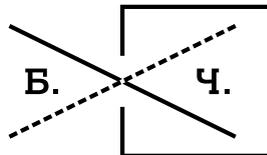




I БАЛАВАНОВСКИЕ ЧТЕНИЯ



I БАЛАВАНОВСКИЕ ЧТЕНИЯ
ПЕТЕРБУРГ—МОСКВА
АПРЕЛЬ 2015

For our cinema and, more generally, for our country, Balabanov was doing work of essence. For the world as well, I think, although the world was looking at him through slitted eyes, trying as it were not to see.

Blessed are the artists—their life continues after they are physically gone, and the First Balabanov Conference is an attestation to and a confirmation of that. We are revisiting Balabanov, and I think we are doing that more profoundly, tranquilly, and closely.

— Sergey Selyanov,
CTB Film Company

When asked how should one write history of Russian literature, Mikhail Gasparov answered with an acrimonious comment, “One shouldn’t, because we cannot write it well at the moment—there is no material.”

Besides all other hardships that fell upon Russian film studies and criticism in post-Perestroika times, there is that crucial issue. For *Séance* magazine which, for a quarter of century, has been studying Russian cinema with an insistence worthy of a better cause, Aleksei Balabanov was a major supplier of material in times of harsh shortage thereof. Was he a friend? Yes, of course, and a loved one. But above all, he was a subject.

What is the Balabanov Conference? What for did we design it and how do we see its future?

For instance, at the First Tynianov Conference in 1982, Tynianov’s name appeared in every presentation’s title. He was not, of course, a self-sufficing subject but one of junction, of context; a point of reference. At the 11th Tynianov Conference, his name was to be found in just one presentation. That did not happen because Tynianov’s legacy was exhausted—it was the conference that had transcended beyond the narrow thematic field and turned into a major academic forum.

The First Balabanov Conference is partly a memorial event—he passed away only recently, and it is still an open wound to us. And, even though we did write about all of his films and made two books on him, there’s still a lot to be said—about Balabanov in particular, and his films.

My dream though is that in the future, the Balabanov Conference would be a meeting point for film scholars at which the range of subjects wouldn’t be reserved to just one director but for which that director would be a reference point—a point to start a big discussion. And, in spite of professional aims so challenging, let us not deceive ourselves thinking they are primary. Of course, the major impetus is to prolong his life among us, stay with him, continue the dialogue with him; and to do everything to maintain his current importance at our galloping modern time when even a most significant entity ever drowns in the stream of overflowing news.

— Lyubov Arkus,
editor in chief of *Séance* magazine

ABSTRACTS

- Petersburg: April 18; 01:00 PM — 07:00 PM
Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage
Naberezhnaya reki Fontanki 49a
thenewstage.ru
sign-up form: newstage.timepad.ru
free admittance
- Moscow: April 19; 01:00 PM — 07:00 PM
Electrotheatre Stanislavsky
Tverskaya ulitsa 23
stanislavskydrama.ru
sign-up form: electrotheatre.timepad.ru
free admittance

LYUBOV ARKUS (RUSSIA). BALABANOV AS THE LAST MODERNIST

Lyubov Arkus (Lviv, 1960) is a film critic and director; founder and editor in chief of *Séance* magazine, founder of the Social Rehabilitation Center for Adults with Autism “Anton’s Right Here”.



Fear of statement, of oneself, is the most distinctive feature of the post-Soviet, including its best representants. In the 2000s, that fear brought forth new standards, a cinematic “fashion”: no music, no emphases, no dramaturgy, no characters, no psychology. Balabanov, however, was always in opposition to that “fashion,” and that was especially conspicuous against the background of the 2000s’ “quiet cinema”—from “Happy Days” on, it was ever important to him to express himself by any means. That gives us ground to speak of Balabanov as the last Modernist, referring not to the classic definition of Modernism as an artistic movement that appeared in the late 19th—early 20th century and was characterised by destruction of narrative and search for new forms (I don’t find Balabanov was ever interested in searching for new forms) but to those premonitions of Modernism that had been emerging since the Renaissance and were articulated by René Descartes: “I resolved to make myself an object of study.” The key figure in this case is that of the Author who is established on the top of the vertical hierarchy, and even when performing the classic Post-Modern stunt—blending the elitist and the mass cultures—uses it as a device (one of the many) to achieve the main aim—an absolute self-expression.

