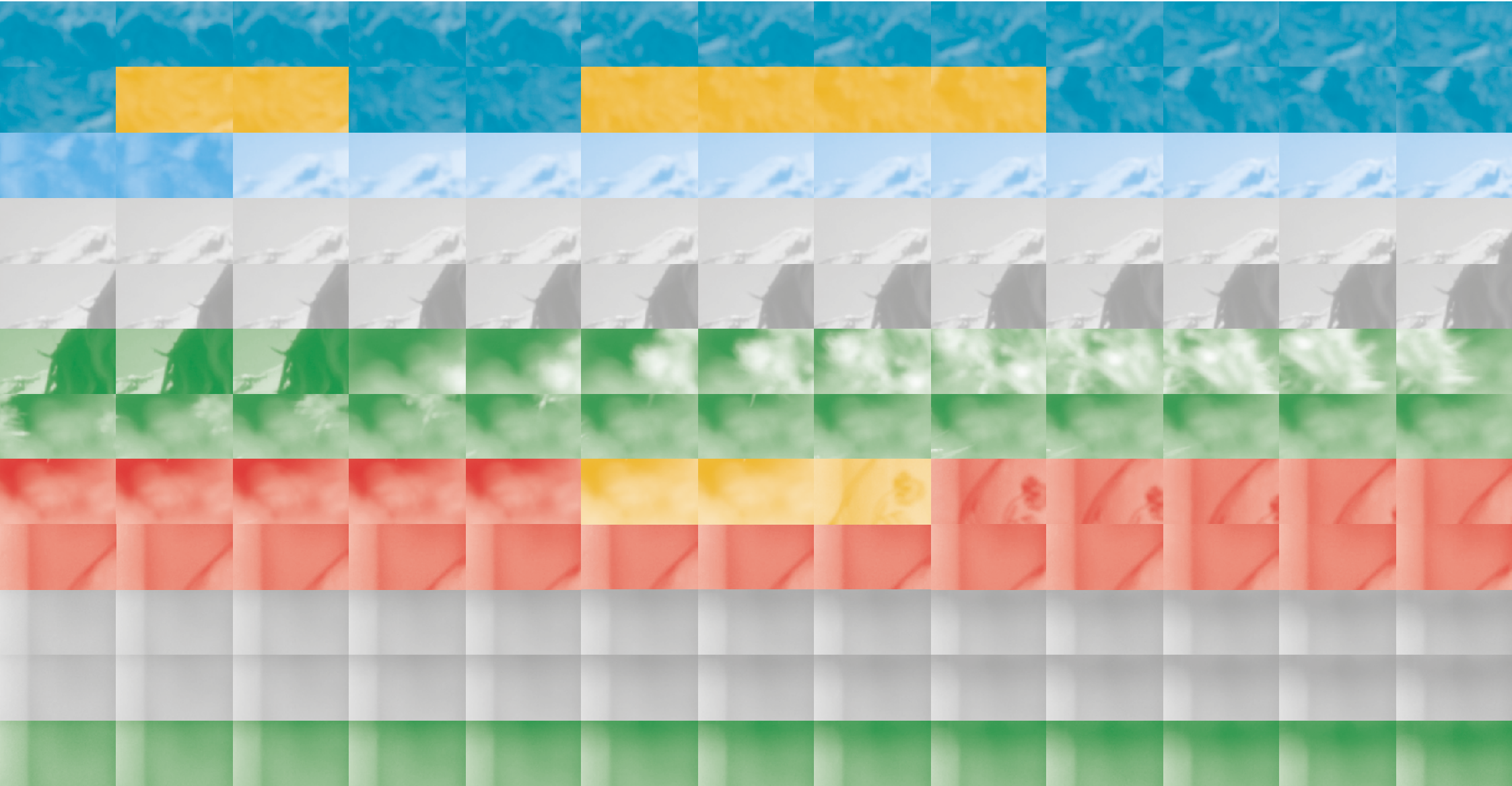


Coproduction Workshop

Central Asia



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PAY THE BILL

Kazakhstan

Director

Assel Aushakimova
assel.aushakimova@gmail.com

Screenwriter

Assel Aushakimova

Producer

Assel Yerzhanova

Genre

Fiction

Budget

325,000 €

Project's state of progress

Financing, development

Funding obtained

20,000 €

Estimated start date of filming

April 2025

Possible co-producers

France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Czech, Netherlands, Taiwan

Type of partnership expected in

France

Post-production, crew positions (DoP, Sound)

Synopsis

In a Kazakh town, a 60-year-old woman sits at home with her grandchildren while her daughter celebrates her birthday with daughter's husband and friends. Suddenly, at night, the woman receives a call from a policeman who informs her that her daughter has not paid the bill at the bar, and it is necessary to pay it today before the police open a case.

The worried woman leaves her grandchildren with her neighbor and goes to the apartment of her daughter, but no one opens the door. The woman goes to the bar where her daughter celebrated the birthday, it is closed. Then she meets with the policeman who called her. He gives her the daughter's phone that her daughter left at the bar and tells her that she needs to take her daughter to the doctor, as her daughter lost consciousness and the policeman helped her husband put her in the car. The woman goes back to her daughter's apartment. The daughter's husband finally opens the door. She finds her daughter in one of the rooms, naked, unconscious, bruised and covered with a blanket. The woman calls an ambulance. The daughter's husband quickly leaves. An ambulance doctor arrives and tells that her daughter died about an hour ago. A policeman arrives and writes down the woman's testimony and asks her to come to the police station later. The woman goes to the bar to ask what happened at night. But no one says anything to her. A bum who was collecting bottles in the bar shows her a video on his phone: a man is beating a woman, and then one policeman, who came to the call, helps put this unconscious woman in the car, and these man and woman leave. The woman asks him to send her this video. He sends, but asks not to say where she got the video from and asks for some money.

A mess awaits the woman at the police station. The woman again testifies to another policeman. The policeman asks if she is sure she is ready to sue the father of her grandchildren and in the end says that it is better to pay the bar bill.

The woman goes to the bar and finally pays the bill.

Director's note

This script is based on a real horrific incident that happened in Kazakhstan in 2022. A man beat his wife to death during a quarrel that happened while they were celebrating his wife's birthday. The man beat his wife on the street where the police station was located. The police did not stop the husband, but on the contrary, they even helped put the beaten wife into the car. The husband took the beaten wife home, where she died from beatings. But even more cynical is the fact that the policeman called the mother of this woman and told her to pay the bill at the bar, as the daughter did not pay the bill.

