

Director  
Andrei Tarkovsky

Screenplay  
Andrei Tarkovsky, Tonino  
Guerra

Cinematography  
Giuseppe Lanci

Art Director  
Andrea Crisanti

Editors  
Erminia Marani, Amedeo Salfa

Music  
Verdi, Beethoven

Producer  
Francesco Casati

Executive Producers  
Renzo Rossellini, Manolo  
Bolognini

Run time: 120 Minutes

Certificate: 15

Russian and Italian with  
English subtitles

Italy 1983

Colour

Aspect Ratio: 1.66:1

[Tarkovsky.co.uk](http://Tarkovsky.co.uk)

 [CurzonArtificialEye](#)

 [ArtificialEye](#)

[#SculptingTime](#)

**CURZON**  
ARTIFICIAL EYE

# NOSTALGIA

Screening as part of Sculpting Time: Andrei Tarkovsky retrospective



*Andrei Tarkovsky made Nostalghia in Italy toward the end of a career cut short by his death from cancer. It was the first feature he made abroad, and its culturally alienated protagonist can be seen as a mirror of his own deep homesickness and longing for Russia. Tarkovsky had forged his career under the Soviet regime, but had bitterly struggled to avoid having his work suppressed by a bureaucratic studio system tasked with realising the state's view of cinema as a propaganda tool to indoctrinate the masses with heroic communist ideals. He alarmed the authorities with his highly intuitive, personal and poetic approach to directing. His films, which all deal with spiritual crisis, tend towards a dream logic, incorporating visually stunning imagery with fragments of memory in a manner that defies simple, set interpretation. He did not overtly identify as a political dissident, but he found the pressure exerted by the state on his ability to create with unhampered authenticity so taxing that after going to Italy in 1982 to shoot his sixth feature, he announced he wouldn't return. The Soviet authorities actively prevented Nostalghia from winning the prestigious Palme d'Or at Cannes. This obstruction only strengthened Tarkovsky's resolve not to go back to his beloved homeland, even though his young son was there and not permitted to leave.*

*Tarkovsky had made autobiographical work before, his 1975 masterpiece Mirror being essentially a weave of childhood recollections set into the wider context of Russia's tumultuous history. The fictional story of Nostalghia, which he dedicated to his mother, holds clear parallels to his own predicament of self-imposed exile. A Russian writer, also named Andrei and played by Oleg Yankovsky, has travelled to Italy to research compatriot 18th-century serf composer Pavel Sosnovsky. Andrei is suffering in the throes of a profound sense of displacement. The companionship and declared affection of his beautiful interpreter Eugenia (Domiziana Giordano) only serves as an additional strain. The tension between creative freedom and ancestral belonging troubles his thoughts and is an irreconcilable problem echoed in the fate of Sosnovsky, who had felt compelled to return to Russia despite knowing he would be enslaved again. There, he had turned to drink before committing suicide.*

*Tarkovsky often used rain and crackling fire in his work to create oneiric, mystically charged worlds teeming with the elemental grandeur of nature. Nostalghia plays out in ruins flooded with water with dripping walls in which indoors and outside merge; in the eerie haze of a steaming Tuscan spa; in a pool in which Andrei attempts to walk from one end to the other without letting a candle extinguish. This last act is called for by local Domenico (Erland Josephson), who may be martyr or madman and who makes an extreme stand against the catastrophic state of the modern world. A final iconic image shows Andrei lying with his dog in front of a Russian dacha, nestled inside an Italian cathedral. Tarkovsky once claimed, after all, that Russians are fatally attached to their roots.*

By Carmen Gray, film critic / journalist