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 ongoing 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.

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

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FROM THE PRESS:

“...[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