

Artist's first name and SURNAME: Salomé Lamas

1. TITLE [WITH SUBTITLES WHEN NECESSARY]:



EXTINÇÃO / EXTINCTION (2018)

HD video, 2:39, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 80 min., Germany-Portugal

<https://vimeo.com/189323815>

PW: salomelamas

2018 – Extinção / Extinction

Production: O Som e a Fúria, Lamaland, Mengamuk Films, Walla Collective, Screen Miguel Nabinho, Bikini

With the financial support: ICA – Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual

With the participation: DAAD – Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian

Selected: Agora Works in Progress 2016 – Thessaloniki International Film Festival

Additional support: Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Yadoo, Bogliasco Foundation, Yuki, Screen Miguel Nabinho, Walla Collective, Bikini

Distribution: O Som e a Fúria

Synopsis:

The question concerning the borders of the territories of what was once the USSR has proved to be a potential time bomb. Extinction is an eclectic patchwork of materials (fiction and nonfiction) led by Kolya, who is of Moldovan nationality, but declares himself a national of Transnistria. Fragments draw the viewer to the collective imaginary of the Soviet Union. The film aims to make an abstract comment on Vladimir Putin's latest political stands of "war without war, occupation without occupation."

Director's intentions note:

I don't have an easy relationship with borders. They frighten and unnerve me. I have been searched, prodded, delayed, again and again, for having the temerity to cross a few meters of land. Borders are bureaucratic fault lines, imperious and unfriendly. Their existence is routinely critiqued by academic geographers, who cast them as hostile acts of exclusion. And yet where, in a borderless world, could we escape to? Where would be worth going?

The end of the Cold War did not produce a thaw throughout the continent. A peculiarity of today's Europe is the variety of "frozen conflicts" it contains. Shot in Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Transnistria, with additional scenes in Portugal and Germany, the film departs from Transnistria, where it appears that several eras coexist simultaneously but time doesn't stand still, which might be a case study in a much wider portrait. Dystopia, utopia's doppelgänger, is not a way to enunciate what will come, but more of a logical and hidden revelation of the present.

Now, it seems Moscow is moving from sticks to carrots in its attempt to persuade Moldova to rethink an upcoming EU Association Agreement. If on one hand, the memory of the Holocaust was influenced by the evolution of the Cold War in the Western part of Europe, and if years after the fall of the Berlin Wall Europe was leaving the Cold War or a long-war period, then any consideration related to memory must answer this simple question: What is the best enemy to remembering? Why are the East and the West today bursting with spectral figures?

Credits

Written, directed: Salomé Lamas
Assistant director: Stanislav Danylyshyn
Cinematography: Jorge Piquer Rodriguez
Sound: Salomé Lamas, Stanislav Danylyshyn
Production director: Stanislav Danylyshyn, Iulia Puica
Production manager, driver: Alexandru Cuciuc
Additional camera, focus puller: Salomé Lamas
Additional scenes: Mónica Lima, Pedro Maia, Jorge Quintela
Music: Andreia Pinto Correia
Performance: Christoph Both–Asmus
Editing: Telmo Churro, Francisco Moreira
Assistant editor: Rita Quelhas
Interns: Maria Inês Gonçalves, João Martinho
Studio recording: Roman Bordei
Sound design, mix: Miguel Martins
Foley: António Porém Pires
Color correction: Paulo Américo
Digital compositing, visual effects: Rodolfo Pereira

With: Kolja Kravchenko, Stanislav Danylyshyn, Vivaedsimir Emelianov, John Donica – OSTK – Obiedinennyi Komitet Trudovykh Kollektivov, KGB – Officers Tiraspol, Sergiu Finite, Valentin Chenkov, Victor Drumî, Galina Lazarenco Popescu, Ninela Caranfil, Andrei Jaloba, Natasha Veleanik, Alexandr Veleanik, Ivan Shvet, Paraskovia Shvet, Anatolii Shvet, Anna Chesnok, Danila Babenko, Viktor Shvet, Oksana, Alina, Professor Nikolay Babilunga, Alexandru Cuciuc, Isabel Pettermann

O SOM E FURIA

Production: Cristina Almeida, Fabienne Martinot, Sofia Bénard
Accountant: Aline Alves, Amadeu Dores

LAMALAND

Production: Salomé Lamas
MENGAMUK FILMS
Production: Michel Balagué
Production assistants: Julliette Rigaleau, Unai Rosende

BIKINI

Production: Eugénio Marques

SCREEN MIGUEL NABINHO

Production: Ariana Couvinha, Vera Amaro

WALLA COLLECTIVE

Production: Tiago Matos

Producers: Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguilar, Salomé Lamas
Coproducers: Michel Balagué, Marcin Malaszczyk
Associate producers: Eugénio Marques, Paulo Américo, Miguel Nabinho, Tiago Matos, Miguel Martins

Translation: Alina Lunina, Salomé Lamas
Additional translation: Anna Avramenko, Stanislav Danylyshyn
Translation revision: Salomé Lamas, Maria Inês Gonçalves, Gloria Domingues
Graphics: Sara Bozzini
Sound, image equipment: Screen Miguel Nabinho,
Jorge Piquer Rodriguez
Editing studio: O Som e a Fúria, Lamaland
Sound studio, mix: Walla Colective, Yuki
Digital laboratory: Bikini
Insurance: Gras Savoye, Riskmedia

Music

SOBRE UM QUADRO (2013)

Andreia Pinto Correia, Aljezur Music, ASCAP

Interpreted: OrquestrUtópica, Katharine Rawdon – flutes, Catherine Strynckx – violoncello

Commission: Culturgest – Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos

Additional sound design: Miguel Martins

ALFAMA (2012)

Andreia Pinto Correia, Aljezur Music, ASCAP

Interpreted: Orquestra Sinfónica da Fundação Calouste

Gulbenkian, Ana Maria Pinto - soprano, Joana Carneiro - conductor Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian

Commission: Fromm Foundation, Harvard University, for the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra

Additional sound design: Miguel Martins

ELEGIA A AL-MU'TAMID (2010)

Andreia Pinto Correia, Aljezur Music, ASCAP

Interpreted: Orquestra Sinfónica da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Joana Carneiro - conductor Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian

Commission: American Composers Orchestra, with the support of Patricia Wylde Plum

Additional sound design: Miguel Martins

Performance

THE TREE WALKER (2011)

Christoph Both–Asmus

Performer: Christoph Both–Asmus

Art direction: Chika Takabayashi

Text – excerpts adapted from Imperium (1993), Ryszard Kapuściński

Locations 2014–2016

Bulgaria: Shumen, Varna, Buzludzha

Portugal: Lisboa, Porto

Moldova: Chişinău

P.M.R.: Rîbniţa, Tiraspol, Lenin, Bendery, Dubăsari

Germany: Berlin

Romania: Constanţa

Checkpoints

Chişinău, Moldova – Dubăsari, P.M.R.

