

Starring: Photos

On Polish iconographic films made from photos

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Looking at Polish documentary film output of the last five decades, it is worth noting a group of films made at different times but based on the same method. These documentaries arrange themselves into a certain interesting and special thread. The works in question are short iconographic films¹, whose entire narrative is formed by suitably organised and filmed photographs. From *Album Fleischera* (*Fleischer's Album*, 1962) by Janusz Majewski and *Powszedni dzień gestapowca Schmidta* (*A Working Day of Gestapo Man Schmidt*, 1963) by Jerzy Ziarnik up to more recent works such as Jerzy Redlich's *Żołnierze führera podbijają Polskę* (*Führer's Soldiers Conquer Poland*, 1996) or Kazimierz Karabasz's *Portret w kropli* (*Portrait in a Drop of Water*, 1997), they constitute a living tradition, to which Polish filmmakers have referred in a number of ways to this day. In the films discussed below, especially those dealing with history, photographs are not substitute forms meant to compensate for never-existing or lost film shots, but rather act as a material in its own right, whose unique features, as Kazimierz Karabasz argues², are not to be found in motion pictures.

Films from photos – when did this begin?³

In his book *Documentary. A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, Erik Barnouw mentions the Canadian film *City of Gold* (1957) by Colin Low and Wolf Koenig⁴ as the one which inaugurated a new documentary genre: works based entirely on filmed photographs⁵. It is a story about Dawson City⁶, a gold miners' settlement from the end of the 19th century, portrayed by a local photographer A. E. Haig. The film won international acclaim. It received an Oscar for best documentary short, and, according to Barnouw, inspired American filmmakers from the National Broadcasting Company, the producer Donald Hyatt and screenwriter Philip Reisman, who soon afterwards used the same method in two films about the Wild West: *The Real West* (1961) and *End of the Trail* (1965). Both documentaries were based on hundreds of photos from the archives of historical associations and private persons. The photo-based film proved a perfect method for making documentaries about end-of-19th-century America, whose image had already been registered on photographs but not yet recorded on film stock. The effectiveness of this method was proved by the 1990 eleven-hour-long American documentary series *The Civil War*⁷. Its author Ken Burns used 3,000 out of 16,000 Civil War photos which he managed to reach. Despite the predominance of archive photos in the film, its genre purity was "contaminated" by adding filmed historians' statements. Describing *City of Gold* as the work which introduced a new genre, Barnouw does not seem to

mean the photo-based film as such, but rather the iconographic film using images, drawings, documents, various objects ⁸.

Actually, in world cinema there have not been very many productions of the film from photos in its pure form. One exception would be France, where the film essayist Chris Marker showed that the new method can be successfully employed in short fiction film ⁹. In the words of Andrzej Pitrus, "*La Jetée*" (*The Jetty*, 1962) *is a unique project. On the one hand, this film is undoubtedly Marker's first masterpiece, already clearly defining the author's scope of interests, to be developed in many later works; on the other hand, it is, to this day, this artist's only fiction film. One should remember; however, that the director never referred to "The Jetty" as a film. He rather described it as a "photo roman", i.e. "photo novel". Indeed, his work has much in common with both literature and photography. What brings it close to the former area is the commentary which replaces dialogue, and the latter is evoked directly, as the film consists of hundreds of static black-and-white frames, and the whole production features only one scene filmed in the classical way, with a camera recording motion picture* ¹⁰.

Shortly after, and also using exclusively photographs, Marker made the medium-length documentary *Si j'avais quatre dromadaires* (*If I Had Four Dromaderies*, 1966) ¹¹. Both films came out as outstanding works of art, and this surely contributed to the promotion of the method, which was later employed with success by other French filmmakers ¹², to mention only the TV series *Contacts* (1993) or *Exodes* (2000). In the former, the camera wanders among contact prints from the negatives of famous photographers, who speak about their techniques, share memories, explain why they selected a particular frame from a series of similar ones, presented on the film strip. The latter series, divided into episodes only three minutes long, shows those areas of the present world where the tragedy of people forced to leave their homes plays out. The series was entirely based on photos by the acclaimed photoreporter Sebastião Salgado.

The birth of the film made from photos came about at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s ¹³, when documentary cinema was undergoing a revolutionary transformation, signified by the American direct cinema and French *cinéma vérité*. In the West, it was the television, which favours longer film forms, that gradually became the main producer and distributor of documentaries. There was little room for the development of documentary shorts based exclusively on still photographic material. This was not the case in Poland, where the cinema documentary short flourished. At the same time as in the US and France, two remarkable photo-based films were made here, inaugurating the history of this genre in Polish cinema.

German albums in the spotlight

One day in 1962, taking a taxi to the Documentary Film Studio in Warsaw, a young film director Janusz Majewski learnt about the existence of a collection of amateur photos from the Second World War, which had been taken by a German officer from Görlitz. The photos drew Majewski's attention. Before long, he borrowed the collection of two thousand photos from the taxi driver, Sylwester Karczewski, and made it the basis of one of the most interesting Polish films of the 1960s: *Fleischer's Album* ¹⁴. At about the same time, Jerzy Ziarnik, another film-

maker working at the Documentary Film Studio, came across an album which had also belonged to a German, a Gestapo officer from Kutno. It was found in the archive of the Central Committee for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland. This collection¹⁵ served as the basis for the film entitled *A Working Day of Gestapo Man Schmidt*, finished after the release of Majewski's documentary.

The analogy between the two films was actually limited to the simple fact that they were both based on similar material: amateur photographs taken by the German invaders. Within one formula – the iconographic film – the two filmmakers employed different approaches, thus proving that this genre, despite its seeming limitations, in fact offers considerable possibilities. Having analysed the photos, Majewski together with Krzysztof Kąkolewski wrote a running commentary to the film, in which they reconstructed Fleisher's wartime history, trying to guess his views and thoughts. The film was enhanced by characteristic tunes from the repertoire of German brass bands, which additionally strengthened the ironic overtone of the commentary on *the odyssey of the honest man Fleischer of Görlitz*.

Jerzy Ziarnik limited authorial commentary to the minimum, including it only at the beginning and at the end of his film. He also decided against using any music or sound effects, trying to create on screen as suggestively as possible the impression of looking at the photo album. His work could be even called a film adaptation of the album¹⁶. The only piece of commentary that we hear quotes Schmidt's own captions under the photos. In comparison to Majewski, Ziarnik makes moderate use of the technique of *repollero*¹⁷. Moreover, unlike *Fleischer's Album*, in which the filming camera as if penetrates the space of the photographs, in *A Working Day of Gestapo Man Schmidt* alongside photos filmed in their full size we watch also cropped details, and even whole album pages with captions, maps, schematic drawings.

Apart from representing different approaches to their photographic material, the two films also have distinctly different protagonists. In Fleischer's pictures it is difficult to find evidence that he can be counted among those who disgraced themselves in the war by committing any particularly shameful deeds. *We did not accuse Fleisher of taking part in the war under the colours of the murderous perpetrators*, Janusz Majewski recalls, *we saw in him an ordinary helpless man, entangled in the war and the crimes, and we tried to conjecture his thoughts on what he found himself participating in*¹⁸. Schmidt is a radically different "character type". He is a conscientious official of the security service of the Third Reich, who has no scruples about taking part in the expulsions of Jews or arrestations of persons suspected of conspiratorial activity; he assists at executions. Especially telling in this context are the "souvenir" photos which he took of the bodies of people hung in a public execution, of an autopsy on one of the victims of the Nazi terror, or of the distressed face of a Jewish woman shouting something to an SS-officer standing in front of her. The author used to sign his photos with laconic captions such as: *Action against 6,000 Jews in Płońsk*, *Public execution in Kutno on 9th June, 1941*, *A Jewish rubbish heap*.

