

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ‘PUTIN’S RUSSIA’ FILM SERIES LOOKS AT 21ST-CENTURY RUSSIA THROUGH A PRISM OF MORE THAN 30 FICTION FILMS AND DOCUMENTARIES

June 15–July 15, 2018

Astoria, New York, June 11, 2018 [updated]—Museum of the Moving Image will present [\*Putin's Russia\*](#), a major screening series including 30 feature films and several mid-length and short films made since Vladimir Putin came to power at midnight on New Year’s Eve in 1999. Nineteen years, four American presidents, multiple wars, various economic booms and busts—and countless protests, crackdowns, and incursions later—Putin is still in charge. During this time, filmmakers within and without the country have gone beyond the headlines to capture, narrate, riff on, and comment upon life in contemporary Russia. The film series, which runs June 15 through July 15, 2018, strives to offer an appropriately broad, prismatic view of Russia in the 21st century.

**Updates:** The Opening Night film, *Moscow*, will feature a personal appearance by director **Alexander Zeldovich**. Plus, a new film has been added: On Sunday, June 17, at 2:00 p.m. *Bimmer*, Pyotr Buslov’s 2003 film, will be introduced by writer **Keith Gessen**. And, on Saturday, July 14, at 1:30 p.m. the screening of *The Term* will be introduced by producer **Max Tuula**.

The films in *Putin’s Russia* were released from 2000 to 2018 and encompass everything from crime thrillers to absurdist comedies, coming-of-age dramas to dystopic science fiction, populist blockbusters to muckraking documentaries. Among them are films by internationally renowned directors such as **Alexander Sokurov** (*Alexandra*), **Andrey Zvyagintsev** (*Leviathan*, *Loveless*), **Sergei Loznitsa** (*A Gentle Creature*, *My Joy*, *Victory Day*), **Aleksei German** (*Hard to Be a God* paired with **Aleksei German, Jr.’s** *Under Electric Clouds*), and **Aleksei Balabanov** (*Me Too*). The series also features the work of artists and films new to U.S. audiences and incorporates invaluable contributions from filmmakers hailing from the former Soviet bloc and beyond. These include the North American premiere of *The Red Soul*, in which filmmaker **Jessica Gorter** queries a range of citizens on how Stalin’s legacy endures in Putin’s Russia; the U.S. premiere of *Extinction*, Portuguese filmmaker **Salomé Lamas’s** entrancing, sonically immersive documentary following a young man who has declared loyalty towards Transnistria, an unrecognized country rooted in

communist ideology; and the New York premiere of **Alexander Hant's** stylish road movie ***How Viktor "the Garlic" Took Alexey "the Stud" to the Nursing Home***. The series closes with the New York premiere of ***Our New President, Maxim Pozdorovkin's*** found-footage documentary that bears witness to the spread of fake news that helped influence the U.S. presidential election (with Pozdorovkin in person, a co-presentation with Rooftop Films).

Other documentary highlights in the series include four films by the St. Petersburg-based **Alina Rudnitskaya: *Blood, Bitch Factory, I Will Forget This Day***, and ***Victory Day***. Rudnitskaya has emerged as one of the most talented and insightful chroniclers of life in contemporary Russia, focusing in particular on the struggles for identity and autonomy by women. In addition, the series includes ***At the Edge of Russia***, the 2010 feature debut from the innovative Polish director **Michal Marczak** best known for *All These Sleepless Nights*; ***Pipeline***, an East-to-West travelogue along the pipeline that carries oil to Europe, by **Vitaly Mansky** (whose *Close Relations* the Museum presented in a theatrical run last year); **Pavel Kostomarov's *The Mother* and *The Term*** (screening with the short ***Sleeping Souls***); and **Victor Kossakovsky's *Hush!***, a surreal and comedic look at the life of a St. Petersburg street as seen from the director's apartment window.

"Though the series highlights some of this century's best films, it is not intended to be a best-of survey, but rather aims to gather a wide array of films offering invaluable and insightful perspectives on 21st century Russian life, culture, politics, preoccupations, and values," said MoMI Curator of Film Eric Hynes, who organized the series with guest curator Daniel Witkin.

