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HOW TO VIEW THE MEETING: No physical location from which members of the public may observe the meeting and offer public comment will be provided. Please view the meeting, which will be live streamed at <https://malibucity.org/video> and <https://malibucity.org/VirtualMeeting>.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE BEFORE THE MEETING: Members of the public are encouraged to submit email correspondence to bsaleaumua@malibucity.org before the meeting begins.

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Malibu Arts Commission
Regular Meeting Agenda
(to be held during COVID-19 emergency)

Tuesday, September 26, 2023
9:00 A.M.

Various Teleconference Locations

YOU MAY VIEW THIS MEETING LIVE OVER THE INTERNET AT
[MALIBUCITY.ORG/VIDEO](https://malibucity.org/video)

Call to Order

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

City of Malibu Vision Statement

Approval of Agenda

Report on Posting of Agenda – September 22, 2023

1. Written and Oral Communications from the Public

- A. Communications from the Public concerning matters which are not on the agenda but for which the Commission has subject matter jurisdiction. The Commission may not act on these matters at this meeting.

- B. Commission Ad Hoc Committee Reports
 - 1. Arts in Education
 - 2. Malibu Public Art Exhibitions
 - 3. Business and Community Outreach
 - 4. Social Media
 - 5. Solstice Canyon Creek Beautification Project

2. Consent Calendar

- A. Previously Discussed Items

None.

- B. New Items

None.

3. Old Business

- A. Solstice Canyon Creek Beautification Project

Recommended Action: 1) Review the status of the Solstice Canyon Creek Beautification Project; and 2) Consider whether to continue the art selection process.

Staff Contact: Community Services Director Riesgo, 456-2489 ext. 350

4. New Business

- A. Documentary Screening

Recommended Action: Review the request from Suzanne Zimmer to collaborate on a screening of the documentary *Freedom on Fire: Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom*.

Staff Contact: Community Services Director Riesgo, 456-2489 ext. 350

5. Staff Updates

6. Commissioner Reports, Comments and Inquiries

Future Agenda Items

Adjournment

Future Meetings

Tuesday, October 24, 2023	9:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting	Location to be determined
Tuesday, November 28, 2023	9:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting	Location to be determined
Tuesday, December 26, 2023	9:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting	Location to be determined

Guide to the City Commission Proceedings

As a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the City is under a state of local emergency, as well as states of emergency that have been declared in the County of Los Angeles, state of California, and a federal emergency declared by the President of the United States. In order to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, the City Council meeting will be open and public but conducted virtually because meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees. This way the public, the staff, and the Council will not be physically in the same place.

The Oral Communication portion of the agenda is for members of the public to present items, which are not listed on the agenda but are under the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission. Although no action may be taken, the Commission and staff will follow up, at an appropriate time, on those items needing response. Each speaker is limited to (3) three minutes. Members of the public wishing to speak during the meeting must participate through the Zoom application. The City requests that you sign up to speak before the item you would like to speak on has been called by the Chair and then you must be present in the Zoom conference to be recognized. Please visit <https://malibucity.org/VirtualMeeting> and follow the directions for signing up to speak and downloading the Zoom application.

Items in Consent Calendar Section A have already been considered by the Commission at a previous meeting where the public was invited to comment, after which a decision was made. These items are not subject to public discussion at this meeting because the vote taken at the previous meeting was final. Resolutions concerning decisions made at previous meetings are for the purpose of memorializing the decision to assure the accuracy of the findings, the prior vote, and any conditions imposed.

Items in Consent Calendar Section B have not been discussed previously by the Commission. If discussion is desired, an item may be removed from the Consent Calendar for individual consideration. Commissioners may indicate a negative or abstaining vote on any individual item by so declaring prior to the vote on the motion to adopt the entire Consent Calendar. Items excluded from the Consent Calendar will be taken up by the Commission following the action on the Consent Calendar. The Commission first will take up the items for which public speaker requests have been submitted. Public speakers shall follow the rules as set forth under Oral Communication.

Old Business items have appeared on previous agendas but have either been continued or tabled to this meeting with no final action having been taken. Public comment shall follow the rules as set forth under Oral Communication.

Items in New Business are items which are appearing for the first time for formal action. Public comment shall follow the rules as set forth under Oral Communication.

Copies of the staff reports or other written documentation relating to each item of business described above are on file in the office of the City Manager, and available upon request by emailing kriesgo@malibucity.org.

The City Hall phone number is (310) 456-2489. To contact City Hall using a telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD), please call (800) 735-2929 and a California Relay Service operator will assist you. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Environmental Sustainability Director Yolanda Bundy, (310) 456-2489, ext. 229. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. [28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADD Title II]. Requests for use of audio or video equipment during a Commission meeting should be directed to media@malibucity.org before 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing agenda was posted in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. Dated this 22nd day of September 2023, at 5:00 p.m.