Cahul, Moldova – Oancea, Romania

Călăraşi, Romania – Silistra, Bulgaria

Kuchugan, P.M.R. – Pervomarisk, Ukraine

Rezina, Moldova – Rîbnița, P.M.R

With the financial support: ICA – Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual

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Calouste Gulbenkian

Selected: Agora Works in Progress 2016 – Thessaloniki International Film Festival

Additional support: Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Yadoo,

Bogliasco Foundation, Yuki, Screen Miguel Nabinho, Walla Collective, Bikini

Distribution: O Som e a Furia

2. DENOMINATION/GLOBAL CATEGORY

(painting, sculpture, object, engraving, drawing, installation, video installation, projection, etc.)

Video Installation/Film – 1 screen projection

3. DOES THE WORK CONSIST OF AN ENSEMBLE (A WHOLE) OR A SERIE? IS THIS SERIE OPEN (STILL IN PROGRESS) OR CLOSED?

IF IT IS A SERIE WITH DIFFERENT PARTS, DO THESE CAN STILL BE CAN THESE STILL BE EXHIBITED SEPARATELY?

In case of a series, thank you for providing assembling instructions.

Closed.

4. DATE / EVENTUALLY INDICATE A PERIOD OF TIME IF THE WORK WAS REALISED OVER A YEAR

4b. Date of creation, if different from the date of realization

(for example: for a photography, date of shooting and date of print; date of reduced-scale model, or matrix, mould, or date of publication, etc.)

Date of shooting: 2014-2016

Date of production: February 2018

World premiere: March 2018 (CPH:DOX, Denmark)

5. TECHNICAL DETAILS

HD video, 2:39, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 80 min., Germany-Portugal

a) Materials

MASTER HD video, 2:39, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 80 min., Germany-Portugal

– APPLE PRO RES 4444 MOV File; mp4 H264 File; Blu-Ray Disc.

b) Material for base or background (linen, aluminum plate, type of paper, pedestal, etc.)

PLEASE CHECK FOR EXCLUSIONS

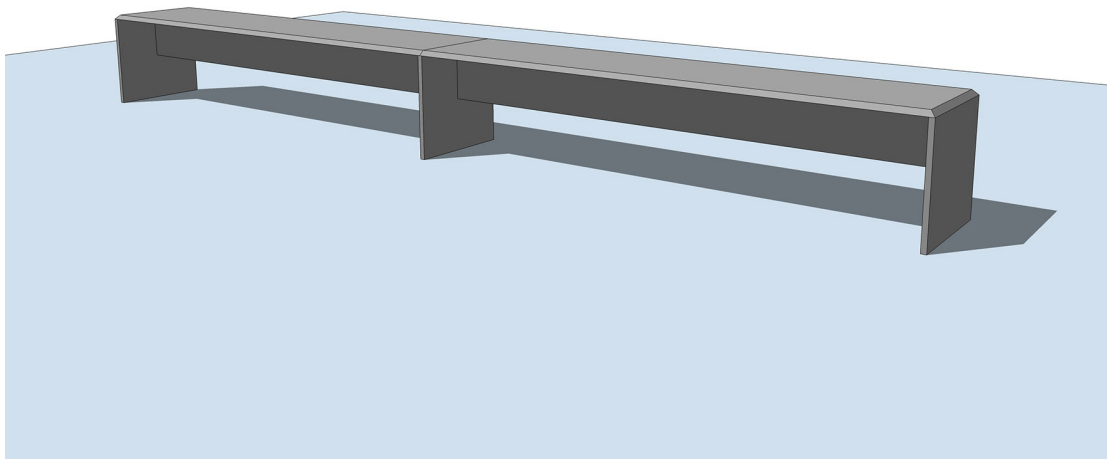
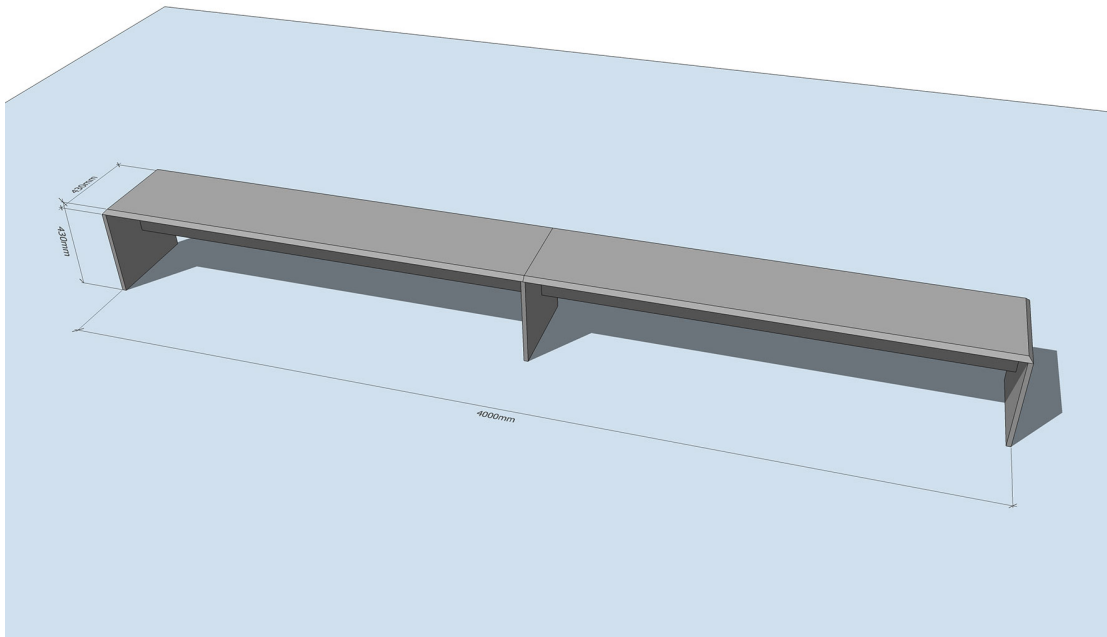
1. Projection / Museum Space

A.Walls and Bench Painted – When possible

Color Ref: NCS S-5500-N

a) Bench

Depending on the exhibition space and venue the artist might request another bench model. The artist can consider other bench options upon request.



B. Sound specs

Dolby 5.1 or stereo – speakers;

C. Image specs

1 – projector / Media Player / Mini Mac / other players

Minimum projection area recommended 391x220 cm

Exinction can be projected/installed in the museum space, either in a loop or with a detailed timetable.

2. Projection / Auditorium

Extinction can be projected at the museum's auditorium, either in a loop or with a detailed timetable. Its screening should be explicitly included in the official exhibition program.

Exclusions

Extinction cannot be programed in film cycles, single screenings or included in parallel events.

Extinction cannot be programed in cinema theaters either non-profit or commercial.

Extinction cannot be edited in DVD or Blu-Ray, VOD, Internet and ancillary.

Extraordinary situations might be considered. Please contact the rights holder for extraordinary permits.

3.TV/Monitor

c) treatment(s)/product(s) in case of restoration (p.ex : *silicone for latex*). Please indicate the name and address of (the) firm to contact.

For preservation materials should be copied and updated to newer formats in order not to become technologically outdated. There should be a back up of the MASTER.

Film Factory <http://filmfactory.fr/> or similar service provider.