Tickets for each program are \$15 with discounts for seniors, students, and youth. Museum members at the Film Lover and MoMI Kids Premium levels and above receive complimentary tickets. For information about membership, visit [movingimage.us/support/membership](http://movingimage.us/support/membership).

*Putin's Russia: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Film Mosaic* is presented with support from the Harriman Institute for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies.

### **SCHEDULE FOR 'PUTIN'S RUSSIA: A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY FILM MOSAID.'**

#### **JUNE 15–JULY 15, 2018**

All screenings take place at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Ave, in Astoria, New York. Unless otherwise noted, tickets are \$15 (\$11 seniors, students, Standard-level members / \$9 youth (ages 3–17) / free for Museum members at the Film Lover and MoMI Kids Premium levels and above. Advance ticket purchase is available online at [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)

#### ***Moscow***

**With director Alexander Zeldovich in person**

FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Alexander Zeldovich. 2000, 139 mins. 35mm. In Russian with English subtitles. With Ingeborga Dapkunaite, Tatyana Drubich, Natalya Kolyakanova, Aleksandr Baluev, Viktor Gvozditsky. A ballet-obsessed mogul finds himself drawn into familial intrigue between his nihilistic fiancée, her simple, kind-hearted sister, and their twisted parents, meanwhile keeping up with his black market business and wily lieutenant, who masquerades as a Hasid to bypass suspicious customs inspectors. The perversely postmodern script, by novelist Vladimir Sorokin, set Russia's literati ablaze well before the film's release. Calling back to classic Russian lit (particularly Chekhov) with added sex, violence, and consumer goods, Zeldovich's film casts the Russian capital as a glossy, phantasmagoric city of nets, taking stock of the chaotic nineties while looking ahead to Putin's new era.

### ***The Stroll***

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Aleksey Uchitel. 2003, 90 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Irina Pegova, Pavel Barshak, Evgeniy Tsyganov, Evgeniy Grishkovets. Made with a youthful spirit to match that of its three energetic young leads, *The Stroll* is the film that best captures, in both content and form, a new century and a new regime's sense of possibility, discovery and entitlement. Presented largely in real time, *The Stroll* takes place along St. Petersburg's most famous promenade, Nevskii Prospekt, where the beautiful Olya is courted first by Alyosha and then by his friend Petya, their flirtations and gamesmanship intermingling with the sights and scenes they confront along the way. Alexei Uchitel's breakout film is like a more fleet-footed, hybridized *Before Sunrise*, albeit with a decidedly less romantic denouement.

### ***Dust***

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Sergei Loban. 2005, 107 mins. Digital projection. In Russian with English subtitles. With Aleksey Podolskiy, Pyotr Mamonov, Gleb Mikhaylov, Nina Yelisova, Mikhail Balinsky, Oleg Novikov, Larisa Pyatnitskaya. Thoroughly underground and exhilaratingly independent, Sergei Loban's sci-fi-ish debut has the look and feel of a film ardently made with spare change and from spare parts. Newcomer Aleksey Podolskiy plays Lyosha, a plus-sized momma's boy mysteriously recruited for a secret government medical experiment that warps his self-image and makes him desperate for further treatment. Predicting internet-addled avatar addictions, nailing simmering millennial fears of surveillance and Kremlin-authored conspiracies, *Dust* is Dostoevskian paranoia duped from a dupe of an old cassette tape.

NEW FILM ADDED TO THE SCHEDULE (UPDATED ON JUNE 11):

### ***Bimmer***

**Introduced by Keith Gessen**

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Pyotr Buslov. 2003. 110 mins. Digital projection. In Russian with English subtitles. With Maxim Konovalov, Sergei Gorobchenko, Vladimir Vdovichenko, Andrei Merzlikin, Ljudmila Polyakova. This story of four rough-hewn, unrepentant hustlers and their escalating adventures in a stolen BMW (*bimmer*, pronounced *beemer*, is slang for the car) became an out-of-nowhere cultural sensation in Russia and beyond, unearthing a new generation of filmmakers fed on 90s western genre films and formed by post-Soviet madness. Infectiously scored and

expressionistically filmed, *Bimmer* is a darkly funny road trip through an immoral, socially arbitrary landscape, featuring four antiheroes who careen between profane nihilism and tribalist loyalty, and an ending that echoes *The Wild Bunch* in its cinematic spectacle and generational reckoning. The screening will be introduced by Keith Gessen, a founding editor of *n+1* and a contributor to *The New Yorker* and *The London Review of Books*. He is the editor of three nonfiction books and the translator or co-translator, from Russian, of a collection of short stories, a book of poems, and a work of oral history. He is also the author of two novels, *All the Sad Young Literary Men* and *A Terrible Country*, the latter of which will be released on July 10, 2018 by Penguin Random House.

