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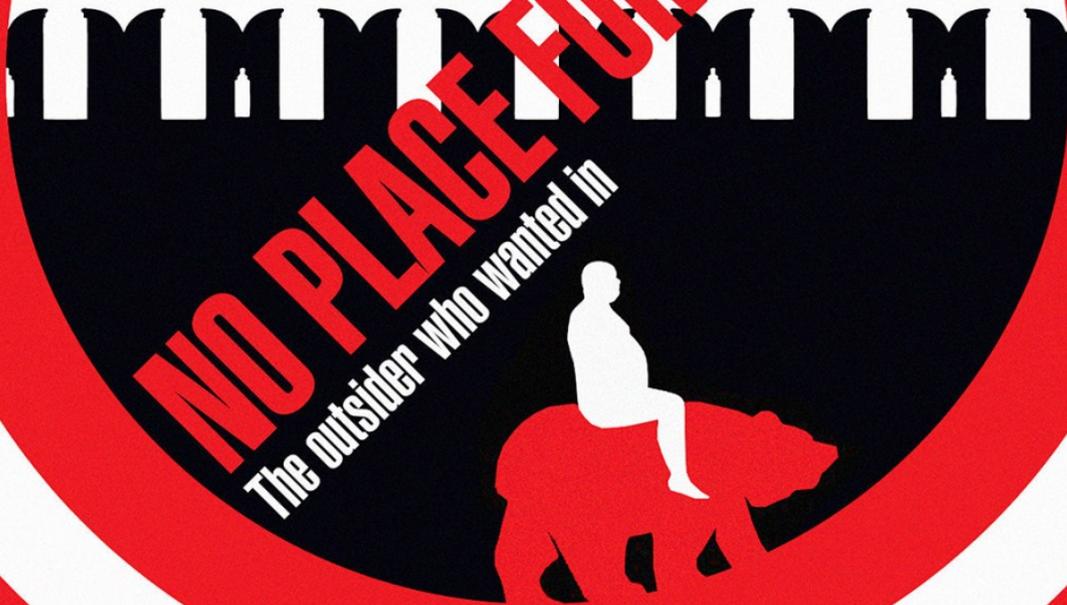
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A film by Oleg Mavromatti

NO PLACE FOR FOOLS

The outsider who wanted in



Written and directed by Oleg Mavromatti • Idea by Oleg Mavromatti and PO98
Produced by SUPERNOVA / CINEFANTOM

SUPERNOVA Film Union and Cine Fantom present

NO PLACE FOR FOOLS

The outsider who wanted in

Film by Oleg Mavromatti and PO98
2014, Russia / Bulgaria, 82 min.

"Some centuries ago Peter the Great criminalized the holy fools. Today, with the help of Internet, I resurrect this holy fool tradition, to draw a critical portrait of Russia's darkest side."

Oleg Mavromatti

www.olegmavromatti.com



SYNOPSIS

Sergey Astahov is a gay man converted by Church and state propaganda into an orthodox pro-Putin activist. Composed of terrifying images from Astahov's blog, this documentary by contemporary artist Oleg Mavromatti is the most radical insight into today's Russia and its ideological clashes.

'We must not give away our children to foreigners and homosexuals,' says Sergej Astahov in the documentary dedicated to him, *No Place for Fools*. A few months prior to this pronouncement, Astahov himself was openly gay.

The documentary is comprised of clips placed by Astahov on his blog. We see him praising modern Moscow shopping malls, eulogising on the pleasures of gay porn and drawing up all manner of lists - from his favourite songs to his illnesses. He considers his homosexuality one of the latter.

It gradually becomes clear, reading between the lines, that Astahov has been admitted to a psychiatric clinic to 'cure' him of this 'disease'. We also see a video in which he marries a woman, subsequently morphing into a patriotic, Orthodox Christian Russian - a Putin supporter who sometimes relapses into his old self: 'I love men.' A documentary that pointedly highlights the insurmountable, confusing ideological changes taking place in contemporary Russia.

