

PRODUCED BY ADAM PALUCH GRZEGORZ ADAMCZYK CO-PRODUCTION SPEAKERS' AVENUE WRITTEN BY MAŁGORZATA SOBIESZCZAŃSKA ADAM PALUCH
DIANA KADŁUBOWSKA PIOTR MIELNIK OLIWIA CEBULA ROBERT KIBALSKI MARIA BOGUSZEWICZ
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAŁ DŁUGOŁĘCKI EDITED BY MARCIN SZYMAŃSKI

DIRECTED BY
ADAM PALUCH

SHADOWS

HER ONLY HOPE IS TO ENTER THE NIGHTMARE

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FILM DETAILS

Title	“Cienie” (Original language) “Shadows” (English)
Type	Short Film
Genres	Drama, Psychological drama, Thriller, Mystery, Sci-Fi
Runtime	7 minutes 43 seconds
Completion Date	January 7, 2026
Country of Origin	Poland
Country of Filming	Poland
Language	Polish
Subtitles	English
Shooting Format	Digital, ARRI Alexa Mini LF
Exhibition Format	2K DCP, 2K ProRes, 2K mp4
Film Color	Black & White
Aspect Ratio	2.39:1
Frame rate	24 fps
Sound	Stereo

TAGLINE

Her only hope is to enter the nightmare.

LOGLINE

A desperate mother uses a secret technology to enter her catatonic daughter's mind to save her, but in the depths of the girl's consciousness, she encounters the dark echoes of her own fears.

SYNOPSIS

The dark 1930s. When conventional medicine and religion fail in the face of her daughter's mysterious illness, a desperate mother undertakes a risky break-in at a psychiatric hospital. The true nightmare begins when a mysterious device opens a gateway not only into the shadowed depths of her child's mind, but also into the hell of her own fears.

In this metaphysical realm, guilt takes on a real form, and the fight for her daughter's life becomes a confrontation with the darkest part of herself.

The film is a stylish psychological drama infused with elements of horror, a modern spiritual séance that evokes the ghosts of 1930s cinema to tell a story of sacrifice and facing one's inner demons.

SYNOPSIS (LONG)

The 1930s. When medicine fails and faith offers no hope, a desperate woman must find another way to save her daughter. Her fifteen-year-old daughter, Hania, has been trapped in a mysterious catatonia for months, the cause of which neither doctors nor clergymen can explain. Under the cover of night, the Mother meets with the Scientist, a pariah pushed to the margins of medicine who is seeking redemption in the world of science. He brings a heretical hope in a worn-out suitcase: an experimental machine capable of creating a bridge between minds.

Risking everything, they hide in the dark corridors, avoiding the hospital staff, and break into the psychiatric ward.

Finding Hania in one of the rooms, the Scientist connects the woman and her daughter to the equipment. The Mother's consciousness leaves her body and sinks into the black, barren Void. The space between dimensions and minds. However, she doesn't find her child there. A deformed, grotesque reflection of herself awaits her: the embodiment of the fears and guilt she has buried for years.

The rescue mission turns into a brutal psychodrama. The Mother realizes that to save Hania, she must confront the inner demon she has spent her life feeding with her own fears and guilt. In an act of desperation, she decides to remain in the Void longer than is safe.

The machine malfunctions, and the hospital staff, alerted by the noise, try to force the door open. Inside the Void, Mother performs the ultimate act of self-discovery. When Hania suddenly opens her eyes to the physical world, she sees only her mother's motionless body and the chaos surrounding her.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have always been fascinated by the idea of a Shadow. I do not mean the one that follows us, but rather the one hidden deep within us. Jung's concept of the dark, repressed side of the human psyche struck me as a perfect foundation for a drama infused with metaphysical elements.

I believe that the atmosphere of classic horror cinema, specifically how it plays with light and darkness, provides the ideal language to tell this archetypal story. "Shadows" was born from this desire to create a universal psychological drama dressed in the costume of a 1930s movie.

At the heart of this story is the Mother and her ultimate question about the limits of sacrifice. What happens when love forces us to enter hell? Not the metaphysical one, but the hell of our own psyche where every step leads deeper into the hidden guilt. Her journey into the extrasensory void is not only a struggle to save her daughter, but above all a desperate attempt to confront her own guilt and accept the darkest parts of herself.

I was captivated by the tension between two perspectives, involving scientific precision and metaphysical mystery. Each offers a different explanation for the protagonist's suffering, yet neither can truly bring her peace. The real answer lies beyond them both, in an act of pure and unconditional love.