### ***Night Watch***

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Timur Bekmambetov. 2004, 114 mins. 35mm. In Russian with English subtitles. With Konstantin Khabenskiy, Vladimir Menshov, Valeriy Zolotukhin, Mariya Poroshina, Galina Tyunina, Yuriy Kutsenko. This international crossover hit fueled dreams of Russian blockbuster exports that never really materialized, but it did send director Timur Bekmambetov to Hollywood (*Wanted*, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*), and offered a genre-filtered, gallows-humor-filled look at the moral and social maelstrom of the early Putin years. Based on Sergey Lukyanenko's popular allegorical novel, *Night Watch* posits a Moscow in which the forces of light and darkness battle for control over the city, complete with blood-drunk vampires, queasy Metro visions, crow-swarmed Soviet high-rises, and an apt air of uncertainty between get-yours nihilism and stubborn optimism.

### **4**

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Ilya Khrzhanovsky. 2004, 126 mins. 35mm. In Russian with English subtitles. With Yuriy Laguta, Marina Vovchenko, Sergey Shnurov. Among the new century's most distinctive works of cinema, *4* is a collaboration between enfant terrible novelist Vladimir Sorokin and audacious director Ilya Khrzhanovsky (whose highly anticipated follow-up, *Dau*, remains famously in progress fourteen years later). Three strangers meet late night in a Moscow bar for a meandering conversation about politics, society, and sex. Then they go home to their wildly divergent lives—one is a meat mogul; another, a piano tuner, the third, a prostitute returning to her remote hometown—which the film pursues and alternately depicts with a visual style and tonal approach that's by turns dramatic, pungent, and lurid.

### ***Alexandra***

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Alexander Sokurov. 2007, 95 mins. 35mm. In Russian and Chechen with English subtitles. With Galina Vishnevskaya, Vasily Shevtsov, Raisa Gichaeva. Legendary opera singer Galina Vishnevskaya commands the screen as the title character, a Russian grandmother who journeys to visit her grandson at his remote post in the war-ravaged Republic of Chechnya. The present-tense, behind-the-headlines *Alexandra* was a crucial departure for Sokurov, arguably the greatest Russian filmmaker of the past 30 years, whose other narrative films of the era tended toward the historical and allegorical. It allowed him to bring his singularly tactile, psychically transporting visual aesthetic to a subject and terrain that had defined nearly two decades of Russian life, and yet always seemed to exist just beyond the frame.

### ***At the Edge of Russia***

SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Michal Marczak. 2010, 72 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. For his feature debut, Polish innovator Michael Marczak (*Fuck for Forest, All These Sleepless Nights*) decamped to the expanses of the Russian arctic for this rare exploration of life at a military encampment charged with guarding the country's northern border. With considerable compassion and subtle absurdism, Marczak follows a teenage new recruit as he is initiated into the duties and rituals needed to contend with nearly unimaginably harsh conditions—including the constant threat of polar bear attacks—crafting an intimate portrait of the men at the furthest extremities of Russia's military industrial complex.

