Delve Deeper into “Belarusian Waltz”
A film by Andrzej Fidyk

This multi-media resource list, compiled by Susan Conlon and Martha Perry of the Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the upcoming P.O.V. documentary “Belarusian Waltz,” that premieres on August 12th, 2008 at 10 PM (check local listings at www.pbs.org/pov/).

Belarus has been called “Europe’s last dictatorship.” Since 1994, Alexander Lukashenko has ruled the ex-Soviet republic with a despotic hand, jailing the opposition, shutting down the press and refusing to investigate the assassinations of dissidents. He has virtually silenced his critics — but not one lone performance artist who stages public stunts mocking the dictator’s pretensions. “Belarusian Waltz” is the story of Alexander Pushkin, whose audacious, comical exploits find him facing the hostility of the police and the consternation of his family. An offbeat tale of post-modern street theater meeting 1930s-style authoritarianism, the film offers a surprising window into the soul of the Belarusian people. A co-production of ITVS International.

ADULT NONFICTION


Bishop, Claire. Participation (Documents of Contemporary Art). Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006. With essays by Umberto Eco, Bertolt Brecht, Roland Barthes and others, this book places participatory art in both a historical and theoretical context, while exploring how it encourages and produces new social relationships.


Lacey, Suzanne. Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art. Seattle, Wash.: Bay Press, 1995. This set of essays is an attempt to formulate an ideological understanding of installation, performance, site-specific work and other manifestations of public art frequently encountered, yet generally misunderstood.


ADULT FICTION

Freudenberg, Nell. The Dissident. Ecco, 2006. Yuan Zhao, a Chinese performance artist entangled in the subversive community of Beijing’s East Village (an artist enclave located in Beijing’s “industrial dump”), moves to Los Angeles to show his work and teach studio art.


Steinhauer, Olen. Victory Square. New York: St. Martin’s Minotaur, 2007. The revolutionary politics and chaotic history of life inside Olen Steinhauer’s fictionalized Eastern European country have made his literary crime series one of today’s most acclaimed. This is fifth and final entry in the series. Other titles include: 36 Yalta Boulevard, The Bridge of Sighs, The Confession, and Liberation Movements.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS


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FILMS, VIDEOS, AND BROADCASTS

Burnt By the Sun (Utomlyonnye Solntsem) A film by Nikita Mikhalkov. Columbia TriStar Home Video, 1994. (134 min). In the Soviet Union of 1936, revolutionary hero Colonel Kotov is spending an idyllic summer in his dacha with his wife and their 6 year old daughter. They are surprised by the arrival of the charming Mitia, who exploits his status as an old family friend to carry out a dark mission. Kotov’s confidence in himself and his country are at first unshakable; he is unable to comprehend that his peaceful family vacation is about to be destroyed by the brutality of the Stalinist regime. In Russian with English subtitles.

Cabaret Balkan (Bure Baruta) A film by Goran Paskaljevic. Paramount Pictures, 1998, 2000. (102 min). In this dark comedy set in war-torn Yugoslavia, the lives of various citizens -- a cab driver, friends in a gym, a girl on a bus, a performance artist and more - intersect during one unpredictable night in Belgrade. In Serbo-Croatian with English subtitles.


Freedom. A film by Tom Baker. Madacy Entertainment Group, 1998. (60 min). Topics include how three of the century’s great spontaneous uprisings (Tiananmen Square, Prague Spring, and the Hungarian Uprising) were crushed. Also shows the Dalai Lama’s flight into exile and the continuing struggle to restore political and religious peace in Tibet; how the indigenous peoples of the world are reclaiming the rights to land that once was theirs; the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of communist domination in Eastern Europe, among others.