

Abstracts and Participants Information

Nancy Condee

“To Provinsk: Right onto Moral Repository; Left at Bleak Endscape (Russian Cinema’s Alternative Routes).”

The talk looks at a tension in Russian cinema of the last twenty years between two oversimplified categories, “mainstream” and “arthouse.” Most analysts agree that their market equilibrium has been an elusive state. For one group of young Russian arthouse directors in the early 21st century, the provinces became a theatre in which they were able to stage a kind of meaning distinct from their immediate predecessors, including—let us say—Balabanov and Sokurov. The talk describes the changing status of the provinces in the industry’s effort to find a manageable place for unprofitable cinema.

Nancy Condee is Professor of Slavic and Film Studies (University of Pittsburgh). Recent publications include *The Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*, ed. with Birgit Beumers (Tauris 2011); and *Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema* (Oxford 2009), which won the 2011 MLA Scaglione Slavic Prize and the 2010 Kovács Book Award from the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Other volumes include *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, edited with Terry Smith and Okwui Enwezor (Duke 2008) and *Soviet Hieroglyphics* (Indiana 1995).

Her articles have appeared in *The Nation*, *The Washington Post*, *October*, *New Left Review*, *PMLA*, *Sight and Sound*, as well as the Russian journals *NLO*, *Seans*, *Znamia*, *Voprosy literatury*, *Iskusstvo kino*. She has worked as a consultant for the Edinburgh Film Festival, the Library of Congress, and Public Broadcasting. At Pittsburgh she is also Director of the Global Studies Center, one of seven such federally-funded US centers. She has recently been appointed a Gaidar Fellow at RANEP (the Russian Presidential Academy for the National Economy), where she will spend several weeks in this Fall semester. Her research interests, broadly speaking, are cultural politics (and Russian cultural politics in particular), with a specialization in contemporary cinema.

Birgit Beumers

“Russia’s dump? The provinces as a landfill.”

The paper explores the representation of the outskirts and provinces in the first instance through the image of a road that leads nowhere; it follows with recent examples of films where this 'nowhere' is a landfill, a dump, a heap of rubbish. I explore how this image has developed in recent years, and what this metaphor might suggest for the state of contemporary Russia.

Birgit Beumers is Professor of Film Studies at the University of Aberystwyth, Wales (UK). Born in Aachen (Germany), she completed her D.Phil at St Antony’s College

Oxford in 1991, and for 18 years taught in the Russian Department at Bristol University. She specializes on Russian culture and has published widely on cinema and theatre. Her most recent publications include *A History of Russian Cinema* (2009) and, with Mark Lipovetsky, *Performing Violence* (2009). She has edited, most recently, *Directory of World Cinema: Russia* (2010) and *Directory of World Cinema: Russia 2* (2014), *The Cinema of Alexander Sokurov* (2011, with N. Condee), *Russia's New Fin de Siècle* (2013), and (with M. Rouland and G. Abikeyeva) *Cinema in Central Asia: Rewriting Cultural Histories* (2013). She is currently editing a directory of Central Asian Cinema and completing a book on early Soviet animation. She is editor of the online quarterly *KinoKultura* and of the scholarly journal *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*.

Joan Neuberger

“The Missing Transition: The Music of Landscape in Eisenstein’s *The Old and the New* and *Bezhin Meadow*”

Viewers of Eisenstein’s *Ivan the Terrible* are often struck by its stylistic departure from the revolutionary films he made in the 1920s. Eisenstein, on the other hand, saw nothing but continuous evolution from his earliest works (of both theory and practice) through his last. We can begin to explain the continuities and transitions in Eisenstein’s style and theory by turning to his two least watched films, both set in the unnamed Russian provinces: *The Old and the New* and *Bezhin Meadow*. Both films exhibit what might be called transitional elements that connect Eisenstein’s early films with his last (though of course we only have frames of *Bezhin*). I examine three specific issues that exhibit the development of this thinking and practice: character, religion, and what he called “the music of landscape,” or the emotional function of visual depictions of the environment. And I will explore the ways Eisenstein’s conception and representation of the countryside were integral to these transitions.

