



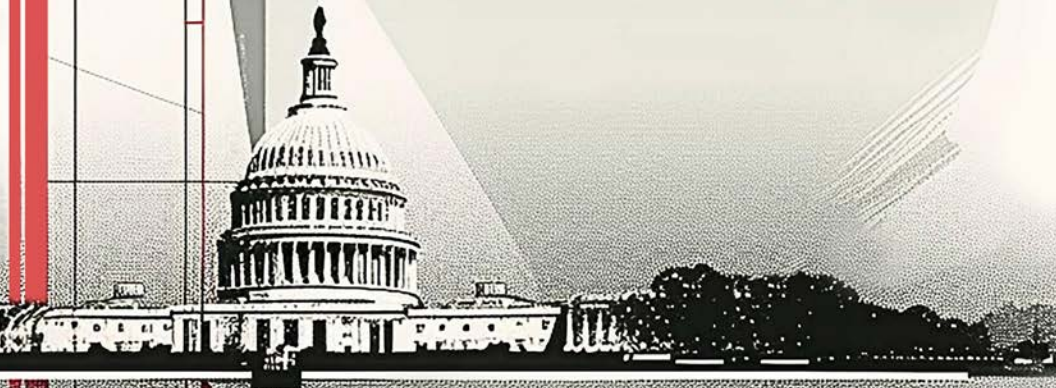
The Kosciuszko Foundation
WASHINGTON, DC

Polish Film Festival

May 10–12, '24

Landmark E Street Cinema

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the **KF**

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BY HASOUD A.

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Kosciuszko Foundation Washington DC Polish Film Festival. We invite audiences from the metropolitan area and beyond to explore a compelling lineup of sixteen new and significant Polish films.

Held under the honorary patronage of the esteemed Oscar-nominated filmmaker Agnieszka Holland and led by a jury of renowned film personalities chaired by Jan Komasa, this festival stands as a celebration of Polish cinematic artistry. Among our special guests is the talented Paulina Pytlak, a rising star who plays the lead in “The Feast of Fire”.

As at the Kosciuszko Foundation, we continue our 99-year mission of promoting Polish culture in the United States, we are thrilled to showcase this rich tapestry of Polish cinema. Join us for a landmark event that promises to enchant, educate, and inspire.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to our sponsors, partners, donors, volunteers, and everyone who contributed to organizing this festival. Polish cinema, undergoing a real renaissance, truly deserves to be celebrated in the nation’s capital.

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Dear Friends and Film Lovers,

The Kosciuszko Foundation in Washington, DC, proudly announces the debut of the Polish Film Festival, marking an exciting milestone in our mission to champion Polish culture and foster stronger bonds between Poland and the United States.

This groundbreaking event promises to showcase the very best of contemporary Polish cinema, serving as a vibrant platform to honor the ingenuity and skill of Polish filmmakers. The Festival invites audiences on a captivating journey through Poland's rich cultural tapestry through a curated selection of feature films and shorts.

Beyond entertainment, the Festival aims to educate and enlighten, illuminating Poland's storied heritage and artistic legacy. From gripping dramas to heartwarming comedies, there will be something for every taste and interest.

With your support, we're confident that the Polish Film Festival will not only captivate audiences in Washington, D.C., but also leave a lasting imprint on the cultural landscape of the nation's capital.

I look forward to seeing you at the screenings!

Barbara Bernhardt

The KF Vice-President & KF Washington DC Office

Executive Director of the KF Polish Film Festival



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the first annual Washington Polish Film Festival, presented by the DC Chapter of the Kosciuszko Foundation, I want to welcome everyone attending our events. We know that it is so much easier to sit at home and make popcorn in the microwave, but we also believe that coming to the theatre and watching new movies on a big screen, with our friends all around us, is a very special experience.

If you love movies as much as we do and especially if you love Polish cinema, then you are in for a treat this year. We are showing recent prize-winning Polish feature films and shorts, most of which come from the last Gdynia Polish Film Festival. In addition, our festival is a competition, one which includes not only awards that are decided by an extraordinary jury, but also awards that will be decided by the audience. Filmmakers love getting these awards and so we plan to announce all the winners at a closing ceremony on Sunday evening.

I have helping or on various boards for the last forty years, but never one as knowledgeable, committed, and generous as this festival board. Our directors have not only made significant financial contributions, but they have also reached out to participate in just about every facet of the festival. It has been a privilege to work alongside them.

Let me also say that as a new festival we are fortunate to have found many partners, including the Polish Embassy, sponsors, and donors. But as a board we mostly grateful to the Kosciuszko Foundation for deciding to take a risk and develop this new festival. It is their commitment to sharing Polish culture in America that makes all this possible.

