

TRICKS

(Sztuczki)

A Film by

Andrzej Jakimowski

Europa Cinemas Award Venice Film Festival 2007

Golden Lion Best Film, Polish Film Festival 2007



Poland 2007 / 96 minutes / 1.85

Certificate: tbc

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Tricks

Written and directed by	ANDRZEJ JAKIMOWSKI
Produced by	ANDRZEJ JAKIMOWSKI
Production Manager	MARIUSZ MIELCZAREK
Cinematography	ADAM BAJERSKI
Editing	CEZARY GRZESIUK
Music by	TOMASZ GAŚSOWSKI
Art Direction	EWA JAKIMOWSKA
Sound	MARTIN BOISSAU
Sound Editing	CHRISTOPHE WINDING
Costumes	ALEKSANDRA STASZKO
Production	ZJEDNOCZENIE ARTYSTÓW I RZEMIEŚLNIKÓW
Co-production	WYTWÓRNIA FILMÓW DOKUMENTALNYCH I FABULARNYCH, TELEWIZJA POLSKA S.A., CANAL+ CYFROWY, OPUS FILM, SUPPORTED BY THE POLISH FILM INSTITUTE

COLOUR – 96 MINUTES - DOLBY SRD – 1.85 - POLAND

CAST

STEFEK	Damian UI
ELKA	Ewelina Walendziak
JERZY	Rafał Guźniczak
FATHER	Tomasz Sapryk
MOTHER	Iwona Fornalczyk
HOMELESS MAN WITH A HANDCART	Andrzej Golejewski
VIOLKA	Joanna Liszowska
TURK	Grzegorz Stelmaszewski
TIPSY MAN WITH BRIEFCASE	Krzysztof Ławniczak
LEONE	Simone Mattarelli
PIGIEL	Roman Baranowicz
GIRL IN THE BAR	Katarzyna Kołeczek

SYNOPSIS

Stefek is a smart 6-year-old, living in a small Polish town; his sister Elka is eighteen. They live with their mother, since their father has moved in with another woman in another town. Mother works in a store all day long, Elka washes dishes in a bar, but studies Italian and competes for an assistant's job in an Italian firm. The boy spends time accompanying his sister and her fiancé Jerzy, a car mechanic. She gives to her kid brother all the knowledge she learned at motivational courses about how to create the world around him. How can you make a paper bag thrown beside a rubbish bin get inside the bin, as it should be? What do you have to do to make an apple seller, ignored by customers, sell his all stock at one fell swoop? Stefek is a quick learner and, consequently, his first experiments in giving order to his surroundings – though naïve at first glance – turn out to work. Yet this is only an overture to his riskiest experiment, though fraught with gravest consequences. One day at the rail station, Stefek notices a man similar to his father, whom he does not remember well. Leaving for work every day, the man changes trains there. How can one to make him stay longer? And how to lead him to the door of the store where Mother works? Stefek designs a meticulous plan and tries to carry it out...

ANDRZEJ JAKIMOWSKI

He began his career by directing short features and documentaries and co-founded the Association of Artists and Artisans and his own film company, where he produced his feature debut "*Squint Your Eyes*" (2002/3). The film won numerous prizes and honorary mentions at home and abroad.

Jakimowski's subsequent feature was the segment entitled "*The Bag*" in "*Solidarnosc, Solidarnosc*" (*Solidarity, Solidarity*) (2005). This was followed by 2007's "**Sztuczki**" (**Tricks**) which was selected as the Polish Oscar entry for 2007/2008. "Tricks" confirms Jakimowski's status as one of Poland's most accomplished up-and-coming contemporary film-makers. The film has won awards at more 20 festivals and has been distributed in about 30 countries—it premiered at last year's Venice Film Festival where it won the Label Europa Cinemas prize and Laterna Magica prize, as well as the Golden Lion at the Polish Film Festival. Tricks has also won prizes at the Sao Paulo International Film Festival, the Miami International Film Festival and the Tokyo International Film Festival where Damian Ul won Best Actor, amongst others.

Filmography

1991	Pogłos (Echo) - short
1994	Miasto cieni - documentary
1998	Dzyń, dzyń - documentary
1998	Wilcza 32 - documentary
2003	Squint your Eyes – feature
2005	The Bag – episode in Solidarnosc, Solidarnosc
2007	Tricks (Sztuczki)

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INTERVIEW from Cinema without Borders

Bijan Tehrani: Tricks has a very unique structure. It has a combination of different categories of filmmaking and blending them together seems to be very dangerous, but it works. How have you managed to do this?