Both films contributed to the historical documentary with a new perspective on the events described: they showed the war from the point of view of the Germans. Moreover, rather than doing so on the basis of the well-known archival film material from Nazi newsreels, which had been used many times before¹⁹, the filmmakers made use of private photographs taken by the participants of the war. The two kinds of sources differ in form – film record versus photographic material – and perspec-

tive. To put it in very general terms, the film chronicles represent the official point of view of the Ministry of Propaganda of the Third Reich, which first trained camera operators, then gave them specific instructions concerning the way of filming, and finally approved their recorded material for public distribution. Fleischer and Schmidt, on the other hand, did not work on commission. They took photos for themselves, capturing what they wanted to capture. Thus, their photos enable us to see the private outlook on the war of those who became cogwheels in Hitler's war machine. Such perspective is not accessible through film shots of the chronicles of that time.

This does not mean, however, that *Fleischer's Album* and *A Working Day of Gestapo Man Schmidt* only present what was captured in the respective photographs. Both directors performed their own interpretation of the photographs, albeit in different ways. With the commentary present throughout his film, Majewski's interpretation is more explicit than Ziarnik's. Consistently and with characteristic irony, Majewski and Kąkolewski present Fleischer as a "tourist" on an expedition organised by the peculiar tourist agency "Wehrmacht" and leading across the war fronts of France and Russia (*Could the decent father and husband, an average bread-eater of Görlitz, afford distant travels before the war? "La douce France" – perhaps he dreamt of it in his quiet home? Here is his big chance! Mr. Fleischer explores France, following guide books designed somewhere up there in the staff office*).

Ziarnik restricted his interference in the Gestapo officer's album. The filmmaker's interpretation is contained in the selection of photographs, in sparse camera movements, white arrows superimposed onto the pictures and pointing to Schmidt in group photos, or in the occasionally cropped frames, as in the photo of a group of Jews, where Ziarnik as if transcends the tormentor's gaze, and selects individual faces from the crowd, enlarging them. The choice of photographs and captions reveals a comparison of Schmidt to a man hunter. Twice, at the opening and close of the film, we see the same photo of the protagonist, shirtless, with bare chest, in an SS-cap, holding his gun down in a gesture of a wearied huntsman. The runaway, shot down and shot with a Leica, looks like a hit animal. A map of expeditions to arrest successive victims looks like a sketched route of a gruesome safari. After the execution of one of the convicts, Schmidt photographed the autopsy of his body, as though he was capturing the dismembering of prey. Finally, the schematic plan of "Wybrzeże" conspiratorial group, with ID-photos of victims glued in different parts of the diagram, resembles an unusual hunter's trophy wall.

However, the photographs do not tell the whole truth, they do not fully explain Schmidt's role in the portrayed events. Jerzy Ziarnik points this out in his brief commentary at the beginning of the film: *We know that his name was Schmidt. He worked in the Gestapo. We don't know if he tormented the arrested people in person, or only gave commands. In January 1945, in his hurriedly abandoned flat, this album was found, featuring photos which he mostly made himself and signed with his own comments.*

Majewski's and Kąkolewski's commentary persists in seeking to unravel the mystery of "the honest papa from Görlitz": what was his actual attitude to the war and its victims? Especially poignant is the photo reportage from the occupied Warsaw, where in July 1940 Fleischer photographed the faces of Jewish passers-by. The narrator comments: *People with arm bands. Why does he photograph them so eagerly? Is he surprised that they're still allowed to walk the streets? Does this*

view annoy him? Or perhaps he already knows what they don't know, perhaps he is aware that in a year's time these people will be separated, locked within walls, isolated like wild beasts? So already now he photographs them with the curiosity of a wildlife expert? Their eyes – did he see in them a premonition of that future? Fleischer photographs zealously. What drives him? Satisfaction or compassion? Perhaps his own portrait could explain this?

The above questions were unexpectedly answered many years after the war, when, after the broadcasting of *Fleischer's Album* on West German television, the protagonist turned up, living in Karlsruhe, and the authors of the documentary soon visited him²⁰. Schmidt's fate remained unknown.

And what was the fate of the new documentary method? *Fleischer's Album* and *A Working Day of Gestapo Man Schmidt* promoted the new method as though in conjunction with the subject matter. Films about the Second World War employing photographs from various sources became a Polish specialty²¹. First of all, one must mention documentaries based on German photographs and closest to the ones discussed above²². Grzegorz Dubowski's *Album zbrodni* (*Crime Album*, 1966) and films by Kazimierz Karabasz: *Zgodnie z rozkazem* (*Following Orders*, 1970) and *Przypis* (*Footnote*, 1970), described German crimes in Polish territory with a matter-of-fact, historical commentary. In 1980, Andrzej Barański made in the Educational Films Studio in Łódź his film *Historia żołnierza* (*Soldier's Tale*), employing the technique of film animation in order to make the "album story" about the fate of Wehrmacht soldiers alive in a new way. The theme and method proved attractive for filmmakers also in more recent times. In 1996, Jerzy Redlich made a twelve-minute TV film *The Führer's Soldiers Conquer Poland*, which was based on Hugo Jaeger's and Heinrich Hoffman's photographs of the 1939 campaign, published as stereoview postcards²³ by the Munich publishing house Raumbild-Verlag Otto Schönstein K. G. In this case, the photos were not private. Jaeger and Heinrich were propaganda photographers, a fact repeatedly underscored in the film commentary. In 2003, the Jewish Historical Institute released a DVD with the iconographic film *Powstanie w gettcie* (*Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*), which featured photographs from Jürgen Stroop's report, processed using modern computer effects. The photos had been probably taken by Jesuiter, a Gestapo officer from the headquarters in Szucha Avenue in Warsaw²⁴. Also Stanisław Różewicz based his short film *Wycieczka do Paryża* (*A Trip to Paris*, 2004) largely on propaganda photographs of Hitler and his triumphs from the beginning of the war. Before that, in his iconographic film *Postkarten* (1979) Różewicz presented photos from an album of a German soldier, though this time from World War One. Here, the official image of the war, reproduced on coloured postcards, was juxtaposed with a view far from propagandistic embellishments, which were missing in frontline photos from a soldier's personal album²⁵.

One must not omit to mention Dariusz Jabłoński's *Fotoamator* (*Photographer*) – a film which is not wholly iconographic (alongside film shots of the 1990s Łódź, an important part of it is an interview with Albert Mostowicz, a ghetto doctor), yet makes extensive use of photographs²⁶. Their author, the Nazi official of the Litzmannstadt ghetto Walter Genewein, was an enthusiast of photography, like Fleischer or Schmidt. Similarly as Ziarnik in *A Working Day of Gestapo Man Schmidt*, Jabłoński also comments Genewein's colour slides, which show Jews of Łódź, with

the photographer's own words, quoting letters sent by the Austrian bureaucrat to the manufacturer of his photographic films, the German factory AGFA ²⁷.

