

= Solaris (1972 film) =

Solaris (Russian : ??????? , tr . Solyaris) is a 1972 Soviet science fiction art film adaptation of Polish author Stanisław Lem 's novel Solaris (1961) . The film was co - @ - @ written and directed by Andrei Tarkovsky . The film is a meditative psychological drama occurring mostly aboard a space station orbiting the fictional planet Solaris . The scientific mission has stalled because the skeleton crew of three scientists have fallen into separate emotional crises . Psychologist Kris Kelvin travels to the Solaris space station to evaluate the situation only to encounter the same mysterious phenomena as the others .

The original science fiction novel is about the ultimate inadequacy of communication between humans and other species . Tarkovsky 's adaptation is a " drama of grief and partial recovery " concentrated upon the thoughts and the consciences of the cosmonaut scientists studying Solaris ' mysterious ocean . In loyalty to the novel 's complex and slow @ - @ paced narrative , Tarkovsky wanted to bring a new emotional and intellectual depth to the genre , viewing most of western science fiction as shallow . The ideas which Tarkovsky tried to express in this film are further developed in Stalker (1979) .

The critically successful Solaris features Natalya Bondarchuk (Hari) , Donatas Banionis (Kris Kelvin) , Jüri Järvet (Dr Snaut) , Vladislav Dvorzhetsky (Henri Berton) , Nikolai Grinko (Kris Kelvin 's Father) , Olga Barnet (Kris Kelvin 's Mother) , Anatoli Solonitsyn (Dr Sartorius) , and Sos Sargsyan (Dr Gibarian) ; the music is by Johann Sebastian Bach and Eduard Artemyev . At the 1972 Cannes Film Festival , it won the Grand Prix Spécial du Jury , the FIPRESCI prize and was nominated for the Palme d 'Or . The film is often cited as one of the greatest science fiction films in the history of cinema .

= = Plot = =

Psychologist Kris Kelvin (Donatas Banionis) spends his last day on Earth reflecting on his life while walking by a lake near his childhood home where his elderly father still resides . Kelvin is about to embark on an interstellar journey to a space station orbiting the remote oceanic planet Solaris . After decades of study , the scientific mission at the space station has barely progressed . The crew is sending confusing messages . Kelvin is dispatched to evaluate the situation aboard the ship and determine whether the venture should continue .

Henri Berton (Vladislav Dvorzhetsky) , a former space pilot , visits Kelvin . They watch film footage of Berton 's own testimony years before of seeing a four @ - @ meter @ - @ tall child on the ocean surface of Solaris while searching for two lost scientists . However , the cameras of his craft recorded only clouds and the flat ocean surface ; Berton 's report was dismissed as hallucinations . After failing to convince Kelvin of the reality of his experience , Berton angrily departs , only to contact Kelvin later via videophone from his private car . He explains that he met the child of a scientist lost on that mission , and the child was like a much smaller version of the one he had seen on Solaris .

Before departing Earth for Solaris , Kelvin destroys most of his personal mementos in a bonfire , noting the volume of keepsakes he has accumulated . In Kelvin 's last conversation with his father (Nikolai Grinko) , they realize that the father will probably not live to see Kelvin return . Although he readily accepted the mission , it is a choice that weighs heavily upon Kelvin 's conscience .

Upon his arrival at Solaris Station , a scientific research station hovering above the oceanic surface of the planet Solaris , none of the three remaining scientists bother to greet Kelvin , who finds the disarrayed space station dangerously neglected . He soon learns that his friend among the scientists , Dr. Gibarian (Sos Sargsyan) , had killed himself . The two surviving crewmen are uncooperative and evasive . Kelvin soon glimpses other people aboard the station , not supposed to be there . Upon entering the late Gibarian 's room , Kelvin finds a rambling cryptic farewell video message from Gibarian addressed to him .

Waking exhausted from a restless sleep , Kelvin finds a woman with him in his quarters despite the barricaded door . To his surprise , it is Hari (Natalya Bondarchuk) , his late wife who committed

suicide some years before . She is unaware of what has happened or how she got there . Terrified by her presence , he lures her into a space capsule and launches the replica of his wife into outer space . In his haste to be rid of her he is scorched by the rocket 's blast . Dr. Snaut tends to his burns and explains that the " visitors " began appearing after the scientists attracted the attention of Solaris , seemingly a sentient entity .