### ***King Lear* (with *Varya*)**

SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Denis Klebleev. 2017, 56 mins. Digital projection. In Russian with English subtitles. This program of films by two of Russia's most exciting young documentary filmmakers pairs two portraits of bonafide 21<sup>st</sup>-century eccentrics. *King Lear* introduces us to Viktor Rotin, an 81-year-old actor whose obsession with Shakespeare's ill-fated monarch colors his perceptions of his own life, from his arrest for speculating in Soviet times to his comfortable dotage in Putin's capitalist playground. Director Klebleev follows Rotin as he rants about his career, family, and Shakespeare theories when not bellowing *Lear* monologues at anyone who will listen. Followed by *Varya* (Dir. Alena Polunina. 2014. 48 mins.), a singular exploration of the crisis in Ukraine from the perspective of the eponymous protagonist, a socks-and-sandals-clad math teacher who decamps from Moscow to Maidan out of sympathy for the Ukrainian cause. *Varya* encounters rebels, idealists, and extremists, eventually finding a woman who models her exploits after Joan of Arc and calls herself the "Soul of Ukraine," with whom she forms one of recent cinema's most memorably strange friendships.

### ***Blood and two others* by Alina Rudnitskaya**

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Alina Rudnitskaya. 2013, 59 mins. Digital projection. In Russian with English subtitles. Over the past decade, St. Petersburg-based Alina Rudnitskaya has emerged as one of the most talented and insightful chroniclers of life in contemporary Russia, focusing in particular on the struggles for identity and autonomy by women. In *Blood*, a tightly knit group of female nurses travel the northwest regions of the country collecting blood donations, serving the dual purpose of stocking the country's blood banks and making nominal but desperately needed payments to unemployed donors. After long days in which they function as de facto social workers and therapists, in addition to performing their demanding medical duties with threadbare resources, they try to let loose with dance, drink, and dreams of love. Preceded by *Bitch Factory* (Dir. Alina Rudnitskaya, 2009, 29 mins), a mini-masterpiece about young women enrolled in a class taught by a middle-age male guru seeking guidance on how to attract wealthy husbands. And *I Will Forget This Day* (Dir. Alina Rudnitskaya, 2011, 25 mins.), a devastatingly restrained, formally spare glimpse at the diversity of women waiting their turn in an abortion clinic, a place that is coolly clinical and completely absent of supporting companions.

### ***The Mother***

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 4:30 P.M.

Dirs. Antoine Cattin, Pavel Kostomarov. 2007, 80 mins. Digital projection. In Russian with English subtitles. After suffering abuse at the hands of her violent husband, Lyuba flees to the countryside with her nine children, where she struggles to earn a living and care for a family increasingly fragmented by time, poverty, and crime. Shot over three years, *The Mother* is a landmark in observational cinema, looking unflinchingly at people enduring socio-economic hardships while letting the fullness of human experience and emotion shine through.

### ***Something Better to Come* (with *The Children of Leningradsky*)**

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 6:30 P.M.

Dir. Hanna Polak. 2014, 98 mins. Digital projection. In Russian with English subtitles. Filmed over the course of fourteen years, Hanna Polak's film is a bracing look at a microcosmic society of outcasts living thirteen miles outside of Moscow in the largest garbage dump in Europe. The film's hero is Yula, who we meet as a bright-eyed child, and who, despite contending with truly hellish circumstances, manages to develop over the course of the director's many visits into a resourceful young woman. Shooting in a highly direct, verité style, Polak combines inflamed muckraking with deep empathy. Preceded by *The Children of Leningradsky* (Dir. Hanna Polak. 2005, 35 mins). In this Academy Award-nominated short film, Polak trains her camera on the homeless street kids of Moscow. The most visible victims of the country's brutal economic experiments, these children, many extremely young, roam the streets without assistance or supervision, developing their own systems of power and dependence, and discovering means of escape through addiction.

### ***A Gentle Creature***

FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 7:00 P.M.

SUNDAY, JULY 1, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Sergei Loznitsa. 2017, 143 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Vasilina Makovtseva, Liya Akhedzhakova, Valeriu Andriutã, Boris Kamorzin, Roza Khayrullina, Sergey Kolesov. A woman visits a prison town in hopes of delivering a package to her husband, only to be preyed upon by everyone from human traffickers to the police. She remains stoically committed until reality itself begins to rupture, casting forth visions, and deceptions, centuries in the making. Inspired by a Dostoevsky story, and akin to Loznitsa's own dark-hearted epic *My Joy*, with which it shares a grimly ironic title, the staggeringly accomplished *A Gentle Creature* journeys deep into a societal abyss and never turns back.

