

(Under Common Sky) the 2nd Summer Film Screenings

# POD WSPÓLNYM NIEBEM

Ukraine / Belarus / Georgia / India



## Film Nights

July 12 - September 6, 2023

The courtyard of The Centre for the Thought of John Paul II  
Warsaw, 11 Foksal Street

**PROGRAM**

July 12 - September 6, 2023, each Wednesday at 8:00 p.m.

Each screening will be accompanied by a talk with invited guests, experts from various fields (travellers, journalists, book authors and filmmakers).

All film nights are free!

July 12

**OTAR'S DEATH (2021)**

directed by Ioseb 'Soso' Bliadze, feature, 105', GEORGIA

July 19

**REFLECTION (2021)**

directed by Valentyn Vasyanovych, feature, 127', UKRAINE

July 26

**LAST FILM SHOW (2021)**

directed by Pan Nalin, feature, 110', INDIA, FRANCE, USA

August 2

**WHEN FLOWERS ARE NOT SILENT (2021)**

directed by Andrei Kutsila, documentary, 71', BELARUS, POLAND

**VOICES.STREAMS (2022)**

directed by DocWave, documentary, 50', BELARUS, POLAND

August 9

**SHANKAR'S FAIRIES (2021)**

directed by Irfana Majumdar, feature, 88', INDIA

August 16

**THE HAMLET SYNDROME (2022)**

directed by Elwira Niewiera, Piotr Rosołowski, documentary, 85', POLAND, GERMANY

**TALES OF A TOY HORSE (2021)**

directed by Ulyana Osovskaya, Denis Strashny, documentary, 75', UKRAINE, ESTONIA

August 23

**DEDE (2017)**

directed by Mariam Khatchvani, feature, 97', GEORGIA

**WET SAND (2021)**

directed by Elene Naveriani, feature, 115', GEORGIA, SWITZERLAND

August 30

**MINSK (2021)**

directed by Boris Guts, feature, 78', ESTONIA, RUSSIA

**LIVE (2022)**

directed by Mara Tamkovich, short feature, 14', POLAND, BELARUS

September 6

**PTITSA (2022)**

directed by Alina Maksimenko, documentary, 30', POLAND, UKRAINE

**THE LAST SUMMER (2022)**

directed by Ihar Chyshchenia, documentary, 43', POLAND, BELARUS

**THE LAST KNIGHTS (2020)**

directed by David Gurgulia, documentary, 42', POLAND, GEORGIA



## Explore, watch, discuss!

*I would like to invite you to the second edition of Under Common Sky Summer Film Screenings. Its idea is to show the latest cinema productions on other cultures and migration issues, and to encourage an empathic meeting with other people in the spirit of dialogue and openness, so close to our patron. Last year's premiere edition of the Screenings, when audiences from Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and India met during film nights, confirmed our belief that it was very necessary. We want our courtyard to once again become a friendly place for reflection and meeting, where Varsovians, in all their diversity, can get to know each other better. There is no better excuse for this than contemporary and profound films. After all, the true magic of cinema lies in the fact that it is a universal and democratic experience.*

*Let's meet under common sky!*

**Michał Senk**

*Director of The Centre for the Thought of John Paul II*

*The 2nd Summer Film Screenings Under Common Sky are a unique opportunity to learn about the cultures and history of the countries where our new neighbours come from, and which we often know only from the distance of superficial stereotypes.*

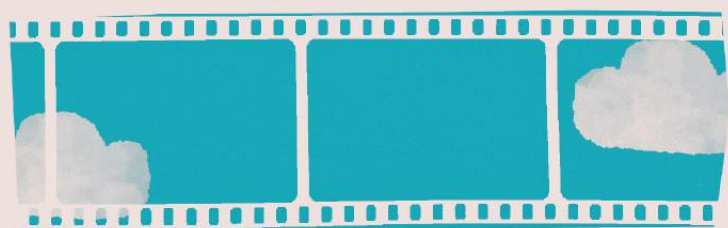
*This year, in the courtyard of The Artistic Tenement, we will present emotional and reflective films from Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and India. Our open-air screenings include as many as 15 of the most interesting titles from recent years – feature films and documentaries, long films and short films that paint a contemporary socio-cultural picture of the countries from which Warsaw migrants came and show the often dramatic causes and consequences of leaving their family homes.*

*Each screening will be accompanied by a talk with invited guests, experts from various fields. They will include travellers, journalists, book authors and filmmakers who know the presented phenomena and their contexts not only from the cinema screen, but also from their own professional and private experiences and interests.*

*We invite you to jointly create a space for a safe, creative meeting and intercultural dialogue – one that will help you overcome the fear of being different and the feeling of alienation.*

**Mateusz Toma**

*Coordinator of the Under Common Sky Summer Film Screenings*



# BELARUS







## **BELARUS**

Our eastern neighbour has a population of 9.4 million and ranks among the medium-sized European countries in terms of surface area (more than 200,000 km<sup>2</sup>). Since 1991, Belarus is an independent country. However, the attempts of the Belarusian intelligentsia to create a sovereign state date back to the early spring of 1918, when the Belarusian People's Republic was proclaimed in Minsk. In July 1990, yet before the official dissolution of the USSR, the then Belarusian parliament – the Rada – accepted the declaration of state sovereignty, which constituted the first step on its way to independence.

