

FEMINISTS UNDER COMMUNISM?

Everyday Experiences of Polish Women as Filmed by Female Documentarians



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THE PROJECT

- The Leverhulme Trust Fellowship 2015
- The National Film Archive in Warsaw Poland
- The Documentary Film Studio (Documentary Films vs. Newsreels)





Danuta Halladin
(1930-1987)



Maria Kwiatkowska
(1926-1999)



Krystyna Gryczelowska
(1931-2009)



Helena Amiradżibi
(1932-2017)



Irena Kamieńska
(1928-2016)

WOMEN'S DOCUMENTARY FILMS IN POLAND

An Overview

- Female contribution to the Polish School of Documentary (1950s-1970s)
- Domestic and international festival trophies
- Non-political authorial visions
- Variety of documentary styles Diverse experiences of men & women
- Films focussed on women from the late 1950s
- Limited visibility in film history at home & abroad
- Resisting the official version of gender equality



OFFICIAL FILM RECORDS OF GENDER EQUALITY

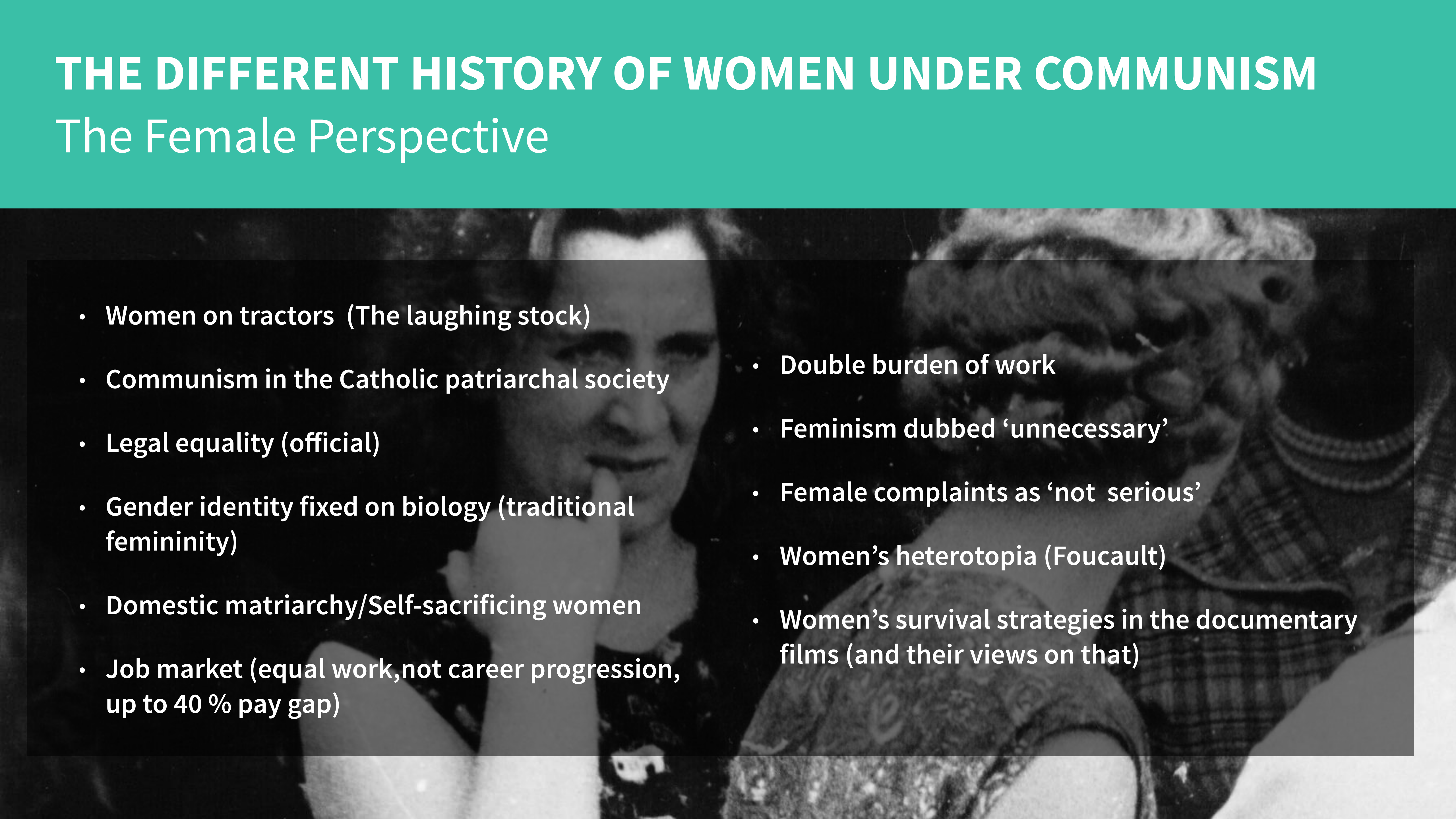
Newsreels



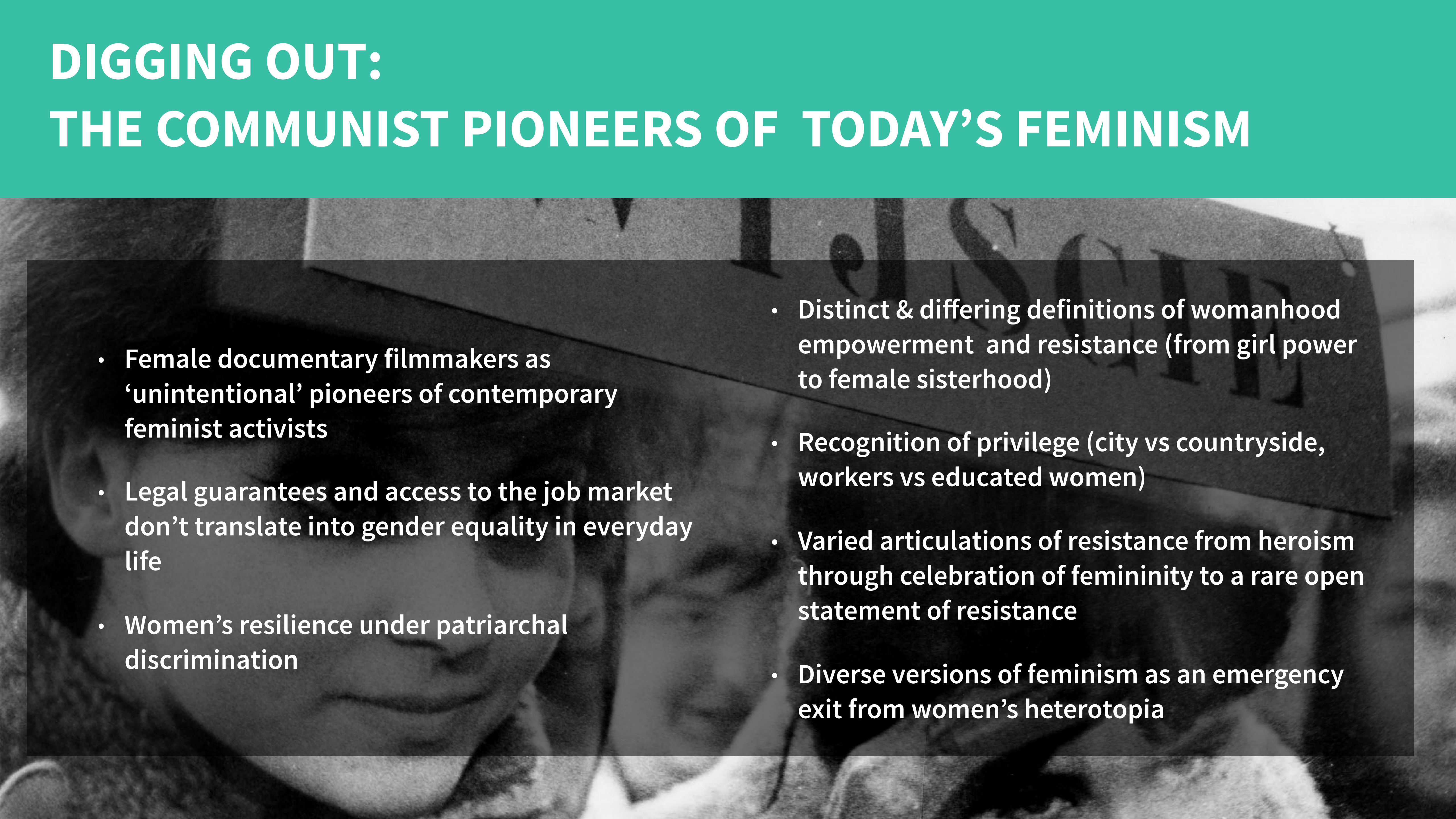
Men Don't Know About It (1957) dir. Jerzy Kaden

