

IN THE FOG

(V Tumane)

a film by

Sergei Loznitsa



OFFICIAL SELECTION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

FIPRESCI Award Cannes 2012
Golden Apricot, Yerevan Film Festival
Best Film, Odessa International Film Festival
Grand Prix, Andrei Tarkovsky International Film Festival

Germany / Russia / Latvia / Belarus 2012 / 128 min / Russian with English subtitles /
Certificate TBC

Release date: April 26th 2013

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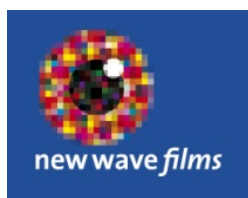
Sue Porter/Lizzie Frith – Porter Frith Ltd

Tel: 020 7833 8444/E-mail: porterfrith@hotmail.com

FOR ALL OTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

Robert Beeson – New Wave Films

robert@newwavefilms.co.uk



10 Margaret Street
London W1W 8RL
Tel: 020 3178 7095

www.newwavefilms.co.uk

SYNOPSIS

Belarus on the western frontiers of the USSR 1942. The region is under German occupation and local partisans are fighting a brutal resistance campaign.

A train is derailed not far from the village, where Sushenya, a rail worker, lives with his family. Innocent Sushenya is arrested with a group of saboteurs, but the German officer makes a decision not to hang him with the others and sets him free. Rumours of Sushenya's treason spread quickly and partisans Burov and Voitik arrive from the forest to get revenge. As the partisans lead their victim through the forest, they are ambushed, and Sushenya finds himself one-to-one with his wounded enemy.

Deep in an ancient forest, where there are neither friends nor enemies and where the line between treason and heroism disappears, Sushenya is forced to make a moral choice under immoral circumstances.

More details and downloads at www.newwavefilms.co.uk

Photos at www.newwavefilms.co.uk/press

CREW

Written and directed by

Based on a novel by

Cinematographer

Editor

Art Director

Costume Designer

Line Producer

Producer

Co-Producers

Sergei Loznitsa

Vasil Bykov

Oleg Mutu

Danielius Kokanauskis

Juris Zukovskis

Dorota Roqueplo

Martin Schlüter

Heino Deckert

Galina Sementseva, Valkentina Mikhaleva,

Vilnis Kalnaellis, Leontine Petit,

Joost de Vries, Oleg Silvanovich

A Production of ma.ja.de fiction, in coproduction with: GP Cinema Company, Rija Films, Lemming Film, Belarusfilm, ZDF/ARTE

2012, colour, 35mm, 1:2,35, Dolby SR, 128 '

CAST

#

Sushenya

Burov

Voitik

Grisha

Anelya

Koroban

Mishuk

Topchievsky

Yaroshevich

Grossmeier

Mirokha

Burov's mother

First policeman

Second policeman

Third policeman

Fourth policeman

Vladimir Svirski

Vlad Abashin

Sergei Kolesov

Nikita Peremotovs

Julia Peresild

Kirill Petrov

Dmitrijs Kolosovs

Stepans Bogdanovs

Dmitry Bykovskiy

Vlad Ivanov

Igor Khripunov

Nadezhda Markina

Boris Kamorzin

Mikhail Evlanov

Sergei Russkin

Timofey Tribuntsev



SERGEI LOZNITSA

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), graduating in 1997. He has been making award-winning documentaries since 1996, and 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* is 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.

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**



Comments from Sergei Loznitsa

THE MORAL LAW WITHIN

Sushenya is accused of something he did not do, and he has no way of proving his innocence. He is completely alone, and even his wife suspects him of wrong-doing. It is precisely this solitude of the main character in his attempt to communicate with the society which does not trust him that makes Vasili Bykov's book so significant. And yet the protagonist remains true to himself. He stands firm on his convictions and his decisions, and he is not capable of compromise or crime simply because the moral law within him prevents him from it. He finds himself in a situation when, in order to remain human and to preserve his dignity, he cannot live any longer. This is one of the paradoxes of being. This is what Bykov's book is about. I read Bykov's novel back in 2001 and I wrote the script almost immediately after.

SCREEN ADAPTATION: THE RULES OF VISUAL GRAMMAR

The difference between a literary text and a film is in the language itself. Everything that can be described in words cannot be represented visually, and vice versa. Any screen adaptation is effectively a "translation" into a different language. In order to be precise and powerful it has to function according to the rules of its own visual "grammar". Bykov's dialogues are very good indeed and also the way the background stories of the main three characters are developed is much more sophisticated than what I could afford in the film. In the script I only give brief outlines and introduce the characters' backgrounds in laconic episodes. It is the rhythm of the film which dictates the rules. It is the length of the scenes and the rhythm at which they follow one another which builds the dramatic narrative of the film.

A SAINT, A MAN WHO DOUBTS AND A VILLAIN

The characters of the three main protagonists can be defined as the following prototypes: a Saint, a Man who Doubts and a Villain. But I think it is far too simplistic to reduce a character to a label. One would do it if one does not have time to contemplate, and the labels are hardly ever going to be correct. The 'villain', Voitik, is not entirely bad. He is a person who wants to survive. And he does not have the inner strength to take action. A lot of people would be able to identify themselves with this character, who just goes with the flow and lets the external circumstances determine his actions.