Venues: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage, Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

ANTON DOLIN (RUSSIA). “DEAD MAN’S BLUFF” AS HYPERTEXT:
THE GANGSTER GENRE & CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF RUSSIAN FILM
ACCORDING TO ALEKSEI BALABANOV

Anton Dolin (Moscow, 1976) is a film historian, critic and journalist. He is one of the authors of the book “Balabanov” (2013). He is a presenter at radio stations Mayak and Vesti FM as well as at the film section of the television show Night Urgant, and writes for Afisha Vozduh. He has authored four books: on Lars von Trier, Takeshi Kitano, Aleksei German, and filmmakers of the 21st century.



Aleksei Balabanov’s seventh film is generally assumed to be a trifle, a pure genre exercise, and at the same time a tribute to the postmodern fashion of double-layered gangster movies (the director repeatedly named “Pulp Fiction” among his favourite films). Yet another approach is possible. Directing a script he didn’t write for himself and casting superstars of Russian cinema, including its informal king Nikita Mikhalkov, in all the roles, Balabanov analysed the structure of Russian cinema, its system of false genres, influences, aesthetical preferences and ethical references. Having readily assumed the role of “the Russian Tarantino” imposed on him, Balabanov used the opportunity to make an explicit, unreserved statement on the cultural context in which he was forced to exist. Behind the seeming absurdity of “Dead Man’s Bluff” lies a ruthless critique of not Russian life proper but the “second reality” produced by it.

Venues: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage, Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

DARIA EZEROVA (USA). “ME TOO”: ALEKSEI BALABANOV’S TAKE ON MAGICAL REALISM

Daria Ezerova (Moscow, 1988) is a graduate student in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Yale University and the organizer of the Yale Slavic Film Colloquium. She is currently working on her dissertation that focuses on post-Soviet film and literature and the afterlife of Soviet ideological constructs in the 1990s and early 2000s.



In an interview following the release of his last feature film “Me Too” Aleksei Balabanov referred to it as a work of “fantastic realism”. This succinct formulation alludes to the tradition of magical realism and invites a close analysis of the film in the light of the artistic movement that perhaps had the most complex relationship with 20th-century literary modernism.

With the unexplained fantastic elements seamlessly interwoven with Balabanov’s signature hyper-realism, bizarre naming, themes of death and transcendence, and the incantation-like, disorienting soundtrack, “Me Too” demonstrates the director’s take on magical realism and in this way becomes distinctly different from the rest of Balabanov’s oeuvre.

This paper strives to uncover a less-studied modernist strand in Balabanov’s work—that of magical realism—through a close analysis of the ways in which its various tropes and elements are employed and re-imagined in his last film. In order to further assert this lasting aesthetic influence, the paper will also reference and briefly focus on Balabanov’s last screenplay—“My Brother is Dead”.

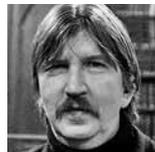
Venue: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage

ELENA GRACHEVA, ALEKSEI VOSTRIKOV (RUSSIA). ZERO SOCIETY: WACŁAW SIEROSZEWSKI'S WORK AS A SOURCE OF YAKUTIAN NARRATIVES IN ALEKSEI BALABANOV'S FILMS

Elena Gracheva (Omsk, 1964) is a literary scholar and lecturer specialising in Russian literature. She is the programme coordinator of AdVita charity fund.



Aleksei Vostrikov (Chelyabinsk, 1960) is a literary scholar specialising in Russian literature. He is a supervisor and curator of the Bestuzhev courses library's book fund.



Wacław Sieroszewski was a Polish writer and civil leader who spent 12 years in exile in Yakutia. His novel "The Depths of Misery" came in Balabanov's view when he worked on "The River"; the book was used as a source material for the script. Later on, the short story "Hailak" became a basis for the film "Stoker".