Joan Neuberger teaches modern Russian History at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of an eclectic range of publications, including *Hooliganism: Crime and Culture in St Petersburg, 1900-1914* (California: 1993), *Ivan the Terrible: The Film Companion* (Palgrave: 2003); co-author of *Europe and the Making of Modernity, 1815-1914* (Oxford: 2005); and co-editor of *Imitations of Life: Melodrama in Russia* (Duke: 2001) and co-editor of *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture* (Yale: 2008). Prof Neuberger is Editor of the public history website, *Not Even Past* and co-host, with Christopher Rose, of the iTunesU podcast series, *15 Minute History*.

Tatiana Filimonova

“Constructing Happiness in Siberia: The Village of Bakhta through the Lens of Three Directors.”

This paper examines the representation of Bakhta, a small Siberian village on the Yenisey river, in three films: Dmitriy Vasiukov’s documentary miniseries *Happy People* (2008),

Vasiukov and Werner Herzog's shorter remake of the latter, called *Happy People: A Year in the Taiga* (2010), and Mikhail Tarkovskii's *Frozen Time* (2013). Although directed with different agendas, all three films feature characters who are undergoing moral purification in the village, having purged themselves of habits and patterns of thinking associated with city life. The village space of Bakhta thus comes to symbolize simplicity and authenticity associated with provincial life. At the same time, however, Bakhta also becomes the setting of a constructed image of a heroic Russian trapper, who preserves native Siberian traditions. This image has a conflict at its core, since, ironically, these traditions are almost obsolete among the native populations, whose decline has been brought about by Russian and Soviet colonization of Siberia. This paper will investigate the ambivalence of political meanings attached to Bakhta as the representative space of the Siberian region, as well as a generic provincial space.

Tatiana Filimonova is an Assistant Professor of Russian Studies at the College of Wooster. Before coming to Wooster, Tatiana taught at Vanderbilt University and Northwestern University, where she earned a PhD in Slavic Languages and literature in 2013. Tatiana's research lies at the intersection of literature, history and contemporary Russian politics. Her academic interests include literature and empire, Eurasianism, postmodernism and regionalism, as well as film. Currently, Tatiana is working on a monograph that traces the influence of Eurasianist thought on twentieth-century and contemporary Russian literature. She has published articles on contemporary writers Vladimir Sorokin and Pavel Krusanov.

Natalija Majsova

“The Province Called Earth: The Chronotope of the Post-Soviet Province Explored through Contemporary Russian Cinema on Outer Space.”

Abstract: The paper examines the chronotope of the Post-Soviet province in contemporary (post 2000) Russian cinema on outer space (*про космос*). The paper provides close readings of three contemporary Russian films on outer space (*Космос как предчувствие* (2005, dir. Uchitel'), *Бумажный солдат* (2008, dir. German jr.), *Первые на Луне* (2004, dir. Fedorchenko), arguing that a) they seem to be aiming at three different audiences, with two different understandings of art (the so-called aesthetic regime, and the theurgic regime); b) they all manage in turning the entire world (with a descriptive emphasis on the ex-USSR in the 20th century) into provinces; and c) these provinces are marked by three different kinds of provincialism: provincialism of the subject (*Космос как предчувствие*), provincialism of memory, which is turned into a fairytale (*Первые на Луне*) and provincialism of the national idea (*Бумажный солдат*). The paper will conclude by exploring if/to what extent these chronotopes of the province are reconcilable, i.e. have the potential of being treated within one, single imaginary.

