

~~WALZER~~

**A forest tribe gone astray
encounters civilisation in the
guise of a railway administration
officer – Walser. Post-apocalyptic
sci-fi mixed with counterculture
utopia of going back to nature.**





Synopsis

A tribe lost in the fringes of civilisation. The Contehli people have eyes blue like the flowers of flax, fair dreadlocks and young bodies. They look like the fulfilment of hippie fantasies about going back to nature. Or like a Slavic version of Avatar. The forest people seem to be living in the Garden of Eden. But civilisation forces itself into this perfect world in the form of a railway administration clerk: Walser. He tries to penetrate their bucolic world and learn their incomprehensible language

but all he brings is chaos and destruction. This styled world of Walser flirts with the tradition of genre cinema: post-apocalyptic sci-fi, western or cavemen films where primitivism and „glamour“ weren't at all dissonant. The clichés known from genre films become blocks in the hands of Libera, who uses them to form a multi-layered riddle of literary figures of a paradise lost; of philosophical and counterculture concepts of a utopian community or phantasms about the end of civilisation.





About the Movie

Zbigniew Libera is undoubtedly one of the most important Polish artists. In the 80s he stuck with the alternative scene of the city of Lodz that defied the communist regime yet remained lukewarm when it came to the mainstream of anti-Communist opposition. In the 90s he left the underground to suggest a radical redefinition of the language of art. His full-length film *Walser* is impossible to place in one category. On the one hand it flirts with genre films, cleverly using clues from post-apocalyptic sci-fi movies and making ironic references to the style of cavemen or Indian films where primitivism and “glamour” were inseparable. On the other hand the relation with genres is clearly only the exterior. Libera uses clichés from genre cinema as blocks and builds a much more complicated structure. Because *Walser* has at least two agendas laced with references to literary figures of paradise lost, philosophical concepts of a utopian community or phantasms about the end of civilisation.

Libera makes up a new community of beautiful and good people living outside civilisation. At the same time he deconstructs this image and looks askance at the new-age aesthetics and the rhetoric of the “new wild”. The world of *Contehli* is a painfully beautifully designed utopia just as it is an ironic commentary on the communes established by the flower children and on the attempts to build a paradise on Earth, where naked and beautiful people make free love and art. In *Walser* one can also find reflections of the Slavic myth and a nod to eulogists of native beauty. The language created by the renowned translator, Robert Stiller - *Contehli* - brings to mind the pipe dreams of Stach “Z Warty” Szukalski about a primal language used by all people, of course one similar to Polish. Maria Janion in “*Uncanny Slavdom*” pointed out how the story of gentle barbarians colonised by the brutal West became the founding myth of our national consciousness and the source of our colonial complexes. Then what is *Walser*? Is it, as a fiction film, a subversive endeavour of the artist who once again decides to dispose of the fantasies that ignite out collective imagination and to touch a cultural taboo?





Zbigniew Libera

Zbigniew Libera is one of the most interesting and most important Polish artists. His works - photographs, videos, installations, objects and drawings - addresses the stereotypes of contemporary culture in a sharp and subversive manner. His striking video pieces from the 80s (among others "Intimate Rituals" and "Mystical Perserveration") came 10 years ahead of body art.

In the mid 90s Libera started making "Corrective Devices" - objects in which he modifies existing products, objects of mass consumption (e.g. "Universal penis Expander" or "Body Master. Play set for children under the age of 9").

He designs recycled toys in art pieces that uncover the mechanisms of upbringing, education and cultural training. The most renowned of them was the "Lego. Concentration camp".

In the recent years he focused on photography, and most of all the specifics of press photography and the way the media shape our visual memory and manipulate the image of history (series "Positives" and "Masters", 2003).

Recently he started curating exhibitions. (Curator Libera - The Artist in the Time of Hopelessness at BWA Wrocław), he has been making an original TV show for four years - the Guide to the Arts for TVP Kultura. In 2012 he graduated from Wajda School.



