

## First Russian Film Festival in the United Kingdom

London, 27th of September - 3rd of October

- Organisers** Academia Rossica Foundation (London)  
SovExportFilm (Moscow)
- Partners** Federal Agency of Culture and Cinematography  
VTB Europe  
Peter Hambro Mining PLC  
The First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin Foundation (Moscow)



- Supporters** Apollo West End  
Mayfair Hotel  
Eventica  
Ivan the Terrible Vodka  
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Obshina  
Baltika Beer  
The Arts Club

**ACADEMIA ROSSICA** cultural organisation was established in London in 2000, aiming to support and develop cultural liaisons between Russia and the West. In collaboration with the leading cultural institutions of Russia, Europe and the United States, Academia Rossica seeks to present the best of Russian arts, heritage and culture and to promote a deeper understanding of Russia in the United Kingdom and the USA. Academia Rossica is a non-profit organisation registered in the United Kingdom.



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Grigory Gevorkian, Sovexportfilm, Alexander Golutva and Sergei Lazaruk, Federal Agency of Culture and Cinematography



Svetlana Adjoubei, Academia Rossica, Anna Melikyan, director, actresses Maria Shalayeve, Irina Skrinichenko



Pavel Lungin, director

## Introduction

### Russia's renowned cinematic tradition continues

It would be fair to say that the first Russian film festival held in London was completed with total success. The festival gave British audiences a long-awaited opportunity to see the portrait of present day Russia through the prism of contemporary film, confirming that Russia's renowned cinematic tradition lives on. The festival proved popular amongst British and Russian audiences and was widely covered by UK and Russian mass media.

### M. E. Shvydkoy, head of the federal Agency of Culture and Cinematography:

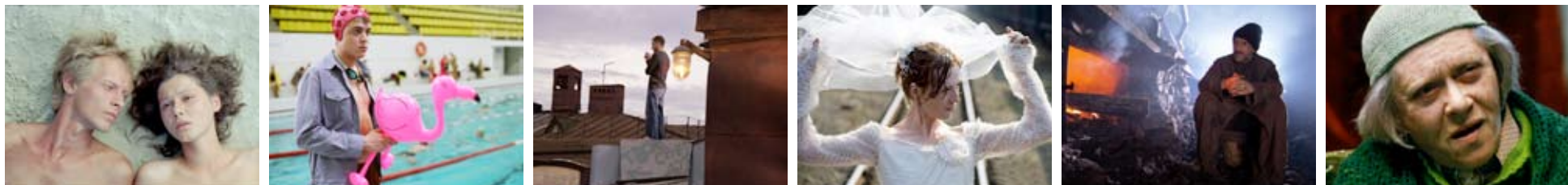
A festival of Russian films in London is a splendid opportunity to demonstrate to British cinema-goers just how rapidly contemporary Russian cinema is developing, an occasion to let them know how today's Russia lives and breathes, and what it takes pride in: it is an event which promotes the further development of the cultural exchange between Great Britain and Russia.

### Satwant Gill, Deputy Director of British Council's film department:

I am just delighted that finally there is a Russian film festival in London and I can't think of anything better than for us to exchange.

### Mr. Yury V. Fedotov, HE Ambassador of Russia in Great Britain:

"A festival of contemporary Russian films is a long-awaited event, and one of great importance to us. The British public is being offered the opportunity to discover for itself the latest achievements Russian cinema has to offer and, through them, to obtain a vivid insight into Russia today"



### Festival Programme

The programme included films made in the last two years, which have all received awards at Russian and international film festivals.

**Euphoria** (dir. Ivan Vyrypaev), 2006. Drama/ love story.

The debut prize, Small Golden Lion, at the 2006 Venice IFF

**Travelling with Pets** (dir. Vera Storozheva), 2007. Drama.

Grand-prix, the Golden St George at the International Moscow Film Festival

**Playing the Victim** (dir. Kirill Serebrennikov), 2006. Black Comedy.

First prize at the Kinotavr national film festival in 2006; the prize of the Guild of Russian Film Critics

**The Island** (dir. Pavel Lungin), 2006. Drama.

The film was screened for the closing ceremony of the Venice IFF 2006 and received the Golden Eagle award as the Best Russian Film of 2006

**Piter FM** (dir. Oxana Bychkova), 2006

A romantic comedy, a hit with the young Russian audiences

**Goddess** (dir. Renata Litvinova), 2005. Mystical thriller.

Jury special commendation at goEast Wiesbaden Film Festival

**On Upper Maslovka Street** (dir. Konstantin Khudyakov), 2005. Psychological Drama. Russian Film Academy Award Nika 2006

A special programme was dedicated to contemporary animation and documentary films.

