

The aim of this project is to broaden the knowledge of Polish amateur film. The research focuses on the period when Amateur Film Clubs (AKF) movement in Poland was in its peak phase – from mid 1950's till the end of 1970's. This period is symbolically contained between two events which was crucial in regards to the politics and culture of PRL: Polish October of 1956 and the imposing of martial law in 1981.

Amateur cinema is a phenomenon of a distinctive historical, sociological, esthetical and also economical significance. Small-gauge films often present statements of marginalized groups and those stories complement the official discourse of the past in an important extent. Such a footage fills the gap between the history and memory, between the public and private, between the general and particular.

The growing interest of the amateur cinema in the world cinema research does not seem to appear in the film studies in Poland. I recognize a substantial gap in the research of the small-gauge films of PRL, a need for a broader and more critical review, to make it appear in cultural practices of PRL and in the history of Polish cinema. It should also be duly placed in current policies and activities of institutions responsible for the cultural legacy. Another reason for taking on the studies on the amateur cinema of PRL is the amount of time that has passed since the intensive development of AKFs and the elderly age of the numerous amateur filmmakers as well as the degrading state of original tapes – especially that they are not kept in sterile conditions. Most probably it is the last moment to attempt to thoroughly examine that phenomenon, taking into account the filmmakers' perspective.

Because of the nature of the amateur filmmaking and the lack of any elaboration of this subject in the film studies my research require gathering the data and materials regarding the AKFs, including amateur films. Most of the data regarding the AKF movement activity will be provided by the interviews with the people linked with the movement. I also intend to conduct queries in the selected GLAM institutions and interview their representatives about the policy of those institutions towards securing and sharing the small-gauge cinema collection. The main paradigms that I will use in my research are New Film History and Oral History. The main concept of New Film History is the research on the cinema from the perspective of its cultural condition and considering various materials related to the production and the reception of the cinema. This paradigm demands to examine the trends and genre from the margins of the cinematography and emphasizes the crucial role of the archives in the research of the history of film. I will also use Oral History to conduct and analyze the interviews. This method mediates between memory and history – its purpose is not to report facts and important past events but to present the way in which those events were remembered by the witnesses.