Kristin Riesgo, Community Services Director



Malibu Arts Commission Agenda Report

Malibu Arts
Commission Meeting
09-26-23

**Item
3.A.**

To: Chair Lawrence and Members of the Malibu Arts Commission

Approved by: Kristin Riesgo, Community Services Director

Date prepared: September 21, 2023 Meeting date: September 26, 2023

Subject: Solstice Canyon Creek Beautification Project

RECOMMENDED ACTION: 1) Review the status of the Solstice Canyon Creek Beautification Project; and 2) Consider whether to continue the art selection process.

DISCUSSION: The Commission has discussed the Solstice Canyon Creek Beautification Project (Project) since May 24, 2022. The Project with the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) included the replacement of the existing bridge and pedestrian underpass to Dan Blocker State Beach.

The Project also included an art component, which was the focus of the Commission. CalTrans received a grant from the Clean California Program to fund artwork, and the Commission agreed to assist with selecting a local artist, theme, and medium. Initially, CalTrans determined that the art completion timeline would be June 2023 and on public display through 2026. The artwork would then be installed and displayed on the side(s) of the new underpass.

CalTrans discussed the various Agreements required for the Project with Staff and the Commission, including the Transportation Art Agreement, Maintenance Agreement (Agreement), and Artist Copyright Waiver.

At the August 23, 2022 Regular meeting, the Commission approved holding a Call for Artists submission process and selected Chair Lawrence and Commissioner Jones to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee (Ad Hoc). The Ad Hoc opened a Call for Artists on September 1, 2022.

At the October 25, 2022 Regular meeting, the Commission approved artist Jules Muck, who planned to paint an original mural depicting ocean wildlife and coastal scenery. The Commission selected Ms. Muck due to her extensive experience painting large-scale murals worldwide and her unique street art painting style.

From November 2022 to December 2022, Staff worked with CalTrans to review the Agreements related to the Project. On January 12, 2023, Staff met with CalTrans and notified the agency that the City of Malibu would not complete the maintenance on any portion of the artwork once it was installed in the Solstice Canyon Creek Bridge. On February 8, 2023, CalTrans determined they would alter the Agreement and remove the City's maintenance responsibilities. Instead, CalTrans planned to work with volunteers through the Adopt A Highway program to manage the upkeep and maintenance.

On July 5, 2023, Staff received a revised Agreement from CalTrans, which removed the City from all maintenance responsibilities. The City Attorney's Office reviewed the Agreement and returned it to CalTrans on July 28, 2023. Staff and Chair Lawrence have communicated with CalTrans, requesting an update regarding the Agreement. CalTrans has responded that the review process has taken longer than anticipated due to the City's request to remove the maintenance terms of the Agreement.

At the July 25, 2023, Regular Meeting, the Ad Hoc expressed concern regarding the progress of the Project and requested further discussion. The Commission is asked to review the Project's status and determine the Commission's position on completing the Project with CalTrans.

ATTACHMENTS: None



Malibu Arts Commission Agenda Report

Malibu Arts
Commission Meeting
09-26-23

**Item
4.A.**

To: Chair Lawrence and Members of the Malibu Arts Commission
Approved by: Kristin Riesgo, Community Services Director
Date prepared: September 21, 2023 Meeting date: September 26, 2023
Subject: Documentary Screening

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Review the request from Suzanne Zimmer to collaborate on a screening of the documentary *Freedom on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom*.

DISCUSSION: At the August 22, 2023 Regular meeting, the Commission received written correspondence from Suzanne Zimmer requesting the Commission to host a screening of the documentary *Freedom on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom* (2022).

The documentary includes footage and interviews with people displaced in Ukraine and the country's ability to unite in a warzone. Evgeny Afineevsky, Director, would attend the screening and participate in a question and answer session.

The film received various awards, including the Brizzolara Family Foundation Award for Films of Conflict and Resolution, the Power of Cinema Award, the European Film Festival of Atlanta, and several other awards (Attachment 1).

The Commission may review the proposal and consider hosting the event on a date determined at City Hall.

ATTACHMENTS: Freedom on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom Press Notes

A

Winter on Fire Production

presented by MakeMake Entertainment & PFX — Post Production and Visual Effects Studio
in association with 1+1 Media, Diamond Docs, Donbas Frontliner & Donetsk Institute of Information

FREEDOM ON FIRE: UKRAINE'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

2023 Director's Anniversary Cut of the documentary film



Directed by Evgeny Afineevsky

Run Time: 116 minutes

Despite our tough task, to make this important visual testament of the Ukrainian people's resilience and bravery in 6 months (between February 24, 2022 and August 31, 2022), we were continuing to document the atrocities of this unjust war. And in February 22-24, 2023 we presented to the world a newly edited and updated comprehensive story of the 9 years of the war and one full year of the full-scale invasion.



Press Contact

Elektra Gray

elektragray@gmail.com

Freedom on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom had its World Premiere at the **79th Venice International Film Festival**, where it was recognized with the **Kineo Award**, and its North American Premiere at **Toronto International Film Festival**. The film has also been selected to screen at Hamptons International Film Festival, Mill Valley Film Festival, Seattle International Film Festival DocFest (Closing Night), SCAD Savannah Film Festival, DOCNYC, Budapest International Documentary Festival, Stockholm International Film Festival, Tokyo International Film Festival, Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival (Czech Republic), Movies on War Film Festival (Norway) and Eastern Neighbors Film Festival (Netherlands) and many other festivals.