### ***Pipeline***

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Vitaly Mansky. 2013, 116 mins. Digital projection. The Russian economy rises and falls in accordance with its natural resources, and the 21st century has been a boom time for oil exportation and political maneuvering thanks to Europe's dependence on the Russian supply. Carrying oil from far eastern edge of Russia to the Western coast of Europe is a pipeline that cuts through two continents' worth of villages, cultures, languages, and climates, many of which master documentary insurgent Vitaly Mansky visits along the way, revealing lives unenriched by the resources extracted from and passing through their land.

***Hush!***

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Victor Kossakovsky. 2003, 82 mins. Digital projection. From the window of his St. Petersburg apartment, director Victor Kossakovsky films a year in the life of an ordinary street. Central to the action is a pothole caught in an infinite, Sisyphusian loop of damage and repair, digging and steamrolling, a collective project that gently and humorously echoes with the cycles of the city.

***The Road Movie***

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 6:30 P.M.

Dir. Dmitrii Kalashnikov. 2016, 67 mins. Digital projection. An audacious found footage document for the internet age, *The Road Movie* compiles material shot exclusively via the deluge of dashboard cameras that populate Russian roads. Amongst a mess of icy collisions in whiteout conditions and fiery wrecks, the windshield becomes a proscenium for everything from a comet crashing down to Earth, an epic forest fire, and angry motorists taking road rage to extreme new levels, all accompanied by consistently blasé commentary from our unseen drivers and passengers.

***Extinction***

SUNDAY, JULY 1, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Salomé Lamas. 2018, 85 mins. Digital projection. U.S. premiere. Kolya is a young man from Moldova with a declared loyalty towards Transnistria—a country that remains unrecognized by the international community and does not officially exist, and which remains rooted in communist ideology. Portuguese filmmaker Salomé Lamas's entrancing, sonically immersive film follows Kolya across various borders, each with its own history and shadowy demands, and bringing him to various haunted monuments to Soviet progress, to ghosts with remnant koans and axes still to grind. *Extinction* is a singularly evocative meditation on the simultaneous fluidity and immobility of life in the former Soviet territories.

***My Joy***

SUNDAY, JULY 1, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Sergei Loznitsa. 2010, 127 mins. 35mm. In Russian and German with English subtitles. With Victor Nemets, Vlad Ivanov, Maria Varsami, Vladimir Golovin, Olga Shuvalova, Alexey Vertkov, Yuriy Sviridenko. Truck driver Georgy (Nemets) sets out on a provincial Russian highway for a routine delivery, but after a series of chance encounters his journey spirals out of control. A roadside police check, a talkative war veteran, and a too-young prostitute lead him to a village from which there appears to be no way out, an unyielding, elemental place mired in the past. Loznitsa's first fiction film was inspired by his own decade-long road travels through Russia, and became an instant landmark of post-Soviet dystopia, alternately fablist and realistic, caustic and tragic.

***The Fool***

FRIDAY, JULY 6, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Yuri Bykov. 2014, 116 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Artyom Bystrov, Natalya Surkova, Yuriy Tsurilo, Boris Nevzorov, Kirill Polukhin, Dmitriy Kulichkov. Called upon to inspect a leak at a derelict housing community, plumber's apprentice Dima (Bystrov)

discovers a rather major structural problem—the building on the verge of collapse. In attempting to save the lives of the eight hundred residents, Dima spends an endless night becoming embroiled in a world of secrecy and corruption, where politicians and power players live by their own code and where tragic consequences are but a grim afterthought. “A distressing moral drama, gripping thriller and scathing sociopolitical portrait of Russia rolled into one,” wrote Boyd van Hoeij, *The Hollywood Reporter*.

### ***Shultes***

SATURDAY, JULY 7, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Bakur Bakuradze. 2008, 100 mins. 35mm. In Russian with English subtitles. With Gela Chitava, Ruslan Grebyonkin, Lyubov Firsova. One of 21st-century Russia’s most exquisitely beguiling art movies follows Lyosha Shultes, a stoic former runner turned petty thief after a disastrous injury, as he prowls the margins of Moscow’s metropolitan sprawl. Directed with a precision reminiscent of Robert Bresson, Bakuradze’s film gradually reveals itself to be something as peculiar and indeterminate as its protagonist, whose memory may be less than wholly reliable. Relentlessly close-to-the-ground, *Shultes* captures the disorientation and melancholy of urban Russian life with exceptional fidelity.