I want to touch on two topics in this film. The first topic is the general indifference of our society. Due to the difficult economic and social situation, many people in Kazakhstan think only about money and how to make money. Many people are indifferent to the problems of other people, even if the tragedy occurs before their eyes.

The second topic is domestic violence in Kazakhstan and femicide. In Kazakhstan, domestic violence is decriminalized. As a rule, perpetrators of domestic violence receive only administrative fines. And the police try not to pay attention to domestic violence, refuse to open criminal cases, believing that these are just family quarrels. Daily news in Kazakhstan is full of headlines about another beating of a wife by her husband. The Islamization of the country, as well as the historical traditional neglect of women in our patriarchal society, does not contribute to raising the status of women. In 2023, 69 women and seven children died as a result of domestic violence in Kazakhstan; more than 99 thousand complaints were received regarding domestic violence. And domestic violence in our patriarchal society does not depend on social status. Last year, the former Minister of Economy of Kazakhstan beat his wife to death.

The main reference of the project in terms of atmosphere, mood and visual concept is "The Death of Mr. Lazarescu" by Cristi Puiu. The

visual concept should convey the reality and everyday life of everything that happens in the film.

The visual concept: a simple and realistic narrative, naturalism, hyper-realism, long shots, handheld camera. We will try to make the film as realistic as we can through cinematography and art design. The predominance of handheld camera, some elements of documentary style and Dogme 95. That will make audience feel like voyeurs. Despite the sufficient number of long takes, I plan that the film will not be classic slow-burn film. The predominance of cold colors in the film will convey the everyday life, reality and cruelty of life surrounded by general indifference.

Producer's note

This project reveals a number of social problems formed in Kazakhstan by the indifference of the authorities and society. Every year the number of female victims of domestic violence is growing in the country, which is facilitated by a high level of sexism, the bias of the authorities towards this problem, and the inaction of police officers. These are problems that need to not just be talked about, but shouted about.

The film sensually reflects the indifferentism of modern society. The heroine, who has lost her daughter, left alone with her pain and innocent children who will become another wounded generation, pays an incomprehensible bill. The project is at development and financing stage. The budget of the project is 325,000 EUR. At the moment we have secured 6% of the budget. We plan to cover part of the budget with a grant from the Kazakh Film Fund and the rest through co-production.

Considering the theme (the patriarchal world, the position of women, femicide) and the plot of the project, we think that the film will be of interest to both international and Kazakhstani audiences. First, we are planning a festival circuit, then a theatrical release, and then release at streaming platforms and TV.

In 2023 we presented this project at Asian Project Market of Busan Film Festival and the project received the main award at the pitch of Bishkek International Film Festival.

We are looking for co-producers and sales agent who will be interested in this touching story that reflects reality. Artistically, this project can be improved by an international crew: DoP, art director, sound, post-production. We are open to any form of collaboration.

Director's biography

Assel is a Kazakh director, screenwriter and producer. Assel graduated from the International Film Business Academy of the Busan Asian Film School in 2021. She is Berlinale Talents alumna. Her second feature film BIKECHESS (Kazakhstan-France-Norway) will have its premiere in the International competition of the 2024 Tribeca Festival. Last year this film won Works in Progress award at industry section of Karlovy Vary IFF 2023. Her first feature film WELCOME TO THE USA had its world premiere at AFI Fest 2019 (New Auteurs). This is the first Kazakh feature film with the protagonist from the LGBTQ community. It was awarded Grand Jury Prize as Best International Narrative Feature of NewFest New York's LGBTQ Film Festival 2020 and was screened at many international Queer film festivals.

Her recent short film COMRADE POLICEMAN was awarded Special Prize in the Short Film Competition of Cottbus FilmFestival and it was screened at Uppsala Short Film Festival, Cottbus FilmFestival, PÖFF Shorts, GoEast, Jogja NETPAC and other festivals.

Assel participated in Berlinale Talent Project Market 2024 (Honourable Mention VFF Talent Highlight Award), Eastern Promises of Karlovy Vary IFF 2023 (Work in Progress award), Biennale College Cinema of Venice IFF 2020, Connecting Cottbus 2021, Meetings on the Bridge 2021, BOAT Meeting 2020, Script POOL Tallinn 2018 and Eurasia spotlight 2017 (special mention of the jury).

Production company's filmography

Assel Yerzhanova is a Kazakh producer. She is the CEO and owner of "FilmFilmFilm" production company. Assel graduated from the Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) named after S. Gerasimov in Moscow and the Kazakh National Academy of Arts in Almaty.

From 2002, she has been a line and executive producer of films of famous Kazakh directors such as Sergei Dvortsevov ("Tulpan"), Nariman Turebaev, Guka Omarova ("Baksy", "Shiza"), Yerlan Nurmukhambetov, Yermek Shinarbayev and others.

She is a producer of two recent films by Yerlan Nurmukhambetov including the film The Horse Thieves. Roads of Time (2019), selected as the Opening Film of the 24th Busan International Film Festival.



Assel Yerzhanova



THE WOLVES

Kazakhstan

Director

Adilkhan Yerzhanov

Screenwriter

Adilkhan Yerzhanov

Producer

Olga Klasheva

olga.khlasheva@gmail.com

Genre

Fiction

Budget

400,000 €

Project's state of progress
script development

Funding obtained
50,000 €

Estimated start date of filming
February 2025 (if the entire budget is raised by this date) or October 2025

Type of partnership expected in France

script-doctor, co-production, co-financing, post-production (e.g. subtitles), sales, international promotion

Synopsis

The second girl in a week was killed by wolves. The locals hire a wolf hunter.

The hunter tells that the girls were not killed by wolves. But the police keep insisting that they fell prey to wolves.

The local mayor's son breeds wolves and regularly brings home escort girls.

The wolf hunter has to prove that werewolves do not exist and that wolves are much more merciful than humans.

Director's note

Logline

A wolf hunter realises that his entire family are werewolves.

Slogan

"Family is more important than anything else, even if it's a family of monsters"?

Key idea

A wolf hunter realises that there is an evil inside him, and this evil has been passed down from generation to generation. It is a mythological evil - there are no werewolves. But there is tradition, corruption and nepotism, which encompasses everything in society, and this evil is worse than a fairy tale.

By combining the fairy tale with social reality, it is important for me to tell the werewolf story in a new way.

Genre

Post-horror like "Let me in" and "Out".

Why is it important for me?

I often shoot social stories about Karatas, a village in Kazakhstan. These stories are criminal, about a disturbed moral and social environment. When people are left to their own devices and decide for themselves what is good and what is evil.

