

ATOMS & VOID

# THE EVENT

a film by Sergei Loznitsa

# THREE DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD



OR MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?

# SYNOPSIS

In August 1991 a failed coup d'état attempt (known as *Putsch*) led by a group of hardcore communists in Moscow, ended the 70-year-long rule of the Soviets. The USSR collapsed soon after, and the tricolour of the sovereign Russian Federation flew over Kremlin.

As president Gorbachev was detained by the coup leaders, state-run TV and radio channels, usurped by the *putschists*, broadcast Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" instead of news bulletins, and crowds of protestors gathered around Moscow's White House, preparing to defend the stronghold of democratic opposition led by Boris Yeltsin, in the city of Leningrad thousands of confused, scared, excited and desperate people poured into the streets to become a part of the event, which was supposed to change their destiny.

A quarter of a century later, Sergei Loznitsa revisits the dramatic moments of August 1991 and casts an eye on the event which was hailed worldwide as the birth of "Russian democracy". What really happened in Russia in August 1991? What was the driving force behind the crowds on the Palace Square in Leningrad? What exactly are we witnessing: the collapse or the regime or its' creative re-branding? Who are these people looking at the camera: victors or victims?

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

In “The Event” I tried to develop my method of working with archival material. I am fascinated and enchanted with the aura of Leningrad/Petersburg, and I am excited by the opportunity to continue the cinematic chronicles of this city. Just as in “Blockade”, the footage of “The Event” documents the life of the city at the time of a historical calamity. Perhaps, not as tragic, as it was in “Blockade”, but nevertheless, crucially significant.

Mythology created around the events of the 1991 Putsch has overshadowed the actual facts, and it is only now – 25 years later – that we can distance ourselves from the misconceptions, strip off the layers of propaganda and speculations, and see and judge the events in a contemporary context. What interests me most is not the politicians, but the people. The protagonists of the film are the citizens of Leningrad, living through the calamities of the coup d'état in August 1991.



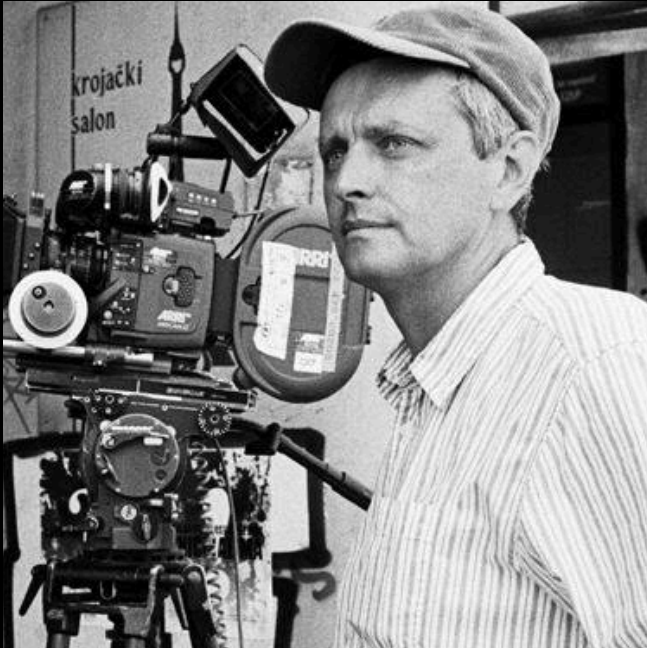


The film consists of episodes, arranged in chronological order, representing life of the city during those troublesome summer days. We can observe a gradual change in the mood and the spirit of the people: we can see how ordinary life turns into history; people's faces, singular close-ups taken in the crowd, bear witness to the spirit of the time, the description of which cannot be found in history text books or transcripts of political speeches. Perhaps it is on those faces, with their expression of confusion, disbelief, determination, anger, that we find the answer to the question – what happened in Russia in August 1991 and why it is that we are still puzzled about the meaning of this event today.

*Sergei Loznitsa*



# SERGEI LOZNITSA



Sergei Loznitsa, Ukrainian director/script writer/producer, was born on 5 September 1964 in Baranovici (USSR). He grew up in Kiev, and in 1987 graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic with a degree in Applied Mathematics.

In 1997 Loznitsa graduated from the Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) in Moscow.

Loznitsa has directed 17 internationally acclaimed documentary films.

His two feature films, "MY JOY" (2010) and "IN THE FOG" (2012) had their world premieres at the Festival de Cannes.

In 2013 Sergei launched a film production company ATOMS & VOID.

Sergei continues to work both in documentary and feature genres. His feature length documentary "MAIDAN", a film about Ukrainian revolution, was released in 2014.

# PRODUCTION

ATOMS & VOID is a film production and distribution company launched by Sergei Loznitsa and Maria Choustova in 2013.

In 2013 ATOMS & VOID produced and released Sergei Loznitsa's documentary short "LETTER" (European Film Academy 2013 nomination for best short film) and managed the production of Loznitsa's "REFLECTIONS", as part of the "Bridges of Sarajevo"/ "Les Ponts de Sarajevo" omnibus (Official Selection Cannes Film Festival 2014). In 2014 the company produced and released Loznitsa's feature-length documentary "MAIDAN", the chronicles of the Ukrainian revolution (Official selection Cannes Film Festival 2014) and co-produced "The Old Jewish Cemetery".

ATOMS & VOID is currently involved in the development of Sergei Loznitsa's new feature and documentary projects.

# CREW

Sound: VLADIMIR GOLOVNITSKI

Editors: SERGEI LOZNITSA, DANIELIUS KOKANAUSKIS

Co-producer: NICOLA MAZZANTI (CINEMATEK)

Producers: SERGEI LOZNITSA, MARIA CHOUSTOVA-BAKER

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