Adam Sikora

Renowned Polish cinematographer and director, winner of many awards. The author of TV Theatre plays. Cinematographer of the following feature films:

Elderly / 2015 / feature film / Director of Photography

Ve Stinu / 2012 / feature film / Director of Photography

Essential Killing / 2010 / feature film / DOP

Ewa / 2010 / feature film / Co-Director, Writer, DOP

The Mill & the Cross / 2010 / feature film / DOP

Expelled / 2010 / feature film / Director, Screenplay, DOP

The Forest / 2009 / feature film / DOP

Four Nights With Anna / 2008 / feature film / DOP

Giant / 2006 / feature film / Director, Writer, DOP

Corpus Christi / 2005 / documentary / Director, Writer, DOP

Robert Piotrowicz

Improviser, co-founder of the Musica Genera Festival and the Musica Genera label. Apart from solo albums he also recorded with Xavier Charles, Kevin Drumm, Jérôme Noetinger, Burkhard Stangle and Anna Zaradny. He has authored radio dramas, sound installations, and music for theatre productions, and he collaborates with other artists on audio-visual media and performances. He gives regular performances at numerous festivals around the world. During those concerts he builds deep and intricate musical forms created with analogue synthesizers and computers. His music is as close to contemporary electroacoustic composing as it is to sound art. His album “When Snakeboy is dying” will be soon published by PAN Act.