### **IN THE SHADOW OF AN AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT**

After the short period of parliamentary democracy in the years 1992–1994, the government system grew increasingly authoritarian following the victory of Alexander Lukashenko in the presidential election. The opposition was methodically stripped of policy instruments. The 30 years of Lukashenko's rule brought the intertwining short periods of relative liberalisation and even more frequent and destructive grip tightening as well as limitation of human rights.

A particular spike in repressions was observed after the presidential election in August 2020 when the government launched violent persecutions against the citizens after thousands had joined pro-democratic protests. Several thousand people were sentenced to long prison terms and almost 200,000, including the main Lukashenko's opponent Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, were forced to leave the country after 2020. The country's becoming increasingly dependent on Russia, which explains the logistical support granted to Moscow during its invasion of Ukraine. Even though the participation of the Belarusian army in the aggression hasn't been confirmed to this day, Russia's recent decision to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus has raised global concerns.

Belarus is not an economic power and its developmental struggles are caused by the uni-directional dependence on the Russian economy, and in the recent years also by Chinese loans. The sanctions and international isolation imposed as a result of undemocratic policies also negatively impact the country. However, Belarus has a great potential in the transit of energy carriers, nuclear energy, production of good quality food and tourism.



## **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**

The dominant religion in Belarus is Orthodox Christianity but there are also groups of Roman and Greek Catholics, communities originating from the protestant tradition as well as Jewish and Islamic districts. The Belarusian Orthodox Church isn't autocephalous (independent) but instead forms part of the Russian Orthodox Church as the Belarusian Exarchate. Due to the experiences of atheisation in the USSR, faith doesn't have a great impact on social life and many Belarusians are indifferent towards religion. What needs to be highlighted in this context is the attitude of the local Church which, albeit with a few exceptions, supports the union of the throne and the altar and doesn't criticise the government.

Belarusian culture bears traces of the history of the lands that for years formed part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian Empire. Under Lukashenko's regime, cultivation of the Belarusian folklore and language becomes a manifestation of patriotism. The most renowned person in the Belarusian cultural landscape is Svetlana Alexievich, who won the 2015 Nobel prize in literature.

## **BELARUSIANS IN POLAND**

It's estimated that around 250,000 Belarusian immigrants currently live in Poland and are the second largest group of foreigners to obtain Polish citizenship, following only Ukrainians. A significant proportion of them are considered political refugees – many of them are young people before 30 who often attend school or study in our country. In Poland, Belarusian immigrants cultivate an alternative, censorship-free cultural circulation (including the Free Belarus Museum at 11 Foksal Street) as well as create outposts for social and political activities, which in the near future will allow them to regain the influence over their country's destiny and democratic transition.





August 2, 8:00 p.m.

## **WHEN FLOWERS ARE NOT SILENT (2021)**

documentary

**Running time:** 71'

**Countries:** Belarus, Poland

**Languages:** Belarusian, Russian

**Subtitles:** Polish

**Directed by:** Andrei Kutsila

**Written by:** Andrei Kutsila

**Cinematography:** Andrei Kutsila

**Edited by:** Paweł Klepacz, Andrei Kutsila

The 2020 elections in Belarus were rigged, sparking a popular uprising unlike anything the country has ever seen before. The peaceful protests were dealt with vicious militia violence, but the protesters did not back down, demanding that President Lukashenko resign after 27 years of ironclad authoritarian rule. This resulted in another round of even more brutal repression. The film tells the story of ordinary Belarusian women and their families who, despite the traumas they experienced, decide to risk everything to continue fighting for freedom. Understanding that hope is a value which cannot die.

### **Festivals and awards**

Warsaw International Film Festival (2021) – Award for the best documentary

Media Festival "Man in Danger" (2022) – White Cobra Grand Prix





August 2, 9:45 p.m.

## **VOICES.STREAMS (2021)**

**documentary**

**Running time: 50'**

**Countries: Belarus, Poland**

**Language: Belarusian**

**Subtitles: Polish**

**Directed by: DocWave**

In August 2020, people gathered on the steps of the Belarusian State Philharmonic in Minsk to protest against the rigged presidential election. Holding signs that read "Our Vote Has Been Stolen", they stood up to the violence together by singing. Although the authorities pacified this spontaneous gathering, musicians soon began to appear on protest marches in shopping malls and subway, each time inspiring people with songs about the dignity, courage, fate and faith of Belarusians. This is how one of the symbols of the Belarusian resistance movement, the Free Choir, was born.

The story of the birth and activity of the Free Choir will be told by the Serdyukov family – musicians and employees of the Philharmonic. The young couple was not very interested in politics, but seeing with their own eyes the enormous brutality of the system towards peacefully protesting compatriots, they could not stay indifferent. The spouses became one of the initiators of creative resistance. After another action, the cellist Alyaksandr Serdyukov was detained at work by the security services and sentenced to 15 days in prison. After being released, he decided to step away from activism and focus on his family and developing his hobbies.



August 30, 8:00 p.m.

