



# young<sup>lab</sup> horizons

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## TUTORS



Philip LaZebnik is a screenwriter, playwright and a screenwriting consultant. Originally associated with Disney Studios and Dream Works. His screenwriting credits include “Mulan” and “Pocahontas” for Disney, and “The Prince of Egypt” and “The Road to El Dorado” for DreamWorks, among many others. He has written the book for the theatrical musical “The Prince of Egypt” with songs by Stephen Schwartz. Philip also worked as a Film/Story Consultant for: “Antz” and “Shrek” (Story consultant, DreamWorks Feature Animation and PDI), “Lion King I ½” and “Mulan II” (Disney Television Animation), and numerous other films.



Ronald Kruschak is a producer, writer and tutor/lecturer with a track record of over twenty years of filmmaking focusing on family entertainment. Ronald has produced Germany’s most successful TV series “Die Pfefferkörner” as well as small national and big budget international movies, such as “The Three Investigators” (Disney, over a million tickets sold) or “Die Rote Zora”. With his company Playwrite, he develops and produces live-action/animation series and films.

## SCRIPT CONSULTANT



Aleksandra Aleksander is a script consultant, and development advisor with experience in talent and production management. A graduate of the Film School in Katowice and the Wajda School, she has completed courses and workshops for producers (Midpoint Feature Launch), as well as workshops for script consultants (MFI Script 2 Film, Script Atelier). She is also a graduate of Gender Studies at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IBL PAN).

## PITCHING TRAINER



Agata Darlasi is a writer, coach, storytelling strategist. She has many years of experience in the development of audiovisual material (since 2007) as a director, screenwriter, documentarist and development consultant. She has also been the Curator of Educational Programs for the development of audiovisual material in various bodies and organizations since 2012. Her talks, workshops, and masterclasses are presented at Film Festivals and various events and cities around Europe.

# ARAAKI

## THE FIRST DOG

FEATURE FILM WRITTEN BY PAWEŁ FERDEK  
POLISH TITLE: ARAAKI. PIERWSZY PIES

Set in the forests of the prehistoric world 15,000 years ago, “Araaki” is an epic adventure that explores the origins of our bond with animals.

Alik (11) lives a lonely life in a tribe ruled by fear under Chief Grind (50) and his even crueler son, Mrapi (13). One day, she discovers a wounded wolf pup in the woods. Defying the tribe’s taboo, she takes her in to save her life.

When Grind discovers Alik’s secret, they are cast out from the village. Together, they must face deadly predators, unknown landscapes, and, most of all, their own mistrust. As their bond deepens, their connection evolves into a transformative partnership—the first between a human and a dog. Alik names her Araaki.

Meanwhile, in the tribe, tyranny worsens as Mrapi fights for power against Grind. Alik decides to return with Araaki as a force of change. They rally the oppressed to rise and reclaim their freedom. Alik becomes a respected member of the tribe, and Araaki gives birth to six pups—promising more trouble and adventures in “Araaki 2”!

A visually stunning and emotionally powerful story, “Araaki” explores the timeless themes of bravery, loyalty, and the birth of a friendship that shaped history.



Paweł Ferdek is an award-winning film and TV director and screenwriter with extensive international experience. His works, the feature films “Ki” (Venice Film Festival) and “Holiday”; the documentaries “Scrap Odyssey”, “Leaders” and “Pollywood”, have been showcased at top festivals and on platforms HBO Max, Amazon Prime, Canal+ Online. Nominated for the European Film Award for “Glass Trap”, he is a graduate of the Andrzej Wajda Film School and Werner Herzog’s Rogue Film School in LA. He has directed projects across Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and America. Renowned for his vision and versatility, he strives to craft meaningful stories with global reach, combining artistic depth with accessibility.

# THE INCREDIBLE YOUNG DETECTIVES AND A CURIOUS CASE OF A WOUNDED TABLE

FEATURE FILM WRITTEN BY NATALIA OSSOWSKA

POLISH TITLE: NIEZWYKLI MŁODZI DETEKTYWI

I ZAGADKOWA SPRAWA ZRANIONEGO STOŁU

A group of twelve-year-old detectives—Maja, Jagoda, and Karol—are hired by Fran (14) to decipher a letter from his late Grandma, Ela. As they work to decode it, they realise it's the first of the clues leading to a lost Frida Kahlo painting. Their mission: find it.

On their journey, the kids must face Destiny, run for their lives through perilous underground passages, and reach the stars. But they must hurry: a mysterious Valentina pursues them, and Greg, Ela's former student, also seeks the painting. Maja discovers her mum knew about the painting's disappearance and suspects it may be related to her death.

They discover Valentina is after Greg, not them, and Fran works with him. The kids have unintentionally guided them toward the painting. The failure brings them closer together, prompting one last attempt to retrieve it. Maja learns her mum didn't know who stole the painting and comes to terms with the fact that her death was an accident.

The kids chase after Greg and Fran and recover the painting. Nobody believes a group of kids could have achieved this, but they don't care – being a detective isn't about seeking glory; it's about doing what's right.



