

Russia Releases First Film Shot in Space, Beating Hollywood Project

By [AFP](#)

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Actress Yulia Peresild during a press conference with the makers of "The Challenge." **Arthur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency**

The first feature film ever shot in space premiered in Russian cinemas on Thursday, which was celebrated in Moscow as a victory over a rival Hollywood project.

In "The Challenge" a surgeon played by the actress Yulia Peresild is sent to the International Space Station (ISS) to save a cosmonaut injured during a spacewalk.

Along with Peresild, Russia sent film director Klim Shipenko for a 12-day stay on the ISS in October 2021 to shoot scenes aboard the orbital laboratory.

The Russian crew beat a Hollywood project also shot in space, which has the backing of "Mission Impossible" star Tom Cruise, NASA, and Elon Musk's SpaceX.

President Vladimir Putin has lauded "The Challenge," saying "We are the first to have shot a

feature film in orbit, aboard a spacecraft. Once again the first".

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The Soviet Union pioneered space travel during the Cold War and the film crew's mission added to a long list of firsts for Russia's space industry.

Shipenko, who was in charge of camera, lighting and sound on the ISS, brought back 30 hours of footage, 50 minutes of which were used in the final cut.

Peresild and Shipenko underwent training for four months before going to space on a Soyuz spacecraft accompanied by a cosmonaut.

The sequences were shot in the Russian module of the ISS and featured cameo appearances by three Russian cosmonauts stationed there at the time.

Ahead of the film's release, the capsule which brought Peresild and Shipenko back to Earth was put on display in central Moscow.

The space agency Roscosmos and Russian state television network Channel One collaborated on the film, and the head of Channel One, Konstantin Ernst, openly expressed his delight in outdoing Hollywood.

"We are all fans of 'Gravity', " Ernst told reporters on Monday, referring to the Hollywood blockbuster starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney.

"But after the release of 'Challenge,' it will become clear that the American picture was just computer-generated imagery," he said.

According to Ernst, the film cost less than one billion rubles (\$12 million) to make, though the price tag of the entire project has not been made public.

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