

Everyone's story is unique and life surpasses imagination

A film by Paweł Łoziński

The Balcony Movie



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(Film Balkonowy)

Can the world be locked in one film frame?

Is there a chance to meet an entire cross-section of people by putting the camera in a fixed place? Maybe it's enough to stop for a moment to get a deeper insight.

Paweł Łoziński, Polish documentary film director believes in it. For him everyone's story is unique and life surpasses imagination. His newest - *The Balcony Movie*, is an art-house observational documentary film project. Łoziński is watching people from the balcony of his apartment in Warsaw, doing what he likes the most - observing the world around him.

„What would happen if I put a camera on my first floor balcony, and talk to passers-by? Would they still want to talk? I decided to check and... it worked! I've decided to stop and wait for the world to come. I was looking at people on the street, catching everyone who walked past below. From time to time some of them slowed down or stopped, and that was my chance to talk to them and listen to what they said. What about? About life.”

Łoziński spent more than 2 years on his balcony and made over 1,000 interviews. Finally in the film about 80 heroes appeared. By showing a short section of a pavement and people stopping on it, Paweł Łoziński creates in his film a universal, interesting and touching story about our current world. Characters are seen from above. We can watch them smiling, sad, thoughtful, staring at telephones. Among them there are residents of the neighbourhood or random guests, Poles and foreigners, ordinary pedestrians. Hardly anyone is the person they look like. People are full of mysteries and secrets. They're not easy to pigeonhole. The conversations uncover vivid emotions, thoughts, attitudes, and show a very sincere reflection of the human condition.

a documentary written, directed and filmed by
PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI

produced by
ŁOZIŃSKI PRODUCTION, HBO MAX, MAZOWIA WARSAW FILM FUND
A POLISH FILM INSTITUTE CO-FINANCED PRODUCTION

100' / 4K / COLOUR / LANGUAGE: POLISH / SUB. ENGLISH
COUNTRY: POLAND / ORIGINAL TITLE: FILM BALKONOWY

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www.thebalconymovie.com

DIRECTOR

PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI

Polish director, cameraman and producer of documentaries. Author of more than 20 award-winning documentaries. Graduate of the Directing Department at the Film School in Łódź. He worked as an assistant to Krzysztof Kieślowski on *Three Colors: White*. He makes distinct and emotionally charged films about people of whom he draws intimate portraits. His films such as debut *Birthplace, Sisters, Chemo, Father and Son* and the latest *You Have No Idea How Much I Love You* are considered innovative as they venture into new thematic areas and explore uncharted spaces within the documentary film genre.

CREDITS

WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND FILMED BY **PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI**
EDITED BY **PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI, PIASEK&WÓJCIK**
MUSIC COMPOSED AND PERFORMED BY **JAN DUSZYŃSKI**
SOUND POSTPRODUCTION **FRANCISZEK KOZŁOWSKI UCHO STUDIO**
IMAGE POSTPRODUCTION **COLOROFFON**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **ZOFIA KUJAWSKA**
PRODUCERS **PAWEŁ ŁOZIŃSKI, AGNIESZKA MANKIEWICZ (IDFX)**
PRODUCER HBO MAX **IZABELA ŁOPUCH (PGP)**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER HBO MAX **HANKA KASTELICOWA**
PRODUCED BY **ŁOZIŃSKI PRODUCTION, HBO MAX, MAZOVIA WARSAW FILM FUND**
A POLISH FILM INSTITUTE CO-FINANCED PRODUCTION

WORLD PREMIERE

74 LOCARNO FILM FESTIVAL 4-14.08.2021
SEMAINE DE LA CRITIQUE

SCREENINGS

Saturday 7.08.2021, 11.00, La Sala, Sub. English, Q&A
Sunday 8.08.2021, 9.00, PalaCinema 1, Sub. English



EVERYONE'S STORY IS UNIQUE AND LIFE SURPASSES IMAGINATION

THE BALCONY MOVIE

a feature documentary
by Paweł Łoziński

I believe that one doesn't have to run after the heroes through different continents, to the end of the world to register their diversity. This „end of the world” came to me by itself.