Director: Oleg Mavromatti

Producers: Boryana Rossa (SUPERNOVA) and Andrey Silvestrov (Cine Fantom)

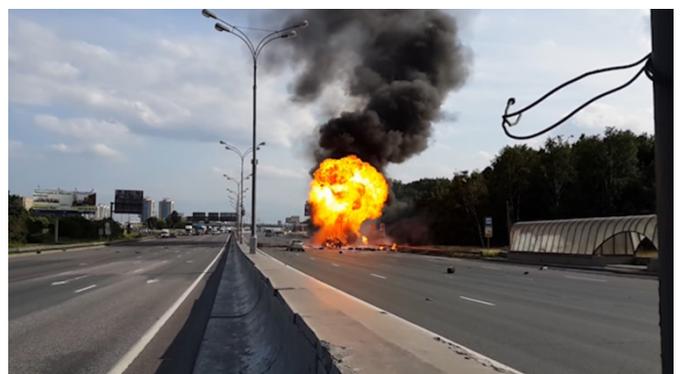
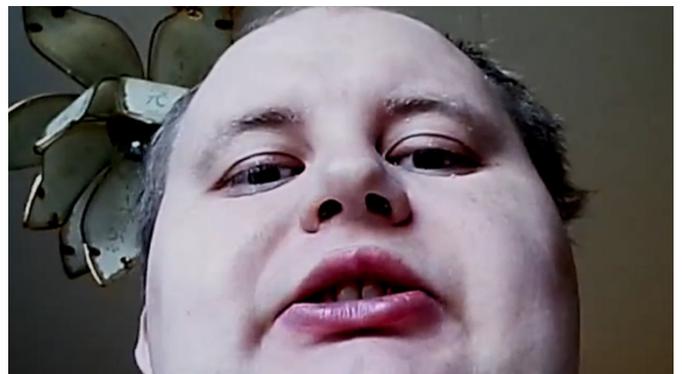
Script: Oleg Mavromatti

Editing: Oleg Mavromatti and Boryana Rossa

Sound: Tihon Pendyrin

Idea by: Oleg Mavromatti and PO98

English translation: Boryana Rossa, Misha Rabinovic





OLEG MAVROMATTI

Oleg Mavromatti (1965, Volgograd, Russia) is an artist and filmmaker who makes films since 1989. In 1995 Mavromatti founded the independent film union SUPERNOVA, manifested as a fortress of Moscow radical cinema. Some films produced within the movement like “The Green Elephant” (1999) and “Bastards” (2000) became cult movies at that time and a

decade later they inspired the appearance of Internet communities which create and share fan memes based on these films daily. Mavromatti is also a prominent representative of radical performance art scene in 1990s Moscow.

He has been legally prosecuted for his critical performance art and film work (such as the famous performance “Ne ver’ glazam” (“Do Not believe Your Eyes”), 2000, part of his film Holst/Maslo (“Oil on Canvas”), 2000- unfinished). His art and film archive has been confiscated in 2000, for what reason many of his early works are completely lost or accessible only from VHS copies. Mavromatti left the country in 2000 and since then he lives in Bulgaria and New York, where he continues making films and art. His work has been featured in numerous publications in monographs such as Rosyisky actionism 1990-2000 (“Russian Actionism 1990-2000”) and art journals like “Art in America.” He has been also a member of legendary Moscow performance art groups from the 1990s like “Expropriation of the Territory of Art” and NECEZIUDIK. In Bulgaria, together with artist and filmmaker Boryana Rossa he established international art collective ULTRAFUTURO, which focuses on the social, political and ethical impacts of technology on contemporary society. Works by the group have been shown at places such as Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Akademie der Kuntse, Berlin; Exit Art, New York; Biennial for Electronic Art, Perth (BEAP) and others.

FILMOGRAPHY

Director: Little Knife Leedaboo (expected 2015), Blind Spot (2007), ULTRAFUTURO Manifest (2005), The Rats are Leaving the Shop (2002), Naj-goliamoto kiyfte v sveta / The Biggest Meatball in the World (2001), X Mask (2000) Viblyadki / Bastards (2000), Holst/maslo / Oil on Canvas (2000), Tainaya estetika marsianskih shpionov / The Secret Aesthetic of the Martian Spies, 1,2, 3. (1997-1999), Ne istite etu peredachu v programme / Don’t Look for This Show in the Programme (1995), Odinadtsat pisem vnutr / Eleven Internal Letters (1995), Chervi Benettona / Benetton Worms (1989).

Producer: Zeleniy slonik / The Green Elephant (1999), Kokki begustiy doctor / Kokki the Running Doctor (1998).

Actor: Kokki begustiy doctor / Kokki the Running Doctor (1998); Holst/maslo / Oil on Canvas (2000); The Juche Idea (2010); The Inner Trotsky Child Series (2014).



DIRECTOR STATEMENT

With “No Place for Fools” I want to draw a portrait of contemporary Russian society. The curious and controversial character I have created with this film is somewhat entertaining but also disturbing introduction to what capitalist Russia means to most of its citizens now. The life of this character is dominated by the macabre desires of the consumerist culture from one side and the restrictions of the sexist imperialist propaganda on the other side. His life can be compared to a nightmarish schizophrenic birthday cake from which jumps out an evil naked clown with a suicide belt. But practically no one who watches these videos in their original form can see all that. Therefore my work as a director is what makes the film’s statement. I would compare my work to the work of an editor of a book, who aggressively re-writes most of the selected texts. By researching Youtube videos and including some of them in my film, I act as a curator who visits artist’s studios and chooses from this “library of concepts” what he needs to make his statement. Then I repaint the gallery and build walls so the art included in it doesn’t look as it did in its studio context.