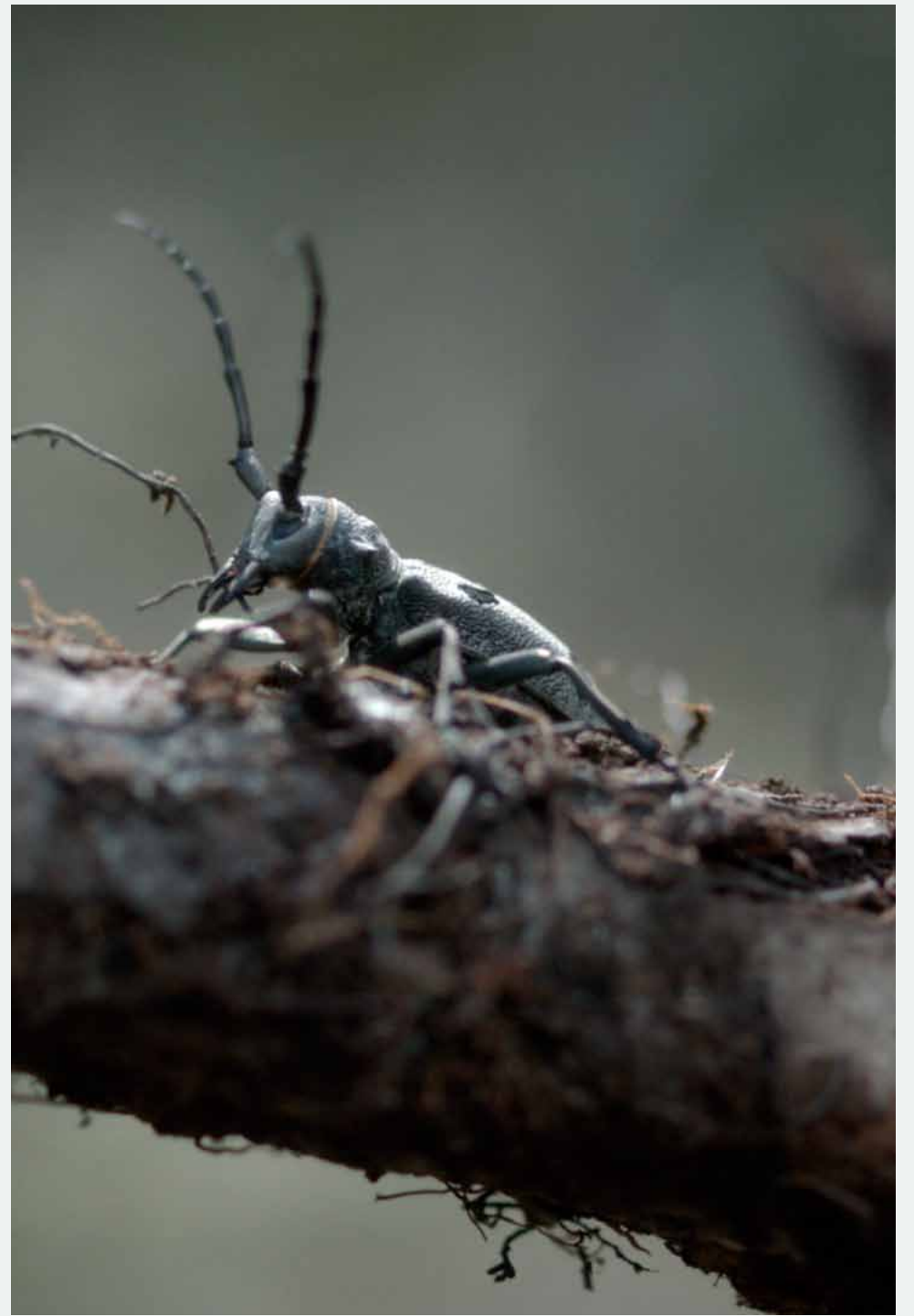
Zbigniew Libera about Walser

The life adventure of a railway employee, Andrzej Walser, that makes the plot of our film is an attempt of telling about a lost opportunity. An opportunity to change our contemporary, post-human, as Michelle Foucault had put it some time ago, style of existence that we adopted as we chose the path of civilisation. Even though the story belongs to the world of fantasy - it could potentially happen in the future - it is still internally true. It happened many a time in our history. In fact, it is happening right in front of our eyes. Our eyes?! Do you remember the scene from „Clockwork Orange” by Stanley Kubrick when the protagonist, Alex, undergoes the so-called Ludovico therapy: the doctors place him on a special chair, tie his limbs and take hold of his eyes with metal tweezers so that he cannot close them. And then they force him to watch brutal scenes.

The way we organise our world makes it impossible to grasp sensibilities, skills and non-verbal modes of communication eliminated by our civilisation. The potential, yet - as you claim - utopian possibility of living in symbiosis with other species and creatures living on our planet had been ruled out once and for all. It's certain. The last thread of connection has been broken - not by decisions made on some political level but by an average and unimportant employee of the railway. Therefore the community that is approaching us according to the Italian intellectual Giorgio Agambena will not get the chance to reach us, unless it will become a community of technologised wreckage, some soulless bio-cybernetic beasts.

Several years ago I took part in the Rainbow festival. A young boy from Poland emerged from the crowd of barefoot joyful people. He must have been there by some accident. He was shocked with the explosion of freedom.

He told me that he found all of it difficult to grasp because his parents had taught him that „in life you have to make everyone else afraid of you. That's the only way to win general respect.” Is that really what we want?





Krzysztof Stroiński

Renowned Polish film and theatre actor. His seemingly ordinary looks make him a favourite for decent and noble, though often naive characters. He has been present on the screens for more than 35 years. He played in: *A Week in the Life of a Man* by Jerzy Stuhr, *Luiza's Garden* by Maciej Wojtyszko, *Case Unknown* by Feliks Falk, *Rysa* by Michał Rosa, *Fear of Falling* by Bartosz Konopka, *Ticket to the Moon* and *Anatomy of Evil* by Jacek Bromski. He won popularity thanks to TV series, especially as Leszek Górecki in *Daleko of Szosy* and Michał Lindner in *Matki, żony i kochanki*, as well as "Methyl" in *PitBull*.

Andrzej Walser

Walser is a former railway administration officer. Responsible for liquidating abandoned railway stations and long unused tracks in the peripheries of the country. He is a harmless stickler who performs all his tasks with diligence. He believes in the importance of his mission and never questions the validity of the orders he receives. He is an incarnation of the inertia of civilisation - he transmits the message of civilisation.





Production

Agata Szymańska Magdalena Kamińska

A unique producer duet, two different personalities that complement each other perfectly and give momentum to one another. In their portfolio there are feature films such as:

