

FILM

MUMBAI FILM FESTIVAL

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Mumbai Film Festival (Oct/Nov, 09) organized by Mumbai Academy of Moving Images(MAMI) and Reliance Big Entertainment was firmly built on World Cinema, Real Reel of documentaries, retrospectives of Paul Schrader (USA) and Theo Angelopoulos (Greece), and Indian Frames. The films screened reflected breath, inclusively and standouts. Torrents of water rushes over the credits of Andrzej Wajda's "Tatarak - Sweet Rush" (Poland, 2009, 85 mins, colour). Middle aged Marta (Krystyna Janda) wakes up with heavy breathing. The scenario is somewhere in rural Poland, with a river, a bridge and lake promontory. Marta never looks at the camera, and is engrossed in a monologue over cinematographer Edward Klosinski, who died in recent times, after being treated with chemotherapy for cancer treatment. Actress Marta's film shooting is delayed. There are reflections on film making. An actor seizes the expression. Images capture moments, Marta took photos to spend time. Now she looks at pictures all the time, which form treasures.

Not long ago, Marta had taken Edward to a brain CT Scan. The house where Marta lives has been repainted and redecorated. A film within a film, 'Tatarak' is being shot. The sweet rush has two kinds of fragrance. The smell of muddy leaves and the aroma of death. In the sub plot film, the fragrance of life is blended with a violent death. In the film narrative, Marta has lost two sons during the German occupation. An old lady shows a medical report to a Dr Krysia, who is Marta's husband. Marta, who is suffering from occasional pain and weight loss, is examined by her husband. X-rays are done, and medical results are awaited. Marta, too, could be afflicted with cancer. While returning home in the car with her husband, Marta's memory drifts to Edward, who died on 05 Jan 2008. His veins were torn, and it was impossible to put drip. He was in a special bed, and Marta was next to him. The last five nights are recalled. Marta walks with an old friend, Tesia, along a promontory, away from the Ibanesque atmosphere at home. The public stage, next to the river, has been rebuilt after the war. Marta and Tesia sit at a table and talk. Young people dance to music, rendered by musicians. The fruit juice is the local pride. Four young men are at a table, where Halinka (Julia Pietrucha) joins Bogus (Pawel Szajda). Tesia's son is in UK with family.

Marta's husband (Jan Englert) studies Marta's x-ray plates. Alina and Bogus sit by the riverside. Marta and Tesia walk along the river. Every year on 01 August, Marta visits Warsaw to the grave of her son. Tesia cries with memories of the Polish Uprising. Next day Marta sits besides Bogus, on the river bank. Twenty-year old Bogus was trained as a raftsman. Marta advises him to read books, and invites him to her residence. Bogus visits and searches for books in Marta's library but he is not fond of writings with descriptions. The scenario shifts to the small town landscape of river and gardens in bloom. The river damaged embankments would be repaired after the floods. Some days later, strolling on the river bank, Marta notices Bogus and Halinka hugging on the bridge. When Halinka leaves, Bogus catches up with Marta. On the bank, Marta brushes off the sand from Bogus' back. They kiss and embrace.

Bogus jumps into the flowing river to fetch weeds. He clutches some reeds, and swims again to collect more reeds struggling for breath, Bogus disappears in the water and drowns to death. Marta jumps into the river, but is unable to find Bogus. Distraught, Marta takes lift in a car on the bridge. The scenario returns to the river bed. Bogus is sinking. Marta is struggling in the water. When Marta reaches shore, two young men jump into the river to rescue Bogus. The hand held camera follows Bogus being dragged to the shore. Bogus throws up water, and the others run to fetch help. Marta hugs senseless Bogus. Underwater film shooting with camera and sound equipments provide distancing mechanism.

Wajda's "Sweet Rush" is a multi-dimensional narrative. The opening monologues and later sub conscious mumblings by Marta, are actually the actress Krystyna Janda's reconciliation with the premature death of her husband, Edward Klosinski, the acclaimed cinematographer. Death hovers over the text of the film, and also outside the film narrative. Marta is unaware of her suspected cancer. Yet Bogus is drowned, after entanglement with roots of sweet rushes, he was pulling for Marta. Though based on a short story by Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz, the film has origins in Krystyna Janda's personal writings. Pawel Edelman's camera observantly follows personal history intermingling with the film narrative. A hand held fixture captures the drowning eddy and whirl pools in the river. The music, by Pawel Mykietyn, gracefully affirms absence in the present structure of the narrative. □□□