



## **Austin Polish Film Festival**

### **50 Years of Polish Film from the Lodz School**

#### **About the Festival**

The Austin Polish Film Festival will provide an unprecedented opportunity for the Austin community to experience Polish culture and arts through the creative eyes and minds of some of Poland's leading film directors.

The festival's theme, "50 Years of Polish Film from the Lodz School," will bring together graduates and students of Poland's national film school. The inaugural event will include the regional premiere of Dorota Kedzierzawska's *Jestem* ("I Am"). The director will attend the regional premiere, providing moviegoers with personal insights and observations.

An exhibition of historic Polish film posters, a showcase of student films and a VIP reception for VIP pass holders and invited dignitaries from the film community in Poland and Austin are included in the festival's program.

The festival is part of a larger effort to cement stronger cultural and economic ties between the city of Austin, Texas and the city of Lodz, Poland. The cities are working toward the establishment of a formal sister city relationship.

Net proceeds from the Austin Polish Film Festival will establish educational scholarships in film for students from both Poland and the United States. Polish scholarship recipients will study at the University of Texas at Austin's Film School and work on commercial film projects through the UT Film Institute's Burnt Orange Productions. Texas student scholarship recipients will be able to study at the Film School in Lodz and gain 35mm cinematography experience.

#### **Festival Sponsor and Supporters**

This year's festival is hosted by the Austin Polish Society and generously underwritten by Carbon Trading LLC of Austin. Sponsors include the Consulate General of Poland in Los Angeles and The Polish Film Institute of Warsaw.

A number of other organizations provided invaluable assistance in the creation of the Austin Polish Film Festival and the film scholarship program including the IC2 Institute of the University of Texas at Austin, City of Austin, Austin Film Society, Bah! Designs, University of Texas Department of Radio-Television-Film and the University of Texas Film Institute.

### **About the Sponsors and Organizers**

The Austin Polish Society is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization whose purpose is to establish a society open to the general public with two primary objectives: to encourage, and further knowledge of Polish culture, traditions, history, language, arts, current affairs, and local events through cultural activities, classes, seminars, and educational exchanges and to foster friendly relations between the American and Polish people. The Austin Polish Society ([www.austinpolschsociety.org](http://www.austinpolschsociety.org)) sponsors a number of events, including a monthly Polish film night that has broadened interest and understanding in Polish arts and culture.

The National Film School of Poland in Lodz (<http://www.filmschool.lodz.pl>), known by its Polish acronym PWSFTViT, is Poland's academic center for the education of film directors, cinematographers and actors. The Lodz school serves as the training ground for Polish filmmakers and a pivotal cultural center for the entire nation. At the end of the Second World War, Lodz remained the only large Polish town besides Kraków not destroyed by the war. The creation of the National Film School established Lodz as a cultural center, a position previously held exclusively by Warsaw and Kraków. Early students of the School include the directors Andrzej Munk, Andrzej Wajda, Kazimierz Karabasz, and Janusz Morgenstern. The internationally renowned director Krzysztof Kieslowski (*Three Colors* trilogy and *Decalogue*) was among the many talented students who attended the School in the 1960s.

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## Austin Polish Film Festival Events Calendar

### **7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 5 – Alamo Drafthouse South Lamar**

*New Directions in Polish Film I*

**"Jestem"** by Dorota Kedzierzawska (2005)

The director will attend this regional premiere and provide a Q&A after the film.

### **7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 12 – Alamo Drafthouse South Lamar**

*New Directions in Polish Film II*

**"Moj Nikifor"** by Krzysztof Krause (2004), and

Student film by Krause from the archives of the Lodz School

### **7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 19 – Alamo Drafthouse South Lamar**

Films of Krzysztof Kieslowski

**"Amator"** ("Film Buff") by Krzysztof Kieslowski (1979)

**"Urzad"** ("The Office"), first short film by Kieslowski (1966)

### **7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 26 – Alamo Drafthouse South Lamar**

*The 1950's and the Influence of Andrzej Wajda*

**"Ashes and Diamonds"** by Andrzej Wajda (1958), and

Student film by Wajda from the archives of the Lodz School

With a special video introduction for the APFF by Wajda

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### **10 am - 1 pm., Thursday, Oct. 26 – University of Texas, College of Communications**

*Student Film Showcase from the Lodz Film School*

Award-winning student films from the Lodz School will be shown at The University of Texas at Austin's College of Communication. Introductions to the shorts will be made by representatives of the National Film School of Poland.

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### **Wednesday, Oct. 4 – Sunday, Oct. 22**

*Exhibit: Polish Film Posters from the Collection of Richard Linklater*

A collection of historic Polish posters will be exhibited at the Harry Ransom Center at The University of Texas at Austin.

### **7 pm., Wednesday, Oct. 4 – Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas**

*Historic Polish Film Posters Opening and VIP Reception*

A festive gathering of dignitaries from the National Film School of Poland with director Dorota Kedzierzawska as the honored guest. The Historic Film Posters of Poland exhibition will be open for display as well as paintings in the Ransom Center Gallery by Polish artist, Feliks Topolski. Leszek Zebrowski, noted Polish graphic designer and the official APFF poster artist will be signing posters. The event will be catered by the

Polonia Restaurant of Houston with vodka from Austin's own Tito's Handmade Vodka. This is a ticketed event. To purchase a ticket for this event, please visit <http://www.austinpff.org>.