### ***Leviathan***

SATURDAY, JULY 7, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Andrey Zvyagintsev. 2014, 140 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Aleksey Serebryakov, Elena Lyadova, Vladimir Vdovichenkov, Roman Madyanov, Anna Ukolova, Aleksey Rozin. Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, still-emergent auteur Andrei Zvyagintsev’s fourth feature (his first, *The Return*, was released during Putin’s first term) remains his most politically pointed to date. A modern-day riff on the story of Job, it stars the reliably imposing yet here surprisingly vulnerable Aleksey Serebryakov as an auto mechanic in the Kola Peninsula, on the northwestern tip of Russia, who is forced to wage war against a corrupt, bureaucratic system that threatens to dismantle his home and family. Zvyagintsev’s ambitious narrative explores shifting mores between men and women, citizens and the state, politicians and the clergy, and the multifarious degradation of individual lives in post-Soviet Russia.

### ***Loveless***

SATURDAY, JULY 7, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Andrey Zvyagintsev. 2017, 127 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Maryana Spivak, Aleksey Rozin, Matvey Novikov, Marina Vasileva, Andris Keiss. Divorcing middle-class thirtysomethings Zhenya (Spivak) and Boris (Rozin) are so through with each other that they have already embarked on new lives with new partners, leaving only their well-appointed apartment and twelve-year-old son Alexey as the remaining hurdles to liberation. Neglected and feeling unwanted, Alexey disappears, which neither parent even notices until the authorities and rescue teams become involved. A biting critique of modernity and moral complacency that also posits characters of depth and complexity, such that everyone, young and old, bureaucrat and ordinary citizen, seems lost, without any notion of how to live or care for one another. Nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, and Winner of a Jury Prize at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival.

### ***Me Too***

SUNDAY, JULY 8, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Aleksei Balabanov. 2012, 83 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Aleksandr Mosin, Oleg Garkusha, Yuriy Matveev, Alisa Shitikova, Aleksey Balabanov. Alexey Balabanov (*Brother, Of Freaks and Men*) capped off one of post-Soviet Russia's most accomplished directorial careers with this frostbitten comic masterwork. In an irreverent reworking of Andrei Tarkovsky's unimpeachable classic *Stalker*, the film follows a murder-happy mobster, an alcoholic, and a down-on-his-luck rock musician (Oleg Garkusha, of winningly bizarre Petersburg prog outfit Auktyon) as they venture—in a Range Rover, no less—from the steamy comfort of the banya to the “magical bell tower,” where their problems may or may not be solved forever. This funny, moving meditation on societal dysfunction and squandered lives is an apt farewell, culminating in a cameo for the ages by Balabanov himself, who died of a heart attack less than a year after the film's release.

### ***Under Electric Clouds***

SUNDAY, JULY 8, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Aleksei German, Jr. 2015, 138 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Louis Franck, Merab Ninidze, Viktoriya Korotkova, Chulpan Khamatova, Viktor Bugakov, Karim Pakachakov. With this hugely ambitious speculative work, German the younger showed that he inherited his father's talent for elaborate sequence shots, maneuvering an expansive cast around a melancholic vision of the Russia-to-come, embodied by an unfinished skyscraper that looms over the action. Told through seven vignettes, the film's disparate characters range from an immigrant laborer from Kyrgyzstan to the daughter of a deceased gangster and a thwarted intellectual reduced to giving palace tours in a hussar outfit. German, Jr.'s take on the not-too-distant future echoes the corruption and injustice of the present with a sympathetic bemusement that recalls Beckett and Fellini.

