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MASTER'S THESIS

THE FILMS OF STEFAN SIDOVSKI
(a catalog of the amateur Macedonian filmmaker's works)

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D e c l a r a t i o n

I declare that I have prepared my Master's Thesis, Dissertation independently on the following topic:

THE FILMS OF STEFAN SIDOVSKI

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

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ABSTRACT

In this research, I am analyzing the work of Macedonian independent/amateur filmmaker Stefan Sidovski. The main goal of my research is to gather together detailed information related to his complete filmography and to systemize it into decades. In addition, I will follow his development as a filmmaker through the decades, examining each film made from the sixties to the current second decade in the 21st century and try to see how he reflects key personal and social events through his films.

ABSTRAKT

V této práci analyzuji dílo makedonského nezávislého a amatérského filmaře Stefana Sidovského. Hlavním cílem mého výzkumu je shromáždit detailní informace vztahující se k jeho kompletní filmografii a systematizovat ji v rámci uplynulých dekad. Dále se zabývám jeho tvůrčím vývojem během těchto období, rozebírám každý film od šedesátých let až po současnost a pokouším se ukázat způsob jakým reflektuje klíčové osobní a společenské události ve svých filmech.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There are many uncovered “gems” of cinematography around the globe. This is especially the case in small and culturally undeveloped countries like Macedonia. When someone has the intention of learning more about Macedonian cinematography, it is likely that the first encounter will be with our most famous director Milcho Manchevski and his film “Before the Rain” (Пред дождот) (1994), which won the “Golden Lion” at the Venice festival and was nominated for an Oscar in the category of Best Foreign Films. If someone is more persistent, he or she can even uncover a few more names of the Macedonian cinematography, such as a director called Stole Popov with his most famous film “Tattoo“ (Тетовирање) (1991), Ivo Trajkov and his movie “The Great Water“ (Големата Вода) (2004) and probably the name of Vladimir Blazevski and his latest feature “Punk’s Not Dead“ (Панкот не е мртов) (2011), that won the main award at Karlovy Vary festival. Unfortunately, all this information was probably found on the Internet and that is not the way that a national film history is built. I believe that in order to seriously establish a film history in a country, you have to have seriously written critiques, observations, or, at least, academic papers written about the filmography of the country’s authors. If someone is interested to follow the history or development of Macedonia’s national cinematography, unfortunately, there is very little relevant literature or critical papers written about it. That will leave you with the impression that we don’t have a Macedonian cinematography since there is no one to establish it or it’s not well documented, so it’s very difficult for someone to follow or learn something about its development and correlation about the authors. And until now, I have only mentioned the most popular “mainstream” Macedonian cinema with four of its most famous and acclaimed film directors. I haven’t touched upon other interesting films or authors, that are not even considered internationally or that you can’t learn anything about on the Internet.

The problem might also lay in the fact that there isn’t a professional Macedonian filmmaker with more than 5 feature films, produced in Macedonia, so it’s hard to follow an artistic development of filmmakers in Macedonia. This is partly because of the poor financial situation in Macedonia and the money that is delegated to the Film Fond for development of the film art and industry in our country. But another more important cause might be related to the unwillingness of filmmakers to do more “low” or “no budget” film projects and to get alternative funding is really hard to get. In this “dissection of the problem,” I was only reviewing the situation of the professional films in our cinematography, but the history of cinema in the world’s cinematography

does not solely consist of “mainstream” filmmakers; the noticeable movements frequently start with rebellious “no budget” experiments and movies. And this is why the Macedonian “master of amateur film,” Stefan Sidovski, started to intrigue me and inspired me to get more involved in research about his films.

There is a strong feeling in Macedonia that filmmakers like Stefan Sidovski who make “no budget” experimental films are isolated like ghetto artists. While amateur filmmakers in other countries might be called independents or no-budget artists, the amateur filmmakers in Macedonia are treated more like some kind of failure within the mainstream film circles. But these filmmakers like Stefan Sidovski continue to make technologically poor films because they believe that the idea behind the film is more important than the technical perfection and because they had more things to say than the “big directors”. Wasn’t this how the French *nouvelle vague* started and looked like in its beginning? The idea before technical perfection? Wasn’t this how the Czech new wave began and looked like? But also, in order for these “film waves” to be recognized, there were people who put an effort into analyzing the films academically, documenting them, wrote books and other critical papers and managed to put them into some social, political or cinematic context so that their value increased. The films from the “waves” are generally starting as a movement of a few artists doing something cinematically new in their countries; they are socially involved and they are expressing some other point of view different from and usually confronting the mainstream. In “serious” cinematically acclaimed countries, the history of cinematography is molded and twisted by non-mainstream filmmakers. These are people who experiment and do the things out of the box, usually with less money or no money, but strong ideas. These are the people that are more involved in discovering the riddles of cinema, life, or the social system in which they live.

In this thesis, I would like to introduce a person who has more short films than any filmmaker in Macedonia (109 films total) to this day and he is still producing. I would like to collect on paper all of his films and to catalog them. I would like to try to analyze his opus so I that can follow his development as a filmmaker and see if there is a quality that deserves to be recognized, as one of the pillars of Macedonian cinematography, believing that critics, someday soon, will establish and write about it. With this thesis, I want to prove that experimental/amateur films made by Stefan Sidovski are worth to be studied as works of art and film mastery, worthy of analysis in film schools. Most of all, I want to discover how his drive to make so many films prevailed over the years. In addition to this thesis, I plan to collect all of his films that were not lost through the decades and make an archive that I will transfer to the Macedonian film archive

so that other researchers and film historians can continue the analysis and contextualization of his opus.

A. Biography of Stefan Sidovski

Stefan Sidovski was born on October 3, 1946, in Skopje. He finished primary and secondary education in his native city. In 1965, he enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje. He studied aesthetics, having as professors Pavao Vuk - Pavlovich and Georgi Stardelov. Stefan completed his studies in 1970, with his bachelor thesis "G.F.V. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit - Absolute Knowledge".

In 1973, he was employed in the most successful gymnasium (secondary school) in the country, "Rade Jovchevski - Korchagin," in Skopje, where he taught philosophy, sociology, and logic until 2010, becoming one of the most popular philosophy professors in Macedonia, and something like an urban legend.

Upon completion of the obligations of post-graduate studies in philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, on July 1, 1995, he defended his master's thesis "The Aesthetic Essence of the Film Frame" before the committee: Academician Professor D-r Georgi Stardelov, Professor D-r. Stole Popov Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Professor Dr. Kiril Temkov (mentor). The thesis has been published as a book, entitled "Film Frame and its Aesthetic Essence", in 1995, the anniversary of film's 100 years of existence.

In 2001, he defended his doctoral (PhD.) dissertation entitled "Aesthetics and Dialectics in the Editing of the Film" before the committee: Academician Prof. Dr. Georgi Stardelov, Prof. Dr. Kiril Temkov, Prof. Dr. Mirko Gjozhev, Prof. Dr. Violeta Panzova and Prof. Dr. Stole Popov. It is published as a book with the same title by the publisher AZ-BUKI-2003.

From 2010 until today he teaches "History and Theory of Film" and "Documentary film" at the University of Audiovisual Arts ESRA EFA.

Since his own student gymnasium days, Stefan Sidovski began to make amateur/experimental films, first alone and then from 1967, as a member of the cinema club "Camera 300", and from 1985, as part of the Academic Cinema club.

He is the holder of the highest degree "Master of Amateur Film," and for the same title, he received a Golden Plaque for his contribution to the spread of film culture in Macedonia from the Film International Committee of the UNICA¹.

During the 15 years from 1985 to 2000, he maintained a summer film school in the city of Struga, in Macedonia. With his films, he has also participated in many international festivals and clubs for Amateur film. His films were frequently rewarded, but sometimes they were also banned. Among others, he is the author of the following amateur and alternative films which have won prizes, all made on film, black and white and color formats of 8mm, super 8mm, and 16mm:

- “Found home” (1968), first prize for feature film, 12th Federal Festival of Amateur Movie in Yugoslavia, Pancevo
- “One day from the diary of...” (1973), first prize for feature film of the 19th Federal Amateur Film Festival in Yugoslavia, Novi Sad (1974)
“Desire” (1976), Grand Prix of the 7th "Naissus Festival” of Inter-clubs Amateur film in Nis (1977)
- “Latest pictures from my school life” (1984), 1st Prize for fiction film at 28th Federal Amateur Film Festival in Yugoslavia, Novi Sad (1984)
- “Gazes toward the watch” (1987), 1st prize for feature film at 18th National Amateur Film Festival, Probistip (1989)
- “Protection of cultural monuments in the City Park” (1989), Grand Prix on the 30th of Federal Amateur Film Festival in Yugoslavia, Kumanovo (1990)
- “Ex-Socialist and actual capitalist trump” (1992) Grand Prix of the 23rd National Festival of Amateur Film, Negotino (1994)

In addition, 60 short films, shot on VHS, Super VHS, MiniDV, selected from Stefan Sidovski's films, were shown at the International Film Camera Festival Manaki Brothers in October 1993 in Bitola.

A retrospective of Stefan Sidovski's film work (as master of amateur cinema) was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje on March 7th, 1995, making him a unique cineaste

¹ UNICA is an independent international organization. It is a member of the authoritative UNESCO Council. The supreme body of UNICA is the General Assembly where all member organizations have the right to participate and to vote.

in the history of cinema, having his works displayed at the Museum upon the invitation from its curator for film and photography, Miroslav Popovich.

Sidovski's first professional and funded movie was “Honour” (2011), made with support from the Film Fund of Macedonia.

B. Research

In order to collect his films, I have spent more than a month in the Macedonian film archive. Most of his films, around fifty, were already digitalized and were available for analysis but I found it very difficult to convince the archive to digitalize some of the older film rolls that Sidovski left in the archive. They told me that they are in very bad shape and they can't even play them on the projector. In the older days, Sidovski, and other filmmakers in absence of tape used a caramelized sugar as a replacement for a tape that connects two different film rolls. But this way of connection is totally unusable after several years. All film rolls have to be reconnected with tape and this was not a priority for the film archive, so I had to wait. I mention this fact because it is possible that there might be more of his films among the unsorted film rolls in the Macedonian film archive.

Another place where I found his films was in the private archive of Gjorgi Janevski, who is a freelance film and media worker and cinephile. He was one of the main organizers of the project that allowed the film “Revolt” (1977) to be restored. While working on the project, he asked the film archive to lend him more film rolls that belong to Sidovski, and with his approval, they managed to digitalize more of his films while they were doing the restoration of the film “Revolt” in Zagreb, Croatia, but these digital copies were not given to the archive afterwards. Only the rolls were brought back.

II. CATALOG


A. Organization of the catalog

I have systemized the catalog into decades in order to be easier to follow his filmography and development as a filmmaker under the circumstances that occurred during those decades. The context of the time under which the films were made is one of the most important direct influences on any filmmaker, especially Sidovski since he is primarily a philosopher and sociologist. Most of his films are connected with philosophical, sociological and political themes that reflect his

view of society and life. The decades are divided from year one (1) till the (0) year of the next decade (example: seventies from 1971-1980, eighties 1981-1990, etc.)

In every decade I'm marking the most important events with a division into three sections: (world) referring to the most important world events of that decade, (state) referring to the most important events that happened in the current state where he was living at the moment (Yugoslavia until the year 1991 and Macedonia from that year on). And finally, (with life events), I am noting the most important personal events of his life, which I discovered in the interviews that I made with him.

B. Legend for the breakdown of the films

screenshot	film form	title of the film	length
 <p>director S. Sidovski production Amateur club "Camera 300"</p>	3.	"DARKNESS, LIGHT, NATURE" 7' (1967)	
		(poetic documentary collage / B&W / 8mm)	
		A short collage movie that consist of three parts, each part named by one of the nouns in the title. First part "Darkness" is about the life of the poor neighborhood and people that live there. Second one, "Light" it has some traits of a poetic documentary about the modern and developed city parts of Skopje and the third part "Nature" is only about nature and no people at all. It seems there is no clear connection between the three parts but it also can be viewed as a dissecting documentary about the "highs" and "lows" of the society and the opposing nature that is free and has tranquility and peace.	year of premiere
			material
			color of the film

Screenshot – a screenshot from the film. If the film was “not found,” there is a self-explanatory picture.

Film form – a dominant film form. It is further explained in the next headline.

Title of the film – translation of the film title in English; Latin and French phrases that are widely known in the public are left in their original language.

Length – the length is always rounded up to minutes, seconds are not included.

Color of the film – if made in color, or black and white (B&W).

Film material (formats) – 8mm, super 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, VHS, S-VHS, MiniDV, and digital.

C. Film forms

I would like to point out that the labeling of film form is not a “genre” based labeling. I avoided genre labeling since that refers more to the way that film themes and topics are narrated or made. As we will see, Sidovski is more focused on experimental ways with the film form in his depiction of the topics and he has a more rational approach, not so developed in narration and therefore I find that definition of the film form is more valuable for this catalog. The genre or genres that might be present in his film will be described in the summary of the film. Here are several main film forms:

- *Experimental* – even though most of his films are “experimental” in their form, films that are labeled as such are those which can’t be dominantly distinguished in other groups.
- *Documentary* – nonfictional films intended to document some aspect of reality, primarily for the purposes of education, or maintaining a historical record.
- *Essay Film* – films that are focused on one topic, with an approach far more rational than the document and including a strong subjective view from the filmmaker. The film form is more experimental than the documentary films and sometimes it can be totally non-documentary.
- *Narrative* – film that has characters, story and plot.

And several other qualities to further explain or/and specify the main film form:

- *Statement* – films that don’t even try to research the topic and serve just for the purpose of giving a statement on the topic. More subjective than the essay films.
- *Poetic* – attribute of the film forms that convey subtle meaning brought by atmosphere and mood in the film.
- *Collage* – films that are consisted of few different non-connected topics and/or forms.
- *Philosophical* – film that is analyzing or represents the stances of some philosopher or tries to answer some philosophical question.