6. PLACE OF REALISATION (exact address):

Shooting

2014 – 2016, Shumen, Varna, Buzludzha, Silistra – Bulgaria; Lisboa, Porto – Portugal; Chişinău, Cahul, Rezina – Moldova; Rîbniţa, Tiraspol, Lenin, Bendery, Dubăsari, Kuchugan – Transnistria; Berlin – Germany; Constanţa, Călăraşi, Oancea – Romania; Pervomarisk – Ukraine

Post-production

Editing: July 2014, Berlin–Germany; February 2015, Lisbon–Portugal; October 2016, Lisbon–Portugal; September 2017, Lisbon–Portugal

Sound Editing: December 2017, Lisbon–Portugal

Sound Mix: January 2018, Lisbon–Portugal

Color Grading: January 2018, Lisbon–Portugal

Deliveries: February 2018, Lisbon–Portugal

Premiere

March 2018, CPH:DOX, Copenhagen – Denmark

7. DIMENSIONS

(height x width x depth / or diameter, without frame) and other measures necessary, in centimetres (duration should appear in minutes/seconds)

> dimensions with frame (height x width x depth)

HD video, 2:39, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 80 min., Germany-Portugal

Projection: Dimensions of the projection can be variable.

Minimum projection area recommended 391x220 cm

8. AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURE (date, justification, etc.)

Please indicate if the work signed, dated, titled, or any other inscription. Thank you for the transcribing exactly as these inscriptions appear on the work (eg. a monogram).

a) Emplacement of inscriptions on the work

Please refer to credits inscribed in the work.

b) Technique of inscriptions

HD video, 2:39, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 80 min., Germany-Portugal

9. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SALOME LAMAS: PARAFICTION (Selected Works) by Mousse Publishing, Milan – Italy

10. PREPARATORY WORK(S)

2016/17 – Self-Portrait

Web project, photography and text, Germany-Portugal

2 Photogravure, spite-bite aquatint on 300g Somerset Softwhite paper, Portugal

Paper Size: 56 x 76 cm; Image Size: 21x15cm (image), 33x48,3 cm (text)

Commission: This Long Century Web Project

Production: Curtas Metragens CRL / Solar Galeria de Arte Cinemática

Fine art: MeelPress

Support: Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual (ICA), Screen Miguel Nabinho

2015 - A Torre / The Tower

HD video, 16:9, black and white, Dolby 5.1 sound, 8 min., Portugal - Germany - Moldova

In collaboration with Christoph Both-Asmus

Production: Mengamuk, O Som e a Fúria

Support: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Yaddo, Bogliasco Foundation, Bikini, Universidade Católica do Porto

Distribution: Agência da Curta Metragem, Kinoscope

Video Installation Edition: Fundação EDP/MAAT Museu de Arte Arquitectura e Tecnologia - collection, Portugal

Harvard Film Archive (HFA) / Harvard University - collection, USA

Video Installation Edition: CNAP – Centre National de Arts Plastiques - collection, France

2017 - Horizon Norizoh

Two-channel HD video installation, 16:9, black and white, stereo sound, 8 min. sync in a loop, Denmark-Portugal-Brazil-Germany

In collaboration with Gregorio Graziosi

Commission: CPH:LAB

Support: CPH:DOX; Danish film institute

11. REPRODUCTIONS

For our documentation, thank you for sending us, for each work, a colour reproduction

Installation views / Documentation, Video Stills – please refer to additional materials.

12. ADDRESS OF THE ARTIST (STREET WITH N°, ZIP CODE, CITY, COUNTRY)

Salomé Lamas

Rua da Bempostinha 20, 3E

1150-066 Lisbon, Portugal

13. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Thank you to join a short biography of the artist, with the mention of studies, formation and exhibitions as well as the catalogue, if existing, in which the work is reproduced.

Bio note

Salomé Lamas (Lisbon) studied cinema in Lisbon and Prague, visual arts in Amsterdam and is a Ph.D candidate in contemporary art studies in Coimbra.

Her work has been screened both in art venues and film festivals such as Berlinale, BAFICI, Museo Arte Reina Sofia, FIAC, MNAC – Museu do Chiado, DocLisboa, Cinema du Réel, Visions du Réel, MoMA – Museum of Modern Art, Museo Guggenheim Bilbao, Harvard Film Archive, Museum of Moving Images

NY, Jewish Museum NY, Fid Marseille, Arsenal Institut fur film und videokunst, Viennale, Culturgest, CCB - Centro Cultural de Belém, Hong Kong FF, Museu Serralves, Tate Modern, CPH: DOX, Centre d'Art Contemporain de Genève, Bozar , Tabakalera, ICA London, TBA 21 Foundation, Mostra de São Paulo, CAC Vilnius, MALBA, FAEMA, SESC São Paulo, MAAT, La Biennale di Venezia Architettura, among others.

Lamas was granted several fellowships such as The Gardner Film Study Center Fellowship – Harvard University, The Rockefeller Foundation – Bellagio Center, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundación Botín, Sundance, Bogliasco Foundation, The MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD.

She collaborates with Universidade Católica Portuguesa and Elias Querejeta Zine Eskola. She collaborates with the production company O Som e a Fúria and is represented by Miguel Nabinho Gallery. salomelamas.info

Filmography, selected work

OURO E CINZA/GOLD AND ACHES [in development], PANTHERAS [in development], HOTEL ROYAL [in production], EXTRACTION: THE RAFT OF THE MEDUSA [in production], O CORPO, A SEXUALIDADE E O ERÓTICO NA OBRA DE JÚLIO POMAR / THE BODY, SEXUALITY AND THE EROTIC IN THE WORK OF JÚLIO POMAR [2019] (audiovisual installation) FATAMORGANA [2016-2019] (Fatamorgana [2017] theatre play, ©Fatamorgana [2018-2019] film, Fatamorgana [2018] publication in collaboration with Isabel Ramos, Affektenlehre [2018] sound installation in collaboration with Miguel Martins, What do we talk about when we talk about Fatamorgana [2018] film, Untitled [in development] photographs, Fatamorgana [in production] publication), DREAM WORLD [2018] (photography), HANGAR-TERMINAL-METRO [2018], EXTINÇÃO / EXTINCTION [2018], , UBI SUNT I [2017], UBI SUNT II [2017] (video installation - in collaboration with Christoph Both-Asmus), UBI SUNT III [2017] (video installation - in collaboration with Christoph Both-Asmus), COUP DE GRACE [2017], HORIZON NOZIROH [2017] (video installation - co-directed with Gregorio Graziosi in collaboration with Christoph Both-Asmus), AUTO RETRATO / SELF PORTRAIT [2016-18] (installation, photogravure) ...RIOTS AND RITUALS [2016], THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD [2016] (video installation), ELDORADO XXI [2016], THE A TORRE / TOWER [2015], MOUNT ANANEA (installation) [2015], NORTE/NORTH: TRIAL BY FIRE (video installation) [2015], LE BOUDIN [2014], THEATRUM ORBIS TERRARUM [2013], TERRA DE NINGUÉM / NO MAN'S LAND [2012], A COMUNIDADE / THE COMMUNITY [2012], ENCOUNTERS WITH LANDSCAPE3X [2012], VHS - VIDEO HOME SYSTEM [2010-2012], GOLDEN DAWN [2011], IMPERIAL GIRL [2010], JOTTA: A MINHA MALADRESSE É UMA FORMA DE DELICATESSE [2009] (co-directed with Francisco Moreira)

14. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS ENCLOSED WITH THE WORK

- a) Complete CV – digital pdf;**
- b) Salomé Lamas: Parafaction (Selected Works) – book;**
- c) Press kit;**
- d) Portfolio;**
- e) Stills;**
- f) Subtitles with TC, transcript of dialogues (when needed);**
- g) Additional info.**

Text accompanying the work should be printed and made available to the public, when possible.