## **MINSK (2021)**

feature film

**Running time:** 78'

**Countries:** Estonia, Russia

**Language:** Russian

**Subtitles:** Polish & English

**Directed by:** Boris Guts

**Written by:** Boris Guts

**Cinematography:** Daria Likhacheva

**Edited by:** Boris Guts

**Music by:** Face, Grechka, Shura, Naviband

**Starring:** Alexey Maslodudov, Anastasia Shemyakina, Anastasia Pronina, Danil Steklov

The first feature film about the events of August 2020 in Belarus, filmed in one take. Pasha and Yulia, a young Belarusian couple, leave their homes at night and find themselves in the centre of protests after rigged elections. An ordinary walk turns into a real hell, where innocent people become victims of militia brutality.

### **Festivals and awards**

Pune International Film Festival (2023) – Main Competition

Film Meeting Bergamo (2023) – Main competition

Cottbus Film Festival of Young East European Cinema (2022) – FIPRESCI Award, Ecumenical Jury Award



September 6, 8:00 p.m.

## **LIVE (2022)** short feature film

**Running time:** 14'  
**Countries:** Poland, Belarus  
**Language:** Belarusian  
**Subtitles:** Polish

**Directed by:** Mara Tamkowicz  
**Written by:** Mara Tamkowicz  
**Cinematography:** Krzysztof Trela  
**Edited by:** Katarzyna Leśniak  
**Music by:** Martyna Kacprowicz

**Starring:** Aliaksandra Vaitsekhovich, Palina Chabatarowa, Andrei Nowik, Ketewan Asrataszwili, Sawielij Goroszczenia

Peaceful protests in Minsk after a Belarusian oppositionist was beaten to death are pacified by the militia. The journalists of the independent Belarusian television are the only ones who broadcast the events from the windows of one of the nearby blocks of flats. When they are tracked by a militia drone, they have little time to decide – to continue the coverage or to ensure safety? What will be more important – truth or freedom? A film inspired by true events.

The film uses fragments of Katerina Andreeva and Daria Chultsova's broadcast from Changes Square and Belsat Studio broadcast on November 15, 2020.

### **Festivals and awards**

Chicago International Film Festival (2022) – Silver Hugo Award  
Festival of Polish Feature Films, Gdynia (2022) – “Zwierciadło” magazine award





September 6, 9:15 p.m.

## **THE LAST SUMMER (2022)**

**documentary**

**Running time: 43'**

**Countries: Poland, Belarus**

**Language: Belarusian**

**Subtitles: Polish**

**Directed by: Ihar Czyszczenia**

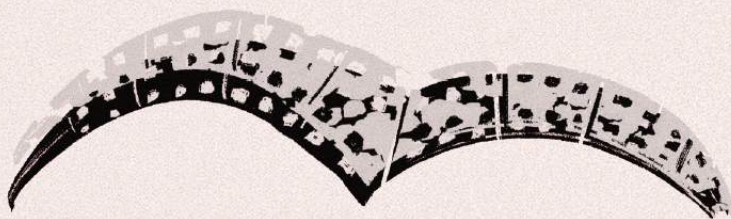
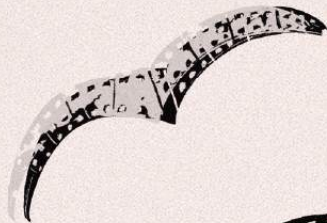
**Written by: Ihar Czyszczenia**

**Cinematography: Ihar Czyszczenia**

**Produced by: Mirosław Dembiński / Fundacja Edukacji  
Dokumentalnej**

Misha is a 17-year-old who has just graduated from the prestigious high school at the Belarusian State University (BUP). His dream is to study mathematics at the same university. He prepares for exams at night, and during the day he plays with his skater buddies on the outskirts of Minsk, where he trains new tricks, dates girls and participates in skateboard competitions. Meanwhile, the country is experiencing its most tense time in nearly 30 years as the coronavirus pandemic coincided with the presidential election. People got used to the fact that elections in Belarus are a mere formality, but this time there was a glimmer of hope that everything would turn out differently.

# GEORGIA





## GEORGIA

The independent Georgia has existed for more than 30 years and just like other Eastern countries was created after the dissolution of the USSR. However, rich traditions of independent statehood have been present in the region since the ancient times and the lands referred to by Romans as Colchis and Iberia (later Kartli). Georgians were one of the first nations to embrace Christianity, after Armenians. They did it in the 4th century AD under the influence of St. Nino, venerated in both the Catholic and Orthodox Church, who encouraged King Mirian III to get baptised. It's St. Nino who introduced one of the popular designs of Christian crosses – the one with drooping horizontal arms.

### LOOKING EAST, PEEKING WEST

Throughout the years, Georgia remained under the geopolitical influences of Mongols, Persia, the Ottoman Empire and Russia. At the end of World War I, the first modern Georgian state was created called the Democratic Republic of Georgia. It lasted less than three years and was conquered by Bolshevik Russia.

The history of the sovereign Georgia (the country declared independence following the March 1991 referendum) is tumultuous and, unfortunately, tragic. Its first president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was overthrown after seven months in power. After a short civil war joined by the neighbouring countries, Eduard Shevardnadze, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, took power for more than a decade. His rule was marked by stagnation, poverty and corruption, as well as territorial disintegration and effective secession of certain areas (Abkhazia, South Ossetia and for some time also Adjara). At the end of 2003, this resulted in the so-called Rose Revolution led by young, pro-Western politicians and with Mikheil Saakashvili at the forefront.

