

research is based on extensive knowledge of poetics, linguistics, history of Polish literature, biographies of specific authors (including anecdotes like the one on Stanisław Barańczak whose broken leg was perceived as a testimony of his national martyrdom), and sound research methodology, complemented by proficiency in using the Praat program, which allows for the objectivization of auditory impressions regarding the intensity, pitch, and duration of a sound. There is, however, a method to this madness. Her eclectic research perspective brings many discoveries and explains certain properties of the poetic worlds of the writers under study. This is best seen in the passages on Wat. The close listening of “Ode III” proves that the oral version of the poem is an independent work, and the surprising pronunciation of the noun “skóra” (skin) introduces religious overtones of lamentation. Only few conclusions by Kremer I find unconvincing. Can Różewicz’s “unbeautiful reading” really be considered as experimental and revolutionary in terms of broadening the limits of poetry? The differences in Różewicz’s performances seem rather random to me, while his “meta-poetic” comments are probably fueled by coyness.

ŁUKASZ TISCHNER
Jagiellonian University in Kraków

Polish Cinema Today: A Bold New Era in Film. By Helena Gosciło and Beth Holmgren. London: Lexington Books 2021. xi, 348 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$120.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2023.43

Helena Gosciło and Beth Holmgren’s *Polish Cinema Today* is an ambitious attempt at describing the heterogeneity and complexity of contemporary Polish film production, or in authors’ words: “a phenomenal new age in twenty-first-century Polish cinema that is at once accretive and audacious, encompassing well-made genre films and quite astonishing arthouse productions, and evincing greater thematic and stylistic diversity than ever before” (2). Gosciło and Holmgren contrast the current state of Polish cinema with its predecessors of the socialist “golden age,” in their opinion much more polarized and unambiguous than today’s productions.

Gosciło and Holmgren decided to take a selective approach and thus concentrated on carefully chosen films grouped according to the recurring themes the authors consider important (some films are analyzed in more than one perspective). The central issues in contemporary Polish cinema are presented by means of close analysis of film texts. In a brief Introduction readers learn about the key processes that shaped contemporary Polish film production. The introduction is followed by eight chapters, each devoted to different threads in Polish cinema. The book opens with a chapter dedicated to the representations of the Catholic Church that traces the signs of changing attitudes toward this institution in Polish society. The second chapter raises problems of migration, both from the perspective of those who live abroad and through the lenses of migrants’ relatives who stayed in the country. Then, the authors analyze several films that deal with the changing role and vision of family, laying stress on the notion of motherhood, an obvious decision given the role of the Polish Mother figure in Polish culture. Chapter 4 introduces new perspectives on Christian-Jewish relations during the twentieth century, resulting partly from recent scholarship on antisemitism and Polish citizens’ complicity in Holocaust. In the following chapter Gosciło and Holmgren present films that portray crime and criminals that range from serial killers active during state socialism to corruption within authorities after the 1989 transition. Next, the

authors concentrate on the representations of Cold War, often referring to works made during the Cold War, or the “golden age” of Polish cinema. The last part of the book focuses on sexuality: the seventh chapter analyzes several movies that depict female sexuality generally in progressive, not puritan ways, and the final chapter revolves around the images of male homosexual relationships that are described mainly on a basis of films directed by women.

All the chapters can be read independently of each other and may easily engage in dialogue with international scholarship on issues here analyzed on the example of Polish cinema. The fact that detailed and generally well-contextualized analyses are based on extensive literature gives the readers the possibility to get acquainted with Polish film criticism that could otherwise be difficult for the non-Polish speaking audience. The accent on a trend to “combine... continuity and change” (287) in regard to production from the period of state socialism enables the authors to convincingly sketch the evolution of Polish cinema while simultaneously imposing certain limitations on the scope of the book.

Readers of *Polish Cinema Today* could benefit from a careful explanation of the motivations behind choices regarding both themes that structure the book and films that have been chosen as exemplifications. The omissions are highly interesting. Given the limitations of this review, I will name only one example. The authors excluded many popular genre films—as for instance romantic comedies whose renaissance has been visible at the beginning of the twenty-first century—that seem in their opinion “hardly contribute... anything significant to Polish cinema in the long term” (176), thus resigning from drawing the broader picture of Polish film production (even if it were to serve as a context for analyses and interpretations) and concentrating on creating a new film canon instead.

All things considered, the overview of Polish cinema offered by Gosciolo and Holmgren is an insightful and thought-provoking read, even though the promise to present “a bold new era in film” has been only partially fulfilled.

DAGMARA RODE
University of Łódź

What Will Be Already Exists: Temporalities of Cold War Archives in East-Central Europe and Beyond. Ed. Emese Kürti and Zsuzsa László. Bielefeld, Germany:

Transcript Verlag, 2021. 198 pp. Notes. Bibliography. \$55.00, paper.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2023.44

This is a long overdue collection of essays that examines archives and the phenomenon of self-archivization by artists in east central Europe. While self-archivization is not unique to the region, there are aspects to it that are unique to this context. As it is widely known, much of the contemporary, experimental art that developed in the region did so independent of major institutions. There was no real art market to speak of, so any independent gallery that existed was usually set up by the artists themselves—for example, Ewa Partum’s *Galeria Adres*, established in 1972 in Łódź, Poland, which is discussed in this volume. The publication takes the 2020 conference “Artpool 40—Active Archives and Art Network” at the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest as its point of departure. Artpool is also an archive that was set up by artists. Founded in 1979 in Budapest, its purpose was to preserve the avant-garde activity taking place in the country at the time, which was not recognized by the state. This text examines a range of examples of other “active archives” and artist archives across the region.