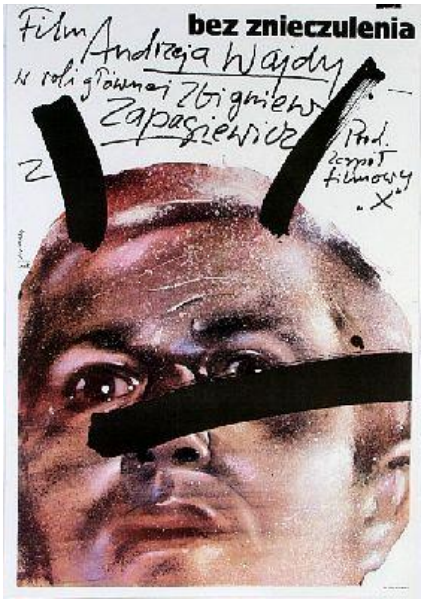
ANDRZEJ WAJDA—FILMS BY THE WARSAW DOCUMENTARY AND FEATURE FILM STUDIO

WITHOUT ANESTHESIA



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1978

RUNTIME: 125’

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Agnieszka Holland, Andrzej Wajda

CAST: Zbigniew Zapasiewicz, Ewa Dałkowska, Andrzej Seweryn, Krystyna Janda, Roman Wilhelmi

SELECTED AWARDS:
Golden Lions, Polish Film Festival, Gdańsk (1978)

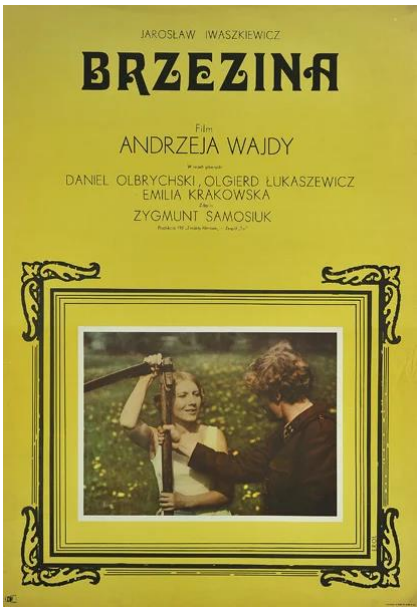
Warsaw Mermaid (1979)
Ecumenical Jury Prize, Cannes International Film Festival (1979)

STORYLINE:

Returning from abroad, Michałowski (Zbigniew Zapasiewicz), a famous reporter, discovers that his wife has left him. An interview portraying him as a high achiever is shown on TV. But back home, the globetrotter and eyewitness to global conflicts finds the place empty. The woman (Ewa Dałkowska) has taken their child and moved in with her lover, a young journalist (Andrzej Seweryn). Michałowski struggles to get over the breakup. He keeps trying to contact his ex-wife through her mother, various friends, and a lawyer, gradually sinking into a deep depression. At first his is surrounded by admiring students, but as time passes, he ends up alone.

With this film, Andrzej Wajda examines the psyche of a professionally accomplished and widely acclaimed man who fails as a husband and father. Agnieszka Holland's screenplay was inspired by the career of world-famous reporter Ryszard Kapuściński and the tragic life of her own father, journalist Henryk Holland. Wajda himself appears in the film as a TV journalists on the *Three against one* talk show, along with another Polish film director, Tomasz Zygadło.

THE BIRCH WOOD



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1970

RUNTIME: 99’

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda (based on the short story by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz)

WRITER: Andrzej Wajda

CAST: Daniel Olbrychski, Olgierd Łukaszewicz, Emilia Krakowska, Danuta Wodyńska, Elżbieta Żołek

SELECTED AWARDS:
FIPRESCI Award, MIFED International Film and Multimedia Market, Milan (1970)
Best Director Award for Andrzej Wajda and Best Actor Award for Daniel Olbrychski, Lubuskie Film Summer in Łagów (1971)

STORYLINE:

Bolesław (Daniel Olbrychski), a young widower and gamekeeper, leads an isolated life in the forest, with only his daughter and Malina (Emilia Krakowska), a domestic servant, by his side. His long-lost brother, Stanisław (Olgierd Łukaszewicz), comes to visit. Suffering from tuberculosis, Stanisław has left a sanatorium in Davos to spend what will probably be his final days at with his brother. Although he is dying, the unexpected guest enlivens his brother’s every-day life with laughter and spontaneity, shaking Bolesław out of his apathy. Meanwhile, a rivalry springs up between the two for Malina’s affections.

The Birch Wood is one of many Polish screen adaptations of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz’s short stories. There are two such films in Wajda’s oeuvre, with the other being *The Maids of Wilko*. The outdoor scenes were shot in the Kampinos Forest, where the original short story is set. On a visual level, Wajda and cinematographer Zygmunt Samosiuk both drew inspiration from the Polish symbolist painter Jacek Malczewski, especially such works as *Śmierć* (*Death,* 1902), *Zatruta studnia* (*Poisoned well,* 1905), and *Śmierć Ellenai* (*Death of Ellenai,* 1883), along with paintings by Aleksander Gierymski and the visual artist and playwright Stanisław Wyspiański.

MAN OF MARBLE

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1976

RUNTIME: 153'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski

CAST: Krystyna Janda, Jerzy Radziwiłowicz, Tadeusz Łomnicki, Jacek Łomnicki, Michał Tarkowski

SELECTED AWARDS:
FIPRESCI Award, Cannes International Film Festival (1978)
Journalists' Award, Polish Film Festival in Gdańsk (1977)
Grand Prix and Best Actor Award for Jerzy Radziwiłowicz, FEST International Film Festival, Belgrade

STORYLINE:

Agnieszka (a by actress Krystyna Janda) is making a graduation film about Birkut (Jerzy Radziwiłowicz), a "shock worker" featured in Stalinist-era propaganda from the 1950s. She is trying to track down people who knew him and access archival documents. Birkut's colleagues recount the enthusiastic years of post-World War II reconstruction and tell the story of a blue-collar worker who defied the ideology he embodied. She

receives help from a film editor who shows her not just the official newsreels, but also the out-takes. Agnieszka digs up some terrific material. But it turns out to be so devastating to the communist regime that a TV executive confiscates her camera and equipment and dismisses the crew. At first, the young woman is so angry and disappointed that she goes home to her father, a railwayman. Under his influence, she realizes that the protagonist is more important than the film. She tracks down Birkut's son and continues to gather material.

As the premier example of Poland's "cinema of moral anxiety" from the 1970s, Wajda's film inspired two sequels: *Man of Iron* about the birth of Poland's Solidarity movement in 1980 and *Wałęsa: Man of Hope*, a bio-pic about Lech Wałęsa. The original screenplay of *Man of Marbl*e was written by Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski, who himself made documentaries on the great construction projects in 1950s. The statue of Birkut that features in Wajda's film, by Adam Roman, reappeared later that year in another prominent film of the "moral anxiety" school, *Camouflage* by Krzysztof Zanussi. The figure is now exhibited in the entrance hall of the Museum of Cinematography in Łódź.