Martin Kabat

Chair of the Board of Directors



We are thrilled to announce that one of the most promising Polish actresses and the leading star of the film “Feast of Fire,” Paulina Pytlak, is joining us at the Washington DC Polish Film Festival (May 10-12).

Paulina Pytlak is widely regarded as one of the most promising actresses of her generation. Although only 25 years old, she has already won one of the most prestigious film awards in

Poland. Her performance was recognized at the 48th Gdynia Polish Film Festival, where she received the award for professional acting debut (for the film “The Feast of Fire”).

Paulina is a student at the Theatre Academy in Warsaw, majoring in acting and vocal specialization. She graduated from the Karol Szymanowski Music School No. 4 in the oboe class and from the Fryderyk Chopin European Music School in the vocal performance department. She has worked with directors such as Wojciech Kościelniak, Michał Walczak, Denis Delić, and Filip Geldon and made her debut in Kinga Dębska’s film “The Feast of Fire” based on the novel by Jakub Małeckki. She received the award for Best Actress at the Polish Film Festival in Toronto and during the 48th Gdynia Polish Film Festival.

Paulina currently performs at the 6th Floor Theatre in the play “Sinatra 100+”. She also sings and composes her own songs, which could be heard at her recital “Jackie” at the Collegium Nobilium Theatre at the Theatre Academy in Warsaw.

Paulina will participate in the Q&A session before the movie and will meet with festival audiences.

- **FRIDAY, MAY 10, AT 4:45 PM:** Join us in the main lobby for a “meet and greet.”
- **SUNDAY, MAY 12, AT 4:45 PM:** Join us before the film “Feast of Fire” for a Q&A session with the actress.



Welcome

Washington, DC Polish Film Festival

May 9, 2024

As Mayor of Washington, DC, it is my pleasure to welcome the organizers and attendees of first-ever Kosciuszko Foundation Washington, DC Polish Film Festival (WPF).

Under the leadership of Oscar-nominated director Jan Komasa and with the support of renowned director and screenwriter Agnieszka Holland, the WPF will provide a fitting tribute to the very best in modern Polish cinema.

I am especially grateful that the festival's featured films will offer viewers exceptional entertainment while providing an extraordinary experience in contemporary Polish culture. I am delighted to welcome the first WPF to the nation's capital.

On behalf of the nearly 700,000 residents of Washington, DC, I offer my heartfelt thanks for your important contributions to DC culture and my best wishes for a successful and memorable event.

Muriel Bowser
Mayor, Washington, DC





Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in Washington, D.C.

Washington, May 10, 2024

Ms. Barbara Bernhardt
Vice-President
Director of the KF Washington DC Center
The Kosciuszko Foundation

Festival Board of Directors

"A film is life from which the boredom have been erased" – Alfred Hitchcock

We would like to extend our sincere congratulations to the organizers of the inaugural Polish Film Festival in Washington, DC.

It is truly inspiring to see the celebration of Polish cinema in such a vibrant and cultural city. Your commitment to showcasing the ingenuity and aptitude of Polish filmmakers is praiseworthy and significantly contributes to the advancement of cultural interchange. You are uniting people and bridging cultures through the power of film.

We are certain that the first edition of this festival has been a statement of the diverse stories and artistic expressions that Polish cinema has to offer. We applaud your hard work and vision in making the festival a memorable and enriching experience for all attendees.

Here's to many more successful editions of the Polish Film Festival in the Nation's Capital, and may it continue to thrive as a beacon of cinematic excellence and cultural appreciation.

We are so proud to be part of this amazing event.

Team of Consular Section
Embassy of the Republic of Poland

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2224 Wyoming Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008, Tel.: +1 202 499 1930, Fax: +1 202 328 2152
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DOPPELGÄNGER

Sobowtór



May 10, 2024 5:30 PM

Landmark E Street Cinema

120 min, Drama, psychological thriller, 2023,

Director: *Jan Holoubek*

Starring: *Jakub Gierszal,
Tomasz Schuchardt, Emily Kusche*

Doppelgänger is a psychological drama infused with elements of a thriller and spy movie, drawing inspiration from the true story of espionage during Poland's communist era. The protagonist assumes a false identity as the son of a German woman, leveraging this fabricated background to excel in espionage. The narrative explores how the machinations of high politics intersect with the lives of everyday individuals. Set against the historical backdrop of the late 1970s and 1980s, the film has drawn comparisons to the Oscar-winning "The Lives of Others" and received multiple awards at the Gdynia Film Festival.



