



**Magiczny
Kraków**

Krakov blossoms in May!

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In Kraków's cultural calendar, May is always filled with a plethora of events: dozens of festivals, scores of concerts, ubiquitous outdoor events, and seemingly endless new exhibitions. Alongside festivals with an international slant and a permanent place on European circuits, it's worth noting the impressive block of film festivals, the unique Miłosz Festival focusing on poetry, and the omnipresent Photomonth in Kraków. And they have a few things in common: they all get their audiences involved, they tackle tricky issues of today, they have fascinating formats, and present captivating guests.

The festival cornucopia started on the first day of the month with the **PKO Off Camera** festival celebrating independent cinema (**1-10 May**). The international part of the competition is open to filmmakers at the threshold of their careers, while the Kraków Film Award is given to the director of the best debut or second film. We will also see the latest releases as part of the Polish Feature Film Competition. Thematic sections tackle issues of contemporary culture and pop-culture (*Loudly Moving Pictures*, *Screening Fashion*) alongside important problems faced by today's society (*Age (in)Appropriate*, *United Colours of Humanity*). Special guests included the icon of Italian cinema Claudia Cardinale and Lars von Trier's favourite actor Stellan Skarsgård; the record-breaking festival was accompanied by numerous concerts (www.offcamera.pl).

On **14 May**, the **13th Photomonth** in Kraków kicked off – a leading European photography festival and one of the most important cyclical events dedicated to visual arts in Poland. The theme of this year's festival was conflict. Wojciech Nowicki, curator of the Main Programme, brought together legends of the worlds of photography and the arts (Josef Koudelka, Zhang Dali), rising stars (Indrė Šerpytytė, Joanna Piotrowska) and acclaimed, innovative curators. The ShowOFF section presented exhibitions by young artists, the latest instalment of the Portfolio Review, and dozens of accompanying events such as meetings, projections and workshops. Photomonth in Kraków also runs alongside the Krakow Photo Fringe, presenting dozens of exhibitions across the city.

It's also worth adding that the exhibition of works by Indrė Šerpytytė, held as part of Photomonth in Kraków, is presented at MOCAK; on 15 May, the Museum of Contemporary Art inaugurates one of its most important exhibitions this year: *Gender in Art* (www.mocak.pl). The same evening, all of Kraków's museums opened their doors as part of the annual Museum Night, this year running under the common theme *Night of Light*.

In mid-May, Kraków welcomed poets arriving for the **4th Miłosz Festival (14-17 May)**. Since its inception, the biennial event has been bringing together authors and critics of poetry, making it Poland's most important occasion of its kind. This is largely due to its open formula – the festival doesn't explore the works of the Polish Nobel laureate directly, but rather reaches for themes from his imagination. This year's inspiration is *A Book of Luminous Things* – the acclaimed anthology of world poetry edited by Czesław Miłosz and published in the US. Guests included the American poet Robert Hass and the great-great-granddaughter of Charles Darwin Ruth Padel. (www.miloszfestival.pl)

This year's **Film Music Festival (27-31 May)** had extraordinary new settings. The organisers invited



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audiences to events held at two brand new venues opened in Kraków last year. Poland's largest sports and exhibition hall Tauron Arena Kraków and the prestigious ICE Kraków Congress Centre. A myriad stars (including Oscar winners!) of the film music world, fascinating projects, soundtracks from the most popular TV dramas and video games all the way to compositions for films by Andrzej Wajda and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, as well as the finale flight aboard the Starship Enterprise... This year's programme was accompanied by events for children as part of the FMF4kids cycle, including the symphonic concert *Young Way Into the Classics* and screenings of films from the Gruffalo series with the soundtracks by festival guest René Aubry performed live (www.fmf.fm).

And that was not all for film fans: the **55th Kraków Film Festival** kicked off at the end of the month (**31 May - 7 June**). Prestigious awards in the competitions for Polish (Golden Lajkonik) and international (Golden Horn) documentaries, animations and features, short films (Golden Dragon) and music documentaries (Golden Hejnał) awaited the finest filmmakers. This year's Dragon of Dragons lifetime achievement award went to the Estonian director Priit Pärn. Other festival attractions included the cycles *Somewhere in Europe*, *Festivals Award Winners* and *Panorama of the Polish Film*. The cinematography from Lithuania was the special guest of the *Focus on ...* cycle. During the eight festival days, four competitions and 11 other sections presented a total of around 250 documentaries and short films the majority of which shown in Poland for the first time. Screenings were accompanied by events held as part of the Industry Zone, concerts, meetings with artists, workshops, outdoor cinema and the Docs+Science section (www.kff.com.pl).