

Sarah K. Jorgensen
For Prof. Ana Indych



Eisenstein's Theories in Mexico

Eisenstein's film Que Viva Mexico! should be understood as an extension of Eisenstein's concepts that was applied to the Mexican context, and not just a reproduction of murals from the Mexican Renaissance. To look at Que Viva Mexico! as an amalgamation of murals denies its theoretical grounding and rich sources.

Using the development of his theories as a basis, this paper will focus on how Sergei Eisenstein's (1898-1948) ideas were received in Mexico and functioned in Que Viva Mexico!. A consideration of Eisenstein's background in the Russian constructivist movement and his philosophy of perception and its relationship to the function of art allow a greater understanding of how to look at his films. Ultimately, I will show touch on how, in the wake of comparisons to imagery of Mexican Muralists Que Viva Mexico! has been overlooked for its part in Eisenstein's theoretical oeuvre .

I am now going to pause to briefly review the literature. Much has been written about the Mexican Renaissance and about the Russian Constructivists. However, only a spattering of literature exists comparing the two. This essay was inspired by a reading of an article on David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974)¹. The article, "The Masses are the Matrix: Theory and Practice of the Cinematographic Mural in Siqueiros." by Marie Carmen Ramirez, focused on how Siqueiros applied Eisenstein's theory of montage and the seizing of the spectator to the plastic arts. I was then inspired to unpack Eisenstein's own theories and influences. I had a desire to find out, not about the friendships Eisenstein had with the members of the Mexican Renaissance, but the relationship of Eisenstein's ideas of cognition and perception to that of his work in Mexico. How was it that he was so well received when, of all the artists who worked in Mexico, only a few seemed to synthesize his ideas? Through out this, I asked the question of how can an abstract art be considered political, what is the basis? How does this fit in with the artists of the Mexican Renaissance, where art was often out rightly political, but rarely purely abstract. Writers concerned with his theories generally tend to overlook this. Eisenstein's sources were many. In looking at Que Viva Mexico!, writers have often emphasized its relationship to Mexican paintings, as opposed to Russian constructivism and montage. Although there were visual connections with some Mexican Paintings, often authors overlook other sources of Eisenstein's work. I wonder whether authors like Inga Karetnikova, in, Mexico according to Eisenstein , are confusing Eisenstein's dedications with inspirations. I found Eisenstein's own writings Film Form and Film Sense most useful in approaching his thought and filmic processes. Stephan Bordwell's book gave me a basis and a bibliography, which I used to pursue further. An article in the MoMa's artist file on Eisenstein, William Richardson "Eisenstein and California". gave me significant information on his time in California. Dana B. Polan's The Political Language of Film and the Avante-Garde helped me to ask broader questions about Eisenstein.

Constructivism began around the Revolution of 1917. Like montage, it was an art movement focused on constructing sculpture out of separate elements. This idea came from came from Picasso and cubism (1912-) extending planar language in two dimensions. Vladimir Tatlin (1885-1953) elaborated this method from 1914 onward. This experimentation was a part of a desire to create new art forms in contradistinction to classical representative paintings, which he perceived to be the domain of the bourgeoisie. Early on, Tatlin and his many followers made abstract sculptures that explored textural and special qualities of combinations of contemporary materials such as glass, metal, and cardboard. **FIG 1.**²

After the October Revolution of 1917 Constructivists were inspired to achieve in art a new visual environment that would answer to the needs and values of the new Communist society and order. Therefore, they sought to extend the formal language of abstract art into practical design. Eventually

¹ Mari Carmen Ramirez. "The Masses are the Matrix: Theory and Practice of the Cinematographic Mural in Siqueiros." In David Alfaro Siqueiros: Portrait of a Decade (1930-1940). Exh. Cat. Mexico City: INBA, 1997, pp.68-95.

² Milner, J.: Vladimir Tatlin and the Russian Avant-garde London and New Haven: Yale, 1983 p.21-40.

constructivists would begin to experiment with film and photography, recognizing the potential of new formal languages for utilitarian designs. Aside from Tatlin, key artists and theorists in constructivism include Aleksey Gan (1893–1942), Aleksandr Rodchenko (1881-1956), Varvara Stepanova (1894-1958), theatrical directors and poets such as Boris Arvatov and philosopher Alexander Bogdanov (1873-1928). **FIG. 5-7** They discussed the distinction between composition and construction as principles of artistic organization. Gathering around literary journals such as *Lef* (*the Left Front of the Arts*) the artists worked out principles of constructivism: 1) Tektonika, the politically and socially appropriate use of industrial materials in regard to a given purpose 2) Konstruktsiya, the process of organizing material and 3) Faktura—the choice of material and its appropriate treatment.³ **FIG.2** In a series of manifestos, the editors eschewed classical easel painting (accoutrements of the bourgeoisie) demanded that art should agitate the masses and organize social life.⁴ Through multidisciplinary writings *Lef* expanded the psychological and intellectual underpinnings of constructivism. The Constructivist's vision was to fuse ideology with formal experiments in design, architecture, sculpture, and photomontage and eventually film. **FIG.3**

The Constructivist attitude and utopian atmosphere generated by the revolution was fostered by the government. On practical terms, constructivist artists' designs for industrial development were regarded by the state as the key to social progress. Under the Constructivists, design of the most mundane objects of daily use represented the partial but substantial realization of the new society. The government fostered debates over the artists' role in industry, while the avant-garde ran art schools and produced imagery on behalf of the government.⁵ They formed the Proletarian Culture movement (Proletkult) and the Central Workers Theater. Artists such as Stepanova, Rodchenko, Tatlin and Lissitzky were employed as teachers and directors in governmental posts administering arts and design such as the Section of Visual Arts (Izo) of the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) and Artistic and Technical Workshops.

The utilitarian ethos of constructivism was a logical extension of the identification of the avant-garde with the art of social and political process; however the experimental nature of constructivist art was driven by artistic impulse. Where as constructivist art focused the ideological and expressive organization of elements, official requirements for potent propaganda imagery began to take priority over compositional invention. Josef Stalin (1879-1953) loathed independence in his public. By the late 1920's, under the conservatism of the Stalinist state, the government renounced the Avant-Garde as degenerate in favor of soviet realism. **FIG. 8-9** Thus the avant-garde, which had once been of the establishment, found themselves without backing in an oppressive, if not dangerous, situation artistically.⁶ During the

³ In the same way-- artists throughout the world at the time were writing manifestos based on politically minded rethinking their art: *Appendix in Ades. Dawn. Art In Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820-1980.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989.

