



PRESSKIT

# OSTROV – LOST ISLAND

A FILM BY SVETLANA RODINA & LAURENT STOOP

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# LOGLINE

On the island of Ostrov in the Caspian Sea the inhabitants, left alone by the Russian state after the collapse of the Soviet Union, survive through poaching. Ivan regularly goes out to sea risking his life and freedom. He struggles, he laughs, he dances, he fights and he believes that one day Putin will see their misery and help.

# SYNOPSIS

Why does an apparently large majority in Russia back Vladimir Putin? As a firsthand account from the heart of Russia, this documentary highlights the impact of aggressive propaganda in Russia on the population. It is set on a lost island in the Caspian Sea, where people have been left to fend for themselves since the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the dissolution of the USSR, the collective fishing industry, which once functioned well, was banned. Since then, there is neither gas nor electricity on the island, neither legal jobs nor doctors. For Ivan, a third-generation fisherman, there is only one way to support his family: illegal fishing. Drunk on state propaganda on television, Ivan nevertheless believes that Putin could fix everything for him and his family

World Premiere: **Vision du Réel 2021**

**International Competition**

International Premiere: **Hot Docs 2021**

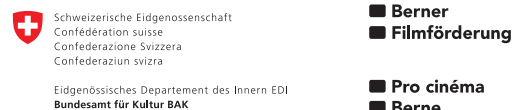
**Best International Feature Documentary Award**

Contact DokLab GmbH, Corinna Dästner:  
[mail@doklab.com](mailto:mail@doklab.com)



# GENERAL INFORMATION

Titel	Ostrov - Lost Island
Genre	Documentary
Language	Russian
Subtitles	English, French, German
Year of Production	2021
Length	92 Min
Shooting Format	2K, Flat, SMPTE
Format	DCP
Ratio	1:1,78
Audio	5.1 Surround
Directors, Writers	Svetlana Rodina & Laurent Stoop
Producer	DokLab GMBH  Corinna Dästner Sonja Kilbertus Urs Schnell
World Sales	Taskovski Films sales@taskovskifilms.com
Swiss Distributer	Royal Film <a href="mailto:verleih@royalfilm.ch">verleih@royalfilm.ch</a>





BERN FILM  
AWARD



BEST  
DOCUMENTARY  
SWISS FILM PRIZE



GRAND PRIZE  
RUSSIA / LATVIA  
ARTDOCFEST



SILVER STAR  
AWARD  
EL GOUNA



CINEMA FOR  
HUMANITY AWARD  
EL GOUNA



BEST FEATURE  
RUSSIA  
LAUREL BRANCH



SPECIAL JURY  
MENTIONING  
CAMDEN



HONORARY  
JURY MENTIONING  
CINEECO SEIA



BEST  
INTERNATIONAL  
FEATURE AWARD  
GUANAJUATO



“(...) the film takes the viewer on a journey to create a wider picture of contemporary Russia with an open mind, as well as the heart...”

**- Irena Taskovski comments on “Ostrov – Lost Island” for Variety**

“*Ostrov - Lost Island* is an evocative portrait of an imperilled Russian community “

**- Carmen Gray for Modern Times**

“Imbued with a surreal atmosphere which comes close to science-fiction, *Ostrov – Lost Island* scrutinises the faces of the island’s inhabitants in order to extrapolate mysteries which go beyond words“

**– Cineuropa**

“The jury was taken by this gorgeous, insightful film. The access the filmmakers had was remarkable and resulted in a truly powerful cinematic experience which shows the everyday reality of people in Russia.”

**The International Feature Documentary Jury of Hot Docs 2021:** Sheila Nevins (Executive Producer, MTV Networks); Kazuhiro Soda (filmmaker); Toni Kamau (producer)







# CAST

Ivan

Anna

Alina

Anton

Galina

Valera

Tatiana

Roman

Tamangiz

Uncle Tolya

Vanya

# CREW

Written & Directed by

**Svetlana Rodina and Laurent Stoop**

Producers

**Corinna Dästner, Sonja Kilbertus, Urs Schnell**

Commissioning Editor SRF

**Urs Augstburger**

Editors

**Orsola Valenti, Karine Sudan, Svetlana Rodina**

Director of Photography

**Laurent Stoop**

Second Camera and Drone

**Mikhail Burov**

Composer

**Marcel Vaid**

Sound Design, Sound Editing & Mix

**Jérôme Cuendet, Alea Jacta**

Color Grading

**Christoph Walther, Trinipix**

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Laurent Stoop and Svetlana Rodina have been developing their first feature film documentary with DokLab since the beginning of 2018. With OSTROV – LOST ISLAND the filmmakers present an empathetic immersive observation of the struggle of the inhabitants of one of Russia's forgotten islands. While enabling a deeper understanding of the political processes in Russia, the film also aims at a deep universal longing: The desire to stay in one's homeland, even if life there seems impossible. Despite the prohibition, the fishermen go on sturgeon hunting and try to stay under the radar of the border guards.