An unfinished album

War crimes, images of the Holocaust were captured by the perpetrators. The victims rarely had a chance to record their fate on photographs. One of the facets of "ordinary fascism" is precisely this mass rush of thousands of Wehrmacht and SS soldiers, policemen, Nazi officials to register with photo cameras their war "travel", to paste into their private albums photographs from executions in which they took part ²⁸. The absence of the victims' "photographic gaze" at their own torment is remarkably brought to light in Jerzy Ziarnik's film *Patrzę na twoją fotografię (I Am looking at Your Photograph, 1979)* ²⁹. The film presents typical photos which can be found in any family album. Except that these come from before 1939. There is no commentary, only popular songs from the 1930s, and captions marking the director's thematic categorization of the photos, e.g.: *My girlfriend, Our wedding, Our holidays*. It is only towards the end of the film that we learn that these are photographs of Polish Jews, and were taken away from them on the Auschwitz ramp together with other belongings. The last shot of the film shows somebody's hand putting the photos away on a shelf in the camp archive. The story of the portrayed people had a tragic ending behind the camp fence. Without photographs. The family album is a form of remembering the shared history of people bonded by blood. It functions in closed, private circulation. It does not need captions, because those who look at it will recognize familiar faces and memorable events. But the albums from the camp archive are anonymous. The circulation in which they had functioned disappeared. The portrayed people were killed, and so were those who could recognise them in the photos. Compiled from fragments of many such Jewish albums into one extraordinary audiovisual album, *I Am Looking at Your Photograph* is a special form of remembrance. The film introduced the surviving photos of those who did not survive into a new space of memory. The irretrievably destroyed family memory was replaced with public memory.

Worth mentioning here is another film from photos, produced with a similar goal in mind, namely to preserve from oblivion images of the world of Polish Jews. In her documentary *Nad Wisłą (On the Vistula River, 1962)*, which was made at the same time as *Fleischer's Album*, Maria Kwiatkowska presented Jewish citizens of the town of Kazimierz nad Wisłą, who had been portrayed by Benedykt Dorys in his photographic series entitled *Kazimierz – 1932* ³⁰. The commentary was written by Maria Kuncewiczowa (in the film, it is read by Hanna Skarżanka). The main, photographic part of the film was framed with Jerzy Gościk's film shots of contemporary Kazimierz, which feature at the opening and close.

The war in Polish photo cameras

In many cases, the making of films from photos is triggered by the existence of a remarkable photo collection. As far as historical film is concerned, the use of photographs may be dictated by their unique perspective on past events, as was the

case with many films discussed above. What often proves more important, however, is the very fact that a noteworthy historical event was registered on a large number of photos, especially if it was not registered on film stock or the film account is sparse³¹. In the case of Polish resistance movement during World World Two, collecting any visual material, whether film (especially difficult to obtain³²) or photographic, for obvious reasons³³ defied the principles of conspiracy and threatened its members, and was only justified if performed for the sake of a particular operational activity. This is why any photos which were taken nonetheless and survived are so valuable. In 1971 Zygmunt Adamski made a documentary ballad about life in a partisan division, thus broadening the thematic scope of iconographic film from photos, and enriching this category with a new variant, in which verbal commentary was replaced with music. Stanisław Ozimek describes the film as follows: *The static "base material" was provided by chronicle photos, revealed after a quarter of a century, depicting the life and fight of one of the Home Army's partisan units, active in Nowogródek region, if I am not mistaken. Treating amateur photos with skill and sensitivity, the filmmaker uses zooms in, close-ups of faces and props, pans, "discovered" midgrounds, to construct scenes and create epic, ballad-like narration. The partisans' lot, at the bonfire, sleeping in hovels, on the lookout, duty at the broadcasting station, wake-up call, lice picking, washing in the stream, report. Alarm signal and march, often for life. Children at the roadside, astonished at seeing Polish troops, a mug of water handed by a country girl. Before the fight, the last roll-up cigarette, a jump, a grenade throw. Captives, captured weapons, a motorcycle being started, brief joy at a local success. The oath ceremony, a partisan wedding, a funeral procession, a priest, a cross, the last volley. Changes of mood, asceticism of means. Refraining from verbal commentary. The main linking element of dramatic composition is Zygmunt Konieczny's music. The simple ballad-like musical concept subtly guides the emotions of the viewer. It seems as though Zygmunt Konieczny's score had been first, and Zygmunt Adamski followed it, composing from photographic frames, brought to life through shot changes, zooms in and close-ups, his partisan ballad about the lot of the human family in the time of war³⁴.*

Especially rich, given the difficult wartime conditions, is the collection of journalistic photographs from the Warsaw Uprising 1944. These photos were used in a number of compilation films. They also formed the basis of iconographic films and iconographic sequences in documentaries drawing more extensively on film material. A work which stands out in this group is Tadeusz Makarczyński's *Sceny z Powstania Warszawskiego (Scenes of the Warsaw Uprising, 1983)*. Divided into two parts: *August* and *September*, it uses photos by the War Press Reporter, Sylwester "Kris" Braun. The film is enriched with music, as well as a commentary informing about the people and events captured in the photos, about their time and significance. This film diptych was complemented by the iconographic *Exodus* (1984), which tells about the fate of Warsaw citizens after the fall of the Uprising in October 1944. Makarczyński used photos to construct whole passages of his films already before (for example in *Maraton [The Marathon, 1972]*). Nor were *Scenes of the Warsaw Uprising* and *Exodus* the last films in which he employed the method of film from photos (he returned to it e.g. in *Spacer po Warszawie pana Bolesława Prusa [Mr Bolesław Prus Strolls about Warsaw, 1984]*).



Fleischer's Album, dir. Janusz Majewski (1962)

I would like to quote here Tadeusz Makarczyński's statement concerning the use of photographs in film. In a sense, the documentary filmmaker echoes the views of his interlocutor Kazimierz Karabasz, whose much earlier statements and films show that photography does not appear in film instead of moving film pictures, but rather due to its own unique characteristics: *Photography*, Makarczyński says, *conveys the truth about time in a yet more distinct way. Something that might not be too interesting in filmed archival material, when dissected through a certain "photographic analysis", dissected into atoms, into parts, will produce a much stronger effect than in a "living" film shot. In a regular shot we simply cannot achieve this third dimension... We do not allow time for thought, for getting a deeper insight, we do not bring out the detail. Besides, a photograph can be subjected to the process of "bringing out" the dramaturgy that it contains, whereas in archival material (of the regular type), dramaturgy is already given. A film shot cannot undergo any kinds of evolution, while a photo can... And hence a whole array of very original and interesting results could actually be achieved in this area. From ascetic treatment of the crudest kind, through very sophisticated methods...*³⁵

In *Scenes of the Warsaw Uprising*, Makarczyński brings out the dramaturgy of the presented photos in several different ways: through their arrangement, camera movements, close-ups. The commentary (written by Waclaw Gluth-Nowowiejski, who took part in the Uprising), adds information to image. It transforms anonymous figures into uprising soldiers with pseudonyms (colonel Jordan with a Nazi flag torn down from the police headquarters), identifies the time and place of the events, speaks about that which is not visible, off-frame or indiscernible for the photo camera. It comments the photojournalist's work. Music underscores the atmosphere of the events, enhancing particular images, details. We hear "songs of the barricades", the recurring motif of Chopin's *Revolutionary Étude*, tunes composed by Krystyna Kraheńska, Jan Ekier, Witold Lutosławski, Andrzej Markowski, Jan Markowski, Andrzej Panufnik. Here is an excerpt from the commentary: *The 23rd of August, early dawn. A battle for the Holy Cross Church and the police headquarters flared*



Scenes of the Warsaw Uprising, dir. Tadeusz Makarczyński (1983)

*up. The fight has been going on for an hour when “Kris” manages to break through to the Staszic Palace. Only a moment ago, these were German positions. From their posts, he takes a series of photos of Krakowskie Przedmieście avenue. Fires have encompassed the whole street*³⁶. At this point, we watch Krakowskie Przedmieście filled with rubble and smoke; the street is photographed from behind the statue of Nicolaus Copernicus. Foreboding music is playing in the background. The commentary: *Tank and cannon fire, blazing machine gun fire shells the positions of the attacking resistance fighters. Toppled down, the church towers burn in the street. Copernicus is calmly watching the battle from his plinth. On the other side, Christ is carrying his cross in the thickening smoke. The uprising soldiers take the church. “Kris” dashes from the palace, jumps across the street and gets into the church from the back. The inside is on fire.* In the background, we can hear the lyrics of an uprising song. We are looking at a photo of the church entrance, damaged by shells; it was photographed from within the edifice. We can see shattered windows. Next, there begins a series of photos showing, stage by stage, a historical confessional burning. The figures of angels are in flames. Organs sounding. The commentary: *Aflame are wooden window shutters, paintings, and sculptures. The figures of angels seem to be running from the blaze, but in a moment they will be consumed by fire. It is here that Chopin’s heart remained forever.*

