



# *LESSONS OF LOVE*

*LOVER. MOTHER. FRIEND. SINNER. WIFE.*

# LESSONS OF LOVE

„This part of life belongs to me!” says Jola, after escaping from an abusive marriage. She’s letting loose with her girlfriends, finally enjoys life and suddenly finds herself thrust into a new romance at a latino dancing class. Will she embrace love for the first time in her life at the age of 69?

---

a documentary film by

**Małgorzata Goliszewska and Kasia Mateja**

produced by

**Anna Stylińska / WIDOK**

In coproduction with

**HBO Europe, Pomerania Film, mx35, Aura Film**

75' and 55' / HD / colour / language: Polish

country: Poland / original title: Lekcja miłości

World premiere at IDFA First Appearance Competition / 22nd November 2019

Polish premiere: Millenium Docs Against Gravity Main Competition / 8th May 2020

---

## WORLD SALES

Autlook Filmsales GmbH

Spittelberggasse 3/14, 1070 Vienna, Austria

Phone: +43 670 208 7881

Salma Abdalla

welcome@autlookfilms.com

autlookfilms.com

---

## PRESS CONTACT:

WIDOK

Pl. Wilsona 4/78, 01-626 Warsaw, Poland

stylowa@gmail.com

Phone: 0048 605 40 46 47



# *SYNOPSIS*

For decades, Jola did what was expected of her. As a mother of six and the wife of an abusive husband, she would put on her make-up and colourful clothes to pretend everything was fine. One day something breaks inside her and she finds the strength to leave her husband and start living life to the fullest. She hangs out with her girlfriends, dances in Café Smile, writes poems and songs. She sings about love – something she’s always dreamt of, yet never experienced. Unexpectedly, she meets Wojtek, who treats her like a queen. Will she be able to open up and embrace love for the first time? Especially, when she finds out that she has less time than she thought?



**KASIA MATEJA**  
*director and DOP*

filmmaker and photographer, graduate of Edinburgh College of Art in Scotland from the faculty of Film and TV. She's worked as a director, cinematographer, editor, sound technician and producer. She made short documentaries and experimental films in Scotland, Ireland, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Mongolia. Her documentary „Silence on the way to the Reindeer People” won awards at the festivals in Brazil, Romania, Portugal and in Poland. She conducts film workshops for disadvantaged youth.



**ANNA STYLINSKA**  
*producer*

Graduated from Cinema Studies (University Paris X), Creative Producer's Course (Wajda School) and Philosophy (University of Warsaw). Has gathered experience in different areas of cinema as a production manager, co-director, first AD, screenwriter, manager at film festival. Currently working on creative documentaries and running workshops for documentary filmmakers. Her feature-length debut Lessons of Love made in co-production with HBO Europe, awarded with Dok Incubator Prize, premiered at IDFA 2019, First Appearance Competition. Now she's producing (together with Katarzyna Ślesicka My Way Studio) new project directed by Agnieszka Zwiefka called "Wika!" which is a coproduction with Heino Deckert (Germany and HBO Europe and was presented at IDFA Forum 2019).

# TEAM



**MALGORZATA  
GOLISZEWSKA**  
*director*

a documentary filmmaker with an artistic background. Malgorzata graduated from the DocPro course at Wajda School in 2012 and POLSKA. DOC. She received a master degree in Multimedia Art. She worked in the Department of Experimental Film (Academy of Fine Arts in Szczecin). She works with different media: documentary film and contemporary art, often combining these two fields. She directed several short films, two of which were screened all over the world on international film festivals. Her short "Type of Birds" was shown at IDFA, Sheffield FFF, Cracow FF, DocAgainst, New Horizons FF and many others.

## WIDOK

Widok focuses on film productions and educational projects. Our vision is to make projects and films touching the most important topics of our times often told from a personal perspective. Widok runs a year-long script workshop as well as lab for documentary film directors ([www.akcjadokument.pl](http://www.akcjadokument.pl))

We are co-producers of:

Urban Cowboys / 2016 / by Pawel Ziemilski

In Touch / 2018 / by Pawel Ziemilski  
(IDFA Award mid-length 2018)

Wika! / in prod. / By Agnieszka Zwiefka /  
IDFA Forum 2019





# INTERVIEW

WITH DIRECTOR'S, MALGORZATA GOLISZEWSKA,  
KASIA MATEJA AND PRODUCER, ANIA STYLIŃSKA

---

## **How did you meet Jola, main protagonist of the film?**

GOSIA: Few years ago, I was very disappointed with love relationships in my life and I was seeking advice on love to believe in it again. I thought I could learn something from people who were more experienced than me. I got fascinated with the dancers from Cafe Smile - dancing club for seniors in Szczecin, my hometown. I decided to make a short documentary about this place and I invited Kasia Mateja to shoot it with me.

The most extraordinary person we met there, was Jola. Heartbroken like me, but unlike me - full of optimism, joy and energy. She was a charismatic independent woman and at the same time playful little girl. We felt she would be an important part of the film. We were shooting for a couple of months and we entered Doc Lab Poland workshop with, what we thought was an almost ready film.

