

ŽIŽEK!



Directed by ASTRA TAYLOR Produced by LAWRENCE KONNER Edited by LAURA HANNA

A ZEITGEIST FILMS RELEASE

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The author of works on subjects as wide-ranging as Alfred Hitchcock, 9/11, opera, Christianity, Lenin and David Lynch, Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žizek is one of the most important—and outrageous—cultural theorists working today. This captivating, erudite documentary explores the eccentric personality and esoteric work of this incomparable academic and writer who has been called everything from “the Elvis of cultural theory” to “a one person culture mulcher”.

ZIZEK! trails the eminent and intrepid thinker as he crisscrosses the globe—racing from New York City lecture halls, traversing the streets of Buenos Aires, pit-stopping at his home in Ljubljana, Slovenia. In transit, Žizek obsessively reveals the invisible workings of ideology through a unique blend of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Marxism and pop culture critique. He is also unafraid to turn his critical gaze on himself, offering cutting commentary on his personality, private life and growing international celebrity.

ZIZEK! is both an unforgettable lesson in philosophy and a compelling portrait of an intellectual maverick. Possessing the capacity to appeal to the uninitiated in a way no other philosopher before him could, Slavoj Žizek’s combination of high and low culture will fascinate even those who once believed philosophy to be a bore.

SLAVOJ ZIZEK

Slavoj Zizek, the “Elvis of cultural theory,” has published over 50 books (translated into 20 languages) on topics ranging from philosophy and Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, to theology, film, opera and radical politics. He was a candidate for, and nearly won, the Presidency of his native Slovenia in the first democratic elections after the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1990. According to a recent profile in *The New Yorker*, Slovenia has a “reputation disproportionately large for its size due to the work of Slavoj Zizek.”

From the European Graduate School website (www.egsuniversity.org):

Slavoj Zizek is a professor at the Institute for Sociology, Ljubljana and at the European Graduate School EGS who uses popular culture to explain the theory of Jacques Lacan and the theory of Jacques Lacan to explain politics and popular culture. He was born in 1949 in Ljubljana, Slovenia where he lives to this day but he has lectured at universities around the world. He was analysed by Jacques Alain Miller, Jacques Lacan’s son in law, and is probably the most successful and prolific post-Lacanian having published over fifty books including translations into a dozen languages. He is a leftist and, aside from Lacan he was strongly influenced by Marx, Hegel and Schelling. In temperament, he resembles a revolutionist more than a theoretician. He was politically active in Slovenia during the 80s, a candidate for the presidency of the Republic of Slovenia in 1990; most of his works are moral and political rather than purely theoretical. He has considerable energy and charisma and is a spellbinding lecturer in the tradition of Lacan and Kojève.

Zizek has cast a very long shadow in what can only be termed “cultural studies” (though he would despise the characterization). He is an effective purveyor of Lacanian mischief, and, as a follower of the French “liberator” of Freud, Zizek’s Lacan is almost exclusively transcribed in mesmerizing language games or intellectual parables. That he has an encyclopedic grasp of political, philosophical, literary, artistic, cinematic, and pop cultural currents—and that he has no qualms about throwing all of them into the stockpot of his imagination—is the prime reason he has dazzled his peers and confounded his critics for over ten years.

A ZIZEK READING LIST

Books by Zizek

For They Know Not What They Do:

Enjoyment as a Political Factor

Verso Books, 1991

Looking Awry:

An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture

MIT, 1992

The Sublime Object of Ideology

Verso Books, 1999

The Fragile Absolute:

Or, Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?

