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Tarantino ‘Shocked By Moscow’ in First Visit to Russia Since 2004

By Samantha Berkhead

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Valery Sharifulin / TASS

Hollywood director Quentin Tarantino was “shocked” by the positive changes Moscow has undergone during his first visit to Russia’s capital in 15 years this week, the country’s culture minister said, while Tarantino himself said that he visited Russia “to see the people,” not its government.

Tarantino was in Moscow for the Wednesday evening premiere of his new film “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood” at Oktyabr Cinema. Earlier that day, Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky took the director on a guided tour of the Kremlin museums and Red Square.

Embed:

> Жду,когда Тарантино сыграет Грозного pic.twitter.com/OIMkp3NPFT

> — крошка,принцесса бала (@MariaGordeeey) August 6, 2019

During the tour, Tarantino said that Moscow had changed for the better since he last visited in 2004, according to Medinsky.

"He was very emotional and interested in Russian history; he was completely shocked by Moscow," Medinsky told the state-run RIA Novosti news outlet on Thursday. "He was shown around all the old chambers. We went from halls from the 15th century to those of the 19th century, like in a time machine."

Following the highly publicized Kremlin tour, the director spoke about his thoughts on Russia, stressing that he came to Moscow to see his fans.

"I don't agree with some of the things that I've heard about that are going on when it comes to the government," Tarantino told the independent Dozhd television channel at the premiere on Wednesday. "But when I'm here, I'm here to see the Russian people. I'm here to see my fans. I believe that whatever I feel about a government, that's not necessarily reflective of the people who live in the country."

The "Pulp Fiction" director also discussed his favorite Russian movies with journalists, pointing to the 1961 Soviet adventure film "Amphibian Man."

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> Квентин Тарантино на экскурсии в Кремле: Что нужно сделать, чтобы быть похороненным в Кремле? pic.twitter.com/1yFaLpp4dZ
>
> — Дмитрий Смирнов (@dimsmirnov175) August 6, 2019

"In the early 70s, they often showed 'Amphibian Man' on television in a dubbed version," he told reporters when asked which Russian work of literature or movie he'd be most likely to reference in one of his movies. "I didn't know that this was a Russian film [at the time], but I really liked it."

In past interviews, Tarantino has named the Oscar-winning Soviet classic "Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears" as one of his favorite films.

"Listen, if you ask me what my favorite Russian film is, I'd even say Sergei Eisenstein's film 'Alexander Nevsky,'" he told the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid on Wednesday. "That one scene of the ice battle is worth everything! But I didn't mention it, because everyone talks about this film. It's like an American director saying that his favorite director is Kurosawa after arriving in Japan. It's boring!"

"Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood" stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie. It

is now showing in Russian at Oktyabr Cinema and in English at Pioner Cinema.

Note: Tarantino's quotes are back-translated from Russian.

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