



ODESSA, TX

a motion film of fading memories

19:30

Narrative Short Film



LOGLINE

A Ukrainian grandmother suffering from dementia is transported back to moments of her life in the Soviet Union.

VIMEO

vimeo.com/alexshuryepov/odessatx

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SYNOPSIS

Natasha has reached the end of her life but she's not ready to go. As she's bedridden in her daughter's house in Texas, she longs for her former life in Ukraine. But Ana, Natasha's daughter and primary caregiver, becomes overburdened by her mother's deteriorating mind and body.

The only solace Natasha finds is in her dreams, where she's transported back to her life in the Soviet Union with her siblings that are long gone. The end approaches. Natasha loses control of herself. Screaming at her daughter and forgetting her own grandchild. The dreams of her past become her only sanctuary.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I was a teenager, I went to say goodnight to my grandmother only to find her disoriented and experiencing septic shock. When the EMT asked her where she thought she was, she said Leningrad. This was 2016 in Texas. My grandmother only lived in Leningrad for a few years as a child in the 1960s, spending the majority of her life in Kyiv. That moment has always stuck with me and I ask myself what that must have felt like, to feel like you're back in time half a century ago.

My grandmother passed away in 2021 and she experienced dementia-related psychosis for the last months of her life. And while the trauma of that experience can't be overstated, I found myself imagining what she saw in those hazy moments where she thought she was back with her family that had passed away years prior in Ukraine. This film is an attempt to express this experience.



I developed the script with the help of diary entries my grandmother wrote about her life in the Soviet Union and the United States. And when I traveled to Ukraine as a cinematographer to film the effects of the war, my family there gifted me with 8mm film that my great-grandmother shot, which captured the memories my grandmother had described in her writing.

So while this film depicts the unsettling nature of dementia, it also depicts my grandmother's childhood, adolescence, and adulthood all captured on 8mm film. Showcasing the beauty of a life, through what they left behind for us.

-Alex Shuryepov

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Alex was born and raised in Texas, spending summers in Ukraine where his mother is from. He directed his first short film, *Mother of Chernobyl*, at UC Santa Barbara as a freshman. It went on to reach international success, premiering at SBIFF and winning best student at the Swindon International Film Festival.

After finishing his film degree at Chapman University with *Odessa, TX* as his thesis, Alex primarily works as a cinematographer. Although he is based in Los Angeles, Alex's film work has taken him back to Ukraine to document the ongoing war.





ABOUT THE FILM

Odessa, TX was produced at Chapman University and shot on their soundstage.

The Production Designer, Laura Kim, spent over a month studying Alex's family photos as well as archival footage from Ukraine. This was to ensure the layout, furniture, and set decoration were accurate for a Soviet bedroom in the 1970s.

The Cinematographer, Graycen Skalecki, utilized modern and Soviet film lenses to differentiate between dream and reality. They also studied and replicated the lighting of 1970s Soviet films to fully immerse the audience in the time period.

Alex developed his own scanning system to digitally transfer his great-grandmother's 8mm film into a RAW 4K file. Transferring over 20 hours of 8mm to be edited down for this short film.



CREDITS

Starring

NATASHA GOUBSKAYA

ANNA SEMENOVA

DARIA SIMAKOVA

OLEG KOUROV

ALINA LAWRENCE

Producer DANIELA MUNOZ

Cinematographer GRAYCEN SKALECKI

Production Designer LAURA KIM

Sound ADAM COX







TECH SPECS

Project Type	Short Narrative Film
Genre	Drama
Runtime	19:30
Aspect Ratio	16:9
Language	Ukrainian and Russian with English subtitles
Filmed on	Alexa Mini LF and Motion Film

CONTACT

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