⁴ Dabrowski, Magdalena, Leah Dickerman, Peter Galassi. *Alexander Redshank* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998.

⁵ J. Bowlt: *Russian Art of the Avant-garde: Theory and Criticism, 1920-1934.* London and New York: Rutledge, 1976 p. 6-10

⁶ Lodder, C. *Russian Constructivism,* London and New Haven: Yale, 1983. p.190.

Soviet purges, many Constructivists fled to Western Europe, some changed their styles and some even committed suicide. Constructivism may have been inspired by the early idealism of the Revolution but it subsequently fell victim to the reality of the political system that emerged.

This constructivist background gave way to Sergei Eisenstein's political, scientific and formal investigations into art. Born to an upper class family in Latvia in 1898, Eisenstein had a cosmopolitan childhood, studying French, German and English, practicing art, reading avidly and traveling to Paris. Eisenstein studied to be an engineer until 1918 when he joined the Red Army, while his father joined the White Army.⁷ In working as an engineer for the Red Army, he came in contact with most of the major thinkers and artists of the Constructivist movement: Gan, Rodchenko, Stepanova, Arvatov, Bogdanov. From 1919 onwards he designed stage sets and directed a number of experimental plays including Jack London's the Mexican, in 1921.⁸

Throughout the twenties, Eisenstein developed a pedagogy of constructivist sources and practices, while incorporating his varied influences which included William James (1842-1910), kabuki theater, Charles-Pierre Baudelaire (1821 - 1867), James Joyce (1882- 1941), Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977), D.W. Griffith (b. c 1870 d. 1948) and, in some ways Renaissance painting.⁹ In 1921 Eisenstein joined the Director's Workshop under the tutelage of Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874–1940), a main opponent of naturalism in the Russian theater. Working with the Moscow Art Theatre, Meyerhold's avante garde productions employed constructivist settings, formalized scenery and eliminating the curtain.¹⁰

Constructivists embraced film as the evolution of theater: theater for the people, employing modern materials. Film appealed to all aspects of Eisenstein's interests: engineering, psychological, theatrical, anthropological, political. In 1922 Eisenstein shot his first short film, *Glumov's Diary*, and published his theoretical text 'The Montage of Attractions' in the magazine LEF.

Through his association with Lef and the Proletkult, Eisenstein became connected with Sergei Tretyakov. While Eisenstein's writings include references to literature, poetry, and music, his political-scientific approach to editing and directing extend from constructivist interest in seizing of the spectator through abrupt contrasts. Tretyakov's ideas are instrumental in understanding the psychological and scientific investigations of Eisenstein's work. Tretyakov Lef manifestos demanded that the artist be a scientist, and work as a "psycho engineer" calculating and organizing the viewer's responses.¹¹ He claimed that art required that the perceiver be emotionally engaged, even if the artists worked in a rational mode. This conception of art and artist was "reiterated by Eisenstein through out the 1920's."¹²

⁷ Goodwin, James. Eisenstein, Cinema and History. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993. p.8-45.

⁸ Karetnikova, Inga. Mexico according to Eisenstein Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. p 4-8.

⁹ *Some of his writings appear to be conversations and critiques with his influences.* Eisenstein, S Film Form. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949. and Eisenstein, S Film Sense. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942.

¹⁰ The anti-heroization of Meyerholds Theater became apparent in Eisenstein, as Eisenstein was the first to establish a divergence from narrative cinema.

¹¹ David Bordwell quoting Sergei Tretyakov, October minus Battleship Potemkin, 1928 in Bordwell, David The Cinema of Eisenstein. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. p. 5

¹² *ibid* p. 5

In 1924, Eisenstein began to develop his theories of montage based on his inquiry into the cognitive processes of the spectator. In his writings he opposes the ideas of theorists such as William James who felt that emotion informs our physical states. Theorists before Eisenstein, such as William James, Theodore Lip and Tolstoy believed that emotional perception created a physical response.¹³ They emphasize art's power to "infect the spectator with feeling".¹⁴ By contrast, Eisenstein was a materialist, assuming that emotional states are higher-level versions of basic physiological functions.¹⁵ Eisenstein felt that the artists should "create a new channel of conditioned reflexes by associating selected phenomena with the unconditioned reflexes they produce."¹⁶ This understanding of perception, and the artist's ability to create impact through it, is the basis of Eisenstein's theories on montage.

From the standpoint of the avante garde, imagery can stimulate the viewer, whether or not it resembles the real world. This will impact the viewer's body. Sharp contrasts in images will make the viewer agitated, which will lead to an emotional, and then political response. These effects will lead the viewer to absorb a political theme. In his manifesto-like writing, Eisenstein believed that agitational theatre arouses emotion in order to shape the attitudes of the new Soviet society.¹⁷

The essential idea of montage arrives from investigations of conflict. In art, Eisenstein worked out a schema of presenting conflicting phenomena to illicit a response. The production of a rapid succession of images in a motion picture to illustrate an association of ideas is, what Eisenstein refers to as, the "dialectic of film". **FIG. 16** These shots are not linked, but rather are in conflict with one another. Conflicts can be varied: formal, ideological, physiological (sound and vision). Examples of cinematic conflicts can be conflicts of graphic directions, conflicts of scales, conflict of volumes, conflict of masses or conflicts between antagonistic pairs of images, conflicts of close and long shots. **FIG. 13-15** The effect of montage reflects Eisenstein's philosophy that in dialectic film antithetical concepts clash and produce a synthesis that supercedes/sublimates individual elements. This theory harkens to the Marxist fundamental - dialectical materialism.¹⁸ For example, on basic level, the image of a dog succeeded by an image of a

¹³ For example, one might say "We cry because we have *perceived* something sad." It is the perception that precedes the physical response.

¹⁴ Bordwell, p 116.

¹⁵ While physical properties can mean such things as cold or warm, physiological functions are such actions such as digesting food, bending over, moving the eye right or left. So, "we cry, thus we become sad". This "materialist" approach can be understood given his constructivist stance, which focused so pragmatically on the material of art and his studying of biomechanics in Meyerhold's workshop. Also of note, this perspective is not so unique to Eisenstein as described in the literature surrounding Eisenstein. Just consider Tetraytov's insistence that art must organize the human psyche through the emotions.

