

BLOCKADE, LANDSCAPE & REVUE

3 films by
Sergei Loznitsa



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BLOCKADE

Russia, 2005, 52 mins

The longest siege during World War II was that of Leningrad, which lasted for 900 days, from September 1941 to January 1944, when Hitler attempted to starve the Soviet city of three million people into submission. Estimates of the number of residents who died from starvation, disease or cold range from 641,000 to 800,000.

Comprised solely of rarely seen footage found in Soviet film archives, *Blockade* vividly re-creates those momentous events, featuring a meticulously reconstructed, state-of-the-art soundtrack added to the original black-and-white silent footage. The result gives viewers the eerie impression of being not just an observer but virtually a participant in the events as they unfold on the streets of Leningrad.

BLOCKADE is organized episodically, beginning with defensive measures, including artillery emplacements, anti-tank fortifications, trenches, and observation balloons; the devastating effect of artillery shelling and aerial bombing of the city; the marching of captured German soldiers through the streets, surrounded by taunting Soviet crowds; the corpses lying on street corners or dragged on sleds to mortuaries for eventual burial in mass graves; citizens desperately foraging for food, water and firewood; the joyous celebrations upon the breaking of the siege and the disturbing aftermath.

BLOCKADE is a compelling demonstration of the power of archival footage, here synergized by an evocative soundtrack, to bring history to life.

"Blockade doesn't barrage you with battle scenes; instead, we get eerie moments of calm as people walk down snowy streets littered with corpses and tanks roll off into the distance."
—**David Fear, Time Out New York**

"What narrative there is, along with a sense of incrementally mounting horror, emerges unbidden from the images: teeming streets that gradually thin, bundled people panning for filthy water in potholes, stick-thin pedestrians stepping matter-of-factly past."
—**Jim Ridley, Village Voice**

"Different and imaginative... One of the most important Russian movies of the last decade... THE BLOCKADE is an important film that belongs in every university library."
—**Denise Youngblood, The Russian Review**

"Stark...harrowing...These pieced-together black-and-white sequences chronicle the deterioration of an austere, stately city into a snowbound graveyard of scarred buildings and numbed survivors."
—**Stephen Holden, The New York Times**

"Fascinating and disturbing... a big-screen treasure for war and history buffs."
—**Film Journal International**

"Riveting... a technical marvel... in making BLOCKADE, Loznitsa cut, edited, and added a soundtrack to archival footage to open history to new interpretive possibilities and deeper comprehension."
—**Tony Osborne, Film & History**

CREDITS

Director Sergei Loznitsa
N. Blaikov, A. Bogorov, J. Blumberg, A. Bistrov, V. Valdaizev, N. Golod,
B. Dementiev, N. Dolgov, S. Ivanov, O. Ivanov, L. Isaacson, A. Klimov,
Cameramen A. Ksenovontov, R. Karmen, L. Levitin, E. Leibovich, V. Maksimovich,
S. Maslenikov, L. Medvedev, A. Nasarov, P. Pallei, F. Pechul, A. Pogoreliy,
G. Simonov, B. Sinizin, V. Sinizin, J. Slavin, B. Sorokin, V. Stradin, K. Stankevich,
V. Sumkin, G. Trofimov, E. Shapiro, B. Scher, G. Schuliatin, E. Uchitel, S. Fomin
Sound designer Vladimir Golovnitzkiy
Producer Viacheslav Telnov
Production Russia - St. Petersburg Documentary Film Studios
Distribution Deckert Distribution

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

Rotterdam International Film Festival, 2006
Visions du réel, 2006
Jury Award and Critics Award, Stalker International Film Festival, Moscow, 2005
“White Elephant” for Best Documentary, Russian Guild of Film Critics, 2005
Nika Award, Best Documentary of the year, Russia, 2005
Best Film using archival material, Jerusalem International Film Festival, 2006
Innovation Award, Chicago International Documentary Festival, 2007



REVUE

Russia, 2008, 83 mins

In *REVUE*, Sergei Loznitsa researched footage from the 1950s and 1960s, selecting excerpts from newsreels, propaganda films, TV shows and feature films that present a portrait – in images - of Soviet life during the same period.

With scenes and sounds taken from a wide variety of films and newsreels, *REVUE* shows us images of industry and agriculture (dam construction, steel plants, Stakhanovite labour competitions, farmland seeded by hand and ploughed with horses), political life (local elections, abundant Lenin iconography, speeches by Khrushchev, the threat of capitalist spies), popular culture (a village choir, a dance troupe, a travelling cinema, poetry readings for workers, a propagandistic stage play), and technology (space exploration, astronaut Yuri Gargarin, new industrial development).

The film's fascinating flow of disparate scenes representing a certain idea – and ideal - of Soviet life, appear, from today's perspective, as alternately poignant, funny, and tragic. The cumulative impact reveals a life of hardship, deprivation and seemingly absurd social rituals, but one always inspired by the vision, or illusion, of a communist dream.

Seen from these dual historical and contemporary perspectives, *REVUE* is both a nostalgic and instructive look back at a communist past that represents social engineering on a grand, and seemingly unreal, scale.

