

VIKTOR

A film by Olivier Sarbil



An official selection of TIFF 2024 - Platform

TIFF 2024 Screenings:

Sunday, September 8 at 2:30 PM @ TIFF Lightbox Cinema 3 ****World Premiere****

Monday, September 9 at 1:00 PM @ TIFF Lightbox Cinema 4

Monday, September 9 at 6:30 PM @ Scotiabank 7 - Press & Industry Screening

Wednesday, September 11 at 2:10 PM @ Scotiabank 6 - Press & Industry Screening

Saturday, September 14 at 7:00 PM @ TIFF Lightbox Cinema 4

Please note: all screenings of VIKTOR at TIFF will be played with open captions.

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Run Time:

91 minutes

[TIFF Website](#)

[Press Materials](#)

SYNOPSIS

Viktor, a young Deaf man in Kharkiv, watches warily during the early days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. A fan of samurai films and raised on stories of war, he dreams of becoming a warrior but is repeatedly denied when he tries to enlist. Eager to find purpose, Viktor embarks on a quest to find his place in the midst of a war he cannot hear.

One of the rare documentaries to premiere in the prestigious Platform programme at TIFF, VIKTOR beautifully weaves black and white imagery with sound design that reflects Viktor's own experience of the world. Acclaimed filmmaker and veteran war cinematographer Olivier Sarbil (MOSUL, ON THE PRESIDENT'S ORDERS) brought his unique experience with conflict and single-sided deafness to his relationship with Viktor, creating a close collaboration that is reflected in the personal, intimate story that unfolds on screen.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT BY OLIVIER SARBIL

I'm a French documentary Director and Cinematographer based in New York. In 2011, my life took an unexpected turn when I was severely wounded by a rocket-propelled grenade while documenting the civil war in Libya. I spent nine months in the hospital, during which I lost part of my right hand and lost hearing in my right ear.

Living with single-sided deafness has fundamentally reshaped my understanding of the world, including my perception of sound and silence. It is this very perspective that has driven me to explore the world of a Deaf man set against the chaos of war and the deep, unseen scars that war leaves on the d/Deaf community. My film is a feature documentary about a Deaf Ukrainian man named Viktor who is desperate to find his place in the world during Russia's brutal invasion of his homeland. It's a story about belonging, resilience, and the struggle for survival in a world that is so brutally loud for some, and painfully silent for others. Viktor's journey explores his transition from romanticizing war to understanding its grim realities. He realizes that violence is not an end but only a necessary means of defense against aggression in a brutal war. However, drawing from the principles of the samurai, he chooses a different path—one focused on self-improvement, inner strength, and compassion, and on contributing to the war effort from his civilian life.

Viktor's decision to share his story and expose his vulnerabilities for the film, especially in the context of the war, demonstrates incredible courage and resilience. Viktor and I developed a unique method of communication that combined basic Russian Sign Language (which I learned specifically for this project), written notes, and visual aids. Throughout the nearly two-year filmmaking process, I made it a priority to maintain Viktor's trust by regularly checking in with him, keeping him informed about the project's progress, and addressing any concerns he might have. This consistent partnership

empowered Viktor to confidently step into the spotlight, ensuring his narrative was told with the authenticity and care it deserved.

Working alone as a filmmaker in a war zone, I faced huge challenges. Managing sound, directing, and cinematography in such an unpredictable environment demanded heightened awareness and constant adaptability. Balancing safety for myself and Viktor with the need to capture the story added a complex layer to maintaining my artistic vision under very dangerous and stressful conditions. Despite my limited resources and manpower, and the incredibly tense environment in which I worked, my goal was always to find the beauty amid the horror, and create striking imagery that will stand the test of time. I hope I succeeded.

The sonic impression of the story was a quintessential part of VIKTOR. Our collaboration with the Oscar-winning 'Sound of Metal' team, Nicolas Becker and Keikki Kossi, joined by Peter Albrechtsen, blended unique soundscapes to create an intense and very unique aural experience. Becker's extensive work with the d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing community, along with his innovative sound design techniques, helped us immerse the audience in Viktor's world.

