

## RUSSIAN & EASTERN EUROPEAN STUDIES

### RUSSIA IN TRANSITION

#### The Films of Sergei Loznitsa

One of Russia's most renowned documentary filmmakers, Sergei Loznitsa has been documenting the changes taking place in his country since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Beautifully photographed and composed, his films are poetic, insightful, and haunting portraits of contemporary Russia.

#### 2006, Four Volume Series

Item No. RUS-01

Purchase of Complete Set: \$599

(a savings of over 30% off the individual purchase prices)

#### Factory

A meticulous study of a steel and clay factory in the Urals, *Factory* is a captivating meditation on man and machine. Stunningly photographed in rich sacral tones, it takes the viewer on a visually mesmerizing tour through the belly of an old Soviet industrial plant. A brilliant subversion of the Soviet-era idealization of the worker, *Factory* is an unapologetic questioning of Russia's ability to emerge as a modern industrial nation in the 21st century.



Volume 1, 2004 (US, 2006), 30 minutes

Item No. RUS-02

Purchase: \$195 Rental: \$65

★ Best Documentary, Lyon International Film Festival, 2005

"Outstanding! Reminds us of the power of cinema in its early days."

- Leonardo Journal

#### The Settlement

A visually arresting documentary about a strange community in the Russian countryside, Loznitsa introduces us to a rural settlement where the residents, seemingly involved in farm work, are in fact patients of a nearby hospital. Their daily chores, earnestly performed, serving only therapeutic purposes. Suffused with the sounds and rhythm of rural life, *The Settlement* is an exceptional and enigmatic film. A parable of post-Soviet society? A testament to the importance of nature in our modern lives? With a haunting coda that perhaps hints at an answer, *The Settlement* is a film that forces us to consider the world in which we live.



Volume 3, 2001 (US, 2006), 79 minutes

Item No. RUS-04

Purchase: \$295 Rental: \$85

★ Best Documentary, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, 2002

★ Winner, Message to Man Film Festival, St. Petersburg, 2001

"...gradually envelops the viewer..." - Variety

#### Portrait

An evocative snapshot of a disappearing way of life, *Portrait* consists of what, at first, appear to be photographs of Russian peasants and farmers - mostly elderly men and women, standing in their work clothes, often with tools by their side. But as we watch, tiny details begin to emerge - the rustling of tree leaves, water flowing in a stream, the sound of dogs barking. Evoking the photographic portraits of August Sander or Dorothea Lange, this remarkable short film captures a people and a world that is quickly vanishing, offering a thoughtful meditation on man and nature, city and country, old Russia and new.



Volume 2, 2002 (US, 2006), 28 minutes

Item No. RUS-03

Purchase: \$195 Rental: \$65

★ Best Documentary, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, 2003

★ Official Screening, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2004

#### The Train Station

One of Sergei Loznitsa's most haunting films, *The Train Station* is also one of his most pointed social critiques. In this film, we are brought to a remote train station deep in the Russian woods. Inside, everyone is asleep. Some are leaning backwards, others are hunched over. Occasionally, someone moves a hand, coughs, turns. At one point, an elderly woman seems to wake up, only to look around and fall back into slumber. Without narration and bathed in a ghostly light, the film is in its own serene way, gripping... and frightening. Why is everyone asleep? What is everyone waiting for? Loznitsa has described this film as a metaphor for what people in Russia are feeling today, a sense of "falling out of time."



Volume 4, 2001 (US, 2006), 24 minutes

Item No. RUS-05

Purchase: \$195 Rental: \$65

★ Best Documentary, Lyon International Film Festival, 2001

★ Winner, National Award of the Russian Culture Foundation, 2001

"...Loznitsa's most eerie and enigmatic work..."

- Educational Media Reviews Online



**NEW**

## The Angelmakers

This multiple-award winning documentary chronicles one of the most extreme and strange cases of female uprising in history. In a small Hungarian village after the first World War, a series of arsenic murders took place. Over 140 bodies were discovered. The victims, all men, were apparently killed by their wives. *The Angelmakers* is a fascinating documentary that reconstructs the murders from conversations with the town's present, mostly elderly, inhabitants - many of whom remember the murders themselves or heard stories from their parents or grandparents. Through their recollections, an intriguing web of circumstance and motivation begins to unfold.