Text I

Sovereignty and the vicissitudes of recognition: peoplehood and performance in a *de facto* state

By Michael Bobick

With its dissolution in 1991, the Soviet Union's fifteen constituent republics became independent states. Overnight, individuals and populations became subjects and citizens of new nation-states, some of which did not exist prior to Soviet rule. The demise of the Soviet Union was far from peaceful, and struggles over the territory and resources of its newly independent states took a violent turn. The April 22nd, 1993 edition of *Pravda* states, "Since 1991 we have lost approximately 150,000 in wars on the territory of the former Soviet Union. This is eleven times greater than [were lost] in ten years of war in Afghanistan — such is the scale of the new tragedy" (Babilunga and Bomesko 1993: 29).

In Eurasia, the demise of Soviet power resulted in a number of "frozen" conflicts that birthed polities with varying degrees of international recognition: Transnistria in Moldova, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, and, more recently, the Donetsk and the Luhansk People's Republics in Ukraine. These *de facto* states, some of which have existed for more than two decades, raise a host of questions related to sovereignty and political authority in the 21st century. *De facto* states bring up not only the issue of *de jure* versus *de facto* sovereignty, but of recognition more broadly.

What forms of recognition are required for statehood, both internally and externally? In what ways do processes of recognition operate *vis-à-vis* constituents, state institutions, and other sovereign states?

Text II

Substitution, Satire, and Performance: Eurasia's *de facto* States

By Michael Bobick

Winston Churchill once remarked, "history is written by the victors." After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West collectively basked in the victory of Western liberal democracy. In a stunning reversal of Karl Marx, who imagined that the antagonistic contradictions of history would end with communism firmly displacing capitalism, it was capitalism and its political armature, liberal democracy, that had proven to be the enduring feature of humanity, the point at which the Hegelian dialectic had reached its ultimate goal. One prominent American scholar, Francis Fukuyama, boastfully remarked in 1992 that:

"What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of government."

Viewed more than two decades later, this astounding statement offers a prescient vision for the 21st century. Given the absence of any competing alternatives, even those who oppose liberal democracy have embraced it. Russia is but one example of what Dmitri Furman terms "imitation democracies." Given the absence of any competing alternatives, imitation democracies combine democratic constitutional norms with a reality of authoritarian rule. The form is democratic, the content – autocratic. It is through this uneasy embrace of democracy that one must view Russia: as a country that purports to be a liberal democracy in order to subvert and undermine its principled underpinnings.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, we have assumed that Russia has been transitioning to a liberal democracy, albeit with its norms, standards, and practices. The West has its own liberal democracy, while Russia has its own sovereign democracy. This fusion of two contradictory concepts – sovereignty as the basis for government and states, and democracy as the system in which citizens participate equally in government – is Russia's unique contribution to an already contradictory era of late-liberalism.

This is not to say that Russian democracy is or is not abnormal, but rather that it is an exercise in substitution: Russia substitutes the principles of democracy with strategy. This strategy trumps all – it was not a single threat that forced Russia to intervene, but rather the example Ukrainian protesters offered to Russians. The Euromaidan movement's overthrow of a corrupt regime offered a blueprint for deposing Putin. This revolutionary fear echoes the thought of Vyacheslav von Plehve, Nicholas II's Interior Minister, who in 1904 remarked "We need a little victorious war to stem the tide of revolution." This led to defeat in the Russo-Japanese war and revolution in 1905. Unable or unwilling to wage a formal war with Ukraine, in the 21st century Russia must use the tenets of democracy and human rights (intervention, self-determination, human rights protection) to wage war by other means. This hollowing out of terms – a democracy carefully stage-managed, a people cultivated to further Russian goals, an occupation without formally occupying, a referendum without choice – is the most important takeaway from Putin's Crimean adventure.

Victors and History

Mere days after the close of a successful Winter Olympics in which the host nation won the most overall medals, Russia invaded and subsequently annexed the Crimea peninsula, a *de jure* Ukrainian territory. Though this Olympic victory is perhaps of a different scale than what Churchill imagined, this victory has proven to be much more symbolic than even Russia's two Chechen campaigns. Russia's reemergence on the geopolitical stage is both surprising and expected, given Russia's desire to overcome the perceived harm and humiliation it felt at the hands of the West during the 1990s. NATO's 2004 expansion in Eastern Europe was perhaps the most recent slight, though one must not underestimate the humiliation and privation felt by millions under Yeltsin.

Russia's resurgence as a geopolitical superpower is embodied in the figure of Vladimir Putin, occasional Prime Minister and, it would appear, President for the foreseeable future. Putin is the first leader in generations that Russians can be proud of. Not since Lenin has Russia had a leader capable of embodying the collective voice of a people wronged and misunderstood by outsiders. Precise, charismatic rhetoric (and, it must be said, grammatically correct Russian) is a hallmark of Putin's tenure. This ability to articulate a national vision should not be underestimated. Putin's accuracy, fluency, and clarity are part of his appeal, as is well-documented use of criminal slang. As Prime Minister, Putin famously declared in a press conference, "We will pursue terrorists everywhere ... we will kill [moisten] them in the outhouse."

Putin's celebrity is not only political, but cultural. He has become larger than life, an emblematic figure who exudes the confidence of a resurgent nation. In 2002, a hitherto unknown Russian pop duo "Singing Together" —had a surprise hit that shot to the top of the Russian charts. "My boyfriend is in trouble again, got in a fight got drunk on something nasty," the duo sings. Fed up with their drunk, deadbeat men (a stereotype with a particular salience in post-Soviet Russia), they collectively declare that want someone ... like Putin.

"One like Putin, full of strength,
One like Putin, who won't be a drunk,
One like Putin, who wouldn't hurt me,
One like Putin, who won't run away!"

The music video shows Putin at his most confident: meeting with world leaders, fielding questions at a press conference, and, of course, taking down an opponent with his judo skills. In 2002, this video existed at the representative level as an intentionally ironic song. Over time, the core message of this song has increasingly taken on a literal meaning as Putin's adept, quick annexation of Crimea reinforces his image as one who "won't run away" from Russia's enemies or forsake their own compatriots.

During Putin's Address to the Federal Assembly in 2005, he called upon Russians to recall 'Russia's most recent history.'

'Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major

geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory.’ (Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation 25 April 2005, The Kremlin, Moscow)

Though much discussion focuses on first part of this quote, Putin’s comments on Russian compatriots in the ‘near abroad’ are perhaps more relevant. Russians living outside of Russia constitute a category of people that are specifically protected under Russian law. The specific law, “On State Policy of the Russian Federation with respect to Compatriots Abroad,” defines compatriots as “people living in other states deriving from some ethnicity that has historically resided in Russia,” along with people who have “made a free choice to be spiritually, culturally and legally linked to the Russian Federation.” This choice can include “an act of self-identification, reinforced by social or professional activity for the preservation of Russian language, the native languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, the development of Russian culture abroad ...” The fundamental indeterminacy within this concept is not unlike the “people” who are the constituent holders of sovereignty in the West.

