



## ARTISTS ON STRIKE

**Production: WOJTEK FILMS (Poland) & Filmlux (Italy)**

**DOCUMENTARY**

**Runtime 115 min. (theatrical release)**

**Screenplay and directing: Elena de Varda**

**Original Music Score: Louis Siciliano (associated producer)**

**PRODUCTION CONTACT:**

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**CAST:** *Krystyna Janda, Olgier Łukasiewicz, Lech Wałęsa, Teatr Ósmego Dnia ["Eight Day's Theatre"], Jerzy Kalina, Krzysztof Skiba (Pomarańczowa Alternatywa ["Orange Alerntywa"]) and Big Cyc), Janiccy twin brothers (Kantor theatre actors), Józef Robakowski, Jerzy Bereś, Tymon Tymanski and many others.*

### **LOGLINE:**

ART AND FREEDOM. Between 1975 and 1989, the most important contemporary artistic movement of underground and independent culture in the world developed in Poland and changed the world under the keyword "Solidarity". Among many artists, participate in the documentary the well known actors Krystyna Janda and Olgierd Łukasiewicz and the Nobel Peace Prize Lech Wałęsa. ART and CULTURE could change the world!

**WOJTEKFILMS** Pl. Powstańców Warszawy 2A, 00-030 Warsaw, Poland - [www.wojtekfilms.eu](http://www.wojtekfilms.eu)

**FILMLUX**, Milan, Italy - [www.filmlux.it](http://www.filmlux.it)



## **SYNOPSIS:**

**Between 1975 and 1989, the most important contemporary artistic movement of underground and independent culture in the world developed in Poland.** In 1981, Polish artists during martial law signed

a document stating that they would not perform or participate in shows or expositions in spaces belonging to the State (television, galleries, newspapers and so on), because the State was an enemy.

It was the beginning of the most powerful independent artistic movement in the contemporary world: artists started to perform only in private flats and churches (it was a time when the church supported artists), books were printed illegally and distributed on a massive scale by hand, actors refused to perform on public television and in the general climate of fear, artists showed up to perform on the streets, creating massive movements (such as the "Orange Alternative"), their goal to be arrested en masse (the prisons had not enough space and it was causing the government a big problem). Even the secret police agents were so fascinated by this artistic world, that they left the best documentation about art life in the secret archives, documentation found by the author of the documentary. Nobody believed that the Soviet dictatorship was going to fall down.

This cultural movement was independent from the syndicate "Solidarność", even though intellectuals and artists were sympathizers. For example, the renowned artist *Joseph Beuys* donated about 1000 drawings and art pieces to the Museum in Lodz in 1981, to demonstrate his solidarity to Poland. Many artists came from all over the world to fraternize with Polish artists ("Konstrukcja w Procesie").

Through performances, visions, archive material and individual stories of some artists; we create a peculiar fresco of those times which changed Europe under the slogan of "Solidarity". We come back from the past to the contemporary world, through a space-time journey and we involve some of those artists to participate on a new issue: **Consumerism has replaced Communism, how did the idea of freedom and solidarity change its meaning?** **We start from Poland and my personal story:** an Italian girl from Milan, an 18-year-old "communist" girl, who got a scholarship from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow in 1987/89 and had to cope with real Communism in Poland: the queues in shops, the lack of grocery products, no access to media and an incredible hidden and clandestine world of art and culture, which she discovers. Now a general amnesia about the past seems to dominate contemporary world.

## **CO PRODUCERS**



**CONTEMPORARY ART CENTR  
"LAZNIA" IN GDAŃSK**



**CITY OF GDANSK**



*Leslaw and Wacek Janicki , going to Kanonicza Street where the theatre of Tadeusz Kantor began*



*Students in Ulica Pomorska 2*



*The actress Krystyna Janda*



*Westerplatte, Gdansk: here started and finished the WWII*



*Jerzy Bereś and the "Fire of Truth", 1985, Krakow*



Marek Sapetto in 1982, the "Art in suitcase"



*Installation in the Church in Zytia street in Warsaw,  
"The last Supper", Jerzy Kalina 1983*



*Graphic by Leszek Sobocki, 1982*



*Lech Wałęsa*



*The big story has become a tourist souvenir , the mask of Lech Wałęsa*



*Entry to the shipyards, immortalized in Wajda films. An artistic performans starts where Solidarność was born.*





*Krzysztof Skiba, the founder of the music Group "Big Cyc" and animator of the "Orange Alternative" in Łódź*



*Tymon Tymanski, composer and singer. He begun his artistic experience in TOTART*



*The actors from the Kantor's Theatre, the Janiczy brothers, carrying the suitcase of memory.*

**DIRECTOR'S NOTE:**

*I wanted to tell the relationship between art and freedom, through a personal and at the same time very universal story that changed the entire world in 1989. A story never told. I had the honor to meet and interview the Nobel Peace Prize Lech Wałęsa, Krystina Janda and Olgierd Łukaszewicz and many other extraordinary artists protagonists of this collective story.*

*Elena de Varda (director)*