As a filmmaker who has lost part of his hearing in the battlefield, returning to war to tell the story of a Deaf man was a deeply personal journey for me. It's a story that mirrors my own struggles. It's a way for me to connect with my own challenges and show the strength that comes from facing adversity, all through the lens of my camera.

Making this film was an incredible risk for both myself, and for Viktor. I hope that it raises awareness for a community that is so often overlooked, especially during wartime. That even during Russia's senseless invasion of Ukraine, its most vulnerable citizens can stand bravely in defiance.

STATEMENT FROM THE PRODUCERS

The themes of communication and human connection are at the core of Viktor Korotovskiy's story - intertwining through the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict as well as Viktor's personal journey to be seen and understood. In his world, communication expands outside of just dialogue, it's a vital expression of identity.

Our goal is for VIKTOR to transcend language barriers and highlight our shared humanity, demonstrating the profound power of cinema. While crafting the film, our team needed to create a cinematic experience that could bridge these diverse linguistic divides. Creating VIKTOR required navigating a web of language barriers, including Russian, Ukrainian, English, and Russian Sign Language. Our producing team mirrors this linguistic and cultural diversity, comprising Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians, Russian-speaking Ukrainians, as well as individuals

who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing. To effectively communicate with Viktor, Olivier learned basic Russian Sign Language and employed translation apps, fostering a crucial bond that was instrumental in conveying Viktor's story.

An especially vital component of the film was the use of sound and we were lucky enough to work with the Oscar-winning team behind SOUND OF METAL - Peter Albrechtsen, Nicolas Becker, and Heikki Kossi along with mixer Tim Nielsen, who aimed to authentically represent Viktor's experience through a carefully designed sonic experience. For the hearing audience, this involved creating a subjective auditory experience that immersed them in Viktor's world. For Deaf and Hard of Hearing viewers, we meticulously crafted open captions that matched the nuance of our sound design. This process was informed by feedback from an early screening with members of the Deaf community, whose responses were both moving and enlightening, revealing how deeply audiences outside Ukraine could connect with Viktor's journey.

At TIFF, we are committed to presenting VIKTOR with open captions at every screening to ensure the film's accessibility.

CREW BIOS

OLIVIER SARBIL - DIRECTOR / CINEMATOGRAPHER

Olivier Sarbil is a multi-award winning French documentary Director and two-time Emmy® winning Cinematographer. Over the past two decades, Olivier has worked extensively in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, North America and Asia, on many of the most pressing global conflicts and social issues that the world has faced. In 2011, his life took an unexpected turn when he was severely wounded by a rocket-propelled grenade while documenting the civil war in Libya. His wounds only strengthened his resolve to continue telling stories that further the understanding of the human condition, in all its contradictions. In 2018, Olivier directed the critically acclaimed feature documentary, ON THE PRESIDENT'S ORDERS, which documents the violent war on drugs in the Philippines and garnered an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Documentary. Variety described it as "a wholly cinematic, sensory experience, with straight-ahead reportage electrified by glaring streetlights and a panicked urban wall of sound." For his previous film, MOSUL, Olivier spent six months embedded with the Iraqi Special Forces fighting ISIS. The resulting documentary provided a searing look at the ongoing conflict and won an Emmy for best cinematography, as well as being nominated for an additional Emmy for best documentary and a BAFTA for cinematography. The Guardian described the film as "an astonishing portrait of urban combat, and a gripping reflection of the universal, eternal truth of warfare".

