



**MUSIC
BOX
FILMS**

presents

Cinema Komunisto

a film by Mila Turajlic

2010, Serbia, 101 mins. Unrated.

In Serbian with English subtitles

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SYNOPSIS

Taking us on a journey through the crumbling remnants of the former Yugoslavia and President Josip Broz Tito's state-funded film industry, this fascinating historical documentary cracks the vaults at the famed Avala Film Studios - home to big-budget productions starring the likes of Richard Burton, Sophia Loren and Orson Welles - and explores the rise and fall of the cinematic illusion called Yugoslavia. Using rare excerpts from dozens of forgotten Yugoslav films, never-seen-before archive footage from film sets, and revealing interviews with many of the film industry's key players, including Tito's personal film projectionist, CINEMA KOMUNISTO recreates the narrative of a former country: the stories constructed for the screen and the ones hidden within the frame.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

How does a country choose the story to tell about itself? If I had to choose one word to describe growing up in a country that has changed names 4 times in the past fifteen years, it would be discontinuity. Destroying the past in the name of a new beginning has become the hallmark of our history, and each new break with the past requires its rewriting. From the end of the Second World War, the Story of Yugoslavia was given a visual form in the creation of Yugoslav cinema. In a sense, the Avala Film studios are the birthplace of the Yugoslav illusion. For me they represent a promising point of departure - that collapsing film sets can reveal something about the collapse of the scenography we were living in.

I first went into the Avala Film studios when I was a student in film school. Sent there to get equipment for a student film, I found myself overwhelmed by the atmosphere of the place. It was immense, a ghost town of abandoned and rotting sets, out-of-date equipment, empty film lots and unemployed technicians. And nobody had ever told me anything about it. I wanted to make a film about how films were used to write and rewrite a story, to provide visuals for a narrative that became the unifying call of Yugoslavia. About the use of our filmmakers' tools - smoke and mirrors - to create the Official National Dream. The cinematic image remains as a testimony, a doorway to another time. But it is also a deception, a construct, to be analyzed, and looked through.

How do we explain Yugoslavia, a country whose existence fits into a half century, bookended by un-civil wars on both ends? Yugoslavs have a passion for their cinema, perhaps founded in our passion for those same myths that have led us marching into battle too many times. The old fortress in the heart of Belgrade houses the War Museum. Today, only a small part of it is open to the public. For those who wander in, looking to spend a Sunday afternoon browsing through Serbian history, the exhibition will take them from medieval battles and kingdoms through the 1930s. The rest is closed, indefinitely. The government has asked the museum to revise the exhibition covering the Second World War, declaring it 'over-dimensional and biased from a communist perspective.' At a loss for official instructions on how to rewrite history, its director could only shut it down. (Not to mention the fact that he doesn't know whether

to mount an exhibition on war actions and losses from the 1990s, as Serbia was never officially involved in war in Bosnia.) And so he waits for us as a society to yet again agree on our new narrative.

This became an urgent film, a response to the discontinuity all around me, a way to preserve a world that is being erased from official memory. When I look around for my childhood, every trace of it is gone, the street names changed, my school's name changed, the neighborhood reshaped with new office blocks. Fourteen cinemas in the heart of Belgrade have been sold and turned into cafes. Avala Films is also up for sale – and will most likely be torn down to build an elite business complex. As they disappear, I am not convinced that the best way to move forward is to pretend the past never happened. I enter this story as a member of a new generation of Yugoslav filmmakers, one that has hazy memories of a country that no longer exists. We come of age surrounded by the ruins of something that is nostalgically referred to as a golden era, but no one has yet offered me a satisfactory insight into how it was all thrown away. We were born too late, and missed that party, but we arrived in time to pay the bill for it.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

At the beginning I set out to explore the Avala Film Studios, aiming to discover and film every hidden corner. The spell of the place was strong - old costumes, rooms full of old posters, screening rooms used as storage space, scripts and production stills littering the floors. I began to interview dozens of old Yugoslav filmworkers, talking to them about the old days, but also looking for clues as to how cinema played a role in shaping Yugoslav society. In writing the script, my focus was on tying the stories of the movies and their making to the wider history of Yugoslavia, and a quote from Jacques Ranciere sums up that guiding idea: "The history of cinema is the history of the power to make History."

