Kieślowski, Krzysztof (June 27, 1941 – March 13, 1996)

Krzysztof Kieślowski was a highly influential Polish filmmaker in the tradition of auteur cinema. Kieślowski tackled the tension between the political, spiritual and ethical, and his camerawork often involved close framing and sequence shots. His first works, documentaries that examined everyday aspects of Polish reality, were followed by the fiction film *Bez Końca* (*No End*) in 1985, a distinctive audio-visual narration that launched his collaboration with Krzysztof Piesiewicz, his co-scriptwriter, and Zbigniew Preisner, who scored his films. *Bez Końca* considers the impossibility of understanding human misfortune and provokes the audience’s empathic involvement. In his early fiction films, Kieślowski scrutinized the restrictions produced by communist ideology alongside metaphysical questions (*No End*, *Prspadek* [*Blind Chance*, 1987]), but in his middle phase, which began with *Krótki film o zabijaniu* (*A Short Film about Killing*, 1988) followed by the television mini-series *Dekalog* (*The Decalogue*)*,* he engaged social themes. *The Decalogue*, set in a Warsaw housing project, is loosely based on the Ten Commandments. In the 1990s Kieślowski focused increasingly on moral issues, and works such as *La double vie de Véronique* (*The Double Life of Véronique*) and *Trois couleurs* (*Three Colours*) have a more spiritual dimension. Kieślowski found funding outside Poland, but he was also disillusioned with Polish critics, who, he felt, misjudged him. They often ignored his engagement with existential and ethical questions by aligning his work with a politically and socially concerned Polish cinema.

References and further reading

Coates, P. (ed.) (1999) *Lucid Dreams:* *The Films of Krzysztof Kieślowski,* Wiltshire: Flicks Books.

Haltof, M. (2004) *The Cinema of* *Krzysztof Kieślowski: Variations on Destiny and Chance*, London and New York: Wallflower Press.

Kickasola, J. G. (2004) *The Films of Krzysztof Kieślowski: The Liminal Image*, New York and London: Continuum.

Woodward, S. (ed.) (2009) *After Kieślowski. The Legacy of Krzysztof Kieślowski,* Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

List of Works (feature films)

*Bez Końca* (*No End*, 1985)

*Prspadek* (*Blind Chance*, 1987)

*Krótki film o zabijaniu* (*A Short Film about Killing*, 1988)

*Krótki film o miłości* (*A Short Film about Love*, 1988)

*Dekalog* (*The Decalogue*, 1988–1990)

*La double vie de Véronique* (*The Double Life of Véronique*, 1991)

*Trois couleurs: Bleu* (*Three Colours: Blue*, 1993)

*Trois couleurs: Blanc* (*Three Colours: Blanc*, 1994)

*Trois couleurs: Rouge* (*Three Colours: Rouge*, 1994)

Paratextual

<http://culture.pl/en/artist/krzysztof-kieslowski> [03/01/2014]

<http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/great-directors/kieslowski/> [03/01/2014]

Marie-Therese Maeder

University of Zurich