I want to continue the same line of society, but through the genre of post-horror, I am interested in attracting the viewer to this theme by means

of the genre. A Social through entertainment. It's important for me to show the prejudices of society through werewolf myths. I want to tell the mythology of nomadic culture in the European genre. Nepotism and corruption as a werewolf phenomenon.

Location

North of Kazakhstan

Film style

Extremely tense from the beginning to the end credits, filled with action and suspense.

Colour scheme: Dark and muted tones.

Camera: Alexa

Camera movement: Predominantly static.

Movement using rails, steadicam or ronin.

Light work: Mostly natural light and practical light.

Composition: Strict, with the hero in the centre.

Montage: Minimal gluing, unexpected joints.

Classical editing.

Cast

Berik Aitzhanov (Goliath, Steppenwolf, Assault)

Kuandyk Dyussebayev (The gentle indifference of the world)

Sound and music

Production sound, minimal overdubbing.

Adding noise accents, the atmosphere of each episode is very important to me, the sounds add to the drama, develop the characters.

Lack of music, instead of music there are noises and ambient backgrounds. All music is in-frame: from speakers in the market, tape recorders, cars or radios.

Producer's note

Since 2010, I have worked and have had a very good experience of collaboration with Adilkhan Yerzhanov - a very acclaimed and prolific Kazakh film director.

I highly believe that our new collaboration - me as his producer and Adilkhan as a director will be a very successful and productive experience too. Adilkhan keeps on trying to find a good balance

between genre films, author's cinema and mainstream trends.

Collaboration with international co-producers is truly an outstanding opportunity for Kazakh filmmakers, this is a support for talents and a chance to develop projects from the very innovative initiatives to the films of a very strong, professional quality. Coproduction is one of the best ways to launch and then to promote creative people, helping them communicate, network and become a part of the world film industry. Our new project "The wolves" will be a very balanced film, which might fit both to wide-audience & art-house styles. We plan to make, as we already did with Adilkhan before, a good story, a very sincere and trustful one, and to produce it, with means of specific cinematic language and film stylistics, in order to be interesting for film theaters, film critics, film professionals, distributors, ordinary movie goers and film festivals.

We believe this project will need and will get a good international promotion. Project has a very high commercial, creative, artistic and spiritual potential. For sure we need financial and technical resources, in order to produce a high-quality movie, which might attract a lot of film art admirers, distributors and contribute to the intercultural exchange between nations, in our days of globalization. The project will keep meanwhile national identity and local particular traces.

Director's biography

Adilkhan Yerzhanov, a film director and scriptwriter, was born in Djezkazgan city, Kazakhstan, on the 7 August 1982. In 2009 he graduated from the Kazakh National Academy of Arts, as a film director.

Adilkhan Yerzhanov is a two-time participant of the Cannes Film Festival's Official Program ("The Owners", 2014, and "The Gentle Indifference of the World", 2018, Un Certain Regard Section) and a two-time participant of Venice International Film festival ("Orizzonti" / "Yellow Cat"/2020 & "Orizzonti Extra"/ "Goliath" / 2022 / Premio "Bisato d'oro" to Berik Aitzhanov & Daniyar Alshinov / "Best actors").

Member of the APSA Academy Winner of "Asia Pacific Screen Awards-2019" for "Achievement in Directing" for "A Dark, Dark Man" film. Member of the EFA (European Film Academy).

Filmography:

Moor, 2024

Steppenwolf ("Rhino" / "Nosorog"), 2023. Big Screen Competition at Rotterdam IFF 2024

Frozen, TV series, 2022

Ademoka's education, 2022 - world premiered at the 38th Warsaw International Film Festival. NETPAC award.

Goliath, 2022 – world-premiered at the 79th Venice IFF / Orizzonti Extra Competition / / Premio "Bisato d'oro" to Berik Aitzhanov & Daniyar Alshinov / "Best actors"

Assault, 2022, world premiered at the Rotterdam IFF, 2022

Zoe's return, a short film, 2021

Herd Immunity, 2021, world-premiered in the Main Competition of the Black Nights IFF (Tallinn)

Yellow Cat / Zheltayakoshka (Kazakhstan-France), 2020. World-premiered at the 77th Venice IFF / Orizzonti Competition

Ulbolsyn (Kazakhstan-France), 2020, TRT-Award winner of the Sarajevo CineLink Works in Progress. World premiered in the Main Competition of the Black Nights IFF (Tallinn) / Best Asian NETPAC Award.

Atbai's fight, 2019, world-premiered at the Warsaw International Film Festival, Grand-Prix

of the Yakutsk International Film Festival; *A dark, dark man* (Kazakhstan-France), 2019, world-premiered at San-Sebastian International Film Festival, "Best director" at APSA

The gentle indifference of the world (Kazakhstan-France), 2018, Un Certain Regard @ 71st Cannes IFF

The History of Kazakh Cinema / Underground of Kazakhfilm 2015, documentary

The Owners, 2014, Cannes IFF-2014 Official Selection

Production company's filmography

Olga Khlashaeva – born 9 June 1979 in Karaganda (Kazakhstan).

Graduated in 2001 from Kazakh State University of International Relations & Foreign Languages in philology and literature and in 2019 from T. Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts in film studies and film criticism (MA).

Since 1997 she has worked in film industry: at "Kazakhfilm" Studios JSC (as head of international relations / promotion of Kazakh films), at Eurasia International Film festival (since its creation in 1998) and as film producer February 1997 – currently – "Kazakhfilm" Studios JSC & "Short Brothers" LLC: Producer, Head of International Relations & international promotion of Kazakh films

EFA (European Film Academy) Member APSA Academy Member (Nomination as Best Producer for the films by Adilkhan Yerzhanov "Owners" in 2014 and "The gentle indifference of the world" in 2018), APSA Fund Grant recipient in 2018 (the film done upon the developed script is "A dark, dark man" / Awarded with Best Director prize at APSA-2019).