The opening night of the festival was held at the Apollo West End cinema on the 27th of September, with an audience of 800 people, and was attended by a representative cultural and business elite of both countries.

The evaluation of ticket sales shows that the most successful films were 'Euphoria', 'The Island' and 'On Upper Maslovka', which therefore indicate that the UK audiences are willing to engage with serious and profound cinematic themes intellectually, as well as to appreciate the artistic and aesthetic aspects of Russian cinema..

Walking through the foyer of the Apollo West End one could hear the audience's regrets that the festival was ending too soon, not giving everyone an opportunity to see all eight feature films, as well as the documentaries and animations. Many people have expressed hope that the festival will become an annual tradition, which will continue to satisfy growing public interest in contemporary Russian cinema.



Sarah McKenzie, UK Film Council, Alexandre Golutva, Grigory Gevorkian



Ken Loach, director, Victoria Isakova, actress, Yuri Moroz, producer



Anna Melikyan, director

### Expanding professional links

One of the aims of the festival was to expand professional links between the UK and Russian film industries. ACADEMIA ROSSICA invited 20 guests from Moscow, which included the first deputy of M.E Shvydkoy, A.A. Glutva, deputy director of cinematography C. Lazaruk; film directors Pavel Lungin and Anna Melikyan, actors Viktor Suhorukov, Maxim Ushakov, actresses Ksenia Kutepove, Victoria Isakova, Maria Shalaeva, Ekaterina Fedulova, and producers Ruben Dishdizhyan, Yuri Moroz and others.

Russian professional guests attended the screenings and the Question and Answer sessions with audiences and the press. They also took part in social events involving members of BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) and NFTS students (National Film and Television School).

### Feedback from British guests:

#### **Duncan Kenworthy, Chair of BAFTA:**

All European cinema ought to be somehow connected - I am fascinated to find out about Russian cinema and the talented people who make it - and certainly learn from them and tell them what we do.

#### **Pawel Pawlikovski, film director:**

The festival was very enjoyable, above all socially. The encounters with Russian actors and directors were very exciting and fruitful.

#### **Dr. Jeremy Hicks, Russian cinema specialist:**

If made an annual event, the festival will surely grow to the benefit of London, Russian cinema and film generally.

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Festival opening Apollo West End



Svetlana Adjoubei, Pavel Lungin, Yuri Moroz, Alexandre Golutva, Sergei Lazaruk

### Future Plans

The first Russian Film festival ended on the 3rd of October, whereas the annual British film festival in Moscow, organised by the British Council, opened on the 5th of October. The collaboration between the two festivals opens new opportunities not only for Russian and UK audiences, but also industry professionals from both countries. The Festival marks an important stage in the development of Anglo-Russian cultural relations.

Academia Rossica and the British Council are currently making plans for the next Russian Film festival in 2008. The aim is to expand the festival, enriching its programme with archive cinema footage, master classes and panel discussions, which would thus turn the festival into an intellectually fruitful artistic dialogue between the two countries.

### Pawel Pawlikovski, film director:

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# Russia steppes out in London

12 FILM

Moscow's movie industry has emerged from its post-Soviet past with a slew of exciting young film-makers. By ALICE JONES

# A Russian rebellion

**T**hat the Russian film industry is no longer a shadow of its former self is clear to anyone who has seen the new crop of Russian films. The country has emerged from its post-Soviet past with a slew of exciting young film-makers. The new breed of young directors are not only talented but also well connected. They have the backing of the state and the industry. This is a sign of a new era in Russian cinema. The country has emerged from its post-Soviet past with a slew of exciting young film-makers. The new breed of young directors are not only talented but also well connected. They have the backing of the state and the industry. This is a sign of a new era in Russian cinema.



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Victoria Isakova



Irina Skrinichenko, Maria Shalayeva



Victoria Isakova , Viktor Sukhorukov

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