During 9th anniversary of the War started by Russia against Ukraine in February 2014 and the 1st anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, Director Evgeny Afineevsky released New - 2023 Director's Anniversary Cut of the documentary film: "FREEDOM ON FIRE: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom"

Freedom on Fire is also the recipient of the **Brizzolara Family Foundation Award for Films of Conflict & Resolution** (Hamptons), the **Power of Cinema Award** (Mill Valley), as well as SCAD's Inaugural **Daring Documentarian Award**, has been nominated for a **Critics Choice Documentary Award** in the **Best Political Documentary category**, won **Festival Internacional de Cinema Independente de Braga – Bragacine, (Portugal)**, won **Best Historical Film** and **Festival Grand Prix** from International Festival of Historical Films "Beyond Time" (Kyiv – Ukraine) and recently won **European Film Festival of Atlanta**. On June 27, 2023 **Cinema for Peace** hosted a special honouring of **His Holiness Pope Francis, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy**, and **Oscar-nominated filmmaker Evgeny Afineevsky** at the **Vatican** and in **Rome**. This is the first time that two global leaders and one filmmaker were honoured with a joint award and that the awards are dedicated to someone — the children who lost their lives in the war in Ukraine. The three awards have an engraving of pictures of three innocent children who were killed on March 08, 2022, by a missile — Obodzinsky Volodymyr (14 years old), Deyneko Nicol (1 year old), and Deyneko Denis (1 year old). The father of these children who lost his entire family to the war, Volodymyr Obidzinskyi, accompanied Cinema for Peace at the honouring and the special film screening of "Freedom on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom"



Director's Statement

Thousands of Ukrainians shivered through a three month protest in Kyiv's Maidan Uprising until the government accepted their ultimatum — President Viktor Yanukovich fled, paving the way for free elections and the opportunity for the nation to finally join the European Union. Yet as I documented the public revelry of February 23, 2014, a war began before my eyes. Upon losing influence over the Yanukovich regime, Vladimir Putin knew his own authority could be undermined if Russians saw their neighbors reap the benefits of democracy. Putin's aggressive agenda remains unchecked by much of the world, even since his troops invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Freedom on Fire presents ordinary people at their most vulnerable, attempting to evade bombs and bullets while — in some cases — choosing which family members to save. By releasing the film now, I hope I can bring immediate clarity to viewers confused by the deliberate misinformation campaign surrounding the current events in Ukraine. Despite the ongoing brutality, the nation is not on its knees. The movie's essence is singing, hugging, volunteers bearing gifts, and children drawing pictures for the soldiers who are keeping them safe. That's beauty: People who know how to laugh and love.

One of my goals was to detail the struggles associated with reporting from the front lines of a warzone. My main character is a female journalist, largely because Marie Colvin (1956-2012) remains a constant presence in my mind. I didn't know her personally, but I immersed myself in her work while making *Cries from Syria*. Colvin died doing her job and telling the truth about that country's civil war. FREEDOM ON FIRE is dedicated to storytellers who risk danger to give voices to the voiceless. Everything can be rebuilt except lives.

— Evgeny Afineevsky

Synopsis

Crafted from stark footage and exclusive interviews with people displaced by the enduring conflict, FREEDOM ON FIRE: UKRAINE'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM reveals how the spirit of unity strengthens morale even amid the country's darkest hours.

When Vladimir Putin launched an unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, its citizens instinctively renewed the survival strategies that sustained them eight years prior during the Maidan Uprising. This companion piece to director Evgeny Afineevsky's Academy Award-nominated documentary *Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom* explores why a jubilant day on Kyiv's Maidan square instigated warfare that has lasted the better part of a decade. Broadening his focus from a single city, Afineevsky and his veteran *Winter on Fire* crew turn their lenses on multiple countries, trailing both the Ukrainians trying to escape and those who have vowed to stay behind.

A sweeping look at a humanitarian crisis, the documentary amplifies the views of children, mothers, soldiers, doctors, artists, volunteers, clergymen, and journalists who are transformed while witnessing ceaseless destruction and bloodshed. Featuring narration from Oscar-winning Dame Helen Mirren, FREEDOM ON FIRE is a saga of resilience that challenges the international community to oppose tyranny together.

Press Notes

Part I: A Continuation of *Winter on Fire*

Director Evgeny Afineevsky has been a U.S. citizen for more than a decade. After growing up in the U.S.S.R. and witnessing its fall from afar, he feels an innate kinship with citizens of that region who want the chance to benefit themselves from democratic values and the freedom of expression.

“My first beautiful experience as a filmmaker in Ukraine started on Maidan in 2013,” he says, referring to the 93-day protest where Ukrainians beseeched the government to deliver on an abandoned promise and enter the European Union. “I was fascinated by the unity that surrounded me. I never experienced seeing people young and old, rich and poor, all trying to achieve a common goal.”