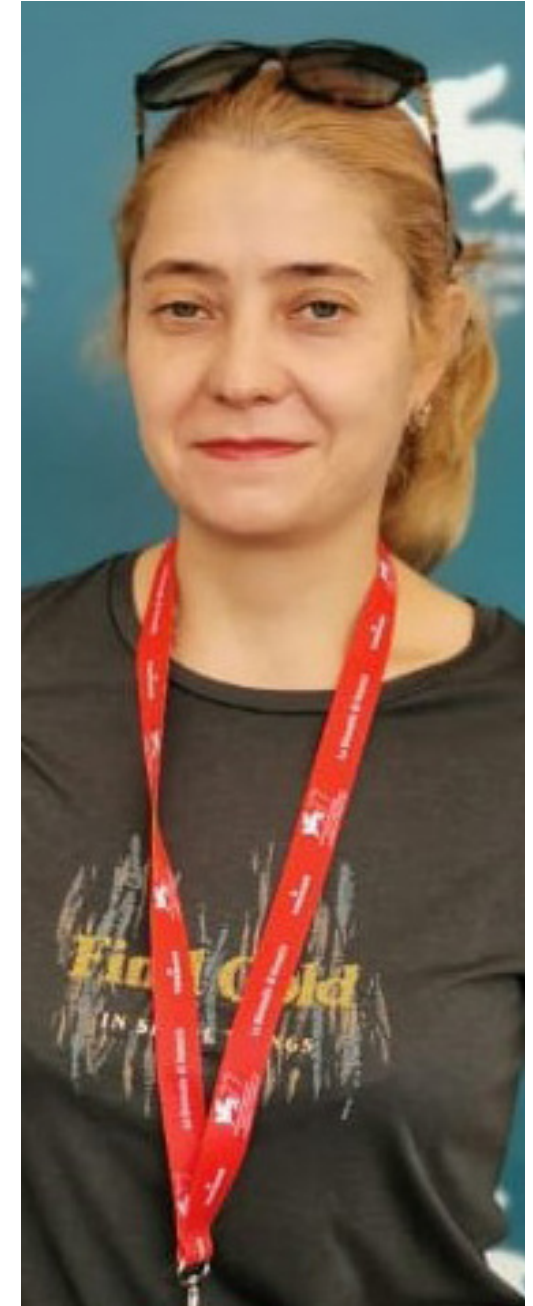
NETPAC Member

Production & International promotion of all feature and short films & one documentary by Adilkhan Yerzhanov

Adilkhan Yerzhanov



Olga Khlashaeva



THE NURSE

Uzbekistan

Director

Sherzod Nazarov
sherzod-nazarov1998@mail.ru

Screenwriter

Shokhjahan Subkhanov, Sherzod Nazarov

Producer

Firdavs Abdukhalikov

Genre

Fiction

Budget

300,000 €

Project's state of progress

**Script and search for financing
(development)**

Funding obtained

93,000 €

Sources of funding:

Cinematography Agency under the
Ministry of Culture of the Republic
of Uzbekistan.

Estimated start date of filming

Filming is planned on April 1, 2025

Synopsis

A village in modern Uzbekistan. Two brothers live in the same yard. They are so busy that they don't have time to care for their 90-year-old widowed father. The old man became very moody and sick. Their wives are also busy with housework and do not devote time to the old man. One day, two brothers discuss their issue and bring a woman - a nurse - from another village who cared for the elderly. She is also lonely and begins to care for this old man. The old man falls in love with the woman and lives happily for a while, but then dies. Time passes and another client comes for the nurse and takes her away to help the new helpless old man...

Director's note

The concept of this feature-length film is based on true events. This happened to my family. In 2008, my grandmother passed away. After that, my uncles, upon consulting, invited widow Marhamat from another village to care for my grandfather. My grandfather had a strong will. At first, it was a bit difficult for him and Marhamat to find common ground. But gradually, they got used to each other. When she arrived, my grandfather and father had 12 children, but they all lived with their own families and only came to visit their grandfather once a year. Marhamat greeted us all like we were family, hugging us every time we visited the house. I was sometimes surprised how this woman became so attached to strangers, but I liked it. In the past year or so, my grandfather has become increasingly ill. Marhamat began to take care of my grandfather better during his difficult times, giving him all her love, but still that love was not enough to overcome death. My grandfather passed away when he was well over 90 years old. After my grandfather's passing, one day I went to the village, wondering what had become of this woman. However, I did not meet her. To my knowledge, my uncles had consulted with each other and decided to kick her out of the house. At first, I was deeply affected by this, and I even felt a little offended. However, later on, I understood their reasoning. They, too, had their own point of view. Through this film, I wanted to understand why this woman dedicated eight years of her life to an unknown person. I have always had an interest in the plight of little people in Uzbekistan.

Producer's note

A low-budget full-length feature film. Two main characters and six episodic ones. The location is 60 km from Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. Additional financing from the Uzbekistan Art and Cultural Development Foundation is possible. Preparation is planned on September-October 2024, filming is planned on April-May 2025.

THE NURSE

Firdavs Abdukhalikov

Director's biography

Sherzod Nazarov has been graduated from the Center for for the Development of National Cinematography of Uzbekistan. he took part to several documentary programmes. Prizes.

Tashkent international film festival (Uzbekistan, 2021) "best short film", "best actor"

Asian world film festival (usa, 2021) "best asian short film" international film Festival Bastau (Kazakhstan, 2021) «best student short film»

Moscow International film festival (Moscow, 2021). "special jury prize»

Eurasian film festival (London, 2022). «Best Eurasian short film»

Sol International film festival (Spain, 2022). «Best short film»

Patriki film festival (Moscow, 2023) «best director»

Production company's filmography

Firdavs Abdukhalikov is a film producer. He is also the director general of the Cinematography Agency under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the founder of the first independent television, radio, and newspaper companies in Uzbekistan. Also been honored as a journalist and is the author of several books on the cultural and historical heritage of Uzbekistan.

Since 2018 — Chairman of the Board of the World Society for the Preservation, Study and Popularization of the Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan (WAX).

Since 2019 — Director General of the Cinematography Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Since 2020 — Chairman of the Oscar Committee of Uzbekistan. Since 2021 — Director General of the Tashkent International Film Festival. Since 2021 — Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the VGIK branch in Tashkent.

Since 2022 — Chairman of the International Creative Association of Film Studios of the CIS countries and Georgia.

Since 2023 — Chairman of the Union of Cinematographers of the Turkic World Filmography as a producer: «Colorless dreams»

2020

«Ilhaq» 2020

«I'm not a terrorist» 2021 «101 Flight» 2022

«Sunday» 2023



Sherzod Nazarov



LEG

Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan

Director
Shokir Kholikov

Screenwriter
Shokir Kholikov

Producer
Aigerim Satybaldy
afilmskz@gmail.com

Genre
Fiction

Budget
400,000 €

Project's state of progress
Financing

Funding obtained
35,000 €

Estimated start date of filming
October 1, 2024

Possible co-producers
Silvana Santamaria (Soilfilms,
Germany), Paolo Maria Spina
(Revolver, Italy)

**Type of partnership expected in
France**
co-producers, festivals, sales,
distributors

Synopsis

Ulmas (40) lost his leg in an accident. He and his relatives gather to discuss the customary Uzbek tradition of burying the amputated leg in the cemetery, in Ulmas' future gravesite. Believing in superstition and fearing immediate death after burying his leg, Ulmas embarks on a desperate mission to find an alternative solution – unconventional preservation methods for his limb.