D. Interview

In the two years of research, I conducted few interviews with Stefan Sidovski about his private life, understanding on films and his filmography. I decided to include some excerpts from these interviews in order to clarify some ideas and decisions in his filmmaking. The excerpts will be put directly to the referred part of the thesis so it’s more clear and understandable for the reader.

III. SIXTIES (1961-1970)

A. World events that marked the decade

- '65 USA enters Vietnam War.
- '67 Ernesto "Che" Guevara is assassinated.
- '67 Summer of love.
- '68 Martin Luther King is assassinated.
- '68 big student protests in Paris are expanding through Europe.
- '69 man lands on the moon.
- '69 Woodstock festival

B. State events that marked the decade

- '63 catastrophic earthquake hits Skopje. The city is devastated. It's rebuilding starts.
- '68 big student protests in Belgrade (the capital of Yugoslavia).

C. Life events that marked the decade

- '63 He would have died in the earthquake: *"If I didn't go for a morning exercise I would have died in the earthquake. When I came home I found a big wooden piece from the ceiling crashed on my bed."* (excerpt from the interview)
- '64 his family lived in ruins for one year until they finally acquired new flat from the state.
- '65 finishes high school.
- '65 together with his friends they start to gamble in order to get money for a camera. They finally got enough money to buy their first 8mm camera, the Russian "Quartz M".
- '66 with his friends they enter "Amateur Cinema Club" but they are not accepted well, and can't get film stock to shot on, so they leave soon afterwards.
- '67 they enter new amateur cine club called "Camera 300" and finally get a film stock to work on.
- '68 his film "Death Conquers" is forbidden to run for festivals because as the officials responded to him *"...there is no space for nihilistic topics in socialist society."* (excerpt from the interview)
- '68 in the cine club they illegally watch a projection from the demonstrations in Belgrade. This will later come as an inspiration for the film "Revolt" from 1977.
- '70 He finishes faculty at philosophy department.
- '70 He enters into the final round (1 of 10 students) at the "Academy of Film arts" in Belgrade but in the end, he's not accepted.

- '70 angry and frustrated because of the failed exam he throws his camera into the river Vardar.
- '70 He works as a prop master for a feature film called "Thirst" (Zed/Жед) by D. Osmanli.

D. FILMS



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

1. "SKETCHES, REPORTAGE, BALL, REBELLION" 4' (1965)

(documentary collage / B&W / 8mm)

The film consists of four short reportage footages of the life in the city. He tried to connect the omnibus through the children games in every reportage.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

2. "GAMBLERS" 6' (1967)

(narrative / B&W / 8mm)

A short film about four gamblers who meet on a meadow and start to play a card game. After some time, one of them is caught cheating and a knife-fight starts. In the end, they all kill each other. On set, the sound was not recorded. Music was added in postproduction on magnetic tape which is unfortunately lost now. This is the case with almost all the film of the first two decades of his opus. Editing and blocking – wise the main fight in the film are not so well done and convincing. This is one of the Sidovski's first attempts to make a film. Apart from not convincing edit of the fight, the story has its own development and structure.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

3. "DARKNESS, LIGHT, NATURE" 7' (1967)

(poetic documentary collage / B&W / 8mm)

A short collage film that consists of three parts, each part named by one of the nouns in the title. The first part, "Darkness," is about the life of the poor neighborhood and the people who live there. The second part, "Light," has some traits of a poetic documentary about the modern and developed parts of the city Skopje, and the third part, "Nature," is only about nature with no people at all. It seems there is no clear connection between the three parts but it also can be viewed as a dissecting documentary about the "highs" and "lows" of the society and the opposing nature that is free and has tranquility and peace.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

4. "DISAPOINTMENT" 7' (1967)

(narrative / B&W / 8mm)

A film that shows a young man, living in a poor house that is disappointed in the socialism. The state of disappointment is ironized with intercuts of shots made from newspaper titles, that write about the great things that socialism achieved. He is the only actor in this film.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

5. "RAKIA" 12' (1967)

(narrative / B&W / 8mm)

Father molests his son because he didn't what to go and buy him Rakia. In the end, the child runs away from home and goes to the rail depot where he meets other children, who accept him and teach him how to become pickpocket.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

6. "ALONE" 5' (1968)

(narrative / B&W / 8mm)

First of his films wherein Stefan acts, this feature will become common practice in his later films. "Alone" is an interesting film about a man, who runs barefoot from his neighborhood into nature, where he feels great relief and happiness. When the main character enters the forest, he starts to communicate with nature; he performs for the forest trees, talks to them, handshakes them and even has an erotic game with one branch. In the end, something not explained happens to him and he throws the branch and runs back into his neighborhood.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

7. "FOUND HOME" 15' (1968)

(narrative / B&W / 8mm)

One of the rare emotional stories of Stefan Sidovski. It's a story about a child, who has lost his mother and is abused by his drunk alcoholic father. After he's beaten, the child goes outside in the street and cries. A blind man passes by and hears the cry. He stops and invites the child to go with him. The alcoholic father sees this through his window and starts to follow them. After a while, the child and the blind man enter blind's man home. The child looks happy as they are about to have lunch. Before the lunch, they pray to the Orthodox icon of "St. George kills the dragon". As they start to eat, the father comes and takes his son. But soon after they leave, the child escapes from his father and comes back to the blind man. The father follows the child again, enters inside and starts to beat him, but the blind man interferes only to be slapped by the father. The child sees a knife, takes it and kills the father. In the next sequence, we see the blind man and the child on the graveyard, probably at the grave of its father. In the end, they leave together like father and son in a shot of a long road. It's one of the most interesting narratives of Sidovski. The killing is built off the screen, which makes it more believable. Sidovski uses their shadows which reflect an image similar to the icon of "St. George kills the dragon" which is a clear plant and pay off in the film. This is one of the most cinematic and most symbolic killings and deaths in his films. The whole film is without sound, which probably pushed Sidovski to be more creative cinematically.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

8. "NOTHINGNESS" 25' (1968)

(philosophical collage / B&W / 8mm)

Collage of the film track leftovers from his previous films. The point of the film was that everything in the world, in the end, transforms into nothingness. The first film that was trying to represent a philosophical topic.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

9. "OMNIBUS" 3' (1968)

(narrative collage / B&W / 16mm)

This was his first film that he shot on 16mm. The film it is an omnibus consisted of three stories. First part is about a guy that rides a bike and falls, the second is about card gamblers as one them succeeds in cheating, and the last one is about a guy that was almost hit by a car because he was staring at a nice girl on the street.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

10. "DEATH CONQUERS" 15' (1968)

(narrative / B&W / 8mm)

A film about a soldier who is one of the few friends that survived the war. He goes back to his village and tries to continue with his ordinary life. A Christian child missionary comes to offer him to become a Christian but the soldier irritated and kills the child. Death, represented like in the Bergman's "The seventh seal", starts to stalk the soldier until he dies. In this film, he was able to direct a mass war scene with a lot of extras. This film was censored and banned from the officials because: "*The film festival said that they can't play the film because it was religiously improper and that it might corrupt the youth with its immoral message.*" (excerpt of the interview)



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

11. "WHY?" 15' (1969)

(philosophical essay / B&W / 8mm)

This film was kind of philosophical meditation as Sidovski would define it. It tried to answer elaborate one of most famous unanswered paradoxes in philosophy: "why is there something, rather than nothing?" The film shows different sequences of life and is intercut with the title card on which is written: "Why?".



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

12. "WORLD OF SILENCE" 4' (1969)

(poetic essay / B&W / 8mm)

In the sixties, Sidovski and his fellow filmmakers were recording the sound separate on magnetic tape. Unfortunately, all the tapes are demagnetized or lost and we will never know how he applied sound in his films at that point of his career. This film was deliberately silent. I wanted to depict the peace of nature.

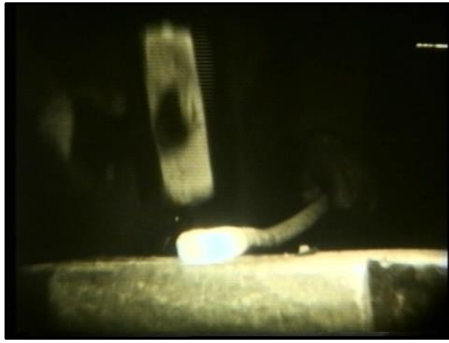


director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

13. "BALLAD ABOUT LOVE" 11' (1969)

(narrative / color / super 8mm)

One of few films that Stefan Sidovski made on the theme of love and relationship. It's a film about two people who meet long after they were in a relationship in their youth. Through flashbacks, the pair evokes memories at the place where they fell in love. Unfortunately, the sound is completely lost so we can't get details about the quality of the dialog or how the soundtrack/ music is serving the narration since the archived material is mute. Because of this, we can't see how the director used the music to amplify or juxtapose the love moments or the flashbacks.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

14. "FIRE AND LIFE" 11' (1970)

(poetic experimental / B&W / 8mm)

One of the first experimental poetic shorts in the filmography of Sidovski. The idea that he wanted to convey is how the same tools that managed to make progress in civilization and change of system through revolution, are used for enslaving the people and the establishment of a new system. The main motif of this progress and change is expressed with a repeating sequence of fire and a blacksmith who is making iron tools. The film starts with a sequence of a monument built in honor of the victory in WW2. Through montage, the details of the guns and cannons depicted in the monument are juxtaposed with the church and may suggest bombardment of the church and probably the victory of socialism and abolishment of religion. Later in the same sequence, the building of the new Parliament is added which is a clear sign of the new ruling power. The meaning is even more clarified with the title card that appears in the beginning "Human" and then a later title that reads "Slaves". Gradually the motif of the blacksmith and fire through montage symbolizes the building of new society but also the new system. In between, there is another title (also from the monument) that says "life – and life" maybe suggesting the exploitation of many, through work, for the few who will control the society.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

15. "LIFE AND MEANING" 5' (1970)

(poetic documentary / B&W / 8mm)

This topic of life and death will be represented in Stefan Sidovski's filmography throughout the decades. In the first part of the film, we see a sequence of the everyday life of people in the city. Later in the film, this is juxtaposed with several gravestones from the graveyard. The everlasting question is raised about the meaning of life and death and its mutual correlation. No answer is given. The difference with other similar documentaries on this topic is that in the end, we see several shots of a vast field and nature. It may suggest that this is a natural circle of life and there is nothing more to it.



director S. Sidovski

production Amateur club "Camera 300"

16. "FIELD, VILLAGERS, MONASTERY" 6' (1970)

(documentary collage / B&W / 8mm)

Documentary collage about the life of the villagers represented in three sequences. In the first sequence was represented their work on the field, second one a depiction of some customs and third one their religion festivities filmed in the village monastery.



director S. Sidovski

production Amateur club "Camera 300"

17. "WHAT AM I?" 15' (1970)

(philosophical essay / B&W / 8mm)

Like in some later films his face was in the whole frame while in the voice over we hear philosophical questions about the identity.

E. Summary of the Sixties Decade

In his first decade as a filmmaker, there were two features that Sidovski would abandon as he developed as a filmmaker and as a person later in his life. It is evident from the topics, that his films became more and more influenced by his emotions and everyday life, as opposed to such films as "Gamblers", "Alone", and "Found home", which are features that are not so typical for his later films and which have "traditional narration" (film that has character, story and plot). In this decade we are also introduced to the experimental form that will dominate his later career. Also, two of his favorite topics emerge: an examination of the social system, present in his film "Fire and Life", and the question about the meaning of life and death that is present in "Life and meaning."

It is really unfortunate that many films from this decade are lost and we can't follow more closely his development. As a researcher, I am really curious about his film "Death Conquers" that was forbidden by the authorities. It would have been interesting to see how it resonated with the historical and social events of that decade and what the authorities found dangerous for the

system. It's important to mention that even from his early life as a filmmaker, he was not frightened to experiment with film forms, short narration, documentaries and metaphorical experimental films. He also started to act in his films which would become, due to practical reasons, a very typical feature of his later films.

There was no direct sound in the films. It was recorded or edited later on magnetic tape that was played in manual synchronization with the projection. *For it to be more synchronized with the projection there was a "pre-voice" record on the magnetic tape. It was going something like "Synchronization with the film (name of the film) in three, two, one..." and at that moment we run the film projection.* (excerpt from the interviews)

The topics and form of his films have a direct correlation with his private life and his understanding of life. These films are directly influenced from his youth and the more emotional reception of his life in that period. We will follow his life and development as a filmmaker where he totally abandons an emotional approach to topics as he "loses" himself in the "world" of a rational understanding of life, helped by his impressive understanding of philosophy and sociology.

IV. SEVENTIES (1971-1980)

A. World events that marked the decade

- '70 death of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin.
- '73 Watergate scandal.
- '74 resignation of Nixon.
- '75 Vietnam War ends.
- '76 Mao Zedong dies.
- '77 deaths of Elvis Presley and Charlie Chaplin.
- '78 Cambodian -Vietnamese War begins.

B. State events that marked the decade

- In this decade, Yugoslavia has its biggest economic expansion. The quality of life improves and young people have more opportunities to migrate for education in western countries.
- '72 public letter from Tito's office was read everywhere. It stated that the youth was getting out of correct moral beliefs. Because of this the most famous Yugoslavian film "black" wave was stopped. The so-called "red" wave started which depicted heroism of partisans in the WW2.
- '74 new constitution of Yugoslavia, allowing more independence of the states and decentralization of the power. It will be in power till '90 and the fall of Yugoslavia.
- '80 Josip Broz – Tito dies. The state gradually starts to fall apart because of the rise of nationalisms in the states.

C. Life events that marked the decade

- '71 fails again (2nd time) on his entrance film exam into Belgrade film school. After this, he will never again apply to film academy.
- '71 works in the scenery department on feature movie called "Shot" (Istrel/Истрел) by B. Gapo
- '72 his only grandmother dies.
- '72 – '73 serves in the Army. (Service in the army in Yugoslavia is obligatory.)
- '73 has an incident with the authority in the Army.
- '73 starts to teach philosophy and later sociology in the high school "Rade Jovchevski – Korchagin," where he will spend all his pre-retirement work.
- '74 his second incident with authority during the standard Army training.