Baby Bump by Kuba Czekaj

/ premiere at the Venice IFF 2015. /

The Erlprince by Kuba Czekaj

/ premiere in Spring 2016 /

Walser by Zbigniew Libera

/ premiere in Spring 2015 /

The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills

by Marcin Malaszczyk

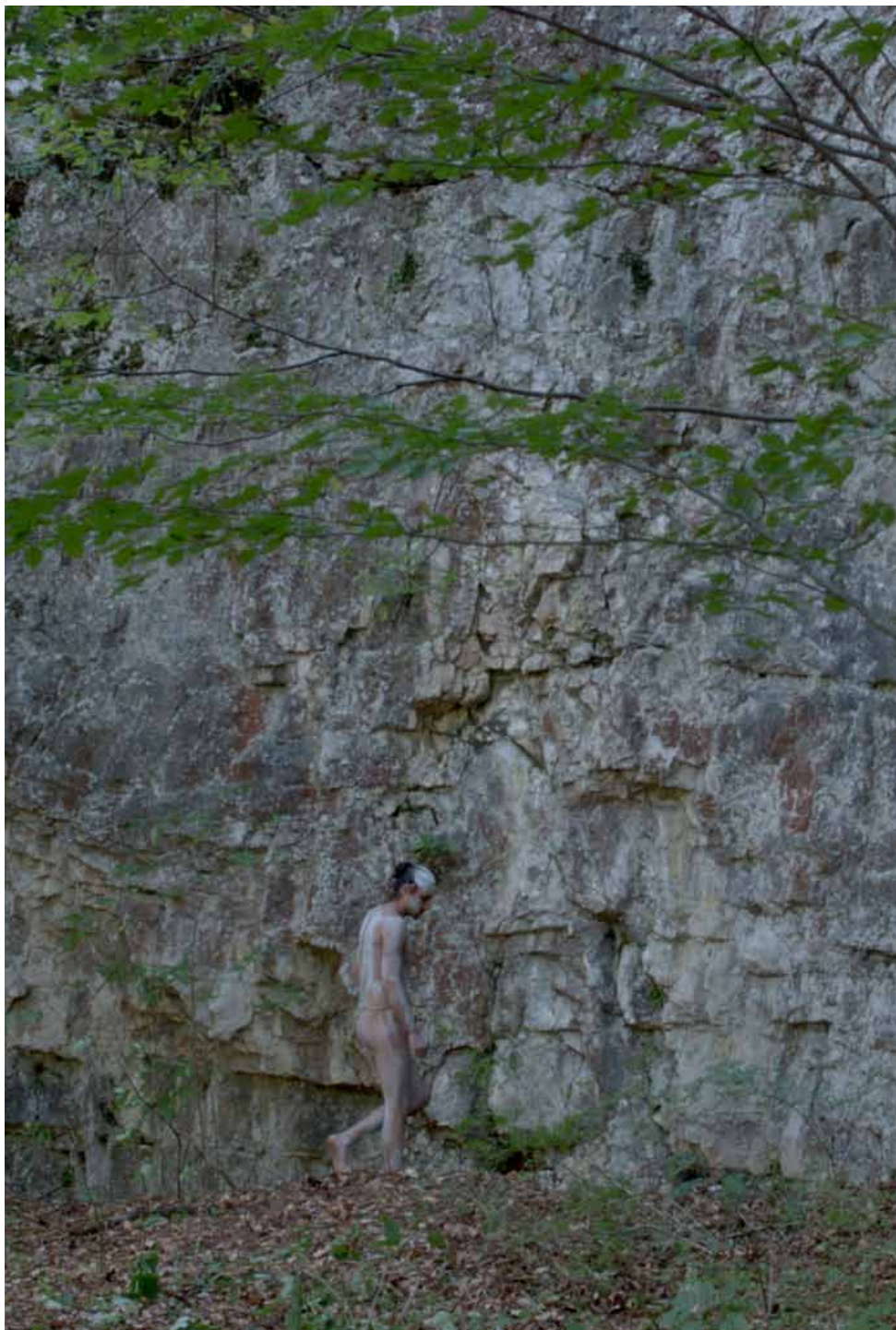
/ premiere at the Berlinale 2015 /

Parasite by Anka and Wilhelm Sasnal

/ premiere at the Berlinale 2014 /

It Looks Pretty From a Distance by Anka and Wilhelm Sasnal

/ premiere at the Rotterdam FF 2012 /



Walser

Directed by / Zbigniew Libera

Production / Magdalena Kamińska, Agata Szymańska

Duration / 78 min

Sound / 5.1

Zdjęcia / Słowenia, jesień 2013

Premiere / lato 2015

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