Sieroszewski's prose resists the aesthetics of its time—the narrative is not built upon a presentation of a character determined by environment, nor is it an ethnographic study or a psychological novel. Yakutian material for the author is a way of estrangement which makes possible a description of human condition and survival. His model of a primitive community is dynamic, not static: the characters reveal themselves in their doings, action is the main subject, narrative is limited to a plot delivery; the story is conventional, language is neutral, psychology not yet invented. Every action is a choice leading to either death or life; hence the straightforwardness, lack of half-tones.

That kind of poetics and point of view proved congenial to Balabanov: the writer and the filmmaker both describe zero societies existing before (Sieroszewski) or after (Balabanov) civilisation.

Venue: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage

MARIA KUVSHINOVA (RUSSIA). “WHIT MONDAY”: DIRECTOR SELYANOV & DIRECTOR BALABANOV

Maria Kuvshinova (Moscow, 1978) is a journalist and film critic; deputy chief editor of *Séance* magazine. She is the author of the book “Balabanov” (2013; 2nd ed. 2015).



Since mid 1990s, Sergey Selyanov was a constant and only producer of Aleksei Balabanov’s who had been his fellow student at Higher Courses for Film Directors. It was at the same time when Selyanov gave up directing to be just a producer. Nonetheless, the three films he made as a director—“Saint’s Day” (1980/1988), “Whit Monday” (1990), and “Not Yet a Time for Sorrow” (1995)—still attract interest and allow to articulate artistic and ideological motives that align the work of Selyanov and Balabanov as directors together.

Venues: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage, Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

JOHN MACKAY (USA). "I DON'T LIKE DIRECTORS MUCH": BALABANOV'S SELF-REFLEXIVE CINEMA

John MacKay (Grande Prairie, 1965) is professor of Slavic and East European languages and literatures and film studies and chair of the film studies program at Yale University. He is author of "Inscription and Modernity: From Wordsworth to Mandelstam", of "True Songs of Freedom: Uncle Tom's Cabin in Russian Literature and Culture", and editor and translator of "Four Russian Serf Narratives". He is finishing his study of "Dziga Vertov: Life and Work", and has published numerous essays on Vertov.



Balabanov's films are often taken to be tough, realist portraits of Russia, past and present. Yet there is a distinctly modernist interest in filmmaking itself as a theme in his films, hidden allegorically within their plots. This paper will try to read a few of Balabanov's films, "Brother" especially, as allegories of their own production.

Venue: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage

ALEXEI MEDVEDEV (RUSSIA). ALEKSEI BALABANOV: GENRE AS METAPHOR

Alexei Medvedev (Moscow, 1969) is a Russian film critic and programmer.



Genre and metaphor, it would seem, are non-congruent phenomena. However, in Balabanov's work genre elements turn out to be not merely instruments to construct a story but precisely metaphorical references to mentalities and mindsets. It is not only, and not so much, a genre irony or an ironic commentary to Russian cinema of the Nineties, that is, not a second reality, but an exposure of rules in accordance with which our reality functioned, and still does. For instance, the moon in "Cargo 200" only at a first glance is a marker of horror, of zombies and vampires to come; it is, in fact, a concise and clear indicator that real ghouls are already here. It is this paradoxical use of genre that the paper will be dedicated to.

Venue: Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

MARGHERITA DE MICHIEL (ITALY). OF THE HEALTHY & THE SICK,
OR "MORPHINE" AS A METATEXT OF (A) RUSSIAN SOUL

Margherita de Michiel (Padova, 1965) is a professor of Russian language and literature at the University of Bologna, translator of Lotman and Bakhtin, formerly a programmer of Russian films at the Venice film festival.



One text, three authors, three “reflections of reflections”; Bulgakov’s text, read by the scriptwriter Bodrov Jr. and the director Balabanov, is incarnated in a “genre transgression” where “Morphine” is not as much a pivot of the narrative as a “background noise” that spellbinds the spectator.