The 'saint', Sushenya, is also not entirely good. He has his understanding of the world and he is not able to change it. And due to this trait of his character he behaves differently and stands apart from the others. The same applies to Burov, the 'man who doubts'. He cannot see things clearly and does not quite understand in what kind of situation he finds himself. He succumbs to his emotions which he is not able to overcome.

All these characters are quite ordinary and quite common. It is only due to a specific combination of circumstances that our protagonists display their personalities in such a way.

WAR WITHOUT COMBAT

I chose this story which speaks about the war without talking about military actions. Everything that we see at the frontline – impressive battle scenes, for example – does not interest me. I am interested in the conditions which force people to come to the front lines. And the origins of these conditions can be found in the routine daily life.

Why make a film about the Second World War? Due to certain reasons, artists during the Soviet era had a very limited opportunity to reflect upon the events which took place in those tragic years. The post-Soviet culture also has produced few works which give an unbiased representation of the events of that period. However, the tragic events need to be addressed, reflected upon and analyzed. I consider it my duty to look back and, therefore, toward the future.

ART WITHOUT DIDACTICISM

Every action takes place during a certain historical period. Things that are happening right now also constitute a part of history. However we do not regard them as historical events because we do not distance ourselves from the present. Thus we do not have an understanding of the current events. And the distance (disengagement from the historical events) gives us the ability to achieve understanding.

It seems to me that after the experiences of mankind in the 20th Century, it is appropriate to speak about the collapse of humanism, as it has been conventionally interpreted in literature and art. I share the view of the Russian writer Varlam Shalamov, who had been through all the circles of inferno in Stalin's Gulag: "In new prose – after Hiroshima, after the self-service of Auschwitz and after the Serpantinka Gulag in Kolyma, after all the wars and revolutions – everything that is didactic should be rejected. Art does not have the right to preach. Nobody can teach anybody, nobody has the right to. Art does not improve people, nor does it make them more noble."

NO SIGN OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE

The choice of locations was determined by the book. In Bykov's story the action takes place in a Belorussian forest. I started looking for locations in the summer of 2010. I travelled extensively in Belarus, in the area described by Bykov. However, it became clear that we could not film there – the region has changed significantly in the past 50 years and there were modern signs everywhere: houses painted in bright green and pink, electricity poles, industrial buildings, etc. So, I continued my journey across the border and I found what I was looking for in eastern Latvia, in the region called Latgale. I found the beautiful wild landscape, where one could place the camera anywhere one wants and turn it 360 degrees without stumbling across any sign of contemporary life. The forestation in that area is quite similar to the one in Belarus. And we found a very good and compact location with a "train station", "Gestapo building" and "market square" which could serve as a perfect setting for the execution scene.

The population of Latgale is a mixture of ethnic Russians, Belorussians, Poles and Latvians. It's a very rich palette of faces and characters. This was exactly what I needed,

as I was also looking for some non-professional actors and for extras to play Belorussian civilians in the market scene.

AUTHENTICITY

Sushenya's house was built from scratch and so were all the interiors. Our designer brought a lot of artifacts from Belarus, as the interiors of the Belorussian farmhouse are, of course, quite different from those of a Latvian house. We studied thousands of photographs and we built the interiors meticulously. I wanted the characters to "live" in those spaces, and not to "act" there.

COLLABORATION WITH THE CINEMATOGRAPHER OLEG MUTU

In my opinion, Oleg Mutu is one of the best cinematographers in Europe. He is an intellectual and he has a perfect sense of style. He has a very strong vision and he is a perfectionist, just like me. When I was preparing for *My Joy*, I was looking for a DOP who could work in a 'documentary' style, with a hand held camera and as little lighting as possible. I was very impressed by the camera in Mungiu's *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, and I thought how great it would be to find somebody who could work in a similar manner. And then we found out that Oleg was born in Moldavia and spoke perfect Russian. I sent him the script of *My Joy* and several weeks after that we had our first meeting in Chisinau. We talked for hours – about literature, philosophy and art. I knew instantly that he was the man I was looking for.

ONLY 72 CUTS

The camerawork *In The Fog* is quite different from the camera of *My Joy*. I would describe it as "monumental", rather conservative. Due to the fact that a lot of shooting was taking place in the forest, Oleg suggested that we had to put the camera on tracks, to achieve a steady and fluid image. Thus we went from the hand-held, documentary camera of *My Joy* to the much more "monumental" image of *In The Fog*. Of course, in this film there are also episodes which were filmed with a hand-held camera, but in general the cinematography of *In The Fog* is quite classical. The challenge Oleg and I had was to film every scene with one shot, to use the movement of the camera as a tool of "inner montage" and to introduce cuts only in places when there is a development of the plot and a new episode begins. The camera is instrumental in the dramaturgy of the film. There are only 72 cuts in *In The Fog*, which, for a film of 127 minutes, is rather ambitious.