

Homegrown Films Losing Out

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Movie studios hope for a breakthrough in 2012 thanks to state funding. **Vladimir Filonov**

In the last two years, the share of domestically made films on the Russian market has fallen by half and now makes up no more than 10 percent.

At a session of the council on cinematography on Monday, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin spoke in favor of additional measures to support the industry.

"Russian pictures are earning less money from exhibition all the time," said Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov. "This is partially connected with the low quality of the production of domestic film companies — which viewers don't want to see. But it is also largely due to the fact that our films are forgotten among showings of the Western giant major [film studios]." Measures are needed to encourage exhibitors working with our films and to raise the quality of production, Peskov added.

In the first 10 months of 2011, Russian films earned 2.6 billion rubles (\$840 million), or 9.7 percent of total box office receipts, from showings in Russia and the CIS, excluding Ukraine,

according to Movie Research. This is the first time that the share of Russian films has fallen below 10 percent, Movie Research general director Oleg Ivanov said. In the first 10 months of 2009, Russian films accounted for 21 percent of box office receipts, he added.

The film exhibition market in Russia and the CIS in the first 10 months of the year increased 8 percent over the same period of last year, to reach 27.6 billion rubles.

The global economic crisis and insufficient financing of domestic filmmaking are the main causes of falling box office receipts for Russian films, said Nikita Trynkin, managing director of the Bazelev's film company. Films begun in crisis-ridden 2008 and 2009 only reached the big screen in the last two years.

"They released films with minimal budgets — and that, of course, was reflected in the receipts," said Zlata Polishchuk, executive vice president of the Central Partnership film company.

The Culture Ministry did not finance a single film in 2009 because of internal problems, though government support always made up a significant part of the budget of a Russian film, Ivanov added.

Viewer antipathy to Russian cinema is also increasing, he added.

Theaters are waiting to see whether the two biggest Russian film premieres of the year — "Boi s Tenyu 3" (ShadowBoxing 3) and "Vysotsky" — will be able to draw the audience back to domestic films, said Sergei Kitin, general director of the Cinema Park theater chain.

The share of Russian films in the market could rise sharply in the final two months of the year, when companies release their strongest productions, Polishchuk added.

Film companies are expecting a breakthrough next year, when films financed through the new government support system — using a special cinema fund, rather than the Culture Ministry — reach the market. The seven largest film companies in Russia are counting on their 10 to 12 releases bringing in more than \$200 million in receipts.

Nineteen out of 20 Moscow cinemas have refused to show Cyril Tuschi's documentary about jailed ex-tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Kommersant said, Reuters reported Tuesday. The situation is similar in St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk and other cities, the paper added.

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