

WERICH, Jan – see VOSKOVEC, Jiří

WÓJCİK, Jerzy

Nowy Sacz, Poland 1930

Polish cinematographer. Wójcik started his work in cinema as camera operator on the set of Wajda's* *Kanal/Canal* (1957), and eventually worked as DP on two important early Wajda features – the classic, *Popiól i diament/Ashes and Diamonds* (1958), an internationally recognised cinematographic masterpiece of black-and-white camerawork, and on the Holocaust drama, *Samson* (1961). Wójcik is the man who is largely responsible for the epic feel of some of the Polish super-productions of the 1960s and for the cinematic image acquired by a number of Polish literary classics in their cinematic metamorphosis. He worked on Jerzy Hoffman's* historical epic *Potop/The Deluge* (1974), an adaptation of Henryk Sienkiewicz's 1886 novel, on Jerzy Kawalerowicz's* *Matka Joanna od aniołów/Mother Joan of the Angels* (1961), an adaptation of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's story, and later on Kawalerowicz's *Faraon/Pharaoh* (1966), an adaptation of Bolesław Prus's 1897 novel. In his earlier period Wójcik worked closely with Andrzej Munk's* on his World War II dramas, *Eroica/Heroism* (1957) and *Człowiek na torze/Man on the Tracks* (1957). He also shot features by directors Kazimierz Kutz*, Janusz Morgenstern, and most frequently with Stanisław Różewicz. DI

WOMEN IN EASTERN EUROPEAN CINEMA

Despite all the policies designed to ensure gender equality under state socialism, women have traditionally been restricted from taking the leading role in film-making and have had fewer chances to direct. But women have, nevertheless, actively participated in the film-making process in various capacities – as screenwriters, DPs, set and costume designers, actresses and film critics. In their work women directors from Eastern Europe have managed to address all major feminist concerns – restricted opportunities, abusive relationships, single motherhood, the glass ceiling. It is not only female directors who have focused on women, however. Some of the finest portrayals of women in East European cinema have come from male directors – in Hungary, for example, in films such as Karoly Makk's* *Szerelém/Love* (1971) and *Egymásra nézve/Another Way* (1982), Péter Gothár's *Ajándék ez a nap/A Priceless Day* (1979), or János Rózsa's *Vasárnapi szülők/Sunday Daughters* (1980). Hungarian Márta Mészáros* is probably the most productive and deservedly best-known figures among the East European women film-makers. Mészáros's filmography includes over twenty titles, and she has worked in France, Canada, and for international co-productions as well as in Hungary. Her films deal exclus-

ively with the problems of women. Her work encompasses a wide range of issues affecting women of various generations – motherhood, abortion, adoption, love, lovelessness, marriage, communal confinement, the generation gap and victimisation. It also includes fine explorations of eroticism and women's sexuality, nurturing friendships, loneliness and ageing. Thus Mészáros has quite naturally been classified as a feminist – a classification she herself refutes. Other active women directors from Hungary are Lívia Gyarmathy, a director of a number of films focusing on inter-ethnic relations, and Judit Elek, director of *Mária- nap/Maria's Day* (1983) whose more recent work has been devoted to exploring anti-Semitism (*Tutajosok/The Raft*, 1989; *Mondani a mondhatatlant: Elie Wiesel üzenete/To Speak the Un-speakable: The Message of Elie Wiesel*, 1996), and Ildikó Enyédi whose 1989 *Az én XX. századom/My Twentieth Century* is a stylish feminist discourse in black-and-white about the intersections of history and personal fate. Enyédi's 1994 *Büvös vadász/Magic Hunter* and 1997 *Tamás és Juli/Tamas and Juli* (1997) confirmed her reputation as an original and innovative figure in European film-making. Ildikó Szabó (*Gyerekgylkosságok/Child Murders*, 1993) and Ibolya Fekete (*Bolse Vita*, 1996) enjoy deserved international acclaim for their work.