THE DIFFERENT HISTORY OF WOMEN UNDER COMMUNISM

The Female Perspective

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- Women on tractors (The laughing stock)
 - Communism in the Catholic patriarchal society
 - Legal equality (official)
 - Gender identity fixed on biology (traditional femininity)
 - Domestic matriarchy/Self-sacrificing women
 - Job market (equal work, not career progression, up to 40 % pay gap)
 - Double burden of work
 - Feminism dubbed 'unnecessary'
 - Female complaints as 'not serious'
 - Women's heterotopia (Foucault)
 - Women's survival strategies in the documentary films (and their views on that)

DIGGING OUT: THE COMMUNIST PIONEERS OF TODAY'S FEMINISM

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- Female documentary filmmakers as ‘unintentional’ pioneers of contemporary feminist activists
 - Legal guarantees and access to the job market don’t translate into gender equality in everyday life
 - Women’s resilience under patriarchal discrimination
 - Distinct & differing definitions of womanhood empowerment and resistance (from girl power to female sisterhood)
 - Recognition of privilege (city vs countryside, workers vs educated women)
 - Varied articulations of resistance from heroism through celebration of femininity to a rare open statement of resistance
 - Diverse versions of feminism as an emergency exit from women’s heterotopia

FILMED EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S HETEROTOPIA

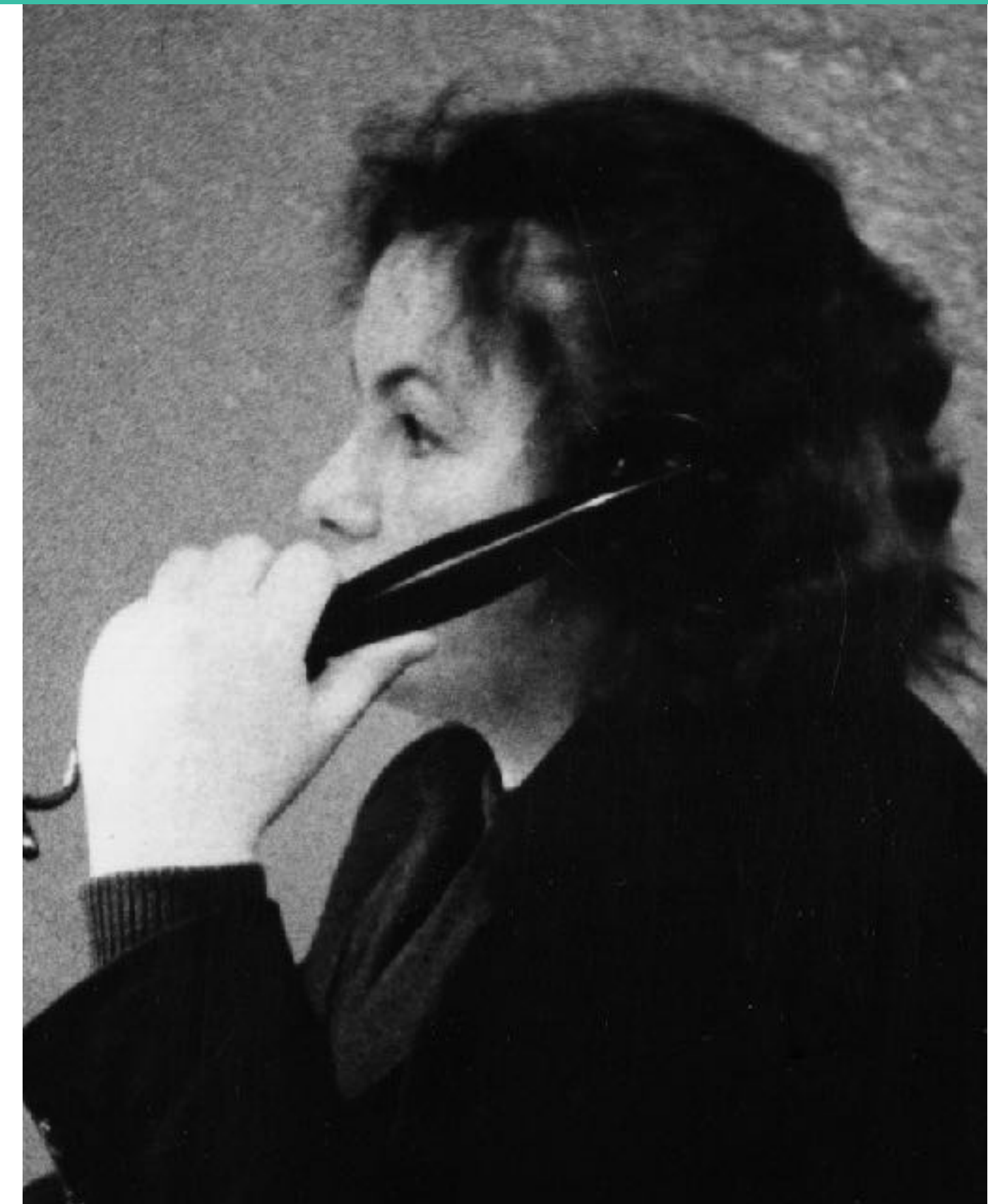
Coping with the Double Burden of Work



