

Friday spotlight: Earth

Aleksandr Dovzhenko's masterpiece *Zemlya* (or *Earth*) is quite possibly the greatest achievement to come out of Soviet cinema and was a starting point for another Russian film giant, Andrei Tarkovsky. Rising above propaganda and keeping intact an authentic artistic voice, *Earth* continues to surprise audiences with its innovation and ability to capture the immeasurable detail of the human experience through sensuality and beauty, which is something impossible to describe in words and must be experienced firsthand. Dealing with dark ironies about life and death, *Earth* is a depiction of the beginning stages of regimentation in the Ukraine and landowners uniting to assassinate the fledgling head of a village committee. Dovzhenko utilizes imagery to a level of absurd brilliance and ingrained the necessity for inspired visuals. One example in particular is a sequence featuring stampeding horses, which is captured soulfully; another is wheat fields blowing in the wind, showing the simple, unaltered beauty of soil. The most profound moment arrives when the deceased village leader meets the ground, bonding to the land, the earth, which spawns all life. Though troubling to the censors of that time period, suffering cuts of socially explicit scenes, *Earth* stands the test of time, working as beams of light fighting to break through a dark shield.