In Makarczyński’s film a certain feature of the film from photos is especially clearly manifested: photographs cease to be fragments of events, and become part of a narrative, elements of a story which is constructed from whole photos and their cropped sections. The film constitutes a context for the photos, enriching them with meaning which they do not have on their own³⁷. *Editing the photos in a new way, the moving camera which films them re-activates the energy hidden in static frames. Makarczyński arranges from “Kris’s” photos complete film sequences with their own dramaturgy: the uprising wedding, the fight in the Holy Cross Church, the funeral in a backyard, the “Prudential” skyscraper being hit by a mortar shell, the*

bombing of Hoża street, the concert in the garden of former “U aktorek” [The Actresses’] café, citizens leaving their homes after the capitulation... These whole sequences add up, arrange themselves into narrative structures, begin to throb with life. An illusion of movement is produced. At some points, “Kris” was indeed taking picture after picture, capturing the ambience of a whole scene. Makarczyński followed this. He directs our attention in such a way that it seems as though a gesture frozen in a photo has been completed in front of our eyes, that a grimace of pain has shown on a face. He “ordered” boys to laugh, a liaison officer to run across the street, and clods of earth suspended in the air – to cover the coffin; it seems to us that the strange lonely passer-by shows up in the ruined Marszałkowska street only as we look, although in fact he has been in the photo all along. “Scenes of the Uprising” makes us aware yet again of the photographic phenomenon of “arrested time”. We are not watching the past. Nor is it the present, but rather something like a “past continuous”, a past which keeps re-enacting itself, playing out its “scenes” anew before our eyes³⁸.

Not only Makarczyński was inspired by the significance of the Warsaw Uprising in Poland’s recent history and by the fact that the event was registered on at least several thousand photos³⁹. In 1968, Jan Łominicki made *Gienek*, a documentary portrait of Eugeniusz Lokajski, one of the photojournalists of the Uprising. The film is not wholly based on iconographic material. Its important part are memories recounted by Lokajski’s sister, who rescued the photos of her brother after he was killed in the Uprising. Sequences composed of photographs, however, constitute a highly significant element of the film. As Alicja Iskierko put it, *Such is the emotional and evidential power of the uprising photos that they break the frames of the story about Eugeniusz Lokajski, they do not want to subject themselves to the general concept of the film, they constitute an independent value, in a sense they make a film within a film. And they have the strongest effect on the viewer’s memory and imagination. They are what makes the dramaturgy of this beautiful film story seem to falter, yet at the same time being the greatest asset of this piece⁴⁰.*

A year after the production of *Gienek*, Wiesław Stradomski’s book *Realizacja filmu w praktyce (Filmmaking in practice)* was published. Addressed to amateur filmmakers, it drew their attention to the technical ease of making a film from photos at home⁴¹. The author also indicated the possibility of creating a film about the Warsaw Uprising⁴² on the basis of numerous photographs published in albums which he listed in his guidebook. He developed this idea, and included also his own screenplay and shooting script of a film from photos entitled *Godzina W (The “W” Hour)*. It is worth noting that in the same year that *Gienek* was produced, young Krzysztof Kieślowski made for the TV his *Zdjęcie (The Photo)*⁴³, in which, accompanied by a team of journalists, he sets off to search for two small boys portrayed in a photograph from the Warsaw Uprising⁴⁴. Krzysztof Lang, in turn, filmed the photographs of Sylwester Braun in *Cienie (Shadows, 1983)*, his film about an exhibition for the anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising⁴⁵. In 1979 Władysław Ślesicki shot a one-minute sequence from the Uprising photos as a background for the opening credits in his fiction film *...droga daleka przed nami...* [...a long way ahead of us...]. The photographs are used in films about the Uprising till this day, though usually functioning as illustration complementary to the witnesses’ accounts or authorial commentary.

Into a more distant future

The 1980s also brought several iconographic films which employed photographs from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Apart from the already mentioned, earlier *Postkarten* by Stanisław Różewicz, one example of a film belonging to this category and time period is Roman Wionczek's *Polacy na starych fotografiach* (*Poles in Old Photographs*, 1982). Two films stand out from the rest: Michał Maryniarczyk's *Warszawianki podróż do Italii* (*A Warsaw Lady's Travel to Italy*, 1984) and Tadeusz Makarczyński's *Mr Bolesław Prus Strolls about Warsaw*. Maryniarczyk used in his film excerpts from Władysław Reymont's *Z pamiętnika* (*From a Diary*, 1903) to construct a monologue of a young townswoman, which we hear while watching postcards and photos of travels abroad. Makarczyński, in turn, reached for Bolesław Prus's *Kroniki* (*Chronicles*, 1874-1911), which served as a source of information for the vivid commentary written by Jerzy Kasprzycki. At the same moment in time, Andrzej Kazanecki arranged and filmed Artur Grottger's paintings to create a historical photoreportage in *Artura Grottgera opowieść o powstaniu styczniowym* (*Artur Grottger's Tale of the January Uprising 1863-1864*, 1984). Here we approach the border between the film from photos and films based on other iconographic material. Apart from photographs, Makarczyński and Maryniarczyk incorporated into their films also drawings and illustrations, presenting them in the same way. Due to their seamless narration, when watching these films we hardly notice that after showing a photo the camera moves on to present a realistic illustration, probably taken from a magazine from those times ⁴⁶.

Karabas and photographs

Some of the themes described above appear in Kazimierz Karabasz's films ⁴⁷. Apart from films from photos, his output features also other works in which photos play a crucial part. In 1970 Karabasz made two iconographic films from photographs documenting German war crimes. *Following Orders* tells about those committed in Poland by the Wehrmacht. It includes photos from the defence war in September 1939, from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising 1943 (from Stroop's report) ⁴⁸ and the Warsaw Uprising 1944. They are accompanied by a commentary written by Karol Małcużyński. The film was made at a time when the relations between the Polish People's Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany were tense, also due to the issue regarding Germany's acknowledgment of the inviolability Polish western frontiers ⁴⁹. The other film, *Footnote*, discusses the origins and events of "Bloody Sunday", which took place in September 1939 in Bydgoszcz, the film director's hometown.

These historical films function at the periphery of Karabasz's work, whose core is the everyday life of average people living here and now. For the author of *Rok Francka W.* (*A Year in the Life of Franek W.*, 1967), also in this case photographs serve as one of the key modes of description. In some films, they build whole scenes, on others, they provide material for separate iconographic film works, such as *Lato w Żabnie* (*Summer in Żabno*, 1977) or *Portrait in a Drop of Water*. Photographs feature also in those of his documentaries which are self reflexive in character. In the 1965 *Na progu* (*On the threshold*), Karabasz presented various methods

which a documentary filmmaker can use when approaching a given subject. In this case, the task in question was to portray young Polish women at the threshold of adult life. As one of the possible methods accessible to a documentary filmmaker, Karabasz suggested a film from photos. The attempt at achieving a more intimate portrayal was based on excerpts from letters sent by teenage girls to “Filipinka” bi-weekly magazine. Karabasz juxtaposed them with photos of young women. Faces picked from the crowd, captured in a moment of pensiveness, gazing into distance, correspond to the confessions which we hear off-camera. The camera slowly zooms into the photos, strengthening the effect of gaining insight into the inner world of the protagonists, who speak about their disappointment, letdowns, anxiety of the future.