The seeming integrity of Balabanov’s narration is subverted by a subtle use of “texts within text” that create a consistent net of intextual and intertextual references. What we see is a text that, as if freed from historical definitions, may serve as a metatext to Balabanov’s work in toto. Bulgakov who is conspicuously absent from this quasi-autobiography, is almost a pre-text where the pre-Revolutionary Russia plays part of Russia’s eternal sub-revolutionism. That oxymoron is played out in an aesthetics that, while ostensibly succumbing to the rules of period authenticity, in fact assumes the traits of fantastical realism in the manner of Dostoevsky.

Demonologist to demonologist. “I know two classes, the healthy and the sick,” says the doctor. But is there a line separating freaks from men? And the protagonist himself, the self-defined “False Dmitriy” struggling with his “not my voice,” who is he? His notes are a “Diary of a Writer” where the author makes a diagnosis of the Russian soul. Through a seemingly superficial design where “points become lines” Bodrov leads us from doubt, from being in two minds, to joining two minds. And Balabanov, through literature and music leads us to the real-irreal “The End.” To cinema.

Venue: Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

COLLEEN MONTGOMERY (USA). OF FREAKS & GANGSTERS: ALEKSEI BALABANOV'S POST-SOVIET REVISIONIST CINEMA

Colleen Montgomery (Toronto, 1985) is a Ph. D. candidate in Media Studies at University of Texas at Austin and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellow. Her research interests include animation, film sound, and post-Soviet cinema.



In the early 1990s, the dissolution of the Soviet Union led to an unprecedented period of decline for the Russian film industry. In the wake of this collapse, many prominent critics and filmmakers faulted a “weak cinema mythology” for the dwindling state of their national film industry, and called for filmmakers to create a new national mythology for the post-Soviet era. Numerous Russian filmmakers heeded this call in fashioning new, positive national myths and heroes that “idealize Russia’s imperial past and culture.”

Aleksei Balabanov’s post-Soviet films, on the other hand, offer a radical alternative to this form of post-Soviet heritage film. Rather than offer a nostalgic view of Russian history and culture, his films—furnished with a host of “freakish” and unsavoury characters—cast a bleak light on Russia’s imperial past and propose no new national mythologies for the future. Looking at two of his most widely distributed, yet very stylistically divergent films, “Of Freaks and Men” and “Dead Man’s Bluff”, this paper examines how Balabanov’s post-Soviet films: deconstruct long-held national mythologies; create a new type of anti-hero, a ruthlessly capitalist, deeply individualist figure; and, lastly, shed light on the socio-economic impact of the introduction of a Western capitalist system to post-Soviet Russia.

Venues: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage, Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

JESÚS PALACIOS (SPAIN). ANGELS & GANGSTERS. ALEKSEI BALABANOV & "BRAT": RE-INVENTING RUSSIAN FILM NOIR

Jesús Palacios (Madrid, 1964). Spanish writer, university professor, curator and film critic, specialized in genre cinema and popular culture. He has authored several books including "Alekssei Balabanov. Cinema for New Russia" (2009).



With "Brat", its sequel and other criminal tales from the New Russia, Aleksei Balabanov, with a distinctive and personal cinematic style, surprised Russian and international film critics and audiences, rediscovering the power and possibilities of genre cinema as social, moral and historical commentary of the reality. As a result of this films and others so stunning and masterful as "Cargo 200", Balabanov re-inventing some kind of genuine Russian noir, appropriating topics and archetypal elements from the mythology of gangster American movies, film noir, thriller and even western, through his reification as a new style, absolutely of his own but mixed with key elements from Russian reality and tradition. With auteur sensibility, but with an eye for the audience, Balabanov created some of the more impressive and intelligent examples of a perfect balance between film d'auteur and popular genre movies, unparalleled before in Russian cinema.

Venues: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage, Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

ANDREI PLAHOV (RUSSIA). BALABANOV, POÈTE MAUDIT

Andrei Plahov (Starokonstantinov, 1950) is a Russian film critic, honorary president of FIPRESCI.



Aleksei Balabanov had a notorious reputation of a provocateur and politically incorrect rule-breaker, a radical and at the same time a conservator. He was compared to Pasolini, Trier and John Ford. After his death, he is hailed as a prophet who foretold the current events. He was never adequately appreciated abroad, and in his own country, interpreted so differently that one wouldn't tell those controversial discourses were about one filmmaker. His destiny is that of a poète maudit who didn't belong to any camp. This is what he should rest to be in history.