The 24 Hours of Jadwiga L.
(1967)
dir. Krystyna Gryczelowska



Our Friends from Łódź
(1971)
dir. Krystyna Gryczelowska



Guarded Grade Crossing
(1976)
dir. Maria Kwiatkowska

FILMED EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S HETEROTOPIA

Coping with the Double Burden of Work



Our Friends from Łódź (1971) dir. Krystyna Gryczelowska

FILMED EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S HETEROTOPIA

Celebrating the Self-Sacrificing Mother/Caretaker



Good Morning, Children
(1966)
dir. Irena Kamieńska



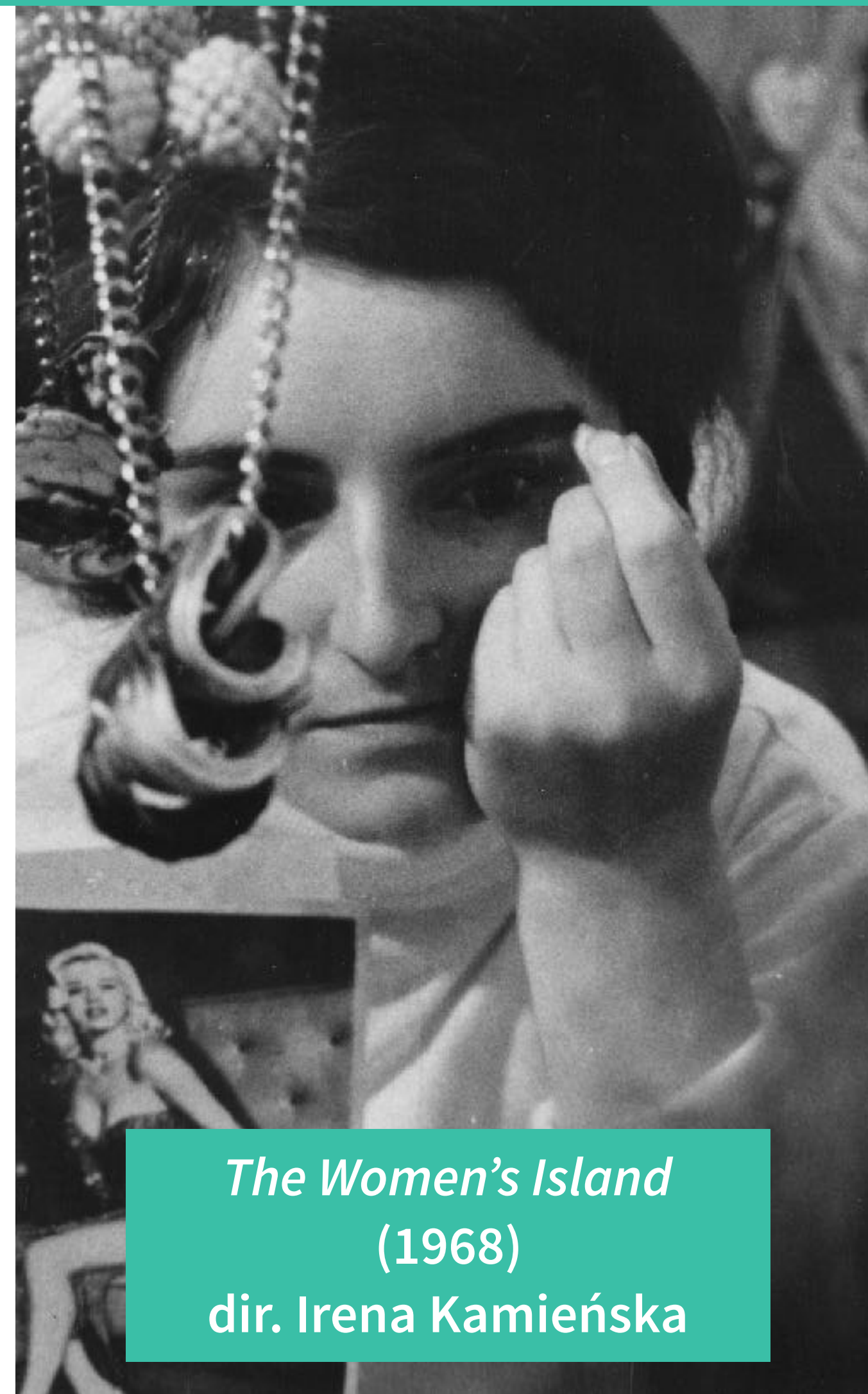
The Family
(1971)
dir. Danuta Halladin



Nurses
(1974)
dir. Krystyna Gryczetowska

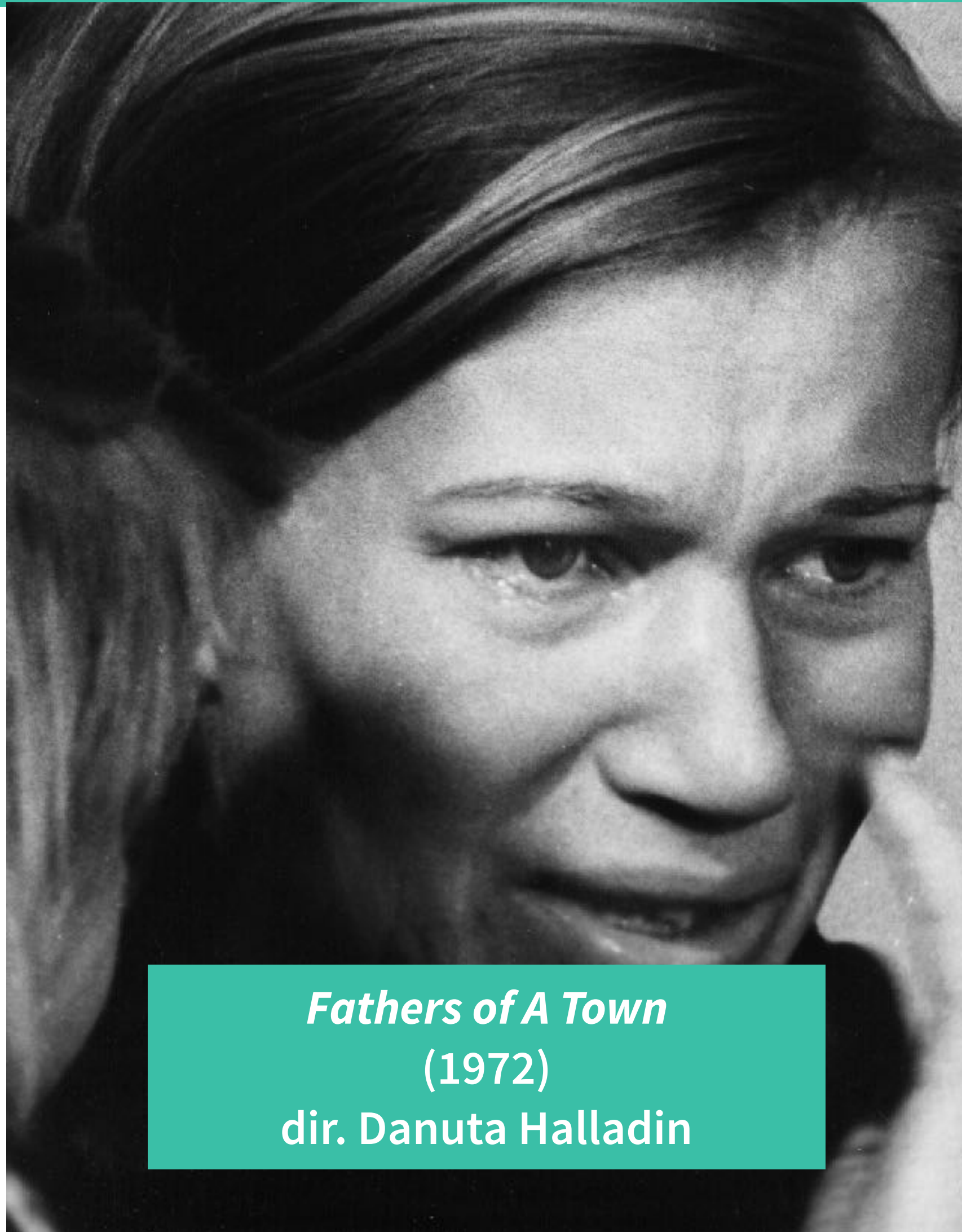
FILMED EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S HETEROTOPIA

