

Andrey Tarkovsky in America

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Andrey Tarkovsky, a great Russian film producer, was not a passionate voyager. He always said that he was interested in traveling into the depths of the human mind, rather than making tourist trips around the world. Following the triumphant premiere of his first film "Ivan's Childhood" at the International Venice Film Festival he visited Sri Lanka in 1962 and wanted to come to that country once again. Unfortunately these dreams had never come true.

Tarkovsky first came to the USA right after his trip to India and Sri Lanka as an international delegation member together with some other esteemed masters of the Soviet cinema. The next visit to America took place almost 20 years later. It was in August 1983, when the director was invited to the Telluride film festival in Colorado. The detailed account of Andrey Tarkovsky's visit to the USA is given in his diaries and in the article by Stan Brakhage published in "Rolling Stock". Krzysztof Zanussi who accompanied Andrey Tarkovsky in that trip to the US also gave his remarks on the director's mood during his encounters with the Americans. He was particularly concerned about Tarkovsky's reaction to the question about happiness put by one of the festival participants. This question stunned the director who retorted with some irritation: "Why asking such silly questions? One should rather brood over the idea of human existence and its objectives, the mission we are called for in this world and the ways to achieve it. As for happiness, it does not matter that much, whether we have it or not..."

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