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Eyes and Ears of the World IDFA Documentary Festival – October 2012

The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) is held every year, in October, in the city of canals and bicycles this year was the 25 anniversary of this incredible event.

The Deputy Editor and I were lucky enough to get press passes for Synchronicity and enjoy a four day marathon of watching documentaries getting footage and interviewing directors. IDFA Issue will be continued on our blog where you can also find contact details: www.synchronicitygroup.net, we are also on [Facebook/synchronicitymag](https://www.facebook.com/synchronicitymag) and on [@Synchro Mag](https://twitter.com/SynchroMag).

Synchronicitypagedesigners:BrookeStreatfieldandYaroheySecka

Russian Dissent Expressed through Art Picks up Pace

Voina, a Russian activist collective specialising in provocative street art against state control and for freedom of speech, has released a documentary which recently screened at the International Documentary Festival in Amsterdam (IDFA).

The film, *Tomorrow*, chronicles the history of the group from their early beginnings as shoplifting squatters to their biggest and most controversial piece, painting of a gigantic penis on a drawbridge in front of the headquarters of the Federal Security Service in St Petersburg.

While the group has more than sixty members since its creation in 2006 the movie focuses on the core of them, known only by their self-chosen names of Vor (thief), his wife Koza, their son Kasper, Leo-the-fucknut, and Crook the main cameraman.

The group started out fairly innocently with graffiti, protests and demonstrations. They soon escalated their activities; stealing banners from official parades, becoming officially leftist in their artistic messages and provoking response from both politicians and official bodies.

In mid-2010 the group began flipping police cars as a response to increasing state control and police brutality. The media started paying attention as the group posted YouTube videos of their art and projects for the public to see.

Living outside society, by occupying empty buildings, the group evaded capture for months but eventually

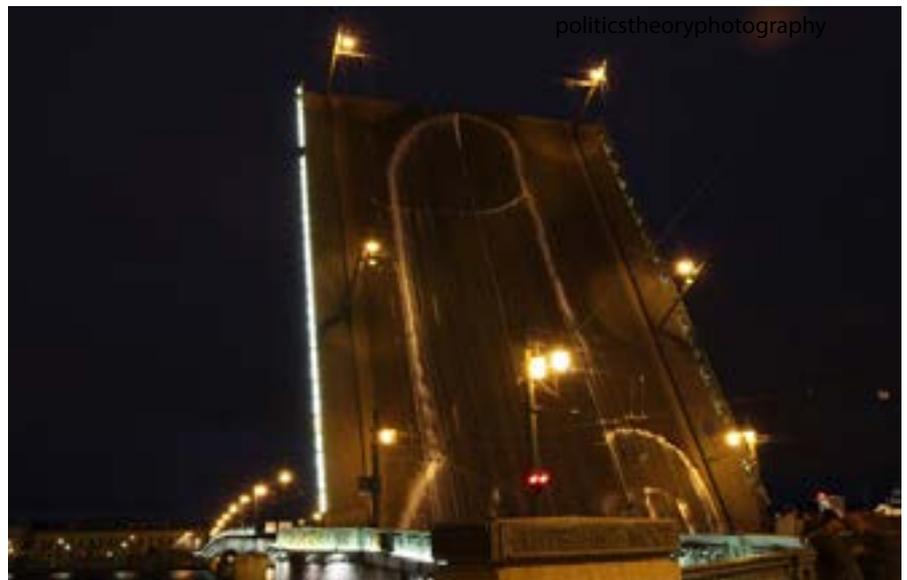


Photo: politicstheoryphotography

were ratted on by an insider which resulted in Vor and Leo-the-fucknut being charged as hooligans, accused of undermining the state and stirring up rebellious energies. Thus began a long legal battle of cat and mouse between Voina and the government with the group continuing their projects, members getting arrested and then returning to hiding, a game which still continues.

Explaining what they do and their motivations Voina has said: "We ask questions; what happens when you steal a chicken, what happens when you call out and question the government, what happens when you hit a policeman, how will the people react? We ask these questions in public with our art as there are no channels for us to ask them in."

The group has gained widespread recognition in the west since 2010.

Partly because of the heightened controversy of their projects, the harsh response from the police, the focus they have put on the Russian state of living and partly because the split off groups of the original Voina such as Pussy Riot.

Many movements such as Amnesty, grassroots organisations, art collectives and anarchists have expressed solidarity with the group as they represent one of the few Russian protest movements against Putin and the government.

The group has also received awards and recognition from various artistic bodies and an Innovation prize from the state in 2011. The group has turned down all of these, donated all cash rewards to charity and continues to refuse to work with media, institutions or officials of any kind.

By Christian Jensen

Propaganda North Korean Style

Propaganda is a documentary purported to have been made in North Korea with images of decadent western lifestyle, capitalist culture and a message of salvation. A couple claiming to be North Korean dissidents approached a translator in Seoul handing her a DVD on condition that she translate and disseminate it.

All the hundreds of images in the documentary are from TV and archive footage and revolve around a North Korean scientist, whose identity has been concealed, explaining in a patronising way under different headings what is wrong with the western world.

From reality TV shows to starlets, fake smiles and consumerisation the whole package makes anyone living in this part of the globe want to cringe. When excerpts from Noam Chomsky come into it one completely agrees with the description of what is wrong with the system that we live under.

Then the bomb is dropped as images of the People's Republic of North Korea appear with dialogue of how we can redeem ourselves. As the scientist then explains that they would be the headquarters for all our ills. With the country's human rights records, isolationist policies and oppressive regime it then made one



Image By: Christian Jensen

“I wanted to make something really out there, something no one had ever seen before.”

feel that having all these ridiculous TV shows, the desire to have things we don't need

general social inequalities and economic cuts are all by comparison not that bad and could be resolved.

While milling over all of that the film ended and a Q&A began as a tall man dressed in black, with black rimmed glasses and a clean-shaven

head walked on stage. Taking the mic he told the audience he was the director and the film was made in New Zealand, where he himself is from. The Director's name is Slavko Martinov, from Christchurch in the South Island, this is his first film feature, which was being shown at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA).

In the interview when asked about the film Martinov said: “I had the idea in 2003 to make a film about propaganda and expose the tools of it that are all used against us. I thought I can't just make a dry film about it, although it might be interesting, I wanted to make something really out there something no one had ever seen before. So I came up with the idea of an interceptive North Korean film that attacks western propaganda I thought that would be a great idea.”

Propaganda is shown in ten parts on Youtube with the whole film put up in July. Martinov said that he had and will mention after screenings of the film at venues that it was made by him and not a product of the North Korean state. So far there seems to be only one hitch in a real life twist with this clever thought out documentary. The actor who played the scientist in the film is wanted for questioning by the South Korean authorities because they think he is a North Korean spy.

By Mark A. Silberstein

A look back: Check out the 2012 issues on: www.synchronicitygroup.net



The Europe Issue was inspired by the 2008 recession hung parliaments and disillusionment with traditional politics and the rise of the extreme right in Europe.



The Censorship Issue looked at the three wise monkeys. In this issue they stood for censorship be it newspapers, radio, television or possibly soon...the Internet and we examined this concept globally.



Journo's Abroad: Most of our colleagues, in the BA Journalism course at City University, went abroad and a few of them contributed from their respective countries.



The Health Issue compared socially acceptable medicine to more alternative methods and challenged the notion of what the general idea of "health" actually means.



The Sex Issue looked at the world of sex, its troubled and dark sides, as well as its cultural differences and artistic representations.