¹⁶ Eisenstein, S. "Montage and Film Attractions" written in 1924, reprinted in *Film Form*, 1949, p. 49.

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ This belief in physical laws is similar to the official philosophy of Communism, dialectical materialism. Dialectical Materialism is meant to provide both a general worldview and a specific method for investigation of scientific problems. Its basic tenets are that everything is material. Change takes place through "the struggle of opposites." So, everything contains different elements that are in opposition. Because of this, "self-movement" automatically occurs...the conflict of opposing forces leads to growth, change, and development...and all this happens according to definite laws. However, Eisenstein is different in the total Hegelian Marxist take is that although he believes in determining properties of history and of laws of nature, he also believes in the possibility of their manipulation.

scream evokes a “bark”. Two types of montage used in Eisenstein early films include metric, rhythmic and movement montage.¹⁹ **FIG. 10-13**

Eisenstein filmed Potemkin in 1925 when he was 27 years old. It was commissioned for the twenty-year anniversary of the limited 1905 Revolution against tsarist Russia. Eisenstein had originally conceived it as an eight-part epic about the year of 1905, but as he was shooting in Odessa he decided to narrow his concept and focus on a sole event- the mutiny by a battleship’s crew and the subsequent massacre of civilians. This focus amplified Eisenstein’s ability to implement his theories of film making which in turn allowed him to more acutely reflect on the spirit of the times. The Battleship Potemkin is conceived as class-conscious revolutionary propaganda, and Eisenstein deliberately avoids creating any three-dimensional individuals (even Vakulinchuk is seen largely as a symbol). Instead, masses of men move in unison, as in the many shots looking down at Potemkin’s foredeck. The people of Odessa, too, are seen as a mass made up of many briefly glimpsed but starkly seen faces. The dialogue (in title cards) is limited mostly to outrage and exhortation. There is no personal drama to counterbalance the larger political drama.²⁰ Eisenstein’s rational employment of tension and montage affect a larger, emotional theme. For example, in the ‘Odessa steps sequence’, it is not only the length of each shot which creates tension, but also the rhythmic marching of the soldiers’ feet which, unsynchronized with the rhythm of the editing, “violates all *metrical* demands”.²¹ **FIG.s 10, 11,14,15**. Through the use of varied montages, Potemkin became his most influential movie and established him, like D.W. Griffiths and Orson Wells, at the core of the history of film.

Throughout his career, Eisenstein investigated perception while elaborating on his theory of montage. He made formal investigations into the dialectics of film and often referenced physics and Renaissance artists. He showed how the contrasting placement of objects in foreground/background positions created perceptions of different planes. In looking at Renaissance paintings, he also demonstrated how the employment of three vanishing points increases tension and dramatic content.²²

FIG. 17 His interest in “simultaneous settings” does not just have cubist and constructivist seasons. He reaches to El Greco to show the dramatic effect of an artist who leaped back and forth in viewpoint, fixing on various details in the same canvas.²³ Collaborations with Dmitrievich Shostakovich (1906-1975)

¹⁹ **Metric Montage:** In metric montage, shots are joined together according to their length, 'in a formula-scheme corresponding to a measure of music' With the absolute length of the piece already determined, the content within the shot is arranged so that it fits in to the confines of this absolute length. Thus, shortening each shot while preserving the original proportions of the formula creates tension. **Rhythmic Montage:** While in metric montage, the content was determined by the absolute length of the sequence, in rhythmic montage, the action within the frame is given as much weight as the actual physical length of each shot. The rhythm of the montage can therefore conflict with the rhythm of the movement within the frame thus generating tension. Eisenstein, S. “Methods of Montage” Film Form pp. 70-83 **Movement Montage** is also called “Content Montage” It is where meaning is created through the similar movements of its central subject in juxtaposed shots. Similar or opposed movement generally combined with composition as most shots aren't static. In Potemkin, we see it in the movement of the stone lions. in the Graduate when Benjamin jumps into pool, Benjamin jumps into bed with Mrs. Robinson, Benjamin idly floats on inflated raft in pool, Benjamin laying in bed next to Mrs. R. in similarly relaxed position.

²⁰ Eisenstein, S. The Battleship Potemkin, 1925.

²¹ Eisenstein, S. “Methods of Montage” Film Form. p. 72

²² Eisenstein, S. “Synchronization of the Senses” The Film Sense. P.102

²³ *Ibid* p.100-105.

and Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) he developed a theory of aural-visual montage: the dialectics of sound and color and sound and image. Continuing his interest in how physical properties affect perception, he monitored how the length and interval of notes caused the spectator to view at different speeds, sometimes affecting different visual perceptions.²⁴ **FIG. 18** Later in his career Eisenstein expanded and schematized his theories of montage into intellectual, overtone, rhythmic, harmonic and sequential montages in his writings, despite Stalin's attempts to control his artistic output.²⁵ Fig.

This examination of the development and specific aspects of Eisenstein's theories is not to denigrate the importance of the connection of Eisenstein's theory to his politics. He used his scientific exploration of perception for political mobilization. A tendency of many specialists on Eisenstein is to reduce Eisenstein's theories to the manipulation of a passive receiver via phenomenological contrasts. This approach negates the very political nature of Eisenstein's practice. In focusing on Eisenstein's emphasis of the aims of art- and film as the production of calculated effects- writers such as Peter Wollen and Andrew Tudor, fail to examine the political context, the form and the function, of this rhetoric.²⁶ A consideration of only the formal and cognitive aspects of work, ignores Eisenstein's constant avowals that his theory of montage is connected to a Marxist way of representing and effecting political action. Eisenstein prefaces Film Sense with a quote from Delacroix, calling for a merging of creative and critical processes. He believed, that, if film was properly used, it would stand as the highest illustration of the highest tendencies of cultural and humanist development.²⁷

If his art was determined by the later Stalinists to be too abstract, his writings strove to prove that they were realist. Eisenstein's films seem to be abstracted from reality, objects dance, sculptures move, while space, horizon lines, rhythm and time are mixed up. But this does not oppose Eisenstein's general conceptions of reality, which center on a bottom up ethos: a transcendence of brute facts. Like his philosophy of cognition, the result of montage was not concrete, but it was not completely divorced from the concrete either. In fact, as Dana Polan observes:

Central to Marxist thinking is a distinction between the apprehension of facts in their unmediated presentness and an encounter with a history which cannot merely be recognized, confronted, seen, but which must be produced. Eisenstein declared himself a realist, cosigning documentary

²⁴ In talking about the audio-visual montage, and exactly sound correlates with visual impressions: "A chord, preceded by a sharply accented sixteenth, will in [explained]...circumstances create an impression of an abrupt fall..." In Eisenstein, "Form and Content: Practice" in Film Sense, 176. He graphs of the eye's movement falls, and correspond to movement, and the makes suggestions to adjust the viewer's perceptions: "It is interesting to note that Shot IV, which corresponds to measures 7 and 8, contains two flags, while the music contains four eight-notes. The eye appears to pass over these two flags twice, so that the front seems twice as broad as that which we actually see before us in the frame. Passing left to right, the eye "taps off" the eight notes with flags, and the two remaining notes lead the perception away from the frame-line to the right, where the imagination continues indefinitely the front line of the troops." *Ibid*, page 179.

