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Kirill L. Goryachok

Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation

Creative Legacy of the Film Director Dziga Vertov in the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art

Abstract

The article analyzes archival documents of the Soviet film director Dziga Vertov stored in the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art. After the death of the filmmaker his wife Elizaveta Svilova preserved his entire personal archive. Vertov's name was forgotten in the aftermath of his persecution; for years he had no opportunity to publish articles or make new films. His earlier works were no longer shown on screen. The first posthumous publications of his documents date back to late 1950s, assisted by his wife and colleagues. In 1958, Svilova handed over the first collection of documents to the Central State Archive of Literature and Art

(TsGALI; RGALI since 1992), which constituted series 1 of his personal provenance fond no. 2091. It contains the filmmaker’s creative material: shot lists, scripts, shooting plans, shots from movies, and his articles and manifestos, which are regarded as key texts on the history and theory of world documentary films. The largest collection of the director's materials, including his diaries, notebooks, drafts, correspondence, and poems was transferred to the archive after the death of Elizaveta Svilova in 1975. Many of the Vertov`s documents, including some autographs, were deposited in fringe collections at the RGALI: personal provenance fonds of his colleagues and opponents, as well as fonds of institutions with which he was connected. Nearly all Vertov's creative materials, in particular, his scripts and editing plans, were published in the first volume of the collection “Dziga Vertov: His Legacy” (2004). The second volume (2008) collected most of his articles and speeches transcripts with detailed comments. His diaries haven’t been introduced into scientific use (excerpts published in the 1967 book “Dziga Vertov. Articles. Diaries. Concepts” require a careful textual verification). As for the letters and poems written by Dziga Vertov in various periods his life, they have never been published.

Keywords

Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), Dziga Vertov, archives, historical sources, history of Soviet cinema.

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About author

Goryachok Kirill Leonidovich, State Institute of Art Studies, postgraduate, Moscow, Russian Federation, +7-916-728-36-38, Goryachokk@mail.ru

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