These options include storing the leg in a refrigerator, but the village's electrical issues prove challenging. Another possibility is preserving the leg in honey, but financial constraints hinder Ulmas from acquiring enough. Ulmas cleverly hides the leg in his friend's store fridge, only to face an angry confrontation when it is discovered.

While Ulmas' uncle prepares a grave for the leg, Ulmas again attempts to secure honey on credit and considers selling the only cow he has. However, his efforts fail, pushing him to seek temporary storage for the leg in Tashkent. But on the way there, transportation delays force him to hide the leg in a sewer, leading to a run-in with the police.

Ulmas is rescued by his uncle, but tensions rise when he discovers Ulmas' attempt to steal preservation liquid from the local school. Determined to bury the leg, the uncle locates it, but is thwarted by Ulmas, who escapes with it.

During his motorcycle ride to the Dugoba caves where the leg could be stored mummified, Ulmas loses the bag from his bike. While searching for the leg, he tragically falls into an abyss and dies.

Ulmas' relatives gathered together again but this time to discuss the interment of Ulmas. They reluctantly decide to bury him without the leg, but agree to entomb it alongside his body once found, in accordance with tradition.

Director's note

As a director, my intention in telling this story is to explore the profound existential questions that arise when confronted with the inevitability of death.

Inspired by a true story, the narrative takes us on a poignant journey through the protagonist's desperate attempt to elude the grasp of death, only to come face to face with his own demise. This narrative provoked and motivated me to delve into the psyche of my protagonist and contemplate my own relationship with mortality. It is through this struggle that I would like to urge an audience to reflect on the nature of escaping destiny and the power we hold to shape our own futures.

At the heart of our film lies a central metaphor: the transportation of a leg. This simple yet powerful symbol represents the burdens we often carry needlessly in our lives. By witnessing the protagonist's journey of letting go, I invite our viewers to examine their own attachments to past grievances, pain, and guilt. It is in this release that we find the true liberation to embrace the present moment.

Through introspection and contemplation, I aim to ignite a spark within the audience – a spark that encourages them to reflect upon their own lives and appreciate the fleeting nature of existence. Delving into the story, I hope to remind each viewer of the importance of authenticity, cherishing the present, and avoiding the weight of regrets when the final credits roll.

Producer's note

As a producer, I am constantly on the lookout for filmmakers who bring a fresh and unique directorial vision to the screen. That is why I am thrilled to be part of the second feature film by the exceptionally talented Uzbek director Shokir Kholikov. I first became acquainted with Shokir through his captivating short animation GIRL AND CLOUD (2021). His debut feature film, SUNDAY (2023), absolutely astonished me with the mature style and psychological precision with which such a young author portrays the daily lives of two elderly individuals. The film is receiving the well-deserved awards around the globe, including the Asian New Talent Award for Best Film at the 25th Shanghai International Film Festival, the Best Director Award at the 3rd Red Sea Film Festival, the Best Director and NETPAC Award for the Best Asian Film at the 28th International Film Festival of Kerala, and Critics Jury Award and Audience Award for Fiction Film at the 30th Vesoul International Film Festival of Asian Cinema.

When we began developing the story and working on the script for LEG, I was immensely impressed by how Shokir delves into the eternal questions of existence in a paradoxical, ironic, contradictory, and tragic manner.

LEG is a fusion, weaving universal themes of life, death, fate, and human fears into a tale deeply rooted in the Uzbek context – a narrative that's unfamiliar and fresh to the world. Crafted in the genre of a serious, philosophical drama, it comes laced with tender humor, subtle irony, moments of tragedy, and bouts of both funny and absurd, offering the audience a roller-coaster of emotions.

The project was successfully presented at various co-production markets, including connecting cottbus in Germany and Meetings on the Bridge in Turkey. As a result, we have welcomed experienced European co-producers such as Silvana Santamaria from Soilfilms (Germany) and Paolo Maria Spina from Revolver (Italy) on board.

Director's biography

Shokir Kholikov, an emerging writer-director from Uzbekistan, graduated with a Master's degree in Film and TV directing from the Uzbek State Institute of Arts and Culture in 2023. He currently teaches film editing and screenwriting at the same institute.

Shokir's short films have gained international recognition, participating in numerous festivals and receiving over 40 awards. These include the short animation GIRL AND CLOUD (Animart Festival Greece 2022) and the short documentary LIFE WITHOUT SPRING (Turkish World Documentary Film Festival 2022).

In 2021, Shokir was granted an opportunity to study at the esteemed New York Film Academy, further honing his skills and artistic vision.

His debut feature film, SUNDAY, completed in 2023, garnered acclaim, winning the Asian New Talent Award for Best Film at the 25th Shanghai International Film Festival, the Best Director Award at the 3rd Red Sea Film Festival, the Best Director and NETPAC Award for the Best Asian Film at the 28th International Film Festival of Kerala, and Critics Jury Award and Audience Award for Fiction Film at the 30th Vesoul International Film Festival of Asian Cinema, among other accolades. SUNDAY continues to make its mark at film festivals worldwide.

LEG will be his second feature film.

Shokir's filmography features:

- *Leg* | In Development | Feature | Fiction
- Honorable Jury Mention of CAF Pitch 2023 connecting cottbus 2023
- Meetings on the Bridge 2023
- *Sunday* | 2023 | Feature | Fiction
- Official Selection (Global Vision) of the 48th Hong Kong International Film Festival
- Official Selection of the 1st Cinevesture International Film Festival
- Official Selection of the 5th Habitat International Film Festival
- Achievement Award at the 1st Batman Film Days
- Third Best Film of the Asian Cinema

Competition at the 15th Bengaluru International Film Festival

Jury Award at the Univerciné Nantes Film Festival Critics Jury Award and Audience Award for Fiction Film at the 30th Vesoul International Film Festival of Asian Cinema

Official Selection (International Competition) of the 2nd Happiness International Film Festival Best Director and Best Script at the 4th Oltin Humo Film Awards

Best Director at the 11th Bastau International Film Festival

Best Director and NETPAC Best Asian Film Award at the 28th International Film Festival of Kerala Best Director Award at the 3d Red Sea Film Festival Jury Special Mention at the 1st Alternativa Film Awards

Official Selection (Cinema of the World) of the 54th International Film Festival of India

Best Film International Competition Award at the 1st Bishkek International Film Festival

Official Selection (International Competition) of the 4th LIMA ALTERNA International Film Festival

Best Film International Competition Award at the 15th Tashkent International Film Festival

Best Film Asian New Talent Award at the 25th Shanghai International Film Festival

— *Life Without Spring* | 2022 | Short |

Documentary

— *Girl And Cloud* | 2021 | Short | Animation

— *Messi* | 2021 | Short | Fiction

— *World Virus Human Nature* | 2020 | Short |

Documentary

— *Tea* | 2018 | Short | Fiction

— *Dilemma* | 2017 | Short | Fiction

— *They Don't Understand Us* | 2016 | Short | Fiction

Producer's profile

Aigerim Satybaldy, a versatile female film producer from Kazakhstan, started her journey in 2006 as a second assistant camera, gradually gaining expertise in various roles within the film industry.