SHORT:

AS IT WAS (13m)

Premiering at the Cannes Film Festival, this film follows a young Ukrainian girl, Lera, living in Berlin when war breaks out. Deciding to return to Kyiv, she finds her family absent and waits with a friend for their return. Lera's reactions and experiences offer unique insights into the impact of sudden, apocalyptic events on ordinary lives.



THE BALCONY MOVIE

Film Balkonowy

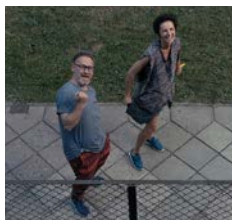


May 10, 2024 8:45 PM
Landmark E Street Cinema

100 min, Documentary, 2021

Director: Paweł Łoziński

Can anyone be a movie hero? Can the world be locked in one film frame? Director Paweł Łoziński is watching people from his balcony as they are passing by: sad, thoughtful, glued to their phones, young and old. Neighbours, random visitors or simply passers-by. The filmmaker accosts them, asks questions, talks about how they deal with life. Standing there with his camera for over 2 years he has created a space for dialogue, a lay confessional of sorts, where everyone can stop by and tell their story. The protagonists carry secrets and mysteries, and are not easy to label. Every story is unique, and life always surpasses imagination. "The Balcony Movie" is a radical comeback to the beginnings of cinema, when man approached the camera. Maybe it's enough to stop for a moment to get a deeper insight?



SHORT:

COUNT MY LOVE (15M)

This is the day. Speed dating in the aquarium. Time to break the routine and find someone for yourself. Sara, in search of love, wants just one thing: a phone number. Well, alright, a shoe size too. And a registration number. Date of birth, body temperature, the number of teeth... Numbers don't lie.



IF I WERE YOU

Na Twoim Miejscu



May 11, 2024 3:00 PM
Landmark E Street Cinema

103 min, Comedy, 2023

Director: *Antonio Galdamez Munoz*

Starring: *Miron Jagniewski, Magdalena Lamparska, Paulina Gałqzka*

We would all, it seems, like to know what life is really like for the opposite sex. Kasia and Krzysiek, a young, quite normal married couple, get a chance to do just that. But are they truly ready? Krzysiek works hard at a corporate job, while neglecting his family. Kasia toils away at a kindergarten, taking care of their son and home, at the same time neglecting herself. They drift apart, until fate gives them an unusual opportunity. IF I WERE YOU is a bold comedy about a husband and wife who discover they've switched bodies and end up learning a lot of good and bad things about one other. A comedy for everyone, teaching us how the most important thing in any relationship is communication – and also how everyone, like it or not, has some kind of role to play in life.



SHORT:

BEAUTIFUL WILDFLOWER MEADOW (30min)

Landscape architect Emil is fighting an uneven battle with those indifferent to the beauty of nature. He is trying to be a good father, but his neurotic rigidity pushes him into a spiral of absurd events.



SCARBORN

Kos



May 11, 2024 5:30 PM
Landmark E Street Cinema

120 min, Drama, History, 2023

Director: Pawel Maslona

Starring: Jacek Braciak, Bartosz Bielenia,
Jason Mitchell, Robert Wieckiewicz

“Scarborn”(Kos) is a 2023 historical drama film directed by Pawel Maslona. Set in 1794, it follows General Tadeusz “Kos” Kościuszko’s return to Poland from the American Revolution to incite an uprising against the Russians. The story intertwines with the journeys of Ignac, a young peasant seeking recognition of his nobility, and Domingo, Kościuszko’s loyal friend and former slave. As they navigate political turmoil and personal challenges, the film explores themes of freedom, equality, and human resilience. Starring Jacek Braciak, Bartosz Bielenia, Jason Mitchell, and Robert Wieckiewicz, “Scarborn” won Best Film at the Gdynia Film Festival for its modern, action-packed take on Polish history.



SHORT:

EDEN (23m)

Teenage Mila’s suicide attempt is interrupted by a young refugee who fights for survival at all costs.





WOMAN OF....

Kobieta z...



May 11, 2024 8:45 PM
Landmark E Street Cinema

132 min, Drama, 2023

Director: *Małgorzata Szumowska & Michał Englert*

Starring: *Małgorzata Hajewska, Joanna Kulig, Mateusz Więclawek, Bogumiła Bajor*

Premiering at the Venice Film Festival this Polish film breaks new ground and confronts perhaps the most controversial social subject of our time. Staring Malgorzata Krzysztofik-Hajewska and Joanna Kulig (Cold War), "Woman of..." is a sensitive and intelligent story of gender identity in a cruel world that cannot accept it and the personal love that ultimately does. Another remarkable first for Polish cinema.