“Loznitsa combines a knack for finding sociological meaning in throwaway moments with a less-is-more aesthetic... By juxtaposing labour-filled activities with TV shows and plays proclaiming the ‘bounties’ of revolution, the film offers glimpses of a government-sanctioned alternative universe.” —Time Out New York

“Loznitsa's narration-free compilation of documentary scenes from the Soviet way of life is a must for anyone interested in glimpsing the disappeared Soviet experience. An unorthodox iconography of society, culture and politics in the old U.S.S.R.”—Louis Menashe, Polytechnic Institute of New York University

“Director Sergei Loznitsa says more about Soviet art and politics than any talking head or narrated documentary ever could.”—Eric Monder, Hollywood Reporter

“Revue melds disparate images of Soviet life during the 1950s and '60s into a luminous time capsule of patriotic fervour and political fealty.”—Jeanette Catsoulis, The New York Times

CREDITS

Director Sergei Loznitsa
Camera Archives
Sound
designer Vladimir Golovnitzkiy
Producer Heino Deckert
Co-
Producers Viacheslav Telnov, Svetlana Zinovieva
Poduction ma.ja.de filmproduktion, St. Petersburg Documentary Film Studios, MDR,
Inspiration Films, YLE Teema
Supported
by Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Hubert Bals Fund of IFF Rotterdam,
Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Russian Federal Agency of Culture
and Cinematography
Distribution Deckert Distribution

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

'The Golden Horn' for the Best Documentary Film, International Krakow Film Festival, 2008
Award for the Preservation of Audio-Visual Memory, Jerusalem International Film Festival,
2008
2008 Best Feature Documentary Film, Open Documentary Film Festival, Yekaterinburg,
Russia, 2008
Rotterdam International Film Festival, 2008 and 2013
2008 BAFICI, Buenos Aires, 2008
2008 IndieLisbon Film Festival, 2008



LANDSCAPE (*Peyzazh*)

Russia, 2003, 60 mins

Winter. People are waiting for a bus in the Russian town of Okulovka. They talk. Listening to their conversations, the viewer is immersed in the world they live in. United by the movement of the camera, the whole place and the people blend together. Reminiscent of the work of Michael Snow and of Chantal Akerman in *D'Est* (1992), *Landscape* is an absorbing documentary showing both the people waiting for a bus and the atmosphere of this wintry wait, the tensions and worries featured in discussions recorded separately from the image, resulting in a poignant and often funny documentary.

'The camera pans slowly across the 'landscape' of faces while, on a separate recording for the soundtrack, we hear people – young and old – talking about their woes and worries and will to survive by living each day as it comes. Finally, the bus arrives – an hour late – exactly the amount of time Loznitsa required to shoot this remarkable candid-camera documentation'.

Ron Holloway, *Kinema*

CREDITS

Director Sergei Loznitsa
Cameraman Pavel Kostomarov
Sound designer Vladimir Golovnitzkiy
Producer Heino Deckert
Production Russia, Germany - Ma.Ja.De. Filmproduction
Distribution Deckert Distribution

AWARDS

Grand Prix, "Filmer a Tout Prix" International Film Festival, Brussels, 2003
Best Photography, Leipzig International Documentary Film Festival, 2003
Jury Award, Sibiu International Film Festival, Romania, 2003



More details and downloads at newwavefilms.co.uk

Photos at www.newwavefilms.co.uk/press

Sergei Loznitsa – Biography

Born in 1964 in Belarus, Sergei Loznitsa grew up in Kiev where he studied applied mathematics and later worked as a researcher on artificial intelligence.

He then decided to study directing at the Moscow Institute of Cinematography (VGIK), and graduated in 1997. He has been making award-winning documentaries since 1996, starting with *Today We Are Going to Build a House* (1996) and *Life, Autumn* (1998). In 2000, he began producing documentaries at the Documentary Films Studio in St. Petersburg, including *The Train Stop* (2000), *The Settlement* (2001), *Portrait* (2002), *Landscape* (2003), and *Factory* (2004). *Blockade* (2005) and *Revue* (2008) are compilations of footage from Soviet archives, much of it made available to filmmakers for the first time.

In 2010 he completed his first feature film *My Joy*, premiered in the main competition of the Cannes Film Festival, to great critical acclaim. *In The Fog* was his second feature film. It received its international premiere at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival and was widely praised by the critics and public alike. *In the Fog* was released by New Wave Films in the UK and Ireland on the 26th of April 2013 and in VOD, DVD and Blu Ray on the 26th of August.

The release of this special DVD set will allow UK viewers to discover three much revered but mostly unseen documentary films by Sergei Loznitsa. *Blockade*, *Revue* and *Landscape* are feature-length films made over a period of five years. Each has its own topic and style, and yet as a group they give a good idea of Sergei Loznitsa's way of looking at the world.

Filmography

Feature-Length Fiction Films

2012 **In the Fog**

2010 **My Joy**

Feature-Length Documentaries

2008 **Revue**

2008 **Northern Light**

2005 **Blockade**

2003 **Landscape**

2001 **Settlement**

Documentary Shorts

2012 **O Milagre de Santo Antonio**

2006 **Artel**

2004 **Factory**

2002 **Portrait**

2000 **The Train Stop**

1998 **Life, Autumn**

1996 **Today We Are Going to Build a House**