- '75 Philosophy is banned from the school system and instead, “Marxism and self-regulation” is introduced in the educational system. He starts teaching this class instead of philosophy.
- '75 starts to hang out with his first generation of students from the high school. This will become a regular practice and he will shoot his films with them.
- '75 his brother dies in an accident. He fell asleep in his car that was turned on, in a garage with his girlfriend and future wife, and suffocated from the fumes. *“There were found dead in his car that was parked in the garage. The car was working. They probably suffocated from the fumes of the exhaust because they turned on the heating and felt asleep.”* (excerpt from the interview)
- '76 his mother dies. Sidovski: *“My mother suffered a lot after the death of my brother. They were somehow very connected, not like me and her.”* (excerpt from the interview)
- '76 breaks up with his last big love of his life. *“We were poor. I lived with my father. One night I brought my girlfriend home. We broke up afterwards. Probably she saw where I lived and she understood that there is no future where there is no money. You need money for love or basic financial circumstances to build a family, you have to provide”.* (excerpt from the interview)
- '77 his film “Revolt” was silently censored.
- '78 He is ordered by the school manager to become a member of the communist party since he is teaching Marxism, but he refuses.

D. FILMS



director S. Sidovski

production Amateur club “Camera 300”

1. “WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?” 8’ (1971) (philosophical essay / B&W / 8mm)

A film about another philosophical question “what is the point of life?” The film was a philosophical meditation of what should be done. And every question (or rhetorical question) was didactically brought to absurd just so one can understand that there is no clear answer about this.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

2. "ONE DAY FROM THE DIARY OF..." 12' (1973)

(narrative / color / 8mm)

A deliberate monotonous film with long shots. He wanted to depict the boredom and pointlessness of a young unemployed man that had nothing important to do. He was shot doing all these everyday activities like sleeping, roaming around the city, thinking etc.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

3. "ROAD TO..." 6' (1973)

(experimental / color / 8mm)

A short experimental film about the confusion of one young man about which "road" in life he should take. The film begins with a man who stands on a wall like a two-dimensional image "crucified" between the cover of a newspaper called "Politika" (*Politics*), which was one of the main propaganda papers and a sheet of paper which says "Evandzelie" (*Gospel*). After this scene, he takes a walk somewhere, only to see him later returning from the direction he had gone. We also see him reading a book by Marx and Engels and wondering about what to do. He starts running away from the camera on a highway, but just before the end of the film, after all of these sequences, he is back at the wall where he began his journey and he is still doubting what he should choose. In the end, he disappears and the wall stays empty. In this film we see what later will become a comfortable way of expression for Sidovski, that is, through experimenting with dialectics.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

4. "OLD BAZAAR" 9' (1975)

(documentary / B&W / 16mm)

Reportage documentary of the old bazaar in the middle of Skopje with all the workshops that were present at that time.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

5. "BREAKFAST" 17' (1975)

(narrative / color / super8mm)

This film is a clear critique of the socialist system that was established in Yugoslavia after WW2. A sick man is having his last breakfast while watching from his window a construction site where cranes (machines) are building new buildings. Before he starts his breakfast, we see that he is lying in his bed thinking about his wife and daughter as we see pictures of them (it's not clear, but it seems that they are dead). Together with this information and the blood that this man is throwing up later on the plate, it is suggested that they are somehow victims of this society. The film finishes after the man finishes his breakfast and falls dead on the ground. Throughout the film, one hears the very irritating sound of a ticking clock which stops once he is dead. The author is suggesting that the ticking is a countdown of the man's final minutes and probably that every person has his or her own ticking clock. There is source music in the middle of the film when he turns on the radio and a famous socialist song plays which is both motivational and in total counterpoint with this man's condition, suggesting that the reality of the system is represented through this man's sickness and poverty, even though the state is attempting to make reality look beautiful through its propaganda, while the ordinary person is suffering.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

6. "DESIRE" 15' (1976)

(narrative / color / super8mm)

"Desire" is a short film about a man who sits in the park and sees himself in the role of other people, symbolizing his desire to be in their place. There seems to be no deeper idea. The sound of nature is added in post-production and a song is accompanying and supporting the ease and comfort of the imagination of our character fueled by his desire.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

7. "REVOLT" 29' (1977)

(narrative / color / super8mm)

This is one of the most famous films of Stefan Sidovski. It's very energetic and rebellious. Five friends decide to leave the town or society in search of spiritual freedom. It's a symbolic rebellion against cultural propaganda and the idealization of perception and reality.

The film was reminiscent of the student riots in Belgrade, as well as the May protests in Europe in 1968. This film had its own cultural revival in 2014 when Gjorgji Janevski took the film from the film archive and digitalized the footage, and then organized another première. By this time, Stefan Sidovski had already gained cult status in Skopje as a person. The soundtrack of the original was so bad that they decided to make an open online project where musicians could take the film and perform a soundtrack while the film is projected behind them. The goal was to make an homage to amateur art done out of pure love and nothing else and to revive that energy. Till this point, the film has had six screenings accompanied by different live orchestras. You can find more information on the web site www.revolt.mk.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

8. "GAZES THROUGH THE WINDOW" 21' (1978)

(narrative / color / super8mm)

Another of the few rare short films on the topic of love. More precisely the film deals with the theme of overcoming a loss of love or breakup. A young female student sits in her room and learns something, we don't see what, but she's not concentrated as we see that something is

overtaking her thoughts. She goes to the window several times as she goes into flashbacks of how she met her ex-boyfriend and how they were making love for the first time. She comes back and takes a photo of her and her ex-boyfriend. Again she sees an imaginative event of herself in a white dress coming to meet her ex and how he strangles her. All of this is a representation of her painful thoughts. In the end, she puts the photography on fire as a sign that their relationship has come to an end and she has to move on. It is interesting to note that she is an amateur actress, a student in the high school where Stefan Sidovski taught. She acts really well and she has one of the most emotional roles that we could see in his films. The collaboration between Sidovski with

the students from the high school where he taught philosophy and sociology will become a common trait in the films to come.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

9. "SYNOPSIS" 26' (1978)

(narrative metafilm / color / super8mm)

A short film about relationships, love, and sex. The whole film consists of several sequences. First is when the couple meets and they hook up. The second is where the man tries to have his first intercourse with the girl. After this, in the next scene, we see the couple walking after the wedding, probably this is a projection of what one of the characters is thinking at the moment. After this scene, we see how the woman leaves the flat after she refuses sex with the man. In between all these scenes, there are shots of different pages of a book on love and sex. Once there is even a strange intercut of a porn magazine from which you get a disgusting feeling, and maybe that is the point for an understanding of the problem, that beneath what is called love lies a basic animal need for sex. The film raises the question if there can be genuine love or if the need for a partner is but a sexual urge.

This whole story is put in meta-cinematic plot structure where we see Sidovski as the writer of the story that unfolds. This part doesn't have any specific narrative development, but it serves as a plot frame for the film. Unfortunately, the music was not preserved and so, the viewer can't get the whole artistic impact that Sidovski intended when he made the film since he often uses music to suggest or reveal a meaning or share his opinion on what we see on the screen.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

10. "MESSAGE" 16' (1978)

(narrative / color / super8mm)

"Message" is a short film about an artist that receives an "enlightenment" or a divine message while meditating in nature. He draws something on a canvas and then goes to the city, leaving the canvas framed in the center of nature as a message, a sign, or as performance art. There is an interesting almost psychedelic montage sequence when the artist receives the message while he is meditating depicting his thought process. The interesting montage continues with his transfer from nature to the city, which is made by the camera moving from a wide shot into a detail on the canvas and then when it moves into wide again, we are already

in the center of the city. This is the first use of this almost video effect montage for practical reasons in his films. The sound of the environment is in counterpoint with the music that supports and conveys the inner feeling and thoughts of the artist. The narrative is pretty straightforward, clear and simple.

E. Summary of the Seventies' Decade

In this decade, Stefan didn't produce many films, due to his obligatory army service and his new work environment in the high school. He also didn't experiment much with different film approaches. He started to explore the use of sound and music as cinematic elements as the super 8mm became more accessible and common format.

This decade is very important on a personal level. This is the last decade where we can still see the presence of love among his topics, and one might find that it's here that the emotional themes are the most personal, since they were made in the decade of his horrific family losses of his brother and his mother, and also of his most important love relationship. The dominant theme of his films is the theme of loss and overcoming pain, with emotions playing an important role. After this, Sidovski decided to take a more rational path in life and he started looking at themes with a kind of analytic distance, as he committed himself to philosophy and sociology.

He had some very important collisions with the authorities while he was serving his obligatory army term, and he became more rebellious. This rebellion is expressed more frequently in his later work. He wasn't afraid to oppose and to critique. He did so with arguments since he was highly educated (for that time) and had the weapons and strength to speak up for his stance. Inspired by the footage from the demonstrations at the end of the sixties, almost a decade earlier, we see open criticism of the social system in his film "Revolt" and this becomes one of the main topics of his opus. In this decade, Sidovski also started to collaborate with his students from the high school.

V. EIGHTIES (1981-1990)

A. World events that marked the decade

- '81 launch of MTV.
- '81 AIDS epidemic officially begins.
- '82 Sony releases the world's first commercially sold CD player, the Sony CDP-101.
- '84 human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is recognized as the cause of HIV/AIDS.
- '84 assassination of Indira Gandhi.
- '86 Chernobyl disaster in SSSR.
- '86 launch of the space station "Mir".
- '89 fall of the Berlin Wall;
- '89 1989 revolution and collapse of the Soviet Bloc in Europe.
- '89 Tiananmen Square Massacre in China.
- '90 Sir Tim Berners-Lee invents the World Wide Web.
- '90 The German reunification.
- '90 launch of the Hubble Space Telescope.
- '90 Gulf War begins.

B. State events that marked the decade

- During the whole decade, nationalism starts to develop in the 6 republics and Yugoslavia gradually starts to be destabilized. The leaders of the republics had continues meetings across the state to decide what to do with Yugoslavia.

C. Life events that marked the decade

- '83 He enrolls in the master program at the faculty of philosophy.
- '86 his thesis proposal "Correlation of Marx and Russian religious philosophy school of the 19th century in works of Nikolai Berdyaev" was not accepted because of political incorrectness. He leaves master studies.
- '86 He was called by Macedonian TV station to make a documentary called "Bell towers of life". This film was played in prime time and gained great recognition, but unfortunately, the film is lost.
- '86 – '88 secret service visits his home and questions his father about him. I checked in the police archive; there is no dossier about this.
- '89 his uncle, with whom he was very close, dies.

D. FILMS

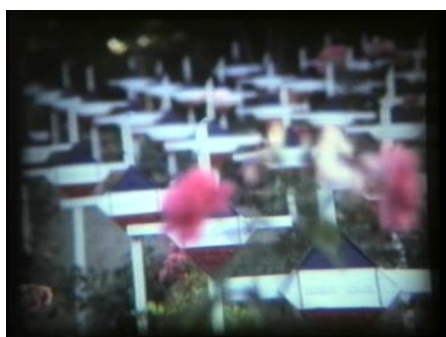


director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

1. "CLEANERS OF THE CITY" 6' (1981)

(documentary / B&W, color / 16mm)

The film is about the gypsies on a garbage dump who wait for the garbage trucks to come leave the waste and they go through it finding some toys, and useful objects for them, that they can later sell or use.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

2. "GRAVEYARD OF THE FRENCH SOLDIERS" 11' (1982)

(poetic documentary / color / super 8mm)

One of the most metaphorically profound and balanced poetic documentaries of Sidovski. It's shot at the memorial cemetery of the French soldiers who died on the Balkan front during the WW1. But this documentary is not about praising the soldiers and the fight for freedom. It's a documentary that very subtly uncovers the destructive power and tragedy of war. The documentary starts with pleasant classical music and we see the neoclassical pillars of the memorial. There is also a playful spinning shot in between the pillars towards the sky and the viewer gets a relaxed feeling of ease. The audience doesn't even notice they are at the cemetery. This is all made purposely. As the film progresses, the music changes into classical march and we see white graveyard crosses but we still don't know what they are since they are shot from the profile. The march progresses into explosions and then we see the shadows of the crosses, a lot of them, and then the director cuts to the shot of the years 1914 – 1918 as we understood that is a clear reference of the WW1. After the explosion, for the first time, the graveyard crosses are revealed. A mass graveyard accompanied by a requiem. Then, in the end, we are again reminded of the beauty of the pillars, the sky and what war destroyed. The music as you can understand has a leading atmospheric role, but the gradual opening of what this film is really about and the showing of the mass graves, in the end, is really well plotted and executed. This film is Sidovski's masterpiece of poeticism and metaphor and displays his knowledge of rhythm and atmosphere in

a movie. The whole graveyard is a character and a story in itself, which brings emotions and excitement to the viewer. It displays one of the best use of montage and sound in his films.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

3. "ABANDONED WATERMILLS" 8' (1984)

(documentary / color / super 8mm)

A documentary about the abandonment of village life and the migration of people to the cities. Its genre is somewhere between poetic and reportage documentary. There are no dialog or "talking heads". It's just a montage of shots that represent the ruins of the houses and watermills in the villages after people left the village. The shots of the ruins are followed by nature at first and then by ethno music. The film ends with a sequence which begins with a wide shot of the village and camera pan as we hear explosions and a chaotic musical score, then we are transferred into a wide shot of the city as we see several chimneys and flying airplanes, everything that represents the city's industrial and modern life. The tone and the picture of the music are in total opposition with the previous peaceful village sequences even though they were representing something that was abandoned.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

4. "LAST PICTURES OF MY SCHOOL LIFE" 13' (1984)

(narrative / color / 16mm)

A film about graduate, which starts in a classroom where students tear apart the books and notebooks full of excitement in excitement. But the second sequence juxtapositions this as it represented the main character sitting in his room wondering what to do next.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

5. "SCREAM" 6' (1985)

(narrative poetic / B&W/ super8mm)

"Scream" is a poetic short about the inner scream as a turbulent feeling that a person has, expressed through a montage of pictures from nature. The film starts and finishes on an editing flat-bed where Stefan Sidovski is cutting his "inner scream", but the middle part carries the story and the emotional impact. We see a man against the waves of a sea

and a character dressed in a black robe on which we read "death" very similar in costume to the character of Death in Bergman's "Seventh Seal." He jumps in a smokescreen of a fire and disappears. The opening and closing editing sequence is just a formal story frame for the poetics in the middle and it gives a meta-cinematic attribute to this film.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

6. "FILM COURSE ON HOW TO LEARN MARXISM" 8' (1985)

(narrative experimental / color / super8mm)

The film consists of two opposite situations (stories). The first is about a man who reads a book in the park, wears black sunglasses and smokes a cigar, does nothing, but seems to be socially above the other man who has a simple, boring working class lifestyle of the 80ties. The "worker"

wakes up, has breakfast and goes to earn his living doing a physical job of loading and unloading a track in a warehouse. The "fancy" guy later is positioned against a white wall and next to him are newspapers *Politics*, which was one of the most popular weekly papers in Yugoslavia. His position clearly suggests his dominance over politics. In the last shot of the film, the fancy guy is running away from the camera on a road, suggesting that he might be leaving this society.