In 1974 Karabasz made another self reflexive documentary: *Punkt widzenia* (*Point of View*). The film presents teenage amateur photographers from the Community Centre in Włodawa. It is not an iconographic film. Apart from photographs made by the protagonists of the film, there are film shots taken by the cinematographer Antoni Staśkiewicz at the market square in Włodawa, and during a heated discussion which the young club members were having, leaning over their photos. Nevertheless, the most essential part of the film are indeed the photos and their authors’ accompanying comments on the soundtrack. Observations and thoughts shared on record by these very young photographers are certainly not far from what some documentary filmmakers could say about their own work ⁵⁰.

Karabasz’s 1979 book *Cierpliwe oko* (*The patient eye*) contains his reflections on the work of a documentary film director. Alongside chapters entitled *Protagonist in a Documentary*, *Observation*, *Human Face*, *Editing*, *Word*, *Narration in a Documentary* and *Truth*, there is also a section called *Photographs*. As the author of *Muzykanci* (*The Musicians*, 1960) sees it, photographs offer filmmakers a chance to enrich their works with a dimension of the reality which cannot be captured by a film camera. *The longer I watch the employment of photographs (photographic prints, not freeze-frames) in the documentary film, Karabasz wrote, the more this practice appeals to me. I am fascinated by two things: the opportunity to contemplate that moment in which a given person and his or her environment were only for a split second, and the opportunity to discern the “material substance” of what is shown in a photo (landscape relief, people’s clothes, shapes of furniture). Both these qualities are absent from a “living” film. And they are, I believe, not irrelevant to any filmmaker who wants to do more than just describe interesting events* ⁵¹.

Karabasz broadened the scope of Polish iconographic film from photos by introducing contemporary subject matter ⁵². In 1977 he made *Summer in Żabno*, a film composed from photographs taken by a student of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Maria Kolano. Upon the film director’s suggestion, she took a photo camera along when she went to her home in the country for holidays, promising to systematically register daily events. She only saw her photos developed after returning to Warsaw. The director used a tape recorder to register the first impressions, remarks and observations which Kolano made on looking at her photos. The recorded material provided a basis for the monologue put on the soundtrack of *Summer in Żabno*. What resulted was an interesting film-photo diary. Its private perspective and the personal tone of the commentary make the film unique in the documentary output of that time.

In his earlier and later films Karabasz employed photos from various sources: from film stills in a cinema display case (*Ludzie z pustego obszaru* [*People from an Empty Zone*, 1957]), through photos which he had taken himself (*Przenikanie* [*Assimilating*, 1978]; *O świcie przed zmierzchem* [*At Dawn and before Dusk*, 1999]) and photos from family albums of his protagonists (*Czas podwójny* [*Double Time*, 2001]), to archive photographs (*Próba materii* [*Material Test*, 1981]). He returned to the film from photos in the 1990s. Before making the iconographic *Portrait in a Drop of Water*, entirely composed from his own photographs, he created two other films, largely based on photos: *Na przykład – ulica Grzybowska 9* (*9 Grzybowska Street, for Example*, 1991) and *Okruchy z ulicy Żelaznej i okolicy (październik '93)* (*Crumbs from Żelazna Street and Neighbourhood /October '93/*, 1994). *Portrait in a Drop of Water* is a group portrayal of Poles from the last decade of the 20th century⁵³. Black-and-white photos of a city on a summer day show people in a crowd, individual figures, viewed from afar, from the back. Now and then a face is visible. Recurring as a motif is the only moving picture in the film: a city roundabout, with strings of cars passing incessantly. The figures from the crowd materialise as individual off-camera voices. We hear people of different ages speaking, answering questions about their hopes, fears, thought with which they start and end the day. In the night scene which concludes the film, photos of a block of flats are accompanied by words from Tadeusz Różewicz's poem about another day which has passed...

Photographs in the eye of cine-camera

Fleischer's Album, *I Am Looking at Your Photograph*, *Scenes of the Warsaw Uprising*, *Summer in Żabno* and other similar short films constitute a separate trend in Polish documentary school⁵⁴. Central to this group are works about Poland's most recent history, as registered on photographic film by people from opposite sides of the barricades. Alongside these films are also those which show less dramatic events, albeit more distant in time. Finally, there are some fully contemporary pictures⁵⁵. These films usually bring out and emphasise the private look, which constitutes an important and valuable aspect of the filmed photos, rarely present in documentary film records from a few decades ago, and often superficial and sloppy in those from a couple or a dozen years back. Such works also enable to show on screen that special dimension of the reality which escapes a film camera, yet is accessible to the camera of a photographer, who is able to capture on film a flash of time, and show in it the texture of the reality, composed of human gestures, glances, objects, architectures, shadows and light spots. Distinct from other iconographic films, akin to the photographic diaporama⁵⁶, in the hands of Polish documentary filmmakers the film from photos proved to be a very comprehensive formula, inspiring creative explorations⁵⁷. The array of formal solutions and themes, broadened from one film to the next for several decades, gives us reasons to believe that the tradition of Polish documentary iconographic film from photos is going to be continued.

MIKOŁAJ JAZDON

Translated by ZOFIA ZIEMANN

- ¹ Marek Hendrykowski defines iconographic film as a *film work whose visual make-up are still pictures: painted, graphic, photographic etc., brought to life by cinematic techniques*. M. Hendrykowski, *Słownik terminów filmowych*, Poznań 1994, p. 122.
- ² *What is decisive in photography is the moment, being the essence of the mood, situation, type of person. That moment often escapes a film shot, dissolves in motion. (...) In film, three subsequent shots do not mean much, whereas three pictures can create a certain sum, thought, event. Co można zobaczyć w szarości. Rozmowa Małgorzaty Sadowskiej z Kazimierzem Karabasem*, in: *Chełmska 21. 50 lat Wytwórci Filmów Dokumentalnych i Fabularnych w Warszawie*, ed. B. Janicka, A. Kołodyński, Warszawa 2000, p. 173.
- ³ An interesting example of the use of photography is a 1898 film by Albert E. Smith and J. Stuart Blackton, founders of the American Vitagraph Company in New York. When on returning from the front of the Spanish-American War they realised that they had not managed to register the most important event, the battle of Santiago de Cuba, they came up with the idea of reconstructing the naval battle in the office room of their studio. To do this, they bought commonly available sets of photographs depicting the ships of both fighting parties. They cut out the images of battleships from their backgrounds and placed them together at a certain distance in a small container filled with water to imitate the sea. All that remained to be done was to place miniature gunpowder charges in the right places, make cigar smoke into battle smoke, and, after running the camera, pull the tiny strings attached to the cut-out ships accordingly. Staged out in this manner, the naval battle was registered on film stock, and then successfully presented as a two-minute hot war front report entitled *The Battle of Santiago Bay*. Cf. Albert E. Smith, *Taking the Camera to War*, in: *Imagining Reality. The Faber Book of the Documentary*, ed. K. Macdonald, M. Cousins, London – Boston 1996.
- ⁴ Cf. E. Barnouw, *Documentary. A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, New York – Oxford 1993, pp. 200-201.
- ⁵ In fact, many films from photos feature proper film shots, which are often employed as a compositional frame. In *City of Gold*, these are shots of contemporary Dawson City, introduced at the beginning and at the end of the film. At the beginning of *Fleischer's Album*, there is a film shot showing a hand which opens the eponymous album. *A Working day of gestapo man Schmidt* and Jerzy Ziarnik's *Patrząc na twoją fotografię (I Am Looking at Your Photograph)* offer similar examples. The opening of the former features a brief shot of the archive building of the Central Committee for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, and then a safe from which a photo album is being taken. The latter shows photographs being put back on a shelf after viewing. Kazimierz Karabasz's *Summer in Żabno*, in turn, presents at the beginning several brief shots of the protagonist during her work in the chemical lab at the university. The moment that the girl leans over the microscope, the first photo appears.
- ⁶ See also D. Duncan, *City of Gold*, in: *Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film*, ed. I. Aitken, New York 2006, pp. 230-231.
- ⁷ Cf. E. Barnouw, op. cit., pp. 327-329.
- ⁸ Such works constitute a sizable group, including not only films on art, which make use of various kinds of art pieces, but also films telling about history through the presented items and documents (Jerzy Ziarnik's *Museum /Muzeum*, 1966/, Tadeusz Jaworski's *The Pultusk Codex /Kodeks Pultuski*, 1957/).
- ⁹ In Poland, the same principle was applied in Walerian Borowczyk's fiction short *Szkola (The School)*, 1958) and in sections of Andrzej Munk's fiction film *Pasażerka (Passenger)*, 1963).
- ¹⁰ A. Pitrus, *Chris Marker. Pamięć obrazu i obrazy pamięci*, in: *Autorzy kina europejskiego II*, ed. A. Helman, A. Pitrus, Kraków 2005, p. 184.
- ¹¹ *Chris Marker's film "Si j'avais quatre dromadaires" (1966), a brilliantly orchestrated meditation on photographs of all sorts and themes, suggests a subtler and more rigorous way of packaging (and enlarging) still photographs. Both the order and the exact time for looking at each photograph are imposed; and there is a gain in visual legibility and emotional impact*. S. Sontag, *On Photography*, New York – London – Toronto 1977, p. 5.
- ¹² In 1990, the renowned French cinematographer Jean-Louis Bompont made a four-minute film entitled *Correspondance*. Consisting of dozens of photos, it tells about a Parisian saxophone player whose thoughts take him to 1930s America while he is playing at a metro station. We watch photographs of night clubs, New York streets, portraits of famous jazz musicians, dynamically edited to the music playing in the film.