That evening , Hari reappears in his quarters . This time Kelvin calmly accepts her presence and embraces Hari throughout the night . Kelvin later causes her to panic by suddenly leaving the room and shutting the door behind him . She hysterically tears her way through the room 's metal door , severely cutting herself . Before he can give first aid , her injuries heal before his eyes . Dr. Sartorius (Anatoli Solonitsyn) calls for a meeting , and Kelvin introduces Hari as his wife . In their symposium , the scientists begin to understand that Solaris created Hari from Kelvin 's memories of his dead wife . The Hari present among them , though not human , thinks and feels as though she were . Sartorius theorizes that the visitors are composed of " neutrino systems " but that it might still be possible to destroy them through use of an offscreen device known as " the annihilator " .

Kelvin shows Hari films of himself and his parents when he was a boy and , later , of his wife . While she is asleep , Snaut proposes beaming Kelvin 's brainwave patterns at Solaris in hopes that it will understand them and stop the disturbing apparitions as communication . However , Sartorius suggests a radical attack of heavy radiation bombardment . In time , Hari becomes independent and is able to exist away from Kelvin 's presence . She learns from Sartorius that the original Hari had committed suicide ten years earlier , and Kelvin is forced to tell her the entire story . Sartorius , Snaut , Kelvin and Hari gather together for a birthday party which turns into a philosophical argument during which Sartorius tells Hari that she is not human , but a mere copy . Distressed , Hari kills herself again by drinking liquid oxygen , only to painfully , spasmodically resurrect a few minutes later . On the surface of Solaris , the ocean is moving even faster .

Kelvin goes to sleep only to wake up agitated and running a fever and gives a monologue to Snaut on the subject of suffering and universal love , then falls asleep again . He dreams of his mother as a young woman , caring for him and expressing her worry concerning Kelvin 's emotional state . When he awakens , Hari is gone , and Snaut reads him the farewell note she left behind . The note indicates that Hari petitioned the two scientists to destroy her . Snaut tells Kelvin that since they broadcast Kelvin 's brainwaves at Solaris , the visitors stopped appearing and islands began forming on the planet 's surface . Kelvin debates whether or not to return to Earth or to descend to Solaris in hopes of reconnecting with everything he has loved and lost .

Again at the shore of the frozen lake , Kelvin finds himself at his father 's house . His dog runs to him , and he happily walks towards it . He realizes something is peculiar , however , when he sees that his father seems oblivious to the fact that it 's raining inside the house . Father and son embrace on the front step of the lakeside house which the camera zooms out to reveal is located on an island in the middle of an ocean on the planet Solaris .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

In 1968 , the director Andrei Tarkovsky had two motives for cinematically adapting the Polish science fiction novel , Solaris (1961) , by Stanisław Lem : firstly , he admired Lem 's work . Secondly , he needed work and money , because his previous film , Andrei Rublev (1966) had gone unreleased , and his screenplay , A White , White Day , had been rejected (even though in 1975 it would be realised as The Mirror) . A film of a novel by Stanisław Lem , a popular and critically respected writer in the USSR , was a logical commercial and artistic choice . Tarkovsky and Lem collaborated and remained in communication about the cinematic adaptation of the novel Solaris . With Fridrikh Gorenshtein , Tarkovsky co @-@ wrote the first screenplay in the Summer of 1969 ; two @-@ thirds of it occurred on Earth . The Mosfilm committee disliked it and Lem got furious over this unacceptably drastic alteration of his novel . The final screenplay yielded the

shooting script which has less action on Earth , and Kelvin 's marriage to his second wife , Maria , was deleted from the story .

In the literary Solaris , Lem describes science 's inadequacy in allowing humans to communicate with an alien life form , because certain forms , at least , of sentient extra @-@ terrestrial life may operate well outside of human experience and understanding . In the cinematic Solaris , Tarkovsky concentrates upon Kelvin 's feelings for his wife , Hari , and the impact of outer space exploration upon the human condition . Dr. Gibarian 's monologue [from the novel 's sixth chapter] is the highlight of the final library scene , wherein Snaut says , " We don 't need other worlds . We need mirrors " . Unlike the novel , which begins with psychologist Kris Kelvin 's spaceflight , and occurs entirely on Solaris , the film shows Kelvin 's visit to his parents ' house in the country before leaving Earth for Solaris . The contrast establishes the worlds in which he lives ? a vibrantly living Earth versus an austere , closed @-@ in space station orbiting the planet Solaris ? demonstrating and questioning space exploration 's impact upon the human psyche .

