by Kazimierz Kutz; *The Deluge / Potop* (1973), *With Fire and Sword / Ogniem i mieczem* (1999), *An Ancient Tale / Stara baśń* (2003) directed by Jerzy Hoffman; *Pirates* (1986) directed by Roman Polański; *Quo vadis* (2001) directed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz; *The Witcher / Wieźdźmin* (2001) directed by Marek Brodzki; *Edi* (2002) directed by Piotr Trzaskalski.

The job of a stuntperson is to recreate acting tasks that require the performer to be skilled in taking a risk. The profession first appeared in Polish cinema in the 1960s, when spectacular films started to be made – Aleksander Ford directed *Knights of the Teutonic Order / Krzyżacy* (1960), Jerzy Hoffman – *Colonel Wołodyjowski / Pan Wołodyjowski* (1969). Initially, stuntmen were amateurs. The first professional stuntman was Krzysztof Fus, who, in 1967, created a professional stunt team in Wrocław. It was formed by a group of daredevils, among them Władysław "Dziunek" Barański, who recalled that stage of his career in the following way: "It took me a while to find out what 'stuntman' meant. I would come back from the set battered. I was trying to help myself, so I started to invent means of protection. They are very important to the stuntman, they make it less painful". Currently, the professional qualifications and the scope of duties of a stuntperson are defined in the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2000 on the performance of certain film professions.



36 × 14 × 6 cm  
Artifact deposited by Władysław "Dziunek" Barański



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# Fragment of the shooting report from the film *Tango*

## dir. Zbigniew Rybczyński

### 1980

Zbigniew Rybczyński, a maker of auteur experimental animated films, director, cinematographer, screenwriter, studied at the Film School in Łódź and was a member of the avant-garde group Workshop of the Film Form. In 1983, he won an Oscar in the Best Short Animated Film category for *Tango*, made at the “Se-Ma-For” studio and Feature Film Studio in Łódź. At the studio, using the live-action method, Rybczyński shot 22 episodes from the life of characters whose lives intersected in a room of a certain apartment. On the floor of the set, he drew the paths that the actors were to follow to limit the overlapping of their silhouettes during shooting. He used a separate film to shoot the background. He developed and edited the negative of the material with the actors and then converted it into a positive to later create drawings on celluloids (masks), ready to be photographed against a selected decoration.

Thanks to daily reports, the documentation, including the place and hours of work, the composition of the shooting crew, and activities performed by them, are now available. This is how Jadwiga Wendorff, the art director of “Se-Ma-For” from 1979

to 1990 recalled working on the film: “I am walking down the corridor in Pabianicka Str. (the seat of the “Se-Ma-For” Studio) when Zbyszek Rybczyński comes up to me and shows me a piece of paper divided into squares, pieces, and says, ‘Listen, Jadwiga, I’d like to show you this project. I’ll be making this film.’ I looked at it and understood nothing. He shot it in Łąkowa Street and then Bednarska Street at the “Se-Ma-For” branch. He did not leave Bednarska for a year. It’s hard to believe but he lived there, slept there, ate there. When you think about it now you realize that these days you could use some technology, but, back then, you had to shoot everything, do everything, and it was a really backbreaking job”.



Digital copy from the collection of The National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute



R A P O R T Z D J Ę C I O W Y

data: 28 III. hala nr.:

tytuł filmu: „Pokoje miłośników”<sup>u</sup>

wyk. pracę w godz. od 8<sup>00</sup> do 23<sup>00</sup>

nr. uj. sek. ekr. zuż. taśmy uwagi

skład grupy zdjęciowej

1/ reżyser	Zbigniew Rybczyński	UJ. NR. 7 - 12 sek.
2/ operator	Zbigniew Rybczyński	PAN JEZOPE, - 108 nr.
3/ as. reżysera	Juwin Byants	
4/ as. op. obrazu	Andrzej Teodorczyk	
5/ ani. ator	Z. Rybczyński	
	s. zarządzający	Juwin Byants
	reżyser	Zbigniew Rybczyński

21 × 15 cm

From the collection of Film Archive 3 - Łąkowa, Łódź Branch  
of The National Film Archive - Audiovisual Institute