DARREN ARONOFSKY - PRODUCER

Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker Darren Aronofsky was born and raised in Brooklyn. Aronofsky heads Protozoa based in Chinatown NYC. His credits include π, REQUIEM FOR A DREAM, THE FOUNTAIN, THE WRESTLER, BLACK SWAN, NOAH, mother!, THE WHALE, the

Sphere's POSTCARD FROM EARTH, and the upcoming CAUGHT STEALING for Sony Pictures. As a producer his credits include JACKIE, THE GOOD NURSE, SOME KIND OF HEAVEN, Peabody and Emmy-winning THE TERRITORY, National Geographic's LIMITLESS, starring Chris Hemsworth, WELCOME TO EARTH, ONE STRANGE ROCK, and the upcoming POLE TO POLE starring Will Smith. He produces VIKTOR alongside Protozoa's Dylan Golden and Brendan Naylor.

SIGRID JONSSON DYEKJÆR - PRODUCER

Producer Sigrid Dyekjær is an Oscar-nominated, two time Emmy-award winning producer with a slate spanning over 60 documentary films during the last 24 years. Notable projects include THE CAVE by Feras Fayyad (2020), THE TERRITORY by Alex Pritz (2022), APOLONIA APOLINIA by Lea Golb (2023), UNDER THE SKY OF DAMASCUS by Heba Khaled and Oscar nominated Talal Derki and Ali Wajeeh (2023), MERKEL by Eva Weber (2022) and Oscar nominated Guy Davidi's film INNOCENCE (2022). Recently, Sigrid premiered her latest film DEMOCRACY NOIR at CPH:DOX and it is now screening in film festivals around the world.

Sigrid teaches at the National Film School of Denmark and at DOK Incubator, an initiative supported by Media. She also holds master class lectures at film schools around the world and courses in documentary filmmaking.

LYA KAMINSKY - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Ilya Kaminsky is the author of DANCING IN ODESA, which won awards from the Academy of American Arts and Letters and the Whiting Foundation, and DEAF REPUBLIC which was the finalist for the *National Book Award* and had received the *Los Angeles Times*' Book Award and was also the *New York Times* Notable Book. He was recently inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and elected to serve as the Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. Kaminsky, who is from Odesa, Ukraine, currently lives in New Jersey.

MARIIA ANTYPENKO - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Mariia Antypenko uses her journalistic skills to promote the themes of equality and accessibility for people with various forms of disabilities. She strives to break existing myths about people with hearing impairments and convey to society the key idea that the only thing Deaf people cannot do is hear. As an ambassador of an NGO specializing in working with people with different degrees of hearing impairment, she believes that all people, without exception, are talented, and the realization of this talent depends on the conditions created by society for each individual. In Ukraine, Sign Language is recognised by law, and as an NGO ambassador, Mariia helps ensure that Deaf people feel empowered, aware of their rights, and have the energy to fight for their rights.

ATANAS GEORGIEV - EDITOR

Renowned as an award-winning editor and producer, Atanas Georgiev is celebrated for visionary projects such as CASH&MARRY and AVEC L'AMOUR. Widely recognized for his

role in producing and editing HONEYLAND, a critically acclaimed documentary that garnered three Sundance awards and received two Oscar nominations. Recent notable contributions encompass collaborations on AGAINST THE TIDE by Sarvnik Kaur, winner of the Special Jury Prize at Sundance 2023, and HOLLYWOODGATE, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival. Concurrently, he holds the esteemed position of distinguished professor at Shanghai University, while also serving as a partner at ARTeFACT Entertainment in Shanghai and Hong Kong.

PETER ALBRECHTSEN - SOUND DESIGNER

Peter Albrechtsen, MPSE (sound designer) is an acclaimed Danish sound designer and music supervisor working on both feature films and documentaries. Recent credits include a very diverse range of prominent movies, including the horror smash hit EVIL DEAD RISE, the Oscar nominated documentaries THE CAVE and A HOUSE MADE OF SPLINTERS and festival favorites like THE KILLING OF TWO LOVERS and AS IN HEAVEN.