### ***Hard to Be a God***

SUNDAY, JULY 8, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Aleksei German. 2013, 177 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Leonid Yarmolnik, Aleksandr Chutko, Yuriy Tsurilo, Evgeniy Gerchakov, Valentin Golubenko. A science-fiction film unlike any other, German's final masterpiece saw the filmmaker take his leave of this world for the planet of Arkanar, a morass of mud, blood, and sundry other fluids mired in a perpetual medieval era, where Earth scientist Don Rumata observes as a possible renaissance is met with violent purges. Working from a novel by beloved fraternal writing duo Boris and Arkady Strugatsky (authors of the book that inspired Tarkovsky's *Stalker*), the director lovingly labored over each and every detail, from battles to belches, crafting a singularly vivid hellscape. Though German's dream project was initially conceived in the 1960s, *Hard to Be a God* nevertheless speaks vitally to its times, setting up an apocalyptic collision between intelligence and brute force to devastating effect.

### ***How Viktor "the Garlic" Took Alexey "the Stud" to the Nursing Home***

FRIDAY, JULY 13, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Alexander Hant. 2017, 90 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Yevgeny Tkachuk, Alexey Serebryakov, Andrey Smirnov, Alina Nasibullina, Olga Oblasova. New York premiere. Swaggering nogoodnik Viktor (nickname: “The Garlic”) uses trucker nuts

against unsuspecting opponents in bar fights and cowers from the live-in mother of his long-suffering baby mama. He appears to catch a break when he stands to inherit a choice new apartment, the only obstacle being Alexey (nickname: "The Stud"), the not-yet-dead father who abandoned him long ago, now noncommunicative and taking up the place for himself. But as Viktor takes to Russia's expansive highway system to deposit his dad in an out-of-the-way nursing home, it appears the old man may have some fight left in him yet. Looking less to Eisenstein and Tarkovsky than to Tarantino and Edgar Wright, Alexander Hant's stylish road movie captures a side of the country rarely seen on film and marks the debut of an original new voice in Russian cinema.

***The Term (with *Sleeping Souls*)***

**Introduced by producer Max Tuula**

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 1:30 P.M.

Dirs. Pavel Kostomarov, Alexey Pivovarov, Alexander Rastorguev. 2014, 83 mins. Digital projection. In Russian with English subtitles. Soon after Vladimir Putin started his third term as Russian president, after a four-year semi-sojourn as Prime Minister, a critical mass of citizens began to coalesce into a discernible, and potentially consequential opposition. Filmmakers Kostomarov (*The Mother*), Pivovarov, and Rastorguev mobilized multiple camera crews to record events on the ground and posted the results online as daily, agenda-free dispatches. This film synthesizes many of these shorter piece but focuses in particular on several opposition leaders, particularly rising political figure Alexei Navalny, activist Ilja Yashin, and his girlfriend, Ksenia Sobchak, a magnetic TV personality and old Putin family friend (and eventual 2018 presidential candidate). *The Term* serves as an invaluable first-hand witness to activism fomented and forestalled, and also includes eye-opening candid critiques of Putin's Russia reminiscent of Pennebaker and Hegedus's *The War Room*. Followed by ***Sleeping Souls*** (Dir. Alexander Abaturov. 2013, 52 mins.), a look at the run up to the 2012 presidential election from the vantage of the Siberian city of Achinsk. Filmmaker Abaturov talks to ordinary Russians about their views on the vote, interviews candidly mercenary political operatives, and watches the polls on election day where some are hoping for personal favors in exchange for their vote, and others who cannot be bothered with the process at all.

***Arrhythmia***

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Boris Khlebnikov. 2017, 116 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Alexander Yatsenko, Irina Gorbacheva, Galina Averyanova, Polina Ilyukhina, Vladimir Kapustin. By day, Oleg (Yatsenko) is a paramedic dedicated to saving lives at any cost. By night—or whenever he is finally off work—he is a stunted good ol' boy who drinks too much and does not realize his wife, a well-regarded young physician, is ready to leave him. Boris Khlebnikov's entertaining and extraordinarily well-acted dramedy manages to be both an insightful portrait of a marriage navigated by ambitious equals—who are never judged for being so—and a sidelong critique of a health care system caught between freewheeling, perpetual triage and cold, uncaring bureaucracy.

