

Title: The Peculiar Persistence of Socialist Realism — The Case of one Dissident Ex-Pat Filmmaker

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This talk aims to unpack the visual means of expression in the post-emigration/immigration work of the filmmaker Mikhail Kalik. Known in the USSR as one of the forerunners of the “poetic” cinema of the Khrushchevian Thaw and author of art house hits like *Do svidaniia, mal’chiki* (Goodbye Boys, 1964), Kalik produced only two films after his immigration to Israel: *Shlosa ve-ahat* (The Three and The One; Israel, 1974), and *I vozvrashaetsia veter* (And The Wind Returneth; USSR-Russia, 1991).

Immigration, then, rather than offering a new beginning, effectively ended Kalik’s career. My inquiry stems from the director’s abrupt cessation of artistic output. Looking to the films themselves for reasons responsible for Kalik’s failed professional immigration, I closely read their formal means against the ideological messages that shaped them, arguing for a paradoxical and retrograde recourse to socialist-realism. Reframing the historical moment of Kalik’s repatriation I suggest that the motivation for his formal solution lay in a uniquely 1970s Soviet Jewish identity construct that hinged upon discursive belatedness.

Venturing into a little-studied liminal area of immigrant cinematography, I argue that Kalik’s was a story of misdirected migratory expectations. Ultimately, surveying Kalik’s Israeli oeuvre, its reception, and the personal trajectory of the director, I intend to comment on immigration, on art produced under the pressing imperative of cultural translation and the possibilities of artistic absorption in an essentially foreign society. This proposed talk is part of the author's on-going research into Russian Jewish expatriate cinema