²⁵ This is referenced in many sources, including Bordwell.

²⁶ Wollen, Peter Signs and Meaning in the Cinema, London: Secker and Warburg, 2nd edition, 1972 and Tudor, Andrew Theories of Film London: Taylor and Francis, 1973. p. 20-25 Tudor goes so far as to apply montage to Sam Peckinpah's The Wild Bunch (1969).

²⁷ Eisenstein, S. Film Sense.

to the realm of falsehood for its inability to do more than reflect (and inaccurately) the mere surfaces and the not yet historicized actuality of things.²⁸

Eisenstein's philosophy of cognition and its relationship to his theories of montage fit nicely within the precepts of historical materialism.²⁹ To Eisenstein, the filmmaker is like a worker who must intervene and interpret actuality and its connection to the larger course of human history.³⁰ Eisenstein's cognitive theories and their application are to some extent, Hegelian-Marxist.³¹ There is nothing democratic in the language of his writings; there is no concern for "liberation of the signifier" in his work. The only thing democratic about his theories is the idea that each film piece is a part of a montage. Although it must be stated that Eisenstein was not concerned with the freedom of the perceiver nor was he concerned with self-reflexivity in film. The function of Art for Eisenstein, no matter the medium, was not merely to re-define perception, but to use that re-definition in a socially useful action.³² It is with these convictions that Eisenstein came to work in America.

Eisenstein came to work in America with a set of convictions. After completing, "The Old and the New," in 1929, Eisenstein sought to travel to America where he hoped to examine the recent developments of sound in film. He also hoped to develop collaboration between the Soviet and American film industries³³. Hollywood showed interest in Eisenstein, as it had earlier in the European director Lubitsch. Eisenstein agreed to work for Paramount for six months on an epic of California history.³⁴ Although his experience in California was marked with visual inspiration and a few forged friendships, it was ultimately a professional disappointment. While Hollywood was unequalled technologically, it suffered from "weak originality."³⁵ Plagued by "the preaching of the box office", "ignorant film executives" and celebrities who, with few exceptions such as Walt Disney (1966-1951) (Eisenstein thought Disney's *Fantasia* as a genius work of aural-visual montage), "were mediocre", Eisenstein took the opportunity to

²⁸ Polan, Dana B. *The Political Language of Film and the Avante-Garde*. Ann Arbor, MI. University of Michigan Research Press, 1983. p. 39. It may well be necessary, in fact, to re-look at Eisenstein's work as non-documentary realism

²⁹ Derived from Hegel and an elaboration of dialectical materialism, historical materialism is the deterministic idea that class struggle produces the dynamic of history and is the source of dialectical progress toward a final uniformity.

³⁰ In fact, Eisenstein prefaces one of his most important essays by quoting Razumovsky's Theory of Dialectical Materialism. According to Marx and Engels the dialectical system is only the conscious reproduction of the dialectical course (substance) of the external events of the world. Eisenstein, S. quoting Razumovsky's in "A Dialectical Approach to Film Form" Film Form, p 42-60.

³¹ Eisenstein's belief in the possibility of manipulation of natural properties (which are subsumed to natural laws) proves that he is not as strictly deterministic as Hegel.

³² In doing so, the spectator must be seized, his or her individuality stripped. And essential to that was Eisenstein's theory of economy: the need to affect the audience by the quickest possible means. Emotional montage offered this. "The viewer must be brought into consonance with the historical meaning of actuality [accomplished only if the spectator] was given as little possible chance to interpose [his or her reality] into the already articulated dialectic of the film." Polan, 47

³³ This has been referred to extensively. Here I will cite Bergen, Ronald. Eisenstein: a life in conflict. London: Little, Brown and Co., 1997.

³⁴ The proposed film was supposed to recount the life of Johann Sutter as a metaphor for the physical and moral destruction of California. His friend Charlie Chaplin regarded the film script, written by Eisenstein, as "brilliant". Richardson, W. "Eisenstein and California: The Sutter's Gold Episode". California History, fall 1980. pp 194-203.

³⁵ Eisenstein, S interview in Los Angeles Times. April 26, 1932. p. 40

embark on a new project outside of Hollywood.³⁶ Although the experience left Eisenstein cynical and disillusioned with the film industry, it opened the door for him to travel to Mexico.

The leftist writer, Upton Sinclair, arranged a budget of \$25,000 so that Eisenstein could travel to Mexico and make a film based on his findings. This would become Que Viva Mexico!.³⁷ Eisenstein went to Mexico with his cinematographer Eduard Tisse (1897-1974) and his assistant Grigorii Alexandrov (1903-?). Eisenstein had long been interested in visiting Mexico. In preparation for his film in California, Eisenstein explored Mexican-Californian history and Mexican art. In some ways, he had hoped that Mexico would present an unspoiled countryside, a paradise akin to pre-Spanish California.³⁸ Reading Idols Behind Altars, Eisenstein studied Mexican art and artists³⁹. While researching his film in San Francisco and Los Angeles, he saw the murals of Mexican artists who he had admired since his days as a set designer.

Mexico provided a welcome environment to Eisenstein. The artists of the Mexican Renaissance not only identified with communist impulses, their recent history had paralleled that of the Russian Constructivists. The Mexican revolution of 1910 was based on similar conception of freedom as the Russian revolution of 1917. While communism was not its basic idea, Marxist ideology did play a major role in the path to Mexican freedom. Some of Eisenstein's friends in Mexico had participated in the earliest incarnation of the Mexican Revolution, the 1910-1911 overthrowing of Porfirio Diaz.

