

The Museum of Modern Art

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WORKS BY SOVIET FILMMAKER VASILY SHUKSHIN AT MoMA

From June 3 to 12, 1988, STORIES FROM SIBERIA: THE FILMS OF VASILY SHUKSHIN, presented at The Museum of Modern Art, honors the late Soviet writer, actor, and director. In his films and short stories, Shukshin (1929 - 1974) concerned himself with the values of the Russian peasantry and challenged the cliches of Soviet realism. Shukshin's films, vastly popular in his homeland, are rarely seen outside the Soviet Union and remain relatively undiscovered by Western audiences.

Five of the eight films in the series were written and directed by Shukshin, including There Was A Lad (1964) and The Red Snowball Tree (1974). Two films, Alyenka (1962), directed by Boris Barnet, and The Two Feodors (1958), directed by Marlen Khutsiev, star Shukshin. The last film, Call Me From Afar (1977), was written by Shukshin, produced posthumously, and stars his wife Lydia Fedoseyeva.

While often humorous and anecdotal, Shukshin's films demonstrate contempt for overly optimistic views of the harsh reality of rural Soviet life. In their spare and direct style, they describe in familiar terms experiences known to millions in the Soviet Union. Shukshin's characters are often confused by the changing face of Soviet society and strive to be modern while constantly checking themselves for "correct" behavoir.

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Born in a remote Siberian village, Vasily Shukshin enrolled at Moscow's Central Film School in the mid-fifties. Prior to graduating in film direction, he had already published his first stories and made his mark as an actor. In 1974 Shukshin's career was tragically cut short when he was struck by a heart attack; he was forty-five years old at the time of his death.

STORIES FROM SIBERIA: THE FILMS OF VASILY SHUKSHIN is presented in the United States by The Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in collaboration with the British Film Institute and Goskino. Special thanks to Ian Christie for his help in arranging the series. Jytte Jensen, curatorial assistant in the Department of Film, coordinated the program for the Museum.

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For further information or film stills contact Sarah Eaton, film press representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9752.