PARADJANOV, SERGEI IOSIFOVICH (b. 9 January, 1924, Tbilisi, Georgia; d. 20 July, 1990, Yerevan, Armenia)

Born Sarkis Paradzhanian to Armenian parents in Tbilisi, Georgia, Sergei Paradjanov (also spelled ‘Parajanov’ or ‘Paradzhanov’) was a Soviet filmmaker known for his complex imagery, stylistic innovations and ethnographic themes. He achieved international fame with *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (1964), which defied Socialist Realism and sparked protests in Kiev. He refused to acquiesce to pressure to dub his film *Shadows* into Russian and instead stuck to the dialect of Ukrainian that his characters would have spoken. With scant resources he shot *Sayat Nova* (1969), a hagiographic celebration of the eponymous Armenian poet through a cinematic exploration of symbols reflecting the inner spiritual world expressed in his verses. *Sayat Nova* was censored and retitled *Color of Pomegranates* before its release. Paradjanov was blacklisted for the next fifteen years, ostensibly for his political views and controversial speeches. He was imprisoned from 1973-77. In 1984 he was finally permitted to release another film, *Legend of the Suram Fortress*, adapted from a Georgian story about a young man who is interred alive in the walls of a fortress in order to fulfill a prophecy. Paradjanov’s last complete film, *Ashik Kerib* (1989), depicts an Aizerbaijani bard on a quest to win the hand of his beloved. Paradjanov died of lung cancer while working on the film *Confession*, which he intended to dedicate to Armenia.

**References and Further Reading**

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**Selected Filmography**

*Ashik Kerib* (Gruziia-film, 1988).

*Legend of the Suram Fortress* (Gruziia-film, 1984).

*Sayat Nova* (*The Color of Pomegranates)* (Armenfilm, 1968).

*Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (Dovzhenko Film Studios, 1964).

**Paratextual Links**

*Parajanov-Vartov Institute*. Web. Accessed 28 April 2014. <http://parajanov.com>. Features a rich variety of photographs of Parajanov, his collages, and his other artwork, much of which appears in a [slideshow](http://www.parajanov.com/photo.html).

*Sergei Paradjanov: Official Website of the Yerevanian House-Museum*. Web. Accessed 13 July 2013. <http://parajanovmuseum.am/>.

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