In 2012, she founded A Films, an independent distribution company dedicated to promoting Asian films. Aigerim's successful distribution and marketing efforts encompass over 30 titles,

including the recent Uzbek sensation SUNDAY by Shokir Kholikov. Expanding A Films in 2022, she now focuses on film development and production, fostering talent and delivering captivating stories.

Aigerim's filmography showcases her dedication to both established and emerging filmmakers. She has upcoming feature projects in development, such as LEG (Meetings on the Bridge 2023, connecting cottbus 2023) by Shokir Kholikov and BIRDS FLY SOUTH (Red Sea IFF Talent Days 2023) by Shugyla Serzhan. She executive produced films like THE RIVER (2018) by Emir Baigazin among others, which has garnered significant recognition, being showcased at prestigious film festivals globally and earning accolades and awards along the way, including the Best Director Orizzonti Award at the 75th Venice Film Festival and an Honorable Mention from the Jury of the 43rd Toronto Film Festival. She also produced two debut short films, SABYR (Best Actor and Best Film at the Baiqonyr IFF 2023) by Marina Zibert and Damir Tanatov and THE LATE WIND (Red Sea IFF 2023, goEast IFF 2024) by Shugyla Serzhan.

With a master's degree in tourism from Kazakh National University, Aigerim is an alumna of Girne American University and the CHANEL x BIFF Asian Film Academy.

Her filmography includes:

- *Leg* | In Development | Feature | Fiction
- *Birds Fly South* | In Development | Feature | Fiction
- *The Late Wind* | 2023 | 23m | Fiction
- *Sabyr* | 2022 | 21m | Fiction
- *Milky Girl* | 2021 | 89m | Fiction
- *The River* | 2018 | 108m | Fiction
- *Would You Like To Stargaze?* | 2018 | 72m | Fiction



Shokir Kholikov



SEVEN ROADS

Uzbekistan

Director

Michael Borodin

Screenwriter

Michael Borodin

Producer

Julia Shaginurova

jshag@einbahnstrassefilm.com

Genre

Fiction film. Slow horror, neo-noir

Budget

1,200,000 €

Project's state of progress

Development (Script. 1st draft)

Funding obtained

21,000 € (Producers' own investment)

Estimated start date of filming

March 2026

Co-producers

Einbahnstraße Productions,
Germany

Type of partnership expected in

France

Co-producers

Synopsis

Anora, a 40-year-old van driver from Uzbekistan, works abroad to chase her dream of opening a beauty parlor. Just as life seems promising, Anora gets a call from her brother's wife about the death in the family. Forced to return to Uzbekistan, Anora faces a deadly threat from her late brother. Together with her sister-in-law, she hits the road to escape the ghost, but then realizes that running from the past will bring them nowhere. Women decide to confront the danger and fight to liberate themselves.

Director's note

In Central Asia, women stand as pillars of strength and independence, playing vital roles in social life, the economy, and households, especially as men often seek employment abroad.

Unfortunately, they frequently face domestic violence and workplace injustice. In my film, I want to talk about the pervasive issues that millions of women worldwide confront daily.

Living in danger and fear is the norm for many. I think it's immensely important to talk about this fear and perhaps find some kind of metaphorical release from it. My film tells the story of two women haunted by a dead relative; they engage in an unequal struggle with him to liberate themselves. The past is catching up with them in the form of a dead domestic tyrant.

It may seem that the heroines are just running away from danger, but in reality, driven by common sense, they find ways to get rid of their fear. For me personally, this film is an important and timely statement about the modern times and people's lives. The main evil in this film is the past, which right now is hovering over the world in the form of murderous wars. The first part of the film is a social neo-noir drama, then through the road movie it transforms into a slow-burner (a slow horror).

I do believe it is important to address complex issues through entertainment genres, to open new horizons, and at the same time to address important topics such as domestic violence and the position of women in Central Asia.

Filming locations in Uzbekistan and South Korea offer an incredible amount of potential for visual discovery. However, I plan to use these countless opportunities sparingly in order to maintain the visual style while preserving the chance to surprise the viewer with unexpected elements.

Producer's note

Michael Borodin is an outstanding artist with a strong and distinctive voice. Having lived as an undocumented migrant worker himself, he possesses a high sensitivity to the world's injustices, where some are deprived of basic rights and condemned to poverty, while others exploit and oppress them. Modern slavery, domestic violence, and women's rights have consistently been major themes in his films. In his second feature Michael tackles these topics with delicacy and profound knowledge of the reality he is dealing with.

I have collaborated with Michael on several projects, including his documentary *COTTON100%* and his first feature film *Convenience Store* (Berlinale 2022) and I have always been impressed by his creativity, his keen and passionate interest in his characters, and his ability to express civil courage and awareness through the exceptional artistic vision.

The new film, a unique genre narrative about two women fleeing violence and attempting to build a new life for themselves, marks a new phase in his artistic journey. I admire the innovative approach he has chosen for his second feature to address burning social issues and anticipate *Seven Roads* to be a great success not only at film festivals but also with the general public in Europe, where Michael has already established himself as a strong emerging talent, and in Asia, where the story is set.

The film is currently in a development stage, with the first draft of the script completed. In 2022, the project was mentored at the *Nipkow Fellowship Program* in Berlin and at the *Cite Residency* in Paris. The preproduction is planned for the winter of 2024-2025 with the principal shooting start in spring 2025. So far the film is a coproduction between Uzbekistan and Germany, we are currently looking for the coproducers from France and South Korea.

