

## **"Polish film around the world. Export, foreign promotion and reception of Polish audiovisual production".**

When? 12-13 October 2023

Where? FINA, 3/5 Walbrzyska St., Warsaw

Organised by: National Film Archive - Audiovisual Institute (FINA)

Partners: Department of Film and Audiovisual Media, University of Lodz

It is well known that film and media productions co-create *soft power* and constitute an important element of cultural diplomacy, understood as the art of shaping friendly attitudes toward the state, maintaining existing allies, and winning new ones. Some scholars and policymakers tend to believe that “national branding,” a concept that treats the state as a brand, is achievable by promoting “flagship products” that accompany beliefs about a country. Their international flow in a globalizing (but nevertheless not entirely globalized) culture is usually susceptible to ideological, economic, and geopolitical conjunctures.

The reception of Polish films in the foreign press shows that national identity—a political and aesthetic imagination composed of culturally significant narratives and recognizable topoi—is often *lost in translation*. Should the cinematic “self-portrait of Poles” be different for viewers at home and those abroad? To what extent is the key to international success to be found in the spinning of universal stories, constructed according to transnational patterns and understood at every latitude? Perhaps those who claim that attractiveness on the international arena can be achieved by emphasizing what is unique and different from other nations? Do heroic or sacrificial virtues that are frequently exposed in Polish films create the intended effect, or the opposite? Are those Polish films, which have been made in the spirit of the self-criticism, a better export commodity because to some foreign viewers they bring the satisfaction of confirming a stereotype? What role in these processes did Polish film play in the interwar period and in more recent years?

Similar doubts relate to 'here and now' of contemporary national cinemas. The EU MEDIA program supports the distribution of "non-domestic European films" and the Polish Film Institute offers funds for the promotion and dissemination of Polish

films abroad. For which stakeholders are these support mechanisms beneficial, and who benefits from them most successfully? Data on the amounts of funding awarded is available, but what are the specific effects of individual projects? To what extent do the successes associated with the Oscar nominations of Polish films in recent years translate into their actual worldwide viewing, and if we were to take the global box-office as an important criterion for evaluation, is the title of "most watched film on Netflix" always something to be proud of? These questions trigger multiple political, economic, and cultural contexts that are worth reflecting upon from a modern-day perspective. We will do so in the course of a two-day academic conference to be held at FINA in October, 2023.

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Please send your paper proposals (up to 1800 characters) and a short bio **by 15 July 2023** to: [konferencja2023@fina.gov.pl](mailto:konferencja2023@fina.gov.pl).

There is no conference fee. For speakers from outside Warsaw, the organizers will provide accommodation for two nights.

A peer-reviewed publication presenting selected conference papers is planned.

(on behalf of the organisers)

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