In 1913 artists Atl, Orozco, Goitia, and many art students including Siqueiros, Islas Allende joined the rebel forces against General Huerta's dictatorship⁴⁰. In the wake of the revolution, the artists continued to seek a way to represent and bring to the fore their visions and commentaries on Mexican history and their vision of what the new Mexican society might become. As with the Russian scenario, conversations among artists led to magazines, manifestos and other propagandistic literature.⁴¹ Artists engaged in critical commentary both on politics and on how to create and dispel "art for the people": Jose Guadalupe Posada's engravings of morbid scenes were propagated and popular with the public (**FIG. 43**) while the cartoons of Jose Clemente Orozco (1883-1949) (**FIG. 36, 41**) depicted the horrors of conflict. Roberto Montenegro (1885-1968) curated exhibitions and wrote about the power of Mexican folk art. Artists returning from Europe such as David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974) (**FIG. 52**) and Diego Rivera (1886- 1957) (**FIG. 42**) fired each other with debates on political and aesthetic ideas. Rivera considered

³⁶ " They preached box office to me... and the producers complained that I didn't seem to get sex appeal into my films" Eisenstein interviewed in Time May 2, 1932 p. 24 He later referred to the state as "California". As for the opinions about ignorance of Hollywood executives: Laemle had asked Eisenstein if he could get "Trotsky to write a screen play" Eisenstein quoted in Barna, Yon Eisenstein Bloomington, IU Press, 1973. p.6, p 154

³⁷ Geduld, Harry M. and Ronald Gottesman, Eds. Sergei Eisenstein and Upton Sinclair: The Making and Unmaking of Que Viva Mexico! Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970.

³⁸ For a description of his inspiration from the California topology see Richardson, W. p. 195-197. For a more elaborate account of his early Mexican themed set designs and his artistic interest in Mexican art and artists (both through his experience in California, and earlier, in Russia) , see "Los Antecedentes Mexicanos de Eisenstein" by Eduardo Vega Alfaro in Vega Alfaro, Eduardo. Del Muro a la Pantalla: S. M. Eisenstein y el arte pictórico Mexicano. Guadalajara, MX: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1997. p. 23-37. He stayed in Pasadena; it is possible he saw Prometheus, by Orozco, which was not far way in Pomona. Orozco was the one artist who alluded Eisenstein

³⁹ Brenner, Anita Idols Behind Altars: Modern Mexican Art and its Cultural Roots. New York, Payson & Clarke Ltd., 1929.

⁴⁰ Covubrias, Miguel "Modern Art" in Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Institute of Mexican Anthropology and History, 1940. p. 137-140.

⁴¹ Guerrero, Siqueiros and Rivera edited El Machete. *Ibid*-p. 139.

mural painting as the ultimate political art for the people. Rivera, for a time the head of the Mexican Communist Party, often connected the Mexican Mural movement to that of his Soviet comrades who proclaimed “The streets are our brushes; our palettes – the city squares!”⁴²

A time of optimism, which gave birth to the Mexican muralists, began when a former revolutionary, Alvaro Obregon, became president in 1920. As with the Russia avant-garde, members of the Revolution also became members of the new government: the philosopher and lawyer Jose Vasconcelos (1881-1959) became the Minister of Education. Vasconcelos, seeking to employ aesthetic of pride and cohesion among the cultures of Mexico implemented an ambitious program to create murals on public buildings.⁴³ Like the Russian government agents, Vasconcelos sought to promote art as a means of supporting the new government. The great artists of the Revolutionary movement came under his employ: Rivera, Siqueiros, Orozco, Montenegro, and Jean Charlot (1898-1979).⁴⁴As with the Russian Constructivists, Mexican art was characterized by a decrying of bourgeois (i.e. European or academic) imagery and easel painting, a flourishing of investigations into the use of new material, formal strategies in art, and debates over the appropriate way to affect (or not) social change through art.⁴⁵ Eisenstein must have felt at home in this politically charged and experimental, artistic atmosphere. He was befriended by the major artists of the revolution and he posed for portraits by Montenegro and Charlot.

It is perhaps this social and political and, in some cases, artistic connection to these artists that has led many writers on film to determine that Eisenstein’s work in Mexico is directly based on the work of the muralists. As I seek to show, although there were many connections between the muralists and Eisenstein, his theoretical basis for his art remained the determining shaper of all his films, including Que Viva Mexico.

Mexico awakened Eisenstein’s artistic impulses in a variety of ways: he had admired the artists of the Mexican Renaissance, studied Meso American art and saw Mexico’s topography as akin the pre-Spanish paradise he had searched for in California.⁴⁶ **FIG. 24, 34** Having not drawn in years, once in Mexico Eisenstein began to write and draw furiously. Mexican art, the Mayan reliefs, the popular illustrations of Jose Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913) and the “actual astonishing, linear structure of the Mexican Landscapes” are apparent in his drawing⁴⁷. His preliminary drawings for Que Viva Mexico! had the same constructivist elements as his early set designs and reflect his theories on seizing the spectator. Bold physical gestures and abstract sensations in his works were generated by an interest in line and

⁴² Vladimir Mayakovsky quoted in Karetnikova, Inga. Mexico according to Eisenstein Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. p. 9

⁴³ Vasconcelos was later criticized by many of the avant-garde artists (whom he had supported) because of his increasing heavy handedness and simplistic, if not racist, notions of Mestizo culture. Rochfort, D Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998

⁴⁴ Covubrias p. 139

⁴⁵ Ana Indych, lectures at City College of New York, Spring 2004

⁴⁶ Alfaro, E “La Tierra De Los Artistas Aztecas” in Vega Alfaro, Eduardo, 1997. p. 15-23.