The film has several songs including "Walk of life" and "One word" from Dire Straits, but also "Revolution" by the Beatles. The songs follow the action and add to the story's message, which is clearly about the difference in class, a phenomenon that started to appear rapidly in the years before the collapse of Yugoslavia and the beginning of the independence of Macedonia. Even though the film works simply by comparison of two situations and characters, it is important to say that Sidovski as a philosopher and sociologist noticed the upcoming events and put them into his films as a warning.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

7. "THE MASTER AND MARGARITA" 13' (1985)

(narrative / color / super 8mm)

His own view and free adaptation of the famous novel by M. Bulgakov. A theater group "Knot" made a stage adaptation of the novel, Sidovski liked some parts of it and suggested making a film to them. Sidovski did not write the film adaptation. It was done by his amateur college and he was in the role of director and director of photography. The film is a simplified version of the original story and it's about love and suffering from breaking up. The story doesn't have dialog and it's mainly accompanied by several soundtrack songs including Ravel's "Bolero" and "Don't leave me now" by Roger Hodgson which kind of divide the parts in the film: the meeting, the love and the breaking up. The whole film is pretty melodramatic. It's acting is full of pathos. This film is an interesting change from the mainly rational topics and approaches that Sidovski's filmography was taking in the 80ties.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

8. "AMATEUR FILM KALEIDOSKOP OF A CITY" 18' (1986)

(collage / color / super 8mm)

A collage film that is made of leftovers from several of his films made earlier in his career. There is no unity other than the city of Skopje where all films were shot. It is like an unconnected poetic kaleidoscope. One very interesting juxtaposition happens with the music that is used and how maybe even incidentally a meaning is built. For instance, from the part of the film "Revolt", he has put a church chorus while the five men are running rebelliously through the city. The film seems to be nothing more than a collage of film stock from his works that never saw the light of the day in the 70ties.



director S. Sidovski
production freelance

9. "NATASHA" 5' (1986)

(narrative experimental / color / VHS)

This is the first VHS film that Sidovski made. Set in a school environment and shot with his high school students, "Natasha" is a short experimental film describing the masculine lust towards woman as a complicated unattainable task, full of obstacles that get repeated. This is shown in a "funny" yet visually powerful way. A man fixates on a woman. In the next moment, we are transferred into the mind of this man, seeing from his POV, as he chases the woman through the school corridor and side classrooms. As soon as he enters one school room, Natasha is gone. After a few seconds, the man exits the classroom and we see Natasha again waiting before the entrance of the next classroom. This is all done in one shot so the continuity serves well in making this a pointless almost delusional chase. He chases her through several classrooms and then the continuous shot ends before he catches her. In the end, we see that this chase was only his imagination. As always, the post-production of the film is messy but the idea and the chase sequences are such that it deserves a look. No post production in sound or music. It's evident that the new inexpensive medium of VHS gave Sidovski a possibility to shoot differently in this case, without caring about expensive film stock and the possibility to make a long moving shot. On the other hand, he had problems in adapting to the postproduction workflow of the new medium.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

10. "MONUMENT OF REVOLUTION" 5' (1986)

(documentary / B&W, color / 16mm)

The film was censored by pre-selectors of festivals, because of the suggestive montage that represented the government building full of predatory animals such as wolves and foxes. Anyhow, the film managed to be accepted and receive an award at the Pula amateur festival, which was the biggest and most prestigious amateur festival in the whole country at that point.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

11. "BELL TOWERS OF LIFE" 25' (1986)

(TV- documentary / color / 16mm)

This film was commissioned by the Macedonian TV station that was the only station at that moment in the Republic of Macedonia. For the first time, he got the change to collaborate with a professional crew and have the whole production covered by the TV station. The documentary played in prime time and got great recognition but

unfortunately, I couldn't find the copy.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

12. "LIFE AND MEANING" 4' (1987)

(philosophical essay / B&W / 8mm)

Essay film divided into two parts. In the first part, there is a montage of the whole life cycle from birth to death. The second part consisted of many philosophical answers and questions about life and its meaning.



director S. Sidovski
production Amateur club "Camera 300"

13. "GAZES TOWARD THE WATCH" 6' (1987)

(narrative / B&W, color / 16mm)

He acted alone in this film about a middle-aged man that looks at the watch and sees how his life passes by with every tick of the clock.



director S. Sidovski

production Academic Cine club

14. "SCHOOL ETUDES" 10' (1987)

(collage / color / VHS)

This short collage consists of two separated "films". The first is about a rebellious man who roams around the school hitting things and then leaving the school in protest. Several shots at the beginning of the film display titles on school doors (like a manager, secretary etc.) and then there is a minute of school life, like classes. Students are working on personal computers in the school. These sequences establish the authority and the system in which the young people are set while they are in the school system. A third sequence consists of long shots of a student who exits the school protesting (about nothing in particular) and knocking school objects out of his way. There is a background song from Kraftwerk called "Home Computer". It accompanies the montage and intensifies the motif of a school system.

The second part of this collage is one long shot of students who smoke cigarettes in an empty classroom inside the school, talking (improvised, not scripted dialog) about their school life. It doesn't seem to surpass the level of a trial that has nothing to say.



director S. Sidovski

production freelance

15. "VIDEO ART" 20' (1988)

(experimental / color / VHS)

Even though he has a lot of experiments in his opus that might look as a video art, this was one deliberately made. It had long shots of the streets and city. The color of the picture was changing constantly from negative to color.



director S. Sidovski

production freelance

16. "PARK" 9' (1988)

(documentary / color / VHS)

Reportage documentary about the city park. It had impressionistic motives which were followed by Vivaldi's four seasons.



director S. Sidovski
production freelance

17. "STREET" 8' (1988)

(documentary / color / VHS)

Reportage documentary about a street in old part of the city of Skopje.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic Cine club

18. "PROTECTION OF THE CULTURAL MONUMENTS IN THE CITY PARK" 6' (1989)

(narrative / B&W / 16mm)

A short film about young people who are disrespectful towards the monuments of the revolutionaries in the capital.



director S. Sidovski
production Skopje TV

19. "EYE, PAINTINGS, TEMPLE OF ART" 22' (1989)

(poetic / color / s-VHS)

This is a poetic TV film that Sidovski made for the national TV service, the only television service at that moment in the state, called Macedonian television. The film is based and inspired by the poetry of Slavko Janevski (writer and one of the pillars of Macedonian literature).

There is a background atmosphere of the capital city and it seems counterpart with the reading of the poetry from S. Janevski, which talks about the human soul, art, and passion. There is a shot of an eye that is intercut with the scenes and it's almost like the eye that narrates all of these passages and it gives to the viewer a reason to think about what he sees and hears. Afterwards, the whole film goes into "The museum of contemporary art" in Skopje, and there are poetic sequences and a montage of paintings by famous painters like Dali, Picasso, El Greco, De Chirico etc., which are repeating tautologically the meaning of the poetry that is narrated. The montage is the better part of the film, especially in the moments when it doesn't tell what the narrator is saying and it gives

you a feeling of the loss of the person in the fast city and the eye that longs for the basic human passion.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic Cine club

20. "REBELLION" 4' (1990)

(statement narrative / color / super8mm)

On the public wall of the bank of the river Vardar near the center of Skopje, a man comes and writes graffiti on the wall saying "No, for private ownership". The same year Yugoslavia started to break up and the process of denationalization and privatization started. This film is in a way a statement against that process and the coming of the new state order the capitalism. The song of ex-YU band called Psihomodo-pop "When I was 16" is running as a score during the whole film. The point is clear but the way in which it is made is very poor and uncreative. Just the camera filming the action with unclear cuts that don't add to the story or message.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic Cine club

21. "SONG" 4' (1990)

(narrative / color / 16mm)

A young girl is writing a song about her sad love relationship. The camera followed the words as she was writing them on the paper and from time to time we see her face.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic Cine club

22. "WINDOWS, DOORS, KALDRMA" 2' (1990)

(documentary / color / 16mm)

Documentary representation of one of the oldest neighborhoods in Skopje called Madzir Maalo. The representation was done through the details of the windows, the old streets cubes (called kaldrma), part of the doors etc.

E. Summary of the Eighties' Decade

The decade is characterized by a big transition for the author and experiments with the new film material that appeared, the VHS. Even though Sidovski was an admirer of the film stock, he was not afraid to use and explore the pros and cons of the new film material, as we see in the film "Natasha", when he uses long takes that he would not have done in his previous films due to the limitation of the film stock material that was at his disposal. He will not shoot many films on this new material as he tries to preserve his love and admiration for the film stock while he can get film stock.

The arrival of the new film material didn't affect the topics and the themes of his films in the decade. We can note how Sidovski is slowly moving away from narration and toward rational and experimental films which convey meaning and a clear stance on a theme or issue more than story or characters. The characters are used as objects to convey the meaning and his own thoughts about the social phenomenon and philosophical thoughts on the subjects that he is working on. Apart from his film "Natasha" that we might say is a film about sexual instinct, and the film "The Master and Margarita" which is a love story, the other films are either experiments or socially involved films. That's why probably "Graveyard of the French soldiers" (Cimetière Militaire français) is thematically the most profound and also cinematically the most developed of this decade. It is important to mention that he also made two films for Television during this decade. The first one, a documentary called "Bell towers of life", unfortunately, could not be found, but it was shown on prime time and was very well accepted. The second one, "Eye, Paintings, Temples of Art," was abstract in its expression and it conveyed the feelings of the poetry of Slavko Janevski. Perhaps the latter was too experimental for the TV because he was never called again to work for them.

VI. NINETIES (1991-2000)

A. World events that marked the decade

- '91 Yugoslav wars. Yugoslavia falls apart. Macedonia is not involved. Peaceful independence of Macedonia and Slovenia.
- '91 SSSR falls apart. Dissolution of the Soviet Union and independence of 15 former Soviet republics.
- '91 first Website is put online and made available to the public.
- '91 end of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.
- '92 Maastricht Treaty creates the European Union.
- '92 end of dictatorship in Albania.
- '92 Bosnian War begins.
- '93 Velvet divorce between the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
- '94 end of apartheid in South Africa and election of Nelson Mandela.
- '94 Assassination of Juvénal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira triggers the Rwandan genocide.
- '94 opening of the Channel Tunnel.
- '95 establishment of the World Trade Organization.
- '95 Srebrenica massacre.
- '95 NATO bombing raids in Bosnia end the Bosnian War; Dayton Accords signed.
- '96 Dolly the sheep becomes the first successful cloned mammal.
- '97 transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong from the UK to China.
- '98 Google is founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin.
- '99 NATO bombs Yugoslavia.
- '99 Kosovo War ends the Yugoslav Wars.
- '99 Euro currency is introduced.
- '99 ISIL is formed.

B. State events that marked the decade

- '91 Yugoslavian wars begin; they will last till '94.
- '91 Macedonia and Slovenia peacefully gain independence.
- '91 Macedonia seceded from Yugoslavia and becomes an independent Republic. Democracy and capitalism are installed.
- '93 privatization law in Macedonia. State land and factories are given to private sector. Many people are left without a job.

- '99 around 20,000 Albanian refugees are allowed to enter and to live in Macedonia.

C. Life events that marked the decade

- '91 Amateur cinema club "Camera club "300" ceases to exist.
- '92 Sidovski transfers to "Academic Cinema club"
- '92 his father dies.
- '92 receives a call from philosophy professor Kiril Temkov to renew the master studies on a new topic about film. He accepts.
- '95 "Academic Cine club" is closed. He carries the memory of the club by crediting the ACC as a producer in his future films.
- '95 on the 100th year anniversary of film, he finishes his master thesis and publishes his first book based on the same topic "Film-shot and its aesthetic essence", which is the first serious academic book on film in Macedonia after its independence.
- '95 He begins Ph.D. studies also on film.

D. FILMS



director S. Sidovski
production Academic Cine club

1. "ILLUSION OF THE REALITY OR REALITY OF THE ILLUSION" 8' (1991)

(experimental / color / super 8mm)

A very extreme experimental film where the primary image is a white wall. Three symbols are displayed on the wall, each for very short time: the Swastika, the hammer and sickle and the sign of the dollar. The film ends with the shot of a water surface. While the wall is depicted, the songs change first to an electronic track with the speeches of Hitler, then to a Soviet march song, then an American song from the Coca-Cola commercial, and in the end, to an aria. It's clear that Sidovski wanted to equalize Fascism, Communism or both ideas with the upcoming force of capitalism that was emerging in the state in 1991 at the time Yugoslavia fell apart. It's interesting how looking at the white surface with only the dirt and dust from the film track is there to be seen creates a hypnotic and strange effect on the viewer.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic Cine club

2. "WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN IT HAPPENS...?" 5' (1991)

(narrative / color / VHS)

A film about the possibility of different selves depending on the choices we make. A man goes and comes on crossroads and takes one path where something happens to him. Afterwards, we go into rewind of the path he passed as we coming back to the crossroad where he takes another road. We see that after this choice something different happens to him.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine Club

3. "WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF MARXISM THAT LIED TO US" 18' (1991)

(narrative / color / 16mm)

A group of young people talking about how to oppose the state and how to express their voice against it. Afterwards, they go and make a rush in the city.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine Club

4. "EX-SOCIALIST AND ACTUAL CAPITALIST TRAMP" 7' (1992)

(narrative / color / 16mm)

Sidovski plays a tramp that wakes up under the bridge and as he starts going towards the city he cracks a cigarette box named "Yugoslavia" which is a clear sign of the past state that fell apart. He comes to the center of the city where he begs for some money but people just chase him away. Revolted he throws his raincoat and starts screaming "I'm now a capitalist tramp".