Alternating between these first-person accounts (many of them told for the first time) and vivid portraits of the countryside, *The Angelmakers* considers the social and cultural factors that led practically an entire village of women to murder their husbands.

**Directed by Astrid Bussink**  
**2005, 34 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-06**  
**Purchase: \$195 Rental: \$65**

✳ First Appearance Award, Amsterdam Documentary Film Festival, 2006

- ★ Winner, Visions du Reel Film Festival, 2006
- ★ Best Documentary Short, European Independent Film Festival, 2006
- ★ Best Documentary, Dokfest, 2006
- ★ Winner, Zagreb Dox Int'l Festival, 2006
- ★ Full Frame Documentary Festival, 2006
- ★ Flaherty Film Seminar, 2006

"Astonishing viewing! A beautifully poignant tale that avoids sensationalism as it unravels the village's open secret."  
- *The Times UK*

"What is great about documentaries is that they often present stories which are stranger than fiction, stories that seem to be straight out of a novel or a fiction film. Astrid Bussink's *The Angelmakers* tells one such tale..." - *DOX Magazine*

"A rich classroom resource for discussion... Highly recommended for Eastern European studies." - *Educational Media Reviews Online*

✳ **In The News**  
*The Angelmakers* is currently being adapted into a feature film starring Helen Mirren (*The Queen, Gosford Park*). The film - also called *The Angelmakers* - is scheduled for release in late 2007.

## Civil Status

**NEW**

*Civil Status* is an observational documentary about the sometimes bizarre, sometimes absurd daily happenings at the Marriage Palace, a civil registry office in St. Petersburg, where people from all walks of life come to record the most significant events of their lives - marriages, divorces, births and deaths. In this tiny windowless space, among scattered desks manned by stoic female clerks (all married, as per office rules), we see young brides in wedding gowns, elderly widows weeping for their husbands, and married couples nervously filling out divorce papers. We overhear intimate conversations - a last minute plea from a wife to her husband, insisting she did not betray him, a middle-aged man flirting with one of the clerks - and we witness the constant arguments that erupt over the office's absurdly rigid rules. "It's like a theater in here," comments one of the clerks, "every minute something happens." Filmed in grainy black and white, *Civil Status* opens a unique window on contemporary Russian society.

**Directed by Alina Rudnitskaya**  
**2006, 29 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-07**  
**Purchase: \$195 Rent: \$65**

- ★ Grand Prize, Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, 2006
- ★ Jury Prize, Documenta-Madrid, 2006
- ★ Rotterdam International Film Festival, 2006



**NEW**

## Under Fire

Over 800,000 women and girls were mobilized in the Soviet Union during WWII, the largest mobilization of its kind in history. Their jobs included sniper, signaler, frontline doctor, nurse, pilot, and communications, among others. *Under Fire* captures moving first-person accounts by five decorated Soviet women as they describe stepping into a man's world and fighting amid blood and death. Unlike most war documentaries, *Under Fire* concentrates on women, their sensory descriptions of what combat is really like, and their reflections of those years.

**Directed by Noel Julnes-Dehner**  
**2005, 27 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-08**  
**Purchase: \$195 Rental: \$55**

"Oral records such as these bring a personal touch to the study of history and deserve a place in most library collections." - *School Library Journal*

## Counterpoint for Her

*Counterpoint For Her* exposes the brutal reality of human trafficking. This eye-opening documentary follows several men and women intimately involved in the trade, including a local Bosnian girl who, while living in Italy in 1992, was sold into the trade by a good friend of her brother. Her story is just one of many instances of a large postwar expansion of sex trafficking that has taken root in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since 1995, nearly 7 billion dollars have been made from human trafficking and thousands of girls from neighboring Eastern European countries have been abused, both mentally and physically, and forgotten. This documentary tells these women's stories and looks at the conditions that have allowed human trafficking to flourish in the Balkans.