Coping with Social Suppression (Female Migrant Workers)



FILMED EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S HETEROTOPIA

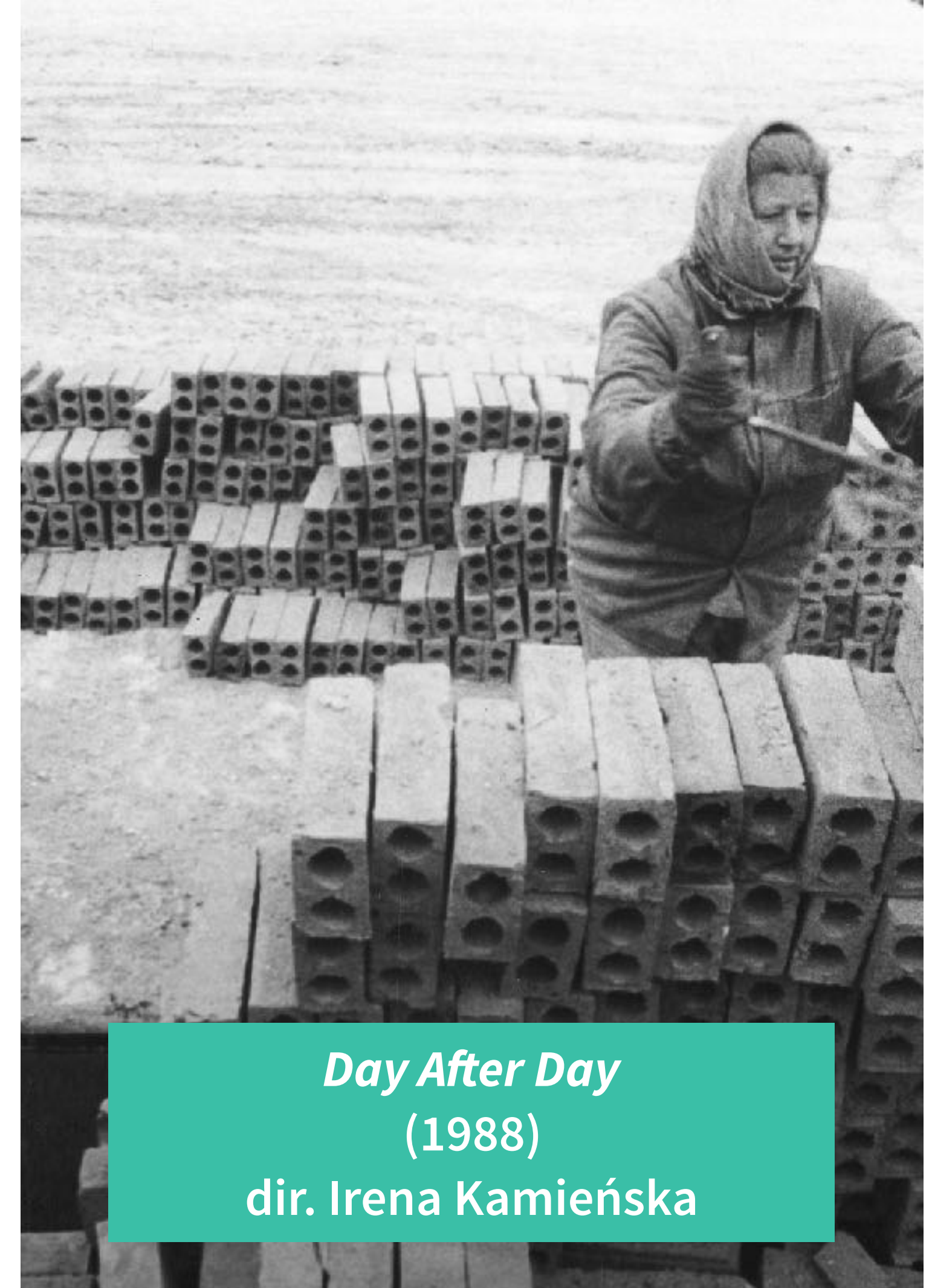
Coping with Social Suppression (Resilient Heroines)