The particular way I wanted to structure the film was to rely on feature films as a tool to tell the story, rather than relying on the traditional approach of using archive in an illustrative fashion. I started gathering old Yugoslav films. It took over a year to gather some 300 films, and catalogue their content. There were archetypes that appear from film to film, particularly in the partisan films, but also whole subgenres giving a picture of life in the new Yugoslavia - films about the youth brigades rebuilding the country, about worker's meetings at the collectively managed factories, etc. I made a database of film clips indexed by the types of scenes and dialogue, which we used in the editing process, and that was definitely one of the most challenging parts of the process. The concept of the visual construction of the film was to tell the history of Yugoslavia using clips from Yugoslav feature films, but also bring these clips into direct communication with the characters in our doc, creating a sort of dialogue between the films and 'reality'. It became clear that I couldn't find one central character to tell the story from beginning to end, so I decided to choose those who could be our guides through each sequence of the film. They were marvelous storytellers, coming from different parts of the film industry, with different perspectives and comments on how we came to be where we

are today, and my favorite moments in the film are when their stories intertwine. I avoided a voiceover from the beginning because it went against the whole nature of the story, so it was essential that their accounts could be stitched together.

The project was selected for ARCHIDOC, and then the Discovery Campus Masterschool, and with some amazing mentorship and support the concept was pushed a lot further. At this point it became clear that for Western audiences the story of filmmaking in Yugoslavia could provide a new and unusual insight into what the country was and how it collapsed from an angle that had never been done before. A constant theme that kept coming up in my research was Tito's role in the cinema industry. It's a widely known anecdote in the former Yugoslavia that Tito was a huge film fan, and as I researched the real role he played behind the scenes, the story gained another layer - the man writing the destiny of a country was also directing its films. That's when I met Leka Konstantovic - Tito's personal projectionist for 32 years. Leka had given only one interview in his life, and was at first very reticent about talking on camera, mainly because he felt that Tito and Yugoslavia had been wrongly disowned even by those who were closest to Tito during his lifetime. His participation in the film provided it's emotional center, the intimate, up-close view that really ties together the big historical events with a keyhole view of the man shaping them.

I spent weeks in the Yugoslav Newsreels, looking for material that would flesh out the behind-the-scenes of the 'official narrative' we were piecing together from feature film clips. I found some absolute gems there, which gave me the ideal opportunity to show the direct involvement of Tito and our characters, but also decided to cast the net much wider. I looked in all principal archives in the former Yugoslav republics (television stations and cinemateques) as well as archives in England, France, Germany and Italy. My favorite discovery was the material showing involvement of ordinary people in the film shoots - like the interviews with young men serving in the army who don't like having to play the Germans, as well as people who have come from all over Yugoslavia to be extras in films. The jewel in the crown was definitely the footage of Tito on the film set, watching Richard Burton play him, squinting into the camera, checking the shot. In Tito's private archive we found evidence of his passion and involvement in filmmaking that has never been publicly shown. From copies of film scripts where he wrote his notes in the margins, to telegrams film directors sent him from film labs reporting on the first print of a film. Letters from Carlo Ponti offering him copies of films to watch. Photos of Sophia Loren and Tito in the kitchen, cooking!?! Transcripts of his conversations with filmmakers following screenings of rough cuts. Often the research had the thrill of a detective story, finding links in various archives, tracking down things people mention in anecdotes.