No matter how many times Ukrainian special forces attempted to disband the peaceful protest with violence, the citizens maintained their determination and dignity. Invigorated by the spirit of the demonstration, Afineevsky chronicled aspects of the Maidan Uprising in two films, both released in 2015: the documentary feature *Winter on Fire* and the documentary short *Romka*. “Romka” is the affectionate nickname for Roman Savelyev, a 12-year-old armed with only a slingshot, who volunteered at the protest’s tech tent so people could go online and contact their families.

“Maidan was the first chapter of the Ukrainian fight for freedom,” Afineevsky says. “What I’m showing right now in FREEDOM ON FIRE is the next chapter. The European Union integration triggered the start of this war because Putin doesn’t want to see people free. He wants to keep everybody as repressed as his own people.”

As Stanislav Stovban — a longtime member of the Ukrainian military — says in FREEDOM ON FIRE, “Essentially, for eight years we’ve been learning how to fight.” Remembering the lessons of Maidan, citizens across Ukraine worked fast to establish shelters, soup kitchens, and medical supply centers. In clothing factories, seamstresses shifted their priorities to sewing armored vests for the Territorial Defense Force. Volunteer Vlad Hlavachek of Kharkiv, Ukraine, takes pride in “how talented and capable every person is,” and their collective adaptability.

Part II: FREEDOM ON FIRE's Vision

Once the 2022 invasion began, Afineevsky embarked on a second — and more ambitious — feature set in Ukraine. “I wanted to tell the history of these past eight years of the war, and at the same time, focus on the major events of the invasion,” he says. Another aim was to remind audiences how Russia, the largest country on Earth, has caused hardships in bordering Ukraine for centuries.

Bringing FREEDOM ON FIRE to fruition meant assembling *Winter on Fire* creatives, Afineevsky's *Francesco* (2020) collaborators, and shrewd new partners. Ted Hope, the former head of production for Amazon Original Movies, serves as a producer. The executive producing team includes two-time Academy Award winner Angus Wall, Mark Monroe (*The Dissident*), Geralyn White Dreyfous (*Won't You Be My Neighbor?*), 2022 Oscar winner Robert Fyvolent (*Summer of Soul...Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised*), and James Costa, past co-vice president of the International Documentary Association's board of directors.

To convey a comprehensive narrative of the war, Afineevsky structured the film around personal testimonies by Ukrainians whose lives have changed dramatically since 2014. During that period, the Vlasenko family tried to evade Russian rule twice: first relocating from Crimea with little fuss, then, in 2022, defying death in Vorzel. Shortly after the Maidan uprising, Stovban was severely injured defending the Donetsk Airport, then he was taken prisoner by the Russian separatists. A one time French teacher from Mariupol, Anna Zaitseva, is relieved when her husband leaves the military to help her raise their son, but their new family life unravels with the invasion. The Vlasenkos, Stovban, and Zaitseva became an integral part of the movie with Nataliia Nagorna, a well-known war correspondent who has had a frenetic and traumatic eight years. In FREEDOM ON FIRE, her behind the scenes vantage is finally laid bare.

Characters in *Winter on Fire* often cite the fate of the next generation as why they decided to protest. Appropriately, lots of children raised in the aftermath of Maidan are given attention in FREEDOM ON FIRE. “Children say things unfiltered,” says Afineevsky, a parent himself. “In conversations with them, you hear pure voices.”

Even at age seven, a boy named Makar is aware that the Russian government has a legacy of portraying itself as a liberator. Standing in his decimated apartment amid falling bombs, he eyes the camera and scoffs, “Thanks to the saviors from Russia for doing this!” Asked for her definition of war, 10-year-old Olya Kapirulia speculates, “When two leaders of different cities or countries do not agree on something, and a lot of people have to die because of it.” She adds, “I don't understand — why can't everyone live in peace? It's so simple.”

Part III: Size & Scope

Whereas *Winter on Fire* unfolds entirely around the central square in Kyiv, FREEDOM ON FIRE presents military action in more than 20 Ukrainian cities. “I intended to show how war is affecting individuals in different parts of the country,” says Afineevsky. Refugees are also followed into Poland as camera people dart through Russian rallies.

“This movie had a huge amount of people involved,” says Afineevsky, who was among the 43 cinematographers (compared to *Winter on Fire’s* 28). Besides building relationships with characters and trying to stay abreast of unpredictable tank sightings and air raids, the director acted as communicator-in-chief. He shared specific guidelines on everything from B-roll shots to the demographics of interview subjects.

“There were a lot of logistics,” says Afineevsky, noting that the pandemic was one of the smaller sources of anxiety. “Specifically in a war zone, people are thinking more about not getting hit by a bullet or not being targeted by a bomb than getting COVID-19.” Fortunately, no members of his crew were hurt on assignment.

FREEDOM ON FIRE’s complete bank of footage measured more than 20 terabytes, which Afineevsky says was painstakingly winnowed down to ensure that “the majority of the material in this film has not been seen, including lots of footage from Mariupol. As another example, we have an interview with Boris Bondarev, one of the top former Russian diplomats from the UN in Geneva, who resigned and disappeared. I’m the only one who got him on camera.”