Director's biography

Michael Borodin (film director and writer) was born in Toytepa, a small town near Tashkent, in 1987. He created his first film at the age of eighteen. In 2010, after graduating from university, he moved to Moscow to study filmmaking. There, he led the life of an illegal immigrant, working as a delivery guy and odd-job worker. Eventually, he had the opportunity to pursue his passion for movies by enrolling in film school. In 2018, his short film 'Normal' was featured in La Semaine de la Critique. His feature film, Convenience Store (Продукты-24), was presented at Berlinale 2022 in the Panorama section. Since March 2022, Michael has worked and lived in Uzbekistan, where he founded Tashkent Film School and SESTRA Films, an independent production company focused on documentaries and features addressing pressing social issues and local topics.

SELECTED FILMS:

2024 - *Mirtemir Is Alright*, documentary short, dir. Sasha Kulak, Michael Borodin
2024 - *Uzbekistan. Stories.*, documentary series, 10 episodes, dir. Umida Akhmedova, Kamilla Rustambekova, Sasha Kulak (director, show-runner)
2022 - *Convenience Store (Продукты-24)*, feature film, drama (Berlinale Panorama 2022, CICAIE Art Cinema Reward) (Midpoint Award for the script at CoCo Pitch 2019 in Cottbus; Next Step program for emerging filmmakers of the Cannes IFF; Berlinale Panorama 2022, CICAIE Art Cinema Reward)
2022 - *COTTON100%*, documentary feature (Artdocfest Riga/ Moscow, main competition, GoEast in Wiesbaden, main competition)
2019 - *The Registration*, short, drama (Odense International Film Festival, Denmark; Spirit Of Fire International Film Festival, Russia)
2018 - *Normal*, short, drama (Semaine De La Critique, Cannes 2018, Kinotavr Film Festival 2018, Koroche Film Festival 2018)

Production company's filmography

Julia Shaginurova is a producer, creative producer and drama consultant. She started her career as a journalist and architecture reviewer in Moscow. After switching to the film industry, she creatively produced over fifteen feature film and series titles. Since 2015, Julia Shaginurova has been based in Berlin, where she founded Einbahnstraße Productions, a company that focuses on creative documentaries and feature films about human rights. In 2022, together with Michael Borodin Julia founded an independent film company SESTRA Films and Tashkent Film School in Uzbekistan.

SELECTED FILMS:

2024 - *Mirtemir Is Alright*, documentary short, dir. Sasha Kulak & Michael Borodin
2024 - *Uzbekistan. Stories.*, documentary series, 10 episodes, dir. Umida Akhmedova, Kamilla Rustambekova, Sasha Kulak
2023 - *Dissidents And Madness*, documentary series, 6 episodes, director Sergey Gindilis
2023 - *Russia vs Lawyers*, documentary feature, dir. Masha Novikova, in coproduction with NOVDOC, ARTE/RBB and ARD
2022 - *COTTON100%*, documentary feature, dir. Michael Borodin (Artdocfest Riga/ Moscow, GoEast in Wiesbaden)
2022 - *Convenience Store (Продукты-24)*, feature film, drama, dir. Michael Borodin



Michael Borodin



THE PATERNAL HOUSE

Tajikistan

Director

Sharofat Arabova
sharoarabi@gmail.com

Screenwriter

Sharofat Arabova

Producer

Akmal Khasanov

Genre

Fiction

Budget

200,000 €

Project's state of progress
Development, Fundraising

Funding obtained
3,000 €

Estimated start date of filming
August 2025

Type of partnership expected in France
co-production

Synopsis

The narrative delves into a non-linear structure, narrated through the perspectives of Amina, an art journalist, and Zokiroff, an antagonist working in the district court who manipulated a case against Amina's mother, Rabia. The story unfolds from these two contrasting viewpoints. From Amina's perspective, she aspires for professional advancement and dreams of attending an art residency in Paris. Rejecting a marriage proposal from Faridun due to his attempts to control her expression and enforce false societal norms, Amina becomes involved in a play rehearsal at Dushanbe's oldest theater, slated for demolition along with a historic residence. Despite her efforts to raise awareness through media channels and a documentary, her actions backfire, leading to the planned demolition of her neighborhood and impending eviction of her family. Despite her empathy and activism, Amina and Rabia find themselves isolated in their struggle to save their home, surrounded by fear and anxiety. Zokiroff's viewpoint offers insights into the factors shaping his relentless nature in carrying out orders to evict Rabia from her home. Viewing the demolition as a reinforcement of patriarchal norms over Amina, he sees parallels between individuals like Faridun and himself, all contributing to Amina's plight in different ways. Following a legal battle, Rabia receives a suspended prison sentence while Amina departs for Paris to pursue her art residency, creating a virtual reality artwork depicting her journey home.

Director's note

The project I am submitting, «The Paternal House», explores the dynamics of a family comprising solely women. Amina, a non-conformist in the traditional community, becomes a victim of underground politics blurring the lines between her reality and an absurd nightmare. The unfolding events affecting her family and the trauma of losing the metaphorical paternal house transform Amina into a creator, enabling her to reconcile with her essence. These revelations manifest in her VR installation of a house without a home abroad, a creation that compels her to believe in people once more. The planned duration of the film is 90 minutes, in the Tajik language, falling under the psychological drama and experimental genres. The project is currently in the development stage.

«The Paternal House» previously participated in the 1st Pitching for Central Asian films, organized within the framework of the 14th Tashkent International Film Festival in 2022. It received a development grant from the Embassy of France in Uzbekistan and Alliance française de Tachkent.

As a writer-director experienced in both fiction and creative documentary forms, I see this workshop as a valuable opportunity to enhance my co-production pitching skills during the film market and gain insights into the project from seasoned film professionals. This workshop offers a unique platform to refine my communication skills, improving my ability to present and advocate for «The Paternal House.» I am confident that the knowledge gained will contribute not only to its development but also lay a foundation for my future collaborative endeavors in the film industry. I am committed to actively participating in the workshop, engaging in meaningful discussions, and welcoming valuable feedback.

Producer's note

I believe that this project, «The Paternal House», stands out due to its relevance in questioning the ongoing urban modernization of Dushanbe and the importance of respect for human rights, heritage culture, and the challenges that arise when dealing with modern and traditional values. Noteworthy it's a women's story. The story is universal as it deals with human emotions, the strive for justice, Tajik sensibility, and the underrepresented setting, making it potentially captivating for audiences worldwide. With a proven track record in successfully producing films such as «Ovora» (2005), «Let it all to be dream (2010), «Hope with Justice» (2013), «Air Safar» (2015), and «40 days of silence» (Chilla) (2014), as line producer, I am confident in my ability to bring this project to realization and deliver a compelling cinematic experience. In

addition, this film project is very close in theme and mood to my previously created series of documentaries «The City of My Memory» about demolished buildings of the Soviet era in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. All these aspects inspire me to implement this project together with the talented filmmaker and author Sharofat Arabova, who has an outstanding view and style unique to the cinema of Tajikistan.