The film offers a unique perspective on how propaganda works from the point of view of people trapped in a corrupt system. But in addition to the political aspect, the film's empathetic view also paints a touching family portrait of its protagonists, who cling to a sense of hope in their family and community. The strong audiovisual approach capturing the rough natural beauty of the island underlines the cinematic potential of the film.

OSTROV – LOST ISLAND started its international exploitation with its World Premiere in the International Feature Film Competition at Visions du Réel 2021 and its International Premiere at Hot Docs 2021, the largest Documentary Film Festival in North America, where it won the Best International Feature Documentary Award. OSTROV - LOST ISLAND traveled to more than 50 festivals and won many awards, including the ARTDOCFEST Grand Prize and the Swiss Film Award for Best Documentary. World distributor is Taskovski Films. Swiss distributor Royal Film released the film in Swiss cinemas in December 2021. In the meantime, the film has been successfully screened on Swiss television (SRF/RTS) and broadcast on 3Sat, as well as sold to several foreign television stations. Subsequently, the film will be released worldwide on VOD.

# DIRECTORS' STATEMENTS

## SVETLANA RODINA

In the beginning there was a photograph which fascinated me with its melancholic beauty. The ruins of some ancient temple in the mist, a deserted shore, a lonely boat... I was told it was an island in the Caspian Sea. And that there was a village on that island. The picture was not that of an ancient temple, but showed the Soviet House of Culture, blown up by some gangsters in the 90's. The authorities have since forgotten about the island and the village, but even today people still live there, despite the dire conditions. Since then, I wanted to go to the island and meet its inhabitants. I wanted to understand what the abandoned island meant for these people - freedom or a prison? And why didn't they want to escape from it? Maybe they couldn't?

This question became particularly relevant to me after I emigrated from Russia to Switzerland, my new home country. Since then I have been going in different directions, becoming more and more not just a Russian, but a "citizen of the world." Meanwhile, Russia has become more and more isolated from the outside world, turning into a giant, bizarre and mysterious island itself and sinking into its own, imaginary world. Its laws cannot be explained by politics or the economy, at least not from a Western perspective.

To understand their world, within two years we spend a lot of time with Ivan and his family. Ivan is an ordinary fisherman, who has been trapped in his fate but who has not forgotten how to love, dream, and believe. He is a hero worthy of a Shakespearean tragedy, a self-taught philosopher searching for a faith in a world where God is declared dead. Therefore, Ivan believes in Putin. He believes in the great past. He believes in the great country. By believing, he defies logic, which makes him forget the hardships of life. And it is also the source of his inner strength and his inescapable tragedy.

## LAURENT STOOP

When I returned to Russia in 2015 to settle there again in part, one thing instantly struck me: The Russians' perception of themselves had completely changed. The breath of change and democratic energy of the 1990s had given way to a new invisible ideological and psychological wall that was being erected between Western Europe and Russia. So what has happened to bring this about? How can we talk about this gap in perception fed on both sides by an unbridled propaganda full of clichés and unspoken words?

As is often the case in Russia, it all began in the kitchen of our apartment in Moscow with the discovery of a few images of a place like many others in Russia. Ostrov is a world at the end of the road where the administration and its services have disappeared as in thousands of other Russian villages, wiped off the map and the statistics. The inhabitants of Ostrov remember the glorious Soviet past, but this past is now fantasised, in tatters, lost forever. The present consists of a daily struggle for survival. The future is uncertain, but the islanders still have a glimmer of hope: they believe that in today's Russia, there is one person only who can actually help the damned and the forgotten to get out of this lawless and precarious situation, provided that their fate is finally brought to his attention, namely the Russian president, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

At this point we enter the more metaphysical than rational dimension of the Russian soul. What seems illogical or impossible to us Westerners is not necessarily so for the inhabitants of Ostrov. Within a system where laws are not really defined, the inhabitants show an extraordinary inventiveness in order to survive. OSTROV – LOST ISLAND wants to give a voice to this silent majority of Russians. They adhere to the resurrected neo-Soviet values. They dream of a Russia that is once again a respected and feared superpower, even if it means being isolated and surrounded by enemies. Ostrov is a metaphor for today's Russia.

# CURRENT CONTEXT

05.03.2022

The war that Russia is waging against the sovereign and European country of Ukraine gave our film OSTROV an additional and particularly somber meaning.