NICOLAS BECKER - SOUND DESIGNER

Nicolas Becker (sound designer) is a French sound designer, foley artist and composer who won both the Oscar and the Bafta for Best Sound for SOUND OF METAL and has also worked on films like ARRIVAL, GRAVITY, THE PIANIST and BARDO. Recently Becker was the sound designer of this year's Berlin Golden Bear winner, Dahomey, Andrea Arnold's Cannes contender, BIRD, and sound designer and composer of HARVEST which is competing at this year's Venice Film Festival.

HEIKKI KOSSI - SOUND DESIGNER

Heikki Kossi, MPSE (sound designer) is a world renowned foley artist and sound designer from Finland who has been doing sound for film for decades and is now working at Skywalker Sound in California. Has more than 400 films on his track record, including SOUND OF METAL, AD ASTRA and BARDO. Has been nominated for an Emmy twice, for both THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD and the STAR WARS TV series AHSOKA, and also worked on a long list of documentaries like the Oscar nominated THE CAVE and A HOUSE MADE OF SPLINTERS and the recent Sundance sound award winner GAUCHO GAUCHO.

TIM NIELSON - RE-RECORDING MIXER

Tim Nielsen (re-recording mixer) has been working at the world's leading film sound studio Skywalker Sound for more than 25 years and has been the sound designer of the highly praised animation movies, FINDING DORY and THE LITTLE PRINCE. He has previously worked on celebrated movies like THERE WILL BE BLOOD and THE LORD OF THE RINGS. He was also the re-recording mixer of the award winning documentaries THE CAVE and THE TERRITORY.

COMPANY BIOS

PROTOZOA PICTURES:

Darren Aronofsky's Protozoa Pictures is a film and television production company based in Chinatown, NYC. Their credits include Aronofsky's Π , REQUIEM FOR A DREAM, THE FOUNTAIN, THE WRESTLER, BLACK SWAN, NOAH, MOTHER!, and THE WHALE; they also produced JACKIE, WHITE BOY RICK, SOME KIND OF HEAVEN, PACIFIED, CATCH THE FAIR ONE, THE GOOD NURSE, and THE TERRITORY. Their TV credits include ONE STRANGE ROCK, WELCOME TO EARTH, and LIMITLESS for NatGeo, KINDRED for FX, and BLACK GOLD for Paramount+. Aronofsky's next feature, CAUGHT STEALING starring Austin Butler, Zoe Kravitz and Regina King, begins production in September. Protozoa currently has projects set up at A24, FX, HBO, Netflix, and NatGeo.

IMPACT PARTNERS:

Impact Partners is dedicated to funding independent documentary storytelling that entertains audiences, engages with pressing social issues, and propels the art of cinema forward. Over the span of 15 years, Impact Partners has been involved in the financing of over 150 films, including: ICARUS, which won the 2018 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature; 32 SOUNDS, which won 2024 Cinema Eye Honors for Outstanding Nonfiction Feature; AFTERSHOCK, which won a 2023 Peabody Award, WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?, which won the 2019 Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary; DINA, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival and was named Best Feature by the International Documentary Association; THE EAGLE HUNTRESS, which was nominated for the 2017 BAFTA Award for Best Documentary; HOW TO SURVIVE A PLAGUE, which was nominated for the 2013 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature; OF FATHERS AND SONS, which was nominated for the 2019 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature; and HELL AND BACK AGAIN, which won the Documentary Grand Jury Prize Award at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for the Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature.

TIME STUDIOS

From one of the most globally iconic brands, TIME Studios is the award-winning television, film, and immersive division of TIME. With a brand defining visual language that dates back more than 100 years, TIME Studios aims to impact communities around the world with ideas that forge true progress, bringing a global audience to the most important stories of our time. Notable recent titles include DIRTY POP: THE BOY BAND SCAM (Netflix), THE LIONHEART (HBO), FRIDA (Amazon Prime), and THE TERRITORY (National Geographic) and JEEN-YUS: A KANYE TRILOGY (Netflix). More information about all TIME Studios projects can be found at <https://studios.time.com/>