MAN OF IRON

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1981

RUNTIME: 147'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski

CAST: Marian Opania, Krystyna Janda, Jerzy Radziwiłowicz, Bogusław Linda, Irena Byrska

SELECTED AWARDS:
Palme d'Or and Prize of the Ecumenical Jury, Cannes International Film Festival (1981)
Award of Solidarity's Gdańsk Region, Polish Film Festival (1981)
Silver Grape, Łagów Lubuskie Film Summer (1981)
Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film (1982)

STORYLINE:

A radio journalist (Marian Opania), is commissioned by the authorities to make a documentary discrediting Tomczyk (Jerzy Radziwiłowicz), an opposition activist involved in the strike committee of the Gdańsk Shipyard. In his role as a journalist, he attempts to infiltrate the shipyard after it is shut down by an occupation strike during the frenzied summer of 1980 on Poland's Baltic coast. He encounters a friend (Bogusław Linda) who mentions Tomczyk, who was a university friend. He manages to obtain a pass to meet Tomczyk's interned wife, Agnieszka, and visits the family of an old trade union activist along the way. These encounters make him decide to turn down the job.

Man of Iron brings back the protagonists of *Man of Marble* as supporting characters. Now married to Tomczyk, Birkut's son, Agnieszka organises a photo exhibition. The strike at the Gdańsk Shipyard ends up achieving the goal originally expressed in *Man of Marble*, to reclaim the dignity and power of the working class. These events went down in the Polish history as the August 1980 accords that gave birth to the Solidarity movement. Reconstructed documentary scenes played by actual trade union members and government representatives were filmed at their original location, in the Gdańsk Shipyard Occupational Health and Safety Hall, just days after the historical events. Preceded by *Man of Marble* (1976) and followed three decades later by a sequel, *Wałęsa: Man of Hope* (2013), the film is another example of the "moral anxiety" genre.

DANTON

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1982

RUNTIME: 130'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Jean-Claude Carrière

CAST: Gérard Depardieu, Wojciech Pszoniak, Anne Alvaro, Roland Blanche, Patrice Chéreau

SELECTED AWARDS:

César Award, French Academy of Cinema Arts and Techniques for Andrzej Wajda (1982)
Louis Delluc Prize, France (1982)
Unifrance Film Award (1982)
BAFTA Award, Best Film Not in the English Language (1984)
Journalists' Award, Polish Film Festival in Gdańsk (1984)

STORYLINE:

Two leaders of the French Revolution, Danton and Robespierre, confront each other amid a deepening reign of terror by the Jacobins that eventually leads Danton to the scaffold in 1794. Paris is seething amid a bread shortage and growing infighting among the revolutionaries. At first, Robespierre resists pressure from the Committee of Public Safety to arrest Danton. He first takes away Danton's newspaper, which has become a platform for his faction, the Dantonists. Then, after a one-on-one meeting, Robiespierre orders Danton's immediate arrest on charges of sedition before the latter has a chance to rally his supporters in the army. Danton fights back, but as he puts it: "I would rather be guillotined than become an executioner myself".

Danton is a film adaptation of Stanisława Przybyszewska's play *The Danton Case* (1929), which Andrzej Wajda first staged at Warsaw's Powszechny Theatre in 1975. Contrary to Przybyszewska's less flattering portrait of the plebeian leader and people's tribune, Wajda's adaptation presents Danton as a hero. The director's idea was to cast Polish actors as members of Robespierre's radical faction, with Wojciech Pszoniak in the main role, while French actors played the Dantonists, led by Gérard Depardieu. The film features a cameo by Polish actor Andrzej Seweryn. *Danton* was originally supposed to have been filmed in Poland, but after the communist authorities outlawed Solidarity and declared martial law in 1981, it was produced in France. *Danton* aimed to portray a revolution's dynamics in their historical context while providing food for thought about its inherent antagonisms as Poland's own "carnival of Solidarity" was coming to an end. Wajda's film showed how ideals can lead to the use of very different means, yielding different results.

THE ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1979

RUNTIME: 98'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Andrzej Kijowski

CAST: John Gielgud, Krystyna Janda, Andrzej Seweryn, Jan Ciecierski, Tadeusz Czechowski

SELECTED AWARDS:

Golden Bear, Berlin International Film Festival for Andrzej Seweryn (1980)
FIPRESCI Award, OCIC Award, and Basque Cultural Society Award, San Sebastián International Film Festival (1980)
Grand Prix, FEST International Film Festival in Belgrade (1981)

STORYLINE:

Two musicians—Marta (Krystyna Janda), a violinist, and Adam (Andrzej Seweryn), a conductor—experience a crisis in their marriage after being visited by a world-famous conductor of Polish origin. The spouses live in Marta's hometown, but she manages to secure a scholarship in New York. Once there, she accidently encounters her mother's old flame Lasocki (John Gielgud). The film shows how a pathologically ambitious, jealous husband and his affection-starved wife are confronted by their unmet needs.

This relationship drama stars a real married couple, as Krystyna Janda and Andrzej Seweryn were at the time, accompanied by their real-life daughter, Maria Seweryn. The director came up with the idea for the film in a conversation with Andrzej Markowski, a composer and conductor who wrote the scores for such Wajda films as *Towards the Sun*, *A Generation*, *Ashes*, and *Layer Cake*. Its literary inspiration was Andrzej Kijowski's short novel of the same title.

TOWARDS THE SUN

DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1955

RUNTIME: 13'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

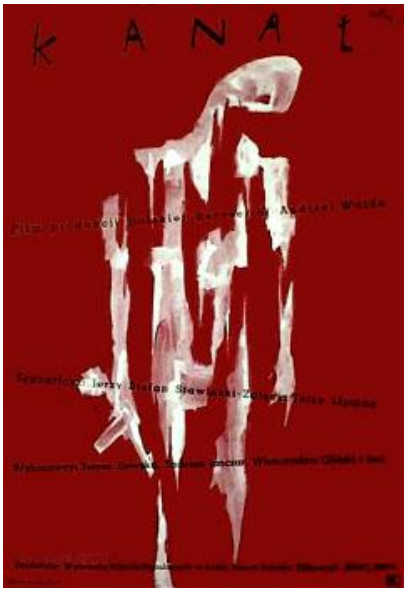
WRITER: Andrzej Wajda

STORYLINE:

In this documentary, Andrzej Wajda presents the work of Xavery Dunikowski, an outstanding early 20th century sculptor. The short film was produced to mark the 60th anniversary of Dunikowski's artistic career. The sculptor is filmed in his workshop amid his famous "heads", or modernist busts of his *fin de siècle* contemporaries. The camera successively focuses on such works as *Eve* (*Ewa*), *Maternity* (*Macierzyństwo*), *Breath* (*Tchnienie*), *Fate* (*Fatum*) and *Dante*. The director then juxtaposes these modern busts with wooden Renaissance-era heads that adorn the Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków. Dunikowski's *Pregnant Women* (*Kobiety Brzemienne*) are displayed on a beach beside a toddler holding a seashell. The film also shows works by the artists in the socialist realism genre, including the *Monument of Gratitude to the Red Army* in Olsztyn and the *Silesian Uprising Monument* atop Saint Anne's Hill. The film's title was inspired by Dunikowski's *Self-Portrait*. *I Go Towards The Sun* (1917), which depicts him as a massive, naked figure in full stride with two faces—one turned towards the sun, the other towards the ground.

