



Enrico Ghezzi and Stefano Francia di Celle
Fuori Orario – Rai 3
present

Il silenzio di Pelešjan

(Italy, 2011- 52 min)

a portrait by

Pietro Marcello

edited by

Sara Fgaier

produced by ZIVAGO MEDIA

in association with KINESIS FILM e AVVENTUROSA FILM
in cooperation with RAI CINEMA and with the participation of VGIK

official screening

tuesday 6 september, sala Perla, 2:30 pm

with the films VREMENA GODA / T'ARVA YEGHANAKNERE (*SEASONS*)
and ŽIZN' / KYANQ (*LIFE*) by Artavazd Peleshyan

press conference

tuesday 6 september, 2:30 pm

sala CLUB ORIZZONTI – 1st floor - Palazzo del Casinò

second screening

saturday 10 september, sala perla, 5:30 pm

with the films VREMENA GODA / T'ARVA YEGHANAKNERE (*SEASONS*)
and ŽIZN' / KYANQ (*LIFE*) by Artavazd Peleshyan

CREDITS

The SILENCE of PELEŠJAN
(IL SILENZIO DI PELEŠJAN)

A film by **PIETRO MARCELLO**
Edited by **SARA FGAIER**

Produced by **ZIVAGO MEDIA**
in association with **KINESIS FILM** and **AVVENTUROSA FILM**
in cooperation with **RAI CINEMA**
and with the participation of **VGIK**

Executive Producers **RINO SCIARRETTA** and **SIMONE GATTONI**

International coordination by **ALIONA SHUMAKOVA**

First assistant director **EMANUELE VERNILLO**
Assistant director **BEATRICE BUZI**

Sound editors **BENNY ATRIA** and **MIRCO PERRI**

Original music by **MARCO MESSINA** and **SACHA RICCI** for **ERA**

Producers:

RINO SCIARRETTA for Zivago Media

ENRICA GONELLA **MATTEO FAGO** and **SIMONE GATTONI** for Kinesis Film

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Press

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IL SILENZIO DI PELEŠJAN wishes to portray a memory: one of the work of Armenian filmmaker Artavazd Peleshyan. A memory of his films and of their creation, a memory of cinema and of its relation with mankind, with its life, its mind, its emotions and with the unceasing, endless paths that intertwine one with the other.

Artavazd Peleshyan remained unknown to the West until 1983, when French cinema critic Serge Daney succeeded in approaching him and, together with a few others who were familiar with his cinema, brought attention to his work in Europe. According to Daney, «*Peleshyan aims at capturing the 'emotional and social cardiography of his time'*».

Il silenzio di Pelešjan is not intended as a biography or as a film essay. It is a plain account of an extraordinary deed, that of managing to film - for the first time in thirty years – one the greatest directors in world cinema.

The cinema of Peleshyan is one of great intensity, while thoroughly experimenting a form of “distance montage” rooted in the lesson of Sergei M. Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov yet conspiring against the very principles of montage set by the two greatest Russian filmmakers.

The portrait of Peleshyan is built in the form of a “distance montage” too – an experimental hyperbole, a full and intense materialisation of an interior montage, resulting in an inspired and lyrical vision of Peleshyan’s world following two major lines:

- The story unfolds from the meeting with Peleshyan in Moscow, when this hard to capture and intense man is filmed.
- Footage from Peleshyan’s works and other unseen material was retrieved and used, capturing some exceptional moments in the filmmaker’s life and almost composing a cinematographic space of its own, dotted with excerpts from Peleshyan’s works: vibrant film cells, aimed at conveying meaning once again to his works and displaying their full expressive potential in ways capable of protecting, from our interference, the creative movement which generated them.

The film also brings back to light impressive and unseen archival footage about the life of the Armenian director, including scenes shot while he was making his films and when he graduated at VGIK, the renowned Pan-Russian Cinematographic Institute of Moscow, sitting in front of a board of examiners composed of directors such as Shukshin and Medvedkin.

Pietro Marcello

Artavazd Peleshyan

Artavazd Peleshyan was born on February 22nd, 1938, in Leninakan (now Gyumri), a town in northeast Armenia almost bordering with Turkey. At the time, Armenia had already been a Soviet Republic for twenty years, and remained so until 1991, when it gained its independence.

The personal biography of Peleshyan is thus linked to the history of Great Mother Russia. He received technical training and started out as an industrial designer though, in the best Soviet tradition, having a technical and scientific background was not perceived as an obstacle to cultivating an interest in the arts, such as music and cinema. In 1963, he enrolled in VGIK in Moscow, the most ancient and renowned cinema school in the world. After his four years there as a student in film directing, he continued his in-depth studies of the great filmmakers of the Soviet school – Eisenstein, Vertov, Romm, Yutkevich, Parajanov –, as well as studying Fellini, Pasolini, Antonioni, Godard and Resnais. His own personal journey had begun: an often lonesome path where to experiment a new notion of montage, an original film theory that will become known as “distance montage”.

While at VGIK, Peleshyan directed the short films *Mountain Patrol* (1964), *Le cheval blanc* (1965, in cooperation with R. Tsourtsoumi), and *Earth of People* (1966). In 1967 he graduated with a montage film dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution, *The Beginning. With We* (1969), Peleshyan’s reached his artistic maturity. The film, produced by Erevan Studios, is a poem in images and music dedicated to Armenia and its people, and was awarded the Gran Prix at Oberhausen Kurzfilmtage Festival in 1970. That year he also directed *Inhabitants*, one of the most beautiful and poignant tributes to the inhabitants of planet earth – animals.

Between March 1971 and January 1972, he formalised his cinema theories in the essay “*Le Montage à contrepoint, ou la théorie du montage à distance*”, later included in the book *Moe Kino (My Cinema)*, 1988).