The set design of Solaris features paintings by the Old Masters . The interior of the space station is decorated with full reproductions of the 1565 painting cycle of The Months (The Hunters in the Snow , The Gloomy Day , The Hay Harvest , The Harvesters , and The Return of the Herd) , by Pieter Brueghel the Elder , and details of Landscape with the Fall of Icarus and The Hunters in the Snow (1565) . The scene of Kelvin kneeling before his father and the father embracing him alludes to The Return of the Prodigal Son (1669) , by Rembrandt . The references and allusions are Tarkovsky 's efforts to give the young art of cinema a historic perspective of centuries , to evoke the viewer 's feeling that cinema is a mature art .

The film references Tarkovsky 's earlier 1966 film Andrei Rublev by having an icon by Andrei Rublev being placed in Kelvin 's room . It thus forms the second part , together with Tarkovsky 's next film The Mirror which was made in 1975 and which references Andrei Rublev by having a poster of the film being hanged on a wall , in a series of three films by Tarkovsky referencing Andrei Rublev .

= = = The cast = = =

Initially , Tarkovsky wanted his ex @-@ wife , Irma Raush , as Hari . After meeting Swedish actress Bibi Andersson in June 1970 , however , he decided that she was a better actress for the role . Wishing to work with Tarkovsky , Andersson accepted her salary in rubles . Nevertheless , Natalya Bondarchuk was ultimately cast as Hari . Tarkovsky had met her when they were students at the State Institute of Cinematography . It was she who had introduced the novel , Solaris to him . Tarkovsky auditioned her in 1970 but decided she was too young for the part . He instead recommended her to director Larisa Shepitko who cast her in You and I. Half @-@ a @-@ year later , Tarkovsky screened that film and was so pleasantly surprised by her performance that he decided to cast Natalya Bondarchuk as Hari after all .

Tarkovsky cast Lithuanian actor Donatas Banionis as Kris Kelvin , the Estonian actor Jüri Järvet as Dr. Snaut , the Russian actor Anatoly Solonitsyn as Dr. Sartorius , the Ukrainian actor Nikolai Grinko as Kelvin 's father , and Olga Barnet as Kelvin 's mother . Earlier , the director had worked with Solonitsyn , who had played Andrei Rublev (1966) , and with Nikolai Grinko , who appeared in Andrei Rublev and Ivan 's Childhood (1962) . Tarkovsky thought Solonitsyn and Grinko would need extra directorial assistance . After filming was almost completed , Tarkovsky rated actors and performances thus : Bondarchuk , Järvet , Solonitsyn , Banionis , Dvorzhetsky , and Grinko ; yet wrote in his diary that ? Natalya B. has outshone everybody ? .

= = = Filming = = =

In the summer of 1970 , the USSR State Committee for Cinematography (Goskino SSSR) authorized the production of Solaris , with a length of 4 @,@ 000 metres (13 @,@ 123 ft) , equivalent to a two @-@ hour @-@ twenty @-@ minute running time . The exteriors were photographed at Zvenigorod , near Moscow ; the interiors were photographed at the Mosfilm studios

. The scenes of space pilot Berton driving through a city were photographed in Japan , in September and October 1971 , at Akasaka and Iikura in Tokyo . The original plan was to film futuristic structures at the World Expo ' 70 but the trip was delayed . The shooting began in March 1971 with cinematographer Vadim Yusov who also photographed Tarkovsky 's previous films . They quarreled so much on this film that they ended up never working together again . The first version of Solaris was completed in December 1971 .

The Earth , the sensual source of life , and the sterile space station orbiting the planet Solaris , are contrasted with lively images of underwater plants , fire , snow , rain and other natural phenomena . A similar contrast appears at story 's end on Solaris with Kelvin 's " Winter " visit to his father 's house , featuring a frozen pond surrounded by bare trees . The dead scenery of this island on Solaris contrasts with the earlier , Summer pond scenes of long @-@ bladed green grasses or ferns gently floating in the water current underneath blooming trees . The Solaris ocean was created with acetone , aluminium powder , and dyes . Mikhail Romadin designed the space station as lived @-@ in , beat @-@ up and decrepit rather than shiny , neat and futuristic . The designer and director consulted with scientist and aerospace engineer Lupichev , who lent them a 1960s @-@ era mainframe computer for set decoration . For some of the sequences , Romadin designed a mirror room which enabled the cameraman , Yusov , to hide within a mirrored sphere so as to be invisible in the finished film . Akira Kurosawa , who was visiting the Mosfilm studios just then , expressed admiration for the space station design .

In January 1972 , the State Committee for Cinematography requested editorial changes before releasing Solaris . These included a more realistic film with a clearer image of the future and deletion of allusions to God and Christianity . Tarkovsky successfully resisted such major changes , and after a few minor edits Solaris was approved for release in March 1972 .