⁴⁷ Glueck, Grace “A Legendary Film Maker, But Without His Camera” NY TIMES, Friday, March 3, 2000. E 54.

energy and in the intersection of line and curve.⁴⁸ **FIG. 19, 37** In depicting pain and cruelty, for example, his writhing figures represent the *state of mind*⁴⁹, **28**, which respond to human horror. As apparent in his philosophy, he created arresting images to arouse emotion. These works, as well as his stills from Que Viva, reflect not only his constructivist interests, but also his attempts to capture the gestalt of Mexican art and history. **FIG. 23, 24**

It is apparent that he was collecting arresting images, perspectives and forms to accomplish his dialectic approach to conveying the oeuvre of Mexican history.⁵⁰ Que Viva's stills recreate the emotional reactions he had to Mexico and ancient Mexican art.⁵¹ He had seen collections of Meso-American pottery and folk art in California and he was inspired, perhaps in the same way that Anita Brenner or Octavio Paz was, by the imagery of Mexican art. **FIG. 24, 30, 31** Paz noted "the surprise we feel when we see something unexpected, unique or singular. Surprise when confronting what is alien. What comes from outside what is rare or extraordinary."⁵²

It is no exaggeration to say that Eisenstein fell in love with Mexico.⁵³ "As a mature man in his middle thirties, he poured all of himself [into the making of Que Viva Mexico]. It entirely captivated him, and his mind bubbled over with schemes for the film he was to make there. It contained his most intimate thoughts and emotions; his personal philosophy, his idiosyncrasies and his conception of a civilization- which moved him more deeply than anything else in his life"⁵⁴ However this love for Mexico has inspired interpretations of the film that focus solely on it as a personal work. In understanding his emotional response to Mexico, it is reasonable that one might then consider his work as a montage of reproductions of the arts of Mexico. This interpretation, however, denies Eisenstein's cognitive and political foundations, and his continued investigations into the ultimate purpose of his films. It even denies the other sources of this film, including academic painting and constructivist photography.

One characteristic of Mexico which Eisenstein observed, and which he at once seized for the framework of his treatment, was the way that old and new exist so clearly side by side. Eisenstein sensed that the whole history of the country lay out in the present. This conflict fits nicely into Eisenstein's method of montage of time. It was with this conflict and its metaphoric outcomes that Eisenstein began and ended the episodes of Que Viva Mexico.

Que Viva Mexico is comprised of a prologue, four episodes and an epilogue. What follows is an

⁴⁸ These constructivist compositional elements are readily apparent in his earlier film, Strike which has shots showing the intersecting lines and curves in arched walkways and dwelling blocks of workers and graceful lines of milk separator.

⁴⁹ Formal analysis

⁵⁰ Again, this can be interpreted as his bottom up theory of realism. His "undocumentary" approach to reality which employs dialectical montage, a montage of arresting images

⁵¹ Program for Eisenstein's memorial quoted in Ernest Lindgren's introduction to Eisenstein, S. Que Viva Mexico! London: Vision Press, 1961

⁵² Paz, Octavio *introduction* Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990.

⁵³ Throughout his life, even after the disillusion of the project, Eisenstein referred to Mexico: hoping to return, hoping to finish his work there. And image in Alfaro, 1997 show's Eisenstein on his death bed, a Mexican serape- the first vision in "Que Viva" hanging on his wall.

⁵⁴ Program for Eisenstein's Memorial, quoted in Eisenstein, S. Que Viva Mexico! London: Vision Press, 1961 *introduction* by Ernest Lindgren. Page 9.

analysis of the chapters of *Que Viva Mexico*, as they have been posthumously assembled in the 1970's and interpreted as cinematic versions of Mexican murals ⁵⁵

The Prologue establishes Eisenstein's vision of the simultaneity of the past and present in Mexican life. Its poetic vision and use of volumetric montage again seizes the spectator. The prologue takes place in the province of Yucatan, where inhabitants still preserve their old way of life. Eisenstein's play with multiplicity of time is stated in the initial scene: "Time is Eternity. It might be today. It might be twenty years ago... might be a thousand."⁵⁶ The prologue has been said to be "inspired" by the mural of the Mexican painter by Siqueiros, *The Burial of a Worker*.⁵⁷ The sculptural images could also be inspired, however, by objects in the Museum of Anthropology, where Eisenstein spent a great deal of time, while the vistas could be likened to the work of the academic painter, José María Velasco⁵⁸ (1840-1912). **FIG. 30-34.**

In the *Conquest* episode Eisenstein depicts the Stations of the Cross, combining two actual rituals with three Christ - penitents. It represents the Spanish and Catholic tradition mixing with the native Indian tradition (in this case, it is the worship of the Maize god, which included sacrifice, a practice for which they were eventually punished) and passion. The episode serves as reminder of the cruel past of the conquest. Eisenstein was interested in the history of the pre-Columbian traditions. This episode has some of the most striking resemblances to mural paintings. It conjures Orozco's images of the torment at the hands of the missionaries, and Siqueiros's scenes of coffins **FIG. 37-40**⁵⁹ Oddly critics when referring to his direct relation to muralists rarely, if ever, mention this episode.

This *Sadunga* episode is set in the tropical province of Tehuantepec. Responding to the matriarchal structure of the village, Eisenstein tells a story of Mexican Indian life still uncontaminated by European culture, of the coming of age of a young girl named Concepcion, her marriage and her motherhood. **FIG. 26** The composition becomes horizontal and passive. Tisse's photography turns away from his well-known sharpness to a softening of all images. This episode visually connects with the work of Montenegro. **FIG. 22.** That may not necessarily be the result of Eisenstein trying to recreate a mural, but more a reflection on the similarities of the two artists' approach to the same material: the Sadunga dancers. **FIG. 20-22** While Montenegro creates a modernist portrait, Eisenstein creates a volumetric montage. These images can also be compared to constructivist photography.

The Fiesta episode is said by critics to be inspired by images of the traditional bullfight as represented in the work of the Spanish artist Francisco de Goya.⁶⁰ It is true that Goya represented bullfights; however Eisenstein's method, his use of rapid and slow rhythmic contrasts and interest in the Fiesta can not be sublimated to simply a recreation of Spanish painting.

Maguey is the episode with the most narrative structure.. Set in the barren lands of the province of

⁵⁵ Eisenstein, S. *prologue Que Viva Mexico*, 1925

⁵⁶ Eisenstein, S. *prologue Que Viva Mexico*, 1925

⁵⁷ Vega Alfaro, 40-70 and Bordwell

⁵⁸ Formal analysis of *Que Viva Mexico*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Alfaro, p 50-70

Hidalgo between fields of the Maguey cactus. **FIG. 33-35** Unlike the Sadunga episode, holds sequences of rhythmic, dynamistic and special montage. The images are hard and contrasting, full of aggression, machismo and austerity. The story is set in pre-Revolutionary Mexico, in the era of the infamous dictator Diaz. A couple of farm workers, Sebastian and Maria, fall victim to the sadistic machinations of their Spanish colonial landlord. **FIG. 27-29, 34** The drama is set in a pulque-producing hacienda. This has been referred to as a visual example of the work of Rivera; however the imagery seems to have a greater counterpart in the cacti images of Orozco.⁶¹ Not only is the overall identification with the farm workers, (even Sebastian and Maria are subsumed into the group) an aspect of Eisenstein's Marxist story making – where characters are representative of overall groups- which can also be seen in Potemkin.

