

New Issues

Frank Karwoski

People of Cinema and Theater

These stamps, part of an ongoing series on People of Cinema and Theater (*Ludzi Kina i Teatru*), honor three Polish actors from the early 20th Century: 2.60 zł stamp for Mieczysław Cybulski, 3.20 zł stamp for Ina Benita, and a 3.70 zł stamp for Kazimierz Junosza-Stępowski.

Cybulski (1903 - 1984) was a handsome actor who appeared in over 40 films between 1925 and 1939. He did not consider acting a serious profession. After World War II began, he emigrated to the U.S., managed a restaurant in Texas (1960s), and later moved to Florida.

The actress Ina Benita (1912 - 1944) was born in Russia and moved to Poland in the interwar period. She debuted on stage in 1931 with the Warsaw Theater Group, and then moved into cinema, performing in 17 films. One of her grandmothers was Jewish and Benita encountered difficulties in German-occupied Poland in World War II; Benita was imprisoned, released, and last seen alive during the Warsaw Uprising.

Junosza-Stępowski (1880 - 1943) was a legendary figure in Polish cinema, considered one of the most outstanding actors of pre-war Polish cinema. He appeared in the earliest Polish films beginning in 1922, and during his lengthy career appeared in 56 films. Before his movie career he performed in the theaters of Poznań, Kraków, and Łódź. Junosza-Stępowski was a star in the cinema, and was involved in several well-publicized romances. He was killed in 1943 while trying to protect his wife from members of the Polish Home Army, who discovered she was an informer for the Gestapo. The film *Dazed* (*Oszolomienie*), directed by Jerzy Sztwiertnia in 1988, is based on Junosza-Stępowski's life. In the margin of each of the three panes there is an informational QR code offering further background information to those able to scan the label.



Date of Issue

October 30, 2017

Sheet Format

3 stamps in ss & 3 panes
of 12 single stamps

Printing Method

Offset

Designer

Agnieszka Sancewicz

Corporal Wojtek the Soldier Bear

This A denominated stamp (2.60 zł) commemorates the unusual life of a Syrian brown bear nicknamed "Wojtek", who was adopted by the Polish military in World War II.

In 1942 the newly formed Anders Army left the USSR for Iran, along with thousands of Poles who had been deported to the gulags following the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939. At a Polish refugee camp near Teheran, a soldier from the Polish II Corps purchased an orphaned bear cub as a pet, and the bear subsequently moved along with the 22nd Artillery Supply Company to Iraq, through Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.

The bear's nickname is a diminutive form of the Polish name Wojciech. He was popular with the troops, and had a propensity for arm wrestling, drinking beer, and smoking cigarettes. Wojtek was given official army status as a private to qualify for transport with the Polish II Corps from Egypt to Italy, to fight alongside the British Eighth Army. At the Battle of Monte Casino, he reportedly carried crates of 11.5 kilogram artillery shells, providing moral support for the Polish troops.

Wojtek received the rank of corporal, and after the war, lived out his life at the Edinburgh Zoo. When he died in 1963 he weighed 220 kilograms and was more than 1.8 meters tall.

The stamp shows an image of him carrying an artillery shell, as depicted on the official emblem of the 22nd Company. Many memorials have been dedicated to him, and a movie was broadcast about him on BBC Two Scotland in 2011.



Date of Issue

October 31, 2017

Sheet Format

Single in sheet of 50

Printing Method

Photogravure

Designer

Roch Stefaniak