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine Club

5. "HEAD" 2' (1992)

(experimental / color / 16mm)

The camera spins around Stefan's head and then around monuments head. Afterwards, both are transitioning seamlessly through edit.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine Club

6. "FOOTSTEPS" 7' (1993)

(experimental / color / VHS)

An experimental short film that starts with a top-shot of a man who walks for more than half of the film. When you're watching the action for more than 30 seconds, it makes you dizzy. Then suddenly the walking stops and gradually, with jump cuts, the camera takes us far away from the subject and then directly into a close up of his puzzled face. It looks like he is thinking about the walk that he took. Somehow, strangely, the dizziness is still with you, and it seems, if you think metaphorically, it might be that he wants to represent how pointless life can be in the endless walk of nowhere. No music, no sound.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

7. "SCREEN-EYE" 3' (1996)

(narrative / color / S-VHS)

A computer is telling a man (Sidovski) that humans have lost their ability to perceive and communicate with nature. Because of this, they've become useless in the evolutionary pyramid, and therefore, computers will take over the world. It's one of the first Macedonian films that has an apocalyptic and futuristic tone. It is shot very expressionistically, with wide lenses with a vignette as a POV of the computer's (eye). In the end, the human is unplugging the PC in panic. Up till that moment, the film is very effective, having a good pace. The end could be criticized for Sidovski's statement, "Quo Vadis homo"? (Where are you going humans?), which reduces the impact of the film at its end.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

8. "IDENTITY DISCLOSURE" 5' (1997)

(experimental / B&W / S-VHS)

This is a film that deals with the means of identifying people and putting them into groups based on their race, religion, beliefs etc. Human subjects are put against the wall, in the execution pose, while the narrator reads something like a census of population questionnaire, while the sound of typing machine is entering information. In the end, the subjects turn around and say "I'm a human" and after this, they are shot and killed. In between the subjects, there is a PC animation over the image, depicting a kind of digital census paper for enlisting and sorting the subjects. It's one of Sidovski's better executed experimental shorts, dealing well with the very important topic of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious Macedonia, after the breakdown of Yugoslavia. In the years to come, we would understand that this was a very important issue for our country. The short film foresees events and the divide that would come in the following decade. This is one of his first films that have a narrator. The voice emerges as from behind the camera and has an effect of authority.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

9. "MEMENTO MORI" 8' (1997)

(experimental / B&W / S-VHS)

A film dedicated to the Romanian philosopher Emil Cioran and his thoughts about the meaning of life, death, and God. Generally, the short is pessimistic or even nihilistic. The picture stays the same throughout the film. Stefan Sidovski is looking at the camera. In the beginning, there is music and sounds that describe a man heading into a marriage and then, the narration of Cioran's essays begin. Sidovski is reading it. In the end, he just closes his eyes, meaning that he's reached death.

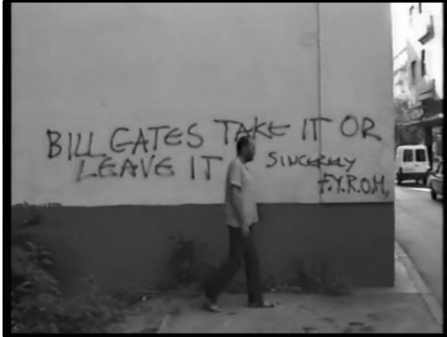


director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

10. "THE WORLD IS AN ILLUSION" 6' (1997)

(experimental / B&W / S-VHS)

Another film about the meaning of life and a direct critique of the consumeristic and capitalistic moral code and ethics. The overall theme of the film suggests the loss of humanity inside the options of hedonistic satisfaction. In the beginning, there is a flickering light wherein Sidovski starts his philosophical narration. Then, there is his face looking directly into the camera up to the moment before he finishes the narration, speaking of old age and the end of life, at which point he returns to the flickering light that fades away. The short is a simple straightforward essay/concept film about the meaning of life in this society. As Macedonia is entering a new system (from Socialism to Capitalism and consumerism) Sidovski notices the problems of this system that people will have, living in it. The film doesn't bring anything new in its conveyance of the message, but the message is worthy.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

11. "WANDERING" 7' (1997)

(essay statement / B&W / S-VHS)

This is a third film about the meaning of life made in the 90ties. It's a version of film essay. The film starts while Sidovski is looking at the river and then a narrator says "everything flows, everything's changing" (Panta Rei). Then he stands up and is wandering around the city looking at the people and looking at the books in the library to the books about God, philosophy and human feelings. All these actions are followed by smooth jazz music. When he passes near the parliament, we hear "moo" (cow) sounds, which clearly describes his meaning about politicians. Then he comes back to the river at the same place where he was at the beginning of the film. While he is watching the river, he says "everything's flowing, nothing's changing" and the film ends.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine club

12. "A TREATISE ON DEMOCRACY" 39' (1997)

(essay / color, B&W / S-VHS)

The purest essay film from the point of view of the form. Sidovski gives an overview of the hypocrisy in democracy and capitalism, how and why this system is failing. A quotation from Montesquieu (a political philosopher in the age of Enlightenment) written on a school table, is shown at the beginning (and the end) of the film: "It's good to bring democracy to the people, but it's better and more valuable to educate people for democracy." He also makes a more direct dissection of the situation in Macedonia and all the transitions between the systems. The clear message is that democracy is not better than the previous system because the country and the people are not prepared for democracy. The music at the film's beginning and the end is "Gaudeamus Igitur" which is an ironic comment on the implementation of democracy in Macedonia and also references the country as a "new graduate" in democracy. He executes the whole film like a reporter walking around the city with intercuts of his classroom.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

13. "ENCOUNTERS WITH THE TRAMP - PHILOSOPHER" 21' (1997)

(essay / color / S-VHS)

Students meet and talk with a tramp philosopher who is roaming around the city. Their main topics are the point of life and achieving happiness. As they talk, they comment on the hypocrisy that is present in the world, especially the correlation of state towards the individuals and the new uprising of capitalism and consumerism that derives from the west, or, as they say, more specifically the USA. One of the points is that without money, there is no happiness since you have to participate and have an active role in society. This film is important because is a summary of Stefan Sidovski life's philosophy. In a way, it is an autobiographical statement film. The two philosophers that he mentions in the conversations are Emil Cioran and Jiddu Krishnamurti, who are already present in some of his earlier films from this decade.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

14. "ILLUSION" 4' (1998)

(experimental / B&W and color / S-VHS)

A short film about the illusion that our senses can throw upon us. There is a man who sits and drinks his coffee in a city café. Then he starts to watch young girls walking by. The man is filmed in black and white and the girls are in color. The man is shot in extreme close ups of his sensory organs and then cut to the color image of the girls walking by. It clearly expresses sexual lust and passion. In the end, he dies on the spot (probably from a heart attack) and then the whole world, including the girls, become black and white.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

15. "COLDNESS" 4' (1999)

(narrative / color / S-VHS)

"Coldness" is a short film made about a man who dies from cold and poverty. The man wakes up and goes to light a fire. As he does this, he dies, cursing poverty. Throughout the film, there are several references to the state, like the flag, the newspaper that carries the name "Macedonia today" etc. The acting is over dramatic and makes the film look worse than it is. The message is clear: bad economic conditions in the country lead people to poverty and death. What is very interesting and unique about this film is the camera work. The whole film is made in three long shots with a very expressive camera that appears to be floating all the time through space, creating an interesting pace.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

16. "SEARCHING" 4' (1999)

(narrative experimental / color / S-VHS)

An expressive and experimental film about the search and containment of self in the world of chaos. The film starts with a slow opening shot of the city viewed from an apartment. We see Sidovski sitting and then suddenly, he explodes, screaming, and starts to run, but the camera is in his hand filming himself from the same distance all the time. He starts to run into the center of the city, screaming, this action followed by techno music. People

(ordinary citizens) are watching him as a lunatic. This action is turned into a repetitive cycle, starting from the apartment three times. Finally, in the last cycle, he is suddenly transposed to nature, riding a bicycle, but still screaming, until all of a sudden, he stops, as he sees someone. As we approach the subject, we see that it's himself dressed in white. The camera then pulls out of his hand and we see the hand reach to the other self. As the hands are touching, the camera goes into the overexposed sunlight. Then he cuts back to the room, and we see him sitting on the same sofa, with but now with a smile on his face, meaning that he has reached inner peace by finding himself in nature, away from the chaotic city. The camera is very expressive and it brilliantly depicts the insanity and panic. The montage effect of the cycles makes for a surreal effect as the action seems to be inner and outer at the same time. The music changes, as he enters nature, from techno to a chorus song that elevates the feeling.



director *S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski*
production: *Academic cine club*

17. "IDENTIFICATION" 6' (1999)

(narrative / color / S-VHS)

Another sci-fi theme and film. A professor's memory is downloaded by a computer. After this event, the professor becomes the computer's slave. He obeys for a short time until he snaps out of the hypnosis, and he says that the PC is the same as politicians and that laughter will save humanity. It's one more dystopic film about computers that are on the quest to take over humanity, but this one has an optimistic message. The computer animation is the most complex in his films so far and it's quite interesting for the year that it was made and the circumstances that it was made under. The set design is simple, but one detail makes it very interesting. In the class room, as he enters, all the PC monitors are turned towards him. In the first shot, you can't notice this scenic detail, but afterwards, as the camera moves into a wide shot of the room, it looks like the PCs are surrounding the professor and that they are connected (in network), making them one unity and giving them visual power.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

18. "DISCOURSE" 10' (1999)

(statement, documentary / color / S-VHS)

It seems that "Discourse" is a sequel of his previous film "Encounters with the tramp – philosopher". Sidovski is playing again the role of the tramp – philosopher and the students are the same people who appeared in the previous film. To make an even deeper correlation with his previous work, even the topic is identical: "the pursuit of happiness."

The only thing that is different is how it's made and structured. There is a brief improvised talk between the students and the philosopher in his classroom. After that, the students express their understanding of the topic for a while and then the film continues like a documentary TV survey where they interview people on the streets about money, happiness and their point in life. The answers are pretty desperate because of the poor economic situation in Macedonia at that time. After the survey, we go back to the café, where the students ask the philosopher again about the happiness. Another difference from the "Encounters with the tramp – philosopher" is that in "Discourse," Sidovski tells the students that if they want to find happiness, the students (people) have to search for it inwardly, and this stance sets a more optimistic tone. The music that accompanies the film from time to time is the soundtrack of the film "Mission Impossible" and it provides a cynical note in its counterpoint.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

19. "BIG EYE" 4' (2000)

(experimental narrative / color / S-VHS)

A short film with thriller and chase action elements. We see an intruder fighting against the system that is represented through personification with the BIG EYE. This entity is representative of money, corporations, computers, and the big brother. Another film with a dystopic tone. The intruder enters a big hall where he aims and shoots at the products of Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and Marlboro, which represent the corporations and the BIG EYE that controls the world. But "the system" recognizes the intruder and sends a guard who kills him. The BIG EYE is represented through a dollar bill, vignette of a camera that is watching around, the desktop PC, and it's talking with modulated "God voice" throughout the film and in the end, it says "only the obedient will live in this system". It's a good short film where Sidovski

plays the rebel himself. There is also a computer animation that locates the intruder in Macedonia. The music adds to the suspenseful atmosphere.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

20. "RAPTURE" 5' (2000)

(experimental / color, B&W / S-VHS)

A man is reading a book on a park bench. We see that he is reading a chapter about freedom. He becomes aware of something and an elevating music starts. He stands up and goes to the lake. As he does this, the image changes to inside his mind where we see a POV of something that is gliding through the trees about 3m in the air. Then we see his face while he is speeding through the park on his bike. He is elevated and happy. Sudden cut to him while he is looking at the lake. He thinks of something and he is back to reality. The picture changes from color to black and white. The sound of the city comes back, loud crowds of people. He looks around. He goes back to the bench and takes the book. We see that the book he is reading is "Freedom from the Known" by Jiddu Krishnamurti. He stands up and leaves. The expressive camera style and representation of the inner rapture is the best feature of the film.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

21. "THE ROAD TO THE OASIS" 10' (2000)

(narrative, essay / color / S-VHS)

This film starts as a fiction. Sidovski enters what he calls a mysterious "closed camp," while there are shootings and choppers passing by something in-between a war zone and border control. As he enters inside the fence, we see that he actually entered into Macedonia. From this point on, the film becomes a strange reportage where Sidovski is the narrator. He opens with one of his regular topics about the state (repressor) and the ordinary person (victim). In the first part, he talks how Socialism failed to establish what it promised and then continues with an even more harsh critique of the modern society, of capitalism and consumerism, labeling the nice PR and commercials in the city as a most hypocritical but most fearsome weapon of the "new" system. He states that their promises of better and beautiful life are only in the billboards, and that reality is something completely different from that. In the end, he and his cameraman escape from the fence of the "closed camp" (Macedonia) where they entered at the

beginning. This film is a little bit confusing because it mixes genres and topics. It should be noted that in the part where he talks about Socialism under Josip Broz – Tito, there is archival footage of the celebration of Labor Day in 1961 in Skopje.

E. Summary of the Nineties Decade

The nineties was the decade where Sidovski finally sets his experimental style as a standard one and moves totally away from the narrative-like films. Because of this, he focused on the expression of his ideas and makes several very interesting and unique films like “Identity disclosure”, ”Screen-eye”, “Searching”, “Big eye”, “Rapture” and “Identification”. In terms of creativity and experimentation with the camera, this decade is the most valuable in his filmography.