The voiceover commentary, written by Bohdan Czeszko and delivered by Aleksander Bardini, follows the conventions of socialist realism, while the film's the visual layer is a much bolder departure into the realm of impressionism, revealing some of young Andrzej Wajda's early artistic inspirations. Just a few months earlier, the director had made his feature film debut with *A Generation*, which also combined socialist realism with neorealistic touches. Dunikowski was also the subject of a 1982 documentary, *I Was an Inmate at Auschwitz* (*Bawiłem w Oświęcimiu*), by Józef Gębski.

KANAŁ (SEWER)



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1956

RUNTIME: 91'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Jerzy Stefan Stawiński

CAST: Teresa Iżewska, Tadeusz Janczar, Wieńczysław Gliński, Tadeusz Gwiazdowski, Stanisław Mikulski

SELECTED AWARDS:

Jury Prize, Cannes International Film Festival (1957)
Gold Medal, World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow (1957)
Golden Duck (award by the monthly *Film*) for Best Polish Film (1959)
Honourable Mention, Brazilian Film Critics Association, Rio de Janeiro International Film Festival (1961)

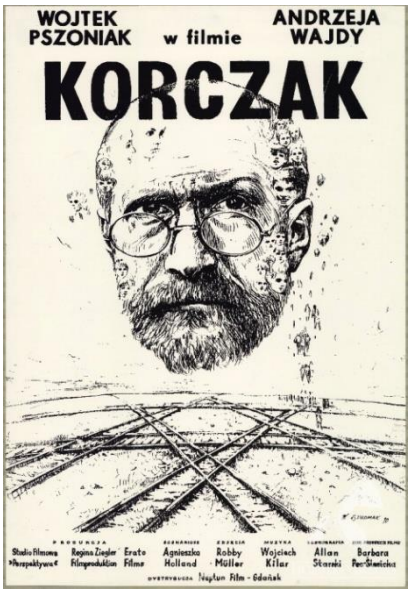
STORYLINE:

In late September 1944, during the last days of the Warsaw Uprising, lieutenant Zadra (Wieńczysław Gliński) is trying to lead his unit from the Mokotów district to the city centre. They first fight in the open and then descend into the sewers. The unit consists of Zadra's second in command "Mądry" ("Wise", Emil Karewicz), cadet Korab (Tadeusz Janczar), liaison officer "Stokrotka" ("Daisy", Teresa Iżewska), Korab's second in command "Smukły" ("Slim", Stanisław Mikulski), and a few others. Their way leads through the circles of Dante's inferno: toxic air, raw sewage, dead bodies. The association with Dante is brought up by the group's sole civilian, a pianist (Władysław Sheybal). Germans lurk at every exit. Zadra is in two minds about whether he is leading his people to freedom or death, and he is also conflicted about whether going back for the wounded will not fatally weaken those still left alive. Only a few make it outside, only to find themselves caught in another trap.

The screenplay was based on writer and filmmaker Jerzy Stefan Stawiński's personal experience as a soldier in the Warsaw Uprising. Communist censors debated what to do with the film at the headquarters of Zespoły Filmowe on 61 Puławska Street, right next to the sewer entrance used by Stawiński during the fighting. The Warsaw Uprising could not appear on the silver screen until the Polish thaw in 1956. Wajda and his cinematographer, Jerzy Lipman, combined two very different cinema styles—war documentary and apocalyptic drama—into one seamless aesthetic. With this film, Wajda launched what became known as the Polish School of filmmaking, garnering

numerous awards at international festivals, including the Jury Prize at the Cannes International Film Festival (1957).

KORCZAK



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1990

RUNTIME: 113’

<u>DIGITALLY RESTORED</u>

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Agnieszka Holland

CAST: Wojciech Pszoniak, Ewa Dałkowska, Teresa Budzisz-Krzyżanowska, Marzena Trybała, Piotr Kozłowski

SELECTED AWARDS:

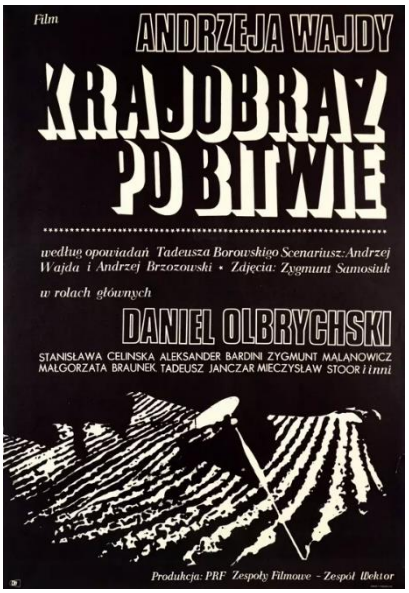
Special Jury Recognition, Cannes International Film Festival (1990)
Deutscher Filmpreis, Best Cinematography for Robby Müller

STORYLINE:

In the mid-1930s, Janusz Korczak (Wojciech Pszoniak) finds out that he can no longer broadcast his radio programme for children. Korczak still manages to run his famous Orphan House in Warsaw, especially after his right hand, Stefa (Ewa Dałkowska), returns from an unsuccessful attempt to emigrate to Palestine. However, his former charges reproach him for being unprepared to deal with life in a brutal world full of inequality and antisemitism. After German forces occupy Warsaw, the Orphan House's position becomes even more precarious. A struggle for survival—and later, simply for a dignified death – begins. True to his character "The Old Doctor", Korczak refuses to renounce his beliefs and forsake his children, even on the brink of death.

Polish filmmakers had been trying to make a feature about Korczak from the earliest days of post-war cinematography. In 1974, Aleksander Ford produced *Martyr (Sie sind frei Doktor Korczak)* while in exile in West Germany. A Polish version followed in 1990 thanks to Wajda and screenwriter Agnieszka Holland. *Korczak* was co-produced by Poland, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

LANDSCAPE AFTER THE BATTLE



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1970

RUNTIME: 101’

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Andrzej Wajda and Andrzej Brzozowski (based on the short story *Bitwa pod Grunwaldem* [Battle of Grunwald] by Tadeusz Borowski)

CAST: Daniel Olbrychski, Stanisława Celińska, Aleksander Bardini, Tadeusz Janczar, Zygmunt Malanowicz

SELECTED AWARDS:

Golden Globe, Milan International Film Festival (1971)
Audience Award, Best Director Award for Andrzej Wajda, Best Actress Award for Stanisława Celińska, and Best Score Award for Wiesława Dembińska at the Łagów Lubuskie Film Summer (1971)
First Prize, Colombo International Film Festival

STORYLINE:

After a concentration camp is liberated by American soldiers, the prisoners are sent to a transit camp in Germany. Poles make up a large group of the former prisoners, who are now classified as DPs, or displaced persons. They have been morally degraded by the hardships of war, as evidenced by their everyday behaviour, their treatment of Germans and women, their squabbling over food, and their fears about the future. Tadeusz (Daniel Olbrychski), a poet, is trying to detach himself while keeping himself occupied by collecting books. He becomes close with Nina (Stanisława Celińska), a Jew who fled Poland. Sadly, even with the war's end, a state of lawlessness continues and sudden death is commonplace.