= = = Music = = =

The soundtrack of Solaris features the chorale prelude for organ , Ich ruf ' zu dir , Herr Jesu Christ (BWV 639) , by Johann Sebastian Bach , and an electronic score by Eduard Artemyev . The prelude is the central musical theme of Solaris . Tarkovsky initially wanted the film to be devoid of music and asked composer Artemyev to orchestrate ambient sounds as a musical score . The latter proposed subtly introducing orchestral music . In counterpoint to classical music as Earth 's theme is fluid electronic music as the theme for the planet Solaris . The character of Hari has her own subtheme , a cantus firmus based upon J. S. Bach 's music featuring Artemyev 's composition atop it ; it is heard at Hari 's death and at story 's end .

= = Reception and legacy = =

Solaris premiered at the 1972 Cannes Film Festival and won the Grand Prix Spécial du Jury and was nominated for the Palme d 'Or . In the USSR , the film premiered in the Mir film theater in Moscow on February 5 , 1973 . Tarkovsky did not consider the Mir cinema the best projection venue . Despite the film 's narrow release in only five film theaters in the USSR , the film nevertheless sold 10 @.@ 5 million tickets . Unlike the vast majority of commercial and ideological films in the 1970s , Solaris was screened in the USSR in limited runs for 15 years without any breaks , giving it cult status . In the Eastern Bloc and in the West , Solaris premiered later . In the United States , a version of Solaris that was truncated by 30 minutes premiered at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York City on October 6 , 1976 .

Although Stanisław Lem worked with Tarkovsky and Friedrich Gorenstein in developing the screenplay , Lem maintained that he " never really liked Tarkovsky 's version " of his novel . Tarkovsky wanted a film story based on the novel but artistically independent of its origin . However , Lem opposed any divergence of the screenplay from the novel . Lem went as far as to say that Tarkovsky made Crime and Punishment rather than Solaris , omitting epistemological and cognitive aspects of his book . Tarkovsky claimed that Lem did not fully appreciate cinema and that he expected the film to merely illustrate the novel without creating an original cinematic piece .

Tarkovsky 's film is about the inner lives of its scientists as human beings . Lem 's novel is about the conflicts of man 's condition in nature and the nature of man in the universe . For Tarkovsky , Lem 's exposition of that existential conflict was the starting point for describing the inner lives of the characters .

In the autobiographical documentary *Voyage in Time* (1983) , Tarkovsky says he viewed *Solaris* as an artistic failure because his film did not transcend genre as he believed his film *Stalker* (1979) did due to the required technological dialogue and special effects . M. Galina in the 1997 article *Identifying Fears* called this film " one of the biggest events in the Soviet science fiction cinema " and one of the few works that does not seem anachronistic nowadays .

A list of " The 100 Best Films of World Cinema " compiled by *Empire* magazine in 2010 ranked Tarkovsky 's *Solaris* at No. 68 . In 2002 , Steven Soderbergh wrote and directed an American adaptation of *Solaris* , which starred George Clooney .

Salman Rushdie calls *Solaris* " a sci @-@ fi masterpiece " , and has urged that : " This exploration of the unreliability of reality and the power of the human unconscious , this great examination of the limits of rationalism and the perverse power of even the most ill @-@ fated love , needs to be seen as widely as possible before it 's transformed by Steven Soderbergh and James Cameron into what they ludicrously threaten will be 2001 meets *Last Tango in Paris* . ' What , sex in space with floating butter ? Tarkovsky must be turning over in his grave . "

Film critic Roger Ebert compared the 2011 film *Another Earth* with *Solaris* by noting that *Another Earth* " is as thought @-@ provoking , in a less profound way , than Tarkovsky 's *Solaris* , another film about a sort of parallel Earth . "

In an example of life imitating art , Natalya Bondarchuk (Hari) revealed in a 2010 interview that she fell in love with Tarkovsky during the filming of *Solaris* and , after their relationship ended , became suicidal . She claims her decision was partly influenced by her role as such a woman in the film " *Solaris* " .

The film was selected for screening as part of the Cannes Classics section at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival .

= = Home media = =

Solaris was released on LaserDisc in Japan 1986 , in the U.S in 1998 , and again in Japan in 1999 . All three editions were in widescreen .

On May 24 , 2011 , The Criterion Collection released *Solaris* on Blu @-@ ray Disc . The most noticeable difference from the previous 2002 Criterion DVD release was that the blue and white tinted monochrome scenes from the film were restored .