Geopolitical Leverage

A key element of Russian strategy is to use separatist regions (Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Crimea) as enclaves from which to threaten the states that should legally govern them. Russian actions in these territories offer no single plan or blueprint, but instead a variety of aid and forms of intervention. Some territories are recognized as independent states (South Ossetia or Abkhazia), some are merely supported (as in the case of Transnistria, in Moldova), while others are annexed directly (Crimea). In all of these contested territories, the Russian military directly or indirectly guarantees their security. By creating conflicts and subsequently keeping the peace, Russia occupies the roles of aggressor, provocateur, and peacekeeper yet does not formally occupy any territory. Through these separatist entities Russia indirectly controls the internationally recognized sovereign states in which they reside. This re-establishment of control and influence in Russia’s “near abroad” constitutes a new form of warfare. Russia, observing the experiences of US intervention in the post 9/11 era, have learned that wars may be short and cheap, but occupations are exponentially more costly. By threatening occupation, Russia creates a climate of mistrust and fear that controls the actions of the sovereign states and their polities. The Russian-born anthropologist Alexei Yurchak has referred to this as new post-Soviet, post-imperial political technology of “non-occupation.”

By creating territorial conflicts and supporting claims, Russia guarantees that these states will never be admitted to NATO or any other military alliance, given that no organization would accept a member with an ongoing territorial dispute with Russia, a nuclear power and Security Council member.

With these conflict zones, Russia cultivates (in the agricultural sense of the term) peoples for harvesting once they are ripe and needed to further their strategy. First, Russia gives individuals residing in these territories Russian citizenship. Yet these citizens, permanently residing outside their purported homeland, are objects of affection kept at a distance (think of that awkward relative you are forced to see once a year). Though these citizens are supported materially through aid, subsidies, and cheap natural gas, as they are in Transnistria, their most important benefit is their role in the Russian geopolitical imagination. As such, intervention can occur on their behalf in accordance with Russian and international law (more on this below).

These citizens of convenience speak Russian and readily consume Russian media. They have become acclimated with the “Russian” outlook on the world in which the principled, cherished concepts of the West – democracy, freedom, the rule of law – threaten their uniquely “Russian” way of life. To Russian compatriots as well as to the Russian state, these “foreign” ideas are implanted by covert Western agents through NGOs seeking to destabilize Russia. As the Russian media ceaselessly reiterates, once these ideas are put into practice, their true origins are unmasked -- their practitioners become fascists, and these supposedly democratic protesters topple legally elected governments. As was the case in Georgia (the Rose Revolution), Ukraine (2008’s Orange Revolution and Maidan), and, to a lesser extent, Moldova (the 2009 Twitter revolution), the violence and disorder inherent in every revolution becomes a pretext for humanitarian by the perpetual, paternal bearer of peace and stability: Russia.

Satire, Liberalism and Humanitarian Intervention

Recent events in Crimea have illustrated the degree to which the Russian state has created a new form of extraterritorial governance in its “near abroad.” This political technology of non-occupation allows for its military forces to be both anonymous yet recognized, to be polite (witness the selfies with soldiers posted on Instagram and other social networking websites) yet threatening (in particular, to Ukrainians and Ukrainian military forces). Until the Crimean referendum of 16 March 2014 and its almost immediate annexation by the Russian Federation, these well-equipped “self-defense” forces operated without any official, recognized existence, i.e., without insignia. They were any army without the formal backing of a state, without an individual or collective identity (the vast majority of these forces wore masks), and, at least initially, without an explicit goal (save for keeping the “peace”). They were not fighting terrorism, bringing sovereign democracy to Crimea, or formally invading a sovereign Ukrainian territory. They occupied without occupying. Through simply through their presence they projected enough force to keep lawful Ukrainian forces at bay and allow a hastily-organized referendum to occur under the careful tutelage of this armed, organized, and disciplined army that is in fact not, legally, an army.

Putin’s repeated disavowal of these soldiers as self-defense forces is a cynical joke, a satirization of international law, human rights, and humanitarian intervention. This comedic drama has real consequences, as the Russian populace has increasingly embraced Putin’s narrative script and potential Crimean scenarios proliferate across the former Soviet space (in Moldova, eastern Ukraine, the Baltic states, and in northern Kazakhstan). Through his defense of Russian compatriots, Putin both utilizes and satirizes humanitarian intervention and the “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) political doctrine. The Responsibility to Protect authorizes intervention in the domestic affairs of another sovereign nation if the sovereign state cannot protect its own population from gross human rights violations such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. It was originally intended to authorize foreign intervention in situations like the Rwandan genocide, and to authorize international interventions to protect separatist minority populations seeking ethnic self-determination. But like all cherished political doctrines, its meaning has shifted in practice. The United States, in particular, uses humanitarian intervention to further its own immediate geopolitical interests. By masking attempts to re-establish the Soviet empire in a humanitarian cloak, Putin performs the same script as Western governments but with a noted cynicism, overtly claiming to use the same principled intervention while transparently revealing a previously unarticulated equivalence between American and Russian imperial ambitions. America does this, so why can’t Russia?

These “double-standards” are a staple of political rhetoric within these separatist states, given that they see the West as collectively denying their claims to self-determination. By distancing the effects of war from the term itself (similarly to its non-occupation as occupation), Russia has redefined peace as a continuation of war by other means. Humanitarian intervention becomes an instrument to intimidate and control neighboring states. Putin’s distortion of the rhetoric of international humanitarian action reveals the *realpolitik* at its core. When Russia occupies another country’s sovereign territory, organizes self-determination (i.e., a referendum) under an implicit military threat, annexes those seeking self-determination, and uses humanitarian intervention and international law to justify its actions, satire has come full circle. Unable to offer any countermeasures to Russian aggression, the West is left to make its case against Russia using these same terms from an obvious position of sincerity, even though these terms have been obviously morally evacuated.

Conclusion

What is important to remember about Crimea is the performative nature of the Russian incursion. At first, soldiers operated without insignia and, ipso facto, unofficially. Yet after they have been unsurprisingly unmasked as Russian forces, their presence enables the new Crimean authorities to perform the constituent actions of any sovereign. This performativity illustrates an increasingly large gap between legal (*de jure*) and actual (*de facto*) sovereignty, though international law holds that recognition by other sovereigns is purely declaratory. These separatist entities exist, they fight wars, and their constituents

believe in them despite their many visible failings. Most discussions about the legitimacy or illegitimacy of Russia's intervention in Crimea obscure a particularly salient point that must be addressed: these de facto polities are artifacts of war. Their residents and citizens are inadvertent combatants who have been conditioned to see the stakes of acceding to the de jure sovereign as capitulation to enemies at best, and to fascists at worst. Renouncing their tentative independence is equated with a liquidation of the region's distinguishing features and peoples.