Venue: Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

ALEKSANDR POGREBNIYAK (RUSSIA). JUDGEMENT OF HISTORY:
BALABANOV'S VERDICT

Aleksandr Pogrebnyak (Saint Petersburg, 1974), Ph. D., is a professor of social philosophy and philosophy of history at the Institute of Philosophy, Saint Petersburg University; professor of interdisciplinary synthesis in social sciences and humanities at the Department of Liberal Arts and Sciences, SPU.



The main line of Balabanov's films is philosophising contemporary Russian history whose logic is most clearly reflected in the dialectic trinary of "Dead Man's Bluff", "Cargo 200", and "Me Too". The first of those represents the 1990s, and its jocular tone enhances the critical diagnosis to the contemporary Russian statehood—the point is not even that an office with a view to the Kremlin is taken by a thug but that he is a subject who stakes on "safety measures" that guarantee him survival in any situation. "Dead man's bluff" with a bulletproof folder is a sign of a radical dystopia—in the 1990s succeeded only he who was choosing foul play by default and preferred self-preservation instinct to existential authenticity—which is why the main value now would be "stability", fair play for everyone else. "Cargo 200", set in the 1980s, is not only a backstory but also an antithesis of "Dead Man's Bluff"—even though motives of despair, pathology and absolute evil prevail here, utopian theme is also present; characters might kill and rape each other but nonetheless they all have human dreams—which is why a perspective, a horizon of future opens in the film's end. Finally, "Me Too" may be seen as a final result: the people of Leninsk of the day before yesterday no more have a place in Moscow or Saint Petersburg; their "happiness" transformed into an "empty signifier", and the "law" turned out to be the heaven's irrational will; the power does not prevent them from going to the zone from which no one has ever returned.

Venue: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage

YURY SAPRYKIN (RUSSIA). “BROTHER 2”, OR THE WARRIOR’S WAY:
CHICAGO TO DONETSK

Yury Saprykin (Novomoskovsk, 1973) is a journalist, former editor in chief of Afisha magazine, and founder of Afisha Vozduh website.



The most popular film by Aleksei Balabanov which at the moment of release was perceived as a genre play bordering provocation, turned out to be the most providential as well. “Brother 2” was the first to foresee and embody the ideology, ethics and aesthetics of the “Russian World”, the ideological system that, as of 2015, defines Russian politics, is accepted by the majority of population and brings great shocks.

Venue: Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

ANDREY SHCHERBENOK (RUSSIA). NINETIES FOREVER: BALABANOV & THE POST-SOVIET

Andrey Shcherbenok (Leningrad, 1974) is a literature and film scholar, and culture historian. He is a faculty member at the Skolkovo Academy.



Early Balabanov films were made in the late 1980s, the last one in 2012, and they are set in 1910s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. However, in a way Balabanov was always making films about the 1990s, both in those works where that decade was explicitly the subject and those set in other periods of Russian history. This fixation manifests itself not only in characters, stories and situations characteristic of the Nineties but also in experiencing the historical present as post-Soviet, that is, in Balabanov's case, meaningful only in correlation to the late Soviet era whose ideological stability is "always already" put in doubt. The paper examines the historical (un)conscious in Balabanov's work and its implications for his films' cinematic aesthetics as such.

Venue: Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage

ALENA SOLNTSEVA (RUSSIA). RUSSIAN WORLD APOCALYPSE IN ALEKSEI BALABANOV'S FILMS

Alena Solntseva (Moscow, 1958) is a journalist, theatre and film critic. She curates Kinoteatr.doc Film Festival and programs for Kinotavr Film Festival.



