

SERGEI LOZNITSA SPEECH FOR DONBASS

THANK YOU! MERCI! GRACIAS! SPASIBO! SHUKRAN!

It's a great honour for me to receive this prize and I'd like to thank Mr Benicio del Toro and his fellow jury members for their support!

I would also like to thank – once again – my beloved Festival – Festival de Cannes – for giving me the opportunity to present “DONBASS” to the world and to put forward questions, which I'm passionate about. Over the past few days I realized – whilst talking to journalists and to film professionals – how little is known about this war, which is going on in the heart of Europe right now. So, once again, thank you to the honourable Jury and to the Festival for sharing my passion.

Of course, I also have to thank my fantastic team and actors, who went through the “DONBASS” experience with me. We are indeed a “dream team”. I feel blessed as a director to have found such kindred spirits and devoted collaborators!

Picasso said: “Painting (or – may I say – a work of art) is not made to decorate apartments. It's an offensive and defensive weapon against the enemy”.

As this ceremony is going on today, in the far north of Russia, at a high security prison, a young Ukrainian artist, our fellow film director, is continuing his hunger strike. He himself, accused of the crimes he never committed and unjustly sentenced to 20 years in prison, demands from the Russian authorities immediate release of all the Ukrainian political prisoners detained in Russia.

It is with great pain and with great admiration I wish to express my solidarity with Oleg Sentsov, with all the film directors in different parts of the world who are fighting for freedom, for dignity and, ultimately, for humanity. No matter how hard cruel and despotic regimes try to prosecute us, to silence us and to make us conform, the art of cinema will remain free. Film directors will continue to break the rules and to transgress the boundaries. Cannes Film Festival demonstrates it year after year.

Thank you and see you again soon!