This film develops a thread of a particular type of filmmaking I started with my film “Bastards” (“Vibliadki”), 1999. Then I used an actor to voice out my observations of society and media, who acted as realistically as possible to create the feeling of a real person. For that I developed a special method to work with actors called “controlled improvisation.” Now I “find” these “actors” on Internet and use their videos as samples for my work.

PRODUCERS STATEMENTS

Boryana Rossa:

This film is a unique look into the life of a person, whose voice is never heard. Director Oleg Mavromatti is the one to give the voice to this lonely and confused man who is trying to survive in the chaos of moral and social values that surrounds him. Capitalist worship of money as freedom contradicts with his poverty, his social status and how his mental condition is treated by society. He is looking for a silent harbor where this contradiction will be resolved. He thinks he had found it in the patriotic homophobic ideology of the media propaganda. But it is not there either, because he is gay. This man ends up speaking and performing more like a drunk poet than a patriot. By very minimal means Mavromatti succeeds to build this multi-layered character, which the audience is falling immediately in love with. The author also transmits an important message about what freedom, love and happiness is or can be. Not on the last place the avant-garde approach of this film, allows us to peak in the parallel universe of vloggers framed by virtually networked likes and dislikes.

Biography:

Boryana Rossa PhD is an interdisciplinary artist and curator who works in the fields of electronic arts, film, video, performance and photography. She is an Assistant professor of film, video art and transmedia at the department of Transmedia at Syracuse University, NTY. In 2012 Rossa finished her PhD on Post Cold-War Gender Performances in Film at Rensselaer, Troy, NY. Her works have been included in international art archives such as the performing art archive re.act.feminism and Transitland Video Art from Central and Eastern Europe 1989-2009. She is also a director of Sofia Queer Forum which bridges art and film with gender theory and human rights activist practice.

Boryana Rossa: bori999@gmail.com

Phone: ++1 5189616683



Andrey Silvestrov:

Oleg Mavromatti's film is an absolutely new genre of audio-visual production. It is made exclusively from Internet footage, however it gathers very bright, very individual, typical just for Oleg, rhythm and approach to the organization of the art material. The strength of his artistic statement can be compared to the most outstanding works of world cinema. This strength is in the unusual and penetrating actuality of his message not only for contemporary Russia, but for the entire world. I envy you, who will be watching this film. I am proud that our company had helped its production.



Biography:

Producer, director and author of the films "Volga-volga" (2006, with Pavel Labazov, premiere at the Rotterdam IFF), "Brain" (70 min, 2010, premiere at the Moscow IFF), "House in Furmanny" (documentary, premiere at the Gogolfest, Ukraine), "Birmingham Ornament" (68 min, 2011, with Yuri Leiderman, special "Venice" version premiered at the Venice IFF, the best experimental film at Syracuse IFF 2012). The general producer of the Cine Fantom Promo company.

Andrey Silvestrov: a1v2s3@gmail.com

PRESS

Mavromatti's film--exactly like "Leviathan" by Andrey Zvyagintsev and "The Fool" by Yuri Bykov --is a comprehensive allegorical assessment of contemporary Russia, in the exact same manner reasoned, painful and hopeless.

However there are also important differences. "Leviathan" concludes the desperate state of things through revealing the double morale, established on all levels in contemporary Russia. "The Fool" brings attention to the scandalous fact that the evil in our country is victorious, because it actually deeply satisfies most of our citizens who are something like "the members" of the organized criminal mob called "The Russian Federation." Mavromatti is focused on the formation of our average citizens and their fascism, hurray-patriotism, illiteracy and narcissism, through the media, in which they are drowned and from which they receive their fairy, and once more co(s)mical absurd ideas.

Evgeniy Maysel, "Oleg Mavromatti: Rewinding is a Resurrection of the Dead." *The Art of Cinema*, May, 2015, #5.; <http://kinoart.ru/archive/2015/05/oleg-mavromatti-prokruchivanie-nazad-eto-voskreshenie-mertvykh>

"The most extravagant surprise (in Rotterdam) became No Place for Fools, by the famous contemporary artist and anti-clerical activist Oleg Mavromatti, comprised exclusively of off Internet images: here we (also) can't find a single shot made especially for this film. This is symptomatic, because both the information

warfare and the most sophisticated forms of propaganda today are to be found on the Net... Sergey Astakhov – a young man with obvious psychological deviances – uploads regularly on his blog something like advertising clips... The mish-mash in this head, might be a result of a psychiatric treatment, but in one way or another it reflects the chaos of the collective unconscious, a jactation between megalomania and the expectation of catastrophe, which dwells in the shots (also collected from the Internet) of lethal car crashes and suicides."