After overthrowing Shevardnadze, Saakashvili served two terms as president reforming the country and displaying his will to enter the EU and NATO. In August 2008 broke out a short Russo-Georgian war, during which the presidents of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine came to Tbilisi in a show of support. In 2013, Saakashvili's entourage lost power and he himself was forced to leave the country, where he came back in 2021. Since then, he's in prison on charges of abuse in office.

In 2013, the Georgian Dream party took the reins of the country. Its over decade-long rule resulted in yet another rapprochement with Russia. Since 2018, the office of president is held by Salome Zourabichvili, the first woman to hold this position in the modern history of Georgia.

At the European Council meeting in June 2022, the country was granted a European perspective, but not an EU candidate status, unlike Ukraine and Moldova. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the country saw a wave of demonstrations in favour of maintaining the pro-Western and democratic course.



## **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**

Georgia is a prevalently Orthodox country with its own, independent Orthodox Church headed by Iliall, referred to as Catholicos-Patriarch. The Georgian culture is known and appreciated all around the world – Otar Iosseliani's movies have gained popularity at international festivals, Nino Haratischwili's novels are widely recognised and even the popular singer Katie Melua has Georgian roots.

## **GEORGIANS IN POLAND**

In the interwar period, Poland maintained close relationships with the Georgian government in exile, while hundreds of Georgian military personnel and intelligentsia settled in Poland. Among them was an Orthodox priest, prominent theologian and polyglot – St. Grigol Peradze – murdered in 1942 in Auschwitz.

There are around 27,000 Georgians currently living in Poland, most of whom are economic migrants who settle mainly in large urban areas. Their shops and catering facilities are gaining on popularity, especially bakeries and restaurants serving traditional Georgian dishes. Their country is an important holiday destination for Poles, who are well-liked in Georgia. When in autumn 2022 Russia announced a partial mobilisation due to the invasion of Ukraine, many Russians at draft age migrated to Georgia.



August 23, 8:00 p.m.

## **DEDE (2017)**

feature film

**Running time:** 97'

**Country:** Georgia

**Language:** Georgian

**Subtitles:** Polish & English

**Directed by:** Mariam Khatchvani

**Written by:** Vladimer Katcharava, Mariam Khatchvani,  
Irakli Solomonashvili

**Cinematography:** Konstantin Esadze

**Edited by:** Levan Kukhashvili

**Music by:** Mate Chamgeliani, Tako Jordania

**Starring:** George Babluani, Natia Vibliani, Girshel Tchelidze, Nukri Khatchvani, Mose Khatchvani

It's 1992. Dina, a young girl, lives in a small Georgian village in the Caucasus Mountains. Her grandfather chose a husband for her, but the girl's attention is drawn by handsome Gegi, who has just returned from the war. They fall in love and decide to run away together. Far away from their family home, their offspring is born. Unfortunately, Gegi dies quickly, and his beloved can only rely on herself. Tradition tells her – as a widow – to accept the proposal of the first man who asks her to marry him. Dina has to leave behind her old life and her beloved child.

### **Festivals and awards**

Beijing International Film Festival (2018) – Awards for the best direction and cinematography

LET'S CEE International Film Festival Vienna (2018) – Audience Award

Eurasian International Film Festival of Almaty (2018) – Best Film Award

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (2017) – East of West Award

Batumi International Film Festival (2017) – Jury Award

Montpellier International Film Festival (2017) – Audience Award



August 23, 10:00 p.m.

## **WET SAND (2021)**

feature film

**Running time:** 115'

**Countries:** Georgia, Switzerland

**Language:** Georgian

**Subtitles:** Polish & English

**Directed by:** Elene Naveriani

**Written by:** Elene Naveriani, Sandro Naveriani

**Cinematography:** Agnesh Pakozdi

**Edited by:** Aurora Vögeli

**Music by:** Philippe Ciampi

**Starring:** Bebe Sesitashvili, Gia Agumava, Megi Kobaladze, Giorgi Tsereteli, Kakha Kobaladze

Young Moe returns to her home village on the Black Sea to arrange the funeral of her grandfather Eliko, who committed suicide. During his stay, he discovers that Eliko has been hiding a secret for many years that will destroy the peaceful life of this small community. As a consequence of this event, Moe has to face the lies, prejudices and intolerance of the locals, which will irreversibly affect the girl's life.

*Wet Sand* is a moving and poetic anthem to those who are forgotten, excluded, and forced to live a lie. The film shows the power of love that can oppose conformism and intolerance, but also the cost of being yourself in a society that does not accept it. The director uses beautiful pictures of the seaside landscape and evocative music to create an atmosphere of both melancholy and hope.

### **Festivals and awards**

Solothurn Film Festival (2022) – Best Film Award

Locarno International Film Festival (2021) – Best Actor Award





September 6, 10:00 p.m.

## THE LAST KNIGHTS (2020)

documentary

Running time: 42'

Countries: Poland, Georgia

Language: Georgian

Subtitles: Polish

Directed by: David Gurgulia

On Stalin's orders, a small Georgian ethnic group of Khevsurs, Caucasian highlanders living in the border areas of the mountains in north-eastern Georgia, was forcibly relocated to the lowlands. This was an act of revenge for not submitting to Soviet rule. The population over 60 years of age died out within a year after the resettlement. The new settlements, such as the village of Gamarjoba (Victory), turned out to be in practice reserves, from which only a few managed to escape. The region has become depopulated. Events that happened 65 years ago still affect people's lives today. The case of the Khevsureti region is only part of a more general problem. *The Last Knights* is a story of people who want to go back to their roots and rebuild the idea of what they used to call home.