¹³ In 1967, Sergei Yutkevich and Naum Kleiman used the surviving tape fragments to reconstruct Sergei Eisenstein's *Bezhin Meadow* (*Bezhin lug*) as an iconographic film.

¹⁴ *Equipped with a magnificent Leica camera, Fleisher was a fanatic adept of photography, and took pictures of whatever he could: trenches at the French front during the "phoney war", a guard change in front of Hotel Europejski in the occupied Warsaw, Jews with armbands in the streets of Lublin, action in the Ukraine, his Christmas leave in Görlitz, i.e. Polish Zgorzelec, the conquered Kharkiv, and finally the retreat from Stalin-grad in snowdrifts and blizzards. There was no doubt that this material could be used to make a great documentary, we only had to bring to life the still pictures, both in visual terms and in the sense of presenting the viewer with a coherent message about this finding. I drew into collaboration Krzysztof Kąkolewski, who at the time was a star of press reportage, and together we came to the conclusion that the most interesting in this material were the alleged motivations and emotions accompanying Fleischer when he was taking his pictures, and that our task was to build a sequence of hypotheses which would seek to answer the following: Why did he photograph this? Why did he focus his lens on this particular scene? What did he think and feel while taking these pictures? I arranged the best photos into chronological sequences, and I made them as alive as I could by introducing camera movement: they were registered with zooms in and out, pans, and travelling shots, so that at times they seem like film pictures. In the commentary, we speculated on Fleischer's state of mind. And this personal, intimate, quiet narration proved better than the immediately self-suggesting classical journalistic style. At that time, twenty years after the war, it strongly appealed to our viewers, whose sensitivity had been somewhat dulled by the militant politicised journalism, practiced on behalf of the society and nation, and perceiving the world in these terms. We did not accuse Fleischer of taking part in the war under the colours of the murderous perpetrators; we saw in him an ordinary helpless man, entangled in the war and the crimes, and we tried to conjecture his thoughts on what he found himself participating in.* J. Majewski, *Retrospektywka*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 231-233.

¹⁵ *In Germany, photography had always been immensely popular. It was practiced by a great number of photo enthusiasts, who took their*

cameras along also during the war. Their predilection for capturing all moments of wartime life became the source of countless amateur pictures. They were "memory shots" of sorts. They would often make up entire albums. The uniform-clad photo enthusiasts used to photograph virtually everything: combat scenes, troops entering the conquered towns, the soldiers' social life, but also street executions, mass murders, interrogation and torture of prisoners, pacification operations, destruction of cities and villages. Sometimes the perpetrator would pose next to his victim's body. It was thanks to this predilection for having pictures of oneself taken anywhere and in any circumstances that today we have irrefutable evidence of Nazi crimes. The "memory shots" which were to commemorate the triumphal march of fascist "Übermenschen" across Europe, and, sent to families in the "Vaterland", show military achievements in the conquered countries, turned against their authors, completely counter to their intent and will: the photos became accusatory documents, enclosed with the court records of cases against war criminals. H. Latoś, *Z historii fotografii wojennej*, Warszawa 1985, p. 274.

¹⁶ *The process of adapting various material refers not only to what had existed prior to the film, but also to that which is born concurrently with it, and potentially also to that which may be born in the future. Thus, the film composition technique of adaptation is in the process of constant development and change it is characterised by a certain openness. As a result of adaptation, material of different origin, from different time periods, different levels of culture enters the film, and undergoes a process of synthesis. Rather than being a mosaic, a jigsaw puzzle, a random collection, the film is a whole which gives the impression of being homogenous, even though it is not.* A. Helman, *Adaptacja – podstawowa technika twórcza kina*, "Kino" 1998, no. 1, p. 48.

¹⁷ *Marek Hendrykowski defines repollero as a filming technique with the use of still images: photographs, paintings, collages etc., employed mainly in films on art; it makes use of zooms, in and out, as well as pans and dissolves, which enable the author to introduce narration while filming static images. Repollero technique was used e.g. by Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica in their film "Nagrodzone uczucia" (Love Required, 1957).* M. Hendrykowski, *Słownik terminów filmowych*, op. cit., p. 251.

¹⁸ J. Majewski, op. cit., p. 233.