The screenplay is based on several short stories by Tadeusz Borowski, most notably *The Battle of Grunwald* (*Bitwa pod Grunwaldem*). A reenactment of the battle, modelled on Jan Matejko's epic painting, is one of the daily recreations in the DP camp. Thanks to Wajda and cinematographer Zygmunt Samosiuk, Borowski's literary grotesque is rendered with compositions of almost painterly refinement. The visual treatment owes much to the postwar expressionist-realist painter Andrzej Wróblewski, especially works like *Execution* (*Rozstrzelanie*), *Lovers' Stroll* (*Spacer zakochanych*) and *Man's Head* (*Głowa mężczyzny*).

A CHRONICLE OF AMOROUS ACCIDENTS

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1985

RUNTIME: 114'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Tadeusz Konwicki (based on his own novel)

CAST: Paulina Młynarska, Piotr Wawrzyńczak, Magdalena Wójcik, Bernadetta Machała-Krzemińska, Dariusz Dobkowski

SELECTED AWARDS:

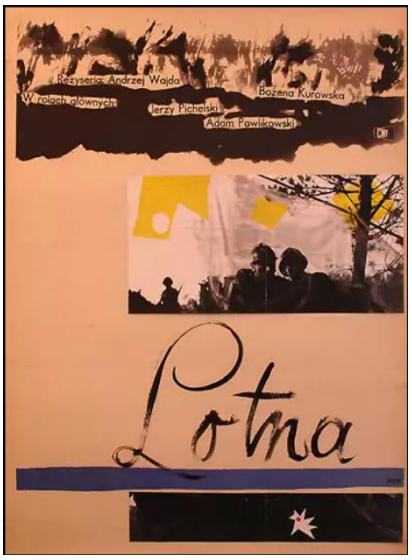
Golden Tape of the Polish Filmmakers Association (1987)
Jury Prize, Tarnów Film Awards (1987)

STORYLINE:

In May 1939, right before his final exams, high school student Witek (Piotr Wawrzyńczak) falls in love with Alina (Paulina Młynarska), a colonel's daughter. At first, the girl mocks his romantic streak, as do the boys at his school, but eventually she succumbs to his charms. Her father strongly objects to her dating a local half-orphan, which he considers a distraction from her plans to study abroad. Witek's mother (Krystyna Zachwatowicz) prays for her son and looks after her dying father. Greta, a German pastor's daughter, meanwhile tries to win Witek's affection. Unfortunately, she is also due to leave Vilnius before the summer ends. The spring of 1939 turns out to be an intense period for the two young lovers and the entire community, as they begin to apprehend the danger of the oncoming war.

The film adapts a semi-autobiographical novel of the same title by Tadeusz Konwicki. Wajda uses footage of the elderly Konwicki—himself a screenwriter and filmmaker—as one of the film's characters, using as a setting Nowa Wilejka—Konwicki's hometown near Vilnius. In his cameo appearance, Konwicki, as the Stranger, goes back in time, aware of his characters' future fate. While he reverses the typical direction of ghost stories, as his future self-haunts the past, the Stranger cannot prevent the impending catastrophe. Instead, he keeps bumping into past versions of himself—on a train, in his boyhood bedroom, on a trip to the graveyard. This is the second time Wajda has introduced the real author of a story into his filmed version (a trick he had done once before with Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz in *The Maids of Wilko*), but now Wajda lets Konwicki interact with his protagonist.

LOTNA



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1959

RUNTIME: 85'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Wojciech Żukrowski (based on his own short story), Andrzej Wajda

CAST: Jerzy Pichelski, Adam Pawlikowski, Jerzy Moes, Mieczysław Łoza, Bożena Kurowska

SELECTED AWARDS:

Golden Tape, Polish Filmmakers Association (1987)
Jury Prize, Tarnów Film Awards (1987)

STORYLINE:

In September 1939, a cavalry regiment arrives at an abandoned palace. On his deathbed, the estate's owner gives his most beautiful mare, Lotna, to cavalry captain Chodakiewicz (Jerzy Pichelski). The unit sets off again, stopping for a rest at a gentry manor and a nearby village. As ordered, the cavalry seek to evade German units, until they are cornered and forced to charge German tanks, which leads to the captain's death. The unit goes back to the village where cadet officer Jerzy Grabowski (Jerzy Moes) marries Ewa (Bożena Kurowska), a teacher, despite the war raging around them. After

the wedding, the cavalrymen move on again, travelling through roads and forests crowded with refugees. When Jerzy is killed by a bomb, the last surviving horseman, lieutenant Wodnicki (Adam Pawlikowski), takes ownership of Lotna.

Wajda directed this drama about the September 1939 campaign in Poland based on a short story by Wojciech Żukrowski. Upon its release, the film's symbolism sparked heated discussion. Wajda, the son of a cavalryman and a teenager when the Second World War began, offers a surrealistic vision of a long-lost world fading into history, symbolised by the lancer regiment. In *Lotna*, his first colour film, Wajda also gave voice to his passion for the visual arts, consciously framing shots to resemble famous historical and modern paintings. The iconic shot of Lotna by her master's deathbed was inspired Leopold Löffler's painting dating from 1860, *The Death of Stefan Czarnecki* (*Śmierć Stefana Czarnieckiego*). Other references included equestrian works by Juliusz and Wojciech Kossak and the image *Headless Fish* (*Ryby bez głów*), painted in 1948 by Wajda's contemporary, Andrzej Wróblewski.

INNOCENT SORCERERS

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1960

RUNTIME: 84'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Jerzy Andrzejewski, Jerzy Skolimowski

CAST: Tadeusz Łomnicki, Krystyna Stypułkowska, Zbigniew Cybulski, Kalina Jędrusik, Teresa Szmigielówna

SELECTED AWARDS:

Diploma, Edinburgh International Film Festival (1961)

STORYLINE:

Him (Tadeusz Łomnicki)—a young sports doctor who plays jazz after work. Her (Krystyna Stypułkowska)—a secondary-school student and jazz club regular. They meet to play a flirty game for one night. They hide behind made-up names, Basil and Pelagia, as if to conceal their sensitivity. In fact, they are "innocent sorcerers" seeking to poison their hopes for love, to borrow the poet Adam Mickiewicz's words from *Forefathers' Eve*, from which Wajda took his title. The couple agree in advance on a scenario for their date: "a shot of vodka, first kiss, intelligent conversation, then bed or in this case the sofa." Then they play a version of strip poker by flipping a matchbox. Who will win and who will lose? Who can pretend the longest to be indifferent to emotions?

