

SOLARIS

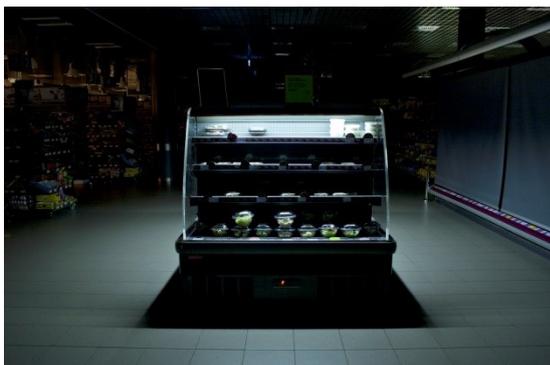
"the world is flesh"

Synopsis

The film exposes closing hours and night time heartbeat of Tallinn shopping mall – a place built to entertain and mirror the world. The ambiguity of camera gaze and the immersive soundscape will confront viewer with a raw materiality of fleeting encounters, circulatory systems and gradually transforming atmosphere.

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

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



Academic context

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

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

Jaroslava Panakova, Speculum Journal (1/2015)

www.solaris-film.com

pavel.borecky@gmail.com

SOLARIS
a sensory ethnography film

Author's Statement

Its light burn right through my eyes. Apparently, my chances of becoming a big fan of shopping malls have never been high. However, getting older, I have realized it is not about the architecture or the perfection of daily shoppers, but rather my concern shifted towards what it represents to me. A world of blissful ignorance, delivering packed and perfumed comfort from all around the world in an instant? A place where take-away happiness can be bought? I decided to confront that...

„What is the night time like in a shopping mall once everyone leaves?" Addressing six shopping centers in Tallinn, the leading city among European capitals in a ratio of commercial floor space to number of inhabitants, I was offered creative freedom and immediate access to one of them.

Solaris. Who would name a mall after the famous sci-fi movie? Maybe someone who wants to render ordinary mall as special, somehow interstellar, somehow materializing one's wishes. A marketing inside joke? Imagine what you wish for and it will be given to you. Tarkovsky and Lem did materialize the dead wife of the orbital station's inspector, did they not?

Initially, I started with a simple task - visiting the place in order to get acquainted with its staff and everyday routines. The more time I was spending there alone with my camera, the more I was apprehending the ideas of Gilles Deleuze, Bruno Latour, Tim Ingold and Nigel Thrift. It is the scholarship that, in my opinion, frames current anthropological horizons I am humbled by, yet, despite initial disorientation, I have realized that the film has been opening new paths for investigation

of how "more-than-human theory" could influence the future of ethnographic cinema.

"Solaris" is not a film solely for academics and PhD holders. I did not want to create a film-statement, but a sensually intensive and contextually open space for the reflection upon modes of consumption. Having no dialogue, the film is experimenting with evocation of other-than-human ontologies. We can infer this approach to Maurice Merleau-Ponty and radically exclaim: "A movie is not thought, it is perceived. Ultimately, it does not mean anything but itself".

During the final evaluation at the Baltic Film and Media school, my documentary supervisors urged me to simplify the narrative and blend disjointed sequences of everydayness, transformation and darkness together. Such response has prompted me to realize my bonding with the mall - I had started treating it as if it were "a person." A person whose testimony - the spatial relationships and night time processes - cannot be misappropriated. I have thus refused to follow the suggestions of my advisors who did not have the same experience as myself. Was it excess of ethical principles in anthropological research or post-human ethics expanding its reach? Was it misunderstanding of the film medium or viable experimentation?

"Solaris" is a cinematic vessel that takes those who dare to enter and projects their dreams back to them. Watching the film might be just a short sensory experience. Nevertheless, there are voices echoing as you walk through the corridors. The confrontation creates relationships and associations. What kind of a conversation would you develop with a vibrating building, its servants and the man with a movie camera?

Filmmaker

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

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

Filmography

Empowering Spaces (12 min, 2015)

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

Memorial (10 min, 2014)

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

Turning Seventeen (12 min, 2013)

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

Traditional knowledge of Asheninka people (6x 10 min, 2011)

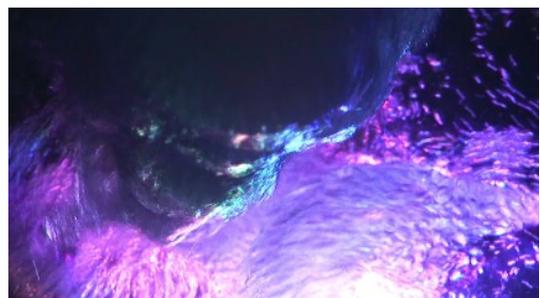
An experimental series of Visual Ethnobotany videos shot as a part of Peruvian research expedition.

Gaj (37 min, 2009)

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



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Solaris - Technical Specifications

Original Title: Solaris

Country of Production: Estonia

Duration: 25 min.

Aspect Ratio: 1.78:1

Original Format: HD

Screening Format: DCP, 5.1 surround sound

Subtitles: none

Festival Screenings 2015/2016

* Freiburg Student Film Forum (May 12, Germany)

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

* Festival do Filme Etnográfico do Recife (November 17, Brasil)

* Athens Ethnographic Film Festival (November 27, Greece)

* World Film Festival (March 28, Estonia)

* Etnofilm (April 28, Croatia)

* Ethnocineca (May 17, Austria)

Credits

Directed, photographed and edited by

Pavel Borecký

Produced by

Estonian Institute of Humanities, Baltic Film and Media School

Editing consultant

Martin Männik

Sound design

Kevin Molloy

Academic supervisors

Carlo Cubero, Kersti Uibo, Riho Västrik

You have met

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

Special thanks to

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

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

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