**Directed by Danijela Majstorovic**  
**2004, 30 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-09**  
**Purchase: \$195 Rental: \$55**

- ★ Bosnia and Herzegovina Film Festival, New York City, 2006

"...does a good job of exploring the social, political, and economic conditions that have allowed human trafficking to flourish. Recommended." - *Video Librarian*

NEW

## The Great Communist Bank Robbery

In 1959, an armored car carrying 1.6 million Romanian lei (approximately \$250,000 in 1959 US dollars) was held up in front of the Romanian National Bank in Bucharest. Within weeks, the police arrested six individuals, five men and one woman. All six were prominent members of the Romanian Communist Party. All six were Jewish.

After the arrest, the entire group mysteriously agreed to play themselves in a film reconstruction of the crime. Titled *Reconstruction* (a scene from which is pictured below), the film played to spellbound audiences across the country and became a powerful propaganda tool for the government. Shortly before its release, all six members were sentenced to death.

Why would a group of Jewish intellectuals, high-ranking members in the Communist Party, commit such a robbery? Why take part in a government propaganda film?

More than forty years after the incident, director Alexandru Solomon deconstructs the reconstruction and discovers a fascinating tale of disillusionment, resistance, and the realities of Jewish life behind the iron curtain. Through interviews with former secret police, prison cell mates, and members of the original film crew, as well as a wealth of archival material, Solomon's striking documentary pieces together the incredible story behind the greatest bank robbery that ever occurred in a Communist state.

**Directed by Alexandru Solomon**  
**2005, 70 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-10**  
**Purchase: \$295 Rental: \$85**

- ★ Historical Documentary Prize, Pessac International Film Festival, France, 2005
- ★ Amsterdam Documentary Festival, 2005
- ★ Best Direction, DokFilm Festival, 2005

"A moving, occasionally absurd, often riveting insight into life behind the old iron curtain." - *Time Out UK*

"A troubling documentary... shows how those executed for the supposed crime were more guilty of being Jews than being criminals." - *Sunday Times*



NEW

## Eternal Memory

This historical documentary examines the Stalinist purges and terror in the former Soviet Union during the Thirties and Forties, when an estimated twenty million people lost their lives - some in labor camps, others starved in state-induced famine, and many others executed for "crimes against the state." Focusing on the Ukraine, the film incorporates historical footage, interviews with witnesses and survivors, public officials, and historians, including Robert Conquest of Stanford University, author of *The Great Terror*.

**Directed by David Pultz**  
**Narrated by Meryl Streep**  
**Item No. RUS-11**  
**1997, 81 minutes**  
**Purchase: \$350 Rental: \$95**

- ★ Silver Apple Award, National Educational Media Network, 1998

"Powerful... a more interesting study of irrational paranoia than Hitler's" - *New Times LA*

## In Search of Happiness

*In Search of Happiness* is a beautiful and poetic film about the last remaining Jews in Birobidzhan, the world's first Jewish homeland, established in a distant corner of Siberia in the 1920s.

The film follows the story of Boris Rak and his wife Masha, an elderly couple whose parents were among the first Jewish settlers in Birobidzhan. A former Chairman of the last Jewish collective farm, Boris now stares wistfully at portraits of his children, who like many others, have since emigrated to Israel and America.

In their kitchen hangs a crucifix; in their yard, they keep a small number of pigs which they name after Russian political figures - Yeltsin, Chubais, etc. Boris and Masha no longer maintain Jewish traditions, and they have long since forgotten the dates of Jewish holidays, but every so often, Boris will retrieve an old gramophone from the cupboard, put on a dusty Jewish record, and quietly sing along in Yiddish.



A poignant and moving documentary, *In Search of Happiness* mixes fascinating archival footage and old Soviet newsreels, with bucolic images of village life to reveal the strange story of the Jewish Autonomous Region, which even today remains an important event in Eastern European history.