More broadly, Crimea and Eurasia's other de facto states illustrate how a critical mass of dedicated individuals, with the implicit backing from another state, can come to embody a phenomenon long the purview of political science: geopolitics. During trips to Transnistria, Crimea, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, people would stress the geopolitical importance of their place in the world. During field research on statehood and sovereignty in Transnistria from 2008-2009, residents remained certain that Russia would rescue them from Europe and help them keep NATO and Euro-Atlantic values at bay. This would also, ipso facto, stop the extinction of their Russian (Soviet) culture. Events in Crimea have only heightened expectations. While on a November 2008 trip to the Crimea, I toured the dachas of Chekhov, Stalin, and the Russian painter Aivozovsky (born Hovhannes Aivazian), it was clear these Russian cultural icons remained safe under the tutelage of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. In Yalta, at the summer retreat of Nicholas II, the conference rooms remain as they were when Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin presided over the geopolitical division of post-war Europe. In March 2013, this curated cultural narrative took on a life of its own. At a 2008 NGO conference in Georgia (oddly enough, on the topic of interpersonal conflict resolution), my Georgian hosts lamented the lack of NATO intervention as a geopolitical oversight caused by other, more distant wars; the West would come, they said, though it was obvious that Russia would remain. While a visiting scholar at the American University of Central Asia, similar concerns emerged. Kyrgyzstan, the most democratic country in an otherwise autocratic region, could astutely extort the US for financial gain, as its location as a vital logistical terminal overstated its otherwise peripheral location. One taxi driver, happy for US military contractors who paid him generously, wondered how long this geopolitical game would go on. In the absence of a real economy, the rents generated by geopolitics and remittances would have to suffice. In the absence of any other compelling reason, geopolitics became the primary reason for their country's importance. These claims are not simply the ideological remnants of the Cold War, but must instead be seen as attempts to (re)inscribe themselves in a new world's order. As Russian actions in Crimea have shown, this new geopolitical order offers no firm conceptual designations; paradox, contradiction, and double-standards are its means of creating coherence for those living amidst the liminality-at-large. In this sense one must look at these polities not as outliers, but rather as entities in which problematize a worldview in which reality can be described with an accepted-upon conceptual vocabulary.

The leaders and elites of Eurasia's unrecognized states champion national self-determination, while the states in which they reside stress the need for stability. In the face of these incompatible principles, these entities illustrate the double standards that allow for recognition of some states (Kosovo) yet deny it to others (the PMR, Abkhazia, South Ossetia). Attempts to delegitimize these entities or to discern their artificiality obscures their communality with our own existence as political subjects.

Crimea, along with Eurasia's other separatist states (Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh) illustrate the very real conceptual slippage of the foundational terms of contemporary politics. Freedom, equality, democracy, self-determination, and intervention are fundamental political concepts of the 19th and 20th centuries, yet in the 21st century we can witness their ongoing (re)definition in old, new, and emerging democracies. Far from being concepts with an agreed-upon basis in reality, their flexible reimagining in Eurasia's de facto states illustrates their inherent indeterminacy. The West intervenes on behalf of principles, while Russia intervenes to further their strategic goals. Given the absence of the Cold War as a stabilizing reference point, we are left to comprehend our own uncertain moment with political concepts that have long since lost their referent. In this sense Russia's humanitarian intervention and support for self-determination should not be seen as perversions of long-sacred principles, but as a reflection of uncertain times.

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Seeing in the dark (excerpts)

by Eric Hynes

In black, white, and smoky gray, a young man stares back at us in slow motion. That same man sits in the back of a car as it hurtles down wet streets, then wanders around desolate landscapes, conversing with various strangers about the collapse of the Soviet Union and the splintering that followed. Yet no matter how arresting these images are, the most important activities in *Extinction* aren't visually depicted.

In fact, for many minutes at a time, there's nothing to see at all, save for a dark-blue depthless expanse disrupted only by subtitles. There's still a picture—note the blueness, not blackness—but it's one you have to populate for yourself. It's like looking at a fully fogged window: something's supposed to be there, something should come *through* there. You're drawn to the frame and also past it, replacing a lack of projected imagery with your own private projections of what's missing. Private in that they're invisible to others and subjective in detail, prompted and motivated by what's objectively present and richly suggestive: the soundtrack.

There's much—far too much for a single column—to be said about the qualities of cinematic sound. But what's particularly evocative about its role in *Extinction*, as well as in some other recent works of nonfiction, is its interplay with thwarted expectations for visuals. These aren't radio pieces or podcasts, in which an element of cinematic theatricality might be situational (such as when radio pieces are attended by a live audience, or when foreign-language podcasts are presented with subtitles, à la Eleanor McDowall's *Radio Atlas* series). These are films in which an empty screen isn't solely a formal condition, but rather something active, unstable, provocative, meaningful. Here sound doesn't merely fill in what's absent, it challenges and converses with a screen that answers back with pointed opacity. Meanwhile the viewer, while ideally always engaged, has no choice but to actively process and synthesize, to get to work.

Consider Derek Jarman's *Blue* (1993), a masterpiece in this vein, which sonically constructs room after room of memories, emotions, aphorisms, characters, stray thoughts, and impassioned declarations—all somehow related to, emitted from, and poured into a vibrating horizontal canvas of cobalt blue. Faced with Jarman's visionary deathbed opus, your eyes aren't closed, you're not getting lost in the infinite space of your own darkness—you're open and awake to his blues. As with up-close viewings of monochromatic minimalist paintings (Yves Klein was an inspiration for Jarman), your

eyes aren't even primarily visual tools anymore, they're quivering, overactive muscles. You stop looking for shapes in the color; instead, the color starts shaping you.

In *Extinction*, the visuals are arrested whenever our young protagonist, along with the film's crew, attempts to cross a series of borders in eastern Europe. These checkpoints of Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, Transnistria, and Russia, are netherlands where cameras are seemingly unwelcome but also perhaps irrelevant. There's a shifty indeterminacy to these crossings that merits witness, but it's also possible that visual witness won't make anything more legible. Hear the posturing, hear the dissembling, hear the grift come through loud and clear. That feeling of being nowhere and somewhere at the same time—one moment in an inter-nationally recognized nation, the next in disputed, supposedly illegitimate territory; one moment having physical autonomy, the next being denied free movement—is profoundly expressed by Lamas's formal gambit. (Whether or not the gambit is motivated by necessity or theory, it plays persuasively as the former, legitimizing the latter.)

Based on the audio, you might picture what's happening, perhaps even vividly. Thwarting one sense often heightens the capacities of another. But the point isn't merely to play with our senses. Our subjective understanding of these events parallels those of travelers who never know what new reality they're walking into—"the situation has changed a bit," a border guard says to justify detention—never know what improvised law will be used against them, never know which crossing will turn out to be a barrier. Creativity along the margins can be liberating; it can also be corrupting and subjugating.