***The Student***

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Kirill Serebrennikov. 2016, 118 mins. DCP. In Russian with English subtitles. With Pyotr

Skvortsov, Viktoriya Isakova, Yuliya Aug, Aleksandr Gorchilin, Aleksandra Revenko, Anton Vasilev, Svetlana Bragarnik. After Venya's mother receives a call from school reporting her son is refusal to participate in mixed swimming lessons, she chalks it up to shyness and derides his claim that being exposed to girls in bikinis is against his religion. But when Venya not only receives exemption by the school's principal, but succeeds in having the dress code changed, he dives deeper into fundamentalist interpretations of the Bible and grows confident in his own power to manipulate authority and vanquish any opposition, including a female teacher who suddenly seems like the last defence against dogmatism. Director Serebrennikov, currently living under house arrest on questionable fraud charges, presents a cinematically engrossing, harrowingly tangible allegory of how easily society can be dismantled by extremism.

### ***The Red Soul***

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Jessica Gorter. 2018, 90 mins. Digital projection. In Russian with English subtitles. North American premiere. More than sixty years after his death, Joseph Stalin remains a lightning rod for Russians. In this deft, inquiring, visually rich documentary, Jessica Gorter visits with numerous contemporary citizens, seniors, students, academics, and activists—some old enough to have been directly affected by the reign of terror, some young enough to question that history—in an attempt to understand how Stalin's legacy endures in Putin's Russia. Nostalgic stories of a state flourishing under the Communist ideal contrast with painful memories of hunger, violence and betrayal. Not infrequently, these conflicting views can be found in one and the same person. Gradually, this intriguing film exposes how the Soviet past lives on in current generations, and thus makes its mark on the future.

### ***Victory Day (with Victory Day)***

SUNDAY, JULY 15, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Sergei Loznitsa. 2018, 94 mins. DCP. In English, Russian, and German with English subtitles. Initial evidence to the contrary, the ceremonies recorded in this latest documentary by Sergei Loznitsa do not take place in Russia, but in Berlin's Treptower Park, where crowds gather annually to commemorate the Red Army's defeat of Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War, a.k.a. WWII. The strange tension of celebrating victory over a country *within that country* is only enhanced by Loznitsa's coolly demonstrative camera, which keeps locating within the crowd subsets of people in subtle combat with one another: anti-democratic Germans, Russian fascists, pro-Russian Ukrainians, anti-Russian Ukrainians, post-Soviet pilgrims, tourists. Nary a veteran is sighted—though Loznitsa makes certain to dwell on the monument's appropriately somber friezes depicting the war and its atrocities—leaving the meaning of it all in the hands of people with their own agendas to pursue. Preceded by ***Victory Day*** (Alina Rudnitskaya. 2014, 30 mins.) Using the patriotic military celebrations of May 9 as an ongoing and disquieting motif, St. Petersburg-based documentary filmmaker Rudnitskaya introduces several ordinary gay and lesbian couples whose legal rights are increasingly invalidated, and whose very lives are in constant danger in a cultural and political climate that's turned blatantly, unapologetically homophobic.

### ***Our New President***

**With Maxim Pozdorovkin in person**

SUNDAY, JULY 15, 7:00 P.M.

New York premiere, co-presented with Rooftop Films  
Dir. Maxim Pozdorovkin. 2018, 77 mins. DCP. In English and Russian with English subtitles. The most entertaining queasy-making film of the year, *Our New President* is an entirely found-footage, mostly TV news-sourced documentary comprised entirely of lies. From a persistent urban myth involving a mummy's curse on Hillary Clinton through misinformation supporting the candidacy of Donald Trump, and from state-run news shows on Vesti, NTV, and the influential international cable channel Russia Today to patriots on YouTube, Maxim Pozdorovkin's purposefully off-kilter documentary bears witness to the spread of fake news that helped influence the U.S. presidential election and foments distrust in truth and objectivity within the Russian populace.

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### **MUSEUM INFORMATION**

**Museum of the Moving Image** ([movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facility—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday–Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$15 adults; \$11 senior citizens (ages 65+) and students (ages 18+) with ID; \$9 youth (ages 3–17). Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, tickets are \$15 adults / \$11 students and seniors / \$9 youth (ages 3–17) / free for Museum members at the Film Lover and MoMI Kids Premium levels and above. Advance purchase is available online. Ticket purchase may be applied toward same-day admission to the Museum's galleries.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Ave or Broadway.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation). For more information, please visit [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us).