For us, Ostrov Island was a metaphor for today's Russia, which, after a brief democratic phase following the collapse of the Soviet Union, has once again isolated itself ideologically. Today, however, Russia is turning into an island cut off from the world on all levels: politically, economically, culturally, and above all morally - a country that finds itself in the role of a pariah, outcast outcast from almost the entire world community.

In our film OSTROV we show the influence of aggressive propaganda, which almost completely dominates the information channels in Russia, while there is practically no freedom of speech and independent media are banned or declared "foreign agents". The residents of Ostrov, like the entire Russian people, are therefore exposed on a daily basis to the lies of propaganda that portrays Ukraine as a fascist aggressor from which the Russian-speaking rebels in the Donbass must be liberated. Thus, an ultra-nationalist narrative is spun: around the victory over Nazism in the "Great Patriotic War", in World War II, the invincibility of Russia, a strong and powerful army recreated by the will of President Putin. The population is manipulated with the help of a TV show in which Vladimir Putin plays the role of the savior of the Russian people against the aggressive West, which has lost its moral values. If we naively thought that the propaganda was primarily to maintain control over the domestic population, as is the case in all authoritarian regimes, we now understand that it was about much more: The Russian population was psychologically prepared for a real war taking place two hours' flight from us. We may not have understood the full extent of it, but the film anticipates the catastrophe that is unfolding before our eyes. In this sense, OSTROV, the Lost Island is truly prescient.



★

ПЕТУХОВ И.И.	ЕЛЕСТРАТОВ Д.А.
ИВАНОВ Г.А.	ЕЛЕСТРАТОВ П.А.
ЛЕВЧЕНКО П.	ГЛАЖКОВ А.И.
БЕЛОВ П.	НИКОЛАЕВ И.И.
БЕЛОВ Г.А.	НИКОЛАЕВ К.П.
БАРАНОВ В.И.	ЗОРИН И.А.
ВОРНОВ О.В.	ИВАНОВ К.В.
БОРИЩЕВ С.И.	СЕРГЕЕВ Д.В.
БОРИЩЕВ И.И.	КАТНИЦКА В.В.
ГАЛОВ Н.В.	РАДЧЕВ В.И.
ЕВГРАШИН С.А.	СЕРЖЕНКО И.И.
ЕВГРАШИН А.И.	СЕРЖЕНКО И.О.
ЗАВЯЗОВ П.И.	СОВАЛКОВ Э.О.
ХЛИСОВ И.И.	СЫЧЕВ
ХЛИСОВ В.И.	СКОБИН
ЛЕЩЕНКО П.И.	СОРОКИН
ПЕРКИНОВ И.И.	ФУК
ПЕТУХОВ И.И.	ХИ
ПЕТУХОВ И.И.	И

# BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY

## SVETLANA RODINA – DIRECTOR



### Biography

Svetlana Rodina graduated in philology in Kazan and later in film directing in Moscow. She has worked as a reporter and host for various TV programmes on the RTR channel. In 2011 she became editor-in-chief of the documentary department of one of the largest production companies in Russia; United Media Group. Since 2006 she has primarily worked as a script writer and director for documentaries.

### Selected Filmography

- 2019 PLANET TUVA, In the footsteps of the expedition of the tsarist spy Sergei Mintslov, Documentary feature, 52'
- 2017 THE GREAT RUSSIAN REVOLUTION 1917, Docu-Fiction, 90'
- 2016 WHIP, Master's degree at the Moscow Film School, Short, 20'
- 2014 GONE WITH THE SEA, Historical Documentary, 52'
- 2013 WASTE PLANET (Mycop), Investigative Documentary, 52'
- 2012 ALSIB, THE SECRET ROUTE, Historical Documentary, 52'
- 2010 THE BODY'S ADVENTURE, TV Doc Serial

# LAURENT STOOP – DIRECTOR



## Biography

Laurent Stoop has a diploma in literature and photography. Just after the end of the Soviet Union he moved to Moscow and worked as a freelance photographer with the photo agency Lookat. In 1995 he founded the production company Mayak-Film. Since then he worked as DOP for various television and feature documentaries, including the award winning and critically acclaimed CITIZEN KHODORKOVSKY (2016).

## Selected Filmography as DOP

- 2020 THAT GIRL by Cornelia Gantner, cinema documentary, 88'
- 2019 GYRANTHERA - on the traces of Henri Pittier y Murra Zabel, documentary, 52'
- 2017 SYRIE, LE CRI ETOUFEE by Manon Loizeau, documentary feature, 72'
- 2015 CITIZEN KHODORKOVSKY by Eric Bergkraut, cinema documentary, 86'
- 2012 BOTTLED LIFE by Urs Schnell, cinema documentary, 90'



# DOKLAB GMBH

At DokLab we are passionate about producing documentary films that are focused on geopolitical, social or cultural topics. We aim to create films that stimulate thought and action, but which also stand the test of time. Meticulous story development and engaging analysis lie at the heart of everything we do. Our goal is to reach an international audience by tapping into universal values.