I chose a black and white aesthetic because this story could not fully exist in color. It is a tale that unfolds in a liminal space, on the border between wakefulness and nightmare. The visual austerity and a minimalist approach are intended to focus the viewer's full attention on the character's emotional journey, creating a timeless story about how sometimes the hardest battle we fight is with ourselves.

"Shadows" is essentially a psychological drama dressed in a costume woven from mystery and a touch of horror. It tells the story of how the most difficult battles are not fought against monsters outside, but against the ones we nurture within ourselves. This is my dialogue with darkness, and I hope it will resonate with audiences as well.

"Shadows" was created as a short film as part of the 6th edition of the directing course organised by Speakers' Avenue.



Adam Paluch – Director, Writer, Producer

BACKGROUND

The desire to make my own film had been maturing in my mind for many years. For a long time, the biggest obstacle was finding people in my immediate environment willing to share this challenge.

Despite this, I did not give up and consistently acquired knowledge on my own. I analyzed cinema and learned the fundamentals of the craft wherever I could, ranging from cinematography and screenwriting to directing.

The breakthrough came when the opportunity arose to join a directing course. It was a pivotal decision. It gave me access to professionals and introduced me to wonderful and passionate people with whom I could finally realize my vision.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Making the film presented a tremendous challenge from the very beginning since I started with resources allowing for only a single day of work for the cinematographer and gaffer. Despite these limitations, I successfully secured funding and doubled the number of shooting days. I also gathered nearly forty wonderful industry professionals ready to bring my vision to life.

A pivotal moment was the casting process where I found the ideal actors for the lead roles. The unique chemistry between them was palpable from the very first moments.

During numerous meetings with various departments, we developed a coherent vision of the world portrayed within the film. We realized that the shooting schedule would be very tight. Therefore, we prepared a detailed storyboard for all scenes and precisely planned every hour of work.

SHOOT AND LOCATIONS

We found the ideal location, which was an authentic psychiatric hospital. We adapted an unused wing and constructed a set design that reflected historical realities.

Thanks to detailed pre-production and an incredibly efficient crew, we managed to shoot all the material needed to depict the tangible reality. This involved dozens of shots captured across several interior locations and the hospital exterior.

The second shooting day took place in a studio. It was there, against black and white backgrounds, that we filmed dozens more shots depicting events in the Void, a dark world from beyond our dimension. Many of these were trick shots requiring precise planning and immediate problem-solving on set.

POST-PRODUCTION

Although we did everything in our power to create the Shadow character using practical effects on set, the final result did not satisfy us. Budget limitations prompted me to learn digital special effects on my own. Ultimately, the Shadow character was created in Unreal Engine 5. This process was facilitated by my previous experience with similar software. In total, nearly thirty VFX shots were created.

The work involved removing modern infrastructure from outdoor scenes and studio elements as well as adding effects such as sparks and additional lighting. Editing and the final touches, including sound design and color grading, were completed in professional studios: Studio FONOGRAP and COLOR PRO.

Adam Paluch – Director, Writer, Producer

CAST



DIANA KADŁUBOWSKA
MOTHER



PIOTR MIELNIK
SCIENTIST



OLIWIA CEBULA
HANIA



ROBERT KIBALSKI
DOCTOR



MARIA BOGUSZEWICZ
NUN



KEY CREW



ADAM PALUCH

Director, Writer and Producer

A debuting director, screenwriter, and producer.

He previously created digital worlds in the video game industry and now works daily as a UX designer, shaping user experiences. Ultimately, he turned his focus toward his greatest passion: cinema.

His work is a dialogue with darkness, where psychological drama meets metaphysical fear. In film, he is drawn to what lies beneath the surface of the story – the mystical structures that govern human fate. His debut film, “Shadows”, is both a love letter to early cinema and a dark treatise on the shadow that follows us and the one that dwells within us.



MAŁGORZATA SOBIESZCZAŃSKA

Writer

A writer, screenwriter, and screenwriting lecturer at the Warsaw Film School. A graduate of Theatre Studies at the Theatre Academy in Warsaw and the Screenwriting Program at the Łódź Film School, she has written feature film, television series, radio plays, and dramas (she received an award in the Script Pro competition for her screenplay for “Zgoda,” among other awards). A member of the Polish Screenwriters’ Guild and the Women of Film (Kobiety Filmu) group.



GRZEGORZ ADAMCZYK

Executive Producer

A debuting film producer, an experienced entrepreneur, and the founder and CEO of an IT company.