Andrey Plahov, *Kommersant Daily*, Jan. 30. 2015.
<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2656602>

"A real lack of love, loneliness and physical longing is the starting basis of the videos from young Russian, Sergej Astahov, and they are easily located on the Internet. Artist and filmmaker Oleg Mavromatti (for some years now based in the United States) takes charge of this inexhaustible material to use it for his own film "No Place for Fools". The film features not only Mr. Astahov's hard to withstand appearances (an endless mantra of patriotism, religious beliefs and, surprisingly, homoerotic fantasies) but also some even harder to withstand video footage that shows exploding cars, suicides and people trying to escape from burning houses. This is real tough stuff. Mixed with sequences from Russian grocery stores and people freaking out because of special offers, gives a very disturbing picture of today's society, and one you won't forget easily."

Carolyn Weidner, *Crazy Love in Rotterdam*, Fipresci.
<http://www.fipresci.org/festival-reports/2015/rotterdam/crazy-love>

“Choosing a marginal for co-author, Mavromatti builds a model of the Russian citizen, a representative of the so called “majority.” The English slogan of the film “The Outsider who wanted in” unmistakably tells us the reason for what we see: the general loneliness, the common feeling of being not part of the mythical “83%” (of Putin’s supporters). And he gives us a prescription: let’s try to convert our consciousness to accept varieties of expressions of humanness, as opposed to submitting it to the total domination of the abstract slogans of everyday propaganda.”

Olga Shakina, Colta.ru, Feb.4.2015
<http://www.colta.ru/articles/cinema/6202>

“The film works with each viewer in its own way and therefore for each of us it can become an opportunity of accepting the Other and the Alien. The controversial feelings, that this video and the personality of the main character Astakhov evoke, namely—shame, embarrassment, disgust, disappointment, empathy—at the end appear to be the phenomenon of personal identification that cinema itself is built on.”

Olga Ryabuhina, Art1.ru <http://art1.ru/art/tot-samyj-chuzhoj>

“It is both disgusting and funny –in front of us is the ultimate consumer of nowadays Russian propaganda. But most importantly Mavromatti is not making fun of his character – for these

eighty two minutes, the miserable man becomes a full-blooded metaphor of today’s sick Russia. This is not just a sensational, this is a terrifying experience.”

Genoveva Dimitrova, “Rotterdam, Beyond the Competition. Propaganda, Sex, Feminism.” Kultura Weekly, # 6 (2798), Feb, 13, 201.
<http://www.kultura.bg/bg/article/view/23072>

“...I approach this as a doctor who is not afraid of blood or pain. Who is trying to somehow help the ill, at least by making a diagnosis. ...If I walk on the street and I see a car crash and broken bodies falling off of it—this makes me want to do two things – call 911 and turn my video camera on. Shooting close ups. Both these things are equally important to me. “

“Aren’t you getting horrified or amazed how during the Third Reich people weren’t reacting on things as we were? Why was that? Now I see why. Because this is how all these mechanisms (of propaganda) work even now. They are even working on a different, higher quality level now.”

Andrey Silvestrov, Interview with Oleg Mavromatti. “Granitsi boli: Oleg Mavromatti” CINEFANTOM Newspaper
<http://cnftm.ru/gazeta/2525-02-02-2015.html>

“Sensation...”

Genoveva Dimitrova, Deniat zapochva s kultura, Bulgarian National TV1, 2/2/2015. <http://bnt.bg/part-of-show/naj-dobroto-ot-filmoviya-festival-v-roterdam>

The newest sensation, praised by Olaf Moller and other cinephiles is the film *No Place for Fools* by Oleg Mavromatti--composed off of fragments from the vlog of Sergey Astakhov, as well as found on YouTube scenery of car crashes, suicides, fights and drunken dances...Actually, although Sergey Astakhov has a psychiatric record, he is no crazier than the rest of the country, which exactly like him sucks in everything transmitted by the First TV Channel, prays, celebrates the annexation of Crimea, carries St. Georgy's bows and enjoys the abundance in the shopping mall "Golden Babylon."

Dmitry Volchek, *Radio Svoboda*, "Leviathans and Colorades: The Best Films of the Rotterdam Festival." Feb. 2. 2015

<http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/26828994.html>