Having developed deep relationships with our characters, we decided to take the film beyond the Avala Film Studios to other important places which form the 'remaining sets' of the Yugoslav film story. With the support of my producer Iva Plemic we filmed on Tito's private residence of Brioni, even going to the camp for political prisoners on Goli Otok where we also found a cinema. A special moment was the shoot on the Neretva river in Bosnia, where we found ourselves in the middle of a pilgrimage of both veterans

from the actual historical battle and extras from the recreation of the battle on film. In a kind of bizarre double world, reality was turned into fiction, and fiction back into reality, Even though the bridge on the Neretva is famous both as a location of a heroic battle in WWII and as the set of Bulajic's Academy-Award nominated film, very few people realize it's still there today. Yet the image of the bridge lying in the river was so iconic, it was even on the front of New Year's greeting cards Tito used to send out.

Our shoots were often fun and entertaining, but on occasion they were quite poignant. The whole crew was aware that we were documenting the last moments of a disappearing story. In some cases, such as that of Vlasta Gavrik, we were the last people to interview him before he died. And in the case of Avala, we are probably the last people to go through the studios and film them. The project was selected for the IDF Academy Summer School 2008, where the first rough cut was worked on with a tutor. Dragan Pesikan took over producing the film and I was lucky to find the right companion for what turned out to be a yearlong edit. My editor Aleksandra Milovanovic made the concept work, creating the interaction between film and our material that I had hoped for. Putting together the material was definitely the biggest challenge, to tell the story coherently and interestingly, while managing to have it work on every layer - the anecdotal, the emotional, and philosophical, and making the play between fiction film and present-day interviews work. The final challenge was in creating a film of HD technical quality. In an unprecedented move, we obtained permission from the Yugoslav Newsreels to take dozens of reels out of their vault for digital scanning. The result is that Tito and Yugoslavia pop on the big screen like never before, which really helps integrate the past and present. The archive was scanned, and the film was blown up to High Definition size and color corrected at the CineLabs in Belgrade.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

STEVA PETROVIC

Avala Films' contact with the world. He was in charge of 'escorting' all foreigners who came to Yugoslavia to shoot their films –picking them up at the border, fulfilling their every request, and once engaging the Yugoslav secret police to stop a train on which a kidnapped Broderick Crawford was being smuggled. "Never let them notice they are not in Hollywood."

Dragisa GILE DJURIC

A template resume of a Communist party operator – from leader of youth brigades in building 'public works', to director of (among other things) the airport, the municipal authority, local government, and finally the national film studio. He was chased out of Avala for thinking that 'the bad parts of communism should also be addressed in our films'.

Aleksandar LEKA KONSTATINOVIC

The longest-serving member on Tito's personal staff, Leka spent every night of his 32-year career as Tito's projectionist standing behind 'the Marshal's' head in the dark, showing films that he gathered during the day. Leka was the silent observer of daily life around Tito, an invisible witness of the political discussions that took place in the screening room, picking tangerine's in Tito's orchard in his free time.

VELJKO BULAJIC

Bulajic's films are the best examples of the authentic partisan genre that represents the most megalomaniacal days of Yugoslav cinema. For him, Tito's Yugoslavia truly was a golden age – he had at his disposal army units, villagers, whatever was required. His contribution was to give the founding myth of Yugoslavia its filmic narrative, stock characters, and most memorable quotes.

Velimir BATA ZIVOJINOVIC

How did a Yugoslav actor become the most popular film star in China, and so lay claim to having over 1 billion fans? By playing in over 300 Yugoslav films, Bata IS the face of Yugoslav cinema. Reportedly, in his films he killed more Germans than Paton did. Bata is the personification of the Yugoslav partisan hero, who carried the myth of their noble struggle from film to film. "What's the last thing Hitler said before he died? -Kill Bata Zivojinovic!"