He recognized the artistic potential of the “Shadows” project, which he decided to provide strategic support for. As a co-producer, he facilitated the film’s production, becoming its key patron and partner.

His entry into the world of film is a natural extension of his passion for visual arts and new media, and the first step towards supporting bold, auteur cinema.



SPEAKERS’ AVENUE

SPEAKERS’ AVENUE

Since 2010, Speakers’ Avenue has been hosting creative meetings, training sessions, and film courses for various skill levels. Courses are offered in Polish or English. Speakers’ Avenue boasts an experienced and creative team of over 130 filmmakers: six Oscar nominees, BAFTA and European Film Award winners, and winners of the Berlinale as well as other leading festivals worldwide.

CREDITS

KEY CREW

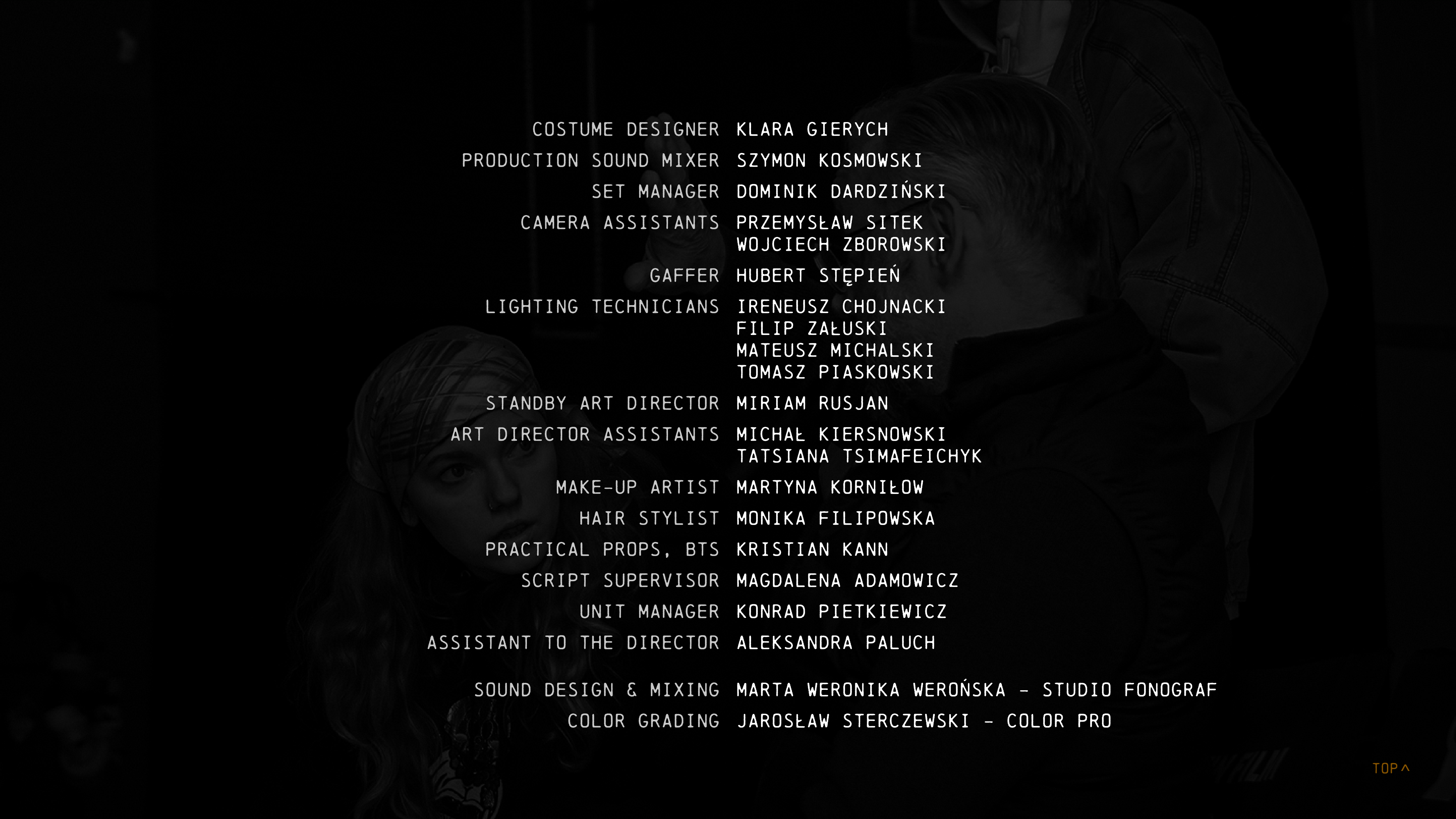
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EXECUTIVE PRODUCER GRZEGORZ ADAMCZYK
CO-PRODUCED BY SPEAKERS' AVENUE

