

# Polish documentary film after 2005.

## Ideas and experiences

### A summary

Krzysztof Kopczyński is a professor at The Institute of Applied Polish Studies of the University of Warsaw and a producer and director of documentary films working on the international market. As a scholar he explores the links between literature, philosophy and film and documentary film. His most important monographs are *Od romantyzmu ku erze nowych mediów [From Romanticism to New Media]* (2003), *Dybuk. Rzecz o nieważności świata [The Dybbuk. On the Unimportance of the World]* (co-authored with Anna Sajewicz, 2017) and *Paradygmat polskiego romantyzmu w uniwersum filmowym [The Paradigm of Polish Romanticism in the Film Universe]* (2021). He has also recently published an article *Religious and quasi-religious attitudes in four Polish documentaries from 2008-2019* (2021, <https://pressto.amu.edu.pl/index.php/i/article/view/30639>). Between 1996 and 2016 he produced several dozen documentaries that were screened at more than 370 festivals in 70 countries. He directed the award-winning documentaries *Stone Silence* (2007) and *The Dybbuk: A Tale of Wandering Souls* (2015). Professor Kopczyński is the winner of 25 film awards granted in 10 countries, a member of the European Film Academy, the Polish Film Academy, the Polish Filmmakers Association and Polish Society for the Film and Media Studies.

The monograph approaches the subject mainly from a market perspective. Drawing on his own experience as a documentary film director and producer, the author describes the rules and practices of Polish documentary film in international co-production, at festivals and in distribution, especially international distribution. This does not mean the book is only aimed at film producers and distributors. Kopczyński is of the opinion that market success requires harmonious, creative and knowledgeable cooperation between all filmmakers and those who research the market and write about films. The more such cooperation is based on

shared values, the better it will be for the common goal he sees as the ultimate one: enriching the epistemological and ethical achievements of documentary film and recognising the role of this film genre plays among audiovisual communications for which reality is a key reference point.

The book focuses on the years from 2005 to 2022. For the chronology of Polish cinema of the last half-century the following historical dates are of particular importance: 1980-1981 – the birth of “Solidarity” and the introduction of martial law in Poland; 1989 – the first partially free elections to the Polish Parliament and the fall of the Berlin Wall; 2004 – Poland’s accession to the European Union. The year 2001 – the beginning of a new century – is used in publications, but is of lesser importance. A more significant date – and therefore a turning point used in the title – is 2005, when, after several years of efforts made by Polish filmmakers, the Cinematography Act was passed on, leading to the establishment of the Polish Film Institute, which radically changed the Polish film market.

The author also takes an interest in documentary film, which is undergoing a transformation in line with the tendencies emerging in the media in the age of convergence (e.g. interactive documentary film). Theoretical and market reflections are complemented by analyses of Polish documentaries, made “worlds away” from Poland, and about the expulsion of the Jews from Poland in 1968. The author uses the most important – mentioned in bibliography – Polish and English language publications (Angela J. Aguayo, Richard M. Barsam, Jonathan Kahana, David LaRocca, Katarzyna Mąka-Malatyńska, Bill Nichols, Michael Rabiger, Michael Renov, etc.).