- ¹⁹ In his 1965 documentary *Ostpost 1942-4*, Bohdan Kosiński used film material from the official Nazi newsreels, combining them with excerpts from German soldiers' letters home. In this way, he juxtaposed the official image of the events with personal accounts.
- ²⁰ *We saw the people whom we had known from photos, but twenty years older: the wife, the son, the daughters, only the grandparents were no longer alive. It was very uncanny, because having been exposed to their portraits for so many months, we subconsciously treated those people as someone close; also they showed trust towards us, they seemed to appreciate our non-aggressive objectivism, and even a hint of compassion, present in our commentary, for people who despite belonging to those who unleashed the war; were also its victims. When questioned, Fleischer usually confirmed our conjectures, he was clearly satisfied with the image of himself which we had created.* J. Majewski, op. cit., p. 234.
- ²¹ Authors of "film Polski.pl" database describe Stanisław Trzaska's *Album śmierci* (*Death Album*, 1978) in the following way: *The film presents the origins of an unusual photo album made by a German policeman Rozner and entitled "Sühne für Bochnia" (Punishment for Bochnia), which was prepared for the Governor-General (Hans Frank, chief of the "Generalgouvernement", a Nazi administrative unit in the occupied Polish territory, 1939-1945 – translator's note) in Krakow. The album is a gruesomely detailed photographic account of the crime on civilian citizens which was committed in Bochnia in December 1939. Fifty people randomly selected from among the inhabitants were murdered. The film account is a reconstruction of the carnage on the basis of the retrieved album.* <http://www.film-polski.pl/fp/index.php/4215633> (accessed: 10.12.2013).
- ²² Photos of cut-off human heads, an axe on the neck of a convict who lay his head on the headsman's block, human figures standing before the firing squad, convicts on the gallows, a noose being placed around the neck, the murdered bodies on the snow. These and similar pictures made by German photo enthusiasts in uniforms feature in Mikhail Romm's famous 1965 Soviet compilation film *Ordinary Fascism* (*Obyknovennyy fashizm*, alternative English title *Triumph Over Violence*, also known in the UK as *Echo of the Jackboot* and in the US as *Trumps Over Violence*). They feature in chapter fourteen, entitled the same as the whole film. They are accompanied by
- the following commentary: *There were photographs found in their pockets. In the photos we can see themselves, their wives, mothers, children, and this! This is what they carried together with the pictures of their children and mothers. What state must a man be driven to that he should carry something like this as a memento, as a pleasant memory?*
- ²³ Stereoview cards produced an effect approximating three-dimensionality, which was possible thanks to special looking glasses sold together with the pictures.
- ²⁴ Jesuiter was indicated by Henryk Latoś as the probable author of photos from Stroop's report – idem, op. cit.
- ²⁵ Marek Hendrykowski describes the film as follows: *Not a single moving image. Following sequences of successive cuts accompanied by repollero technique, we move, postcard after postcard, from Alpine mountain passes to the foreground of Warsaw and to the Przemysł Fortress, we take part in the bombing of the Tower Bridge in London, we shell Paris from the Big Bertha. All that to the beat of boisterous marching tunes, which turn this military passage into one big succession of conquests. But suddenly things start to complicate. Counted in dozens and hundreds of days, the frontline drudgery and toil, homesickness, no hope that the war would end soon, daily pain, illness, stays at field hospitals, and finally – death. A moment of silence marks the beginning of the second part of the film, in which postcards are replaced by wartime photos from a German album (found one day by the filmmaker at a used book seller's). The photographs show horrid, shocking images of the real effects of the war: Dead bodies in the streets, remains of bombed cities, soldiers' corpses in muddy front trenches, forests of crosses stretching up to the horizon. The jaunty marches are no longer to be heard, gloomy one-note music of death appears instead, occasionally punctuated by ominous percussion accents. And finally, the image of a simple soldier looking our way, holding yet more crosses for the fallen. His gaze at us is the last image of "Postkarten".* M. Hendrykowski, *Stanisław Różewicz*, Poznań 1999, pp. 98-99.
- ²⁶ The film uses fragments of Krzysztof Krauze's unfinished *Fotoamator*, which, had it been produced, would have probably been a "pure" iconographic film.
- ²⁷ Cf. T. Łysak, *O niemożliwej wierze w dokument. "Fotoamator" Dariusza Jabłońskiego*, "Kwartalnik Filmowy" 2003, no. 43 (English

- translation published in this volume as: idem, *On the Impossibility of Believing in the Documentary*. Dariusz Jabłoński's "Photographer").
- ²⁸ That the Germans have an inclination to photograph their crimes was known already during the war. Polish resistance movement knew how to use this: *In view of the sadism of Nazi perpetrators, manifesting itself for example in their habit of taking photos of themselves with their living, tormented or dead victims, spontaneous action was launched, and subsequently sanctioned with instructions from conspiratorial organisations, of thorough identification of films brought by Germans to photo studios to have them developed. Photo prints of pictures meant for albums of various Fleischers and Schmidts added to the repertory of Polish documentation of the time of the occupation. Using conspiratorial channels, the resistance managed to dispatch some of those photographs abroad. They shocked the public opinion in the West.* S. Ozimek, *Film polski w wojennej potrzebie*, Warszawa 1974, p. 160.
- ²⁹ *The hardest problem concerned the technique. We couldn't shoot this in some overtly fanciful way, although this is often done in similar situations. Those photographs had to be shown in as simple a manner as possible. We reproduced them one-to-one. I was only wondering how to approach such small objects. I decided to film them with zooms in, zooms out, and pans.* Tylko prawda. Z Michałem Bukojemskim, operatorem filmu "Patrzę na twoją fotografię", rozmawiała Iwona Cegielkówna, in: *Chelmska 21...*, op. cit., p. 194.
- ³⁰ Cf. J. Fuksiewicz, *Fotografie przywrócone życiu*, "Film" 1964, no. 16.
- ³¹ *When from 1968 to 1972 the Polish documentary sought to partially fill the "zones of non-visible reality", to use Marc Ferro's term, a fuller presentation of resistance activity and conspiracy fight was hindered not only by censorship, but more so by the lack of audiovisual material. (...) Sometimes, the shortages of archival film repertory were complemented by sets of photographs, both Polish and German in origin, which remained extant after the war or were found years later. At times, documentary narration was based on frames of photographs "animated" only with changing shots, editing, and music illustration. The specific asceticism of material occasionally produced unexpected cognitive and even aesthetic effects.* S. Ozimek, *Film dokumentalny*, in: *Historia filmu polskiego*, vol. 6 (1968-1972), ed. R. Marszałek, Warszawa 1994, p. 212.
- ³² The Polish underground's enormous difficulties in producing film material are described by Stanisław Ozimek, *Film polski w wojennej potrzebie*, op. cit.
- ³³ *Not everywhere and not all underground organisations allowed their members to take photographs. Only activities of the occupation authorities, round-ups, executions, and other forms of persecution could be presented in the photos. Photographed were also all kinds of German public notices displayed in the streets. Photography was employed first and foremost as a technique allowing to reproduce documents. The point was that no members of conspiracy organisations should be visible in photos, that their names, including the name of the photographer, should remain unknown.* H. Latoś, op. cit., p. 166.
- ³⁴ S. Ozimek, op. cit.
- ³⁵ T. Makarczyński, in: K. Karabas, *Bez fikcji. Z notatek filmowego dokumentalisty*, Warszawa 1985, p. 65.
- ³⁶ The commentary is read by Krzysztof Kolbasiuk, known to many viewers as the Warsaw Uprising soldier Łukas Zbożny, whom he played in Jan Łonnicki's popular TV series *Dom* (*The House*, 1980).
- ³⁷ *Yet, unlike memory, photographs do not in themselves preserve meaning. They offer appearances – with all the credibility and gravity we normally lend to appearances – prised away from their meaning. Meaning is the result of understanding functions. "And functioning takes place in time and must be explained in time. Only that which narrates can make us understand." Photographs in themselves do not narrate. Photographs preserve instant appearances.* J. Berger, *About Looking*, London 2009, p. 55.
- ³⁸ R. Nowak, *Ucieczka i powrót*, "Kino" 1984, no. 1.
- ³⁹ Cf. *Z kamerą w powstańczej Warszawie*. Text, photo selection, layout design S. Kopf, Warszawa 1994.
- ⁴⁰ A. Iskierko, "Gienek", czyli siła prawdomównych obrazów, "Ekran" 1968, no. 50.
- ⁴¹ *I would like to draw the amateurs' attention to iconographic documentary film also because it is easily achievable in their working environment. It can be made even in a small room, using one strong lamp (nitraphot or fotolite), or even sunlight. One can focus on the work, in peace and without third parties involved, carefully balancing frames and composing shots, one does not need to hide the film camera from camera-shy persons, or to carry its load around. And if something goes wrong the*

first time, one can easily and at any time repeat and improve the bad shot, without concern that in the meantime something has changed in the film set. Finally, with such films one can do justice to people and events of the past if they deserve the attention of the present and future generations. W. Stradomski, *Realizacja filmu w praktyce, przykłady i ćwiczenia wraz z metodyką szkolenia warsztatowego*, Warszawa 1969, pp. 13-14.