Andrzej Jakimowski: I never hesitate to use all means available to show the beauty of the people I have in front of my camera, it doesn't matter if they are actors or amateurs. Sometimes I cheat them and shoot from a hidden camera, sometimes I torture them with exercises months before shooting. So there is a kind of documentary observation and improvisation mixed with deliberate and precise professional work. But I only want to show people as they are. I like them as they are. I think there is no risk in such a way of working, because true behaviour is always interesting; the same with structure and story. If there are true feelings and observations in the film, it doesn't matter how we show them and how we combine techniques to show them.

Bijan Tehrani: How did you come up with the story of Tricks? Was it from any personal experience? The story of Tricks has the both the taste of neo-realist Italian Cinema and of Colombia's magic realism, what do you think?

Andrzej Jakimowski: Half of the story is stolen from my life. It's the relationship of a little boy and his teenage sister who takes care of him. Another half of the story is stolen from the life of somebody else; it is the relationship of a father and his abandoned children. That's nice to hear that the story tastes a little bit like an old movie. I did my best to achieve that. This is my reaction to modern cinema. Quicker and quicker story telling, nonstop action, handheld cameras, and video clip kind of cutting are no longer fresh for me. I'm impressed if somebody keeps my attention for some time without moving the camera or cutting. That's why things which seem to be old-fashioned are often really fresh for me. Same with what movies talk about. I'm no longer impressed with violence, sex and depressing dose of truth about life. I'm impressed with delicate and positive view of life and I appreciate a sense of humour.

Bijan Tehrani: Damian Ul's performance as the little boy Stefek is magical. How did you find Damian and how did you work with him?

Andrzej Jakimowski: Damian was chosen out of 400 boys. That was probably the most I work I did concerning him. I didn't work very much with him later. He is very clever and he found immediately that I do not accept any pretence. Since that time

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we didn't even talk about his acting. But he understood very well what the film is about because his father abandoned him and his mother in real life.

Bijan Tehrani: How did you go about casting the film the other actors?

Andrzej Jakimowski: There was a team of people who helped me find the right actors. I shot a lot of improvised scenes with potential actors. I often mix professionals and nonprofessionals in test shooting. The outcome is often unexpected and I usually found talents in both groups. That's why there is a mixture of professionals and amateurs in my films. One good thing about that is that actors always try to match the natural behaviour of amateurs, who do not act, but just are themselves.

Bijan Tehrani: There are elements in the film that are repeatedly used and act like characters themselves, such as cars, trains and birds. Was this in the script from the start or did you emphasize these during shooting the film and its editing?

Andrzej Jakimowski: Both—it was the script from the start but some elements did not work and we cut them later, for example the '69 Mustang. The best scene with this legendary and meaningful car was not good enough and I cut it.

Bijan Tehrani : How challenging was making of the Tricks?

Andrzej Jakimowski: There is no way to get to know whether a child that never acted before will be good in the main role until the first shots are done. No test filming can help. But once the shooting has started, it is too late to change the main actor. So everything is put at risk, like in real gambling. This is very challenging. With amateurs in the three main roles—two of them had never acted before—“Tricks” was challenging for me as a director and producer.

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ADAM BAJERSKI (Photography)

A graduate of the Cinematography Faculty in Łódź Film School in 1992. He debuted with special photos in 1997 and from then on, as a cameraman he debuted with *SQUINT YOUR EYES* (2002/3) along with Paweł Śmietanka, for which he received Honorary Mention at the PFFF in Gdynia, the Special Prize at the IFF Cameraimage in Łódź,, at the *Prowincjonalia* Festiwal in Września, the Andrzej Munk Award and the Tarnowska Film Award (all in 2003). He was Director of Photography in 2004 *Spam*, *The Bag in Solidarity*, *Solidarity...*, and in 2007 *Tricks*.

TOMASZ GAŚSOWSKI (Music)

The leader of the *In Spector* Jazz Group, he debuted in film by writing the music to Andrzej Jakimowski's *Echo* in 1991. He also wrote music to many commercials and films like, *Love Gamestation* (2000), *Squint Your Eyes* (2002/3), *The Bag in Solidarity*, *Solidarity...* (2005) and *Tricks* (2007). In 2004 the Biennale in Venice saw Antoni Malinowski's installation *Bridging Lines* with music by Tomasz Gąssowski.