- *Good morning, I'm filming a balcony movie here, can you talk to me for a moment?*
- *But what do you want to talk about?*
- *About life!*

I assume that everyone has a story to tell, so I was just listening and writing a journal of meetings with the heroes for more than two years. Some people responded to me briefly, others opened themselves for a deeper, sometimes philosophical conversation. They stopped at the fence for a moment, which often turned into a long conversation. From the first sentence they ceased to be anonymous. They often surprised me with a dialogue, a history, a punch line.

- *I am a woman who by a twist of fate has become very happy.*
- *How did it happen?*
- *It's a secret.*
- *Oh... But now you've aroused my curiosity. It's not fair.*
- *Maybe not, but my happiness might be unhappiness to someone else.*

Some of the days brought many important conversations, others made it impossible to go on, due to street renovations, cars parking, manifestations happening in the neighborhood. A day spent on waiting for better conditions tended to repay with a great evening talk. It was like fishing - I dropped the line, and waited patiently. I listened to emotional and very personal stories. People's readiness to let me into their intimate world constantly amazes me. It turned out that this project became a response to a great human need to talk and confide. Sometimes I had the impression that people talking to me actually talked aloud to themselves or to someone who was above us all.

- *Good morning, good morning, have you got a moment?*
- *I've no time, I'm hurrying to the doctor's.*
- *Oh, hello, madam, maybe you have time to talk.*
- *About what?*
- *I talk to people about life here.*

- *Oh dear, you've got the wrong person.*
- *Why so?*
- *Because my life is a mess at the moment.*

10 meters of the sidewalk became a "stage" on which the protagonists performed. I captured them passing by their road through life. They stepped into my frame with their stories, some seemingly banal, other heavy, some light and some sad ones. I was fascinated by the fact that I could not predict what was going to happen each moment. I was driven by a great curiosity to see who would appear in my frame, what they would tell me in a moment. I wanted this feeling of curiosity to be transferred to the viewer.

- *So I wander the streets of Warsaw and I don't know what to do with myself. Should I do a robbery or something, just go back to the old path, back to jail, 'cos that's easiest.*
- *Better not.*
- *Yeah, better not. I've got no prospects. In jail I took my high-school exams and I've got a tiler's apprenticeship diploma. I came out full of enthusiasm, but a few days on I'm full of rage and anger. I haven't been aggressive to anyone yet.*
- *Where do you live?*
- *On the street.*

The unconventional camera setting and different point of view on people, made the conversations resemble a secular confessional. I became part of the set design of this street, a fixed point to which one can address a question, a request, or a new story. I was convinced that from the balcony one could see and hear more. The world seen slightly from above is even a bit more interesting and this point of view doesn't diminish the problems of the people below at all. On the contrary, from the balcony you can see much more!

- *What a strange format, you stand there on your balcony, while I have to crane my neck, you're comfortable.*
- *But I'm down here, I'm having to bend, it's giving me backache.*
- *Ah, now it turns out you're worse off than I am.*
- *So what meaning do you see in life?*
- *Oh dear, don't ask.*
- *I have to probe.*
- *The meaning of life is profound, but with time it matures into what's this life for.*

The form of this project reminds me a bit of the first film experiments of the Lumière brothers. The idea is similar: a man comes to the camera. I would like to refer formally to the beginnings of the cinema, except that the man who approaches the camera leaves a testimony, and tells the story.

- *And what's the book about?*
- *"What is mankind's place within the universe? Is the Earth in danger from us? Or is it that we're a danger to ourselves?" It's about space, and about everything, in the thoughts of this wonderful man, whatever came into his mind, he wrote about it.*
- *Well quite, what do you think our place is?*
- *Entirely accidental and tiny. We have no special place in the universe, we're like a tiny dot of chance somewhere in the ocean of unimaginable space. Oops!*

Experiments in films let us take a look at the world from an unusual, original point of view. This time we get an image that could be registered anywhere. It is not important if it is Warsaw, Paris or London. I strongly believe that the story of meetings with passers-by under the balcony, has a chance to become universal. We get a condensed picture of human reality, filled with truth and emotions. This is a film about us and for us.

Paweł Łoziński
Warsaw, August 2nd 2021

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The Balcony Movie



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ŁOZIŃSKI PRODUCTION

HBO MAX

MW P&A MAZOWIA WARSZAWA FILM FUND

POLISH FILM INSTITUTE

FILM PARTNER IDFX

DEVELOPMENT WITH THE SUPPORT OF

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