

theater and opera; and western post-modern theories and their reception in Russia. These are only a few contexts among many others that the authors discuss. In many cases they go into small details and more closely analyze Prigov's texts; in some cases they take a more distant view. But on its whole, the book remains very informative and engaging, the choice of Prigov's texts that are quoted in the book are very precise and give a good overview over the trajectory of Prigov's poetic and artistic development. But maybe even more importantly, the method chosen by the authors—to analyze Prigov's poetry through elucidation of its different contexts—not only allows them but, in fact, requests of them to describe a greater panorama of Russian culture at the end of its Soviet and beginning of its post-Soviet period. In a very strange way this period—maybe because of its transitional, fluid character—escapes the gaze of many contemporary cultural historians who concentrate their attention either on the Soviet or post-Soviet cultural situations. However, the most interesting artistic phenomena of post-socialist Russian art start precisely in this transitional time. The authors have it right when they speak about the Russian actionism of 1990–2000s as a continuation of Prigov's earlier performances, especially, in the case of the groups “Voina” and “Pussy Riot.”

I know that at this point the reader would expect from the reviewer to make some critical remarks concerning the book. However, I have no inclination to do so. The authors have obviously undertaken a huge effort to collect all this heterogeneous material and bring it into book form. Their research was immense. So I am glad that this book about Prigov appeared in Russian and hope that it will be translated into English and other western languages to give better perspective on a crucial moment of Russian history—a moment that Prigov captured and embodied as nobody else.

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Sergueï Loznitsa: Un cinéma à l'épreuve du monde. Ed. Céline Gailleurd, Damien Marguet, and Eugénie Zvonkine. Lille, France: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2022. 274 pp. Notes. Index. €25.00, paper.
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For over a decade, Sergei Loznitsa has wrestled with the Soviet past and its impact on the east European present. This work, carried out in both gutting fiction films and formally rigorous documentaries, has made him one of the region's foremost filmmakers. Loznitsa is particularly well-known for reviving the compilation film, mining the archives for rare, never-before-seen footage of events ranging from the show trials and Stalin's funeral to the siege of Leningrad and the 1991 putsch.

Born in Belarus, raised in Ukraine, and trained as a filmmaker in Russia, Loznitsa has also been forced to navigate a complex set of identities. His fiction films were accused by Russian critics of promoting Russophobia. In February 2014, just three days after the invasion, he resigned from the European Film Academy in protest against its overly “neutral” and “toothless” statement of solidarity with Ukraine, only to be expelled from the Ukrainian Film Academy for speaking out against a blanket boycott of Russian films. This controversy, however, has arguably only further cemented his standing.

Given Loznitsa's phenomenal productivity and the sensitivity of the historical subjects he touches, it is surprising that his work has not inspired more scholarship. Up until now, scholars had only engaged with it in articles devoted to individual films or groupings of films. *Sergueï Loznitsa: Un cinéma à l'épreuve du monde* is the first

book-length study of the filmmaker's oeuvre. To account for its "protean" nature, the editors—Céline Gailleurd, Damien Marguet, and Eugénie Zvonkine—have adopted a very inclusive approach, soliciting texts from a mix of scholars (senior and junior, west European and Russophone), as well as several prominent film critics and festival programmers. This approach has two principal strengths. First, it allows for different framings of the filmmaker's oeuvre. Some chapters consider its importance regionally, in light of its contributions to those audiences' self-conception; others go at it comparatively, drawing connections between Loznitsa's approach and that of filmmakers working in markedly different contexts. Second, it acknowledges the crucial role critics and programmers play not only as gate-keepers but, more positively, as advocates and exegetists.

The volume is divided into four sections. The first explores how Loznitsa's work grows out of a broader set of historic, cultural, and cinematic contexts. The second homes in on the representation of people and places in Loznitsa's oeuvre, particularly their spectrality and the way "the present threatens at any moment to take on the appearance of the past" (14). The third considers Loznitsa's fraught relationship with history and his fascination with, yet mistrust of, "the document." Finally, in the fourth section, the editors graciously give Loznitsa himself the last word. The volume concludes with Damien Marguet's insightful study of Loznitsa's process, a transcription of a master class the filmmaker gave in 2019 at the Université Paris 8, and a dialogue between Loznitsa and the British filmmaker Peter Snowdon about how each approached the task of filming a revolution (for Snowdon, the 2011 uprising in Cairo's Tahrir Square and for Loznitsa, the 2014 protests on Kyiv's Maidan).