In 1972 he made another masterpiece, *Seasons*, depicting life as marked by seasons in a difficult yet serene compromise between mankind and nature – one of our artist’s favourite topics. In 1982, he shot a feature film dedicated to the conquest of space, *Our Century*. The film tells of the sensitive moments before a spatial launch and, once again, explores the issue of how mankind is challenging the forces of nature. Until the ‘80s, Peleshyan’s films were completely unknown outside of a small circle of cinema lovers. The cultural openness favoured by Gorbachev’s policy enabled, during the mid-80s, a feeble circulation of USSR films. During those years, the first screenings of Peleshyan’s works were organised thanks to the efforts of French critic Serge Daney. After participating to film festivals in Rotterdam, Paris, Pesaro, Nyon and Marseille, Peleshyan was at last praised as he deserved by cinema critics, who acknowledged him to be one of the greatest living filmmakers. In Paris, in 1992, a major retrospective on Artavazd Peleshyan was organised at Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, accompanied by a special event on the French TV channel Antenne 2. Between 1992 and 1993 he directed two more short films, *The End* and *Life*, while cinema journals and magazines started giving ample space to his art, in France in particular. In 2000, in Paris, he received the SCAM (Société des Auteurs Multimédia) award for his cinematographic achievements. Artavazd Peleshyan lives and works in Moscow. Nevertheless, his extraordinary films continue to be little known in the western world.

FILMOGRAPHY

Mountain Patrol [*Gornyj patrol*], 1964. A study of documentary and informational films in Yerevan, prod. by VGIK.

Le cheval blanc [*Belyj kon*], 1966, 35 mm, BW, in cooperation with R. Tsourtsoumi, prod. by VGIK.

Earth of People [*Zemlja ljudej*], 1966, prod. by VGIK.

The Beginning [*Nacalo o Skisb*], 1969, 35 mm, BW, 10 min. prod. by Films Docum., Erevan Studios, VGIK.

We [*Menk o My*], 1969, 35 mm, BW, 30 min. prod. by Erevan Studios.

Grand Prix au Festival d'Oberhausen 1970.

Inhabitants [*Obibateli*], 1970, 35 mm, BW, 10 min. prod. by Bieloruss Film.

Seasons [*Tarva Yeghanaknere o Vremena goda*], 1972, 35 mm, BW, 30 min. prod. by Erevan Studios.

Our Century [*Nach Vek*], 1982, 35 mm, BW, 50 min.

(In 1990 the author edited a new version, 30 min., prod. by Erevan Studios).

The End [*Konec o Vertch*], 1992, 35 mm, BW, 8 min. prod. by Haik Studios.

Life [*Kiank o Zizn*], 1993, 35 mm, col., 6 min. prod. by Armenfilm & M/P Aitta.

Collaborations:

Script writer of *The Colors of an Autumn Market* (1971) by M. Vartanov.

Co-director of *Minute étoilée* [*Zvyozdnaya minuta*](1973) by Lev Koulidzhanov.

Director of the documentary part of *Sibiriada* (1977) by Andrei Mikhalkov- Konchalovsky.

Bibliography:

Moe Kino [*My Cinema*] 1988, Yerevan, Sovetakan Grogh (the essay "Distance Montage" can be found at pp. 129-148 of the Russian edition).

Distancionnyj montaz [*Distance Montage*] 1974, in "Voprosy kinoiskusstva" ("Cinema Issues"), n.15, Moscow, p. 302 onwards; French translation: *Le Montage à contrepoint, ou la théorie du montage à distance* (March 1971 – January 1972) in "Catalogue de la rétrospective consacrée iaux documentaires arméniens" 21eme Festival de Nyon, Oct.1989. Translation by B. Balmer-stutz. also published in **Trafic** n.2, Paris, Editions POL, 1992, pp. 90-105.

Pietro Marcello

Pietro Marcello was born in Caserta in 1976. Between 1998 and 2003 he worked in organising and planning the *Cinedamm* screening sessions at the Damm centre in Montesanto, Naples. He was assistant director for the documentary film *Antonio* by Leonardo Di Costanzo. In 2002, he directed the radiodocumentary *Il tempo dei magliari*, broadcast by Radiotre within the *Centolire* format. Assistant director for *Il Ladro*, a short film by Sergio Vitolo, he directed the short films *Carta* and *Scampia* (2003). He was cameraman and video editor for the documentary *Fuggifuggi* by Nick Dines and, in 2004, cooperated with Giovanni Cioni in his documentary *Le anime del Purgatorio*.

In 2004, he directed the documentary film *Il cantiere*, winner of the 11th Festival Libero Bizzarri. The following year he finalised *La baracca*, a documentary that won the Audience Award at *Videopolis* 2005. During 2005, he also volunteered for an NGO in Cote d'Ivoire in the making of a docu-film entitled *Grand Bassan*.

His film *Il Passaggio della linea*, selected in 2007 for the Orizzonti section of the Venice Film Festival, gained him international recognition. «A little 'railway' movie on express trains travelling at night through the Italian peninsula», the film obtained a whole series of acknowledgements and nominations, starting with the 2007 Venice Film Festival. *La Bocca del lupo* (2009), commissioned by the San Marcellin Foundation, is a moving and intense story mixing documentary and fiction through the use of footage from precious and poetic works. The film won the Turin Film Festival and was awarded by many other international film festivals, amongst which we here mention: the Caligari Film Award, Forum of New Cinema section, and the Teddy Award for Best Documentary at the 2010 Berlin Film Festival; the Scam International Award 2010 at Cinema du Réel; the international jury award BAFICI 2010 at the Buenos Aires Festival; the David di Donatello and Nastro d'Argento awards for best documentary. On 4-10 August 2011 the film was screened at MoMa in New York.