

# ***THE NEW YORK TIMES***

## **Movies**

### **Sonia**

**2007-USA-Biography/Graphic & Applied Arts**

#### **PLOT DESCRIPTION**

Filmmaker Lucy Kostelanetz celebrates the life and work of one of her ancestors in this documentary, which deals in part with the confluence of gender, religion and politics in the world of 20th Century art. Kostelanetz's great aunt Sonia Dymshitz-Tolstaya was born to a wealthy and socially prominent Jewish family in St. Petersburg, Russia before the Soviet Revolution, but she threw off her life of privilege to become both an artist and a political activist. Sonia earned a potent reputation for her work as a painter, working on both canvas and glass, and she soon became a key figure in the revolutionary art movement in Russia, socializing with some of the most important poets, musicians and visual artists of the day. Sonia also enjoyed a freewheeling and tempestuous love life, including a long-term relationship with Vladimir Tatlin. However, as Josef Stalin rose to power, Sonia struggled to make a creative statement within the creative confines imposed on her by the Soviet state, and in time she was expelled from the official Artists Union, a group she helped to create. Sonia also found her creative energies sapped by the demands of marriage and raising children, and her status as a Jewish woman certainly didn't help her in her struggles to keep her work before the public; by the mid-1940's, Sonia's creative life had ended, though she remained intelligent, aware and defiant. Featuring photographs from Kostelanetz's family archive and excerpts from Sonia Dymshitz-Tolstaya's journals, Sonia was screened as part of the 2007 New York Jewish Film Festival.  
~ Mark Deming, All Movie Guide

**READER RATING: \* \* \* \***

**(4 stars, 1 vote)**

## **CAST FOR 'SONIA'**

[Maria Tucci](#) - Sonia

## **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

[Jared Du Brino](#) - Editor, Animator

[Alan Dater](#) - Cinematographer

[Lucy Kostelanetz](#) - Producer, Editor, Director

[Yuri Garushin](#) - Camera Operator

[Daniel Epstein](#) - Camera Operator

[Dima Shustoff](#) - Sound/Sound Designer

[Jonathan Bloom](#) - Sound/Sound Designer

[Todd Sines](#) - Graphic Design

[Mikhail Levitin](#) - Camera Operator

[George Griffin](#) - Animator