

an Iwona Sekierzyńska film

## "THE AMATEURS"



Written & directed: **Iwona Sekierzyńska**

Production: **Poland 2020**

Runtime: **95 min.**

The Polish cinema premiere: **2021**

The festival premiere: **The Main Competition of the Gdynia Film Festival 2020**

**CREATORS:**

Written & directed: **Iwona Siekierzyńska**

Cinematography by: **Michał Popiel - Machnicki**

Edited by: **Agnieszka Glińska, Barbara Fronc**

Sound by: **Radosław Ochnio**

Costume designer: **Izabela Stronias**

Make-up artist: **Izabela Karwacka**

Music by: **Marzena Majcher**

Produced by: **Autograf, TVP S.A., Studio Fonograf, Studio Orka, MX35, Miasto Gdynia**

**A Polish Film Institute Co-financed Production**

Producer: **Anna Wereda**



**CAST:**

Krzysiek – Wojciech Solarz

Wiki – Roma Gąsiorowska

Mother – Anna Dymna

Theatre Director – Mariusz Bonaszewski

Olbińska – Małgorzata Zajączkowska

Bartoszek – Krzysztof Kowalewski

Marzena Gajewska

Anna Kujawska

Natalia Olszewska

Oliwia Cubala

Renata Klinkosz

Adam Siekierzyński

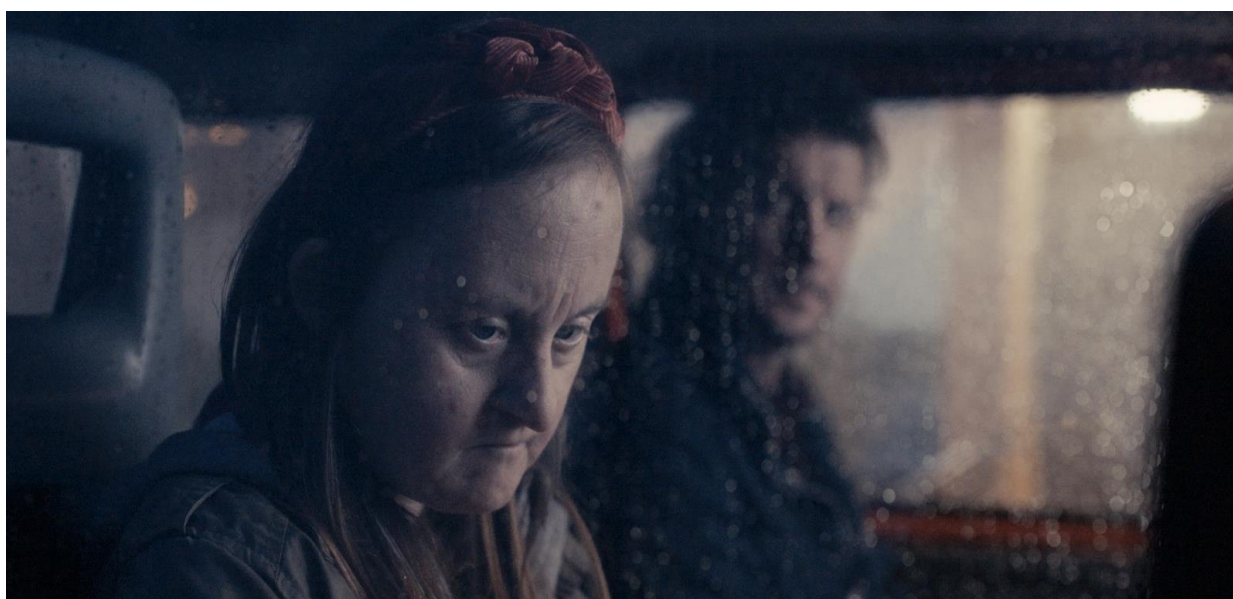
Ariel Wojtanik

Tomek Macniak

Marcin Wenta

Janek Skiba

**and others**



**ABOUT:**

The story begins when KRZYSIEK's theatre group called **Personal Property Office** (the members of which are actors with intellectual disabilities) wins the festival and the award sponsored by a professional theatre. They are given a chance to stage a show. Great joy, great opportunities, great expectations. Krzysiek and the actors are currently working on a new play, *Zorba the Greek*. It would be wonderful to perform it on a real stage. It turns out that the theatre director attaches certain conditions to his offer of collaboration.