Starting with the film “Brother”, Aleksei Balabanov engaged himself in exploration of the so called “Russian World’s” foundations, the “Russian idea” which, after the USSR had dissolved, became the national ideology of the “siloviki” (the word was rarely used in the mid-1990s, but it is not a coincidence that the word “sila” (force, power) is found so often in Balabanov’s scripts). Inside the limited framework of the action or thriller genre, local particularities flourish. Bodrov’s character—the invincible Russian Rambo, or the national Bond—is an embodiment of that new Russian type which manifested itself in full force in the “Novorossiia” project. He is an outright monster despite the evident charm of this “thick-lipped boy.” His monstrosity—the lack of empathy, of common sense or sense of reality—is demonstrated quite convincingly, however, few perceived it that way at the time of release. It is interesting that while Balabanov probes the slough of the people’s life, he discovers no solid ground whatsoever, which leads to the macabre of “Cargo 200”, “The Stoker”, and “Me Too”. Illusive ideals do not hold a structure, the world falls to pieces because violence, its only cementing force, cannot bear real weight.

Venue: Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

SPECIAL EVENTS

BALABANOV CROSSROADS. FILM RETROSPECTIVE

Balabanov liked to watch movies, which he did often and many at a time. When planning this retrospective we initially wanted to screen his favourite films but the circumstances and composition of the conference suggested another choice—three crossroads, three films that link to his filmography in various ways. One of them—“Hunger”—he saw as a student and came back to it when working on his debut. Another one—“Andrei Rublev”—he always loved and watched repeatedly. The third one—“In a Glass Cage”—he might had never seen but concurred with its director in the depth of the analysis of evil.

Petersburg: April 16–18; 07:00 PM
Aurora film theatre
Nevsky prospekt 60
avrora.spb.ru
ticket price: 250–300 roubles

Moscow: April 19; 09:00 PM
Pioner film theatre
Kutuzovsky prospekt 21
pioner-cinema.ru
ticket price: 300 roubles

“Hunger” by Henning Carlsen. A film that influenced Balabanov’s feature debut “Happy Days”



In the late 19th century in Christiania (now Oslo) where Munk is already searching for subjects of his dire paintings somewhere offscreen, a young writer is dying of hunger and humiliation.

The adaptation of Knut Hamsun’s novel written in first person, is one of the most celebrated Nordic films in history, a coproduction of three countries that premiered in competition at the Cannes film festival and earned a Best Actor award for the lead Per Oscarsson. His character, suffering from poverty, proud to the point of shrewishness, in an unrequited love and surrounded by indifference, is one of the most penetrative images of an unimportant person in the world cinema history. Viktor Sukhorukov’s character from Balabanov’s feature debut “Happy Days” could be his brother.

The film will be introduced by the film critic Maria Kuvshinova.

“Sult”. Directed by Henning Karlsen; Denmark—Norway—Sweden, 1966; 111 min. The film will be screened in Danish with Russian subtitles.

Petersburg: April 16; 07:00 PM; Aurora film theatre; ticket price: 250 roubles

Moscow: April 19; 09:00 PM; Pioner film theatre; ticket price: 300 roubles

“In a Glass Cage” by Agustí Villaronga. The Spanish “Cargo 200”



A Nazi doctor hiding in Franco's Spain goes on with his experiments in a comfortable mansion. He is obsessed with pain and boys but at some point, unable to bear the weight of his past and his guilt any longer, he decides to commit suicide. A failed attempt leads to paralysis, and the torturer is now bound to, and locked in, an artificial respiration machine; his aide is an angel-like young man who knows what the rich house's owner conceals.

“In a Glass Cage” is the first and perhaps most famous film by Agustí Villaronga, an award-winning director and a sophisticated examinant of personal and social pathologies. The director immerses us into a nightmare of the Post-Franco Spain, a country of isolation, dreadful past, and unsteady present, glazed by horror. The film whose themes resonate with Lilliana Cavani's “Night Porter”, Pier-Paolo Pasolini's “Saló” and Aleksei Balabanov's “Cargo 200”, brings the choreography of terror and domination to a new aesthetic level: the victim and the torturer entwine in a mesmerising dance macabre of suffer and atonement that will entrance even a hardshell and prepared viewer.

The film will be introduced by the Spanish film critic Jesús Palacios.

“Tras el cristal”. Directed by Agustí Villaronga; Spain, 1987; 110 min.
The film will be screened in Spanish with Russian subtitles.