The Soldadera episode- Though never completed, scripts proposed by Eisenstein show that this was a homage to the fighting women soldiers of the Mexican revolution. It was to be modeled out of murals by the Mexican artist that Eisenstein regarded most highly: Orozco

The *final episode* shows the urban life of Mexico City in juxtaposition with images of the old traditions and an “unselfconscious sense of continuity”.⁶² The ecstatic imagery of the Day of the Death and the Calaveras, images of contrasting levels of reality are said to be directly inspired by the popular prints of the folk artist Jose Guadalupe Posada. ⁶³ **FIG.43**

The imagery of Posada's dancing skeletons does resonate throughout the final episode. However, in Eisenstein's own words, he was particularly taken with the use and idea of rebirth in this film, which he was able to articulate through the use of dialectical film. This episode was to show this “rebirth” in Mexico, via the use of montage. In the midst of the urban carnival, the dancers strip off the masks of Death. Under some masks there are painted skulls, skulls made of sugar, toys, and human faces. The last removal of a mask reveals a young boy; the close up image fills the screen with his smiling face. Through this series of seemingly unrelated images lead up to, as in Eisenstein's philosophy, a general metaphor- In this instance it is a metaphor for Mexico's historical immortality, her new start. **FIG.44-49**

Much written about Eisenstein's Que Viva Mexico! treats it as a series of Mexican murals on film. The next few paragraphs will discuss the probable reasons for this: the misinterpretation of Eisenstein's “dedications” of episodes in the film, the ignoring of his preliminary drawings and their relationship to his theories, the fact that the film was never completely edited, the film's un-Soviet setting which made it uninteresting for Marxist rhetoricians.

One reason for the narrow line of thinking about Que Viva Mexico! is that Eisenstein himself dedicated each scene to a different Mexican artist. Dedication of a scene, however, was not always the result of direct visual connections. His dedications may have been more of an “inspiration” than an exact compositional blueprint. Most of the artists to whom Eisenstein dedicated episodes were his friends.

⁶¹ *ibid.* “Eisenstein y Los Tres Grandes del Muralismo Mexicano” 45-73. This is somehow further substantiated because Eisenstein referred to Rivera as a lovable cactus. Eisenstein, S. in

⁶² Bordwell 160.

⁶³ This is referenced in many works, including Bordwell and Alfaro,

Although he appreciated Rivera's artwork, Eisenstein's dedication of Maguey (cactus) episode to Diego Rivera was not so much a reflection of Rivera's imagery as it was a metaphor for his character: "I would dedicate the nopal to Diego. Myriads of needles flash from it- like the many-walled satires of Diego--his luncheon of the millionaires, of the aesthetes, his burning Indios. But Diego can bloom as well- just as the sharp strings of the nopal, with the pink, yellow, blue buds of the flower of the fiesta of Xochimilco."⁶⁴ So, a distinction should be made by writers on Eisenstein, between dedication of imagery and a source of imagery.

Although there are similarities among images of the artists of the Mexican Renaissance and Que Viva Mexico!, the film should not be seen only as an amalgamation of frescoes directly placed onto the screen. If Mexican art is discussed as providing sources for imagery in Que Viva Mexico! Then his drawings should also be considered, for they were research for the film. As discussed above, his drawings showed theoretical observations about seizing the spectator. It follows that these observations should also be discussed as sources for the visual and theoretical underpinnings of his film. Eisenstein himself had been described as "a mental montage".⁶⁵ This indicates the dexterous nature of his thought and his references. Why, then, would his sources in Mexico suddenly become singular? His ultimate source was an amalgamation of sources and his understanding of perception and use of montage, in each frame and each sequence.

One problem in the understanding of Que viva Mexico is that it was never finished. It is hard to determine what Eisenstein fully envisioned or intended, and what other contrasts he might have come up with had he the chance. Eisenstein had written the script for Que Viva Mexico!, but there were no specific details included in it by the time the Eisenstein had to cut short filming. Eisenstein felt shooting was a free interpretation of the script and that editing freely interprets the shot material. So, the literary form that the version presently available follows was a ground plan that would have been varied in the editing room.⁶⁶ Given the importance that post production editing had in Eisenstein's film making ethos, it is a great shame that "the full story of the intellectual and artistic origins of Eisenstein's Mexican film will never be known".⁶⁷

Another reason for the overlooking of vision and the reduced consideration of sources by critics of Eisenstein is that Que Viva Mexico! had a completely different context than the rest of his oeuvre. Because the film is not a Soviet setting, it is not regarded as political. Because it includes what has been referred to as painterly imagery- it is not investigated as constructivist or theoretically experimental- despite the fact that his own drawings show a theoretical basis for his images. Though Eisenstein was a man of complex intellectual sources, his work in Mexico has become an object of a narrow line of interpretation.

⁶⁴ Eisenstein, S. "The Prometheus of Mexican Painting" in Karetnikova, Inga. Mexico according to Eisenstein Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. p. 162,

⁶⁵ Bordwell, Quoting Ivor Montagu 30.

⁶⁶ Film Form and Film Sense.

⁶⁷ Geduld, *intro.*

While his film was never completed, his time in Mexico was not without great impact. This is because the climate was one of experimenting and of relative openness, if also competition, in the arts.