Over the course of the shoot, Afineevsky made three trips to Ukraine when he wasn’t circulating between cross-continental cutting rooms. “Shooting while editing was a 24/7 undertaking,” he says. “On the editing side alone, we had five people working in Ukraine, two in the Czech Republic, and two in the United States. All orchestrated by my amazing editor/producer, Will Znidaric.” Thanks to post-production, each location is even identified with captions in Ukrainian, Russian, and English.

“It was very, very organized, but still stressful,” Afineevsky says. “We filmed our last shot on August 9th to keep the movie current. I was able to reteam with Helen Mirren and record her narration on August 26th so the movie could premiere at the Venice Film Festival in early September.”

Part IV: The Russian Propaganda Machine

Hours after Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered his troops to invade Ukraine, he supplied a motive at a televised address to the nation: “The purpose of this operation is to protect people who for eight years now have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime. To this end, we will seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine.”

His words bewildered citizens around the globe, and immediately rang false to the bulk of 44 million Ukrainians. Not only is Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Jewish, but he also lost three relatives in the Holocaust. Imagining a direct conversation with Putin, Afineevsky asks, "Based on what you are calling people Nazis? Because they are not ready to accept how you behave?"

Upon reflection, Afineevsky says, "I think the most visceral source of pain for Russians remains the Second World War." The Soviet Union's leaders claimed neutrality in the conflict, but secretly abetted Germany for two years. Germany then invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. It is estimated that during WWII, the Soviet death toll reached 27 million.

Afineevsky, who is Jewish, presumes Putin invokes nazism "to justify the invasion" by "aggravating pain and elevating hate. It's like irritating a bull with a red cape."

As the Russian Armed Forces' attacks against Ukraine broadened, so did the government's propaganda narrative. "First Russia was 'denazifying Ukraine,'" Afineevsky says. "Then Russia asserted that Ukraine was developing a biological weapon with America in order to target Russia. That's why Russia said they were destroying strategic military sectors in Ukraine." Putin has also compared himself to Peter the Great, although the president does not share the common view that Russia's first emperor was a conqueror. "Putin said that Peter the Great was just reclaiming Russian territory. So that's another excuse that's been given for what's happening."

FREEDOM ON FIRE presents festivities where Russian streets are jammed with decade-long Putin supporters. Yet no population is a monolith, and Afineevsky says some Russians would not cheer for their president at a parade. "I interviewed a lot of Russian figures for this movie, and many of them are ashamed by what they see on the news."

Part V: Ukrainian Strength on Display

Citing Napoleon, Hitler, and Putin, Afineevsky says, "Every century brings its own dictator who dreams about trying to create a big European empire. And every time it's a failure." Still, 54 percent of global citizens live under some form of dictatorship. Each nation that topples to authoritarianism can induce more to do the same.

With his latest work, Afineevsky observes Ukraine's resilience far outside Kyiv. Despite the devastating circumstances, morale is high. Even citizens who have lost loved ones and homes cultivate compassion and generosity. Ukrainians seem incapable of treating one another like strangers.

"In my previous movie, Pope Francis explained how we always need to help our brothers and sisters who are fleeing wars because tomorrow it can be you or me in their place," Afineevsky says.

The director's greatest aspiration for FREEDOM ON FIRE is that the film "wakes up the world as a call for action, and, hopefully, can ally with Ukraine against the potential threats to freedom, freedom of speech and expression, human rights, and democracy."

For communities of any size, Afineevsky sees a clear-cut path to positive change: "Be united and not divided."

Character List

Main Characters

Nataliia Nagorna: Ukrainian war journalist for the television channel 1+1 who takes solace in the expectations of her job, even amid a humanitarian emergency. "True courage is when you are afraid but still act," she says.

Anna Zaitseva: Mother of an infant who hides for more than two months underneath the Azovstal iron and steel plant, the Mariupol facility where her husband works. She is forced to act as a single parent — her husband's whereabouts are a secret while he serves in the Azov Regiment and after he becomes a prisoner of war. Once Azovstal is hit with an anti-bunker bomb, Anna and her son, Sviatoslav, are taken to a Russian-run filtration camp; she is first interrogated, then fêted in pro-Russian propaganda pieces. Finally, she and Sviatoslav are released to the Red Cross and the United Nations.

Tetiana Vlasenko and Kateryna Vlasenko: Respective mother and 16-year-old daughter who are hospitalized after being shot in their car by members of the Russian Armed Forces. Kateryna sustains serious injuries, but she and her eight-year-old brother, Igor, likely saved each other's lives: she shielded him from bullets, and he howled at a soldier who eventually led them to safety.

Stanislav Stovban: Member of the Ukrainian military whose battalion was bombed at the Donetsk Airport in 2014. Stovban was taken into Russian captivity, where one of his legs was amputated. Following a prisoner exchange, his other leg was saved by a Ukrainian doctor, and Stovban immediately rejoined the fight.

Fr. Andriy Zelinskyy, SJ: Chief military chaplain for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, who analyzes why Russia has been trying to incite discord within Ukraine since he and his fellow Maidan protesters declared victory. Zelinskyy remembers peaceful evenings spent watching the stars glimmer through the shrapnel-studded walls and roof of an airplane hangar.