July 12, 8:00 p.m.

## **OTAR'S DEATH (2021)**

feature film

**Running time:** 105'

**Country:** Georgia

**Language:** Georgian

**Subtitles:** Polish & English

**Directed by:** Ioseb "Soso" Bliadze

**Written by:** Elmar Imanov, Ioseb "Soso" Bliadze

**Cinematography:** Dimitri Dito, Dekanosidze

**Edited by:** Elmar Imanov

**Music by:** Ioseb "Soso" Bliadze, Domas Strupinskas

**Starring:** Nutsa Kukhianidze, Iva Kimeridze, Eka Chavleishvili, Achi Makalatia

Two seemingly different families live in a high-rise building in Tbilisi and in an isolated house on the outskirts of the city. Ketu and her teenage son Nika lead a typical urban life, full of haste and unfulfillment, while Tamara, trapped in the idyllic boredom of the suburbs, teaches singing and takes care of her father – Otar. An unfortunate accident makes their lives irreversibly intertwined one summer night, initiating a series of events that will bring many misfortunes to one family, and for the other will become a chance for a radical change in life.

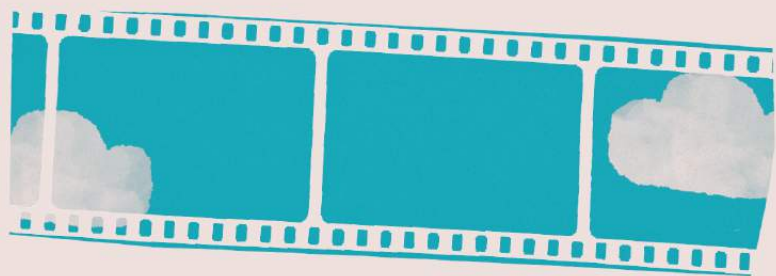
*Death of Otar*, debuting in Ioseb "Soso" Bliadze's feature film, is crafted with insightful creativity and playful absurdity that seemingly belie the tragic theme. It is a mosaic story of intertwined fates and an intriguing study of changes and divisions in contemporary Georgian society.

### **Festivals and awards**

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (2021) – FEDEORA Award, East of West Award nomination

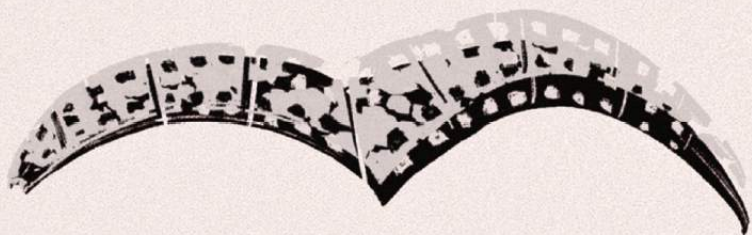
Batumi International Film Festival (2021) – Jury Award, Best Actress Award

Tbilisi International Film Festival (2021) – Best Film Award: The Golden Prometheus





# INDIA



## INDIA

The Indian subcontinent is a large, geographically, socially and culturally complex organism. The independent India that cut off the colonial ties with the Great Britain in 1947 is currently the most populated country in the world with more than 1.3 billion inhabitants belonging to various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups.

The largest group consists of Hindus, who speak Hindi, and whose religion is Hinduism. The country is also home to Muslims, Sikhs, Jains and Christians (especially in the southern states: Goa and Kerala). Even though there's almost a thousand of languages and regional dialects spoken in the entire subcontinent, most Indian citizens also speak English.

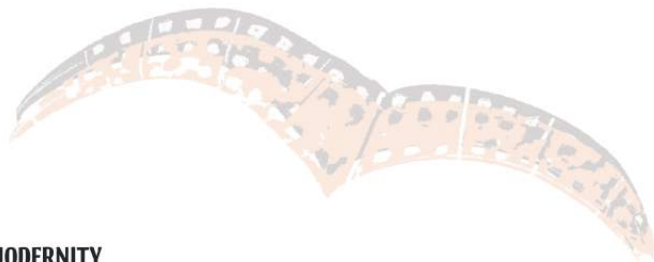
### A PINCH OF POLITICS

India's one of the few, relatively stable democracies in Central and South Asia. Its ability to maintain this political system is considered a huge achievement given the country's diversity. Indian politicians such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter Indira Gandhi are counted among the most notable leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During the Cold War, India, along with Yugoslavia, Indonesia and Egypt, was an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement of countries in search of their own path to political development, away from the Western democracies and communist regimes.

For years, India's been developing what resembles a two-party political system with two main players: the Indian National Congress and the Indian People's Party, whose leader, Narendra Modi, has been prime minister since 2014 (during Modi's rule, the lasting advantage of his party on the political scene has become noticeable). In the Indian system, the office of president is of purely ceremonial importance. Presently, India belongs to the so-called emerging economies and is an active member of the BRICS bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).