DokLab was founded in Bern, in 2006, as a limited liability company, by the two filmmakers Urs Schnell and Dodo Hunziker. From 2016 -2019 Sonja Kilbertus was a partner and producer at DokLab. In 2019 Corinna Dästner joined by as producer.

## Selected Filmography

In Progress	TOUXTES by Svetlana Rodina and Laurent Stoop, TV documentary
In Progress	DOM by Svetlana Rodina and Laurent Stoop, cinema documentary
In Progress	SALTY TEA by Svetlana Rodina and Laurent Stoop, cinema documentary
2022	MÜLL IN SICHT! By Dodo Hunziker, Festival and TV documentary, 53'
2022	URBAN GENESIS by Dodo Hunziker, cinema documentary, 104'
2021	OSTROV - DIE VERLORENE INSEL by Svetlana Rodina and Laurent Stoop, cinema documentary, 92'
2019	BODY OF TRUTH by Evelyn Schels, cinema documentary, 96'
2019	BODY OF TRUTH by Evelyn Schels, cinema documentary, 96'
2018	TO THE END OF DREAMS by Wilfried Meichtry, documentary feature, 82'
2015	TIBETAN WARRIOR by Dodo Hunziker, cinema documentary, 84'
2012	BOTTLED LIFE by Urs Schnell, cinema documentary, 90'



## ORSOLA VALENTI – EDITOR

...has a degree in translation and studied semiology at the university of Geneva. She currently works as an editor (a. o. 'a iucata, Pescatore di corpi and Il mio corpo by Michele Pennetta, Way Beyond by Pauline Julier, The Mushroom Speaks by Marion Neumann). She has written and directed a series of short films and has worked with students from the HEAD (Geneva University of Art and Design ) and from the ECAL (Lausanne School of Art, photography section) and as an editing consultant.

## KARINE SUDAN – EDITOR

...studied at the ECAL in Lausanne, and since 1994 works as an editor. She mainly collaborates with Jean-Stéphane Bron, Fernand Melgar, Nicolas Wadimoff, Stéphane Goël, Véronique Reymond and Stéphanie Chuat, whose movies won many prizes at international festivals and were public successes. Karine Sudan was nominated twice for the Swiss Film Award and in 2013, she received the special Prize of the Swiss Film Academy for the editing of Manuel von Sturler's film "Hiver Nomade".

## MARCEL VAID – COMPOSER

...works as a musician (guitar) and composer for film and has composed over 80 feature films (Goodnight Nobody, Chris the Swiss, The Congo Tribunal, Wall of Shadows, Köpek, Not Me-A Journey with Not Vital). He worked with Fredi Murer, Milo Rau, Léa Pool, Eliza Kubarska, Greg Zglinski or Oscar-nominated Timo von Gunten). 2019 he won his 4th Swiss Filmprize 'Best Filmmusic' for 'Chris the Swiss'. He is head of the electro-acoustic experimental collective «Superterz». (Collaborations with Nils Petter Molvaer, Norbert Möslang (Voice Crack), Mauro Pawlowski (dEUS), Alain Monot (The Young Gods), Toshinori Kondo or Marianne Schroeder (John Cage).

## JÉRÔME CUENDET – SOUND DESIGN

...was trained as a sound engineer at the EJMA (school of Jazz and Contemporary Music) in Lausanne. In 1996 he graduated from the SAE (School of Audio Engineering) in London. He's been active in the audiovisual sector since 1998 and has worked with Swiss directors such as Francis Reusser, Jean-Stephane Bron and Ursula Meier. He now co-owns Alea Jacta.CH, a sound editing and mixing facility based in Lausanne.

# CONTACTS

## PRODUCER

DokLab GMBH  
Gerberngasse 34a  
3011 Bern  
Switzerland

+41 31 508 05 58  
[mail@doklab.com](mailto:mail@doklab.com)

Contact:  
Corinna Dästner  
[cd@doklab.com](mailto:cd@doklab.com)

## WORLD SALES

Taskovski Films Ltd  
1st Floor, Healthaid House  
Marlborough Hill  
Harrow, HA1 1UD  
United Kingdom

+387 65 920 857  
[sales@taskovskifilms.com](mailto:sales@taskovskifilms.com)

Contact:  
Irena Taskovski, Petar Mitric

## DISTRIBUTION SWITZERLAND

Royal Film  
Luftgässlein 4  
4051 Basel

+41 61 560 60 11  
[verleih@royal-film.ch](mailto:verleih@royal-film.ch)

Kontakt:  
Simone Seiterle, Philipp Fink