

'Tarantino-style western' about Kościuszko Uprising wins coveted Golden Lion award for best film at Gdynia film festival

CULTURE | HISTORY

STUART DOWELL SEPTEMBER 25, 2023



Jacek Braciak (L) delivers a powerful performance as Kos, who has just returned from America and is accompanied by freed slave Domingo played by Jason Mitchell (R).

Press materials

A new film about the Kościuszko Uprising has won the coveted Golden Lion for Best Film last night at the Gdynia Film Festival, Poland's leading cinema showcase.

Dubbed a 'Tarantino-esque Western in 18th century Poland', the film's compelling blend of grotesque violence and black humour is set against the tumultuous backdrop of Poland in 1794, when Tadeusz Kosciuszko, the eponymous 'Kos', returns to Poland to rally support among the peasantry for his insurrection against the Russians.



Their journey takes a fateful turn when they come across a peasant (played by Bartosz Belenia known for his role in Corpus Christi) being tortured on a meadow by his master.

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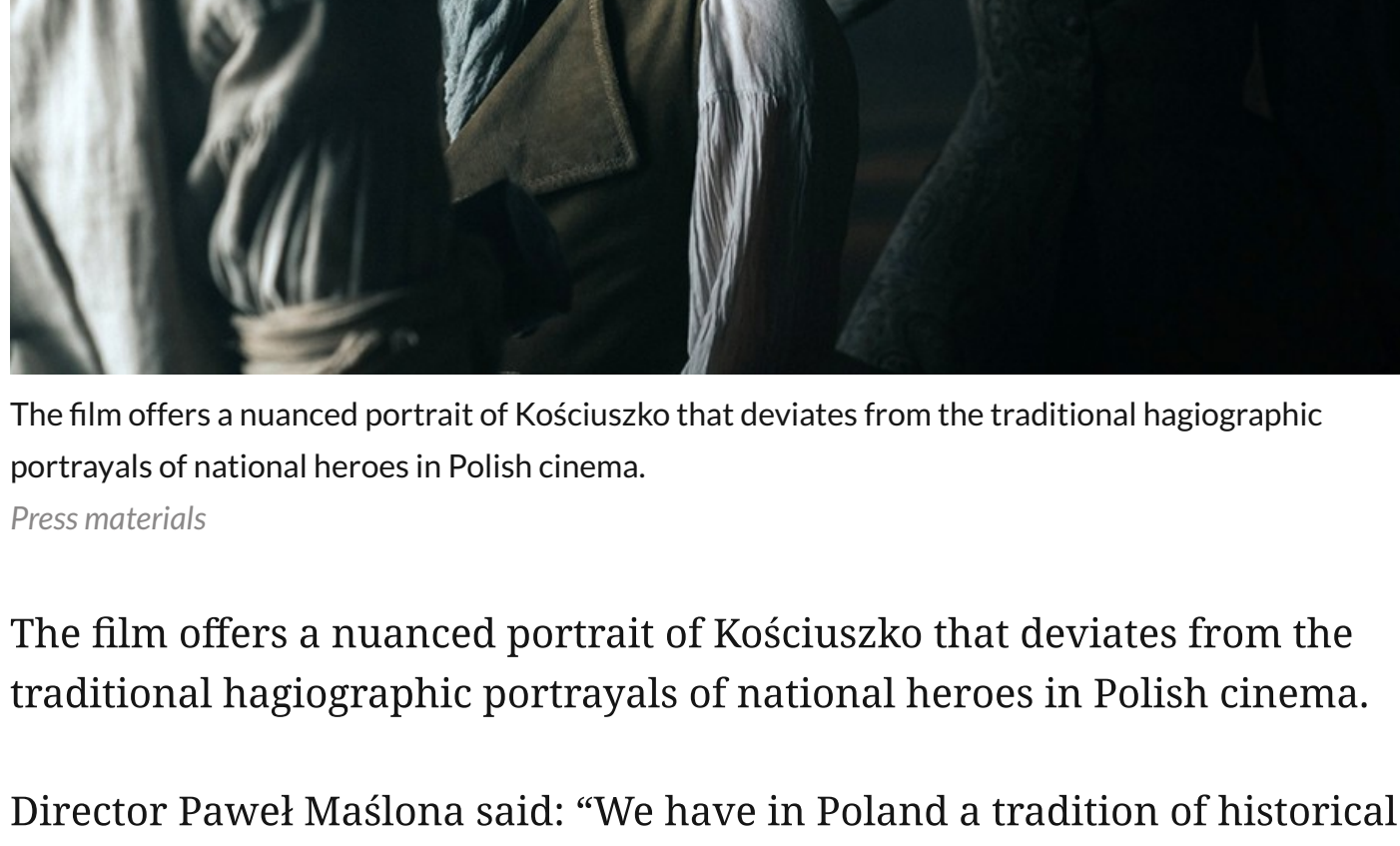


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The young man is the illegitimate son of a nobleman, who is trying to have his noble origin recognised after his father's death.

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Director Paweł Maślona said: "We have in Poland a tradition of historical cinema in the form of school-trip films. [...] Our assumption was that history should serve our film, not our film serve history. This is probably what sets us apart from classic historical films."



With its blending of the absurd, humour and violence, Paweł Maślona's film has invited striking parallels with the cinematic oeuvre of Quentin Tarantino.