Verso Books, 2000

Welcome to the Desert of the Real:

Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates

Verso Books, 2002

Organs Without Bodies:

On Deleuze and Consequences

MIT, 2003

The Puppet and the Dwarf:

The Perverse Core of Christianity

MIT Press, 2003

Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle

Verso, 2005

Books and articles on Zizek

“Enjoy Your Zizek!”

by Robert Boynton, *Lingua Franca* magazine, October 1998

The Zizek Reader

by Slavoj Zizek, Elizabeth Wright, Edmond Leo Wright

Blackwell, 1999

“Marx Brother”

by Rebecca Mead, *The New Yorker*, March 2003

Slavoj Zizek : A Critical Introduction

(Modern European Thinkers)

by Ian Parker, Pluto Press, 2004

Slavoj Zizek: Live Theory

by Rex Butler, Continuum, 2005

THE FILMMAKERS

ASTRA TAYLOR / Director

Astra Taylor was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1979 and raised in Athens, Georgia. She currently divides her energy between scholarly pursuits and politically focused documentary filmmaking.

She holds an MA in Liberal Studies from the New School for Social Research and has been an instructor in sociology departments at the University of Georgia and State University of New York, New Paltz where she has taught classes on social theory, globalization, and the sociology of film. Her writing has appeared in the *Monthly Review*, the *Nation*, and *Salon*. In the spring of 2006 the New Press will publish her first book, an analysis of the contradictory and inspirational legacy of the 1960s for those who have come of age in the decade's shadow.

In 2001 she spent two months in southern Senegal with a partner producing and directing (and later editing) *The Miracle Tree: Moringa Oleifera*, a 45-minute documentary shot on digital video. The project was commissioned by an international NGO to record efforts of a local sustainable development project to alleviate the plight of infant malnutrition.

In the summer of 2002 she joined the Documentary Campaign, a New York City based not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the production and distribution of documentary films that promote social justices and human rights, to associate produce the Campaign's first feature, *Persons of Interest*. Directed by Allison Maclean (*Jesus' Son*), *Persons of Interest* is about the round up and detention of Muslims and Arabs in the aftermath of September 11th. The film was an official selection at the 2004 Sundance, Rotterdam, and Human Rights Watch film festivals and won the Amnesty International Humanitarian Award at the Chicago International Documentary Film Festival.

She founded Hidden Driver Pictures with Laura Hanna in early 2005.

LAWRENCE KONNER / Producer

Lawrence Konner has had a long and distinguished career as a screenwriter and documentary filmmaker. With his partner, Mark Rosenthal, Konner has written the feature films *The Jewel of the Nile*, *The Legend of Billie Jean*, *Desperate Hours*, *Mighty Joe Young*, *Mercury Rising*, and *Planet of the Apes*. Their most recent film, *Mona Lisa Smile*, starred Julia Roberts and was released in December 2003.

In television, Konner was the head writer on the series *Little House on the Prairie* and *Family*. In 2001 Konner received an Emmy Award nomination for Best Dramatic Writing for his work on the HBO series *The Sopranos*.

In 1995, Konner produced and directed a documentary short, *One Thing I Know*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, screened at the Cannes Film Festival, and won the Special Jury Prize at the U.S.A. Film Festival. In 2003 Konner produced *Persons of Interest*, a feature length documentary about the illegal detentions of thousands of Muslims in the aftermath of September 11th.

Konner is a former member of the Board of Directors of The Writers Guild of America, and a former Creative Director at the Sundance Institute. He is a member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

LAURA HANNA / Editor and Sound Recordist

Laura Hanna is a co-founder of Hidden Driver Pictures. She has worked in film/television in New York City for the past five years doing post production mixing, editing, sound design, as well as installation and location recording. The following is a partial list of projects she has worked on in the previous mentioned capacities: *Road to Paris* (CBS 2002), *Shots in the Dark* (CTV 2002), *Justifiable Homicide* (2002), *A Day in the Life of Africa* (2003), *The Perpetual Life Of Jim Albers* (Sundance 2003), *Academy Awards Open* (Errol Morris 2003), *Hollywood High* (AMC 2003), *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster* (DVD for feature Sundance 2004). She currently plays music with Hannah Marcus (Bar-None).

