



a film by Sergei Loznitsa

# AUSTERLITZ





**IMPERATIV FILM** presents

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# **AUSTERLITZ**

a film by Sergei Loznitsa

documentary - 94 min - b/w - 1.85:1 - 5.1 - Germany - 2016

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## CREW

Written & Directed by **Sergei Loznitsa**  
Directors of Photography **Sergei Loznitsa, Jesse Mazuch**  
Edited by **Danielius Kokanauskis**  
Sound by **Vladimir Golovnitski**  
Sound mixing by **Ivo Heger**  
Line Producer **Kirill Krasovskiy**  
Producer **Sergei Loznitsa**  
Production by **Imperativ Film (Germany)**  
With the support of **Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien**  
**Filmförderungsanstalt / German Federal Film Board**  
**Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg**

**IMPERATIV  
FILM**



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung  
für Kultur und Medien

**FFA**  
Filmförderungsanstalt German Federal Film Board

**medienboard**  
Berlin-Brandenburg

**german  
films**



## SYNOPSIS

There are places in Europe that have remained as painful memories of the past - factories where humans were turned into ash. These places are now memorial sites that are open to the public and receive thousands of tourists every year.

The film's title refers to the eponymous novel written by W.G. Sebald, dedicated to the memory of Holocaust. This film is an observation of the visitors to a memorial site that has been founded on the territory of a former concentration camp. Why do they go there? What are they looking for?



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I never thought that I would come here. Passing by I saw the sign and turned off. The passage leads alongside the road and turns to the side. The buildings are arranged in a semi-circle: houses where people live, normal people in normal houses. Yellow walls, white window frames, green lawn. Near one of the houses a woman sits under an umbrella and drinks coffee. Cars are lined up in the parking area. It is a quiet and hot summer day. Nothing unusual.

Do these buildings belong to the territory? To the right, to the left, downwards, there is a fence and the entrance is built in perfect symmetry. People walk around behind the fence – tourists. All of them follow a strict logic. From one area filled with charcoal and framed with white stones to the next. A sign, a barrack number, next sign, next barrack number, infirmary, a barn.





People walk around alone or in groups. They look into windows and doors, stand at the information desks. People are interested in everything – each rock, every inscription. “Look, here was the seventh barrack and here the tenth.” “And here they shot people.” “How did they do it?” “They cladded the wall with wood to stop the bullets.” “And here were the corpses.” “And here were the Jews.” Where and how were things stored or fixed? In what ways did the extermination machinery work? People are interested in everything. What is this house? Can we go in? Please! An arrow invites you to continue your visit. Every wall, up to the ceiling, is covered with white tiles. A conveyor leads downwards – hooks, chains, jacks, stove doors.

This is the place where people were exterminated; this is the place of suffering and grief. And now, I am here. A tourist. With all the typical curiosities of a tourist. Without any notion of what it was like to be a prisoner in the concentration camp having a number, every day waiting for death, clinging to life. I stand here and look at the machinery for the extermination of the human body. Traces of life, sometime ago, long ago, here and now. What am I doing here? What are all these people doing here, moving in groups from one object to another?

The reason that induces thousands of people to spend their summer weekends in the former concentration camp is one of the mysteries of these memorial sites. One can refer to the good will and the desire to sense compassion and mercy that Aristotle associated with tragedy. But this explanation doesn't solve the mystery. Why a love couple or a mother with her child goes on a sunny summer day to look at the ovens in a crematorium?

To try to come to grips with this, I made this film.

## **BIOGRAPHY - SERGEI LOZNITSA**

Sergei Loznitsa, Ukrainian director, scriptwriter, producer, was born in Baranovichi (USSR, now Belarus). He grew up in Kiev and in 1987 graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic Institute with a degree in Applied Mathematics. In 1997 Loznitsa graduated from the Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) in Moscow. He has directed 18 internationally acclaimed documentary films. His two feature films, "Schastye moe" (2010) and "V tumane" (2012) had their world premieres at the Festival de Cannes, where "V tumane" received the FIPRESCI prize. Loznitsa's feature-length documentary film "Maidan", dedicated to the Ukrainian Revolution, premiered in 2014 at the Festival de Cannes. His feature-length documentary film "Sobytie" that revisits the dramatic moments of August 1991 in the USSR, a failed coup d'état attempt (known as Putsch) premiered at la Biennale di Venezia in 2015.



## **FILMOGRAPHY - SERGEI LOZNITSA**

TODAY WE ARE GOING TO BUILD A HOUSE · 1996

LIFE, AUTUMN · 1998

THE TRAIN STOP · 2000

SETTLEMENT · 2001

PORTRAIT · 2002

LANDSCAPE · 2003

FACTORY · 2004

BLOCKADE · 2005

ARTEL · 2006

REVUE · 2008

NORTHERN LIGHT · 2008

MY JOY · 2010

IN THE FOG · 2012

THE MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTHONY · 2012

THE LETTER · 2012

REFLECTIONS · 2014

MAIDAN · 2014

THE OLD JEWISH CEMETERY · 2014

THE EVENT · 2015



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