

A Cinema Guild Release



# MAIDAN

A film by Sergei Loznitsa

131 minutes / DCP / 1.85:1 / Dolby 5.1 / Ukraine / Not Rated  
In Ukrainian with English Subtitles

Stills available at: [www.cinemaguild.com/downloads](http://www.cinemaguild.com/downloads)

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa, Maidan chronicles the civil uprising that toppled the government of Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovich and has since developed into an international crisis between Russia and the West. Filmed in stunning long takes, sans commentary, Maidan is a record of a momentous historical event and an extraordinary study of the popular uprising as a social, cultural and philosophical phenomenon.

## **LONG SYNOPSIS**

Beginning in November 2013, when hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens gathered in Kiev's Independence Square (Maidan) to protest Yanukovich's refusal to establish closer ties with the West, Loznitsa and his cameraman were there, capturing the peaceful rallies, demonstrations, speeches and songs.

As Loznitsa notes, "The euphoric atmosphere of the early days of Maidan felt so comforting and empowering that it felt like being in a maternal womb. Never before have I seen or experienced such solidarity, camaraderie and such an authentic spirit of freedom. It was amazing to see so many volunteers working together in such a harmony and with such zeal. Everybody seemed to be busy: guarding Maidan, helping out in the kitchens, providing medical assistance, performing on the stage of Maidan, coordinating volunteers. The night of December 19th, St Nicholas's feast, felt like a medieval folk carnival – a free spirit of the nation, awakening from a long sleep."

In January 2014, following an ultimatum from the government to disperse, riot police stormed the square. Maidan captures the bloody street battles that erupted, the fires that raged throughout the night, and the make-shift funerals for the dead.

Eschewing the conventions of traditional talking heads documentaries, Maidan plunges the viewer into the middle of this revolution for a startling and immediate portrait of an awakening nation, rediscovering its identity.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

By Sergei Loznitsa

I went to Kiev in the middle of December. I knew it was urgent. I knew I had to be there and I had to film. I put off all my other projects and commitments and went to Maidan.

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During the first weeks of Maidan, there was danger, but also there was a lot of humour and laughter. This very particular Ukrainian sense of humor, which helped them get through some of the darkest moments of this nation's history. They were laughing at incompetent and corrupt politicians rather than hating them. The creative energy was bursting, and dozens of amateur singers and poets performed their rather naïve, but incredibly honest and passionate ballads on the stage of Maidan. There was also the abundance of food... Perhaps, it's been the most well fed revolution in history. Field kitchens were working round the clock and volunteers and ordinary citizens of Kiev were bringing tons of food supplies and home-made delicacies in order to feed everybody – they did not ask whether you were supporting the opposition or the regime...

By the middle of January the mood changed. It was not a carnival any more. It was a battle. Blood was shed. It was no longer a peaceful protest against corrupt president. It was a fight against an evil regime. It was a revolution...

Maidan is the first film in my rather long documentary career, when I actually had to follow the events of "real life", as they were unfolding. This was a new and nerve-wrecking experience for me. Usually, when I start on a documentary, I start by laying out a complete structure of the film in my head. I know exactly how the film will begin, how the narrative will develop and how it will end.

Making Maidan was a completely different experience. I was receiving new footage throughout January and February, and as tension was escalating and blood was shed, I was editing the film, not knowing what ending to expect. I divided the film into several parts: the prologue, the celebration, the battle and the post-scriptum.

My goal is to bring the spectator to Maidan and make him experience the 90 days of revolution, as they unfolded. I wanted to distance myself from the events and to leave the spectator vis-à-vis with the events, without any commentary or voice-over narrative. I used long takes in order to immerse the spectator into the narrative. I

tried to record as much direct sound as possible, and I'm going to use a lot of it in the film.

“Maidan” is an enigma to me, which I am yet to solve.

Sergei Loznitsa  
March 2014

## **About the Director**

### **SERGEI LOZNITSA**

Director / Director of Photography

Sergei was born on September, 5<sup>th</sup> 1964. He grew up in Kiev, and in 1987 graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic with a degree in Applied Mathematics. In 1987-1991 he worked as a scientist at the Kiev Institute of Cybernetics, specializing in artificial intelligence research. He also worked as a translator from Japanese. In 1997 he graduated from the Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK), where he studied feature film making. Sergei has been making documentary films since 1996, and he has directed 14 documentaries, all of which received numerous international awards. Sergei Loznitsa's montage film "Blockade" (2005) is based on the archive footage of besieged Leningrad. Loznitsa's feature debut "MY JOY" premiered at the Festival de Cannes in 2010, and was followed by "IN THE FOG", which premiered in the competition of the 65<sup>th</sup> Festival de Cannes in May 2012 and received the FIPRESCI prize.

Sergei Loznitsa continues to work in both documentary and feature genres. He is currently working on a feature film "Babi yar".

## **Feature Filmography**

MAIDAN (Documentary, 2014)

IN THE FOG (Narrative, 2012)

MY JOY (Narrative, 2010)

SWEET SIXITES (Documentary, 2008)

REVUE (Documentary, 2008)

BLOCKADE (Documentary, 2006)

LANDSCAPE (Documentary, 2003)

THE SETTLEMENT (Documentary 2002)

## PRODUCTION TEAM

**Serhiy Stefan Stetsenko – director of photography (additional footage)** was born in 1981 in the North-East of Ukraine. He studied cinematography at the Kiev University of Culture. Works as a DoP for film and television in Kiev. Serhiy met with Sergei Loznitsa during the first weeks of Maidan, and courageously and diligently followed the civil protests with his camera, witnessing the most dramatic moments of the revolution.

**Vladimir Golovnitski – sound designer** was born in Brest (Belorussia, former USSR) in 1956. Graduated from the Institute of Cinema Engineers in Leningrad (now known as the St Petersburg State University of Film and Television). From 1978 till 1992 Vladimir Golovnitski worked at the Belarusfilm Studios in Minsk. Since 1994 he is based in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he runs his independent sound design studio, Gutara. Golovnitski has been closely collaborating with Sergei Loznitsa since 2003, and he has designed the sound for 8 documentaries of Loznitsa, including “Blockade” (2005), “Revue” (2008), “Letter” (2013) as well as Sergei Loznitsa’s 2 feature film, “My joy” (2010) and “In the fog” (2012).

**ATOMS & VOID** is a film production and distribution company founded by Sergei Loznitsa and Maria Choustova-Baker in 2013. The company is based in the Netherlands. In 2013 ATOMS & VOID produced and released Sergei Loznitsa’s documentary short “LETTER” (European Film Academy 2013 nomination for best short film) and managed the production of Loznitsa’s “REFLECTIONS”, as part of the “Bridges of Sarajevo”/ “Les Ponts de Sarajevo” omnibus (Official Selection Cannes Film Festival 2014). ATOMS & VOID is also involved in the development of Sergei Loznitsa’s next feature project, “BABI YAR”.

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