Fathers of A Town
(1972)
dir. Danuta Halladin



Workwomen
(1980)
dir. Irena Kamieńska



Day After Day
(1988)
dir. Irena Kamieńska

FILMED EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S HETEROTOPIA

Empowerment through Fashion, Leisure & Entertainment



Who Wants a Dress?
(1963)
dir. Helena Amiradżibi



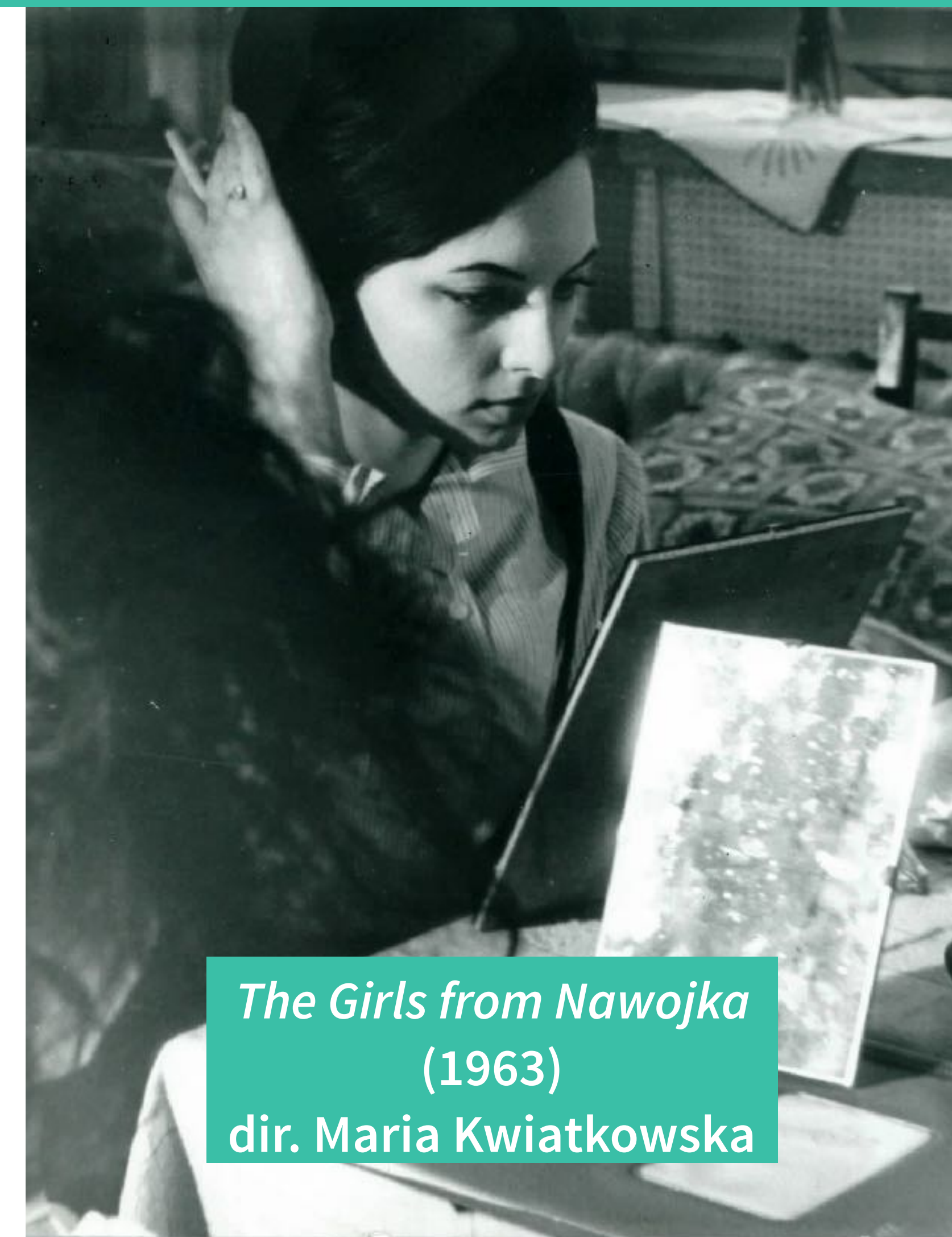
Career
(1964)
dir. Helena Amiradżibi



Not Just on Fashion
(1965)
dir. Maria Kwiatkowska