Dan TANA

Seduced by Hollywood films at a young age, Dan Tana fled Yugoslavia as a young football star, to end up proprietor of the legendary LA restaurant that bears his name. Upon meeting Tito who confessed to him he that he too would have run away from Yugoslavia, Dan returned to the film studios, producing several award-winning films.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

MILA TURAJLIC writer/director/producer (Dribbling Pictures)

Mila graduated from the London School of Economics with a degree in Politics and International Relations and completed a degree in Film Production at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. During her studies, she set up an NGO that introduced parliamentary debating at the University of Belgrade. Faced with the political reality of post-revolutionary Serbia, she converted to filmmaking in the belief that art will always be more subversive than politics. She received the Michael Peacock scholarship to continue her master studies in Media and Communications at the LSE, and specialized in documentary filmmaking at La Femis in Paris. Mila was invited to intern with two-time Academy Award winner Tony Schwartz in New York. In 2004, she worked at Wilton Films in London, as a production assistant and researcher for Discovery Europe /Discovery Times and ARTE France. Since then, she gathered experience on feature films as AD and production coordinator (*Apocalypto*, *Fade to Black*, *Brothers Bloom*, and *Human Zoo*). With the aim of bringing quality documentaries to Serbian audiences, in 2005 she co-founded the MAGNIFICENT 7 Festival.

CINEMA KOMUNISTO is her first feature documentary. Four years in the making, it was selected for ARCHIDOC, developed in the Discovery Campus Masterschool 2006, Docu Talents of the East at Karlovy Vary in 2008, IDFA Academy Summer School in 2008 and Berlin Talent Campus 2009.

DRAGAN PESIKAN producer

Dragan is a media executive and producer with over 10 years of experience in television. Following several years working as a journalist for print and radio, he joined the sports department of Channel 3 (3K) of Radio-Television Serbia, the national public broadcaster, as journalist and commentator. From there he moved to the film department, where he created the TV magazine Short cut S covering international film events. From October 2000 to May 2006 he was Deputy Channel Director of 3K overseeing development and production of various broadcast programs. Currently he is the production manager and Head of commentators at Eurosport. In 2009 he conceived and set-up operations, programming and technology for the first HD TV station in the region, Arena TV. In recent years he has specialized in film production, executive producing the feature film Jelena , Katarina , Marija which was shot entirely on location in New York. He set up his own production company 3K Production and is overseeing the script development and production of several feature film projects.

ALEKSANDRA MILOVANOVIC editor

Aleksandra graduated from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Department of Film and TV Editing, where she completed her Masters and is currently working on her PhD. She is also a teaching assistant in film history and theory at the Faculty. She has extensive experience editing documentary films and programs for independent productions as well as TV B92. She was the 2nd editor on highly-rated docu series for TV B92 including *Ko je ubio Antu Markovica* (10-part series) and *Sav taj folk* (8-part series) and regularly edits the most successful political investigative program on Serbian television, *Insajder*.

NORTH AMERICAN FILM FESTIVALS (A SELECTION)

Tribeca Film Festival, USA (North American premiere)
San Francisco International Film Festival, USA
HotDocs Toronto, Canada
Indianapolis International Film Festival, USA
Chicago International Film Festival, USA
UNAFF - United Nations Association Film Festival, USA

AWARDS

Gold Hugo for Best Documentary at Chicago International Film Festival, USA
Alpe Adria Cinema Award for Best Documentary Film at Trieste Film Festival, Italy
FOCAL International Award for Best Use of Archive Footage in an Arts Production
FIPRESCI Serbia Best Documentary Film in 2011
Grand Prix du Jury Festival International du cinéma d'Alger, Algeria
Best Balkan Newcomer Dokufest, Prizren
Best Debutant Director Makedox, Macedonia
Best Editing Award Cinema City, Serbia
Audience Award Views of the World, Cyprus
Audience Award UnderhillFest, Montenegro
Audience Award Cinema City Festival, Serbia
Honourable Mention of the Jury It's All True Festival, Brazil
Honourable Mention of the Jury Uruguay International Film Festival, Uruguay
Honourable Mention of the Jury Cape Winelands Film Festival, South Africa
Honourable Mention of the Jury UnderhillFest, Montenegro
Special Jury Award Balkan Film Festival in Podgradec, Albania

INTERVIEW with Mila Turajlic:

Tell us a little about *Cinema Komunisto*, in your own words.

