

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘WAYS TO FREEDOM’ POLISH FILM SERIES CAPTURES THE NATION’S ROAD TO DEMOCRACY

Thirteen features and shorts, including works by Krzysztof Kieslowski and Andrzej Wajda, commemorate the 25th anniversary of the first free parliamentary elections in Poland

November 13–23, 2014 at Museum of the Moving Image

Astoria, New York, October 30, 2014—Museum of the Moving Image and the Polish Cultural Institute New York will present *Ways to Freedom: Polish Film and the Rise of Democracy*, a thirteen-film series commemorating the 25th anniversary of the first free parliamentary elections in Poland. The series, running November 13 through 23, 2014, includes seven features and six documentary shorts that date from 1977 through 1990, a tumultuous political period in which the nation experienced the loosening of Stalin-era control, the imposition of martial law, and the birth and growth of the Solidarity movement. Four of the screenings will be introduced by noted film scholars, and the opening night of the series will be followed by a reception.

Ways to Freedom opens Thursday, November 13, at 7:00 p.m. with two films by Krzysztof Kieslowski, *Blind Chance* (1981) and *From the Point of View of the Night Watchman* (1977), a rarely shown documentary-style short, with an introduction by Annette Insdorf, film scholar (Columbia University) and author of *Double Lives, Second Chances: The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski*. Tickets for this program are \$15 (discounted for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above) and available in advance online at movingimage.us.

Other highlights include *Interrogation* (1982, dir. Ryszard Bugajski, introduced by Sheila Skaff, NYU scholar, on November 14), a film set in 1950s Poland during the Stalinist era about the imprisonment and torture of a Polish actress who refused to denounce a friend. Famously censored by authorities during the period of martial law, *Interrogation* only opened theatrically in 1989 and was shown at the 1990 Cannes Film Festival where actress Krystyna Janda won the Best Actress award and the film was nominated for the Palme d’Or. Agnieszka Holland also appears in the film as an actress. Another rarely seen film in the series is *The Mother of Kings* (1982, dir. Janusz Zaorski, introduced by Michal Oleszczyk, film critic and director of Gdynia Film Festival, on November 16), follows a widow and mother of four from the crisis of the

1930s, World War II, and the Stalinist era. This film, too, was censored at its completion and was only released in Poland in 1987 and debuted internationally at the Berlinale in 1988 where it won the Silver Bear for outstanding single achievement. Another featured film, ***Escape from the Liberty Cinema*** (1990, dir. Wojciech Marczewski, introduced by Andrzej Krakowski, filmmaker and CUNY instructor, on November 15), combines fantasy with political satire in a tale about actors who step out of the screen to protest censorship. The series title is a reference to Marczewski's film.

The other films in the series are Andrzej Wajda's ***Man of Iron*** (1981), chronicling the rise of a union organizer at the Gdansk shipyard modeled on Lech Walesa; ***Rat-Catcher*** (1986, dir. Andrzej Czarnecki), the famous documentary about an exterminator who feeds and befriends his prey before he kills them; ***Hear My Scream*** (1991, dir. Maciej Drygas), a documentary short about Ryszard Siwiec, who immolated himself to protest the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops; ***Smaller Sky*** (1980, dir. Janusz Morgenstern), a dramatic feature centered on a scientist who drops out of society as an act of rebellion; ***Shivers*** (1981, Wojciech Marczewski), a coming-of-age drama set at a boy scout training camp during the Stalinist 1950s; ***Fan*** (1987, dir. Wojciech Marczewski), a documentary about the fan club of a Polish pop rock band that serves as a front for political indoctrination; ***Where To*** (1990, dir. Pawel Kedzierski), a masterpiece of image and sound editing using newsreels to capture a moment in history; and ***My Notes from the Underground*** (2011, dir. Jacek Petrycki), which features heroes of the Solidarity trade union talking about their actions under martial law, interwoven with footage from the 1980s.

David Schwartz, the Museum's Chief Curator, said, "*Ways to Freedom* is significant both for the quality of the films, which include works by such masters as Krzysztof Kieslowski and Andrzej Wajda as well as such rarely screened great films as *Interrogation* and *The Mother of Kings*, but also as a living history of a tumultuous, exciting period of Polish history. It is clear that during the period from the birth of the Solidarity movement in 1980 through the free elections of 1989, Poland played a central role in the fall of the Iron Curtain."

Ways to Freedom: Polish Film and the Rise of Democracy is presented in collaboration with the KINO POLSKA Foundation and the Digital Film Repository in Poland, with support from the Polish Cultural Institute New York (PCINY).

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Images and screeners are available upon request.

SCHEDULE FOR 'WAYS TO FREEDOM: POLISH FILM AND THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY,'
NOVEMBER 13–23, 2014

Screenings will take place in the Sumner M. Redstone Theater or the Celeste and Armand Bartos Screening Room at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue in Astoria, and are included with paid Museum admission and are free for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above (unless otherwise noted). For information about Museum membership and to join, visit <http://movingimage.us/support/membership>.

