



AFTERIMAGE

"Andrzej Wajda's Afterimage is a late masterpiece in a career already marked by many illustrious films. The 90-year-old director's work has lost none of its force of outrage over the years, but this film carries extra resonance in light of the contemporary situation in Poland, even though the film is set in the dark days of Soviet communist rule. Based on the life of the avant-garde artist Wladyslaw Strzemiński, it blazes with energy, passion, and controlled fury as it follows the life of a man who refuses to bend to official ideology, even when it threatens his very existence."

Piers Handling

The Miami Film Festival (MFF) has brought dozens of light and heavy, uplifting and intense, fanciful and realistic, joyful and gritty, and happy and soul-searing movies to Miami for over three decades. These are films that may not always be mainstream features nor garner a huge audience, but each film does present a beautifully crafted, thoughtful story with intellectually stimulating points of view that stay with the viewer long after the final credits. MFF is committed to bringing these wonderful contributions from around the world.

On March 6, 2017, the American Institute of Polish Culture partnered with MFF for a reception following the film, *Afterimage*, shown at the trendy Lincoln Center's Regal Theater in Miami. Written and directed by the renowned Polish director, Andrzej Wajda, it is a perfect example of quality filmmaking that has been produced in Poland for decades. *Afterimage* was Wajda's last project before he died in 2016.

When the Second World War ended; and as a result of the 1945 Yalta Agreement between Great Britain represented by Churchill, the U.S. by Roosevelt and Russia by Stalin, a Communist government was installed in Poland. Many Poles felt betrayed by their wartime allies and dozens of Polish soldiers refused to return to Poland because of Soviet repression. The movie captures this

post-WWII period when the Russian-imposed totalitarian regime in Poland began to crush any creativity not sanctioned by communists, and how it destroyed those who were unwilling to compromise their vision for the oppressors. Countless Poles suffered horribly at the hands of the suppressors, but none more than citizens who were well-to-do, cultured or educated as they could, and did whenever possible, expose the true tyranny of the new order.

In the 1950's, internationally known avant-garde artist and theoretician, Wladyslaw Strzemiński, who was also a founder of the Higher School of Plastic Arts in Lodz, became a target of relentless suppression because of his refusal to denounce his artistic beliefs and expressions. What happened to him and to so many others in the arts who opposed the regime's mandates makes for a powerful, disturbing and ultimately very sad story, and one Andrzej Wajda lived through. He too was forced to endure extreme censorship and possible professional and personal ruin, but he managed to secretly put together films that won worldwide acclaim and praise.

AIPC plans to continue our ongoing collaboration with MFF in supporting cutting edge films that represent a cross-section of life in Poland - past and present.