## About the Films

### Regional Premiere

***Jestem / I Am* (Poland, Dorota Kedzierzawska, 2005),**

**100 minutes**

Based on a true story, the film tells of an eleven-year-old (Piotr Jagielski) who escapes from an orphanage and returns to his hometown where the other kids call him Mongrel and his young alcoholic mother (Edyta Jungowska) kicks him out again. Undaunted, he sets up quarters of his own in an abandoned barge. Mongrel's survival stratagems and day-to-day encounters show he's not only resourceful but a fundamentally good person. He and an unhappy girl his age (Agnieszka Nagorzycka) from a posh house nearby discover a sense of affection and love in each other's company. Composer Michael Nyman (who did the scores for *The Piano*, *Gattaca*, and *The End of the Affair*) provided music that's both sweeping and intimate. (Source: IMDB.com)

***Moj Nikifor* (Poland, Krzysztof Krause, 2004),**

**97 minutes**

The setting is the mountain resort of Krynica, Poland. The year is 1960. Nikifor enters the studio of artist Marian Wlosinski and unpacks his painting tools. Wlosinski's life, thus far a calm, regulated one planned to the minutest detail, is suddenly disrupted. Wlosinski tries to rid himself of his intrusive guest. He decides to find Nikifor's family. It turns out that Nikifor lives entirely on his own. Various people have given him shelter, he has no birth certificate. From a legal point of view... he simply does not exist. Marian Wlosinski is hardly a folk art enthusiast, however, as he comes to know Nikifor he begins to appreciate his art. He notices both Nikifor's deep faith and his spiritual freedom. He discovers that this translates in Nikifor's paintings into an independence from all external opinions, while in his life it denotes a lack of attachment to the temporal and a deep humility. Wlosinski realizes how deeply he himself is a slave of his art education – how addicted he is to painting tradition, how dependent on the evaluation and judgment of others, on dreams of success and material security. (Source: [www.culture.pl](http://www.culture.pl))

***Amator / Camera Buff* (Poland, Krzysztof Kielowski, 1979),**

**112 minutes**

Filip buys an 8mm movie camera when his first child is born. Because it's the first camera in town, he's named official photographer by the local Party boss. His horizons widen when he is sent to regional film festivals with his first works but his focus on movie making also leads to domestic strife and philosophical dilemmas. (Source: IMDB.com)

***Popiół i diament / Ashes and Diamonds* (Poland, Andrzej Wajda, 1958),  
105 minutes**

On the last day of World War II in a small town somewhere in Poland, Polish exiles of war and the occupying Soviet forces confront the beginning of a new day and a new Poland. In this incendiary environment we find Home Army soldier Maciek Chelmicki (Zbigniew Cybulski) who has been ordered to assassinate an incoming commissar. But a mistake stalls his progress and leads him to Krystyna, (Ewa Krzyzewska) a beautiful barmaid who gives him a glimpse of what his life could be. Gorgeously photographed and brilliantly performed, *Ashes and Diamonds* masterfully interweaves the fate of a nation with that of one man, resulting in one of the most important Polish films of all time. (Source: Criterion Collection).

**[www.austinpff.org](http://www.austinpff.org)**



**For Immediate Release**  
Sept. 5, 2006

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**INAUGURAL FILM FESTIVAL FEATURES REGIONAL PREMIERE**  
***Austin Polish Film Festival cements cultural, economic bonds between Austin, Lodz***

**AUSTIN, TX** – The Austin Polish Film Festival kicks off Thursday, Oct. 5 at the Alamo Drafthouse South Lamar with the regional premiere of *Jestem* (“I Am”) from acclaimed Polish director Dorota Kedzierzawska. *Jestem* is one of four feature films to be presented at the inaugural event with the festival’s net proceeds benefiting a scholarship fund for Texas and Lodz film students.

“It’s a thrill to bring the regional premiere of *Jestem* to Austin movie buffs,” said Mary Gawron of the Austin Polish Society, a festival organizer. “Ms. Kedzierzawska will personally provide insight about her film, and we’re honored to have her join us.”

The festival’s theme, “50 Years of Polish Film from the Lodz School,” provides a focus on narrative films from the prestigious National Film School of Poland, including screenings of *Moj Nikifor* by Krzysztof Krause (Oct. 12), *Amator* by Krzysztof Kieslowski (Oct. 19), and *Ashes and Diamonds* by Andrzej Wajda (Oct. 26).

Together, the Austin Polish Society and the National Film School of Poland in Lodz will bring a full calendar of festival events, including screenings of Lodz school student films, a Polish film poster exhibition and a VIP reception for film festival sponsors, dignitaries, artists and festival VIP pass holders.

“The film festival is an integral part of our efforts to cement stronger economic, cultural and educational ties between the city of Austin and the city of Lodz,” said Mark Hall, co-chair of the festival and an organizer of the Austin-Lodz Sister City initiative. “We want this inaugural festival to be the first of many cooperative efforts between our two communities.”

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The Austin Polish Film Festival is hosted by the Austin Polish Society and the National Film School of Poland in Lodz and generously underwritten by Carbon Trading LLC of Austin.

The Polish Film Institute of Warsaw, the Consulate General of Poland in Los Angeles, IC2 Institute at the University of Texas, the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies at the University of Texas, City of Austin, Austin Film Society, Bah! Designs, University of Texas Department of Radio-Television-Film, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, and the Polish American Congress have all lent their support to the festival.

For more information about the Austin Polish Film Festival, visit [www.austinpff.org](http://www.austinpff.org). Tickets and passes are available online beginning at [www.alamodrafthouse.com](http://www.alamodrafthouse.com).

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