## Set design for the film *Kingsize* / *Kingsajz*

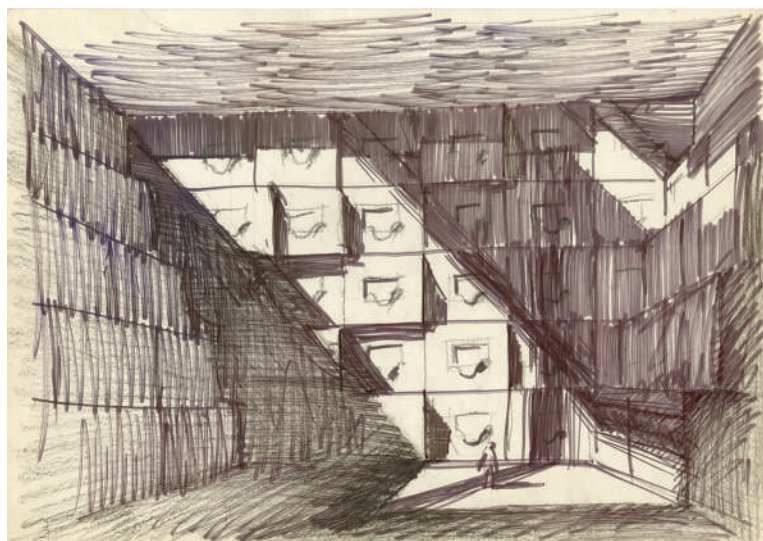
dir. Juliusz Machulski

designer: Janusz Sosnowski

1986

The design presents a fragment of Drawers Land (Szuflandia), a place from the film *Kingsize* (1987), inhabited by dwarfs. The set was designed by Janusz Sosnowski who had worked with Juliusz Machulski since *Sexmission* / *Seksmisja* (1984).

To shoot the film, a set at a scale of 20:1 and over 200 macro-props were built. Andrzej Sołtysik, the production manager, described the decoration creation process in the following way: "More than 30 pieces were made by artists from Łódź. They were made at the Arlekin Theatre. Jukopol near Płock made drawers for *Kingsize*. For the first time in many years, the film used the matte painting technique". The method allowed the filmmakers to create an illusion of set elements enlarged to any size. Janusz Sosnowski recalled: "Only six drawers would close under the ceiling of the studio, and I needed 30 of them. An artist from Barrandov came and made two such matte



paintings for us. I asked the assistant of the other set designer, Leszek Rybarczyk, to keep an eye on what he was doing. When the artist left, the third matte painting was made by Leszek. A matte painting is a frame with glass. It is placed between a set element that must be lit and the camera. On the glass, you paint black what has been built and what is not there. Then, you film it in such a way that you get the effect of an enlarged set. Today, these things are done by computer".

21 × 30 cm  
Artifact deposited by Janusz Sosnowski

# Set design for the film

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## *Freedom of the Leg / Wolność nogi*

**dir. Piotr Dumala**  
**author: Piotr Dumala**  
**1988**



34 × 19 × 1,5 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

The flat engraving on a plasterboard covered with printing ink is an artwork by Piotr Dumala – a director, screenwriter, writer, graphic artist and lecturer at the Film School in Łódź.

Dumala made his first attempts at animated films in the fourth year of his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, in the Film Graphics Studio, under the supervision of the master animator Daniel Szczechura. The technique he used in the film *Freedom of the Leg* differed from the earlier achievements of the artists representing the Polish school of animation. The author mentioned that he had invented it by accident: intending to sketch a picture on a plaster tile covered with dark paint, he reached for a needle and then he had “an epiphany when he realized that a picture can be painted over without a trace and another one can be scratched onto it”. The short film project, produced by the Łódź Studio of Small Film Forms “Se-Ma-For”, is an enigmatic story happening in the moonlight. In the original plot, the title leg of a young man takes on an independent life. The artist recalled: “At first, there was only one drawing of a leg running across a deserted market square, followed by a group of disabled people on crutches and in wheelchairs. It felt like a great scene in itself. Finally, I came up with a screenplay about a man who disassembles himself while asleep – the leg in question escapes and then grows wings and flies away”.

## Album with production photos from the series

*Chancellor / Kanclerz*

dir. Ryszard Ber

author: Andrzej Szwed

1988

The photos show the film crew on the set of the biographical series *Chancellor* directed by Ryszard Ber (1933–2004), the title protagonist of which is the Grand Chancellor of the Crown – Jan Zamoyski (Marcin Troński). The photos come from one of the commemorative albums made by Andrzej Szwed, a long-time employee of the WFF, who has worked on 134 film sets. As a driver, stagehand, grip, or a person responsible for film equipment, he worked on, among others: *The Deluge / Potop* (1974) directed by Jerzy Hoffman, *Vabank* (1981) directed by Juliusz Machulski, or *The Inn / Austeria* (1982), directed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz. He is also an amateur photographer who has captured many interesting situations on the set. He would put the photographs into albums labelled with the titles of the films. In addition to the photos of actors and film crews, he also included autographs in some albums.