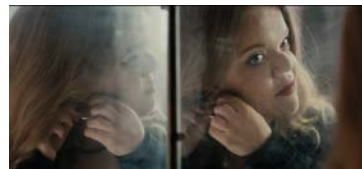
Set against the landscape of the Polish transformation from communism to capitalism, "Woman Of..." spans 45 years of the life of Aniela Wesoly and her journey to find personal liberty as a trans woman.



SHORT:

THE DRESS (30m)

Julia lives in the Polish countryside. Her music is death metal. Her favorite pastime: playing on slot machines. She works at a wayside motel for drivers. Julia is short stature and her entire life is dictated by her height - the local community can't seem to accept her different appearance. Everything changes, when she crosses paths with a handsome truck driver. The man soon becomes the object of her loving, almost erotic obsession...



ULTIMA THULE

Ultima Thule



May 12, 2024 12:30 PM

Landmark E Street Cinema

83 min, Drama, 2023

Director: *Klaudiusz Chrostowski*

Starring: *Jakub Gierszal, Arthur Henri,
Weronika Humaj*

Winner of the Best Film (Small Budget) at the Gdynia Film Festival the film stars Jakub Gierszal (Doppelgänger), as a young man who journeys to an island that is forbiddingly cruel. However, the exquisite cinematography reveals a different world, a hidden layer of beauty swirling all about him, in which he may finally fit and find peace.

Bartek, a 30-year-old, unexpectedly loses his father. Tormented by remorse, he decides to leave his life behind and embarks on a long and lonely journey to the most secluded British isle.



SHORT:

MANDALA (25m)

Łucja tries to restore her son's health and wash away her guilt for the events of the past. The harder she tries, the thinner the lines between motherhood and violence, reality and nightmare become.



THE INLAWS 2

Teściowie 2



May 12, 2024 3:00 PM
Landmark E Street Cinema

95 min, Comedy, 2023

Director: *Kalina Alabrudzińska*

Starring: *Eryk Kulm, Maja Ostaszewska, Izabela Kuna, Adam Woronowicz, Ewa Dałkowska*

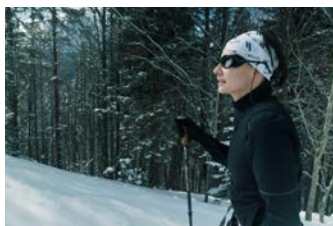
Will there be a wedding this time? Weronika and Lukasz - the would-be young couple from the first part decides to give each other a second chance and invites the family to a wedding and a wedding reception in a seaside town. Among the guests there are well-known heroes: Wanda and Tadeusz with their dog Mirelka, as well as divorced Malgorzata accompanied by ... a dozen years younger Jan and her mother. The sea, drinks, undressed sunbathers - all this makes the members of the bride and groom's family open up more and more and throw off their masks.



SHORT:

MOTHER COMES BACK (21m)

Is it possible to travel in place? Is it possible to replace Himalayan expanses with Beskid hills? Ever since Wiktoria - who suffers from infantile cerebral palsy - was born, her mother Veronika has been grappling with these questions, trying to find her old passions in her new life with her daughter.



THE FEAST OF FIRE

Święto Ognia



May 12, 2024 5:30 PM

Landmark E Street Cinema

93 min, Drama, 2023

Director: Kinga Debska

Starring: Paulina Pytlak, Joanna Drabik,
Tomasz Sapryk, Kinga Preis

The Feast of Fire is a poignant drama centered around two sisters grappling with their bodies and personal challenges. One sister, a driven ballerina, pushes her body to its limits in pursuit of her ambitions, seeking solace from haunting memories through ballet. The other sister, who is disabled, views her body as a confining prison but possesses a keen observational perspective from her balcony vantage point.

The film delves into their respective journeys of overcoming physical limitations and personal struggles, ultimately triumphing over their circumstances. Each sister confronts and reconciles with their past and present, navigating their individual paths toward empowerment and fulfillment.



SHORT:

MY OLD GALS (24m)

Zofia and Ania reunite after 50 years to go on one final trip together and fight for the feelings they once shared.