END CREDITS

TIME STUDIOS PRESENTS

**A
PROTOZOA
PRODUCTION**

A REAL LAVA PRODUCTION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

IMPACT PARTNERS

VIKTOR

DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY

Olivier Sarbil

PRODUCED BY

Darren Aronofsky

PRODUCED BY

Dylan Golden

Brendan Naylor

PRODUCED BY

Sigrid Jonsson Dyekjær

Philippe Levasseur

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY

Olivier Sarbil

EDITOR

Atanas Georgiev

MUSIC BY

Disasterpeace

SOUND DESIGN BY

Peter Albrechtsen, MPSE

Nicolas Becker

Heikki Kossi, MPSE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Ari Handel

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Romain Bessi

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Jenny Raskin

Geralyn White Dreyfous

Meadow Fund

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Mike Beck

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EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Mariia Antypenko

Ilya Kaminsky

Lani Levine

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Kelsey Koenig

CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

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Marni E. J. Grossman

Katrina Vanden Heuvel

CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

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Dave O'Connor

Kyle Hentschel

Michael Erlinger

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Field Producer Serhiy Solodoko

Associate Producer Olga Beskhmel'nitsyna

Associate Field Producer Dmytro Kovalchuk

Post Producer Christina Isabel Emdrup

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Associate Editor Matt Westlake

First Assistant Editor Dragan Aleksov

Assistant Editor Sam Salvodan

Creative Consultant Samuel D. Hunter

Production Executive Avivit Bar-Yosef

Legal Advisor Christian Alsøe, Löwe Law Firm

Producer's Assistant, Real Lava Harry Vaughn

Josefine Behrmann & Peter Jensen,
Bookkeepers Bogholderiet

Production Assistant Daria Mitiuk

Post Production Assistant Sara Ferro, Trice Films, Macedonia

Post Producer Assistant Julie K. Møller

Literary Consultant Katie Ferriss

Archive Researcher Camilla Brem

Editing Facilities Filmtrick Editing Solutions
ARTeFACT Entertainment
Assembly

Digital Intermediate Picture Shop

Digital Intermediate Colorist Tim Stipan
Digital Intermediate Colorist Assist Calvin Johnson
Digital Intermediate Producer Julian McDougald
Project Manager Ladd Lanford

Re-Recording Mixer Tim Nielsen
Dialogue Editor Kristoffer Salting
Sound Effects Editor Mikkel Nielsen
Assistant Sound Designers Théo Serror
Andrea Ferrera
Sound Effects Recordist Charles Maynes, MPSE

Post-Production Sound Services by
Skywalker Sound
a Lucasfilm Ltd. Company
Marin County, California

Foley Artist Heikki Kossi, MPSE
Foley Mixer Malcolm Fife
Assistant Re-Recording Mixer Robert Cooper
Engineering Services Donnie Little
Post-Production Sound Accountant Cathy Shirk
Client Services Traynor Katzer
Senior Manager, Studio Capacity Carrie Perry
Head of Production Finance & Planning Mike Peters
Head of Engineering Steve Morris
Head of Production Jon Null
General Manager Josh Lowden

ADR Services Provided by

HARBOR
ADR Mixer Bobby Johanson
ADR Recordist Beau Emory
ADR Coordinator Lila Walsh
ADR Supervising Producer Tricia Schultz

Musicians

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Cello Raphael Weinroth-Browne

Allan Hon

Impact Partners

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Director of Development Chris Boeckmann

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Development Manager Chelsea Williams

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Made with the generous support of Impact Partners and its following members:

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Bill & Ruth Ann Harnisch - The Harnisch Foundation

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Margo King & John Steiner - Steiner King Foundation

Lessing Stern & Babbie Stern

Katrina vanden Heuvel

VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO

Kate Parkinson

THANK YOU TO

Trevor Baldwin

Adriana Banta

Michael Cadet

Malcolm Clarke

Darren Conway
Leslye Davis
Gwendoline Debono
Kyron Eganatovitch
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Made with support from the SFFILM's Documentary Film Fund

Camera equipment generously provided by Canon USA

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