The film is Wajda's response to the emerging *Nouvelle Vague* of young French filmmakers. Only after inviting Jerzy Andrzejewski to collaborate on the screenplay did it occur to Wajda that he could hardly expect a middle-aged novelist to write convincing dialogue for two young lovers. Wajda next enlisted Jerzy Skolimowski, then an aspiring poet and boxer. It was this experience that prompted Skolimowski to choose filmmaking as a career. Apart from the script, Wajda helped set a New Wave mood with a score by jazz pianist and composer Krzysztof Komeda. Komeda has an onscreen cameo playing with Andrzej Trzaskowski (Jazz Believers), playing the trumpet, saxophonist Andrzej Wojciechowski (Melomani), and drummer Jan Zylber. An added attraction is future Hollywood director Roman Polański, playing the band leader on double bass. Komeda also wrote the song "There was Weather" ("Była pogoda"), performed in the film by Sława Przybylska.

MISS NOBODY

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1996

RUNTIME: 98’

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Radosław Piwowarski (based on the novel by Tomek Tryzna)

CAST: Anna Wielgucka, Anna Mucha, Anna Powierza, Stanisława Celińska, Jan Janga-Tomaszewski

SELECTED AWARDS:

Jury Honourable Mention for Anna Wielgucka, Berlin International Film Festival (1997)
Best Director Award for Andrzej Wajda, Tróia International Film Festival (1997)

STORYLINE:

After moving to a big city, 15-year-old Marysia starts at a new school. She’s shy and struggles to fit in. At first, she makes friends with Kasia, a strong-willed girl with an artistic streak and a fixed worldview. Kasia gradually leads her into the world of art and intellect, which Marysia finds increasingly fascinating as she discovers a new way of life. Kasia confesses that she is possessed by a demon, which allows her to make music.

THE MAIDS OF WILKO

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1979

RUNTIME: 116'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Zbigniew Kamiński (based on the short story by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz)

CAST: Daniel Olbrychski, Anna Seniuk, Christine Pascal, Maja Komorowska, Stanisława Celińska, Krystyna Zachwatowicz

SELECTED AWARDS:
Special Jury Prize and Best Production Design Award for Allan Starski and Maria Osiecka-Kuminek, Polish Film Festival, Gdańsk (1979)
Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film (1980)

STORYLINE:

In poor health and saddened by the death of a friend, Wiktor Ruben (Daniel Olbrychski) decides on a country holiday to re-visit fondly some remembered places from his youth—specifically, the home of his aunt and uncle and a neighbouring estate where the eponymous maids of Wilko used to live. Upon arrival, he finds the once young women all together: Kazia (Krystyna Zachwatowicz), who now runs the house and has a son, Julcia (Anna Seniuk) with her daughters, along with Jola (Maja Komorowska), Zosia (Stanisława Celińska) and little Tunia, who is now grown up. Only Fela is missing, having died many

years earlier. Walking, reminiscing, sharing meals, crossing the river—all of these activities are presented as a search of lost time and exist, as it were, outside of time.

Wajda and his crew made the film as a tribute to the poet and prose stylist Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, who appears at the very beginning of the film, based on one of his short stories. The editing suggests Iwaszkiewicz himself is the protagonist. His original short story is indeed autobiographical and describes the writer's visits to Byszewy manor, near Łódź. A number of Iwaszkiewicz's short stories have been adapted for films, including such masterpieces as Wajda's *The Birch Wood* and *Mother Joan of the Angels* by Jerzy Kawalerowicz, as well as debuts of younger directors at Wajda's Zespół Filmowy X film production studio such as Agnieszka Holland's *Evening at Abdon's (Wieczór u Abdona)*. One of Wajda's assistants during the making pf *The Maids of Wilko* was Magdalena Łazarkiewicz, who later returned to the same location, Radachówka manor near Kołbiel, to shoot her own film *White Marriage* (*Białe małżeństwo*), an adaptation of the play by Tadeusz Różewicz.

THE RING WITH A CROWNED EAGLE

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1992

RUNTIME: 104'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Andrzej Wajda, Maciej Karpiński, and Andrzej Kotkowski, based on a novel by Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski, *Pierścionek z końskiego włosia* (*The Horsehair Ring*)

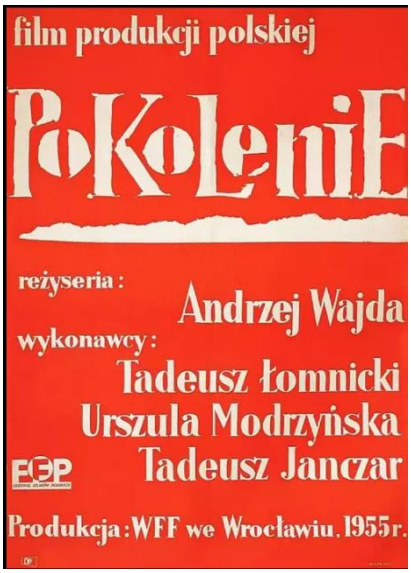
CAST: Rafał Królikowski, Cezary Pazura, Piotr Bajor, Mirosław Baka, Adrianna Biedrzyńska

STORYLINE:

Marcin (Rafał Królikowski), an officer cadet serving in the Warsaw Uprising, retreats from the ruined city with a handful of troops from his platoon. The wounded subaltern, who leans on young Wiśka (Agnieszka Wagner) for support, receives the eponymous ring from her. He tries and fails to save Wiśka from being raped by a Soviet soldier, then is found in a hospital by Janka (Adrianna Biedrzyńska), a medic, and his superior from the underground, major Steinert (Piotr Bajor). One by one, they round up the surviving insurgents. Marcin realises that prospects for continuing armed struggle against the new regime are slim, so he decides to seek opportunities for himself and other Home Army veterans to work for the good of the country under the guise of collaboration. It turns out that a soldier of the communist-backed People's Army he met during the uprising, comrade "Tatar" (Mirosław Baka), is now secretary of the regional committee of the communist Polish Workers' Party (PPR). Marcin talks Tatar into giving him a job as driver. Kosior (Cezary Pazura), a secret police lieutenant, develops an alarming interest in Marcin and symbolically removes the eagle's crown from the soldier's ring, just as the communist regime removed the crown from Poland's national emblem. Marcin tries to intermediate between the underground and PPR, and succeeds in arranging an unofficial meeting between the two sides. However, Kosior exploits the opportunity to arrest the entire command of the NIE resistance organisation. Marcin loses hope, especially as Janka turns her back on him. By some miracle, he meets Wiśka and gives the ring back to her, which she then throws away. The young man shoots himself in the head.

In this historical drama, Wajda revisited the subject matter of his earlier films of the Polish School, this time without the limitations of communist-era censorship. The climactic scene showing the arrest of underground commanders is modelled on a real historical event—the abduction of 16 Polish underground leaders. The script was based on a novel by Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski, *The Horsehair Ring*, which was banned by censors in 1965 and only published in 1991. Wajda also introduced a scene echoing the famous lighting of spirit glasses from *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958), as Marcin and Wiśka re-unite and await the results of the communist–Home Army negotiations.