Another important technical feature is the use of special effects or PC-generated screens which students made for his films, which was quite an achievement at that time. There were no other films made at that time in Macedonia, which used computer-generated effects. He also started using the S-VHS format, which made for a lighter camera, and that feature made possible the experimentation and extreme camera movement in films like “Searching” and “Rapture”. This shows how courageous and accepting Sidovski was in his involvement and experimentation with the “new” technologies.

Sidovski began to take more roles in his own films and when asked in the interview why he did that, he replied “*Well you know, you have an idea, and you need to execute it fast and when I asked actors or other people to participate they said they were busy, so out of necessity I did it myself. It's less of a drag. (he smiles)*” (excerpt from the interview)

Regarding themes, he opens up another philosophical topic about humanity and technology (more concretely, the computers) and the possibility of computers taking over the world. In these films, he raises the question if there can be salvation for the humans if they were to go back, closer to nature. The old topics about the person against the system are here to stay and are more or less told with the same points of view. Emotional stories about love and sexuality are absent from this decade, and probably from his life. Generally, a rational world view was dominant in this decade as in the majority of his filmography.

VII. TWENTY ZEROS (2001-2010)

A. World events that marked the decade

- '01 September 11 attacks: Terrorists destroy the World Trade Center in New York City, damage The Pentagon in Washington, DC.
- '01 War on Terror declared.
- '03 Iraq War begins, triggering worldwide protests.
- '04 enlargement of NATO and the European Union incorporates most of former Eastern Bloc.
- '04 Facebook formed.
- '06 independence of Montenegro.
- '08 Kosovo declares independence.

B. State events that marked the decade

- '07 Nationalistic party VMRO-DPMNE comes to power. Corruptive and authoritative ten-year rule will bring lasting devastating effects on every aspect of the life in the state, cultural, economic etc.
- '10 Skopje2014 a controversial building project is introduced for the central part of the capital city, Skopje. A staggering amount of money is wasted while the economy is in collapse.

C. Life events that marked the decade

- '00 Sidovski develops a platonic love relationship with an art student 25 younger than him. He tries to make something out of it but fails. They part their ways and he continues his solitary philosophical life.
- '01 finishes the Ph.D. and publishes the second book on film "Aesthetics and dialectic montage in movies"
- '04 together with prof. Kiril Temkov publishes a textbook on philosophy for students of IV year of high school, which is so good in quality that is still used today.
- '10 He retires and leaves high school.
- '10 teams up with A. Zikov, a producer and his former high school student, who will support his work as a producer; they will make several projects together, most importantly his first professionally funded film.

- '10 becomes a professor at “University of Audiovisual Arts, European Film Academy, ESRA Paris - Skopje - New York” (a private film Academy) where he teaches film theory, film history, and later documentary till this day.

D. FILMS



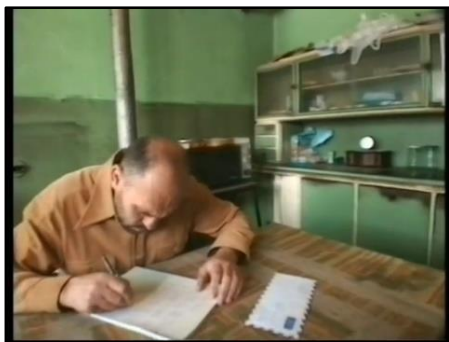
director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

1. “HOPE” 6’ (2001)

(narrative / color / S-VHS)

A man on the main train station, prepared for his trip with bags, is waiting for some particular train to come. Many trains pass but he doesn’t get on. He waits. His hope never dies, he waits patiently. He sees people leave, he cries, he waits patiently for his train until one day he dies at the station while waiting for his train. This film has the feeling of

Becket’s play “Waiting for Godot”. It’s a nice metaphor for the people in our country waiting and hoping for something to change, but the country is still labeled as a transitional country even twenty-six years after its independence. In actual reality, nothing much has changed. The social situation and the unemployment rate are getting even worse. This film has one of the best atmospheres and a strong feeling of total despair.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

2. “LETTER” 4’ (2001)

(narrative / color / S-VHS)

“Letter” is a film that asks the question about the level of crime in the democratic society. A man writes a letter to his brother in the USA, asking him if democracy there is it same as in Macedonia, hard and harsh. The man takes a break from writing and goes to open the window. As he does so, he sees a murder in front of his building. He

closes the window, vividly shaken. He finishes the letter and he goes to send it to the post office. As he exits the door of his flat, he is shot accidentally in a shootout taking place at the entrance of his building. The main action is set in Stefan Sidovski’s apartment, which is a total ruin and it just emphasizes the bad condition of society after establishing of democracy in Macedonia.

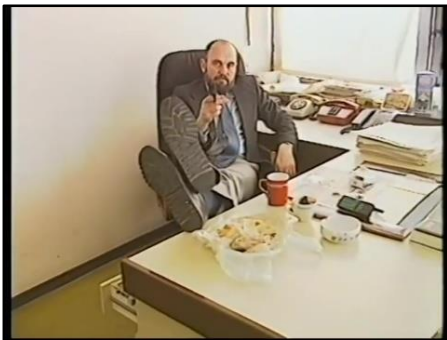


director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

3. "APPARITION" 4' (2001)

(experimental / color / S-VHS)

The film is shot in one take. Sidovski goes from one point to another point in the park and then back, to close the film in a kind of circular path. The film starts with a short scream as the camera exits from his mouth, just to change rapidly his mood into an elevated state and hypnosis by the world, while Beethoven's "Moonlight sonata" plays in the background. Afterwards, he passes a road in the city park, as we hear a gunshot, and he quickly goes on the ground, crawling forwards. Suddenly he stands and he starts to talk with the cameraman like mute lunatics without any sound. When he reaches the small lake in the park, he goes back to his hypnotized mood. After this, he goes back to the place where he was when the film started with the same action and ends the film like it started with a scream.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

4. "THREAT" 3' (2002)

(narrative / color / S-VHS)

A Very short film about the corrupted manager of a company that receives a threat over the phone. He becomes angry and that anger progresses in fury. Seconds later, he gets a second phone call and another threat from a woman named Milica. Totally furious, he takes the gun and he leads us to think that he will kill himself. We hear a gunshot but we see that he didn't commit suicide. He suddenly becomes calm and relaxed like nothing happen. He is back in control over himself. Story wise, it's unclear how this happened. The film has intense pace and through the dialog, it is explained how high-level business in Macedonia is full of corruption, threats, and set-ups. It seems it was intended to be shot in one take with energetic camera movement, but probably due to the improvisation, it has one "jump-cut" just before the end.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

5. "VISIT TO THE CITY PARK" 6' (2002)

(statement / color, B&W / S-VHS)

Short statement film about Macedonian nation and its tendency toward self-destruction. Sidovski uses both color and black and white. A man is shot in the city park near several monuments of some of the most important historical figures in Macedonian history. Mainly he stands face to face with these figures, while the camera is spinning very actively around them at the same time voice-over written-like narration is conveying opinions about the tendency toward self-destruction. Some parts of the narration are citations of what these figures have said or written in their own time, that applies perfectly to the present-day situation. In this way, Sidovski points out that the self-destructive nature of our nation was there all along.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

6. "THE TWILIGHT OF CIVILISATION" 13' (2002)

(statement essay / color, B&W / S-VHS)

Essay (statement) film which opens with a regular class that Sidovski is giving at the high school where he teaches sociology and philosophy. He starts to dissect all the popular political systems during the 20th and 21st century. He points out that all of those political systems have failed to provide freedom for the individual and that element is the failure of the civilization. As he finishes the class, one student stands and shoots him saying "all who think like this should be killed". It is not sure if the student represents young people who want to succeed in forming a society that would free the individuals or just some infiltrated brainwashed student who represents the present system. As Sidovski elaborates the systems, there are archival footages used for all of them. Between the sequences of each system, the camera is roaming through the classroom as we see the bored student faces and this suspicious student who will kill Sidovski in the end.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Chaplin

7. "BURLESQUE" 1' (2003)

(burlesque /B&W / S-VHS)

One-minute burlesque, gag film for about a man who needs to use the toilet really badly. He finally enters a toilet but is having trouble unzipping his pants. In the end, we see that it was not the zip but the screw cap that was making him unable to pee. The music, the style and even the screen mask added in post-production are made entirely like the

burlesque style in the silent era. The story is written by Gligor Kostovski.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

8. "LOOK!" 3' (2003)

(experimental statement /color / S-VHS)

"Look" is a short experimental film about happiness. The film is constructed through a few intercuts between the close up of the eyes of Sidovski and different places both in the city and in nature, ending with the sequence of different graveyards (Christian, Jewish, Muslim etc.). Meanwhile, Sidovski says that we should search for happiness within

ourselves, not outwardly. In between intercuts the color of the close up's over layer changes, although it doesn't seem to symbolize anything in particular.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

9. "DEMONCRACY" 5' (2003)

(narrative, essay /color / S-VHS)

"Demoncracy" is like a sequel to the film "The twilight of civilization" pointing out the problems of the democracy and clearly inspired by the book "The West: Phenomenon of Westernism" by Alexander Zinoviev. The film starts at his class where he speaks about the problems of democracy, as one suspicious student is recording his

class. The story goes into a flashback, where we see that the student was instructed by an older man to record the class. In the next sequence, we see Stefan in his apartment where two guys come and beat him. The film ends when we see that he has been put into a mental institution. In voice-

over, Sidovski says “be obedient”. This “sequel” is more cinematically made than “The twilight of civilization”. While Sidovski speaks we see the intercut with the story of the student who is persuaded to record his lecture by some older man. At some moments, there is a quite strong tone of crime/thriller movie. There are shots that look like they were filmed with telelenses (probably done with max. zoom of the s-VHS camera) and this adds a lot to that crime/thriller atmosphere. The plot is also supporting this tone and in the end, the person who tried to “warn the people” and speak up about the problem of the system is put into a mental institution by the government.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

10. “BENCHES” 3’ (2003)

(experimental documentary /color / S-VHS)

Sidovski sits on a bench looking at the city around him. In the end, he concludes that everything is changeable. It has the tone of a poetic documentary. It also has some confusing sounds of shooting and war, as if he wants to say that everything is changeable through war. But that is not so clear.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: DV-Chaplin

11. “NIGHTMARE” 4’ (2003)

(experimental /color / S-VHS)

Sidovski tries several visual post production techniques to image the state of his “mind and soul” in the nightmare of his life under capitalism. In the beginning, the film is constructed into three parts, the first starts with a sequence where he is spinning in the middle of a city crossroad and adding strange sounds and visual effects. In the next sequence, he enters a ruined building of a factory and yells “give us jobs” while he is showing the ruins. Then in the 3rd part, he is in the middle of a grass field yelling “give us bread”, and after this, he is shown standing near water yelling “give us water”. These sequences conclude and we see him near commercial banners of famous brands and products where he is shooting at them with his finger, supported only by the sound of a gunshot. He finishes this film pointing (and shooting) his finger toward us (camera).



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Cinema S-S production

12. "THE SOMNAMBULISM OF A LUNATIC" 8' (2003)

(narrative /color / S-VHS)

A short narrative about a crazy sleepwalker who receives a call from someone to whom he owes some money. Then he falls asleep and we see that he is dreaming about a guy who comes to take his money and kills him. In the morning, he is woken up by the same guy, who now scares him and puts the sleepwalker into such a panic attack that the guy calls a medical team to hospitalize him. In the end, we see Sidovski (again playing the main character) sitting beside a small flag of the USA and a sign that says democracy. Although the topic about problems in capitalist/democratic society is already familiar in his filmography, this film is exceptionally well planned and executed more professionally than previous films. There is one long opening shot that sets the strange tone of the film. This shot is accompanied with music evoking mystery, crime, and suspense. There are also some post production effects with the camera to effectively set apart the dream from the story's reality. This adds to the psychologically strange tone of the film. Overall, the film has one of the finest production and post-production values. His acting is the weakest part of this film because is too expressive in some moments and it takes one out of the narrative of the film.



director S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Chaplin production

13. "OLD, OLD... AND IN TRASH IT GOES" 5' (2003)

(poetic documentary /color / S-VHS)

A short documentary of how people are treating objects and memory from the former state of Yugoslavia, especially the image of Josip Broz – Tito. The documentary is filmed in one of the filthiest bazaars in Skopje, where the poorest people sell broken stock, old objects, and trash they don't need anymore, which is conveying the message pretty clear. The meaning and message are built by wide shots where you can see and feel the atmosphere of the bazaar intercut with close ups of the products (books, tapes, monographs) that people are selling with the themes and elements of Yugoslavia and Josip Broz - Tito. The visuals are accompanied by the song "Evidence (Dokaz)" by the Serbian turbo-folk icon – Ceca Raznjatovich, who is another symbol of kitsch and "garbage culture". The stance of the filmmaker might be understood ambiguously because it's not so clear if the director wants to signify that people once put meaning into these objects or

he wants to say that the fallen system ends at an open bazaar where it becomes only meaningless artifacts that are sold almost for free.



director: S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Chaplin production

14. "A CRUEL TRUTH" 1' (2004)

(narrative experimental /color / S-VHS)

One minute short about a poor crippled man who is pitied by the seller in a small neighborhood shop. In the end, the audience finds out that he is not crippled but that he has a piece of salami tied to his leg, which he probably stole from the shop. The film is accompanied by a folk song that gives a tone of even deeper poverty because these newly composed folk songs are the music which is preferred by the majority of the people in rural places.



director S. Sidovski
production freelance

15. "IMITATION OF AMERICAN LIFE" 5' (2005)

(narrative / color / digital)

His first film shot digitally. It is the story of the last day in a rich man's lonely, sad life. From his luxurious home, he takes his gun and drives through the city. He stops to have his last lunch at a McDonald's restaurant and ends up on the Skopje's Kale (fortress) where he shoots himself. This is another film with a clear critique of the capitalism. Sidovski points out that even rich individuals haven't found salvation in the capital that they own. Full of loneliness and emptiness, they decide to commit suicide. The music, in the beginning, is peaceful harmony played on a piano that changes into death/thrash metal song called "America" from the German band Rammstein. In the moment before he shoots himself, he says: "What's the worth of my treasure, when I'm not happy". Stating the point of the film in this final sentence makes it look more naïve than it really is. Unfortunately, this feature will emerge more often. It may be that Sidovski is gradually becoming uninspired, tired or even lazy.



