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1983

**SATURDAY
AUGUST 6
SEQUOIA I**

6:45 P.M.



THE CONSTANT FACTOR (Constans)

*Poland, 1980. (96 min.)
35 mm 1.66 format*

Director/Screenwriter: Krzysztof Zanussi; **Producer:** Polish Corporation for Film Production; TOR unit; **Photography:** Slawomir Idziak; **Music:** Wojciech Kilar; **Editor:** Ursula Sliwinska; **Principal Cast:** Tadeusz Bradecki, Zofia Mrozowska, Malgorzata Zajackowska; **Print Source:** New Yorker Films, 16 West 61st St., NY, NY 10023

Educated in physics and philosophy, Krzysztof Zanussi makes the movies of a humane mathematician. He is always asking himself where the exact intersection of freedom and determination is to be found: must 2 and 2 always equal 4? and if so, how far must every 1 take personal responsibility for his life or stagger along in pre-designed paths? The "stories" in Zanussi's pictures are the materials of life set out in such a way to insist on these questions, as if they were the proofs of theorems. And so **THE CONSTANT FACTOR** is an enquiry into whether life is fixed, consistent and bleak, or invaded, encouraged, and threatened, by chance.

Its central character is Witold, who has finished military service in a parachute regiment, and who now seeks to make his life. His father was a famous mountaineer; his mother is a pharmacist, dying slowly. Witold gets a good but killing job working for the state. He has a glimpse of mysticism in Bombay, and he dreams persistently about the majestic wildness of the mountains. He tries to behave well, but he finds life and its systems messy and compromised. He asks the questions, and he is suspended between being a slave of fate and a free man. As always, Zanussi's films can be read as commentaries on life behind the Iron Curtain; but they are also models from universal philosophy. - *David Thomson*