Vlad “Pikaso” Minchenko: Painter and tattoo artist who voluntarily collects and buries dozens of bodies he finds scattered around Bucha. During the period when he’s transporting the remains, a Russian soldier comes to his home and asserts that Ukrainians were responsible for the killings.

Irina Khadjava and Valeria Khadjava: Respective grandmother and seven-year-old granddaughter who survived the Donetsk Drama Theater bombing on March 16, 2022. Approximately 600 casualties were reported, including Irina’s son (Valeria’s dad) and Irina’s younger granddaughter (Valeria’s sister).

Andrey Serbin: Mariupol anesthesiologist who scrambles to treat and protect patients as his hospital becomes depleted of staff and supplies.

Ilia Novikov: Lawyer who defended political prisoners in his native Russia before relocating to Ukraine, and at the beginning of the invasion, joining Kyiv’s Territorial Defense. One of Novikov’s comrades films cell phone footage of corpses strewn along on a Bucha street. When the clip goes viral, members of Russia’s Putin-controlled media insist the video features actors playing dead.

Yevgeny Roizman: Former mayor of Yekaterinburg, Russia who supports Ukrainian independence. He explains how Russia’s anti-Ukrainian propaganda morphed from words to actions, such as when his home country armed separatist factions in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Additional Characters

Felix Repka: Comedian who hosts a stand-up showcase in a bunker on March 19, 2022.

Ilya Hlushenko: Comedian who performs at the aforementioned showcase, which takes place in Sumy, Ukraine.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy: Leader of Ukraine since he was democratically elected in April 2019.

Daria: Sergeant of the Armed Forces of Ukraine who was home on military leave when Russia attacked her country in February 2022. Unable to connect with her stationed colleagues, she utilizes her skillset as a volunteer for the local Territorial Defense Force.

Vlad Hlavachek: Volunteer in Kharkiv, Ukraine who gives a tour of an aid facility that includes a kitchen where meals are prepared for hospital workers, college students, and sequestered civilians.

Evgeniy Maloletka: Photojournalist who witnesses calamity when the Russian Air Force bombs a Mariupol, Ukraine maternity hospital on March 9, 2022.

Dmytro “Orest” Kozatskyi: Member of the Azov Battalion who filmed videos that revealed the true story of the civilians living under the bombings of the Azovstal plant, shocking the world.

Violetta Tarasenko: Video editor/blogger in the besieged city of Mariupol. She informs city’s dire conditions to the audience — she and her neighbors live without water, gas, light, heating, and cell phone service.

Makar: Seven-year-old boy who displays where a shell blasted through his stories-high apartment. With their home destroyed, Makar and his mother take refuge in a bunker with children eager to form friendships.

Kateryna Overchenko: Translator and volunteer who details how after the Maidan Uprising — which she participated in — Russia began attacking Eastern Ukraine, carrying out war crimes that much of the world’s press overlooked. Overchenko is the only interview subject included in both FREEDOM ON FIRE and *Winter on Fire*.

Stanislav Krasnov: Member of the Ukrainian military who posits why some citizens of Crimea championed Russia during its successful annexation of the Ukrainian city in 2014.

Valeriy Yembakov: Brigadier General of the Armed Forces of Ukraine who stresses how — in Syria and Ukraine — Russia recycles military tactics they used against their own people during the Chechen Wars. Yembakov assails the Russian Armed Forces as “monsters” for implementing the maternity hospital and Drama Theater airstrikes.

Boris Bondarev: Former Russian diplomat who resigned from his UN post in May 2022 to show solidarity with Ukraine. He harbors harsh opinions toward Russia’s Foreign Affairs Ministry and its leader, Sergey Lavrov.

Petro “Gnome”: Member of the Ukrainian military who has disowned his Russian relatives. The roar of approaching missiles interrupts Gnome’s interview, compelling him to take cover indoors.

Dasha Horiyenko: Eleven-year-old Kharkiv girl who finds brief distraction in a classical music concert at a metro station. When her house burned down amid the conflict, her family was unable to rescue their cat.

Olya Kapirulia: Ten-year-old girl who ventures outside every morning to feed cats that have been separated from their owners. A pacifist and an optimist, she decorates her room with drawings of butterflies and rainbows to stay cheery during wartime.

Andriy Nebytov: Kyiv’s Regional Chief of Police, who investigates crimes against civilians, and as an example, shows viewers a ruined car where five Ukrainian civilians – including a two-year-old – died at the hands of the Russian Armed Forces.

Iryna Venediktova: Former prosecutor general of Ukraine, who was present in Bucha when dozens of murdered civilians were exhumed from a mass grave in order to obtain DNA samples. On July 17, President Zelenskyy suspended Venediktova, alleging that numerous members of her staff colluded with Russia.

Andriy “Cloud” Bidyuk: Second-generation soldier who hails from Russia, values honor above all else, and serves in the Ukrainian Military Corps. A surprise benefit of his duties are warm, grateful receptions from the Ukrainian civilians he encounters.