Cinema Komunisto is a trip through the fiction and reality of a country that no longer exists, and may never have existed, except in movies. Using films and the stories behind-the-scenes to reconstruct the rise and fall of Yugoslavia, it takes you through the silver screen into the time of communist Yugoslavia. Under President Tito, who was a huge film lover, the film industry was given the task of creating a narrative for a new country, and they did it in the most megalomaniacal way—creating one of the largest film studios in Europe, bringing stars like Orson Welles and Sophia Loren to star in the films, and in one case even destroying a real bridge to recreate a famous episode from the war. Through the stories of Tito's personal projectionist, who showed him a film every night for 32 years, we begin to see Tito's role in a new light—as Chief Illusionist, at once both director and biggest fan of the story taking shape on the screen.

In your film, you really tell a 50+-year history of, as you say, “a country that no longer exists.” As someone so young, what inspired you to tell this story?

I was born into Tito's Yugoslavia, and many aspects of the personality cult and the communist system shaped my childhood—like being inducted into the *pionir* movement, and swearing my loyalty to Tito (who at that point had been dead for 7 years). I vividly remember the day his picture was taken down from our classroom wall, and the portrait of Milosevic that replaced it. Tito's Yugoslavia was so emphatically erased during the 90s that by 2000, very few traces of it existed. And then in the last ten years, a lot has been done to erase Milosevic and all we went through in the 90s from official memory. So, my motivation was a revolt against this pattern of erasing things and starting from zero, because I really think that's the origin of most of the problems Serbia today faces.

What did your research entail? How did you find your subjects?

Researching this film was a lot like detective work. My main sources were old film workers who know better what you can find in archives than the people working in them today, and they would give me leads on things that maybe still existed, which I would then chase. A lot of stuff disappeared or was burned in the bombing in the 90s, so often there was no way of knowing what was in a box or vault, and I just persuaded them to let me look at everything—that's how we found some incredible archive no one's ever seen before. Gathering 320 old Yugoslav films took over a year, and I had to barter with these intense collectors who wouldn't give me films unless I could offer them something they didn't have. I then wrote time-coded notes while I watched the films and pulled scenes that I thought were good illustrations of life in Yugoslavia, the ideology, or just plain fun. In the end, we had a database of around 1500 clips, which I indexed so that in the edit room I could find things quickly—for example, if we decided to do a montage of 'funny deaths from partisan films,' I could just enter those search words and I'd get 50-60 such scenes. I talked to around 50 people before I settled on my characters, and for the most part they turned me down when I asked them to take part. It took some time to find the right argument to persuade them—I think they realized that I was just going to keep coming back, with new pieces of archive that I found or new questions, and that I was incredibly passionate (obsessed is probably more accurate) about making this film.

This was clearly an ambitious project, on a huge scale.

How were you able to make it so personal?

For me, it's always been a personal story. The idea to use clips from feature films came because I saw these films as a family photo album, a place where I could find images from my childhood. The sight of the film studios today, their rundown state, drives me to rage and tears, because it's a personification of what has happened to the entire idea of the country I was born in. Going to the film studios always felt like I was entering my own secret garden, and I just wanted the freedom to explore it and record what I saw.

What's the craziest thing (or "lightning strikes" moment) that happened during production?

The whole shoot was pretty intense, because in most cases we knew we were the last people who were going to be filming in that particular place, or talking to that character, as many of them are quite old. Actually, several of them died after we interviewed them (which is when my crew members announced they would never let me interview them). So there was a sense of historical importance in what we were doing. The biggest turning points in the film were getting access to Tito's personal archive (which took a year of lobbying), where I discovered the extent to which he had been involved in the making of the films, and discovering that his personal projectionist was still alive. That's when I realized that we could take the story to a whole new level.