Although Eisenstein's friends were social realists, his Constructivist background and his development of dialectical montage, an un-documentary like realism, would preclude much artistic affinity with them.⁶⁸ Despite the difference between the two, his greatest affinity was for Orozco, yet the two never met.⁶⁹ Had they met, the seemingly apolitical Orozco may have been hostile to Eisenstein's political inclinations. Eisenstein found a philosophical comrade and artistic pupil in Siqueiros.⁷⁰ While Filming in Taxco, Eisenstein came to know Siqueiros who was exiled there. Eisenstein worked on adapting his theories of perception and its manipulation to Siqueiros' work in the plastic arts.⁷¹ Siqueiros' conversations with Eisenstein led to him to further experiment with dynamic space and multiple perspectives. These conversations became the foundation for Siqueiros' understanding of method and of the use of pictorial form. Eisenstein is often cited as Siqueiros' greatest influence.⁷² **FIG.50-52** Eisenstein is also noted to have impacted Mexican cinema.⁷³

Due to financial and storyline disputes and pressure from Stalin, who did not like his artist's increasing independence and suspected defection, Upton Sinclair held the film. Eisenstein and his crew were sent back to Russia before Eisenstein was able to edit it. He had been sending the footage to Hollywood for development, and there it remained. In an effort to recoup funds, Sinclair sold parcels of the film as stock footage. Aside from snippets, Eisenstein never saw his film developed. This was the great tragedy of Eisenstein's career.⁷⁴

So, although Eisenstein's Mexican work vanished from his control, with Siqueiros, the impact of theoretical ideas is stamped on walls throughout Mexico, Southern California and in museums such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It is a remarkable story. Whereas critics still see Eisenstein's sojourn in Mexico as a painterly footnote to his other activity, Mexican artists were able to see the importance of his theory and his pedagogy. Aspects of his theories of perception, of physiological

⁶⁸ Appreciation, perhaps, but affinity no. For example: His trips to Cuernavaca with Rivera, where he marveled at Rivera's paintings. Karetnikova, p. 43.

⁶⁹ He had long admired the impact of Orozco's work. In *Prometheus*, for example, Orozco demonstrated what Eisenstein had enthusiastically referred to as spatial Montage when talking about Goya. Orozco was perhaps one Mexican artist with whom early on he might have had the greatest visual affinity and the artist whose work actually does seem most fitting for *Que Viva Mexico!*. Yet the two never met. He mediated deeply on Orozco. He compared Orozco's subject matter, his sophisticated use of perspective and his social outcries to that of Rivera. In speaking about their distinctive intensity, he said "Quantitative Diego, Qualitative Orozco". Eisenstein also noted that "Orozco does not compromise. He does not go down to the Stock Exchange in San Francisco like Apollonian colleague." Eisenstein, S. "The Prometheus of Mexican Painting" in Karetnikova 159-162

⁷⁰ This is also in contrast to Orozco's seemingly apolitical stance. When David Alfaro Siqueiros, the third member of the mural triumvirate, saw Orozco's designs for Guadalajara's Government Palace mural, he told his older colleague, 'Orozco, I think you are a great painter, but you are a lousy philosopher.' Another time, the staunchly Communistic Siqueiros said: 'Orozco, faithful to his traditional hermeticism and misanthropy, succumbed to apolitical passivity at the same time that he drowned in the empty symbolism of pseudo-revolutionary art.'" Martin, Mary Ann. *Orozco: A Small Tribute* New York: Mary-Ann Martin Fine Art, 1996 page 17.

⁷¹ Mari Carmen Ramírez. "The Masses are the Matrix: Theory and Practice of the Cinematographic Mural in Siqueiros." In *David Alfaro Siqueiros: Portrait of a Decade (1930-1940)*. Exh. Cat. Mexico City: INBA, 1997, pp.68-95.

⁷² Sources include Barnitz, J. p. 80-81. Rochfort, D p.145 and Karetnikova, 23.

⁷³ "La Obra Grafica de Eisenstein in Mexico". Alfaro, 87-93.

⁷⁴ Geduld

phenomena and of dialectical art, would then reverberate to artists who were influenced by Siqueiros and his cohorts.

When reflecting on his brief time in California, Eisenstein said that it was not “just that he was a Russian” that made Hollywood hostile to him, but it was a general fear of new things, a fear that “he might do something new, something different.”⁷⁵ This was not his experience among the Mexican avant-garde, who shared a historical and political affinity with Russian artists. As evidenced by his California experience and by his difficulties when he returned to the Soviet Union, Eisenstein could not work in an environment hostile to experiment and theory.⁷⁶ Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in Mexico he was not only able to absorb visual world of Mexico, but also to further explore and experiment with his theories of perception and art. This in mind, it would be relevant to include the importance of his theories in any discussion of Que Viva Mexico.

Eisenstein’s film needs to be looked at as an extension of Eisenstein’s concepts that was applied to the Mexican context, and not just a reproduction of murals. To look a Que Viva Mexico! as a series of Mexican murals is to cheat it out of its theoretical grounding.

⁷⁵ Eisenstein S. interviewed in Time May 2, 1932 p. 24

⁷⁶ Eisenstein returned to a changed Russia. The rise of Stalin only intensified Lenin’s instinctive hostility towards the artist. “Realism” in Soviet doctrine meant positive depictions of happy, industrious workers, of a society where there was no oppression and nothing to rebel against except the foreign imperialists. Over the years it also meant an increasing glorification, practically deification, of Stalin himself as the embodiment of this society. This numbing, simple-minded recipe, nothing less than an attempt at mass brainwashing, could only be achieved by the eradication of all concern for form and style in art. After his return from America, Eisenstein stopped making films for five years. He made few films until his death in 1948. Because of Eisenstein’s importance and popularity, Stalin could not eradicate him. Nevertheless, he attempted to thwart or demolish many of his subsequent films (if they were not deemed good enough propaganda),

Eisenstein Filmography

This Filmography was based on the one found in Goodwin, James Eisenstein, Cinema, and History, 1993, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, pp.237-41.

Strike [Stachka]; general release: April 28, 1925

Produced by Goskino and Moscow Proletkult

Battleship Potemkin [Bronenosets 'Potemkin']; general release: January 18, 1926

Produced by Goskino

October [Oktaybr]; general release: March 14, 1928

Produced by Sovkino

Old and New [Staroe i novae]; general release: October 7, 1929

Produced by Sovkino

Que Viva Mexico!, filmed 1930-31 Never released or completed. Collected and distributed in partial form in 1983.

Alexander Nevsky [Aleksandr Nevsky]; general release: December 1, 1938

Produced by Mosfilm

(Music: Sergei Prokofiev)

Ivan the Terrible [Ivan Grozny]

Part 1, produced by Alma-Ata Studio; general release: January 6, 1945

Part 2, produced by Mosfilm; general release: September 1, 1958

Censored by Stalin (for its "un propagandistic" imagery which suggested that Stalin was homosexual)

Part 3 **destroyed**

(Music by Prokofiev)

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