The full program is posted on the Museum's website at movingimage.us/waystofreedom

Blind Chance (Przypadek)

Introduced by Annette Insdorf, Columbia University

Followed by a reception

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski. 1981, 114 mins. DCP. Kieslowski shows three possible outcomes for a medical student running to catch a train: in one he becomes a Communist party activist, in another he joins the opposition, and in a third, he gets married and lives non-politically.

Preceded by ***From the Point of View of a Night Watchman*** (Dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1977, 17 mins. DCP), a documentary portrait of an officious night porter. Annette Insdorf is Director of Undergraduate Film Studies at Columbia University, a Professor in the Graduate Film Division of the School of the Arts, and author of *Double Lives, Second Chances: The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski*.

Tickets: \$15 (\$9 members at the Film Lover, Dual, and Family levels / free for Silver Screen members and above). Advance tickets available online at movingimage.us.

Interrogation (Przesluchanie)

Introduced by Sheila Skaff, New York University

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Ryszard Bugajski. 1982, 118 mins. DCP. With Krystyna Janda. A 1950s cabaret singer is taken in for an interrogation, and she realizes she is being asked to denounce an acquaintance as a traitor. This harsh appraisal of Stalinism was banned during martial law and not released until 1989. Sheila Skaff is Administrative Director of the Masters of Art Program in the New York University Gallatin School of Individualized Study, where she teaches courses in international film studies, and author of *The Law of the Looking Glass: Cinema in Poland, 1896-1939*.

Smaller Sky (Mniejsze niebo)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Janusz Morgenstern. 1980, 96 mins. DCP. With Roman Wilhelmi, Beata Tyszkiewicz. In this excellent but rarely shown adaptation of a John Wain novel, a 45-year-old scientist rebels against his life by leaving his family and living at a railway station. He catches the attention of a psychiatrist and a journalist.

Escape from the Liberty Cinema (Ucieczka z kina Wolnosc)

Introduced by Andrzej Krakowski, City University of New York

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 4:15 P.M.

Dir. Wojciech Marczewski. 1990, 92 mins. DCP. With Michal Bajor, Artur Barcis. Evoking *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, this highly original film is about a screening of a new movie in which the characters rebel, refusing to play mindless roles. Instead, they engage with the audience, and authorities don't know how to handle the situation. Andrzej Krakowski is a filmmaker (*Triumph of the Spirit, Eminent Domain*) who studied at the Lodz Film School and professor of Media Communication Arts at CUNY.

Man of Iron (Czlowiek z zelaza)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 3:30 P.M.

Dir. Andrzej Wajda. 1981, 153 mins. DCP. With Jerzy Radziwilowicz, Krystyna Janda. Wajda's sweeping sequel to *Man of Marble* follows the evolution of a union organizer, modeled on Lech Walesa, from the riots of 1970 to the formation of the Solidarity trade union. Wajda incorporates rare documentary footage into the drama.

The Mother of Kings (Matka Krolow)

Introduced by Michal Oleszczyk, Gdynia Festival

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Janusz Zaorski. 1982, 127 mins. DCP. With Magda Teresa Wójcik, Zbigniew Zapasiewicz, Franciszek Pieczka. One of the greatest Polish films, with extraordinary camerawork, music, and acting, *The Mother of Kings* follows a poor Warsaw widow and her four sons from the 1930s to 1956. Michal Oleszczyk is a film critic and artistic director of the Film Festival in Gdynia, Poland's largest festival of feature films.

Rat-Catcher, Fan, and My Notes from the Underground

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2:00 P.M.

Rat-Catcher (Szcurolap) (Dir. Andrzej Czarnecki. 1986, 22 mins.) This famous portrait of an exterminator was widely read as a metaphor for Communist Poland.

Fan (Dir. Wojciech Maciejewski. 1987, 30 mins.) A pop rock band's fan club serves as a front for political indoctrination.

My Notes from the Underground (Moje zapiski z podziemia) (Dir. Jacek Petrycki. 2011, 39 mins.) Interviews and rare footage with heroes of the Solidarity movement.

Hear My Scream and Where To

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 4:30 P.M.

Hear My Scream (Uslyszcie mój krzyk) (Dir. Maciej Drygas, 1991, 57 mins.) A documentary about the life of Ryszard Siwiec, who burned himself to death in a Warsaw stadium in 1968 to protest the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Preceded by ***Where To (Dokad)***, (Dir. Pawel Kedzierski, 1990, 16 mins.) a masterful compilation of newsreel footage including music, shouts, songs, and speeches.

Shivers

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Wojciech Marczewski. 1981, 106 mins. Digital projection. With Tomasz Hudziec, Teresa Marczewska, Marek Kondrat. Set in the Stalinist 1950s, this autobiographical tale follows a teen boy who is sent to a boy scout training camp after his father is brutally arrested. With his friends, he learns about worker strikes and political changes that will soon grip the country.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Museum of the Moving Image (movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facilities—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. **Holiday hours:** The Museum will be open 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 11 (Veterans' Day); Monday, December 29; and Tuesday, December 30. The Museum will be closed on Thursday, November 27 (Thanksgiving); Wednesday, December 24; and Thursday, December 25.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Tickets for regular film screenings are included with paid Museum admission and are free for members at the Film Lover level and above.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3–12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance online at movingimage.us.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. Its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit movingimage.us.

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