What's your advice for aspiring filmmakers? And for women, in particular?

I think the biggest lesson I learned is that having time is almost more important than having money, because time is what allows you to build relationships with your characters and collaborators. And also, don't be afraid of people thinking you are crazy—I went back to the archives so often to look for things, and insisted so much on being shown outtakes and discarded reels, that all the employees looked at me as if I was some lunatic who just wouldn't go away.

Who are some of the documentary filmmakers who influenced you?

Agnes Varda stands out, in terms of her sense of play in approaching documentary form—and form to me is as important as content. For me, the biggest challenge was to make a historical documentary that feels fresh, and to make archival material feel relevant and alive, and in this I was very inspired by documentary filmmakers who have really played with using archive—particularly Errol Morris, as well as Erik Gandini and his editor Johan Soderberg. Oliver Stone's *JFK* also had good examples of how a lot of factual information and paperwork could be made visually stimulating.

If you could have dinner with any filmmaker (alive or dead), who would it be?

I wouldn't be that interested in having dinner with a filmmaker as much as having a chance to shadow them while they work—just to see them in action for a moment—like Errol Morris in the cutting room, or Agnes Varda on the night before a shoot, or Paul Greengrass planning his shot list with his DP, or Fellini and Nino Rota trying out ideas at the piano.

TIMELINE of Yugoslavia - Between Fact and Fiction

1944. TITO'S FIRST APPEARANCE ON FILM

Captured by the camera of the visiting British mission in Drvar, days before his 52nd birthday. The scene is later re-created in the 1963 partisan film 'DESCENT ON DRVAR'

1946. IN THE MOUNTAINS OF YUGOSLAVIA

At the end of WWII the victorious Communist government seeks help from Russian comrades in setting up the new country's film industry. The first post-war film is shot by Eduard Tisse (Eisenstein's assistant). Controversial parade scene with big photos of Stalin and small ones of Tito.

1947. AVALA FILM CREATED

Tito signs directive creating the Central Film Studios - later known as Avala Film. The film city is built by youth volunteers and filmworkers. The intention is to create a Hollywood of the East on the Kosutnjak hill outside Belgrade, which was expected to make 100 films a year (it never succeeded in making more than 13).

1947. SLAVICA

First Yugoslav film. Directed by Vjekoslav Afric. (He would later fall out of favour for an overly populist anti-authority film.) Film celebrates partisan fight, creating authentic Yugoslav 'partisan' genre. Part of technical crew are German POWs.

1948. BREAK WITH STALIN

Yugoslav rejection of the Cannes festival in solidarity with socialist bloc fest in Marjanske Lazny. During the festival, Stalin parts ways with Tito, and expels Yugoslavia from Eastern Bloc. Yugoslav films are dropped from the program, as Tito's image appears in them, and the Yugoslav delegation leaves in protest. The next year they go to Cannes.

1949. LEKA STARTS DIARY

Leka Konstantinovic starts working as Tito's projectionist, keeping a daily diary of the films he shows. On average Tito will watch 275 films a year.

1952. BATHING BEAUTY

With Soviet films gone from cinemas, Hollywood arrives to fill the repertoire. Esther Williams' Technicolor aqua-musical captivated Belgrade audiences becoming a box office topper. Belgrade's love affair with 'Esther' is re-told in a 1985 Yugoslav film 'HEJ BABU RIBA'.

1953. LAST BRIDGE

First international co-production. Love story between partisan commander (Bernard Wicki) and German nurse (Maria Schell) was so controversial Tito had a private screening to determine if film should be released.

1954. PULA FILM FESTIVAL CREATED

Annual gathering of Yugoslav film production. Viewing of 'collective reality' in the ancient Roman Coliseum on the Adriatic Coast. Tito's private island resort, Brioni, was a short boat ride away, and by next year he was the patron of the festival. All films screened at Pula were first brought to him for a private screening, and his 'opinion' was reported by Leka, the projectionist, to the festival jury.

