



FLOATING SKYSCRAPERS

A FILM BY TOMASZ WASILEWSKI

BANASIUK | NIERADKIEWICZ | GELNER | HERMAN | KUNA | ZBROJEWICZ | FRYCZ

ACTER EGO PICTURES in cooperation with SUPER KRAK, STUDIO Q, KATARZYNA MARCINIOWICZ, SOUNDPLACE, MUZYCZNE STUDIO PRODUKOWANE SPOT, TRAILEANDMORE, NATALIA SIWICKA present "FLOATING SKYSCRAPERS"
produced by ROMAN JAROSZ, IZABELA IGEŁ starring MAREK BANASIUK, MARTA NIERADKIEWICZ, BARTOSZ GELNER, KATARZYNA HERMAN, IZA KUNA, OLGA FRYCZ, MIROSLAW ZBROJEWICZ make up EWA KOWALCZYK
costumes MONIKA KALETA production design JACEK CZECHOWSKI editor ALEKSANDRA GOWIN music by BAASCH director of photography KUBA KJOWSKI written and directed by TOMASZ WASILEWSKI



Studio Q

SOUNDPLACE



Trailand More

FILMS *Abstrakcyjne*

FLOATING SKYSCRAPERS
(PŁYNAĆE WIEŻOWCE)

Written and Directed by
TOMASZ WASILEWSKI

starring

MATEUSZ BANASIUK as KUBA

MARTA NIERADKIEWICZ as SYLWIA

BARTOSZ GELNER as MICHAL

KATARZYNA HERMAN as EWA

OLGA FRYCZ as MONICA

IZA KUNA as KRYSZYNA

MIROSLAW ZBROJEWICZ as JACEK

Cinematography KUBA KIJOWSKI P.S.C. Editor ALEKSANDRA GOWIN

Original Score by BAASCH Production Designer JACEK CZECHOWSKI

Costumes MONIKA KALETA Makeup and Hairstyling EWA KOWALEWSKA

Producers ROMAN JAROSZ & IZABELA IGEL

93 minutes - Cinemascope - DCP 5.1

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SYNOPSIS

In his fifteenth year of training, aspiring champion swimmer Kuba lives a normal, uneventful life – at home with his mother and girlfriend. He happily switches back and forth from good sex with Sylwia to the occasional back rub his mother craves. But Kuba has also been growing more curious about some of the boys at the gym.

At a gallery opening one night, he is out of place and totally bored until he meets Michal. Sylwia picks up on his fascination, but Kuba has her heart. She keeps her feelings to herself, as from one day to the next Kuba puts Michal in the middle of his life with her.

Kuba drops his training program and begins to dream of another life. His mother is incredulous and urges him to stay on track. Meanwhile, Michal takes on the task of convincing his concerned mother and distant father that his lifestyle is not just a passing fancy.

Kuba comes to recognize he has never experienced feelings as deep as those he has for Michal. It takes all the courage he can muster to face those who love him and dive in. Then he must deal with the consequences.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Inspiration

“Floating Skyscrapers” addresses the theme of loneliness in our world today. The characters represent two generations, whose lives are closely intertwined. At the same time, each character is an individual striving to be true to his or her inner self. But as the dreamscape of their lives opens up, different paths appear. They discover they might have fewer things in common with each other than they thought – and only some of those things can be shared.

“Floating Skyscrapers” is a film about the human condition. It is about love, or the lack of it, and about the consequences of seeking out its substitutes. It is about wasted opportunities and lost dreams - about the contemporary world and its pitfalls.

Writing

I worked on the script of “Floating Skyscrapers” with the great conviction that I wanted to fill a gap in Polish cinema, which has lately been reluctant to tackle difficult contemporary stories. I was aware that the subject of love that is different and striving for social acceptance is still very much outside the realm of our national cultural conversation. I knew that the story had to be unique and intriguing, if it was to trigger a change in the way some people still perceive these issues.

I focused my efforts on making the plot as appealing as I could to a wide audience. It is addressed to both young and older viewers.

I was especially particular about the construction of the narrative, to keep it logical and suspenseful. I worked at writing a film that would capture the viewer's imagination and hold it from the very first scene.

I also wanted my characters to resonate psychologically and be socially believable. Each of them is configured with deep psychological attributes. I aimed at making each easily identifiable in the real world. Their strength, which springs from a deep analysis of each character's inner self, highlights the notion that has been at the core of this project from the very beginning – that I wanted to make a film for general audiences with a clear ethical message and a forthright, no holds barred depiction of the way we live today.

Directing

The subject that interests me most is human behavior and everything that concerns human life, down to the smallest, most commonplace and unimportant details.

I love riding the subway and do it for hours on end in every city I travel to. I especially love the New York subway - staring at people and finding a strange kind of intimacy in the rush hours. It is then that people are forced to reduce the physical distance between them with the resulting embarrassment either disappearing completely or violently increasing. I feel that it forces people to drop their masks as weary commuters and forget about controlling their behavior. In those moments I find people to be the most pure and interesting.