Her experiment called to mind *I Had Nowhere to Go*, Douglas Gordon's collaboration with and tribute to nonagenarian experimental filmmaker Jonas Mekas, which made the festival rounds in 2016. Nearly everything goes unseen in the film, yet Gordon's empty screen serves less as a dark canvas on which to project Mekas's spoken remembrances than as a neutralizing monolith. No doubt there's much to picture in Mekas's often harrowing stories of flight from Lithuania during the Second World War, which involved living in a Nazi prison camp and escaping to the U.S. But Gordon's sporadic insertions of imagery function as near non sequiturs—here, briefly, is a gorilla, several minutes after Mekas mentioned one, and not even *this* one, in passing—serving to effectively rebut our impulses to fill in the gaps. What it does is train our ears, instead of satisfying our eyes, so that Mekas's voice, with all of its accented character, poetic cadences, and refined melancholy, absorbs our attention.

If Gordon had withheld visuals entirely, we'd settle into the experience as we might a radio broadcast, free to concentrate our eyes wherever we might, and bring Mekas's voice into our own individual space. Whereas these rare, unevenly spaced glimpses of

things that are never *the thing* situate us in the cinema, if unfamiliarly. It's another move that disciplines our eyes so that we'll really listen.

Published in Film Comment in the May/June 2018 Issue. Eric Hynes is a journalist and critic, and curator of film at Museum of the Moving Image in New York.

Who's afraid of the Russian Soul?1

By Emília Tavares

The militant cynicism of the writer Thomas Bernhard hangs over Salomé Lamas' most recent film, *Extinction*, in a very significant way. A fierce critic of the idea of nationalism and the heavy historical legacies of Nazism in post-war Austria and Germany, his thinking radically introduces a critical conception of the idea of border to which *Extinction* leads us.

Extinction is a documentary and fictional plot about the social and political reorganisation of Russia, and the tragic consequences of the institution of a new empire. Filmed at border checkpoints, in a problematic enclave between Moldova, Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria, the film unfolds under the gloomy cloak of historical her-itage and new forms of despotic control over territories.

At the heart of the action is Transnistria, a small country with a complex political and social history which clearly shows the pow-er play in the region between Russia and bordering countries, all formerly part of the USSR. Although it belongs to Moldova, Trans-nistria claims its independence together with integration into the Russian Federation, an aspiration which is recognised neither by the Kremlin nor internationally. This does not prevent the existence of a clear occupation of social, political and economic influence in this small country by Russia, creating yet another constant source of tension in the region. Russia remains dominant, through border controls, an active spy network and strategic financial aid, establish-ing its political and economic dominance, but without any recognition of Transnistria's independence.

Extinction also reflects on the recent history of Eastern Europe, with clear references to the work of the Polish historian and journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski (1932-2007), author of *Impe-rium* (1993), one of the most distinctive works on the political his-tory of Russia and bordering countries. Furthermore, it confronts us with Russian mentality, through the thoughts of two survivors of the Siberian Gulag, Varlam Shalamov (1907-1982) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008), whose view of their personal experience in the prison camps under the Stalin regime represents the paradox of Russian culture itself with respect to its totalitarian history.

The project was filmed in 2015, at a time when the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation was at its peak, due to the annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea by the latter, which would give rise to an atmosphere of constant tension and fear, evident at each border crossing. This state of conflict persists in the region of the Donbass. With an illusory script and an identity as journalists, the film's crew experience the reality of this web of control of identities and nationalities to which the whole region is subjected on a daily basis.

The material filmed for *Extinction* was also used to make a short-film *Self-Portrait* (2018) and a diptych of photogravures (2017) that allude to the only border incident, between Moldova and Ukraine, with KGB agents, and to a series of 3 photographs from a sequence of 148 shots of the film with the title *Dream World* (2018), about the colossal *Memorial House of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, built on Mount Buzludzha between 1974 and 1981.

Extinction travels through four Eastern European countries with the historical burden of a Bolshevik Russia, in a dramatic duality of past and present, memory and future resolution, dominated by the decadence of the ideology and its most atrocious ghosts. By engineering the whole film around border regions, the director emphasises the despotic nature of these controlled areas, to which the witnesses confer vehement documentation.

The film clearly expresses the confrontation of memory with the decadence of a future, through the character Kolja, who has Moldovan nationality but claims his Transnistrian identity. Symbolically, Kolja was born at the time of the fall of the communist regime and is conflicted by a drifting identity and a feeling of unconditional love for his homeland. Kolja's life is also the reflection of a historical confrontation between East and West, exposing the weaknesses of the project of the European Community in the face of the imposition of a new wave of nationalisms and autocratic regimes.

Conscious of the symbolic importance of architecture and its legacy of a complex view of history, Salomé carefully films some of the emblematic monuments of the communist regime, which create a second filmic structure that guides us through the horrors of the end of the ideology, and which endure, in the landscape and in memory, as uncomfortable reminders of a recent past. In doing so she reveals their material and allegorical magnificence and the flagrant contrast with the eminent degradation and abandon of some of them at the present time. It is important that we reflect on these monuments, which Kolja visits as if on a tour of the past, as patrimonial and symbolic markers with which the new regimes produce their history.

Two important monuments in Bulgaria set the stage for *Extinction*. The first is the monument that commemorates 1300 years of the Bulgarian nation, erected in 1981, also known as the *Founders of the Bulgarian State Monument*, erected on a high plateau near the city of Shumen. The scene of colossal mythical figures which constitute the monument evoke some of the most violent stories of the despotism of the Stalin regime.

The remains of the past also include the *Memorial House of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, built on Mount Buzludzha between 1974 and 1981. An empire of symbolism, it narrates the great achievements of the Bolshevik Revolution in Bulgaria and of its main protagonists. The monument's first phase of construction involved some 6000 workers. It was operational for a decade, but after 1989 it was abandoned as a result of the fall of the communist regime in the country, succumbing to the same fate as many other similar monuments that were either ransacked or destroyed. Currently, the Bulgarian government is planning a mammoth recuperation project with the aim to 'preserve the monument for future generations, while incorporating new museum elements in order to present a full and comprehensive account of Bulgarian history', according to the project's website.²

As one of the poorest countries in Europe, with an oligarchic tradition of political and economic power and a worrying swing to the far-right in the recent elections, the past and future symbolism of the monument seems to compromise any critical exercise in history. *Extinction* shows us the immense frieze of the intellectual mentors of socialism covered in anti-communist slogans and graffiti, signs of the political failure of a regime, but not necessarily of its cultural and social ghosts.

In Moldova, the film features the 'Romanita' Tower, situated in Chisinau, built between 1978 and 1986, intended to be a model for collective housing. The building was quickly privatised after the end of the regime and is now abandoned due to its unsuitability for modern public requirements.

These are spaces of disintegration, whose memory remains active, representing the decadent ruins of an ideology, and which continue to affect the life and future of the population. Uprooting, lost utopias and frustrated hopes contaminate the formerly noble 'Russian soul'.

Surprisingly, the recuperation of the mythology of this 'Russian soul' seems to be a new source of inspiration for European politicians. A concept invented by philosophers and writers in the 19th century, the 'Russian soul' was rooted in the defence of an intellectuality closer to spiritual values and the people, in a return to the cultural and historical origins of Russia. It strove for an ideal of a universal congregation of humanity, based on Christian values and led by the superior messianic capacity of the Russian people.