A GENERATION



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1954

RUNTIME: 83'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Bohdan Czeszko (based on his own novel)

CAST: Tadeusz Łomnicki, Urszula Modrzyńska, Tadeusz Janczar, Janusz Paluszkiewicz, Ryszard Kotys, Roman Polański

SELECTED AWARDS:

State Award of the Polish People's Republic (joint award) for Andrzej Wajda, Jerzy Lipman, Tadeusz Janczar, and Tadeusz Łomnicki (1955)
30th anniversary of Polish People's Republic award for Andrzej Wajda, Lubuskie Film Summer, Łagów (1974)

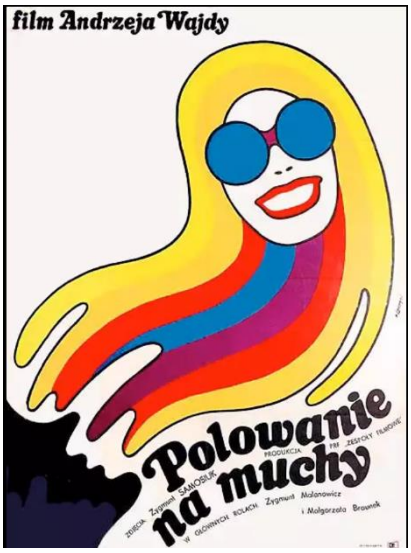
STORYLINE:

A group of young people joins the underground struggle against the German occupiers. Stach (Tadeusz Łomnicki) is employed at a carpenter's workshop, which is also the site of a Home Army cell. However, the young man befriends a member of a rival underground organisation, the communist People's Guard, and falls in love with Dorota (Urszula Modrzyńska), who belongs to the communist-backed Union of Youth Struggle.

When an uprising breaks out in the Warsaw Ghetto, Jasio (Tadeusz Janczar) tries to smuggle Jews out and tragically dies. That night, the Gestapo arrests Dorota, which leads to Stach taking over her duties.

Based on a screenplay by Bohdan Czeszko, Wajda's debut film was produced under the artistic direction of Aleksander Ford. The film features a clash of two aesthetics: socialist realism and neorealism, which ultimately paved the way for the distinctive style of the Polish Film School. Young Wajda, assisted by cinematographer Jerzy Lipman, reveals a penchant for painterly compositions and draws inspiration from the painter Andrzej Wróblewski, especially in the scene of Jasio Krone's death. The eponymous generation of young people growing up under German occupation, which the novelist Roman Bratny famously called "Columbuses", is represented by a few characters played by Zbyszek Cybulski, Roman Polański, and Ryszard Kotas. Under political pressure, the draft script was rewritten, with Stach recast as the protagonist whose choice between the two sides becomes the story's focus.

HUNTING FLIES



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1969

RUNTIME: 104'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Janusz Głowacki (based on his own short story)

CAST: Zygmunt Malanowicz, Małgorzata Braunek, Hanna Skarżanka, Ewa Skarżanka, Daniel Olbrychski

SELECTED AWARDS:

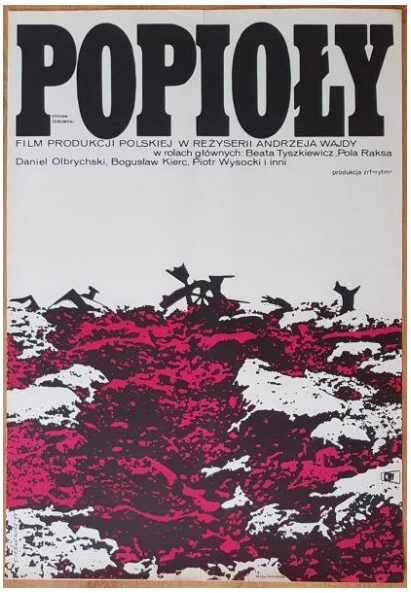
Best Supporting Actress for Hanna Skarżanka, Lubuskie Film Summer, Łagów (1970)

STORYLINE:

Włodek (Zygmunt Malanowicz) feels henpecked by his wife and mother-in-law, who rule the roost at home. He is expected to show initiative in getting a new apartment, boosting his family's standard of living, and taking care of his child. Meanwhile his father-in-law has retreated into the position of an observer. Włodek flees into the arms of a young university student after a chance meeting. Little does he know that the young woman has specific plans for him. Using her connections, Irena (Małgorzata Braunek) wants to motivate and inspire him to become a Russian language translator. But Włodek, the failed student of Russian, isn't interested in a new career.

This adaptation of a Janusz Głowacki short story was seen by critics as an expression of both Wajda's and Głowacki's distress at the breakdown of their relationships with women—an interpretation suggested by the screenwriter and director themselves. The distorted mirror of the satire presents a grotesque image of women, who treat men instrumentally as they climb the professional ladder, and men vainly trying to impress their loved ones. *Hunting Flies* was the first major role for actress Małgorzata Braunek, whose bug-eyed sunglasses and brilliant smile became iconic. The mother-in-law and the protagonist's wife were played by the mother-daughter acting duo, Hanna and Ewa Skarżanka. The film's party sequence in Nieporęt features cameos by famous singers and cabaret performers, including Marek Grechuta, Jacek Fedorowicz, and Krzysztof Krawczyk with the band Trubadurzy. This social satire is one of the few comedies in Wajda's oeuvre, together with *Layer Cake* (1968) and *The Revenge* (2002).

THE ASHES



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1965

RUNTIME: 227' (part 1: 103'; part 2: 124')

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski (based on the novel by Stefan Żeromski)

CAST: Daniel Olbrychski, Bogusław Kierc, Piotr Wysocki, Beata Tyszkiewicz, Pola Raksa, Jan Nowicki

SELECTED AWARDS:

Golden Duck award for Best Polish Film, *Film* monthly (1966)

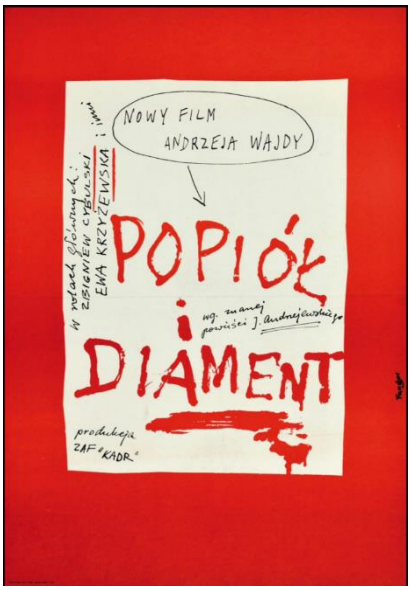
STORYLINE:

Rafał Olbromski (Daniel Olbrychski), a young Polish nobleman, leaves his family home to throw himself into the whirlwind of world-shaking events. Europe is engulfed in the Napoleonic Wars, which Poles hope will bring their country's independence. At first, Olbromski serves as secretary to Prince Gintułt (Piotr Wysocki) and joins a Masonic lodge at Gintult's prompting. His love affair with Helena (Pola Raksa), married to a prominent lodge member, ends tragically. Together with his friend, Krzysztof Cedro (Bogusław Kierc), they join Napoleon's army. However, the two comrades are separated by fate. Rafał fights against Austria in the Battle of Raszyn, while Krzysztof is sent to

Spain, where he takes part in the Battle of Somosierra. The film depicts Poles both as brutal conquerors and victims of violence. The cruelty of war comes as such a shock to their romantic ideals that the protagonist's blindness in the final scenes should be interpreted as a metaphor for Poles' political naivety.