Making films is a bit like riding the subway. I look for intimacy, closeness and truth. Writing and filming "Floating Skyscrapers" I focused on capturing the moments, the emotional states, the meditation. Not the events themselves but rather all those little things that happen to a character around the moment of reaching a decision. In film, like in the real life, it is not the effect but the process that enriches us. It is this process that lets us to learn more and it is this process that causes us to stop what we are doing and then makes us whole again.

New York was in a way my inspiration. I am glad all the more that the world premiere of the film will take place in this unique city. I was thirteen and gazing at the skyscrapers of Midtown when I came up with the title "Floating Skyscrapers." I decided then that someday I would make a film with this title. My inspirations are many and varied - films, directors, actors, people I meet. All are equally important. I love the cinema, I love movies – and sometimes feel that they are the only things that keep me going. Ulrich Seidl's "Paradise: Love" and "Import/Export," Michael Haneke's "Hidden", Darren Aronofsky's "Black Swan", Steve McQueen's "Shame", Lars von Trier's "Melancholia" and "Dancer in the Dark", Sofia Coppola's "Somewhere", Steven Soderbergh's "Traffic", Pedro Almodóvar's "Volver" and Andrea Arnold's "Fish Tank" are just a few of the movies that I love - the movies I go back to. The work of these directors has enriched my work in ways I can only guess at.

Casting

I began by casting Marta Nieradkiewicz as Sylwia; Katarzyna Herman as Kuba's mother Ewa; Iza Kuna as Michal's mother, Krystyna, and Miroslaw Zbrojewicz as Michal's father, Jacek. I know them very well and moved quickly to get them on board as soon as we started production. Katarzyna and Miroslaw were both in my first film, and I could sing their praises for hours. I know how it may sound – I adore them; but the truth of the matter is that they are both bona fide actors. The same goes for Marta and Iza. These exceptional artists are a dream come true for every director and casting them in my film was an obvious choice. The awfully talented and natural Olga Frycz joined cast as Sylwia's best friend Monika soon afterwards. They represent everything I look for in actors.

Casting the boys proved to be much more complicated. Eventually, I opted for a traditional casting call, during which I found Bartosz Gelner to play Michal on the very last day. At first I thought about him for Kuba, but we soon realized that he would make a better Michal. He read with many actors for more than six hours. It was only late in the day that Mateusz Banasiuk finally appeared. He could only stay thirty minutes before rushing off to the theatre. Two days later, going through casting footage, it struck me that Mateusz would be perfect as Kuba. It was incredible to see him totally immersed in his character from the very first take of the screen test. It was only later I learned he and Bartosz are actually friends. I am always fascinated by personalities that are so terrifically magnetic as Kuba is. That magnetism is central to the role. Kuba is something of a romantic character, destroying all those who love him.

What I look for in actors is inspiration and creativity. Above all, trust and dedication build strong partnerships. If I were to lose trust for even a single moment, I would lose interest and working together would become impossible. For me, making films is not a job but a dream come true. I only want to work with people of the same mindset - those for who like me consider our work a question of life and death. Being a perfectionist, I would much rather have an actor turn down a part than lose his motivation half way through.

About the Director

Tomasz Wasilewski was born in 1980 in Torun, Poland. He graduated from The National Film School in Lodz and was assistant director on numerous stage plays and films. He also worked on international co-productions such as Lars von Trier's "Antichrist" and Per Fly's "The Woman Who Dreamed of a Man." He is currently the scriptwriter for a series on Polish National Television. His full-length feature debut "In a Bedroom" had its world premiere in Karlovy Vary in 2012, and has been one the most prominent Polish films on the international festival circuit.

About the Actors

Mateusz Banasiuk, who plays Kuba, graduated in 2011 from the Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw and anchors his career in theatre, film and television. He plays the drums and won 2013 national swimming championship, competing in the actors category. In 2012, he received the prestigious Felix Warszawski Award for his performance as Romek in Henryk Worcell's play "Zaklęte rewiry."

Bartosz Gelner, who plays Michal, works in film and television. He graduated from the Ludwik Solski State Drama School in Cracow.

Marta Nieradkiewicz, who plays Sylwia, graduated from Lodz Film School. At the 25th Theatre Schools Festival in 2007, she received a distinction from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage for her role as Klarysa Hailsham-Brown in the play "Spider's Web" and the Audience Award for "the most electrifying" female performance.

About the Producers

Roman Jarosz and **Izabela Igel** founded Alter Ego Picutres as a production and distribution entity. Tomasz Wasilewski's "Floating Skyscrapers" is the company's first feature film. They have been involved in the distribution of Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's "The Kid with a Bike," Laurent Bouzereau's "Roman Polanski: A Film Memoir," and Marius Holst's "King of Devil's Island."

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