

## HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

### Lech Majewski's poetic examination of loss.

**In Polish poet and filmmaker's *Field of Dogs*, the visuals are again striking and the theme of death deeply examined in an original way. Again there is a strong feeling that the stakes are high – a dialogue with God, a struggle for the soul.**

Sporting a badly scarred but sensitive face, the young hero works behind the check-out counter of a soulless wholesale store. More often we find him asleep in a clothes bin in the back, or in the pew of a cozy cathedral. There he dreams painterly dreams of a naked woman nursing a baby on a riverbank, or of himself embracing a dead woman covered in blood.

He evades thought by channel-hopping on TV and imagines a bikini-clad blonde seducing him on a tropical beach. But meanwhile the real world impinges on his private grief with its own mega-tragedies: newsreels show graphic images of flooding all over Poland and the plane crash in which the country's president was killed. The grainy images nevertheless look poetic in the context of the film. For example, a badly flooded cemetery in which even the tombstones are submerged and only crosses stick up out of the water (newsreel) rhymes with the final surreal scene of a flooded cathedral (fiction).

Dialogue is kept to a minimum and most of it is delivered by the boy's compassionate, philosophical aunt (**Elzbieta Okupska**) in an extended monologue as she tries to comfort him. Unlike the priest in church, she faces death head-on and reads him an apropos piece from Seneca and then quotes Heidegger. Rather amazingly, it seems to help.

**Deborah Young**

#### **The Bottom Line**

A rarefied art film for the very literate.