



IDA

POLAND, 2014, 82 MIN

PAWEŁ PAWLIKOWSKI

WINCHESTER
FILM SOCIETY

WINCHESTER
SCIENCE CENTRE
AND PLANETARIUM

Welcome back to the Winchester Science Centre for our new film season.

We have 16 very different films from around the world & we are looking forward to sharing them with you!

We are so used to constant movement and compulsive cutting in American movies that the stillness of the great new Polish film *Ida* comes as something of a shock. After making documentaries for British television, *Ida* is a charged, bitter return. Set in 1961, during the Stalinist dictatorship, the movie pushes still further into the past; almost every element in the story evokes the war years and their aftermath. The filmmakers have confronted a birthplace never forgiven but also never abandoned.

In a majestic convent, an orphaned young woman - a novice named Anna (Agata Trzebuchowska) - is ordered by her Mother Superior to visit her aunt in Lodz before she takes orders. A beautiful eighteen-year-old with a broad Slavic face, a composed, devotional manner, and a tantalizing dimple, the girl has never left the convent before and knows nothing of her family. In Lodz, wearing her habit, Anna enters the apartment of a forty-five-ish woman, who is puffing on a cigarette and waiting for the guy she picked up the night before to leave. A minor state judge and Communist Party member, Wanda Gruz (Agata Kulesza) tells her niece that her real name is Ida Lebenstein, and that she's Jewish - a "Jewish nun," she says. Abrupt and dismissive, Wanda enjoys attacking the girl's ignorance. But Wanda has mysteries of her own and scores to settle: Ida's mother was her beloved sister. The two agree to go to the village in which the parents were hidden by Christians and then betrayed - the village

where Wanda grew up.

Ida becomes both an investigation of sorts and an intermittent road movie, featuring a dialectically opposed odd couple. *Ida*'s faith and disciplined simplicity will be jostled by experience, and Wanda will be tested, too, as her own buried sorrows come back to life. Sardonic comedy lurks within the strange pairing. At first, Wanda can't stop taunting *Ida*'s indifference to sex, and, about the village, she says, "What if you go there and discover that there is no God?" Yet Pawlikowski doesn't favor one point of view over the other: the two women are equal in their isolation and their need to pull together the shards of identity in a country that has been almost entirely broken. Pawlikowski has complained about critics who see the movie solely as a meditation on the Holocaust or Poland, and, of course, he's partially right, since *Ida* is certainly a story of identity; it's certainly a spiritual journey, too. Whatever he says, he's made a movie that breathes history in every frame, and his annoyance reminds me of D. H. Lawrence's remark, "Never trust the teller, trust the tale. The proper function of a critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it." All right, then: again and again, "*Ida*" asks the question, What do you do with the past once you've re-discovered it? Does it enable you, redeem you, kill you, leave you longing for life, longing for escape? The answers are startling.

David Denby - The New Yorker

WRITING CREDITS: Pawel Pawlikowski | Rebecca Lenkiewicz **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Ryszard Lenczewski | Lukasz Zal
MUSIC: Kristian Eidnes Andersen **CAST:** Wanda Agata Kulesza | Anna Agata Trzebuchowski | Lis Dawid Zogrodnik | Szymon Jerzy Trela | Feliks Adam Szyzkowski | Mother Superior Halina Skoczynska

Our next screening | **The Falling** | Tuesday 20 October 2015. 8.00pm

A mysterious fainting epidemic strikes several students at an all-girl's high school in late-1960s England.