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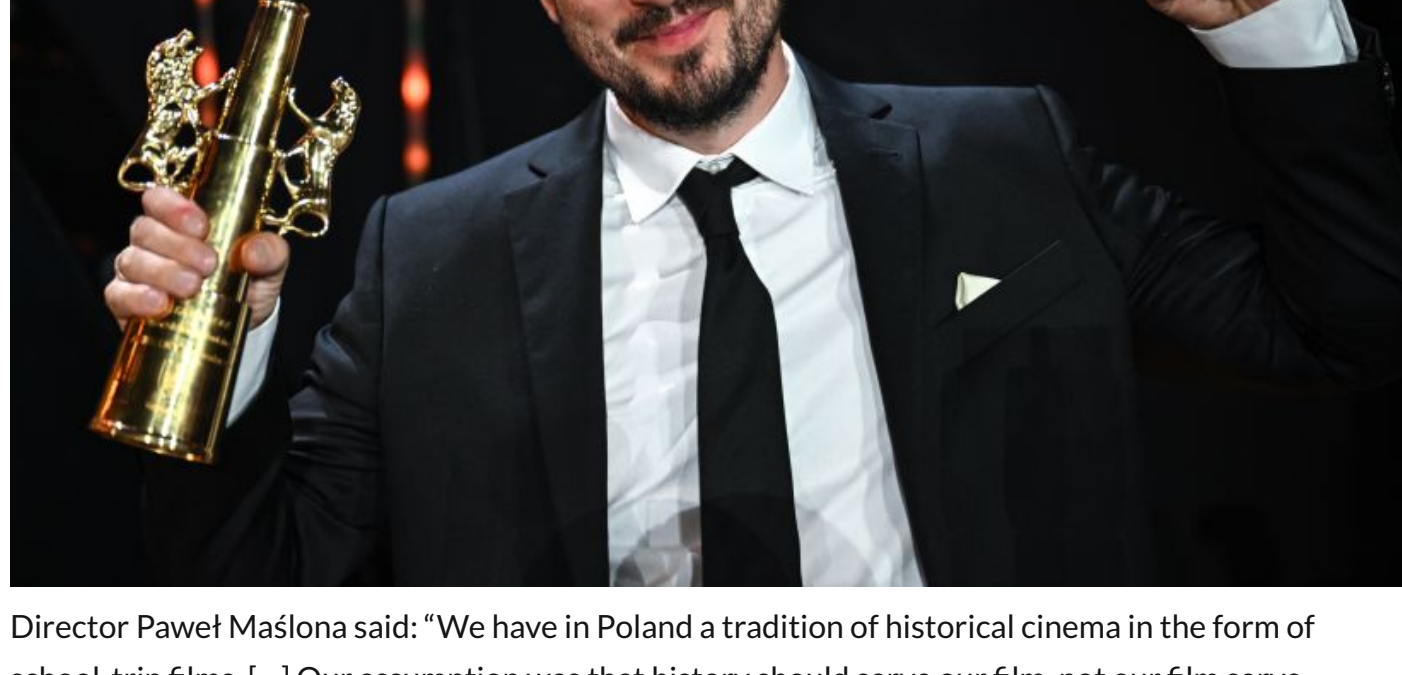
Film journalist Karolina Korwin-Piotrowska praised the film, describing it as "A Western in 18th century Poland, troubled by the unrest, drinking on vodka and bloated egos of the nobility, drenched to the tips of their hair in the blood of peasants and villains of all sorts?"

"And why not! It's fantastic to watch, the echoes of The Hateful Eight are pleasing to the eye, but Tarantino doesn't have that grace, lightness, mixed with brutality, irony and a history lesson."



In addition to the coveted Golden Lion, "Kos" garnered three more accolades, including a well-deserved award for Robert Więckiewicz in the supporting male role category.

However, it was not the sole spotlight-stealer of the evening, as Jan Holoubek's spy thriller "Doppelgänger" secured five awards, including the Best Director prize.



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Adam Warżawa/PAP

The second most prestigious award of the evening, the Silver Lion, was claimed by Olga Chajdas' thought-provoking pre-transformation drama, "Imago."

The Polish Film Festival is one of the oldest film events promoting Polish cinema. Founded in 1974, until 1986, the festival was organised in Gdansk, after which it moved to neighbouring Gdynia.



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The festival showcases the most recent Polish productions, which compete for the Golden Lions and Silver Lions, as well as a number of individual awards.

TAGS: FILM, AWARD, GDYNIA FILM FESTIVAL, ROBERT WIĘCKIEWICZ, TADEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO, BARTOSZ BIELENIA, OLGA CHAJDAS, KOŚCIUSZKO INSURRECTION, JAN HOLOUBEK, KOS, PAWEŁ MASŁONA, JACEK BRACIAK, JASON MITCHELL, KAROLINA KORWIN-PIOTROWSKA

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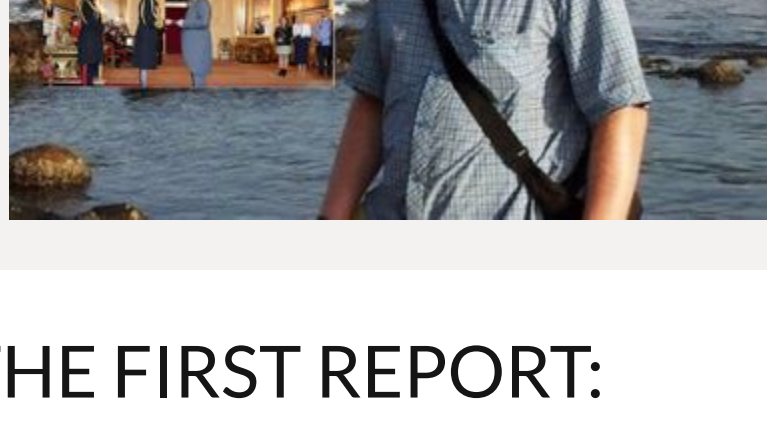
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