

## NYWIFT Success Story: Polish Filmmakers NYC



Still from Katarzyna Klimkiewicz's *Flying Blind*, one of the films screened at Polish Filmmakers NYC's series *Different Ages, Different Voices: Polish Women in Film*.

**April Hattori and Agata Drogowska, both members of New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT), met each other and a film series was launched. Hattori discusses this NYWIFT networking success story:**

In 2012, Agata Drogowska saw the need to increase awareness of Polish cinema. Renowned directors of the Polish Film School, such as [Andrzej Wajda](#) and [Agnieszka Holland](#), influenced the development of cinematography worldwide after World War II. They inspired a new generation of Polish filmmakers who continue their tradition in a modern context.

Drogowska wanted to launch a screening series of Polish films that would create dialogue around the films through Q&As. As a filmmaker and artist herself, she understood all too well the importance of collaboration to get projects completed.

"I didn't have much to work with, but I had a good idea and lots of people in Poland and the US who I thought would see the value in doing this," she says.

To kick off her plan, Drogowska partnered with [Studio Munka](#), a Polish organization that promotes emerging filmmakers, to hold a free three-day film series, The New Generation of Polish Filmmakers. It included the New York premiere of the award-winning film *Women's Day*, directed by Maria Sadowska. Several organizations sponsored the series, including the Polish Film Institute, Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union, Polish Cultural Institute New York, and NYWIFT.

Getting the word about the film series was Drogowska's next challenge, including promoting it to an audience beyond the Polish community. She knew she needed more PR help, in addition to the consultants she already had on board. Drogowska and I had met about two months before the film series' opening night, and given my expertise in PR and marketing, the timing was perfect. I was looking for a freelance work to sink my teeth into and was excited to be part of such a groundbreaking project.

I helped Drogowska establish a social media presence for [Polish Filmmakers NYC](#), reach out to media to publicize opening night, create event registrations through Eventbrite, and identify organizations and individuals to contact to raise awareness about the event. These efforts led to a sold-out opening night and film series. It was only the beginning of Polish Filmmakers NYC's steady growth.

"One of the amazing things about our screenings is that our films draw a diverse audience — not just those in the Polish community," says Drogowska.

She also points out the efforts of one of the film series' supporters, Polish Film Institute, in reviving Polish cinema during the last 10 years.

"It supports bold new projects and a new generation of filmmakers, many of them women, such as [Kasia Roslaniec](#) and [Małgorzata Szumowska](#), both of whom won major prizes at the 2013 Berlinale."

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Since its launch, Polish Filmmakers NYC has held monthly screenings and special events centered around Polish films, which consistently sell out.

On its one-year anniversary, the organization held a sold-out three-day film series *Different Ages, Different Voices: Polish Women in Film*, which had its opening night at the Museum of Modern Art. The series was programmed by Drogowska and Michał Oleszczyk, one of the leading film critics and scholars in Poland, as well as a regular contributor to sites such as RogerEbert.com and Slant Magazine. Additional marketing help came from Kamila Slawinski, a NYWIFT member.

Drogowska says NYWIFT has played an important role in Polish Filmmakers NYC's success.

"I couldn't have gotten Polish Filmmakers NYC off the ground without NYWIFT's support. The behind-the-scenes help and promotion of our films to its membership have been invaluable," she says. "In addition, the networking opportunities at NYWIFT enabled me to meet April Hattori and other amazing NYWIFT members who have made important contributions to our growth."

Find out about upcoming [screenings from Polish Filmmakers NYC](#) and more updates on [Facebook](#).

— APRIL HATTORI

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