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*The Festival is partially financed by the Polish Film Institute and by the
Department for Cooperation with Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.*

*The Festival expresses gratitude to Agata Peszko for her assistance in developing the
festival's visual campaign concept, including its signature Red Ball and reels.
We extend our gratitude to Kashka Kisztelinska for her graphic design assistance.*

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WASHINGTON DC

POLISH FILM FESTIVAL

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Polish Studies Initiative

The Polish Studies Initiative (PSI) supports Ohio State students, postdocs and faculty studying and/or researching Polish language, culture and other disciplines related to Poland. Funds are used for PSI's annual grant and scholarship competitions which help to facilitate travel for study abroad programs, internships and research both domestically and internationally. Learn more about PSI at go.osu.edu/polishstudies

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FESTIVAL PATRONAGE



AGNIESZKA HOLLAND is a renowned filmmaker known for her diverse contributions to cinema and television. From acclaimed films like “Angry Harvest” and “Europa, Europa” to English-language works such as “Copying Beethoven” and “The Secret Garden,” Holland’s films span multiple genres and languages, earning her numerous accolades, including Oscar nominations.

In addition to her successful film career, Holland has directed episodes for popular TV series like “Tremé,” “House of Cards,” and “The Wire.” Her recent film “Green Border” has received critical acclaim and multiple festival awards.

Recognized by the Kosciuszko Foundation with prestigious awards and an honorary trusteeship, Holland continues to showcase her talent and impact in the world of cinema while promoting Polish culture internationally. Her versatile body of work underscores her enduring influence as a filmmaker.

FESTIVAL JURY

JAN KOMASA, chair of the jury, is a celebrated Polish filmmaker known for his Oscar-nominated film *Corpus Christi* (*Boże Ciało*) and other acclaimed works like *The Hater* and *Warsaw 44*. He recently made his Hollywood debut with the thriller *Anniversary*, which features a star-studded cast. Komasa’s achievements include numerous awards and critical acclaim for his directing. He also lectures at the National Film School in Łódź and is involved with the Polish Film Institute. Additionally, he participates in academic events at prestigious universities worldwide and serves as a jury member at major film festivals, highlighting his influence in contemporary cinema. The Kosciuszko Foundation recognized the filmmaker in 2023 with the KF Pioneer Award.

SLAWOMIR GRÜNBERG

Emmy Award-winning documentary producer, director, and cameraman.

LILIANA KOMOROWSKA

An actress and director of documentaries.

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Professor of Film at the City University of New York.

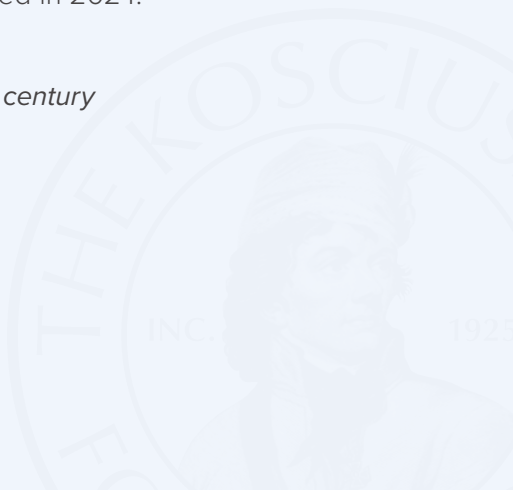
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and be part of our mission to
strengthen the Polish-American
community!

- Established in 1925, KF is on the brink of celebrating its centennial.
- Nearly \$2 million awarded in 2023-24 alone in scholarships, grants, and fellowships.
- \$1.8 million raised to aid Ukrainians affected by the Russian war.
- Two new KF Chapters opened in 2024.

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*Together, let's enter the new KF century
more vital than ever!*



FESTIVAL SCHEDULE



● FRIDAY, MAY 10

4:45 PM MEET AND GREET WITH PAULINA PYTLAK

5:30 PM DOPPELGÄNGER (120 min)
Short: AS IT WAS (13 min)

8:45 PM THE BALCONY MOVIE (100 min)
Short: COUNT MY LOVE (15min)

● SATURDAY, MAY 11

3:00 PM IF I WERE YOU (1h43m)
Short: BEAUTIFUL WILDFLOWER MEADOW (30 min)

5:30 PM SCARBORN (120 min)
Short: DO RAJU (23 min)

8:45 PM WOMAN OF... (132 min)
Short: THE DRESS (30 min)

○ SUNDAY, MAY 12

12:30 PM ULTIMA THULE (83 min)
Short: MANDALA (25 min)

3:00 PM THE INLAWS 2 (95 min)
Short: MOTHER COMES BACK (21 min)

4:45 PM Q&A WITH PAULINA PYTLAK

5:30 PM THE FEAST OF FIRE (93 min)
Short: MY OLD GALS (24 min)

CLOSING CEREMONY

8:30 PM JURY AWARDS
AUDIENCE AWARDS

Brochure Design:
MARGARET KOZLOWSKA