**Directed by Alexander Gutman**  
**2006, 52 Minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-12**  
**Purchase: \$295 Rental: \$85**

- ★ Winner, Russian Film Festival, 2006
- ★ Honorable Mention, Cinema du Reel, 2006
- ★ Leipzig Documentary Film Festival, 2006
- ★ Docpoint Film Festival, 2006

## My Grandfather's House

*My Grandfather's House* follows filmmaker Eileen Douglas' determined search to find her grandfather's house in Lithuania, the home he lived in and left behind in 1911 when he fled, at 16, to America to escape the Tsar's Army. Four decades after his death, with only fragments to guide the way, the documentary is Douglas' attempt to lift the veil of darkness and discover "where it all began." Traveling from New York City to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington to her mother's attic in Syracuse to the homes of relatives and finally to the block in Kovno where her grandfather once lived, Douglas unexpectedly unlocks the mystery of stories he never told, discovers the fate of family members lost in the war, learns of the glory that once was Lithuanian Jewry, finds living relatives missing for years in Siberia, and resurrects a family shattered by the traumas of the 20th Century. *My Grandfather's House* weaves together original footage, old family photographs, archival records, translations of old Yiddish letters, family reminiscences and interviews to evoke a vanished era.

**Produced by Eileen Douglas  
and Ron Steinman**  
**Directed by Ron Steinman**  
**72 minutes, 2004**  
**Item No. RUS-13**  
**Purchase: \$250 Rental: \$75**

"An exceptional documentary." - *School Library Journal*

"A personal, evocative film." - *The Forward*



## Pictures from the Old Country

This film chronicles the filmmaker's quest to uncover the mystery of her Slovak identity and heritage. As a young girl growing up during the Cold War, she was curious about the 'strange' language spoken by her grandmother and the enigma that shrouded her past. Fantasizing that her grandmother was a communist spy, she begins to ask questions that are never fully answered. Years later as an adult, seeking answers to many of those same questions, she embarks on a journey to learn about Slovakia, why her grandmother came to America, and who she left behind. Along the way, not only does she gain a deeper understanding of her family roots, but also discovers a beautiful land, a rich culture, and a profound sense of her own Slovak American identity.

**Directed by Susan Marcinkus**  
**2003, 27 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-14**  
**Purchase: \$195 Rental: \$55**

"Truly charming and incredibly informative... might well inspire others to begin a search within their own families for a more personal link to their heritage..." - *School Library Journal*

## River of Time

Russian scientist Igor Novikov is renowned for his groundbreaking research in astrophysics and amazing theories on the concept of time. This film is a poetic journey into his theories, as well as his own experiences of past, present and future.

**Directed by Robert Fox**  
**2005, 29 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-15**  
**Purchase: \$195 Rental: \$55**

★ Documentary Fortnight, Museum of Modern Art, New York City, 2006

## Bolshoi: Between Fame and Drill

NEW

This wonderful documentary profiles a year in the life of the Moscow Academy for Choreography, one of Russia's seven state schools for ballet - and the most famous.

**Produced by Parthenon Entertainment**  
**2005, 50 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-16**  
**Purchase: \$295 Rental: \$75**

"Like Michael Apted's famous *Up* series, the film is driven by human interest, getting involved in the students' stories... Impressive performances!" - *Library Journal*

"A fascinating, sophisticated portrait of an elite institution." - *School Library Journal*



## The Animated Century

*The Animated Century* is the first ever comprehensive history of animation worldwide. Animated hosts Professor Edward Arlington Elderberry and his disciple Horace (created by Bill Plympton) introduce clips from 160 films from 26 countries, and discuss the most significant animated films of the past 100 years, with particular emphasis paid to the history of Eastern European animation.

**Produced by Animated Century Prods.**  
**2005, 92 minutes**  
**Item No. RUS-17**  
**Purchase: \$295 Rental: \$85**

"Amusing as it is informative..." - *Christian Science Monitor*

"A terrific, entertaining, intelligent history of the animated film. From the earliest scratchings to the latest computer graphics, this fascinating story tells it all." - *Ken Burns, Director of the PBS documentaries, The Civil War and Baseball*

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