⁴² *The subject of our sample film will be the now historical facts connected with the outbreak and course of the uprising which began in Warsaw on August 1, 1944, and lasted for two months. Conducive to our plans is the abundance of photographic material, issued in special albums by several Polish publishers.* Ibidem, p. 14.

⁴³ *He owed the idea to Kazimierz Karabasz, who gave him an old photograph taken towards the end of the war; it showed two nicely dressed six-year-old boys holding rifles. Kieślowski filmed the story of finding them after many years.* S. Zawisliński, *Kieślowski. Ważne, żeby iść...* Izabelin 2005, p. 112.

⁴⁴ This photo was recently reproduced on the cover of the Italian edition of Norman Davis's *Rising '44. The Battle for Warsaw*.

⁴⁵ *The young documentary filmmaker Lang made a film in which the exhibition and "Kris's" photos served as a point of departure for his own (his generation's?) assessment of the Uprising tradition. The film begins in an intriguing way: the cinematographer wanders in the dark, the camera brings out brighter spots of the photos. Presented in this way, they seem to belong to the reality. We get the impression of peering from hiding at fragments of the reality of that time: the Uprising soldiers in helmets won from the Germans, the barricades, the ruins.* R. Nowak, op. cit.

⁴⁶ An interesting example of using photos together with other iconographic material is Piotr Andejew's *Fotoplastykon (Kaiserpanorama, 1978)*, which presents Zdzisław Beksiński's photographs and paintings.

⁴⁷ I develop this further in: M. Jazdon, *Fotografie w filmach Kazimierza Karabasza*, in: *Kadrowanie rzeczywistości. Szkice z socjologii wizualnej*, ed. J. Kaczmarek, Poznań 2004.

⁴⁸ Photos from the Warsaw Uprising served as a basis for photographic sequences in *Epizod z 1942 roku (An Episode from 1942, 1983)*, a teleplay based on the journals of Janusz Korczak, which Kazimierz Karabasz directed for the Polish Television Theatre.

⁴⁹ *Following Orders* takes for its point of departure the image which the Bundeswehr had at that time, and which tried to draw from the myth rather than tradition of Wehrmacht's "clean hands". The opening shots of the film show the FRG army training, and are accompanied by the following commentary: *The Bundeswehr – the largest land army in Western Europe. Already as many as half a million young Germans from the FRG are serving in it. They are the inheritors of German military tradition. A tradition followed also by the Wehrmacht during the difficult times of Hitler's rule; it kept its honour and clean hands. This is what young Germans are told, and the world. What is the truth about that military tradition and honour of the Wehrmacht thirty years ago?* At this point the shot stops in a freeze frame, the image of marching soldiers is suspended. *This film tells about small bits of a great war. Basing on the few extant photos – only about that which happened in Poland.*

⁵⁰ *I was fascinated by the way in which those young people approached photography. Usually in such circles works are discussed in terms of "I like it" or "I don't like it". And there I met with something totally unexpected. I was astonished that very young people can be so perceptive – and they were not students of art academies, no professors had hammered into them that "art is...", that art mediates between one human being and another. They were not backed up by extensive reading; as for photo albums, they only knew the most popular publications, namely yearbooks full of illustrated prospects. That could not be any inspiration for them. The inspiration came from within, from their sensitivity, and from someone in the Community Centre who animated them. Co można zobaczyć w szarości. Rozmowa Małgorzaty Sadowskiej z Kazimierzem Karabaszem, op. cit.*

⁵¹ K. Karabasz, *Cierpliwe oko*, Warszawa 1979, p. 116.

⁵² In his 1970 film *Pociąg (The Train)* Andrzej Brzozowski used photos taken of passengers in train cars and corridors. The film about a train pushing with difficulty through snow drifts was interpreted as a metaphor of the reality of that time.

⁵³ *"Portrait in a Drop of Water" is Karabasz's first post-1989 attempt to present a group portrait of Poles. Eight years have passed since the breakthrough of 1989. No more queuing, but no jobs either; the society began to exhibit views and attitudes unknown before, unex-*

pected. Centred around questions about people's satisfaction with their work, their anxieties, things that move them, their need for change, this portrait is in fact something more than the eponymous metaphorical drop. These simple questions and answers contain the essence of everyday human existence. Although we are usually unaware of them, it is by the answers to these questions that our choices are governed, our conduct in matters important and special. M. Hendrykowska, *Patrząc intensywnie*, in: *Klucze do rzeczywistości. Szkice i rozmowy o polskim filmie dokumentalnym po roku 1989*, ed. M. Hendrykowska, Poznań 2005, p. 119.

⁵⁴ Documentary films from photos are among the most often awarded Polish films: *Fleischer's Album* (Silver Wawel Dragon at the 2nd All-Polish Short Film Festival in Krakow – 1963, Golden Gate Award for best war reportage at San Francisco International Film Festival – 1963, honorary mention at the IFF in Mannheim – 1963), *A Working Day of Gestapo Man Schmidt* (Bronze Lajkonik at APSFF Krakow – 1964, honorary mention at the International Ethnographic and Sociological Film Festival in Florence – 1965, League of the German Democratic Republic for Friendship Among the Peoples Prize at IFF Oberhausen – 1965), *Leśni (The Forest People)* (Diploma of Recognition at the International Short Film Festival in Krakow – 1972, Polish Krzysztof Komeda Jazz Association Prize for Zygmunt Konieczny at APSFF Krakow – 1972), *I Am Looking at Your Photograph* (Grand Prix Golden Dragon at ISFF Krakow – 1979), *Death Album* (Honorary Diploma at IFF Leipzig – 1978), *Exodus* (Grand Prix Golden Lajkonik na APSFF Krakow – 1985, Special Honorary Prize Golden Lajkonik for Sylwester Braun “Kris” at APSFF Krakow – 1985).

⁵⁵ The interest in using photography in film not just as a testimony of the past, but as a way to access a special dimension of the reality, recently brought several noteworthy works, such as: Katarzyna Maciejko-Kowalczyk's *Benek blues* (1999), Andrzej Barański's *Fotografia*

jest sztuką trudną (Photography Is a Difficult Art, 1998), Dariusz Jabłoński's *Photographer* (1998) or Ireneusz Dobrowolski's *Portrecista (The Portraitist, 2005)*.

⁵⁶ *Diaporama* – an audiovisual show whose components are still images in the form of slides projected on a screen and sound synchronised with the projection. The soundtrack can be any kind of enhancement of the author's expression (music, recorded sounds, a text read out, etc.). *Diaporama* is an integrated form of sound and music, which are designed as an inseparable whole. In effect we get an original form of artistic expression, positioned between independent film and separate presentations of photographs and sound pieces. One should also note that it is a mistake to regard diaporama as a slideshow with music playing in the background. Such a presentation of pretty pictures is simply called a slideshow. Technically, diaporama is a show (also large-scale, e.g. in cinemas) of slides screened from several (at least two) projectors, to achieve the effect of image blending. In the 1980s, Polish tandems of authors presented projections rich in content, using nine or even twelve integrated projectors. In the 1980s and 1990s many Polish artists, basing on their artworks, presented this form of artistic expression, which was completely new, given the possibilities of the time, and accessible to anyone dealing with photography or music; it was a forerunner of present day multimedia. <http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diaporama> (cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diaporama> /accessed: 10.12.2013/).

⁵⁷ Edward Bryła at the Documentary Film Studio in Warsaw specialised in “mixed films” (with live action and elements of animation). He co-authored many films based on static photographs. In 1955 (so two years before *City of Gold* was made), he created photographic sequences for Kurt Weber's *Pod jednym niebem (Under One Sky)*, the first post-war documentary film about the Warsaw Ghetto. Already then, Bryła used various combinations of camera movements when filming the photos.