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June 4, 2009

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RUSSIAN DOCUMENTARY FILM COMES TO NEW YORK
Visiting filmmakers screen documentaries addressing social issues

This June, [CEC ArtsLink](#) partners for the fourth time with the [Robert Flaherty Film Seminar](#) (RFS) to host four Russian film professionals on a two-week residency at the Seminar and in New York City.

The filmmakers will screen their work at [Anthology Film Archives](#) on **Tuesday, June 30th at 7:00pm**. The films address social issues facing Russia today, including internal ethnic tensions, the on-going conflict in Chechnya, and assimilation of people with special needs.

The directors of the films, [Aleksei Barykin](#), [Aleksandr Gabrilyan](#) and [Oleg Vizzhachy](#), and film curator [Claudia Chupina](#), will be present for Q&A following the screening. To attend, please RSVP to Cassandra Hartblay at chartblay@cecartslink.org, or via CEC ArtsLink's Facebook page.

The group of film professionals was selected by an international committee of nominators to participate in the residency, which is part of the Open World Cultural Leaders Program. The program, facilitated by CEC ArtsLink, encourages cross-cultural communication between the US and Russia through the arts.

The featured films are:

SHAKHTARNBERDYR (2008, 26 min., directed by Oleg Vizzhachy)

Tadjik Muslims spend a summer as migrant workers restoring an Orthodox Church in rural Russia.

"Oleg, as a person and a director, is distinguished by his deep intuition. ... He has an acute sense for the nerve of contemporary society and nimbly draws out his perspective in his documentary films."

– Ivan Golonev, Director of the Russian Festival of Anthropological Film

The Song You Do Not Hear (2008, 26 min., directed by Aleksey Barykin)

A group of students at a school for the Deaf in Kazan, Russia rehearse and perform popular music in sign language. As they graduate and look toward beginning careers, their performances echo the challenges they face as Deaf adults in a hearing world.

The film was an award-winner at the 2009 Without Barriers Film Festival in Moscow.

Without War (2008, 51 min., directed by Aleksandr Gabrilyan)

Only the best of the best make it through training to become Red Berets, the Russian Army's Special Forces. But, training and life on patrol in Chechnya present very different kinds of challenges.

The film has won numerous awards at Russian festivals, where it was hailed as a "courageous debut."

The filmmakers' residency is made possible with support from the Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Arts. Saint Petersburg filmmaker Nadezhda Bolshakova, who participated in the 2007 residency, wrote, "the program not only broadened my professional horizons, but also changed my mentality and attitude towards America – its culture and people from the arts community – toward the positive."

Margaret Dikovitskaya, author of *Visual Culture: The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn*, has attended past film screenings presented in conjunction with this program, often inviting guests who might otherwise have not ever been introduced to Russian culture. "As an art historian who grew up in Russia," she writes, "I would like to stay informed about the recent developments in the art world; I am grateful for the opportunity to meet young filmmakers from Russia and learn more about what they are doing or, as Russians say, "what air they are breathing." [This] program affords such a chance to all New Yorkers."

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International Film Seminars, Inc. (IFS)/ Flaherty is a non-profit organization dedicated to the worldwide advancement and development of independent films, videos, and other movie-image arts by generating professional dialogue and insights into the art and content of the moving image, establishing education programs for youth and presenting innovative movie-image works at seminars, festivals, schools and universities.

CEC ArtsLink, through a multi-faceted program of cultural exchange, serves to create and sustain constructive, mutually beneficial relationships in the arts between the United States and Eastern and Central Europe, Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Working with artists, arts organizations and community-based groups, CEC ArtsLink provides an essential structure for ongoing dialogue, contributing to a culture of openness and trust between nations.

With years of experience as a leader in cultural exchange between the United States and Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, CEC ArtsLink has long been a behind-the-scenes player in numerous esteemed cultural events, as a supporter and facilitator of residencies, projects, and networks for artists and art managers at venues across the U.S. and around the world. Today, we are pleased to bring an on-going series of cultural events to the public through our partnerships in New York, around the United States, and abroad. Visit our homepage for more about upcoming events and on-going projects.

Open World's Cultural Leaders Program aims to forge better understanding between the United States and Russia by enabling emerging Russian leaders in the arts to experience America's cultural and community life, and to work with their American counterparts. Support for the cultural program is provided through partnership and funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Open World is a unique, nonpartisan initiative of the U.S. Congress. Delegates range from judges to mayors, from innovative nonprofit directors to experienced journalists, and from political party activists to regional administrators. Over 11,000 Open World participants have been hosted in all 50 U.S. states since the program's inception in 1999.

For more information about the visiting filmmakers, please visit www.cecartslink.org, or email chartblay@cecartslink.org. Advance copies of the films (DVD format) available for press reviewers upon request.

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