Petersburg: April 17; 07:00 PM; Aurora film theatre; ticket price: 250 roubles

“Andrei Rublev” by Andrei Tarkovsky. One of Aleksei Balabanov’s favourite films



Early 15th century. Tatar invasions and feuds pull Rus’ apart. Andrei Rublev, together with two other monks, comes out from the gates of Andronikov Monastery; he is destined to become the greatest Russian icon painter.

Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky from the script written together with Andrei Konchalovsky, “Andrei Rublev” has become one of the greatest films of not just Soviet but world cinema. In spite of its title it isn’t a Western biopic or Orthodox hagiography but rather a mosaic offering to experience the Medieval Rus’ in its full tragic manifoldness. The protagonist here is not a hero in a Western European sense but rather an “enchanted wanderer” (sokindred to Aleksei Balabanov), a contemplator who at first strives to learn about the world but then hides from it in a monastery, having given a vow of silence. Rublev’s view, just like that of the camera, dictates the structure—a series of faces and events; frescoes that do not have a beginning or an end that emerge out of the dark ages following the creator’s will.

The film will be introduced by the editor in chief of Séance magazine Lyubov Arkus.

“Андрей Рублёв”. Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky; USSR, 1966; 205 min. Special screening of the new version restored under the guidance of the cinematographer Vadim Yusov. The film will be screened in Russian.

Petersburg: April 18; 07:00 PM; Aurora film theatre; ticket price: 300 roubles

BALABANOV CROSSROADS. AN EXHIBITION

Concept by Polina Zaslavskaya—an artist, participant of a number of exhibitions, coordinator of various artistic and activist projects.



The exhibition Balabanov Crossroads is a total installation which creates a “situation,” existing by rules of peripheral, scattered vision; moves along the tangent revealing the world of Balabanov as a filmmaker and as a human through his relationships with literature, people, and time. The exhibition consists of several elements that resonate with each other. The composition is centred around Aleksei Balabanov’s writing desk and Nadezhda Vasilieva’s sketches for his unrealised projects. Balabanov’s connections to his inner circle are visually represented by his friends’ works; relationship to literature, by a mapping panel; to time, through audio and video. All those elements are connected with quotes from Aleksei Balabanov’s diary that thread the whole exhibition space.

Literature. Books played a crucial part in Aleksei Balabanov’s life and work. Samuel Beckett, Knut Hamsun, William Faulkner, Waclaw Sieroszewski, Mikhail Bulgakov, Strugatsky brothers, Nikolai Leskov, Vladimir Nabokov—the list of literary influences is visualised in a plan / map / collage allowing to trace the relations of cultural and temporal contexts, from literature to Balabanov and back to literature.

Inner Circle. Balabanov’s friendly ties found their ways to his films. Paintings and drawings presented at the exhibition bear an air of closeness, humanness and sincerity. Among participants are Aleksei Balabanov’s wife and costume designer Nadezhda Vasilieva, painter and production designer Vladimir Kartashov, Balabanov’s friends Vyacheslav Butusov and Nastya Poleva, priest and former painter father Rafail, and others.



Time. A sound art composition created by composer Vladimir Rannev especially for the exhibition is built of soundtracks and dialogues taken from Aleksei Balabanov's films. Footage of Saint Petersburg of Balabanov's era is edited into a video sequence that serves not just as a conceptual element—it integrates objects, paintings and sound into a whole.

Venue: Art and Music Centre of the Mayakovsky Library
Nevsky prospekt 20
vk.com/nevskiy20
free admittance

Date and time: April 23 to May 10

BALABANOV. THE BOOK



The first effort to explore Balabanov's finished filmography was made by Séance magazine in the book "Balabanov", released in late 2013. The volume continued Séance's "black book series" (which was started by releases of "Sokurov" and "Muratova") and, following the established tradition consisted of two parts: a biography and a collection of essays by different writers.

The new version, denser and more accessible, is a biography of the filmmaker written by film critic Maria Kuvshinova and enlarged especially for the second edition. Working on the new version included interviews with Balabanov's mother Inga Aleksandrovna and his childhood's friend Evgeniy Gorenburg, which allowed to expand the chapter on the filmmaker's early years; furthermore, a trip to Yakutia provided material for the chapter on the unfinished picture "The River". The new version will be presented at the First Balabanov Conference.