Regarding the war in Ukraine, India's verging on the side of neutrality, trying to maintain relations with both Moscow and Kiev. Its engagement with BRICS doesn't affect the good relations with the EU and the USA.



## A LEAP INTO MODERNITY

Since gaining independence, India's made a considerable civilizational progress by working conscientiously over the decades to eliminate such problems as extreme poverty, disease outbreaks and epidemics, illiteracy as well as ethnic and religious conflicts between diverse groups of citizens. Social situation of women is also steadily improving, although sometimes with great difficulty. India remains a country of stark contrasts, hugely burdened with the significant impact of caste and class divisions. Since the 1990s, the country's been largely investing in the sector of IT and modern technologies. Indian IT specialists have become synonymous with highly sought-after experts across global markets. The multicolour Indian culture, which started gaining popularity in the Western world thanks to the counterculture of the 1960s, has now managed to conquer the entire world with its Bollywood movies that put the spotlight on Indian music, fashion and cuisine.

## INDIANS IN POLAND

The data from the recent years says that Poland hosts more than 40,000 Indian citizens, either permanent residents or those living here long-term. Many of them are IT specialists who take up jobs at different organisational levels in large, multinational corporations in Warsaw, Cracow, Łódź, Gdańsk and Wrocław, where they're regarded as conscientious and professional employees. Many Indians in our country run catering facilities which score high in popularity rankings.







July 26, 8:00 p.m.

## LAST FILM SHOW (2021)

feature film

Running time: 105'

Countries: India, France USA

Language: Gujarati

Subtitles: Polish & English

Directed by: Pan Nalin

Written by: Pan Nalin

Cinematography: Swapnil S. Sonawane

Edited by: Shreyas Beltangdy, Pavan Bhat

Music by: Cyril Morin

**Starring: Bhavin Rabari, Bhavesh Shrimali, Richa Meena, Dipen Raval, Paresh Mehta**

Samay, a nine-year-old boy from an Indian village, is fascinated by the images he sees on the local cinema screen and dreams of becoming a director. However, his strict father does not approve of this passion and forbids him from watching films. Samay doesn't give up and befriends a projectionist who allows him to attend shows in exchange for delicious home-cooked dinners prepared by Samay's mother. However, soon this unobvious duo will have to make painful choices due to the inevitable changes taking place in the cinema.

The Last Film Show is a film about the magic of cinema and love for film – Indian Cinema Paradiso for young viewers. The film was also India's official entry for the 2023 Academy Award for Best International Film.

### Festivals and awards

Satellite Awards (2023) – Best Actor Award

Asian World Film Festival (2022) – Best Film Award

Valladolid International Film Festival (2021) – Best Film Award

Días de Cine Award (2021) – Best Film Award



August 9, 8:00 p.m.

## SHANKAR'S FAIRIES (2021)

feature film

Running time: 88'

Country: India

Language: Hindi

Subtitles: Polish & English

Directed by: Irfana Majumdar

Written by: Nita Kumar

Cinematography: Sunny Banerjee

Edited by: Tanushree Das

Music by: Pieter Van Zyl

**Starring:** Jaihind Kumar, Shreeja Mishra, Gaurav Saini, Irfana Majumdar, Adwik Mathur

India, 1962. Shankar is an extremely capable butler who works in the house of a wealthy police officer. He is valued by his boss and housewife especially for his culinary skills. However, the hero also has his own dreams and secrets, which he shares only with his employer's daughter, Anjana. Together, they create an imaginary fairy world where they can escape their harsh reality. Meanwhile, in a nearby village, Shankar's daughter falls gravely ill and he would like to return home.

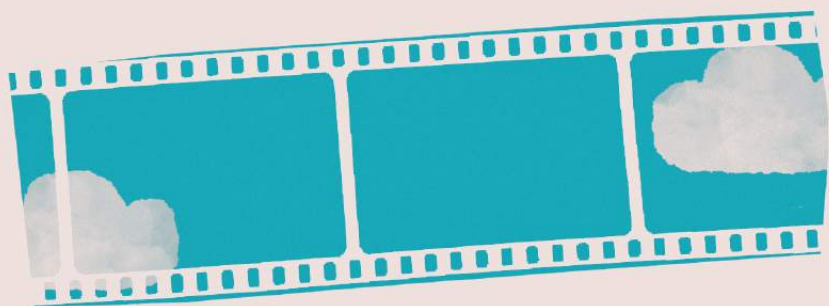
*Shankar's Fairies* is an intimate portrayal of growing up in India in the 1960s. A story full of warmth, humour and emotion, which at the same time very accurately shows the complexity of inter-class and cultural relations in India of that time.

### Festivals and awards

Locarno International Film Festival (2021) – Main Competition

Hong Kong Asian Film Festival (2021) – Main Competition

Chicago International Film Festival (2021) – Main Competition





# UKRAINE





## UKRAINE

Ukrainian statehood has evolved over the centuries since the baptism of Rus' by Prince Vladimir in the waters of the Dnipro River in 988. Kiev then became the centre of the Eastern Slavic Christian culture. Then, for years we formed part of the same Commonwealth. Despite the fact that our relations have been turbulent, as it's often

Ukrainian demographics is complex and varied. According to the 2021 data, the number of Ukrainian citizens was around 43.79 million. Today, it's hard to make an estimate due to the ongoing Russian aggression which not only causes mass emigration, but also dramatic life losses.

