

SIX FILMS

Agnieszka Polska

12.10—1.11.2025

opening: Saturday October 11, 7—9 PM

galeria skala, Poznań,

free entry

“We are currently confined together in one space.” This sentence, which appears in Agnieszka Polska’s film *The Longing Gaze* (2021), captures the experience of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The film consists of recordings from industrial cameras. Its characters are physically separated, but they live in a shared, global space, organized and supervised by technology.

In her films, Polska reflects on the contemporary human condition, which is shaped by the new flow of information, the flexible concept of time, and the changing value systems. She does so in a characteristic, storytelling manner—her visual essays resemble ghostly séances in which the narrative collides with images of a new, technological reality.

The Book of Flowers (2023) explores the theme of coexistence, shifting the narrative from the technological to the biological sphere. The film tells the story of a fantastic, millennia-long, close symbiosis between flowers and humans. It is an alternative form of interspecies relationship, based not on domination, but on a symbiotic, deep interdependence.

Agnieszka Polska’s films are characterized by a sophisticated yet critical approach to the tools she uses. *The Book of Flowers* (2023) combines animation created using artificial intelligence with 16 mm film production. The film *Ask the Siren* (2017) uses digital image manipulation: the artist transforms a woman’s face, disrupting its routine perception and leading to its defamiliarization.

In *Watery Rhymes* (2014), the viewer’s gaze is guided by three-dimensional subtitles, consisting of a collection of terms describing non-renewable resources. The subtitles float in an iridescent liquid contained in a champagne glass. They overlap and become increasingly illegible as their forms dissolve into the image. Polska poeticizes the utilitarian role of language, confronting it with images of the mining industry and the voice of a narrator. In this way, she explores the physicality of language and the limits of communication. In *The Happiest Thought* (2019), we experience a mixture of voices, songs, and false notes, with which the artist alternately disturbs and calms the human nervous system. She forces the viewer to concentrate completely and, with an almost hypnotic suggestion, induces a state close to contemplation, making full use of her control over their perception.

Through a variety of verbal and visual tools, the artist helps us understand the reality that surrounds us. However, she uses new technologies in such a way as not to intensify the lowest human passions in her audience – vanity, ostentation, self-admiration, or moralizing tendencies. The field of her reflection remains the social circulation of meanings – how circulating images organize our everyday lives.

Jess Łukawsk

Agnieszka Polska (1985, Lublin) studied at the Faculty of Arts at UMCS in Lublin (2004–2005), at the Faculty of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow (2005–2010), and at the University of the Arts in Berlin (2008–2009). She is the winner of the Preis der Nationalgalerie award (2017) and the third edition of the Film Award (2013) granted by the Polish Film Institute, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, and the Wajda School.

Polska's works have been presented at MoMA in New York, the Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris, and Tate Modern in London, among others. Her solo exhibitions have been organized at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, and Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, and more. Agnieszka Polska participated in the 57th Venice Biennale, the 11th Gwangju Biennale, and the 24th and 19th Sydney Biennale.

List of films

The Happiest Thought (2019) 21 min.

The Longing Gaze (2021) 13 min.

Watery Rhymes (2014) 4 min.

Ask the Siren (2017) 8 min.

Perfect Lives (2019) 9 min.

The Book of Flowers (2023) 9 min. 30 s.

Courtesy the artist Agnieszka Polska and Dawid Radziszewski Gallery.

The exhibition is co-financed with funds from the Department of Culture of the City of Poznań and the Department of Culture of the Marshal's Office of the Greater Poland Voivodeship in Poznań.