Venue: Electrotheatre Stanislavsky
Tverskaya ulitsa 23
stanislavskydrama.ru
sign-up form: electrotheatre.timepad.ru
free admittance

Date and time: April 19; 07:30 PM

BALABANOV ON VASILIEVSKY ISLAND. A GUIDED TOUR



When Aleksei Balabanov moved to Leningrad, he almost instantly chose Vasilievsky island as a place to settle and lived here until his death; and it was here where he shot many of his films. Here's the market where in the mid Nineties Danila met the German and in the Noughts Misha and Tata celebrated Paratroopers' Day; a block away is the alley through which, a century ago, Trofim arrived to the city, and from which in 1984 the young characters of "Cargo 200" strolled to the future. We invite participants of the conference to visit shooting locations of "Brother", "Of Freaks and Men", "It Doesn't Hurt", "The Stoker", "Me Too"; and to try to feel that fleeting air of the hidden, underground Saint Petersburg that remains forever in Balabanov's films.

Venue: meeting point TBA
sign-up form: vk.com/seance_magazine

Date and time: April 17; 03:00 PM — 05:00 PM

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SCHEDULE

PETERSBURG

APRIL 16

07:00 PM

Film Retrospective. "Hunger"

Aurora film theatre
Nevsky prospekt 60
avrora.spb.ru
ticket price: 250 roubles

APRIL 17

03:00 PM — 05:00 PM

A guided tour. Balabanov on Vasilievsky island
meeting point TBA
sign-up form: vk.com/seance_magazine

07:00 PM

Film Retrospective. "In a Glass Cage"

Aurora film theatre
by invitations only

APRIL 18

01:00 PM — 07:00 PM

The First Balabanov Conference
Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage
Naberezhnaya reki Fontanki 49a
thenewstage.ru
sign-up form: newstage.timepad.ru
free admittance

07:00 PM

Film Retrospective. "Andrei Rublev"

Aurora film theatre
ticket price: 300 roubles

APRIL 23 TO MAY 10

Exhibition. Balabanov Crossroads

Art and Music Centre of the Mayakovsky Library

Nevsky prospekt 20

vk.com/nevskiy20

free admittance

MOSCOW

APRIL 19

01:00 PM — 07:00 PM

The First Balabanov Conference

Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

Tverskaya ulitsa 23

stanislavskydrama.ru

sign-up form: electrotheatre.timepad.ru

free admittance

07:30 PM

Presentation of the book “Balabanov”

Electrotheatre Stanislavsky

sign-up form: electrotheatre.timepad.ru

free admittance

09:00 PM

Special screening. “Hunger”

Pioner film theatre

Kutuzovsky prospekt 21

pioner-cinema.ru

ticket price: 300 roubles

THE FIRST BALABANOV CONFERENCE
PETERSBURG—MOSCOW
APRIL 2015



Organised by: Séance magazine, CTB film company, Russian Film Fund.

In partnership with: Danish Cultural Institute, Aurora film theatre, Pioneer film theatre, Alexandrinsky Theatre New Stage, Electrotheatre Stanislavsky, Art and Music Centre of the Mayakovsky Library, Poryadok Slov bookstore. Media partners: Bumaga online newspaper, websites Colta.ru, The Village, Gazeta.ru.

Head supervisor: Lyubov Arkus. Curators: Maria Kuvshinova, Konstantin Shavlovsky. Coordinator: Sasha Ahmadshina. Assistants: Anastasia Senchenko, Evgeniy Uhmylin. Art director: Peter Leznikov. Translator: Andrei Kartashov. Proofreader: Aleksei Belozеров. Guest manager: Maria Markaryan. SMM: Lolya Nordic.

Photo used in designs of the conference's posters, postcards and website by Aleksei Kuzmichev for Afisha magazine: Aleksei Balabanov on the set of "The Stoker"; Kronstadt, February 2010.

Séance magazine would like to thank Nadezhda Vasilieva, Sergei Selyanov and Aliona Shumakova for their help in arranging the conference.

Full schedule at: seance.ru/balabanov. VK page: vk.com/balabanov_2015.

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