1958. THE TEMPEST

Dino de Laurentiis' historical epic, shot north of Belgrade. LIFE magazine reports it's the biggest film set in Europe at the time.

1962. PREKOBROJNA

Yugoslav blockbuster about young people in the youth brigades, creates two superstars of Yugoslav cinema - Milena Dravic and Ljubisa Samardzic.

1962. 'NEMA PROBLEMA' = NO PROBLEM

Ratko Drazevic, veteran partisan and State Security officer, appointed Head of Avala Film. Rumour has it he has 'slept with 2000 women, and killed 2000 men.' His job is to open channels to West, and bring in Hollywood co-productions and their US dollars.

1962. THE LONG SHIPS

The provocative statements of right-wing actor Richard Widmark cause a stir in Belgrade.

Vikingmania in Belgrade - young party members grow hair long in wish to play extras in film, risking penalties from Communist Youth orderlies in charge of hygiene.

1963. LICEM U LICE

Considered to be the first Yugoslav political film, the story analyses the problems of Yugoslavia's policy of worker's self-management of industry. Inspired by Lumet's 'Twelve Angry Men', the entire film takes place during a communist cell meeting in a factory.

1964. MARCO POLO

Film stars in Belgrade: Alain Delon, Omar Sharif, Anthony Quinn, Orson Welles. Ratko Drazevic tries to persuade Nicholas Ray (who is living in Belgrade at the time) to take over the making of the film. Avala Film accounts for about half of the feature films being produced annually in Yugoslavia, with the facilities now including an artificial lake and a stable of 500 horses.

1967. THE BRIONI CONNECTION

During the Pula Festival, Tito invites a large delegation of Yugoslav film workers for a visit on Brioni. Directors and actors vie for his attention arranging future film productions, mostly covering partisan war exploits in the war. Others, like Purisa Djordjevic, who suggests to Tito the making of a film about the 1948 split with Russians, is told 'don't mess with that'.

1968. STUDENT 'SPRING'

Student protests rock Yugoslavia - and a new generation of socially and politically engaged filmmakers emerge. Known as authors of the 'black wave' filmmakers like Zivojin Pavlovic, Dusan Makavejev, Zelimir Zilnik see their films banned from distribution, and some leave the country out of fear of persecution.

1969. BATTLE ON THE NERETVA

Academy Award nomination for most famous partisan epic: 5 tons of artillery and weapons thrown into the Neretva river, culminating in the destruction of a real bridge. Starring Yul Brynner, Franco Nero, Hardy Kruger, Orson Welles. Music by Bernard Herman. Poster designed by Pablo Picasso. The film played in cinemas in Italy for over half a year, and even won favorable reviews from Jean-Paul Sartre.

1970. PULLING BACK

In his New Year's speech in 1970, Tito launches the 'counteroffensive' - an official campaign against political and cultural corruption as a way to 'repair the course' of the 1960s. As part of the reversal of a too liberal approach, a new wave of films is banned, and Lazar Stojanovic is sent to prison for his graduation film PLASTIC JESUS, in which he mocks Tito.

1973. SUTJESKA

Finally giving permission to have someone play him on screen, Tito casts Richard Burton to play him. Burton spends time with Tito, requesting the use of the Marshal's pipe. Burton's wife, Elisabeth Taylor, is present for the shoot, but turns down an offer to play a partisan nurse in the film.

1974. TITO ELECTED PRESIDENT FOR LIFE

Fidel Castro comes to visit, and is shown both NERETVA and SUTJESKA. He is so impressed, the next night he asks to see them again.

1976. WALTER DEFENDS SARAJEVO

Partisan films become an exported Yugoslav brand. 'Walter' is shown on Chinese national TV every New Year's Eve for 30 years, making it the most watched film in the world, and it's star Bata Zivojinovic the most famous actor in China. Bata has acted in over 300 films, and been in 35 partisan films.