Natalija Majsova received her MA (2011) and PhD (2015, dissertation title: Outer space in contemporary Russian film) in Cultural Studies from the University of Ljubljana. Since 2012, she has worked as a researcher at the Centre for Cultural and Religious Studies and teaching assistant at the Department of Cultural Studies (both University of

Ljubljana). She is currently postdoctoral researcher at the ERUDIO Business School (Ljubljana), and researcher and expert associate of the Cultural Centre of European Space Technologies (KSEVT, Slovenia). Her recent research interests revolve around cultural studies theory, cultural studies of outer space, Russian studies and film studies.

Anna Aydinyan

“Tiflis: Provincial Russian Town or an Exotic Colony”

The 2010 film adaptation of Yuri Tynianov’s 1929 novel “The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar” recreates the novelist’s parodic representation of Tiflis as both an exotic borderland between Russia and Persia and a provincial Russian town. The visual representation of Tiflis suggests its partial transformation into a Russian provincial town, where people in European and Georgian “national” attires mingle, and European dances alternate with Georgian ones. This harmonious coexistence, however, appears only in or around the dwellings of the educated elites. The establishing shot for Tiflis defines it as an exotic locale, where passing Russian soldiers look at odds with their surroundings. The Caucasus is unequivocally declared to be “not Russia” by Griboedov’s companion Doctor Adelung when he first sees the mountains. In this scene the film departs from the novel in which Doctor Adelung seeing the mountains suggests that in one hundred years post-coaches will connect them with Vladikavkaz in the same way they connect Petersburg with Tsarskoe Selo. This parodic equation between the Caucasus and the suburbs of Petersburg could seem inappropriate to the film makers after the recent Chechen and Russo-Georgian Wars. Overall, the film faithfully reflected the “colonizer’s guilt” that permeates Tynianov’s novel, showing the views of the Caucasus as either a Russian province or its colony problematic.

Anna Aydinyan received her PhD in Slavic languages and literatures from Yale University in 2012, and is currently a visiting assistant professor at Kenyon College. Prior to Kenyon, she taught a diverse range of courses on Russian language, literature and culture at Trinity College and the University of Pennsylvania. Anna Aydinyan is working on a monograph, *The Aftermath of the Russian-Persian War of 1826-1828 in Russian and Iranian Literature and Film* that examines nineteenth- and twentieth-century evaluations of Russia’s imperial expansion in the framework of comparative colonialisms, and participating in a scholarly collaboration *Winning and Losing the Great Game: Literature, Art, and Diplomacy between Russia and Iran*. Her other scholarly interests include Russian Film. After finishing her manuscript she is planning to work on an article “Andrei Tarkovsky and Acmeism,” in which she views Tarkovsky’s filmmaking techniques and philosophy as a continuation of the traditions of the Silver Age, particularly the Acmeist movement.

Viktor P. Filimonov

“Шукшинский” тип провинциального героя в российском кино. 1990- 2000 гг.”

The paper explores the type of provincial character that was conceived in the prose of Vasily Shukshin. The character was fully established as the alter ego of the creator within Shukshin's cinematic oeuvre, both as a director and as an actor. The peasant origins that define this type of character are actualized in the form of the lost traditional country home, ultimately torn down by the Soviet system that replaced the peasant commune with state collectivism. Some time ago the character "*slipped off his own roots, and didn't grow onto another*" (Lev Anninsky). He became a "local wanderer", migrating, in most cases, within the limits of a provincial district. All the while, the character retains the memory of his peasant roots along with the desire to return to them. The paper intends to outline of the evolution of the Shukshinean type in Russian cinema from the mid-1960s up to the present time, focusing in greater detail on the period from 1990s to the 2000s.

Viktor P. Filimonov (b. 1947) is a writer, specializing in film and literature studies. He is the author of authorized biographies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Andrei Konchalovsky. His biography of Arseny Tarkovsky will be released later this year. He is a co-author of four-part book series *Russian Worldview*, exploring the evolution of representations of national values and meanings in Russian philosophy, literature and film across centuries. Author's research into the issue of Russian province and its representing character is reflected in a number of publications in *Seance Magazine*, *The Film Studies Journal* and *Historian and Artist*. Currently, the author is finishing the biography of director Gennadi Poloka.