MARTINA RADWAN / Director of Photography

Martina Radwan started in her native Germany in the film industry in 1987 as a Camera Technician at ARRI, Berlin. In 1988 she began to work in production as an Assistant Camera, where she worked with DP's like Robby Mueller, Juergen Juerges and Sophy Mantigneux and directors like Wim Wenders and Albert Maysles.

In 1995 she moved to New York where she attended the film program at NYU. She broke into the industry as an AC for Lisa Rinzler and Wolfgang Held and started to work as 2nd Unit DP or operator for high-end production. In 1999 she attended a workshop with Gordon Willis.

At the same time she started to work as a Director of Photography and shoot features, documentaries and shorts. Her documentaries, such as *Vertical Traveler* and *Ferry Tales*, have been seen in numerous festivals and on PBS and HBO along with many of her shorts. Her work includes collaborations with directors like Rebecca Miller, Allison Maclean, Jenny Livingston, Pola Rappaport and Tina DiFelicianantonio.

In 2001 she worked with Ellen Kuras as 2nd Camera Operator on *Personal Velocity*, a feature directed by Rebecca Miller and produced by InDiGent. The film won the Cinematographer Award at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival and The Grand Jury prize for Best Film in 2002.

In 2002 she completed one feature in LA and one feature in New York. She has traveled around the world for human rights documentaries and started to shoot commercials.

Currently she is working on a longterm documentary about the Dalton school and prepping for a feature in Lebanon. In early 2004 *Ferry Tales*, on which Radwan was DP, was nominated for an Academy Award.

JESSE EPSTEIN / Director of Photography

Jesse Epstein received an MA in documentary film and gender studies from NYU. She has directed, produced, field produced, and filmed documentary projects nationally and in Africa, India, and the Netherlands. She has worked extensively with the Media Activist organizations Deep Dish TV, Papertiger TV, and the Independent Media Center. Her PSA on teenage girls and body image appeared at the Media that Matters Film Festival, in conjunction with the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, and on the Oxygen Channel for Women. Her film *Wet Dreams and False Images* about media manipulation and body received the Jury Award for Short Subject in the Online Section of the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, and the Best Use of Technology Award from the Urban Literary Film Festival in North Carolina. The film has also been selected by other film festivals including the New Orleans Film Festival, The San Francisco Independent Film Festival and The Full Frame Documentary Festival. She is the founder of GSS. Productions, a youth video program in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Jesse has also worked with the International Rescue Committee and Global Action Project to produce film projects with refugee youth.

MOLLY SCHWARTZ / Animator

Molly Schwartz was born in New York City, raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and studied painting at the school of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has lived in Chicago, Los Angeles, Nepal and currently resides in Brooklyn where she works as a professional animator. In addition to being an animator, composer and designer, she is also a painter, potter and photo-taker.

JEREMY BARNES / Composer

Jeremy Barnes has played with Neutral Milk Hotel, Broadcast, Bablicon and Guignol. He is, like his music, nomadic. In the past year alone, has lived in England, Prague and New Mexico, gradually gathering the many instruments, musicians and ethnographies that would ultimately appear on *Darkness At Noon*, his most recent album released under the moniker A Hawk And A Hacksaw (released on The Leaf Label).

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Directed by **ASTRA TAYLOR**

Produced by **LAWRENCE KONNER** for **THE DOCUMENTARY CAMPAIGN**

Edited by **LAURA HANNA**

Directors of Photography **MARTINA RADWAN** and **JESSE EPSTEIN**

Original Score by **JEREMY BARNES (A HAWK AND A HACKSAW)**

Animation by **MOLLY SCHWARTZ**

On-Line Editor **PETER McCOUBRY**

Sound Mix **LAURA HANNA**

Assistant Producer **CHRISTOPHER DOBBIE**

Philadelphia Field Producer **JESSE GOLDSTEIN**

Still Photography **KATE MILFORD**

Translations by **POLONA RUZIC**

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