FILMED EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S HETEROTOPIA

The Independent Career Woman



The Girls from Nawojka
(1963)
dir. Maria Kwiatkowska



Scenes with the Captain
(1971)
dir. Maria Kwiatkowska



Ms Zofia
(1978)
dir. Maria Kwiatkowska

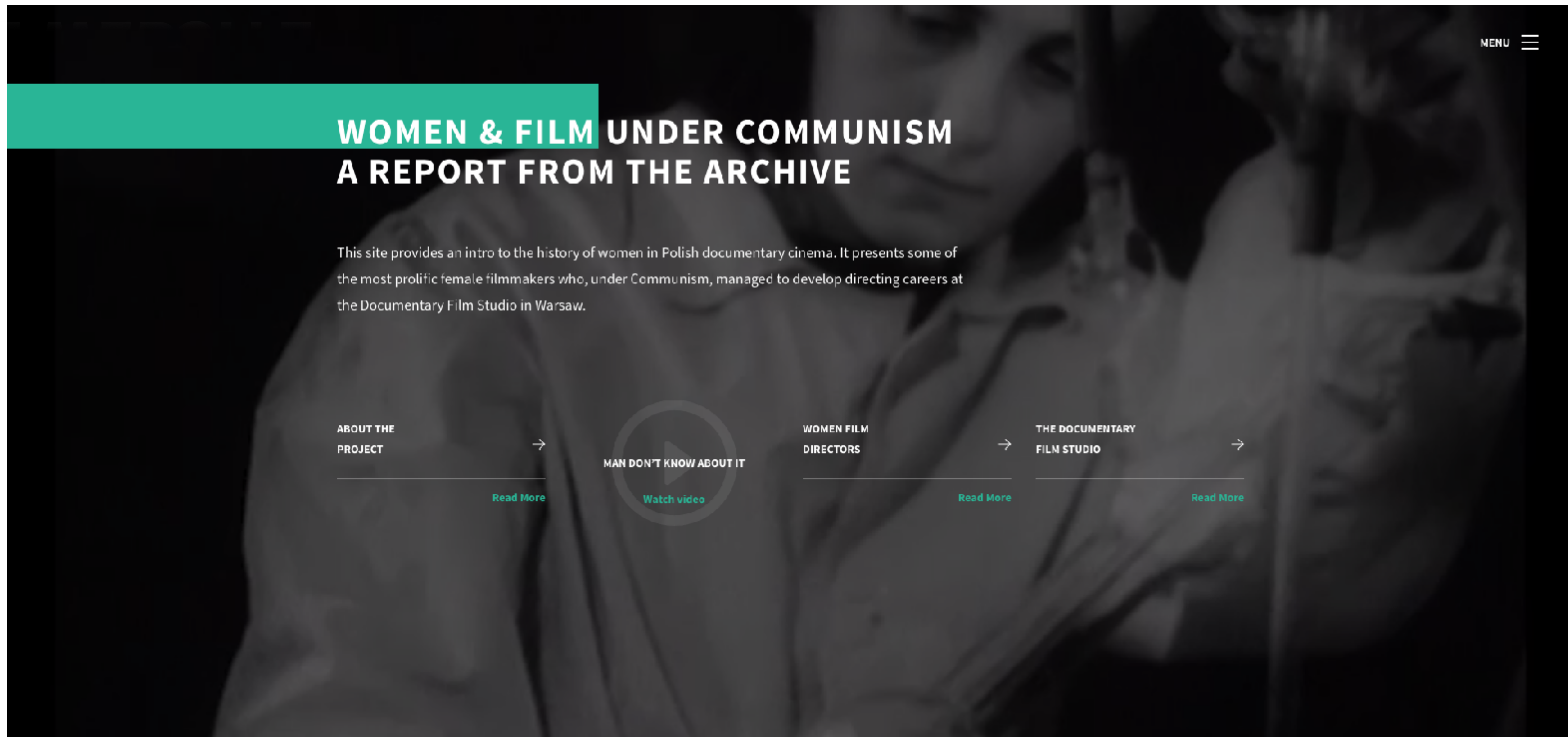
DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S HETEROTOPIA

An Open Statement of Female Resistance to Patriarchy



The Weak Woman (1967) dir. Helena Amiradžibi

THE WEBSITE



<http://womenundercommunism.com/>