Viktor Filimonov has completed his graduate studies at Leningrad State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography in 1979. He has retired after 25 years of teaching high school Russian Language and Literature, and lives in Dostizhenie Village, Vladimir Region, Russia, with his wife and daughter.

Anna Nieman

"From Periphery to the Capital, From Abjection to Meaning. *The Hero's Trajectory Within the Chronotope of Aleksey Balabanov's Oeuvre.*"

The proposed paper focuses on the chronotope of the Post-Soviet province and the character's movement between the province and the capital in the films of Aleksey Balabanov. The films of Balabanov present a consistently occurring pattern when the centripetal movement from geographical and cultural periphery brings forward a new direction that is vertical in its vector. Within Balabanov's narrative, the vertical appears as an almost mythical place above, sometimes literally as a higher floor in a building. Character's ascension suggests a departure from "endless movement of the signification". Using Julia Kristeva's concept of the deject, the paper traces the spontaneous movement of Balabanov's hero, as he transgresses but never fully defines the boundaries of the chronotope he operates within. The vertical, represented both visually and narratively in the films, emerges as an attempt to institute meanings within "the discourse of abjection". The tension between the vertical and the hero's inability to ascend in physical, spiritual and narrative sense is examined as a formative force of Balabanov's oeuvre and a defining aspect within of the chronotope of the province.

Anna Nieman (b.1972) is a film critic and historian, a full-time digital media artist based Cheshire, Connecticut, USA. She received her Film Studies degree from VGIK, Moscow, Russia in 1995.

Over the years, Anna contributed to several trade and popular publications in print and online, including Art of Film, Film Studies Journal, Caravan of Stories, KP, Paris Match, MuzOboz, Odnako, mubi.com, kinokultura.com, kultpro.ru.

She is a founding member, producer and co-director of the Garage Project on mubi.com, which created a collaborative space for focused curation of emerging cinematic talent.

Currently Anna is working on her graduate thesis *Man of War: The Hero of Aleksei Balabanov's Films in The Context of Soviet/Russian Cinema*.

Rémy Rouillard

“Romantic Siberia and the Generous Oil Workers : Civilizing the Province While Building an Empire in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia.”

Based on an examination of the TV series *Bolshaya neft'* (“Big Oil”) which began to air on Russian state television in 2009 as well as on 14 months of ethnographic research in the oil-rich Nenets Autonomous District, this presentation discusses two main aspects characterizing the Russian oil industry since the 1960s. First, it shows how the *romantika* (which translates into “romance” or “romanticism”) which has attracted oil workers to the Siberian and northern regions cannot be separated from the dual mission of the oil industry to both assist the Soviet and post-Soviet Russian authorities to make their country a global superpower, while at the same time “civilizing” these regions and their inhabitants. Second, this paper discusses the ways in which the *romantika*/civilization paradox has had as a consequence to place the different waves of oil workers in the position of generous agents of development, thus relegating the local inhabitants to position of recipients of socioeconomic development.

Rémy Rouillard has been conducting research in the post-Soviet world for more than a decade, namely in Russia and Estonia. He received his PhD from McGill University’s Department of Anthropology in 2013, after which he conducted a two-year postdoctoral project at the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge. Both his doctoral and postdoctoral projects are based on ethnographic research conducted in the oil-rich Nenets Autonomous District (NAD), in northwestern Russia, between 2008 and 2013. His research examines and compares the ways of life of indigenous Nenets reindeer herders and villagers; predominantly Russian settlers who arrived in the NAD during the Soviet days to explore the district’s oil and gas potential; and mobile Russian oil workers who extract oil from deposits discovered by Soviet prospectors. The discussion stemming from these comparisons sheds light on the socioeconomic consequences of the extraction of oil in the Arctic, most especially in relation to the oil companies’ preference for a flexible and mobile workforce. Rémy is now conducting a postdoctoral project in Inuit mental health at the School of Psychoeducation, Université de Montréal.