The major female figure in Czech cinema is Vera Chytilová*. Her best feature film is the experimental Dadaist *Sedmikráska/Daisies*, 1966. Other works which reveal an uneven career include *Hra o jablko/Apple Game* (1976), *Panelstory* (1979), *Kalamita/Calamity* (1981), *Faunovo prilis pozdní odpoledne/The Very Late Afternoon of a Faun* (1983). Screenwriter Esther Krumbachová is one of the most important figures of the Czech New Wave*, having scripted such surrealist features as Jan Nemeč's* *O slavnosti a hostech/Report on the Party and the Guests* (1966) and *Mucedníci lásky/Martyrs of Love* (1966).

Most notable women in Polish film-making include Holocaust survivor Wanda Jakubowska* who made a personal film about the death camps, *Ostatni etap/The Last Stage* (1948). The interest in Jakubowska has been recently revived and her work featured at many international film festivals in the 1990s. Barbara Sass-Dort*, director of *Bez miłości/Without Love* (1980), *Debiutantka/The Debutante* (1982), *Dziewczeta z Nowolipek/The Girls of Nowolipki* (1985) and Magdalena Lazarkiewicz, director of *Prezez dotyk/By Touch* (1985) have displayed a continuous commitment to making films about women, and their works are quite interesting within the 1980s East European socio-political context. Agnieszka Holland's* early work presents some very interesting portraits of women (e.g. *Kobieta samotna/A Lonely Woman*, 1981) but she does not exhibit a special preference for women's issues although she created fine female portraits in *Bittere Ernte/Angry Harvest* (1985, Ger.) and *Washington Square* (1997, US). The work of Dorota Kedzierzawska including *Diabły, diably/Devils, Devils* (1991), *Wrony/Crows* (1995), and *Nic/Nothing* (1998) has garnered considerable international acclaim. Like Mészáros, Bulgarian

Binka Zeljazkova* was educated at VGIK* and then went back to Bulgaria to make a long succession of films, many of which deal with the problems of women. Her best works are the absurdist *Privarzaniat Balon/The Attached Balloon* (1967) and the innovative *Poslednata дума/The Last Word* (1973) which features a group of female political prisoners in fascist Bulgaria of the 1940s. Roumiana Petkova started an active career in cinema committed to the problems of women (*Otrazheniya/Reflections*, 1985); her work in the 1990s focused on ethnic minorities (*Gori, gori oganche/Burn, Burn, Little Flame*, 1994; *Mezhninen sviat/A World In-Between*, 1995). Women working as directors in East European cinema are Malvina Ursianu and Elisabeta Bostan* in Romania, Anisa Markajani in Albania and Gordana Boškov and Mirjana Vukomanovic in Serbia. DI

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YIDDISH CINEMA IN POLAND

At the beginning of the twentieth century Poland was home to over three and a half million Jews. There was a thriving Yiddish and Hebrew cultural tradition, particularly in the theatre. The first forays into film were made as early as 1908 by the Sila Company, which filmed Yiddish plays. It was not until the 1930s, however, and the arrival of Polish-born Joseph Green from America, that Yiddish cinema really established itself in Poland.

Green saw an opportunity to make films cheaply in Poland for the American-Jewish market. He founded Green-Film, the Polish arm of his company, in 1936. His first production introduced American-Jewish comedienne Molly Picon in the musical comedy *Yidl Mit Fiddl/Yiddle with a Fiddle* (1937), an international success. Green operated in true movie-mogul fashion, with publicity splashes and American 'stars'. Under his guidance, Yiddish cinema began to play a prominent role on the Polish film scene, and his films were distributed throughout Europe. It was not unusual for mainstream directors to make Yiddish films. Aleksander Ford* shot *Chalutzim/Sabra* in 1934 with actors from the famous Habimah theatre in Palestine, and it was popular comedy director Michal Waszyński who made the true Yiddish classic, *The Dybbuk* (1937). Most of Joseph Green's productions survived the war because he took the negatives to America in 1939. When comedians Shimon Dzigan and Israel Schumacher made a semi-documentary in 1949 – *Unzere Kinder/Our Children* – the new Polish government banned the film and the film-makers emigrated to Israel. More recently, with the demise of communism, Yiddish cinema is