Regarding his beginnings in the profession and “playing at being a photographer”,

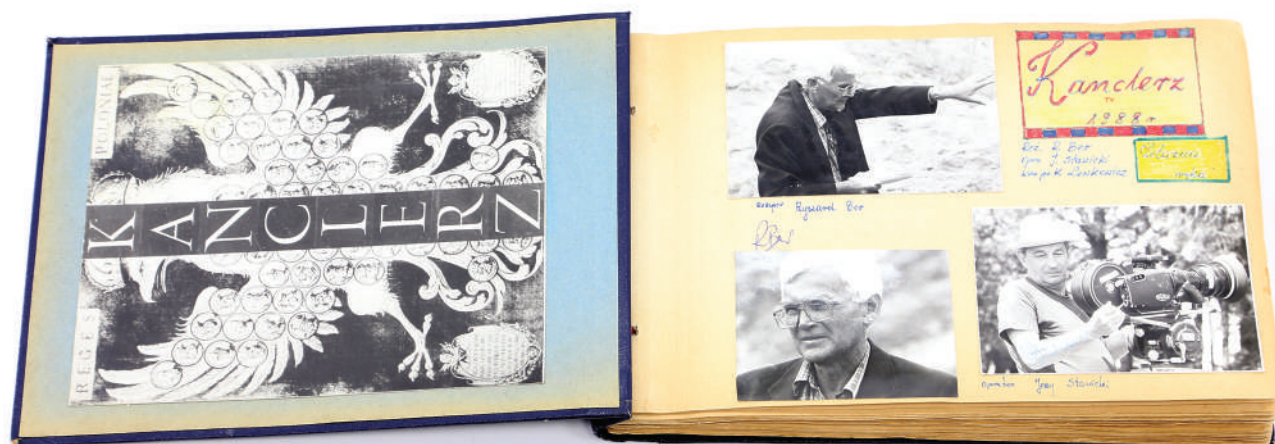
he said: “It was great fun. I was a young man, a bachelor, I enjoyed working in film. On average, four films were made on location each year. [...] I was playing with an ordinary camera, no luxuries. I liked documenting work on the set. After all these years, when I look through my albums, I say to myself: «an amazing story, a beautiful souvenir». The collection of the Film Museum includes three albums by Andrzej Szwed with production photos from four films, as well as negatives and contact sheets from eight productions.



9 × 13 cm

From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź





21,5 × 33 cm  
From the collection of the Film Museum in Łódź

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## Oscar statuette for the best foreign language film

***Ida*, dir. Paweł Pawlikowski**

**designer: Cedric Gibbons**

**production: R. S. Owens**

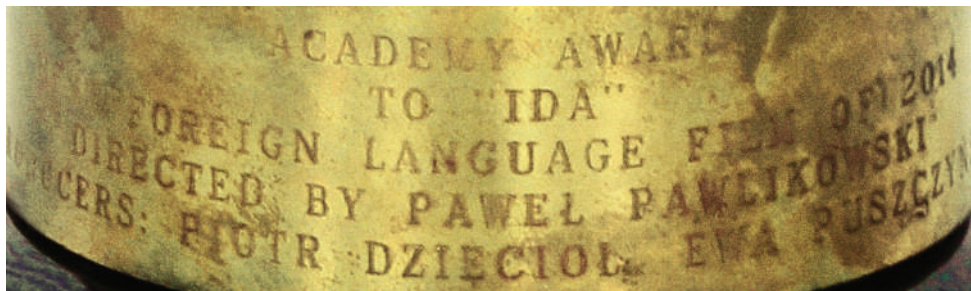
**2014**

The first Oscar for a Polish feature film. The owner of the statuette is Piotr Dzięcioł, the founder and CEO of Opus Film, which produced *Ida* (2013) directed by Paweł Pawlikowski. During the Oscar gala, the director received the statuette – the producers Ewa Puszczyńska and Piotr Dzięcioł received identical golden figures later on. Opus Film was established in 1991 on the premises of the former Feature Film Studio in Łódź, the largest one in post-war Poland.

The Oscar is the most important and famous film trophy in the world, awarded by the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences since 1929 – hence, its official name is the Academy Award for Merit. It was first named Oscar in press in 1934. The statuette was designed by Cedric Gibbons, the artistic director of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film studio. George Stanley, a sculptor from Los Angeles, was commissioned to make it. The form proposed by the creators is a figure holding a two-handed sword. The shiny figure stands on a film reel, weighs almost 4 kg, and is 35 cm tall. It is made of britannium, an alloy of tin, antimony and copper, coated with 24-carat gold. It is produced by a factory in Chicago which makes 50 figurines every year. The cost of producing one statuette depends on the current gold price and ranges

from 400 to 1000 dollars.