Wajda's film adaptation of Stefan Żeromski's historical novel (1902–1904) is structured as a series of scenes with a leading compositional motif, as in a *tableau vivant*. Despite its 19th century setting, the film deals with tragic heroism and other themes familiar from Wajda's earlier work on World War II, such as *Lotna* and *Kanał* (*Sewer*). *The Ashes'* striking landscapes, symbolism and battle scenes again demonstrate the director's visual talent. Upon its release, the film sparked a long, heated discussion among film reviewers, columnists, literary critics, and even politicians. The film was shown in the main competition at the Cannes International Film Festival in 1966.

ASHES AND DIAMONDS



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1958

RUNTIME: 99'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Jerzy Andrzejewski (based on his own novel), Andrzej Wajda

CAST: Zbigniew Cybulski, Ewa Krzyżewska, Wacław Zastrzeżyński, Adam Pawlikowski, Bogumił Kobiela

SELECTED AWARDS:

FIPRESCI award, Venice International Film Festival (1959)
Canadian Federation of Film Societies award, Vancouver International Film Festival (1960)
Crystal Star, French Film Academy Award for best foreign actress for Ewa Krzyżewska (1960)
David O. Selznick Silver Laurel (1962)

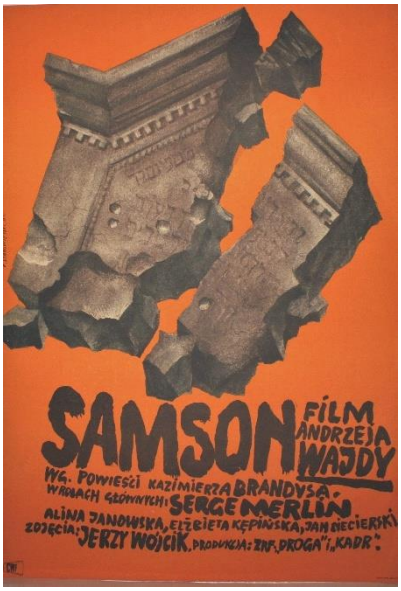
STORYLINE:

In the final days of World War II, Maciek Chełmicki (Zbigniew Cybulski), a young Polish Home Army soldier, is ordered to assassinate the secretary of a local committee of the communist Polish Workers' Party. Shortly after Maciek receives these instructions, he meets Krystyna (Ewa Krzyżewska), a barwoman at a hotel. Torn between a sense of duty and a budding romance, Maciek will be forced to make a choice. That night, a banquet is held to celebrate victory. The next morning will prove tragic for the protagonist.

This is the film that went down in the history of Polish culture and world cinema as an icon for the Polish Film School and a symbol of national cinematography. Despite its adaptation from a popular Jerzy Andrzejewski novel, *Ashes and Diamonds* (originally published as *Zaraz po wojnie* [*Shorty after the war*] in 1947) and official support from the communist authorities, the film was not what the regime bargained for. Instead, Wajda shifts the audience's focus and sympathies from the kind but elderly communist activist to the young Home Army soldier, highlighting his tragic fate. In its artistic approach, the film completely abandoned socialist realism in favour of a new symbolist aesthetic, modern acting, and ambiguous moral assessment.

More than three decades later, Wajda returned to these characters in *The Ring with a Crowned Eagle*, an adaptation Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski's novel, recreating the famous scene with spirit glasses from *Ashes and Diamonds* while using a young generation of actors, watched on screen by film's characters. In 1999, *Ashes and Diamonds* placed 7th in a ranking of Poland's best 20th century films by *Polityka* weekly.

SAMSON



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1961

RUNTIME: 117'

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Kazimierz Brandys (based on his own novel), Andrzej Wajda

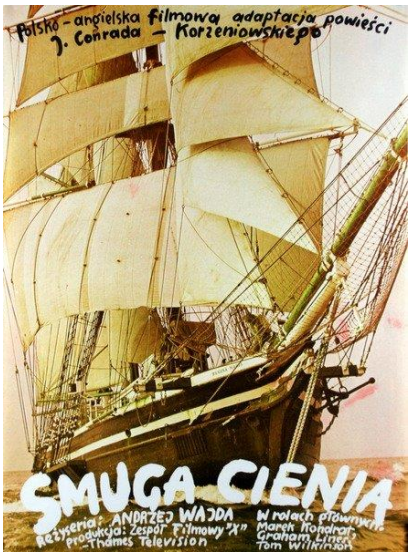
CAST: Serge Merlin, Alina Janowska, Elżbieta Kępińska, Jan Ciecierski, Tadeusz Bartosik, Władysław Kowalski

STORYLINE:

The film tells the tragic story of a young Jew, an unwilling witness to the extermination of his nation, against the backdrop of the cruelty of World War II. It also presents the attitudes and reactions of various people whom the ghetto fugitive encounters.

Before the war, Jakub Goldberg is sentenced to prison for killing a pro-fascist university student in self-defense. The outbreak of the war leads to his release, but as a Jew, Jakub soon finds himself behind walls again in the ghetto. There, he finds work as a gravedigger. After his mother's death, Jakub manages to escape to the Aryan side, where he finds shelter with various people. His tragic predicament and the constant need to stay in hiding have a very negative effect on his psyche. Jakub wants to go back to the ghetto, but it has already been liquidated. Instead, he joins an underground print shop. He dies fighting, blowing himself up with grenades and taking several Nazis with him.

THE SHADOW LINE



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1976

RUNTIME: 100'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITERS: Bolesław Sulik and Andrzej Wajda (based on the novel by Joseph Conrad)

CAST: Marek Kondrat, Graham Lines, Tom Wilkinson, Berhard Archard, John Bennett

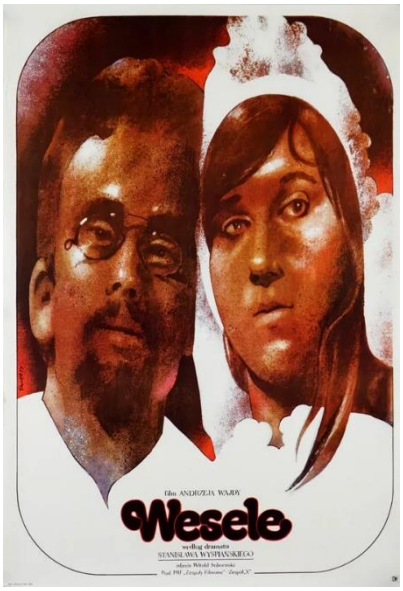
SELECTED AWARDS:
Silver Lions, Polish Film Festival, Gdańsk (1976)
Golden Frigate Audience Award, Szczecin International Maritime Film Festival (1978)
Silver Caravel, International Naval and Sea Film Week, Cartagena (1979)

STORYLINE:

Joseph Conrad (Marek Kondrat), a young merchant navy officer, becomes a ship captain for the first time after the sudden death of his superior. He is to sail the vessel from Bangkok to Singapore. The task turns out to be more difficult than anticipated. The ship is a broken-down hulk, the crew falls ill, and medical supplies quickly run out. By turns storm-tossed and becalmed, the ship can barely hold its course. The spirit of the old captain, like a curse, keeps haunting the young skipper. He comes to feel as if this ordeal made him cross the shadow line of the title into the other side of life.