Despite the fact that Ukraine is dominated by Orthodox Christians, the country isn't mono-confessional. The religious demographics also includes Catholics of both denominations, with about 20% Greek Catholics living mostly in the western regions of the country, evangelicals as well as Muslims and Jews. In 2019, the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine was recognised and its independence was acknowledged by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Orthodox Churches of Greece and Cyprus as well as the Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. The efforts are being made to fully unite the Ukrainian Orthodoxy, which for decades remained under Moscow's jurisdiction.



## THE DIFFICULT PRESENT

The post World War I attempts to build an independent Ukraine based on the alliance with Poland and Western countries failed and the dream of many generations of Ukrainians to have their own country had to wait until the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Poland was the first country in the world, along with Canada, to acknowledge the country's independence. Over the 30 years of its independence, the sovereign Ukraine has come a long way and continues to make significant sacrifices in order to join the representatives of Western and democratic values for good.

The first decade of independence with presidents Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma was spent in limbo and in search of its own place on the political world map. Ukrainians' aspiration towards change and joining of the European community was expressed during the Orange Revolution at the turn of 2003, which propelled Viktor Yushchenko to power and was a significant turn in the Ukrainian geopolitics.

Almost a decade later, Viktor Yanukovych's presidency caused a significant regression as he eventually rejected the EU Association Agreement. This led to another revolution – Euromaidan – also referred to as the Revolution of Dignity. This revolution wasn't a bloodless one and initiated an overt Russian aggression: first, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and then the irredenta in Donbass and in the eastern Ukraine supported by Moscow. Finally, there's the last year's full-scale invasion which came as a shock to the entire world.

This very challenging last decade with presidents Petro Poroshenko and Volodymyr Zelenskyy was at the same time 'the golden era' of Ukraine – the brave country that has faced the aggression of a great power is now renowned and admired throughout the world.

## UKRAINIANS IN POLAND

According to the data gathered by the Polish Border Guard, after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, more than 12 million Ukrainians crossed our border. It's now estimated that the number of Ukrainians currently staying in Poland is above 2 million. They're thus the largest group of foreigners to be granted Polish citizenship. Among them are both war refugees and economic migrants who have lived in Poland for quite some time now.

The presence of Ukrainians has become part of Polish everyday life and Ukrainian is the most spoken language in our streets (apart from Polish). Ukrainians become our friends from schools, universities, work, health centres and administration offices.

Close relationships with the Polish people in the recent years have resulted in the growing popularity of the Ukrainian culture in our country, including its folklore as well as its modern literature (books by Yurii Andrukhovych), cinematography (movies by Oles Sanin and Lubomir Kobylchuk), rock music (Okean Elzy, Haydamaky, Plach Yeremiyi) and theatre (Svitlana Oleshko's productions).





August 16, 10:00 p.m.

## TALES OF A TOY HORSE (2021)

documentary

Running time: 75'

Countries: Ukraine, Estonia

Languages: Estonian, Ukrainian, Russian

Subtitles: Polish

Directed by: Uliana Osowska, Denis Strashny

Written by: Uliana Osowska, Denis Strashny

Cinematography: Denis Strasznyj

Edited by: Miriam Jegorow, Uliana Osowska, Denis Strasznyj

Music by: Anton Dehtiarov

Former anti-Soviet activist Anatoly, now a monk and artist, lives in an ancient stone tower in the heart of Tallinn. Every day he prays to nature and creates handmade books in his workshop. Many years ago, Anatoly made a vow to find something good in every day. The outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine makes him leave the peaceful Estonian capital and go to the frontline towns with a volunteer work mission. Since 2014, he has been combining spiritual life with social activism, constantly traveling to the Donbass to provide humanitarian aid. His oath is put to the test by the reality of the "grey economy".

### Festivals and awards

Docudays UA International Film Festival – Main Competition

MeetDocs Eastern Ukraine Festival, Kharkov – Main Competition



July 19, 8:00 p.m.

## REFLECTION (2021)

feature film

Running time: 127'

Country: Ukraine

Language: Ukrainian

Subtitles: Polish & English

Directed by: Valentyn Vasyanovych

Written by: Valentyn Vasyanovych

Cinematography: Valentyn Vasyanovych

Edited by: Valentyn Vasyanovych

**Starring:** Roman Luckyi, Nika Myslytska, Nadia Levchenko, Andriy Rymaruk, Ihor Szulha

Ukrainian surgeon Serhiy is captured by Russian military forces in the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine and, while in captivity, is exposed to horrific scenes of humiliation, violence and indifference to human life. After his release, he returns to his comfortable middle-class apartment and tries to find purpose in life while rebuilding his relationship with his daughter and ex-wife. He is learning how to be a human being, a father and how to help his daughter who needs his love and support.

The latest film by Valentyn Vasyanovych, one of the most interesting Ukrainian filmmakers of recent years. The director once again, just like in the previous, great *Atlantis*, explores the attitudes of individuals in the face of the horror of war. The inexpressible trauma is the source of loneliness and guilt that extends into life long after returning home.

### Festivals and awards

Jerusalem International Film Festival (2022) – Best Film Nominee

Venice International Film Festival (2021) – Best Film Nominee

Toronto International Film Festival (2021) – Best Director Nominee

**NOTE! The show is for viewers over 16 years of age only.**



September 6, 8:45 p.m.

