

SOLARIS

"the world is flesh"

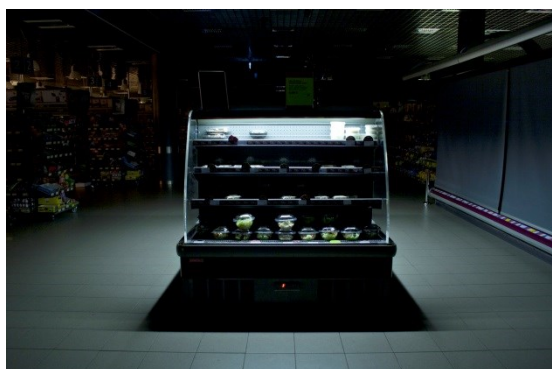
Synopsis

The film exposes closing hours and night time heartbeat of a Tallinn shopping mall – a place built to entertain and mirror the world.

The ambiguity of camera gaze and the immersive soundscape will confront viewer with a raw materiality of fleeting encounters, circulatory systems and gradually transforming atmosphere.

The dialogue-free sensory ethnography will invite you to question limit between the body and the world in one of the most vibrant urban ecosystems.

"Solaris explores the reality hidden behind a postsocialist euphoria of consumerism. In the film it is materialized as an empty shopping mall appearing out of our collective consciousness, near future, or even different planet."



Academic context

Methods of anthropological enquiry were based on theories of radical empiricism (Jackson), non-representative scholarship (Ingold, Thrift, Latour) and school of new thoughts in an ethnographic filmmaking – sensory ethnography (MacDougall, Pink, Taylor).

The film is inspired by phenomenology of architecture developed by Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa who perceives environment and human consciousness as inseparable spaces.

Jaroslava Panakova, Speculum Journal (1/2015)

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SOLARIS
a sensory ethnography film

Author's Statement

I have never been a big fan of shopping malls. Its lights burn right through my eyes. Getting older, I have realized it is not about the architecture or the daily shoppers, but rather about what it represents to me. A world of blissful ignorance, delivering packed and perfumed comfort from all around the world in an instant. Here, take-away happiness can be bought.

„What is the night time like in a shopping mall once everyone leaves?“ Keeping my eyes open and unbiased, I addressed six shopping centers in Tallinn, the leading city among major European capitals when it comes to shopping center floor space per inhabitant. I was offered creative freedom and immediate access to only one of them.

Solaris. Who would name a mall after the famous sci-fi movie? Maybe someone who wants to make the mall special, somehow interstellar, perhaps even have it materialize one's ideas. Marketing inside joke? Ask and it will be given to you. Tarkovsky and Lem did materialize the dead wife of the orbital station's inspector, did they not?

Initially, I had a simple question.

I started visiting the place to get acquainted with its staff and everyday routines. The more time I was spending there with my camera, the more I was apprehending the ideas of Marc Augé, Félix Guattari, Nigel Thrift and Tim Ingold.

These are the ideas that frame the horizons of anthropology in the 21st century. I do not dare to say I have a full grasp of these.

Yet I have realized that the film is opening paths to investigate how could the "more-than-human theory" influence the future of ethnographic cinema.

"Solaris" is not a film solely for academics and PhD holders. I did not want to create a statement film, but a sensually intensive and contextually open film space that is susceptible to polyphonic interpretation. Therefore, the film is experimenting with perspectives and no spoken dialogue.

We can infer this approach to Merleau-Ponty and radically exclaim: "A film is not thought, it is perceived. Ultimately, it does not mean anything but itself".

During the final evaluation at the BFM School, my documentary supervisor commented: "Simplify it and blend together the interior locations."

At that moment I realized my bonding with the mall - I had started treating it as if it were a person.

A person whose testimony - the spatial relationships and night time processes - cannot be misappropriated. Excess of ethical principles in anthropological research or post-human ethics expanding its reach? Misunderstanding of the film medium or viable experimentation?

"Solaris" is a vessel which takes those who dare and project their dreams onto them.

