

**CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
PRESENTS**

THE TRAUMA OF WAR AND ART:

FROM THE LITERARY TEXT OF *LENINGRAD* TO ITS FILM VERSION

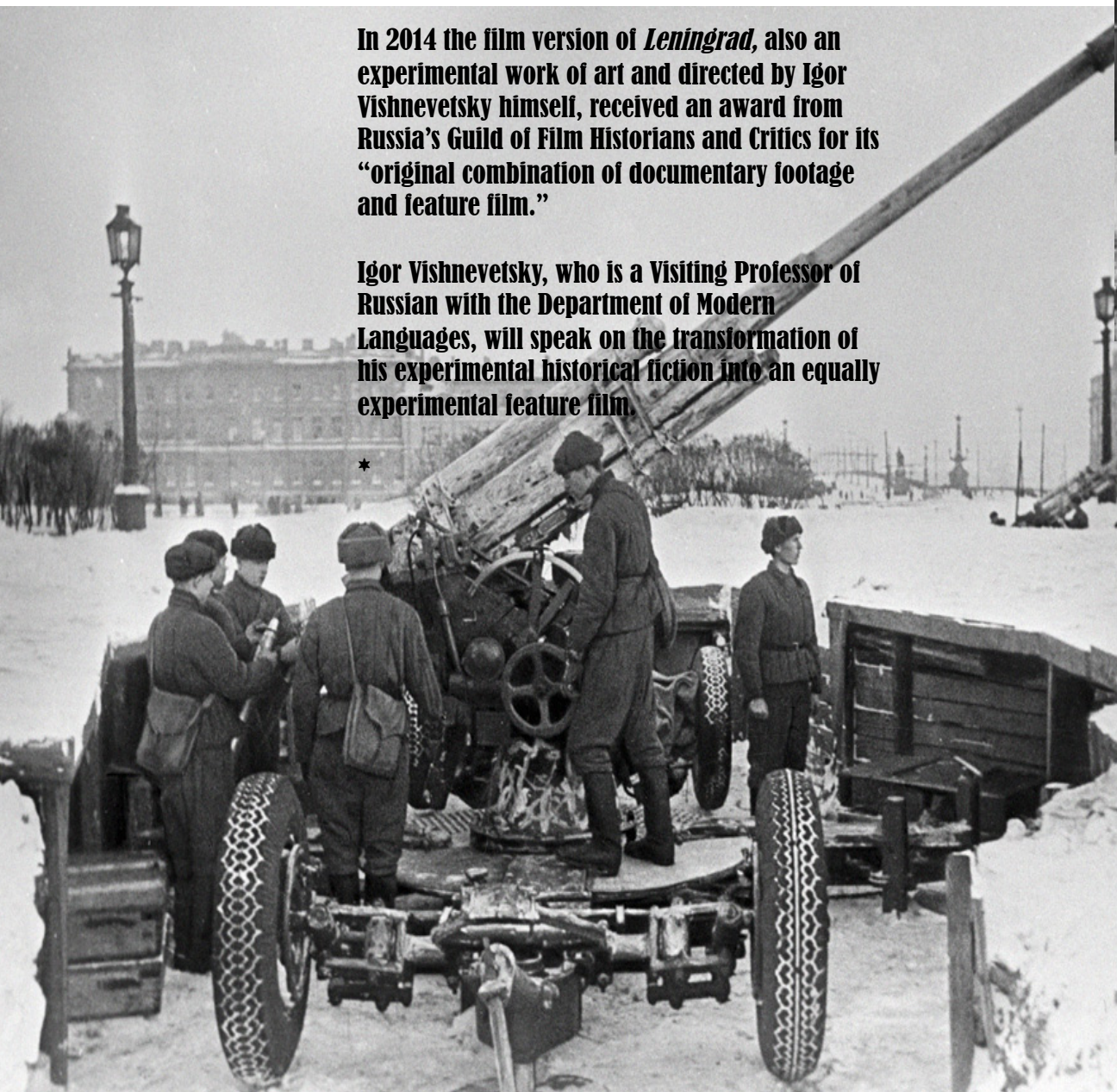
The World War II Siege of Leningrad by the *Wehrmacht* and its military allies was the worst operation of its kind in human history. For 872 days, from 1941 to 1944, one of the most beautiful cities in Europe (before 1924 and after 1991 known as St. Petersburg) was under continuous bombing and shelling: 18,000 civilians were killed; about 1,000,000 more died of starvation inside the besieged city.

Igor Vishnevetsky's experimental novel *Leningrad* (2009) describes the dehumanizing effects of the Siege and deals with the transformation of the former Russian capital into a Soviet city. *Leningrad* was perceived by many of its readers as a strong argument in the on-going discussion of Russia's present-day attitude toward its Soviet past. In 2012 the novel was awarded Russia's prestigious *New Verbal Art* literary prize, and in 2013 it was translated into English.

In 2014 the film version of *Leningrad*, also an experimental work of art and directed by Igor Vishnevetsky himself, received an award from Russia's Guild of Film Historians and Critics for its "original combination of documentary footage and feature film."

Igor Vishnevetsky, who is a Visiting Professor of Russian with the Department of Modern Languages, will speak on the transformation of his experimental historical fiction into an equally experimental feature film.

★



FROM THE PRESS:

"The motion picture's theme — the ordeals of the Siege as experienced by Leningrad intellectuals — is presented in an uncanny way. In this dreamlike film rare documentary footage, from both Germany and Russia, meets with fictional episodes that border on hallucination."

Andrei Plakhov, film critic, Honorary President of FIPRESCI (Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique)
Kommersant Daily newspaper, March 7, 2014

"...[T]his is some sort of utterly surprising experiment related to the subject of the Siege [of Leningrad]... On the one hand it is a classical work of art; on the other, it is an avant-garde creation, absolutely lacking any prior tradition. It's a very interesting mixture of poetry, prose, newsreel and documentary cinema with a feature film plot. I've not seen anything like it".

Andrei Plakhov, interview, *Novosti Yugry* online, March 13, 2014

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2014
Steinberg Auditorium (Baker Hall A53)
4:30 – 6:00 pm
Reception to follow**

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