director: S. Sidovski, S. Kostovski
production: Academic cine club

16. "WEST" 12' (2006)

(narrative /color / S-VHS)

One of the few films with a narrative structure about two friends that are having a conversation about the bad situation in their country (Macedonia) and their will to emigrate in a search for better life. In the end, one of the friends leaves the country. The film represents a topic that will become very important in years to come. As in many of his films, Sidovski foresees a problem which will become very important in the next ten years. Some statistics show that from independence till the year 2017, more than a quarter (around 600.000 citizens) of the population have emigrated from Macedonia. The tempo of the film is slow and you feel the topic would be better presented in a shorter time. I personally acted in the film and was able to witness Sidovski's process. Sidovski only had a short outline of how the film should go. The dialog was totally improvised and repetitive. That's why you have the feeling that the film has difficulties in the way it builds the structure. This is one of the rare films where Sidovski didn't act, probably because we agreed to, and was film's story had to be told by characters who are teenagers. This film is one of the first that has original music composed for this film.



director S. Sidovski
producer: Academic Cine Club

17. "DULLNESS" 8' (2006)

(narrative /color / S-VHS)

The wife of a small businessman finds herself leading a totally pointless life that consists mainly two activities, going to work and shopping afterwards. In the end, she takes a ride in her car and commits suicide. Like in the previous film "West," here Sidovski uses music composed for the film. It's also non-professional amateurish work, but it's worth mentioning. The dialog is not so good and it seems improvised but it serves the story far better than the dialog in the film "West." Like in "Imitation of American" life, in the end, the woman tells the problem in voice over, but everything is so obvious, you don't have to hear it in voice over.



director S. Sidovski
production Freelance

18. "BOREDOM" 1' (2006)

(experimental /color / S-VHS)

A short experimental film that tries to capture the feeling of boredom and to ask the basic philosophical question "Who am I". Those words repeat chaotically for one minute while on the screen there is nothing more than the shot of Stefan Sidovski looking somewhere motionless. In the end, the repetitive line stops and he screams "BOREDOM" three times. The one-minute film is entirely irritating, which was likely the point because the words stay stuck in your head, which is an accomplishment for the film.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine club

19. "CRAZY REVOLUTIONIST" 9' (2006)

(narrative experimental /B&W / S-VHS)

A film about a lunatic in a mental institution. He is a true supporter of communism and still believes in their ideals. He sings communist songs while telling all the problems of the capitalism and communism all included. As he does this, there are intercuts with poses from Macedonian revolutionary memorial sculptures from the communist era. Also intercut are clips from the film "Battleship Potemkin", all followed by famous communist songs. The idea of the film is that the pure communist ideals are mistaken for lunacy by the nowadays capitalist society. It looks like a narrative film but it's not purely so. It's a mix of a propaganda film, with archival footage and the breaking of the fourth wall quite often, and sometimes non-deliberately.



director S. Sidovski
production Freelance

20. "LAST DAY" 9' (2006)

(narrative essay /B&W, color / S-VHS)

An essay film motivated by the book "Death and the Western Thought" by Jacques Choron. It shows a man who lives in a "black and white" world (also shot in B&W) inside his house and the only cheerful and meaningful activity is when he is outside while shopping. This part of the film is shot in color. The man also eats from McDonald's, and with

this Sidovski is making a direct critique of the consumerist society present and supported by the western corporations like McDonald's in this case. The message that he tries to get across is that shopping and consuming have become the main source of happiness and therefore the main purpose in life. The action is accompanied by excerpts from the book that he reads in the voice over.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine club

21. "IN CONTINUO" 5' (2007)

(essay / color / digital)

A poetic documentary about the pointless circle of life and death in society. He also represents the person as not a valuable participant in society but just a number. We see a traffic jam and then we are transferred to the graveyards of three different religions (Jewish, Muslim, Christian) and to places where there are communist monuments. Afterwards, we are taken back to the same starting sequence of the traffic jam. The "Requiem" of Mozart is accompanying the footage. This is perhaps the only film that is not shot in academic ratio. *"We shot this film in that (16:9) ratio because we didn't know how to set the camera (he smiles) or there wasn't an option for the academic ratio (4:3). For me (4:3) it is more "natural" ratio, maybe because all the classics that I love are made in that ratio and I'm used to that.* (excerpt of the interview)

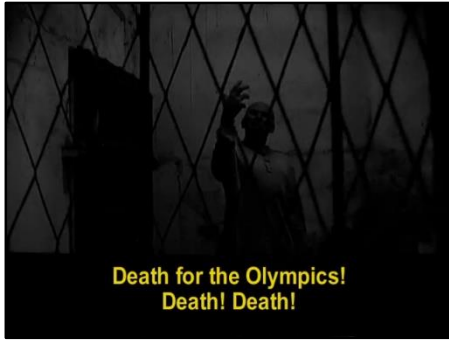


director S. Sidovski
production PrimiFilms

22. "GHETTO CINEMA" 13' (2008)

(documentary, essay / color, B&W / digital)

Sidovski is a cinephile and in this essay documentary, he talks about his passion for going to the cinema almost as a ritual and how "his ritual" was restricted because the many of the main cinemas closed in Skopje in the 90ties. He talks about how he is forced to go into "private" projections of movies in bars and cafes, and that his favorite activity now looks like a ghetto activity. He opens another side to his favorite topic – the consumerist society and how home cinema has supported the destruction of real "cinema life" and the cinema-going culture in Macedonia. There is music accompanying the whole film that gives a tragic tone to the whole topic and supports the idea of this film.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine club

23. "THE BIG LEADER" 13' (2008)

(narrative experimental/ B&W / digital)

A short film about a lunatic who constantly says that the sole purpose of democracy is to make a slave out of humans and how it should be destroyed together with the Olympians. In addition, there is an order from CIA to kill this lunatic and that's why the manager of this asylum executes this man. The film is dedicated to Leni Riefenstahl and is intercut with footage from her films "Triumph of the Will" and "Olympia" used to connect Nazi Germany with today's society and democracy's control of the people. The acting and the narrative are naïve, likewise, the way this topic is presented. The naivety comes mainly from how meanings are presented as tautologies and how the point is told in the end.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine club

24. "TREE OF LIFE" 3' (2009)

(experimental/ color / digital)

A man is not feeling so well and he sits on a bench. He sees this big tree by the lake in the park. He comes close to it and he starts to hear sounds that remind him of his life. As he hears the sounds, his condition gets worse and he drops dead on the ground. First, the tree is shown in autumn without leaves and in the end of the film, we see a picture of the tree when it's green like in spring. The whole film is done with a blurry layer that makes it more chaotic and watchable.



director S. Sidovski
production Academic cine club

25. "PEOPLE AND LIVESTOCK" 5' (2009)

(documentary / color / digital)

A nonnarrative documentary that is shot at the stock market in Skopje. Sidovski on several occasions makes a comparison and sublime reference between people and livestock. We see how people prepare and trade the stock. The structure is loose and non-progressive.



director S. Sidovski

production Academic cine club

26. "CONTAINER" 5' (2010)

(experimental / color, B&W / digital)

The film starts as we see a container and the Macedonian anthem is played loudly. Afterwards, this is intercut with archival footage of communist proletarian parades, factories, and workers from the beginning of the 60ties, as we hear someone yells "bread, jobs, and factories". Sidovski then intercuts the container with commercial billboards of banks, phone operators, and other consumeristic articles. We also see intercuts between the container and the government building. The film clearly creates a reference to Macedonia as a garbage container.

E. Summary of the First Decade of the 21st century (The Twenty Zeros)

With the exception of a few out of the twenty-five films, this seems to be cinematically the weakest decade of Stefan Sidovski's opus. You get the feeling that he has exhausted his themes, especially when you consider how many films are made about consumerism, but more alarming is the way in which he is telling his stories. It's uninventive and repetitive. The films that are most noteworthy are mainly from the first half of the decade. The film "Hope" has one of the best atmospheres that Sidovski has ever created and there is a level of absurdity that is rare in his films "Nightmare", and "The somnambulism of a lunatic". The latter also has remarkable camera experimentation and postproduction work in terms of sound and editing.

The main problems are his tautological expression of his films' points. Maybe this is clear sign of him losing the touch with his filmmaking. When asked in the interview about this feature, he answered: "*I was afraid that maybe the message isn't clear enough to the audience*" (excerpt from the interview). But for me, this reflected a loss of inspiration.

After the decade of the 90ties, which was devoted to experimental cinematic pieces and unconventional storytelling, in this decade at the start of the 21st century, he makes several narrative films, such as "Letter," "West," and "The Last Day" which are weak in structure and in dialog, not to mention weak character development, absent in almost all of his narrative films.

It's important to mention that in this decade, he started to work with the digital format but he had not yet exploited the possibilities of this format. He will do this in the next decade when

he started to work more closely with A. Zikov, who is his former student and well-understood post-production possibilities.

“Ghetto Cinema” has very gentle and emotional tone for both the viewer and Sidovski. It might be considered as his autobiographical essay film, where he talks about his only lasting passion, and love, the films, and especially the “temples” of the movies, the cinemas which are slowly disappearing.

Overall, this decade was probably the most peaceful (or relatively uneventful) in his life and an apathy pervaded society as the dominant feeling of the people in the state. This may account for a lack of inspiration in his work and is certainly underneath his film “Boredom” that the whole feeling is contained and it’s delivered to the viewer most clearly with the impression that stays with you after the end of the film.

VIII. TWENTY TENS (2011-2017)

A. World events that marked the decade

- '13 Edward Snowden releases classified documents concerning mass surveillance by the NSA.
- '13 Croatia becomes a member of the European Union.

B. State events that marked the decade

- '11 a young man, Martin Neshkovski, is killed on the main square by the members of the police forces. This will start a series of major protests against the government that continues till 2017 when the government will be changed.
- '15 thirty-eight wired tape conversations are leaked from the police and published by the opposition party in order to try to overthrow the dictatorship government. Many affairs are discovered by the public which leads to many street protests and unrest.
- '16 Colorful revolution starts.
- '16 the Special Prosecution body is constructed to deal with the wired tapes.
- '17 the dictatorship nationalistic party is overthrown on regular elections.

C. Life events that marked the decade

- '11 – '16 Sidovski continuously applies with his new collaborator the producer A. Zikov to the film fond of Macedonia.
- '11 He gets his first short film funded. It will be his last till the date that this thesis is made.
- '13 starts teaching another subject, documentary film, at film faculty of ESRA

D. FILMS

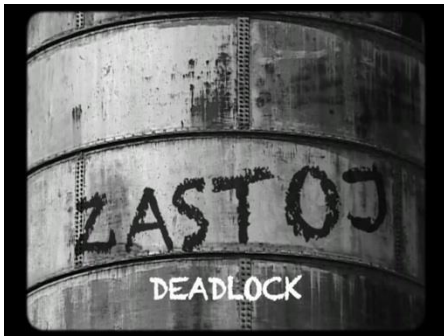


director S. Sidovski
production Arka Media

1. "HONOUR" 14' (2011) professional (narrative / B&W / 35mm)

At 65 years, Stefan Sidovski makes his first short professional film, which was financed by the film fond of R. Macedonia. It was made under professional circumstances with a full crew and it was the first experience like this for Stefan Sidovski. The film is about a tramp family, a mother, and son, that has a shelter on a site that is about to be razed so that a businessman will build some new building. By the end of the film, a bulldozer is

destroying their home and shelter. We see their life and love and their fight to survive in the society. The boy ends up in a delinquent home because he was caught trying to steal food to feed his family. In the final scene, his mother is bringing him food at the delinquent home through the fence. The film is made without dialog. This was the scriptwriter's idea and Sidovski embraced it. At some moments, you can feel that the dialog is missing, but on the other hand, this nonverbal environment, together with the black and white photography, gives the film very strong atmosphere and deeper meaning to regular everyday activities. The relationship between mother and the son is built and developed through simple moments like eating or just sitting and smiling at each other. This is a film where you can see that Sidovski understands cinematic language very well and that he can make an accomplished narrative film with a good script.



director S. Sidovski
production Arka Media

2. "DEADLOCK" 6' (2011)

(poetic documentary / B&W / digital)

Shot on the site of an abandoned factory, this film gives a pretty clear meaning about the deadlock or standstill of society. The factory is usually something that operates in order to provide for and give prosper to a country on several levels - products, jobs, economy etc. In the middle of the film, there is a speech by Josip Broz – Tito, made in voice over, about the new working relations in the socialism and clearly talking about the workers and the factories that are built around the country after the WW2. The film ends with the shot of the river Vardar and the factory but the river is not moving. To emphasize this effect a man that jogs on the riverbank passes in the frame while the river is motionless. It's a really strong visual ending that gives a clear message. People that are present in the state don't seem to see the deadlock that is happening all around them. Here, we can see how the collaboration with A. Zikov was paying off. Younger, Zikov understood the post-production possibilities and gave ideas to Stefan how to exploit them, which he did. Sidovski started to understand and work with the new digital format and its possibilities.



director S. Sidovski
production Partes production

3. "A MOMENT OF HAPPINESS" 5' (2012)

(experimental / color / digital)

Minimalistic, simple and stylistically clean, short film about a man who reads his newspaper. Suddenly, he looks at a tree and experiences happiness, soon to end. Afterwards, he returns to reading the paper. The film is accompanied nicely with a smooth jazz song that gives a nostalgic note to the experience of happiness. One of the most refined films of Stefan Sidovski, almost like haiku poetry.



director S. Sidovski
production Partes production

4. "A SUNDAY PROMENADE'S CONCERT" 4' (2012)

(narrative / color / digital)