Dane Reighard

“Fetishism and Provincial Life in Shukshin’s *Kalina Krasnaia*.”

Kalina Krasnaia (1974), Vasilii Shukshin’s most popular film, offers a perfect encapsulation of its creator’s trademark provincial/urban dichotomy in the form of a melodrama about a prodigal son who returns to his native village upon release from prison, only to find himself unable to escape his criminal past. The film’s most prominent visual metaphors are the protagonist Egor Prokudin’s beloved birch trees, which inspire him repeatedly to wax poetic and sentimental. In this paper, I offer a psychoanalytical reading of Prokudin and his birch trees, positing them as fetishized objects that elucidate his complex relationship with his estranged mother and, by extension, his Siberian roots. I argue that Prokudin’s fetish is indicative of Shukshin’s own career-long attempt to reconcile his status as a Soviet cultural icon with his humble beginnings in Russia’s Altai region.

Dane Reighard originally hails from Johnstown, Pennsylvania and is a current PhD candidate in the department of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Languages & Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research interests include ideology and aesthetics in Soviet, Russian and Polish cinema as well as adaptations of Russian literature in world cinema. As a lifelong cinephile who only encountered his first Russian film at age twenty, Dane’s foremost professional goal is to help make Russia’s illustrious film history better known and more accessible to American audiences.

Irina Oktyabrskaya

Birthmarks on the map (<http://rodinkinakarte.ru>) – The Siberian project focuses on the everyday life of the people living beyond the Russian capital. More than 60 authors including students of various photo schools and winners of the World Press Photo Contest and Pulitzer Prize participated in the Project. They tell “simple stories of ordinary people in their everyday life, which turn out to be the most typical and important”. The focus is on the Russia backwoods, their residents populating the vast territory stretching from the Chukotka Peninsula to the White Sea coast and the life without any political context.

The program of “The Photo-Backwoods. Heroes and Images of the Siberian Lands” is dedicated to the history of the Siberian country studies and modern projects of visual recording and anthropological studies in the Russian Provinces. It includes the photo- and video-films “People of the Deep Water”, “Spring”, “People of the Mountains”, “Umai’s Necklace”, “Immer Ich/Always Me” and fragments of photo- and video reports that were filmed in the remote districts of obscure Siberia.

Irina Oktyabrskaya is an ethnologist, curator of photo-expeditions and exhibitions, Doctor of History, Head of the Ethnology Department at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography in Novosibirsk, Professor of the Novosibirsk State University.

Lyudmila Parts is an Associate Professor of Russian in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, McGill University (Montreal). She is the author of *The Chekhovian Intertext: Dialogue with a Classic* (Ohio State UP, 2008) and the editor of *The Russian 20th Century Short Story: A Critical Companion* (Academic Studies Press, 2009). She has published on Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Tolstaya, Petrushevskaya, P'etsukh, and Pelevin. Her current research is on Russian symbolic geography and the provincial theme in post-Soviet literature, film, and journalism as a cultural representation of Russian nationalism.

Mark Lipovetsky is Professor and Chair of the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Colorado-Boulder. He is the author of more than a hundred articles published in the US, Russia, and Europe, eight books, and co-editor of nine volumes on Russian literature and culture. His most recent monographs include *Performing Violence: Literary and Theatrical Experiments of New Russian Drama* (Bristol: Intellect Press, 2009, with Birgit Beumers; Russian version - 2012), and *Charms of Cynical Reason: The Transformations of the Trickster Trope in Soviet and Post-Soviet Culture* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011). Currently, he works on a critical biography of Dmitry Prigov and edits his collected works. Lipovetsky's works were nominated for Russian Little Booker Prize (1997) and short-listed for the Andrey Bely Prize (2008). In 2009-12 he worked on the jury for Russian literary prize NOS (in 2011-12 as chair). In 2014 he received an award of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages for the outstanding contribution to scholarship.