Alexander Bragin and Nataliya Denisova: Respective architect and theater artist who belong to a multi-generational group sharing a bunker in Kharkiv. Bragin studied in St. Petersburg, Russia, and continues to revere Russia’s cultural pedigree in literature, music, and more. Although Denisova claims to be creatively blocked, she paints intricate Easter eggs by candlelight.

Arkady Ivanov: Volunteer who befriends many Ukrainian children and parents with his frequent food deliveries to their bunker.

“Knyaz”: Soldier in Donetsk, Ukraine who says the Russian Armed Forces’ battle style feels borrowed from “2,000 years ago, when people conquered and sacrificed each other for reasons they didn’t understand.”

Maria Knyzh: Ukrainian military medic who deems her comrades upbeat, affectionate, and entertaining, regardless of their robust enemy.

Kirill “Sailor”: Commander of a Ukrainian Special Forces Unit who observes that since February 2022, his countrymen’s determination to defend their sovereignty has only grown.

Filmmaker Bios

Director, Producer & Cinematographer Evgeny Afineevsky

Documentarian Evgeny Afineevsky was born in the Russian city of Kazan when it was part of the former U.S.S.R. Since childhood, he has dreamed of a world with less violence and more acceptance.

While making WINTER ON FIRE: UKRAINE’S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM (2015), he realized that he could imbue his art with activism. That film helped galvanize people in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Hong Kong and Lebanon to demonstrate against oppressive dictatorships. His next work, *Cries from Syria* (2017), opened hearts and minds — audience members in various countries inundated Afineevsky with questions about how they could aid innocents who have long been trapped in the Syrian Civil War. After earning Pope Francis’ trust for *Francesco* (2020), he joined the pontiff on a globe-trotting tour to alleviate division through love and kindness. A continuation of WINTER ON FIRE called FREEDOM ON FIRE: UKRAINE’S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM will premiere as an Official Selection at the 2022 Venice Film Festival. Tracing his four-title arc from WINTER ON FIRE to FREEDOM ON FIRE, shared themes emerge such as humanity’s capacity for good and evil, mortality and heroism.

Afineevsky has also debuted documentaries at the Venice Film Festival, Telluride Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, Rome International Film Festival, and the Sundance Film Festival. His oeuvre has received nominations for an Oscar, a PGA Award, a Primetime Emmy Award and four News & Documentary Emmy Awards. Additional accolades include a People’s Choice Award for Best Documentary from the Toronto International Film Festival, a Critics’ Choice Documentary Award for Best Director, an Overseas Press Club Award, a Television Academy Honors award, an IDA Documentary Award, two Kineo Awards, a Humanitas Prize, Catholics in Media Associates Social Justice Award, and a Cinema for Peace award.

Producer & Editor Will Znidaric

Will Znidaric is a 2-time ACE Eddie award winning editor, for the feature documentary, “Jane” for National Geographic, and the documentary series, “Five Came Back” for Netflix. He recently served as Supervising Editor on the 4 part documentary series for Apple TV on Magic Johnson titled, “They Call Me Magic”, which premiered on April 22, 2022

Znidaric first came to prominence in 2015 with “Winter On Fire; Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom”, directed by Evgeny Afineevsky, which went on to receive numerous accolades, including an Oscar nomination for Best Feature Documentary. In addition, Znidaric’s other acclaimed projects include “The Black Godfather”, “Biggie: I’ve Got A Story To Tell”, “Quincy”, “Strokes of Genius” and the recent global hit “Neymar: The Perfect Chaos”.

His films and series have been singled out for recognition from the Television Academy, The Grammys, The Critics Choice Awards, BAFTA, The National Board of Review, and The NAACP Image Awards, amongst others.

Producer Ted Hope

Over a 35-year career, Ted’s been a producer on over 70 films, studio executive on over 60, CEO of a start-up streamer, co-head of 3 production companies, executive director of a film society & festival, a Professor Of Practice at 2 universities, and founder of a post-production facility, 2 websites, 2 think tanks, & an app. His films have received 25 Oscar nominations, with 6 wins. He is one of two producers to have three of their films win the Sundance Grand Jury Award. Ted’s memoir *Hope For Film* has been published in two editions and is a must read for all filmmakers or those wanting to be. Hope’s career in the film business is defined by an innovative and inclusive approach, always operating from a deep love of cinema, its history, and recognition of its potential. He produced 5 features in 2021, including George Clooney’s *The Tender Bar*, starring Ben Affleck. Ted’s eye for directorial talent has helped launch the feature film careers of Ang Lee, Hal Hartley, Michel Gondry, Nicole Holofcener, and many others. Did we mention Ted launched Amazon’s foray into feature film production, co-running it for much of his tenure, leading them to 19 Oscar nominations and 5 wins? Yes, that’s Ted.