The director has received a grant as part of the programme that promotes Shakespeare and activates people with disabilities. If they want to perform in a professional theatre, they have to follow the rules. Krzysiek has doubts... Yet, he decides to face the challenge. They begin rehearsals with the participation of PROFESSIONAL ACTORS and WIKTORIA, a celebrity and a famous star. Krzysiek's actors are instantly impressed by Wiktoria's charm. During one of the rehearsals, the theatre director decides the main role can't be played by Mary, Krzysiek's sister. The director is ruthless: there won't be any premiere with toothless, lisping Mary. The protagonist should be played by a younger, prettier actress with better diction. WIKTORIA! Krzysiek agrees to replace the cast.

Time pressure, fascination with Wiktoria... The premiere must take place, but will it make Krzysiek proud?



Q&A

**How did you come up with the idea for a screenplay about the theatre group called Personal Property Office?**

I've known Personal Property Office (PPO) for almost twenty years because my brother Adam, who also plays in my movie, is a member of this theatre group. Many years ago, I made a documentary film *The Stranger* about their work. In 2014, the PPO actors as well as professional actors (Aleksandra Nieśpielak and Krzysztof Grabowski) took part in *My Business*, a theatre play by Radosław Paczocha. The idea for a feature film emerged as we were working on this play, in which Radosław included an excerpt from Shakespeare. Plus, the group is my family in a way. Zbigniew Biegajło, the creator of PPO, is the prototype of the character of Krzysiek. His passion and involvement in creating this theatre group inspired me to write the screenplay.

**The film is set on the Polish seaside. Why did you choose this particular setting for your story?**

The theatre group is operating in Gdynia, the city I also come from. I couldn't imagine forcing our PPO actors to work in a new place. Plus, the seaside, the sea... This is where you can feel the spirit of freedom!



**What difficulties and challenges did the film crew have to face while working with people with disabilities?**

We didn't want to have a huge film set with a crew of fifty people. Together with Anna Wereda, the producer, and Michał Popiel-Machnicki, the DOP, we decided that the film set should be intimate and private. We reduced the crew to a minimum. I feel it helped all of us to get used to a new situation. Our PPO actors are very open and incredibly involved. Everyone was impressed by their professionalism.





**While writing the screenplay, did you think about particular actors who would play the leading roles in the film?**

I thought about Wojciech Solorz when I was writing the screenplay. To be absolutely certain, I decided to have an audition for the film. Małgorzata Lipmann helped me a lot by holding a great audition in the form of workshops. I must admit a few actors made a profound impression on me, but it was Wojciech who blended with the PPO group and played naturally. However, the character of Wiki was a challenge for me. I offered the role to Roma Gąsiorowska, but she refused at first, claiming that her character was too banal. Time went by, the screenplay was rewritten, the celebrity character changed, and Małgorzata Lipmann, the casting director, talked to Roma again. I didn't have high hopes, but it turned out that 'the film star' agreed to participate in the project :)

I thought about the role of the theatre director for a long time. I had two very strong candidates, each of them being different. When Mariusz Bonaszewski showed up for screen tests, he started behaving like the theatre director at once, bossing us about :) I must say I wasn't sure if I'd be able to direct him. I finally chose Mariusz Bonaszewski, which turned out to be a grand slam.

**How did professional actors prepare for working with actors with disabilities?**

I wanted Wojtek to be organic in his role. Working with PPO is based on movement. Wojtek had to learn that. I received a lot of help from Zbigniew Biegajło and two therapists working with body and movement (Małgorzata Wiśniewska and Barbara Szamotulska). During a workshop, for a few days, we got to know each other and prepared for the film. Apart from Wojtek, Roma Gąsiorowska also participated in the workshop.



#### WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY:

**IWONA SIEKIERZYŃSKA** (b. 17 Aug 1967 in Gdynia)

She graduated from the Psychology Department (University of Gdańsk, 1993) and the Directing Department (Łódź Film School, 1996).

In 1996, she was nominated for the Student Oscar for her short film *Lady*, made under the creative supervision of Krzysztof Kieślowski.

In 2000, she received the Cinéfondation scholarship awarded by the Cannes Film Festival.

#### Filmography:

2020 *The Amateurs* – wrote & directed

2017 *Rachel* – (TV theatre play) directed

2015 *My Business* – directed; the theatre play featuring actors with intellectual disabilities and professional actors

2014 *Kobro* (theatre play) – directed; awarded Best Theatre Play in Łódź

2015 *The Stranger* – directed

2003 -2010 *Parish* – directed

2003 *My Roast Chickens* – wrote & directed

Additionally, she co-wrote a script about the life and work of Katarzyna Kobro, which was awarded first prize in the Script Pro Contest.



**CONTACT: Anna Wereda, Autograf Karol Woźbiński, phone: 793 786 774,  
anna.wereda@autograffilm.pl**