## **PTITSA (2022)**

**documentary**

**Running time: 30'**

**Countries: Poland, Ukraine**

**Language: Ukrainian**

**Subtitles: Polish**

**Directed by: Alina Maksimenko**

**Written by: Alina Maksimenko**

**Cinematography: Alina Maksimenko**

**Edited by: Feliks Mirosław Mamczur**

**Music by: Vladimir Tarasov**

The story, set during the pandemic, takes place in the shared apartment of a mother and her adult daughter. In one part of the house, mum's music school operates on-line. She is a piano teacher and contacts only with her students. In the second part there is a painting studio of her daughter Alina. Despite sharing a common space, their worlds practically do not connect with each other. One day, Alina finds out about an accident that kills Katia, her friend's daughter. From that moment on, we witness uncomfortable telephone conversations between Alina and her friend. The tragic story of Katia will connect the main characters.

The project is developed at the Wajda School on the DOK PRO course as part of the Film Education Program 2019/2020 co-financed by the Polish Film Institute.

### **Festivals and awards**

International Documentary Film Festival É Tudo Verdade / It's All True (2023) – Short Film Award





August 16, 8:00 p.m.

## **THE HAMLET SYNDROME (2022)**

documentary

**Running time:** 85'

**Countries:** Poland, Germany

**Language:** Ukrainian

**Subtitles:** Polish & English

**Directed by:** Elwira Niewiera, Piotr Rosołowski

**Written by:** Elwira Niewiera, Piotr Rosołowski

**Cinematography:** Piotr Rosołowski

**Edited by:** Agata Cierniak

**Music by:** John Gürtler, Jan Miserre

*The Hamlet Syndrome* presents a generation of young Ukrainians marked by war and political breakthrough. The starting point of the film are the preparations for a theatrical performance loosely based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The rehearsals, combined with entering the private lives of the characters, create a moving portrait of a generation that wants to face the trauma of war and a painful past, which now, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, becomes also their present. For each of the characters, the theatrical stage becomes a platform from which they can shout their regrets, while asking themselves the Hamletian question: "to be or not to be?".

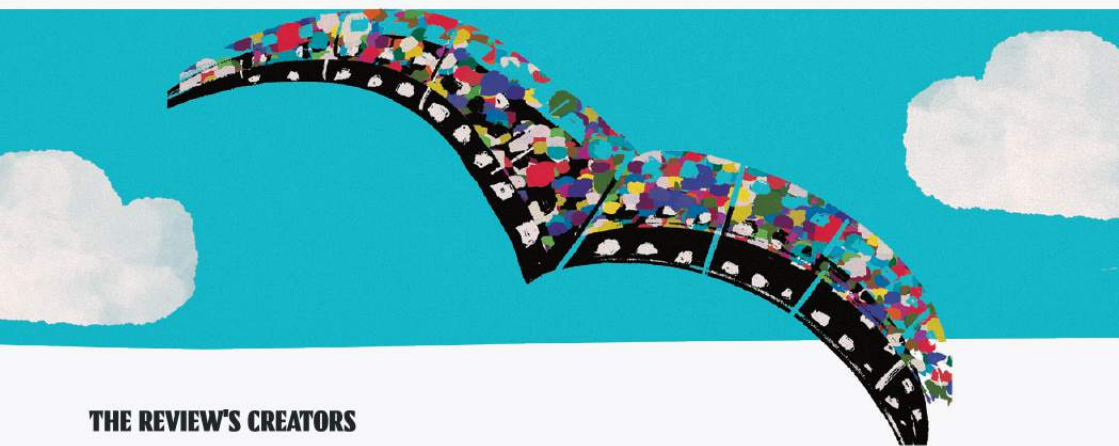
Observing with the camera the process of creating the performance, *The Hamlet Syndrome* from a close, intimate perspective portrays the first Ukrainian generation born after the collapse of the USSR, which is trying to change the country torn by conflicts and put their lives in order.

### **Festivals and awards**

Locarno International Film Festival (2022) – Grand Prix for the best film of the Semaine de la Critique 2022 section  
Locarno International Film Festival (2022) – Boccalino d'oro Independent Critics Award for Best Documentary 2022  
Krakow Film Festival (2022) – Złoty Lajkonik – award for the best Polish film, special distinction in the international documentary film competition, student jury award

**The Centre for the Thought of John Paul II** is a Warsaw-based cultural institution whose mission is to pose questions about the ethical condition of man in relation to universal values: goodness, truth and beauty, as well as freedom, solidarity and dialogue. The Centre operates in the fields of culture, science, education and building an engaged and responsible society. In its programme activities, the Centre for the Thought of John Paul II draws on the intellectual, spiritual and cultural heritage of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II, pointing to its universal dimension.

The Centre for the Thought of John Paul II is the operator of the John Paul II Warsaw City Council scholarships for pupils and students, the organiser of projects such as the New Epiphanies Festival and the City of Dialogue, and the initiator and owner of the multimedia portal JP2online.pl, which is the first comprehensive source of knowledge about the Pope in Poland and the world.



## **THE REVIEW'S CREATORS**

### **The main coordinator**

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### **The film programme**

Mateusz Toma

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