Executive Producer Mark Monroe

Mark Monroe is an award-winning documentary writer, director and producer, and co-founder of Diamond Docs. A two-time WGA award winner and BAFTA nominee, his film credits include writing the Academy Award winners, *THE COVE* and *ICARUS*, as well as the Grammy winning *THE BEATLES: EIGHT DAYS A WEEK*. Recent collaborations include *LUCY AND DESI* with Amy Poehler, *BECOMING COUSTEAU* with Liz Garbus, *THE BEE GEES: HOW CAN YOU MEND A BROKEN HEART* with Frank Marshall, *PAVAROTTI* with Ron Howard, *BEFORE THE FLOOD* with Leonardo DiCaprio, *THE DISSIDENT* with Bryan Fogel, *WATCH THE SOUND* with Mark Ronson & Morgan Neville, and *TALES FROM THE TOUR BUS*, an animated music series with Mike Judge. A journalism graduate from the University of Oklahoma, Mark began his career as a news writer for CNN. He had at least one film premiere at the Sundance Film Festival for 12 years straight. Other theatrical credits include: *Hell On Earth: The fall of Syria and the rise of ISIS* (Tribeca 2017, National Geographic); *Under the Gun* (Sundance 2016, Epix); *Hooligan Sparrow* (Sundance 2016); *Racing Extinction* (Sundance 2015, Discovery); *Fed Up* (Sundance 2014); *Sonic Highways* (HBO 2014); *Drunk, Stoned, Brilliant, Dead: The Story of the National Lampoon* (Sundance 2014, Showtime); *Mission Blue* (Berlin 2014, Netflix); *The Summit* (Winner, Best Editing Sundance 2013); *Who is Dayani Cristal?* (Winner, Best Cinematography, Sundance 2013); *Sound City* (Sundance 2013);

The Tillman Story; *Chasing Ice* (Winner, Best Cinematography Sundance 2012); *Stolen Seas*; *Last Play at Shea*; *Once in a Lifetime: The Extraordinary Story of the New York Cosmos* (W.G.A. nomination "Best Documentary Script", 2007); *Amazing Journey: The Story of The Who*; and *Morning Light* (Disney Pictures).

Executive Producer Angus Wall

Angus Wall is a creative director, filmmaker and founder of MakeMake, a studio which consists of MakeMake Entertainment, a52, Elastic, Indestructible, Jax, Primary, and Rock Paper Scissors. Wall has won two Academy Awards, a BAFTA, Five Emmys and several Clios for his work, which includes editing *The Social Network* and *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*, executive producing the documentaries *13th*, *Icarus*, *Winter on Fire*, *Neymar: The Perfect Chaos*, and *Jeen-yuhs*, and for directing the title sequences for *Game of Thrones*, *Carnivàle*, and *The Morning Show*. He also holds the patent on digital film workflows based on his pioneering technical work done for the film *Zodiac*. Angus has collaborated with just about every major brand, studio, and top filmmaker working today.

Composer Jasha Klebe

Jasha Klebe is a composer known for emotive melodies and impactful scores. Most notably, Jasha composed the score to Netflix's Oscar nominated documentary, *Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight For Freedom* as well as co-scored the BAFTA and Emmy nominated music of BBC's *Planet Earth II*, alongside Hans Zimmer and Jacob Shea. He additionally provided music to the follow up series, *Blue Planet II*, as well as wrote the Emmy nominated music of National Geographic's *Challenger Disaster: Lost Tapes* and *Diana: In Her Own Words*. In 2019, Jasha composed the score to the Emmy-nominated Netflix documentary, *The Black Godfather*, directed by Reginald Hudlin and produced by Nicole Avant. In 2021 he scored FOX's *Malika the Lion Queen* narrated by Angela Bassett as well as music for Garrett Bradley's poignant series, *Naomi Osaka*. He also wrote the music for Netflix/Plimsoll's nature documentary series, *Animal*. His music can be most recently heard on the true-crime documentary series, *I Just Killed my Dad*, directed by Skye Borgman, as well as Peacock's reimagining of *Queer As Folk*, created by Stephen Dunn and exec produced by Russell T Davies.

Jasha began his musical career at the age of 5, singing at his Grandparents' opera house, Cinnabar Theater, in Petaluma, CA. He studied classical piano and trombone for over 15 years before he moved to Los Angeles and started working at Remote Control Productions under Hans Zimmer. Over the 4 years with Hans, Jasha wrote on such films as *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Rush*, *Man of Steel*, and several other notable projects. Jasha was also the music arranger for the 84th Academy Awards, as well as keyboard/synthesizer player within the event's orchestra. In 2013, Jasha began to serve as one of the headlining composers at Bleeding Fingers Music. Within this role, Jasha contributed countless hours of music to some of the most acclaimed series on television, including shows on ABC, CBS, MTV, Netflix, Lifetime, A&E, The Discovery Channel, The History Channel, National Geographic, BBC, and he performed live on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* alongside Shea and Zimmer. Jasha currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

Dedication

Dedicated to all journalists, filmmakers, and members of the press who have been killed and who are risking their lives today to shine a light on the stories and images of different conflicts for the world to see.

End Credits

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Evgeny Afineevsky

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Evgeny Afineevsky

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Ted Hope

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Kirill “Sailor”
and many others

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"Orchestral Suite No 3"
by Bach

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