



# ¡Vivan las Antípodas!

Director: Victor Kossakovsky

2011 Documentary

108 mins. Rated: U



[www.invernessfilmfans.org](http://www.invernessfilmfans.org)

At Eden Court

29<sup>h</sup> April 2014 7.15pm

## Introduction

What would be the shortest route between Entre Ros in Argentina and the Chinese metropolis Shanghai? Simply a straight line through the centre of the earth, since the two places are antipodes: they are located diametrically opposite to each other on the earth's surface.

During his visits to four such antipodal pairs, the award-winning documentary filmmaker Victor Kossakovsky captured images that turn our view of the world upside down. A beautiful, peaceful sunset in Entre Ros is contrasted with the bustling streets in rainy Shanghai. People who live in a wasteland are connected to people dwelling next to a volcano. Landscapes whose splendour touches the soul are juxtaposed with the clamour of a vast city. These antipodes seem mythically connected, somehow united by their oppositeness.

Kossakovsky's movie is a feast for the senses, a fascinating kaleidoscope of our planet. Vivan Las Antipodas! - Long Live The Antipodes!

(IMdB)

## Russian Director VICTOR KOSSAKOVSKY -

- is an underseen nonfiction master. His films, including his monumental second film *The Belovs* are expressive, rigorous, playful and sensual in a way that few documentaries are.

After a string of festival appearances in the last few years (including a series of masterclasses at IDFA and receiving the True Vision Award at the 2012 True/False Film Festival) the Russian's films are starting to get the attention they deserve. With the release of his spellbinding *¡Vivan las Antípodas!*, Kossakovsky has ascended to his proper place in the gallery of world directors

(BFI)

Kossakovsky famously claimed 10 Rules for documentary filmmaking:

1. Don't film if you can live without filming.
2. Don't film if you want to say something – just say it or write it. Film only if you want to show something, or you want people to see something. This concerns both the film as a whole and every single shot within the film.
3. Don't film, if you already knew your message before filming – just become a teacher. Don't try to save the world. Don't try to change the world. Better if your film will change you. Discover both the world and yourself whilst filming.
4. Don't film something you just hate. Don't film something you just love. Film when you aren't sure if you hate it or love it. Doubts are crucial for making art. Film when you hate and love at the same time.
5. You need your brain both before and after filming, but don't use your brain during filming. Just film using your instinct and intuition.
6. Try to not force people to repeat an action or words. Life is unrepeatable and unpredictable. Wait, look, feel and be ready to film using your own way of filming. Remember that the very best films are unrepeatable. Remember that the very best films were based on unrepeatable shots. Remember that the very best shots capture unrepeatable moments of life with an unrepeatable way of filming.
7. Shots are the basis of cinema. Remember that cinema was invented as one single shot – documentary, by the way – without any story. Or story was just inside that shot. Shots must first and foremost provide the viewers with new impressions that they never had before.
8. Story is important for documentary, but perception is even more important. Think, first, what the viewers will feel while seeing your shots. Then, form a dramatic structure of your film using the changes to their feelings.
9. Documentary is the only art, where every esthetical element almost always has ethical aspects and every ethical aspect can be used esthetically. Try to remain human, especially whilst editing your films. Maybe, nice people should not make documentaries.
10. Don't follow my rules. Find your own rules. There is always something that only you can film and nobody else.

## Review Extracts:

### A.

¡Vivan las Antípodas! is a mysterious trick film: inventive, wildly playful and truly mesmerising. The movie is a portrait of four antipodes – places on Earth diametrically opposite one another – that plays out as magical realist ethnography.

Like a nonfiction Alfonso Cuarón, Kossakovsky uses ingenious technique to create cinematic poetry. To actualise the theme of the antipode, images are often upside down or sideways; reflections in lakes can be of cities thousands of miles away.

The rare land-to-land antipodes include rural Entre Rios, Argentina and urban Shanghai, peaceful Patagonia, Chile and mountainous Lake Baikal, Russia, volcanic Hawaii and the jungles of Botswana, rocky Miraflores, Spain and Castle Point, New Zealand, where a whale has washed up onto a beach. It's a cosmic, lovely, sensual film, as consistently interested in blowing your mind as Godfrey Reggio's over-celebrated works, but always rooted in the primary building block of nonfiction: acute observation of people and place.

### B. *Mike McCahill -Guardian:*

The phrase is "digging to China", but in fact there are several points where one might theoretically pass through the Earth's core and emerge on land the other side. Victor Kossakovsky's documentary curio is essentially a high-concept exercise in matchmaking, pairing and then crosscutting between these polar opposites to illustrate how the other half lives. Stunning, Nasa-precise photography maps out the similarities and differences: there's a clear mismatch between rural Argentina and rapidly developing Shanghai, but shared agricultural interests unite Chilean Patagonia with Russia's Lake Baikal, and Kossakovsky finds one lovely visual rhyme between Hawaii's volcanic terrain and the hides of Botswanan elephants. A sympathy for the methods of slow cinema would help – it digs assiduously, using long takes that gradually reveal the minutiae of daily life – but its idiosyncratic gaze refuses any we-are-the-world homilies. You emerge wondering what (and who) might lie beneath your own feet

### C. *Trevor Johnston -Time Out:*

Apparently, if you dug a hole through the Earth from London, you would reach the Antipodes Islands south of New Zealand. Russian documentarist Victor Kossakovsky uses that conceit to deliver nothing less than a portrait of our world, as seen through four pairs of geographical opposites. Much of this is played out in rugged landscapes, reminding us that the life of the planet isn't always couched in human terms, yet the effect of this spectacular, sometimes whimsical, always patient piece of filmmaking suggests that, wherever we are, we share a common bond with what lies beneath our feet. Unlike, say, similar globetrotting, image-led works like 'Koyaanisqatsi' or 'Baraka', Kossakovsky's film is never preachy, allowing the visuals to percolate and affect each viewer in their own way. Striking, ruminative and entirely worthwhile.

### D. *The Hollywood Reporter*

A brightly original and, for once, entirely positive take on the planet Earth, this exquisitely shot and produced travelogue compares not just places but the people, flora and fauna who are "upside down" from one another. Hypnotic traveling shots and twisted perspectives add another feather in the cap of prize-winning Russian cameraman and director Victor Kossakovsky. A panoramic Venice Film Festival run is assured,

The contemplative nature of the film won't be everyone's cup of tea, and those looking for drama, conflict and strong narrative would be better off with a Disney nature series. This film takes a contemplative tack, preferring to focus on simple, uncomplicated folk who live in the most beautiful, remote locations in the world. Kossakovsky, who did the editing as well as the dazzling camerawork, moves comfortably between his antipodes once he sets them up. By the end of the film, the Earth is criss-crossed with mini-narratives that give a sense of the grand family of human beings and, overall, how beautiful and varied our world is.

*Inverness Film Fans (InFiFa) was founded in 2003 with the aim of bringing the best of past and present world cinema to audiences in Inverness and the surrounding areas and to encourage wider interest, appreciation and understanding of the art of Film. We now meet fortnightly at Eden Court Cinema for screenings and post film discussions. We select our films from the best of international cinema, incorporating a thematic strand in our bi-monthly programmes and including member's requests. InFiFa organise special events for members and have launched a new website with an online discussion forum and information on forthcoming screenings and other film events in the Highlands.*

*If you have comments on the film you have seen tonight, have seen something recently that you'd like to tell others about or have a film you'd love to see on the big screen, please get in touch via our website!*

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