This loose structure works well as it allows for a wide variety of approaches. Some contributions offer in-depth analyses of individual films (Anton Dolin on *A Sweet Woman*, Céline Gailleurd on *Babi Yar: Context*, Eugénie Zvonkine on *My Joy*, and Olga Kobryn on one of Loznitsa's most overlooked documentaries, *Northern Light*). Others go at it comparatively (Sylvie Rollet on Loznitsa's two "Leningrad films," *Blockade* and *The Event*, Evgeny Gussyatinsky on lethargy in *The Train Stop* and *Portrait*). Some explore specific themes that surface time and again across the filmmaker's oeuvre (Mathieu Lericq on the spectrality of Loznitsa's bodies; Vincent Deville on the Manichaeic split between pastoral nature and the advent of machines, Sylvie Rollet, Gabriel Bortzmeyer, and Camille Bui all on the ambiguous figuration of "the people"). Others demonstrate how Loznitsa builds upon—or sets himself against—pre-existing traditions (François Albera on the relationship to early Soviet compilation films, Masha Cerovic and Irina Tcherneva—to Soviet World War II films). Arnaud Hée's piece is particularly refreshing: it considers Loznitsa not as a filmmaker but as a programmer, tasked by Paris' Bibliothèque Publique d'Information in 2020 with curating a series of documentary films that would speak to his own work.

The emphasis throughout the volume is on the richness of Loznitsa's oeuvre and the variety of scholarly approaches it elicits. Still, the chapters do all coalesce around a central point: that Loznitsa's films are more about process than final product. As the title suggests, they are a means of "testing the world," less interested in advancing a particular thesis than interrogating their subject matter. Is history inevitably traumatic? Why does violence always beget more violence? Are human beings always at the mercy of broader forces or do they have a certain degree of agency? What conditions are necessary for people to become a people, with a unified, collective will? What causes people to commit the bravest acts and the most horrid crimes? A more implicit concern of both Loznitsa's films themselves and the chapters in question here is whether cinema maintains a more privileged relationship with history than any of the other arts. What, exactly, can a document tell us?

That the first book-length study of such an important filmmaker should appear in France rather than the UK or the US speaks perhaps to the longstanding relationship between eastern Europe and France, and, perhaps, to that country's greater interest in formally innovative and culturally informed cinema from around the world. Regardless of the reason, however, the volume is bound to become a touchstone for anyone interested in Loznitsa's work, contemporary re-evaluation of Soviet history, documentary and art cinema, and what has come to be termed "revolutionary feeling."

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Russian TV Series in the Era of Transition: Genres, Technologies, Identities. Ed. Alexander Prokhorov, Elena Prokhorova, and Rimgaila Salys. Boston, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2021, 280 pp. Index. Illustrations. \$35.00, paper
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Renowned scholars of Soviet and Russian television Alexander Prokhorov, Elena Prokhorova, and Rimgaila Salys have edited a multifaceted collection that explores continuities and changes of post-Soviet television since 2000. Based on a genre approach, the introduction and nine articles focus on various formats like quality television drama, low-budget web television mini-series, or the channel *Kul'tura* (Culture). They analyze gender, issues of cultural memory, formats bridging traditional legacy TV and internet-based platforms, as well as the consequences of shifting political and economic power structures. Five short interviews with Russian producers, directors, and screenwriters complement the edition. They may become interesting sources for future research.

In their introduction, the editors highlight structural developments regarding new technologies like streaming or the fact that recent Russian language TV series are now also available on international platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime. Furthermore, several channels offer online services targeting Russophone viewers all over the world (9). Thus, the previous trend of adapting western originals has been compensated by Russian originals that are said to be distributed globally. Considering the Russian aggressions since the annexation of Crimea, the increasing efforts of Russian propaganda wars in the west, and the current war against Ukraine, this claim should have been discussed in a longer perspective as it addresses the transnational adaptability of the post-Soviet TV culture.

The broad range of topics the essays explore are connected by the editors' assumption that Russian TV offers deep insights into pop-cultural trends of the Putin-era and depict current societal negotiations and debates about the glorious Soviet past, as well as about ethnic, sexual, social, and other diversity. Alyssa DeBlasio investigates the programming of *Kul'tura* channel that was in 1997 the first thematic channel in Russian television broadcasting history. She convincingly shows how *Kul'tura*, as "island of good taste" (44), successfully addresses the widespread nostalgia for Soviet culturedness (*kul'turnost'*) among the generation of viewers who came of age before 1991. It thus perpetuates the Soviet intellectual concept of "high" culture and conveys Soviet norms and values in opposition to the influences of western popular culture until today. Stephen M. Norris examines the award-winning serial *Shtrafbat* (Penal Battalion) to show how television let history conflict with contemporary memory and politics. The serial presented challenging interpretations on the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in 1945. It initiated public debates by implementing the narrative that Russian soldiers "fought and suffered for the Russian Orthodox spiritual community"