We also thought we didn't need a producer. It turned out the opposite - actually we were at the very beginning and it was at the workshop where we met Ania and instantly decided to work together. She took our film to a completely new level. The project started becoming bigger and bigger, something I never expected. At the same time we were getting closer to Jola's story and we realized that there's much bigger topic hidden in her tragic past behind a joyful and colourful appearance.

## **Ania, did you decide on spot to make this film, why?**

ANIA: I saw some fragments of the footage and I knew immediately I want to make a film about Jola. She was full of inconsistencies - at the same time tragic and comic, strong and weak, pretty and ugly, funny and serious.. I knew some people would love her and some would be discouraged



by her coldness. I found it fascinating that you couldn't easily classify her. Only later on we discovered the real topic of the film which was domestic violence. We felt huge importance of telling Jola's story, as millions of women all around the world share her experience - their stories remain untold, their pain is silent - their lives are just a backstage for others. They sacrifice their lives for the good of their children, taking violence for granted, depriving themselves of the right to happiness. I'm sure everyone knows such a person in real life. Most of Jola's girlfriends were beaten by their husbands and they never questioned it. They even laughed at it. That's why we decided to tell this story in a bitter sweet and often comic tone. I'm happy we managed to make a film about a serious topic but in a light, funny and uplifting form because it's the only way you could truthfully show Jola's story. And it's a story about a joyful autumn of life and a constant fight to make the world a better place. Reminding us that it's never too late to start living.

**Gosia and Kasia, how did it happen that you directed this film together? what was it like?**

G: As the project was getting bigger and bigger, it involved a lot of responsibility, I realized that the task of being the only director became too heavy for me., especially after shooting scenes with Bogdan, Jola's evil husband. I also felt that we were taking artistic choices with Kasia together from the very beginning so I asked her to direct the film with me, and we became a great team. I was responsible more for the contact with all the characters, and holding the story together and Kasia was more in charge of the visual choices and finding the best form of the film.

KASIA: In my previous projects I have always worked in a team, so it felt very natural for me to work with another person. Fortunately, Gosia is my friend, which made our cooperation easier.

Despite the fact, that we have different tastes and tempers, we deeply respected and trusted each other, which made us open to ourselves and our ideas. While working on the project, each of us had a moment to take the reins and individual work. It was very natural and over time it turned out to be a good choice for the movie.



**How did you find the form for the film?  
it seems sometimes almost like a fiction movie.**

During the first months of work on the film, we filmed almost everything. Each situation seemed important and unique. In result we had hundred hours of footage, which were difficult to edit. We started to plan more carefully. Due to the fact that a lot of scenes in our film are based on dialogues of two characters, we took the decision to shoot some scenes using two cameras, or sometime even three camera. To make the characters feel comfortable and not trapped, two of the cameras were placed outside the restaurant and one inside was left rolling without our intervention so that characters could feel quite natural. Recordings from several cameras were easier to edit in a fiction like style. However, in the film there are also very intimate scenes, shot only on one small camera. I'm the most proud of them. I would say that the visual style of Lessons of love has been most developed in the assembly of very different elements.

**How was it to work with Jola?**

G: I quickly became Jola's close friend. It seemed like she had no secrets and nothing to hide but at the same time she was hiding all her emotions behind the strong make-up. It had been her way of survival almost all her life.

K: She looked like a Hollywood diva, as if she was playing a fascinating tragicomic role in her own life and all the reality around her was cinematic, dramatic and sometimes absurd. It felt like there was already a film happening, before we even started shooting. We had an abundance of topics, unbelievable characters and stories to choose from. We had to cut a lot from Jola's life to find our film.

G: The biggest challenge was to make her take off her mask to get closer to her feelings. But certain events in Jola's life helped her a lot to open up and taking part in the film was a life changing lesson - for Jola as well as for us. A real Lesson of Love.

---

# CREDITS

directed by

**Małgorzata Goliszewska & Kasia Mateja**

script

**Małgorzata Goliszewska & Anna Stylińska**

produced by

**Widok ANNA STYLIŃSKA**

producer HBO Europe

**Izabela Łopuch**

executive producer HBO Europe

**Hanka Kastelicova**

associate producer

**Joanna Szymańska**

co-produced by mx35

**Mateusz Wajda**

co-produced by Aura Films

**Anna Bławut Mazurkiewicz**

co-produced by

**Pomerania Film**

cinematography

**Mateusz Czuchnowski, Kasia Mateja,  
Tymon Tykwiński**

film editing

**Alan Zejer**

sound on set

**Anna Rok, Jarosław Sadowski**

Sound edit and design

**Marcin Lenarczyk**

Sound post-production

**EarWorks&SoundTravel**

Music consultant

**Paweł Juzwuk**

Image post-production

**Coloroffon and Espera Studios**

with financial support of

**Polish Film Institute**

developed in the frame of

**dok.incubator**