The literary and intellectual movement *Pochvennichestvo* responded to the historical duality of Slavophiles and Westernists, constituting a third path for the fate of Russia on the map of nations. Defending Christian ethics, spirituality, suffering and resignation as values of purification, the constitution of this 'Russian soul' was also an indictment in favour of a return 'to Russian soil', to '*pochva*', a way of bringing intellectuals closer to the people and thus allowing them to affirm, above all other nations, their singular capacity for putting fraternal universalism into practice.

As noted by various historians, the concept of 'Russian soul' came about at a time in history of intense struggle and uncertainty between the East and the West, but was nevertheless a concept produced in the romantic context of nationalisms, which would be reused throughout history to justify an identity gap between a unitarian political force and the people.

Another more critical perspective was that of the philosopher Pyotr Chaadayev, who considered that the memory of the birth of the Russian nation was intimately connected to "first wild barbarism, then rude superstition, then cruel and humiliating foreign domination, whose essence our rulers subsequently inherited, that is the sorrowful story of our youth (...) we live only in the present in the narrowest of its confines, with neither a past nor a future – in dead stagnation."³

Nowadays, the allegory of this historical concept is being recuperated by some of the political elite, for example, the French president, Emmanuel Macron, who on his last visit to the Kremlin invoked Dostoevsky's messianic vision of the 'Russian soul' to move Putin and Europeans towards a fraternal universality. Other Eastern European leaders have invoked a foundational spirituality as the programmatic axis of an extremist nationalist ideology.

Borders and Peripheries

In a Europe of free movement of people and goods, Extinction reminds us that the symbolism of borders and their territory are linked to the political constitution of Europe itself, and that they have been crucial in the development of both democracy and despotism. The first great historical border was the separation of East and West, which was amplified by the developments of the dissolution of the USSR and which, according to some historians and political analysts, turned Eastern Europe into the object of social and cultural phenomena of a 'peripheral' nature.⁴

Consequently, Eastern Europe was positioned on the political map and in public imagination as a territory that was 'foreign, 'external and exterior' to Western Europe, which recent phenomena of xenophobia and exclusion, such as the attacks on Polish communities in the wake of Brexit, in Great Britain, seem to confirm.⁵

By shifting the reflection from the purely political and geo-strategic sphere to aspects of culture and mentalities, the debate and understanding of the constitution of the borders of Eastern Europe take on new shapes.

A fundamental aspect which the countries and societies rebuilt after the fall of the Berlin Wall seem to have in common is the failure of political, democratic and participative devices, since regime change was not accompanied by a change of mentalities or culture. The cyclical failure of an institution of democracy lies, therefore, in a historical context too rooted in despotism and violence, without time for regeneration, reformulated in terms of experiences.

Salomé Lamas' film clearly shows us this mental failure in the face of change, through Kolja and his resignation to a historical legacy, to a dark and difficult present, an 'I'm nobody' which finds its loudest expression in the divorce of politics from life.

As Pamela Ballinger asserts (2018), "for those individuals suffering the effects of life in a European superperiphery or for mi-grants trapped in the no-man's land of the "Balkan corridor," the language of Eastern peripheries continues to resonate as a way to denote deep asymmetries. Similarly, such a conceptual vocabulary provides those in the Balkan countries remaining outside of the European Union (...) a means to articulate their sense of being the periphery of the periphery of the periphery."⁶

Through Kolja and the testimonies of inhabitants of these border regions we can better understand this notion of multiplied periphery, not only in its political sense but, above all, in its human dimension. When Kolja affirms that "Europe doesn't interest me, and I don't interest Europe", we are faced with an immense historical echo of a division between East and West that was never purely ideological, but also with a legacy of paternalism and political ignorance, which feeds all extremisms.

The opening of the European Union to the Balkans did not signify, therefore, a universalisation of some of their better principles. Rather, according to some analysts, in the Baltic region, EU accession "has not helped the parties to put the past behind them, as optimistic end-of-history scenarios foresaw. Instead, some of the most dramatic clashes over history and memory have taken place after the historic enlargement of Western institutions."⁷

The violence of which *Extinction* constantly reminds us continues to rise up like a perennial monument, in a region that is both disputed and abandoned, in a cyclic errancy between utopia and its failure.

The response to the question posed by Salomé Lamas, 'Why is it that the East and the West are now about to explode with spectral figures?' has a complex and ambiguous history of understanding.

On the one hand, the Balkans are, in certain circles, understood as a transitional border zone, populated by a masculine and paternalist discourse, embodied by the political figure of Putin. On the other, some historians emphasise the psychological factor of the impossibility of forgetting as crucial in the analysis of the history of Eastern Europe, given that many unresolved problems seem to emerge with new dynamics. Here, the role of historical and ideological manipulation was and continues to be fundamental in a context in which, according to Vaclav Havel, collective hatred has a terrible "power to draw other people into its vortex".⁸

The pair of historians Bidelieux and Jeffries summarise the region's historical and political crossroads: "The Revolutions of 1989 and their aftermath have not only presented old

questions in a new light. They have also raised questions about the past of the new present.”⁹ Such questions still overshadow the democratic projects of Eastern Europe, but alarmingly they also threaten the consolidated democracy of Western Europe.

Extinction is a film which takes a stand, and in this sense allows us to overcome many of the preconceived ideas about Eastern Europe and its recent history, which we see as entrenched between communism and post-communism, but which is much more complex than that. It also demonstrates to us that Putin and Russia are only the most visible face of a wider Europe, which feeds on the paradox of a new autocratic messianism and a savage globalising capitalism.

Extinction affirms that ‘The soul is not a border’, putting the worn out ‘Russian soul’ of the past on a new level of human rights and respect for diversity and identity, which political history cyclically resists. In 2016, on a visit to the Russian Geographical Society, Putin put the geographical knowledge of new generations of Russians to the test¹⁰, talking ironically about a Russia without the limits of borders, whose past is still active and legitimises its modern political attacks of territorial expansion.

(1) Title of an article by Hannah Gais “Who’s Afraid of Russian Soul?”, published in *The American Baffler*, 31 August 2017.

2<http://www.buzludzha-monument.com/project/>

(3) Cited in Ostapenko, Raisa (2018) – “The significance of the Russian Soul in understanding contemporary geopolitics” in *Cambridge Globalist*, 7 August 2018, consulted online.

(4) See for example the article by Ballinger, Pamela (2017) – “Whatever Happened to Eastern Europe?- Revisiting Europe’s Eastern Peripheries” in *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, volume 31, number 1, February 2017, pp. 44-67.

(5) *Ibidem*, p. 46.

(6) *Ibidem*, p. 61

(7) E. Berg, P. Ehin (1999) – “Incompatible Identities? Baltic-Russian Relations and the EU as an Arena for Identity Conflict” in “Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic Russian Relations and European Integration, Franham, Ashgate, cited in Bellinger, Pamela, *op. cit.* p. 52.

(8) Havel, Vaclav (1994) *Towards a Civil Society: Selective Speeches and Writings, 1990-1994*, Prague: Lidove Noviny Publishing House, cited in Bidelieux, Robert and Jeffries, Ian (1998) – *A history of Eastern Europe - crisis and change*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 32.

(9) Bidelieux and Jeffries (1998) *op. cit.* p. 33.

(10) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btLHVYoYnXI>