

EDUCATIONAL MEDIA **REVIEWS** ONLINE



Sonia

2006

Distributed by [Cinema Guild](#), 115 West 30th Street, Suite 800, New York, NY 10001
212-685-6242

Produced by Lucy Kostelanetz Productions

Directed by Lucy Kostelanetz

DVD, color and b&w, 96 min.

Sr. High - Adult

Art, Art History, History, Women's Studies

Reviewed by Rue McKenzie, University of South Florida, Tampa



Highly Recommended

Date Entered: 1/12/2010

Sofia Dymshitz-Tolstaya (1886-1963) was a Russian avant-garde painter with active involvement in the Bohemian artistic community in the early 1900's. Born into a wealthy family in Czarist Russia, Sonia (as she was often called) was viewed by her family as the "sister who broke all the rules". She strongly supported women's independence through education and artistic expression. During the revolutionary years of the early 20th century, Sonia felt that art would transform life and pursued 'art to answer the needs of the masses'.

Sonia's grand niece, Lucy Kostelanetz, has produced much more than a simple biography. She has incorporated memoirs, archival film footage, family and historical photographs, and contemporary interviews to create a profile of artistic life during revolutionary times. While Sonia is the focus of the documentary, other topics also mentioned include the artists Marinetti, Tatlin, and Malevich, and a look at the "Stray Dog" writers' club. Lucy Kostelanetz successfully combines many sources of information creatively. Her use of overlaying photographs creates a sort of 'animated decoupage' which adds interest to the overall production. The technical quality is very high, and all the more impressive given the creative visual approach.

This program is **highly recommended** for high school through college and perhaps general adult audiences. Courses in art history, humanities, and women's studies will benefit from this video.