Sidovski is walking through the city park, observing the monuments. As he's watching them, every monument tells its own story or sends a message through its own meaning or the accompanied music. In the first sequence, there are monuments of the partisan heroes who are all vandalized and this is intercut with graffiti nearby, referring to police brutality, which was the source of protest in the years to come. The music in the background is a folk humoresque about a love made in the "Macedonian way" the main words are "we are only quarreling, we are only fighting" sung by classical choirs, which provides a cynical tone to the picture. The second sequence portrays the newly installed watching statues in the park, that look like jesters and they are smiling at Sidovski and his concern that eventually will change nothing, as the country will continue to its path of regress. At last, we see a monument to one of the greatest Macedonian revolutionaries, Goce Delchev, which is accompanied by voices of protests. This film is also very minimalistic without any additional text or voice over. He doesn't work with a tautology, but he conveys the message with sound in juxtaposition with the picture.



director S. Sidovski
production Partes production

5. "ONE LAST STROLL" 5' (2012)

(narrative / color / digital)

A short film about a nostalgic man who goes around a city park while looking at the abandoned rollercoaster in the amusement park (Luna Park). He is imagining the static wheel in the park, spinning, while fun music accompanies the scene, probably some scenes from his childhood. Then he walks around the park seeing the neglected places and throws some trash in the bin. Finally, he sits on the bench near the lake in the park and dies. The camera pans down and we see his reflection in the lake. His death is symbolized with a detail of a falling yellow tree leaf. Made in a minimalistic style, again only with sound effects, atmosphere and some music. There is a video vignette (mask) that adds to the nostalgic feeling.



director S. Sidovski
production Partes production

6. "MEETING" 7' (2013)

(narrative poetic / color / digital)

One of the rare films that treat the theme of love and in this case, the topic of lesbian love. Two of Sidovski's students play two girls who meet in the park and there is a sexual tension that leads to them making out. The meeting and the sexual tension is "poetically" or "expressionistically" described through in-cuts of imaginative dancing of the girls in the park describing their freedom which they feel when they make out. This is made little bit naïve. It's an unusual theme for Sidovski since he is more involved in social topics, but on the other hand, the question about homosexual couples is just now starting to move out of the taboo zone in our country, while there is forceful propaganda to ensure the "right moral" of traditional family relationships. When the girls start to kiss and touch their body parts, Felix Mendelssohn's "Wedding march" starts which suggest the issue of marriage of same-sex couples.



director S. Sidovski
production Partes production

7. "FILM ETUDES - part 1" 11' (2014)

(essay – etude / color / digital)

The first of the four film etudes, video essays, made to support his theory classes on the faculty of ESRA where he is teaching. This particular video etude is on the topics of “footsteps”, “waiting” and “spinning”. He is showing different ways that this actions (themes) can be represented.



director S. Sidovski
production Arka Media

8. "LAST FOOTSTEPS" 4' (2015)

(experimental / color / 35mm)

We see the legs of a man who is walking on grass for two-thirds of the film. Near the end, we see another pair of legs that are following him and in the end, they both stop and we hear a gunshot. Sidovski, who is the first pair of legs, falls down, killed by the gunshot. As he drops, we see his face and a picture of a woman, who maybe gives us the motive for why he was killed. There is no dialog. The film was shot on 35mm and was developed in Romania.



director S. Sidovski
production Partes production

9. "RAISON D'ÊTRE" 6' (2015)

(documentary essay / color / digital)

As the title of the film suggests, this film raises one of the most important philosophical question: the reason or purpose for something's existence, in this case, human existence. The film starts in a pub with Sidovski reading the book by the philosopher Martin Heidegger called “Being and Time”. Then he writes down on a paper the expression “Raison d'être” and then, seemingly through his thought process, we are transferred into the documentary like footage of the city. First, we see shots of several banks and then the quarters of beggars and tramps, after which we go into shop windows and billboards in the town. This sequence ends with the graveyards of different religions. Then we are transferred back into the pub where Sidovski has some revelation as he reads the sentence “The question about the purpose of every being should be addressed” in Heidegger’s book. This film is very similar to his previous film “In continuo” and it’s made with a lot of still shots and suggestive montage.



director S. Sidovski
production Partes production

10. "FILM ETUDES - part 2" 4' (2015)

(essay – etude / color / digital)

Second, of the four film etudes, video essays, made to support his theory classes on the faculty of ESRA where he is teaching. This particular video etude is on the topics of “rotating”, “film shots” and “building of reality”. He is showing different ways that this actions (themes) can be represented.



director S. Sidovski
production freelance

11. "FILM ETUDES - part 3" 3' (2015)

(essay – etude / color / digital)

Third of the four film etudes, video essays, made to support his theory classes on the faculty of ESRA where he is teaching. This particular video etude is on the topics of “camera positions”, “eye and frame”, “film illusion and reality”. He is showing different ways that this actions (themes) can be represented.



director S. Sidovski
production freelance

12. "FILM ETUDES - part 4" 3' (2015)

(essay – etude / color / digital)

The last of the four film etudes, video essays, made to support his theory classes on the faculty of ESRA where he is teaching. This particular video etude is on the topics of “kinesthetic”, “kinematics” and “cinematics”. He is showing different ways that this actions (themes) can be represented.

This is the only etude where he uses external footage from films to explain some of his theory views.



director S. Sidovski

production Partes production

13. "C'EST LA VIE" 5' (2015)

(documentary essay / color / digital)

As the title suggests, "that's life" and you cannot do anything about it, but somehow Sidovski offers some possible answers how to make more of it. The film is inspired by the book "In Praise of Slowness: Challenging the Cult of Speed" by Carl Honore, who points out that people don't enjoy anymore and are in constant battle with time, and they are always in some kind of rush that leads to nowhere. He finds the solution in slowing the pace and enjoying the moments in the present.

The film starts with the music "Also Sprach Zarathustra," by Richard Strauss, and shots of nature. The whole film is constructed upon three citations from the book. The most interesting is the montage where he explains the pace of life. Showing in fast motion the rush of society and the chaos that eventually passes the life in seconds from childhood to death. This montage is accompanied by aggressive techno track that supports the pace of the montage and footage. The film ends with a slow-motion montage of people kissing on the bench, feeding birds on the square, and then he returns to the shots of nature from the beginning.

E. Summary of the Twenty Tens Decade

Sidovski did not make as many films as in the last decade, but it seems like he benefitted from the collaboration with his young co-worker Aleksandar Zikov, who helped him professionally with the production and especially with the post-production of his films and ideas.

In this decade, is important to note that he finally made his first professionally financed film, "Honor", in which he collaborated with a screenwriter and was only engaged to work on as a director. Here he proved that he perfectly understands film language since he made a film that doesn't have any dialog and he managed very well to convey the story, the atmosphere, and mood. The film represents his finest work to date on a narrative film, even though this may be because he didn't write it. His work with the actors is subtle and the casting seems to be perfect. After fifty-one years since his first film, and as a sixty-five-year-old filmmaker, this film was his "dream come true" because he had an entire film crew behind him and was working under normal filming conditions. After this film, he continued to apply to the film fond, but until the present, he remains unsuccessful in receiving funding for a second film.

In this decade, he also managed to make his expression minimalistic in his films and to do so without naively stating the message, as he did with the films in the previous decade. This evolution of his filmmaking language can be best seen in the films: “Deadlock”, “A moment of happiness” and “C’est la vie”. This might be that he found ways to convey the message through better editing and sound design which is done by his partner A. Zikov or that he got inspired and motivated after his first professional film.

Another personal goal and wish that he had from the moment he started making films, that he achieved finally in this decade was to shoot a film on 35mm film stock. That was achieved in the film “Last footsteps”. With this, he has worked on almost all possible film materials (formats) (8mm, super 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, VHS, S-VHS, digital). Not many filmmakers can say that they passed so many formats through their film career.

He continues to work and he is hoping to still achieve funding for his first professional feature movie.

IX. CONCLUSION

After all this time researching, I think I managed to collect and very precisely systematize a major part of his filmography, which overall is an enormous opus, 109 films to this date, that runs through five decades, made on almost every possible film format, which was available to Stefan Sidovski in Macedonia. In the research, I found out how his personal life choices and social events influenced his filmmaking development. In the beginning, in the sixties, he was still searching for his film language and themes. In this decade he filmography was still very diverse he made narrative movies that had emotional themes like “Rakia”, “Found home”, and “Ballad of love” but also started to experiment with the form and philosophical themes in the works like “Death conquers” and “Why?”. The seventies is emotionally and personally the most exhausting decade in which he made the least number of movies. After this decade emotional themes in his films will be a real rarity. He explored these themes in the films like “Gazes through the window” and “Synopsis”. Kind of socially engaged films, like “Breakfast” and “Revolt”, emerged in this decade and was something new to that point but will become one of the most important aspects of his opus. The eighties will be the most fruitful decade till that point and will also bring the new medium of VHS which made him adapt but also bring new possibilities in his expression like the long takes. In this decade he will make two TV movies and some very important documentaries as “The graveyards of the French soldiers” and “Bell towers of life”. The experimental film form starts to dominate his opus and from this decade on will become the dominant form of his filmmaking. He starts a collaboration with many students from his high school, we can see this in the films like “The Master and Margarita” and “Natasha”. As Macedonia becomes independent, capitalism and democracy are installed in the country and Sidovski continues to explore socially the bad parts of this new “order”. His films reflect the collapsing economy, poverty, and transition difficulties as he finds many similarities in the socialism and capitalism that are explored in the films like “We are the children of the Marxism that lied to us”, “Ex-socialist and actual capitalist tramp” and “A treatise on democracy”. Some interesting dissection of the danger of technologies is express in his “sci-fi dystopic” films as “Screen-eye”, “Identity disclosure”, “Identification” and “Big eye”. The first decade of the new millennium is the decade where apathy becomes present in the society, the country is still in transition and that doesn’t seem to have an end. This apathy influences his work also as he loses his themes and his touch in his filmmaking. He becomes more tautological with the cinematic elements and the themes start to repeat. One of the best films in which he succeeded to reflect this apathy is the film “Boredom”. As we arrive into the last decade we see how his collaboration with his former student A. Zikov, that becomes his

producer and post production collaborator, brings freshness in his opus. Together they manage to get the first funded film “Honor” that will be the only financed film that he has worked on and which allowed him to work under professional film conditions. Finding the possibilities of post production in the digital era eased by the collaboration with A. Zikov, made his expression refined and minimalistic as we can see in his movies “Deadlock” and “Moment of happiness”.

As I researched, I understood that he was not so comfortable with the regular narrative, characters or plots. His own rational nature seems not so suited for traditional storytelling, but rather for a form which emphasizes the idea. As you may have seen in this thesis, Sidovski is quite comfortable when he is experimenting with forms and complex philosophical ideas, concepts, and thoughts, or as he will say “philosophical meditations”. I understood how personal choices and his individual life path steered the filmmaker’s life and ideas. After all the tragedy in his immediate family and his failure to be accepted into the film academy, Sidovski may have felt “abandoned” and as a consequence, put aside traditional narrative and emotional topics. We can also see how the film form became a dominant element of interest and experimentation for him. Once he became more involved with philosophy, he found that experimental and essay films were the forms best suited for a free expression of his rational interests and topics, and to treat the main questions of philosophy. He was clearly endeavoring to transfer philosophy to the film screen. Whether he was successful, is questionable, but he followed his interests and used film to “meditate” on issues. When I asked him what is the best art medium for philosophical meditation and topics he said: *“To be honest with you I don’t think that film is the best art form that can grasp philosophy in its depths, I find that the closest that art can come to philosophy is packed in the form of the novels.”* (excerpt from the interview)

Of course, the interviews and the conversations helped me a lot to understand Stefan Sidovski as a person. Without these interviews would have been very difficult to understand his filmography. I have to state that he was very open, collaborative, transparent and concrete about the information. He didn’t hide anything and as he once said *“You ask what you want and need to ask, I will answer everything very openly”* (excerpt of the interview). Because of this, I could see how the loss of people close to him led him to take a more rational view of the world. It was also evident that fact that he failed to enter the film academy in Belgrade, influenced not to go and make narrative films but to go more experimental and also to enroll in philosophy studies that will further influence the experimental and rational approach towards the world and the filmmaking.

We can’t forget the fact that to be a teacher is his call. He managed to inspire many students in high school to become involved with film, philosophy, and sociology. He inspired us (I was his

student) to always question authority to learn “how to learn” and think for ourselves. He is that kind of teacher that isn’t bored but listens to his students, and through that, he also learns and is also a student. He is prepared to share opinions and have discussions with younger people. In a few of our conversations, when I asked him something about his work or O made a comment on his work about how I see it, that sometimes it might be naïve or that I thought that he may have made wrong choices, I remember how calm and egoless was he, and he answered me with humility: “*Well you see nobody told me that, that is new thing that I can now be aware of...*” or “*You are right it’s nice observation I never thought of that*” (excerpt of his interview). He is the perfect example of someone who still listens and that is why his films have changed and improved, particularly when he started to collaborate with his former high school student Aleksandar Zikov. They became more elegant and minimalistic. The fact that he listened to suggestions doesn’t mean that he left his ideas, on the contrary, he managed to improve them. There is a feeling that he came close to what all those great ideas should have looked like in the previous decades if he had had more professional collaborators.

He also managed to write two very elaborate books on film. One on the topic of montage and one on the topic of the film frame. The correlation between his thoughts on those film elements and his films is a topic for comparative work that I hope someone will address in the near future since I think is very important and it could give us further insight and perspective into his work. This paper wasn’t long enough to include his theoretical work into the analysis of Sidovski as a filmmaker.

I hope I will manage to publish this paper in the form of a monograph, so other people can better understand the world of Stefan Sidovski and become interested in other authors who are doing experimental and no budget films in our country. I hope that these filmmakers might also obtain recognition and popularization in order to improve the written history of our national cinematography. I also believe a study of such independent authors is beneficial to film students and has a place in the film school curriculum.

In the end, one of the most valuable aspects of studying Stefan Sidovski, which is still resonating in my head, is my wonder at where Sidovski found and still finds the will to make films, after all these years. How does he stay driven by the excitement and the will to say something and to find expression for ideas? Can a film be your life passion? If someone should take something out of this research, even though it sounds romantic, is that everything is possible, all you need is will and love for the things you want to make.

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