Natalia Ossowska is a screenwriter whose accolades include winning Script Pro Competition prizes (2020, 2022), being a BBC International Radio Playwriting Competition finalist (2020) and the Big Break semifinalist (2017) and placing second in the 2022 "Wyobraź sobie" competition with a project currently in development with Aurum Film. In 2023, Audioteka produced her podcast series for children. In 2025, she was selected for the "Scenarzystki na Horyzoncie" workshop by the New Horizons Film Festival in collaboration with Netflix. She's passionate about writing across diverse genres.

# THE MYSTERIOUS SPLASH

FEATURE FILM WRITTEN BY NATALIA ŁODYGOWSKA

POLISH TITLE: **TAJEMNICZY PLUSK**

Kaja is 12 years old and loves the sea. She lives in a big city, so for most of the year, she misses the beach, the wind, and the sound of the waves. Her favorite place on Earth is her grandparents' house, located right by the Baltic Sea.

Every year, she spends a week of vacation there. However, this year will be different. It's the first time she's coming after the death of her beloved grandmother, which makes her feel lost. Her grandfather's strange behavior leads Kaja to spend most of her time with a boy from the neighborhood, David.

During one of their swims in the sea, Kaja notices a mysterious splash and is convinced that something tried to attack her. Neither David nor her grandfather believes her, so she decides to uncover the mystery herself.

Her investigation leads her to an extraordinary discovery: her grandmother was not an ordinary person—she guarded the boundary between the human world and the magical creatures inhabiting the Baltic. Now that she's gone, no one is watching that boundary. With David's help, Kaja will fight to restore balance between the worlds and save the sea mermaid—Zielenica.



Executive producer of films "Magdalena" (dir. Filip Gieldon), "Victoria" (dir. Karolina Porcarii) and "Followers. Odpalaj lajwa" (dir. Jakub Radej). Graduate of the Film School in Katowice (Organization of TV and Film Production) and the Wajda School (Creative Development). Participant of the KIDS KINO LAB workshops as a project producer ("Fantasylum", "Once upon a time in Devillage") and the Script Atelier as a screenwriter ("The Last Rose on Earth"). Screenwriting scholarship holder of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage ("The Last Rose on Earth") and the Polish Film Institute ("Dyslectic"). Junior producer tutor alongside Ronald Kruschak during the Young Horizons Lab in 2022.

# PATCHWORK VACATION

FEATURE FILM WRITTEN BY JULITA OLSZEWSKA  
POLISH TITLE: PACHWORKOWE WAKACJE

Róża (12), Kalina (10), and Wierka (8) share one mom, Maria, but have three dads who avoid each other at all costs. When Maria, exhausted from parenting heads to Bologna, the girls force fathers into a trip to the Tatra Mountains. What could go wrong? Everything.

Jan – corporate perfectionist, Filip – athlete and eternal Casanova, and Hubert – sensitive artist, must find a way to get along and tackle the challenges of parenting. Róża, Kalina, and Wierka are anything but calm and thrive on competition. The girls turn the trip into a game, keeping a secret ranking to answer THE question: which dad is the best? Chaos is guaranteed – from graffiti and a visit to the police station to trampoline injuries, sugar overloads, fleeing from sheep, and getting lost during hiking. Every mistake means lost points, but bravery, absurdly funny mishaps, and unexpected moments of connection can earn them back.

In the mountains fathers let go of grudges, and the girls learn family is about being together and understanding, not points.

“Patchwork Vacation” is a heartwarming and humorous story that reminds us perfect families don’t exist – but the memories we create together last a lifetime.

Is a half-sister anything less than a sister? As Wierka would say: who even came up with the stupid idea of “half”?



Julita Olszewska is a Polish screenwriter and one of the writers of the Netflix series "Infamia" (2023), which won four awards at the BNP Paribas Warsaw SerialCon, including Best Polish Series of 2024 and Best Screenplay. She also wrote the award-winning short film "Alicja i Żabka" (2020) and the psychological drama "W spirali" (2015). Her latest project, the comedy film "Kłątwa," has been completed and is awaiting its premiere. Currently, she is developing a new premium drama series.

In 2023, she received a Special Mention from StoryLab.pro and Second Prize – a scholarship from the Starak Family Foundation – in the "Wyobraź Sobie" competition for her treatment "Greetings to Prison." In addition to screenwriting, she is a model and leads a philosophical discussion club, "Chaotic Thinkers," in Milanówek. She travels in a campervan and aspires to become a skater and surfer.



Young Horizons Lab is a script development programme focused on script development of live-action and animated films and series.

The programme works on projects at different stages of its development (concept phase, early development, pre-production phase).

Workshops is organised by Young Horizons and co-organised by the Creative Europe Desk Poland. Programme is co-funded by the Polish Film Institute and organised in partnership with Mazovia Institute of Culture and Mazovia Warsaw Film Commission.

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**More information and synopses in Polish**  
**[industry.younghorizons.pl/lab](http://industry.younghorizons.pl/lab)**