1980. TITO DIES

1985. O TEMPO DOS LEOPARDOS

The newly-independent country of Mozambique commissions Yugoslav filmmakers to help make their first feature film, about the struggle of their communist guerillas to win independence. The first African partisan film is made.

1987. ESCAPE FROM SOBIBOR

Produced by Dan Tana, starring Rutger Hauer. The last time the Yugoslav Army gave tanks and other technical support for a film shoot.

1991. PULA FILM FESTIVAL CANCELLED

The Pula festival is cancelled, the flag coming down in the arena, the organisers calling on 'people of reason to resist the coming violence'. War breaks out days later.

2000. OCTOBER 5TH REVOLUTION

Having survived the 90s war and embargo by making coffins and children's toys, Avala produces its last independent film. From 1945 to 2000 more than a quarter of all films in the former Yugoslavia were produced by Avala Film - 200 feature films, 400 documentary films and around 120 foreign co-productions.

2002. BATA ZIVOJINOVIC RUNS FOR PRESIDENT

Bata makes the decision to run for president as the candidate of the Socialist Party of Serbia, in place of Slobodan Milosevic who is on trial for war crimes in the Hague. Bata's campaign slogan 'You know me.'

2005. AVALA FILM PUT UP FOR SALE

The new constitution of Serbia no longer recognizes the category of 'socially-owned' property and Avala film is put up for auction.

2007. BELGRADE CINEMAS DISAPPEAR

14 government-owned cinemas in the center of Belgrade are sold at auction, with the stipulation that the new owner has to keep them operating as cinemas. Today, not a single one of them is open.

PRESENT DAY

Avala Film remains unsold. The famous Studio 1, the second-largest studio in Europe, is today used for the production of a glitzy weekly entertainment show. The future is uncertain for the 100 workers who are still employed there.

CREDITS

Written & Directed by	MILA TURAJLIC
Produced by	DRAGAN PEŠIKAN
Producers	DRAGAN PEŠIKAN, MILA TURAJLIC, IVA PLEMIC, DEJAN PETROVIC, GORAN JEŠIC
Edited by	ALEKSANDRA MILOVANOVIC
Director of Photography	GORAN KOVACEVIC
Original Music	NEMANJA MOSUROVIC
Sound design	ALEKSANDAR PROTIC
Graphic design	JELENA SANADER
Sound recordist	IVAN UZELAC, ZELJKO ĐORĐEVIC
Additional camera	JELENA STANKOVIC
Archive research	MILA TURAJLIC
Print design & site	NIKOLA RADOJCIC, BRACA BURAZERI
Post-production	CINELABS BELGRADE
Produced in association	DRIBBLING PICTURES, 3K PRODUCTIONS & INTERMEDIA NETWORK
With the financing support of	FILM CENTER SERBIA CITY OF BELGRADE JAN VRIJMAN FUND ERT GREECE FILM IN SERBIA US AID
Developed within the framework of	DOCUMENTARY CAMPUS MASTERSCHOOL IDFAcademy SUMMER SCHOOL ARCHIDOC EDN WORKSHOP - DOCS AT THESSALONIKI

About Music Box Films

Music Box Films is a leading distributor of international, American independent, and documentary content in North America.

Past releases include Guillaume Canet's hit thriller TELL NO ONE and the film adaptations of Stieg Larsson's trilogy of international mega-selling novels. The first in the series, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO with over \$10 million in US box office, was one of the most popular foreign-language releases of recent years.

Recent titles include Roger Michell's LE WEEK-END, written by Hanif Kureishi and starring Jim Broadbent; five-time Academy Award® nominee Jan Troell's THE LAST SENTENCE; and Pawel Pawlikowski's IDA, winner of the FIPRESCI Prize at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates The Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films.