Watching the film may be just a short sensory experience. Nevertheless, there are voices echoing as you walk through its corridors.

Confronting them creates relationships and associations. What kind of a conversation would you develop with a vibrating building, its servants and the man with a movie camera?

Filmmaker

Pavel Borecký is an aspiring visual anthropologist holding MSc degree in Sustainable development and co-founder of anthropological research organization Anthropictures. He carried out fieldworks in Serbia, Peru and Czech Republic focusing on visual ethnobotany, community building and urban placemaking.

Currently, he studies Audiovisual Ethnography at EHI+Baltic Film and Media School in Tallinn and collaborates with Estonian Urban Laboratory and Vita Pictura Productions.

Filmography

Empowering Spaces (12 min, 2015)

The five audiovisual portraits revealing the obscure life of empty spaces in Tallinn attempt to question their current existence and imminent future.

Memorial (10 min, 2014)

A short observational portrait of a place in decay and a space of transition – Tallinn memorial of chess player Paul Keres, Estonian sportsman of the century.

Turning Seventeen (12 min, 2013)

A short ethnographic film on coming-of-age of a young Romani girl living in a small town Zlutice.

Traditional knowledge of Asheninka people (6x10 min, 2011)

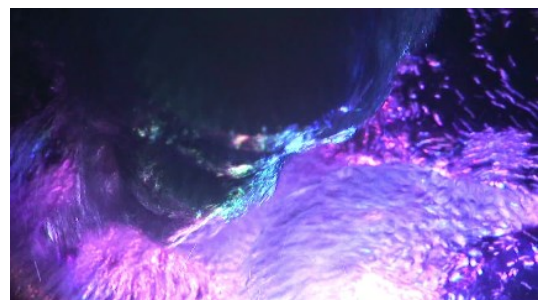
An experimental series of Visual Ethnobotany videos shot as a part of Peruvian research expedition.

Gaj (37 min, 2009)

A short ethnographic mosaic on life of Czech community in Serbian village.



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Solaris - Technical Specifications

Original Title: Solaris

Country of Production: Estonia

Duration: 25 min.

Aspect Ratio: 1.33:1

Original Format: HD

Screening Format: DCP, 5.1 surround sound

Subtitles: none

Screenings 2015

* Baltic Film and Media School (April 14, premiere, Estonia)

* Freiburg Student Film Forum (May 12, Germany)

* Speculum Journal (May 14, conference, Slovakia)

* Apricot Tree International Ethnographic Film Festival (October 3, Armenia)

* Post-future? Rethinking Postsocialism in Central Eastern Europe (October 9, conference, Poland)

* Athens Ethnographic Film Festival (November 27, Greece)

* Festival do Filme Etnográfico do Recife (November, Brasil)

Credits

Directed, photographed and edited by

Pavel Borecký

Produced by

Estonian Institute of Humanities, Baltic Film and Media School

Editing consultant

Martin Männik

Sound design

Kevin Molloy

Academic supervisors

Carlo Cubero, Kersti Uibo, Riho Västrik

You have met

Solaris, Juri Georgiev, Ricard Lõhkivi, Sander Ots, Raido Sults, Margit Voitk, Mart Männil

Special thanks to

Andri Ksenofontov, Tauri Tuvikene, Delyan Lyutskanov, Oliver Thorne, Maria Aua, Khaled Sari, Michal Pavlásek, Solaris Keskus AC, Tanel Tatter, Robert Lang, ABC Supermarkets AS, Kristel Seer, Piret Isotamm, Solaris Cinema, Helen Villmann, Kadi Kivi, Aivo Orusalu

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The original photography by [Maria Aua](#).

ESTONIAN INSTITUTE OF HUMANITIES AND BALTIC FILM AND MEDIA SCHOOL PRESENT PAVEL BORECKÝ FILM
EDITING CONSULTANT MARTIN MÄNNIK SOUND DESIGN KEVIN MOLLOY ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS KERSTI UIBO AND CARLO CUBERO

