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# MAIDAN МАЙДАН

a film by **SERGEI LOZNITSA**

**MAIDAN** chronicles a civil uprising which took place in Kiev (Ukraine) in the winter of 2013/14. The film follows the progress of the revolution: from peaceful rallies, half a million strong, in the Maidan square, to the bloody street battles between the protestors and riot police. **MAIDAN** is a portrait of an awakening nation, rediscovering its identity.

Director Sergei Loznitsa rises above current political issues and looks at the nature of the popular uprising as a social, cultural and philosophical phenomenon. A powerful mix of enthusiasm, heroic struggle, terror, courage, aspiration, people's solidarity, folk culture, passion and self-sacrifice, **MAIDAN** is a stunning cinematic canvas combining classical film making style and documentary urgency.

## Director's notes:

*I went to Kiev in the middle of December. I knew it was urgent. I knew I had to be there and I had to film. I put off all my other projects and commitments and went to Maidan.*

*The euphoric atmosphere of the early days of Maidan felt so comforting and empowering that it felt like being in a maternal womb. Never before have I seen or experienced such solidarity, camaraderie and such an authentic spirit of freedom. It was amazing to see so many volunteers working together in such a harmony and with such zeal. Everybody seemed to be busy: guarding Maidan, helping out in the kitchens, providing medical assistance, performing on the stage of Maidan, coordinating volunteers. The night of December 19<sup>th</sup>, St Nicholas's feast, felt like a medieval folk carnival – a free spirit of the nation, awakening from a long sleep.*

*During the first weeks of Maidan, there was danger, but also there was a lot of humour and laughter. This very particular Ukrainian sense of humour, which helped them get through some of the darkest moments of this nation's history. They were*

*laughing at incompetent and corrupt politicians rather than hating them. The creative energy was bursting, and dozens of amateur singers and poets performed their rather naïve, but incredibly honest and passionate ballads on the stage of Maidan. There was also the abundance of food... Perhaps, it's been the most well fed revolution in history. Field kitchens were working round the clock and volunteers and ordinary citizens of Kiev were bringing tons of food supplies and home-made delicacies in order to feed everybody – they did not ask whether you were supporting the opposition or the regime...*

*By the middle of January the mood changed. It was not a carnival any more. It was a battle. Blood was shed. It was no longer a peaceful protest against corrupt president. It was a fight against an evil regime. It was a revolution...*

*Maidan is the first film in my rather long documentary career, when I actually had to follow the events of “real life”, as they were unfolding. This was a new and nerve-wrecking experience for me. Usually, when I start on a documentary, I start by laying out a complete structure of the film in my head. I know exactly how the film will begin, how the narrative will develop and how it will end.*

*Making Maidan was a completely different experience. I was receiving new footage throughout January and February, and as tension was escalating and blood was shed, I was editing the film, not knowing what ending to expect. I divided the film into several parts: the prologue, the celebration, the battle and the post-scriptum.*

*My goal is to bring the spectator to Maidan and make him experience the 90 days of revolution, as they unfolded. I wanted to distance myself from the events and to leave the spectator vis-à-vis with the events, without any commentary or voice-over narrative. I used long takes in order to immerse the spectator into the narrative. I tried to record as much direct sound as possible, and I'm going to use a lot of it in the film.*

*“Maidan” is an enigma to me, which I am yet to solve.*

*Sergei Loznitsa  
March 2014*

## **Crew:**

**Sergei Loznitsa – director, director of photography.** Sergei was born on September, 5<sup>th</sup> 1964. He grew up in Kiev, and in 1987 graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic with a degree in Applied Mathematics. In 1987-1991 he worked as a scientist at the Kiev Institute of Cybernetics, specializing in artificial intelligence research. He also worked as a translator from Japanese.

In 1997 he graduated from the Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK), where he studied feature film making.

Sergei has been making documentary films since 1996, and he has directed 14 documentaries, all of which received numerous international awards. Sergei Loznitsa's montage film “Blockade” (2005) is based on the archive footage of besieged Leningrad.

Loznitsa's feature debut “MY JOY” premiered at the Festival de Cannes in 2010, and was followed by “IN THE FOG”, which premiered in the competition of the 65<sup>th</sup> Festival de Cannes in May 2012 and received the FIPRESCI prize.

Sergei Loznitsa continues to work in both documentary and feature genres. He is currently working on a feature film “Babi yar”.