CAST

MOTHER DIANA KADŁUBOWSKA
SCIENTIST PIOTR MIELNIK
HANIA OLIWIA CEBULA
DOCTOR ROBERT KIBALSKI
NUN MARIA BOGUSZEWICZ

CREW

PRODUCTION MANAGER JULIA WEJCMAN
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAŁ DŁUGOŁĘCKI
EDITOR MARCIN SZYMAŃSKI
1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR BARBARA GŁĘBOCKA
PRODUCTION DESIGNER KAROLINA KOZŁOWSKA



COSTUME DESIGNER KLARA GIERYCH
PRODUCTION SOUND MIXER SZYMON KOSMOWSKI
SET MANAGER DOMINIK DARDZIŃSKI
CAMERA ASSISTANTS PRZEMYSŁAW SITEK
WOJCIECH ZBOROWSKI
GAFFER HUBERT STĘPIEŃ
LIGHTING TECHNICIANS IRENEUSZ CHOJNACKI
FILIP ZAŁUSKI
MATEUSZ MICHAŁSKI
TOMASZ PIASKOWSKI
STANDBY ART DIRECTOR MIRIAM RUSJAN
ART DIRECTOR ASSISTANTS MICHAŁ KIERSNOWSKI
TATSIANA TSIMAFEICHYK
MAKE-UP ARTIST MARTYNA KORNIŁOW
HAIR STYLIST MONIKA FILIPOWSKA
PRACTICAL PROPS, BTS KRISTIAN KANN
SCRIPT SUPERVISOR MAGDALENA ADAMOWICZ
UNIT MANAGER KONRAD PIETKIEWICZ
ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR ALEKSANDRA PALUCH
SOUND DESIGN & MIXING MARTA WERONIKA WEROŃSKA – STUDIO FONOGRAF
COLOR GRADING JAROSŁAW STERCZEWSKI – COLOR PRO

VISUAL EFFECTS & STORYBOARD ADAM PALUCH

ADDITIONAL STORYBOARD JAN TOPCZEWSKI

ARTISTIC SUPERVISION TOMASZ GOLDBAUM-WLAZIŃSKI

FESTIVAL DISTRIBUTION AGNIESZKA DAMSKA-CORNISCH

WEBSITE MACIEJ MIŁANOWSKI

DRIVERS JAN KANN
BARBARA GŁĘBOCKA

CAMERA EQUIPMENT ATM SYSTEMS
JA CIĘ KRĘCĘ

LIGHTING EQUIPMENT LIGHTHOUSE GURU

LOCATIONS

THE PROF. JAN MAZURKIEWICZ MAZOVIAN SPECIALIST HEALTH CENTRE
ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN WARSAW – FACULTY OF DESIGN
BRATANKI STUDIO

Speakers'
Avenue

ATM
SYSTEM

F
STUDIO
FONOGRAF

COLORPRO

STILLS

More hi-res stills available on [Google Drive](#)



Mother (Diana Kadłubowska) despairs over the condition of her daughter, **Hania** (Oliwia Cebula).



After attempting to enter her daughter’s consciousness, **Mother** (Diana Kadłubowska) finds herself in an infinite, black “Void”.



Mother (Diana Kadłubowska) faces the manifestation of her hidden fears: the **Shadow** that emerged from the darkness of the “Void”.



A dramatic scene in which **Mother** (Diana Kadłubowska) defies the rules governing travel to another dimension.

BEHIND THE SCENES

More hi-res BTS photos available on [Google Drive](#)



Director of Photography **Michał Długołęcki** hunts for the perfect shot in a hospital ward scene.



Director **Adam Paluch** explains the concept of a special effect shot to actress **Diana Kadłubowska** (Mother).



Actors **Piotr Mielnik** (Scientist) and **Diana Kadłubowska** (Mother), together with the Director of Photography **Michał Długołęcki**, prepare for a scene in front of a psychiatric hospital.



Director of Photography **Michał Długołęcki** and the Director **Adam Paluch** discuss a shot in the "Void", filmed in a studio on a black background.

CONTACT, LINKS & DOWNLOADS

CONTACT US

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Katowice, POLAND

LINKS

Website www.shadows-movie.com

Hi-res Poster [Google Drive](#)

Hi-res Production Stills [Google Drive](#)

Hi-res BTS Photos [Google Drive](#)