

The Earth Is Blue as an Orange

The Earth Is Blue as an Orange (2020) dir. Iryna Tsilyk, contradicts itself on its own with the name given to it: the earth might be blue, yes, but how can an orange be blue? The film is set in a dark era of the 90's following a Ukrainian family's journey in not just surviving the war, but "living" in it. The film is slow, integrated in realism regarding dialogue, which according to Tsilyk was important to "fight for natural-sounding Ukrainian language"¹

Naturally when "war" is mentioned in any context, especially in film, the natural (or taught) expectation the viewers are give into are violent imagery and emotions of despair, or "triumph" at the end of war. This film does none of that. By focusing on a family neither involved or engaging in the act of war itself, the film provides the viewers to experience the "other side" of war, that won't be depicted in national television. There is a montage of landscapes and sceneries of nature of orange, red, green, and blue. This scene is somehow so peaceful and calm, even "serene", which directly contradicts to our general visualization of "war".

Even in the midst of war, we are constantly introduced to and reminded of a "dream", and that dream is cinema. The film emphasized on the importance of the dream, to continue dreaming, that dreaming is valid even in an not-so-pleasant environmental surrounding setting. The situation this family is in is yes, surreal, but somehow in following their daily conversations, watching them give directions to other family members in a home-set studio, blowing a wish into a lantern(?) and laughing about the outcome of the action, invites the viewers to the comfort of their home, and in return, the viewers are able to feel *with* them, not *for* them.

To be seen and heard, to tell a story, as an artist is what connects the film to the audience who's never experienced the same circumstances as the characters in *The Earth Is Blue as an Orange*. Yes, they are victims of war, but there are no need for pity nor sympathy. With the pursuit of dreams, and being able to integrate those dreams within the tragedy of reality, is enough (for the moment) to "stay optimistic" and carry on with hope. *The Earth is Blue as an Orange* isn't dark, or devastating; it just let's the viewers follow the characters within the frame as if we are with them. There may be war, but home still exists. And when there's home, there is comfort, security, hope, and always love, which might be all someone might need to simply "carry on"

¹ <https://www.apofenie.com/interviews/2021/10/3/im-always-looking-for-reasons-to-be-optimistic-an-interview-with-iryna-tsilyk>, "I'm always looking for reasons to be optimistic": An Interview with Iryna Tsilyk