

FRUITS, VEGETABLES and Maciej JANKOWSKI

We met Maciej JANKOWSKI at the TAP on November 29th, 2021.



Maciej JANKOWSKI is 31 years old and is Polish. He currently lives in Poland. He studied culture at the university of Warsaw, and directing at the Film School in Lodz. He doesn't have any children and is a bit shy. He has been working as a director for 2 years mainly on all kinds of TV shows. He loves his job because he feels happy when he directs.

He has made twelve short films. He directed a short film called « *Fruits and Vegetables* » a year ago in May . He did not act in this short film.

He wouldn't have been able to achieve all this without his mentor, Leszek Dawid, an excellent Polish director. Soon he will start working as an assistant director on a series produced for Netflix.

«*Fruits and Vegetables*» is short-film which was realised by Maciej JANKOWSKI. This film is about his childhood which was a bit difficult for him. It shows a mother who runs a little shop but doesn't earn a lot of money and a teenager who rebels against his mother.

The theme of the film is precisely: self-shame and parental shame. Because, he himself struggled with these emotions in his life. He has many complexes. This is why he wanted to look at these difficult emotions in the film and think about what they can lead to. The young director thought that he could be honest about such matters owing to his childhood experience.

Wojtek



Wojtek, an obese twelve-year-old, is ashamed of himself and his mother who runs a dilapidated grocery store. The grocery store is named after the main character, "Wojtek". He's ashamed of her when he is with his schoolmates, who often make fun of him because of his body and bully him. This is also the reason why he doesn't like his body.

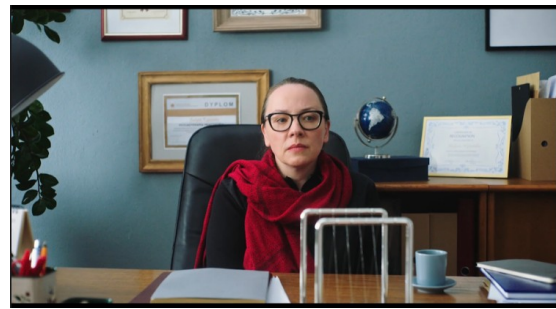
He tries to change it, but it is quite a challenge for him. He eventually rebels against their lifestyle. However, Wojtek doesn't realise that his attitude makes his mother uneasy and insecure. His behaviour heightens the tension between them. This leads to self-awareness and a possible change in their way of living.

An Interesting Filming Technique

The young film director used some efficient techniques to highlight tension and other emotions in his work. We have retained some moments from a few scenes.

One of the scene which caught our attention is one shot in the principle's office, where Wojtek and another student are summoned for having fought during the (PE (physical education) class.

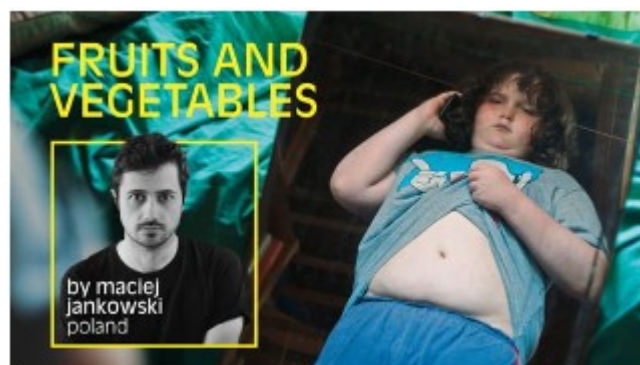
The director uses rack-focusing to underline the confrontation between the main character and the principle. This technique creates tension and a heavy atmosphere, thanks to the shifting of the camera from one character to the other.



The camera zooms in on Wojtek to capture what he feels through his facial expressions. The aim here is to show Wojtek's anger, his intention to provoke and to go over the limit. But when the camera is turned on the principle, he uses a pull-back shot to emphasise on the educational environment and the critical situation. The pressure of self-shame and bullying leads to Wojtek rebelling against the institution. In this scene, we agree that the technique is well chosen, because we feel their emotions and can fit ourselves into the this particular school environment and issue.

There are quite a few more interesting filming techniques that can be analysed in this short film for further studies.

Critique



To begin with, the title «*Fruits and Vegetables*» doesn't echo the issue dealt with in this short film. Nonetheless, Mr. JANKOWSKI has successfully managed to the feelings of shame, anger and frustration. Shame is often translated by moments of abrupt silence within the dialogues. This way of proceeding make us feel the awkwardness of the characters trying to get to the point and avoiding the issue (their obesity and lifestyle) at the same time.

The actors have done a good job making the characters seem real to life. They have managed to convey most of the emotions felt by the character. This short film can be understood both by children and adults.

Although we like this film and find it quite interesting, there is one major drawback. There are sometimes moments of blank that are too long (silence, action stagnation), which seem to slow the film down in order to fill in a time gap. The silence at the end of the film creates a particular blank in the sequence of the film, leaving the audience suspended – in want of answers.

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