This Anglo–Polish co-production features Polish actor Marek Kondrat as the captain with a predominantly British cast. The script was based on a 1917 novel by Joseph Conrad, the British novelist who was born in Poland as Józef Korzeniowski. Conrad based his story on his own experience as a ship's captain. In 1976, the year of the film's release, a statue of Conrad was erected in the port of Gdynia. Wajda shot the film on location in England, Bangkok and the Black Sea. Wojciech Kilar's score adds a romantic touch to the seascapes and shipboard scenes.

THE WEDDING



FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1972

RUNTIME: 102'

<u>DIGITALLY RESTORED</u>

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Andrzej Kijowski (based on the play by Stanisław Wyspiański)

CAST: Marek Walczewski, Izabela Olszewska, Ewa Ziętek, Daniel Olbrychski, Emilia Krakowska

SELECTED AWARDS:

Silver Seashell Award, San Sebastián International Film Festival (1973)
Golden Grape award, Best Screenplay for Andrzej Kijowski, Best Production Design

for Tadeusz Wybult, Krystyna Zachwatowicz, and Maciej Putowski, Best Cinematography for Witold Sobociński, Lubuskie Film Summer, Łagów

STORYLINE:

A wedding procession sets off from the St. Mary's Church in Kraków and moves on to a country cottage owned by the Host, poet Włodzimierz Tetmajer, in Bronowice. The wedding guests come from different worlds. The Groom, Lucjan Rydel (Daniel Olbrychski), belongs to Kraków's intelligentsia, while the Bride, Jadwiga Mikołajczykówna (Ewa Ziętek), is a peasant girl—bringing two social classes to mingle at one banquet table and dance together. That night, the revellers are joined by apparitions. Rachela (Maja Komorowska), a Jewish poet, approaches the cottage and stands by its windows. She brings along the Straw-Man. The guests are also visited by the ghost of Wernyhora, a Ukrainian bard and seer; the spectre of Jakub Szela, the the leader of a bloody peasant uprising against the Polish gentry in Galicia, and others. At dawn, the wedding party hatches plot to stage an armed uprising for independence. In their dazed state of semi-consciousness and half-dream, this turns out to be impossible.

This masterpiece again shows Wajda's outstanding skill at interpreting literature, this time based on a play from an author of the Young Poland movement in the early 1900s, evoking its vivid neo-romantic imagery and *fin de siècle* zeitgeist. In translation to the screen, this fantastical national drama explores the potential for an understanding between Poland's intelligentsia and the lower classes of society, which became a pressing political issue in the early 1970s on the eve of the Solidarity movement. The film received enthusiastic reviews and won numerous awards.

EVERYTHING FOR SALE

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1968

RUNTIME: 94'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Andrzej Wajda

CAST: Beata Tyszkiewicz, Elżbieta Czyżewska, Andrzej Łapicki, Daniel Olbrychski, Witold Holtz

SELECTED AWARDS:

Warsaw Mermaid (Polish Journalists Association's Film Critics Club award) for Best Feature Film (1969)

STORYLINE:

A film crew waits for a lead actor gone missing, to no avail. Searching for the missing star are his wife, Ela (Elżbieta Czyżewska), and the director's wife, Beata (Beata Tyszkiewicz). After some time, they learn that the actor has been killed in a tragic accident while leaping from a speeding train. Andrzej (Andrzej Łapicki), the director, wonders how to finish making his film. Is it possible to shoot a film about the void the actor left behind? The director decides to cast a new star, Daniel (Daniel Olbrychski), as his replacement.

This self-referential film, for which the director wrote the screenplay himself, is Wajda's artistic attempt to grapple with the death of actor Zbigniew Cybulski, an iconic figure of the Polish Film School. Cybulski starred in three films directed by Wajda: *A Generation*, *Ashes and Diamonds*, and *Innocent Sorcerers*. Through his role of Maciek Chełmicki in *Ashes and Diamonds*, Cybulski created the myth of a romantic hero, which became a point of reference in all the actor's subsequent roles. Cybulski's first and last names are not mentioned in Wajda's film. There was no need, since almost every Pole alive at the time vividly remembered the circumstances of the actor's death at the Wrocław main railway station on 8 January 1967. To reinforce the linkage of fiction to real-life events, characters played by other actors were given the first names of the actual people they depicted. The film again references paintings by Andrzej Wróblewski, especially *Execution (Rozstrzelanie)* from 1949. Jerzy Ziarnik's documentary *On Set (Na planie*) reveals more about Wajda's search for the right form in *Everything for Sale*, making the film even more self-referential.

THE PROMISED LAND

FEATURE FILM

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 1974

RUNTIME: 179'

DIGITALLY RESTORED

DIRECTOR: Andrzej Wajda

WRITER: Andrzej Wajda (based on the novel by Władysław Reymont)

CAST: Daniel Olbrychski, Wojciech Pszoniak, Andrzej Seweryn, Kalina Jędrusik, Anna Nehrebecka-Byczewska

SELECTED AWARDS:

Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film (1976)
Golden Lions, Best Actor for Wojciech Pszoniak, Best Production Design for Tadeusz Kosarewicz, and Best Score for Wojciech Kilar, Polish Film Festival, Gdańsk (1975)
Golden Grape, Lubuskie Film Summer, Łagów (1975)
Golden Prize, Moscow International Film Festival (1975)
Golden Spike Grand Prize, Valladolid International Film Festival (1976)
First Prize and Best Director Award for Andrzej Wajda, Cartagena International Film Festival

STORYLINE:

Karol Borowiecki (Daniel Olbrychski), a young Polish engineer employed at a huge textile mill in Łódź, owned by the German industrialist Bucholc, dreams of setting up his own operation. Together with his two friends, Max (Andrzej Seweryn), the German owner of a small weaving mill, and Moritz (Wojciech Pszoniak), a Jewish middleman, he decides to take advantage of inside information about a planned increase in cotton prices, make a quick killing, and set up a factory. This information comes from his married lover, Lucy Zuker (Kalina Jędrusik). Soon, Karol's father, a landowner, moves to Łódź together with his charge, Anka (Anna Nehrebecka), Karol's fiancée. Karol's affair with Lucy Zuker causes him problems, and so do the escalating costs of his business venture. Little does he know what opposition will be stir up within the industry, and what personal price he will come to pay for it. In the end, the money that saves him will not come from Anka or Lucy, but from Mada Müller's (Bożena Dykiel) dowry after a fire destroys his uninsured factory. Karol will also have to face down his workers, who rise against him in violent protests.

This outstanding adaptation of Władysław Reymont's novel depicts the industrialisation of Łódź. The film was shot almost entirely on location, including at former mansions of real-life factory owners Izrael Poznański and Karol Scheibler, whose palace currently houses the Film Museum in Łódź. With its spectacular set design, *The Promised Land* paints an epic panorama of social relations at the end of 19th century. The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 1976.