By 2020, over 3,100 Oscar statuettes were awarded to the best films and filmmakers in the industry.







35 × 13 cm  
Artifact deposited by Piotr Dzieciol

# Acknowledgments

The Film Museum in Łódź would like to thank all the people and institutions listed below:

Jerzy Armata, Andrzej Barański, Władysław „Dziunek” Barański, Jan Bareja, Renata Berecka, Łukasz Biskupski, Ryszard Bonisławski, Brigitte Braun, Ewa Braun, Jacek Bromski, Karol Brzeziński, Małgorzata Cebulka, Krystyna Cierniak-Morgenstern, Ewa Ciszewska, Barbara i Janusz Czczowie, Ireneusz Czop, Leszek Dawid, Danuta Dąbrowska-Przybylska, Leonard DeGraaf, Krystyna Demska-Olbrychska, Anna Drzymuchowska, Piotr Dumąta, Piotr Dzieciot, Maria Ekier, Feliks Falk, Władysław Farbotko, Milenia Fiedler, Katarzyna Figat, Elżbieta Gajos, Janusz Gajos, Liliana Gałązka, Małgorzata Gębka, Robert Gliński, Zbigniew Godlewski, Teresa Gruber, Jarosław Grzechowiak, Barbara Grzegorzek, Mariusz Grzegorzek, Andrzej Haliński, Jerzy Hoffman, Sławomir Idziak, Anna Jadowska, Krzysztof Jajko, Stanisław Jodłowski, Jarosław Kamiński, Dorota Kędzierzawska, Jan Kidawa-Błoński, Maria Kieślowska, Konrad Klejsa, Michał Koliński, Jan Jakub Kolski, Maria Kotarska, Marek Koterski, Hubert Kozera, Jacek Kusiński, Marta Kuszyńska, Stanisław Kwiatkowski, Jolanta Lemann-Zajicek, Stanisław Lenartowicz, Ryszard Lenczewski, **Konstanty Lewkowicz**, Eugenia Lipman, Martin Loiperdinger, Agnieszka Lorenc, Radosław Łuczak, Joanna Macha, Andrzej Machejek, Juliusz Machulski, Janusz Majewski, Edmund Małasiński, Katharina Mann, Wojciech Marczewski, Katarzyna Mąka-Malatyńska, Piotr Mikucki, Hanna Mikuć, Gabriela Muskała, Anna Nehrebecka, Hieronim Neumann, Wiesław Nowak, Marek Nowicki, Anna Ohirko, Daniel Olbrychski, Cezary Pazura, Edyta Pazura, Artur Petz, Henryk Poselt, Barbara Ptak, Elżbieta Radke, Zofia Radzinowicz, Jerzy Rezakiewicz, Józef Robakowski, Arkadiusz Rośczał, Zbigniew Rybczyński, Andrzej Seweryn, Piotr Sitarski, Marek Skrobecki, Wiktor Skrzynecki, Marcel Sławiński, Andrzej Stupecki, Wojciech Smarzowski, Katarzyna Sobańska, Michał Sobociński, Piotr Sobociński, Piotr Sobociński Jr, Bogdan Sölle, Andrzej Sołtysik, Janusz Sosnowski, Henryk Spychała, Wiesława Starska, Allan Starski, Michał Staszczak, Andrzej Strąk, Andrzej Sutowicz, Daniel Szczechura, Piotr Szczepański, Tadeusz Szczepański, Andrzej Szenajch, **Antoni Szram**, Małgorzata Szumowska, Andrzej Szwed, **Stanisław Śliskowski**, Mieczysław Bartłomiej Vogt, Marta Walczyńska, Andrzej Walczyński, Aleksander Wańkowski, Jadwiga Wendorff, Paweł Wendorff, Zbigniew Wichłacz, **Tadeusz Wijata**, Mariusz Wilczyński, Tadeusz Wilkosz, Jacek Wosiewicz, Tomasz Wójcik, Bronisław Wrocławski, Kazimierz Wróblewski, Krystyna Zachwatowicz-Wajda, **Edward Zajicek**, Krzysztof Zanussi, Janusz Zaorski, Henryk Zastróżny, Anna Zawadzka, Jerzy Zieliński, Wanda Ziembicka-Has, Andrzej Żabicki, Zbigniew Żmudzki, Wojciech Żogała, Xawery Żuławski and Muzeum Miasta Łodzi (Museum of the City of Łódź), Samorządowa Instytucja Filmowa „Helios-Film” w Łodzi (Local Government Film Institution „Helios-Film”)

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The exhibition was co-financed by the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport from the Culture Promotion Fund



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