During the pitching session, our team plans to highlight the key strengths of «The Paternal House», including its fundraising strategy, marketability, target audience appeal, and the initial cast and talents.

Additionally, I will be prepared to discuss potential Co-Production challenges and ways of overcoming them for Tajik films. This is a great opportunity to engage with French film industry professionals to gather their feedback and explore potential collaborations with Tajikistan.

THE PATERNAL HOUSE

Director's biography

Sharofat Arabova is a writer-director based in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, a member of Filmmakers' Union of Tajikistan. Her directorial work includes the short film 'Nasib' (2021), which received the Jury Special Prize for relevance at the Umut Film Forum in Bishkek; 'Tasfiya' (2014), a feature film recognized with the Diploma of Film Experts of Tajikistan at the Didor International Film Festival; and 'Khayolfurush' (The Illusion Seller, 2017), a short honored with the Jury Special Award at the 4th Kashmir World Film Festival and the Golden Begonia Award at the 7th Asian Micro Film Art Festival in Lintzan, Yunnan, PRC. Additionally, 'In Between' (2013) received the Grand-Prix at the 3rd International Film Festival 'Kyrgyzstan, a Land of Short Films' and Best upcoming film at the Jaipur International Film Festival-2014, India. Alongside her creative pursuits, Arabova pursued academic endeavors, studying Cultural Studies at Russian-Tajik (Slavic) University and Film Direction at the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune. She is an alumna of the Busan Asian Film Academy and Berlinale Talents.

Production company's filmography

Akmal Khasanov is the Director and Founder of the AVStudio production studio under the Art-Vision brand, serving as a producer. He is an alumnus of the Goethe Cultural Academy-2018 and a member of the Filmmakers' Union of Tajikistan. Khasanov has produced notable feature films such as 'Ovora', 'Let Everything Turn Out to Be a Dream', and 'Air Safar', as well as the TV series 'Hope for Justice'. Additionally, he has served as the line producer for projects like 'Chilla' (40 Days of Silence) directed by Saodat Ismailova, spanning France, Germany, Uzbekistan, and the Netherlands, and the documentary 'Buzkashi' directed by Najeeb Mirza, involving Canada and Tajikistan. With a portfolio encompassing over 20 documentaries, Khasanov is also credited as the author of the documentary series 'The City of My Memory'.

His contributions have earned accolades, with 'Ovora' receiving the Special Prize and the Prize for the Best Actress at the Eurasia International Film Festival in Kazakhstan, the President's Prize at the International Muslim Film Festival in Tatarstan, Russia, and the Grand Prix at the International Film Festival 'Creative Flight' in Uzbekistan, among others. 'Air Safar' was honored with the 'For the Smile of Asia' award at the XXVII International Comedy Film Festival in Russia, and the Special Prize at the International Film Festival in Qingdao, China. Additionally, his social video 'To Be a Human' received a Special Mention at the LAMPA social video film festival in Russia.

Akmal Khasanov



Sharofat Arabova



40 DAYS

Kyrgyzstan

Director

David Gutnik

Screenwriter

Assol Abdullina, David Gutnik

Producer

Assol Abdullina
assol.abdullina@gmail.com

Genre

Fiction

Budget

750,000 €

Project's state of progress

Development

Funding obtained

50,000€

Estimated start date of filming

2025

Possible co-producers

France

Type of partnership expected in

France

Co-production, sales (if possible)

Synopsis

33-year-old Perizad returns to her home in Kyrgyzstan to bury her uncle, the last male member of her family.

Reuniting with her estranged mother and grandmother, Perizad comes home to observe the 40-day mourning ritual, a time when, according to Muslim and Eastern Orthodox beliefs, the spirit of the recently departed remains present in the home. During this liminal period, Perizad makes intimate contact with the ghost of her uncle, learning more about him than she ever did during their shared life together.

As Perizad retraces her uncle's footsteps through the streets and countryside of Bishkek, meeting his past friends and lovers, she reconnects with her mother and grandmother, while grappling with her own pain and past.

Director's note

In 40 DAYS, the central character, Perizad, defies Kyrgyz gender roles, while coming face to face with the way traditional notions of masculinity can lead men astray. When my co-writer, Assol, and I conceived of the project, Assol was grieving the loss of her uncle. He had recently taken his life. At the time, I was grieving the death of my childhood best friend, and we were both looking to take on our experiences with grief within a post-Soviet context. Assol and I are native Russian speakers with deep roots in the former Soviet Union, yet neither of us are Russian, so we share a uniquely post-Soviet sense of displacement. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its imperial aspirations in the post-Soviet bloc add new and vital depth to our collaboration, as the quest for identity in the region reaches fever pitch.

At heart, we wrote 40 DAYS to capture the feeling of being haunted by our homelands and heritage; to confront generational trauma in the immigrant experience; and to interrogate the value systems we inherit from our families and culture.

Producer's note

When I met David, I was grieving the loss of my uncle. It was a lonely journey. In my family, we didn't talk about our feelings. In fact, we stopped talking to each other altogether. In New York City, nobody has time for death. David was the first person who genuinely and bravely faced my aching. He patiently welcomed my yearning to talk about the ugliest moments of my family story. I never told my uncle how much I loved him, so the project started as a chance for me to say, «Goodbye, I miss you» to my uncle, to my mother and grandmother, and to my country.

I was born and raised in Kyrgyzstan and moved to the United States in my twenties. Throughout my journey from east to west, I struggled with questions of identity and belonging, as a person of mixed ethnic and racial backgrounds, as a woman raised by strong independent females in a patriarchal society, as a Muslim, and now, as an immigrant.

40 DAYS follows Perizad as she asks and lives these questions: who am I? Where do I belong? What do I do with this suitcase full of loss, grief, and ghosts? How do I begin to heal? At the same time, Kyrgyzstan finds itself wrestling with its own ghosts, still recovering from the fall of the Soviet Union. Just as 40 DAYS is a journey of self discovery for Perizad, the film also holds up a mirror to my country's struggle to define and reimagine its own national identity.

—Assol Abdullina

Director's biography

David Gutnik is a Ukrainian-American writer and director. His most recent film, RULE OF TWO WALLS, a feature documentary on the war in Ukraine, was awarded Special Jury Prizes at the 2023 Tribeca and Odessa Film Festivals. The film was shortlisted for the 2024 "Truer Than Fiction" Independent Spirit Award and currently holds a 100% Rotten Tomato score.

MATERNA, David's acclaimed debut feature film, won the awards for Best Cinematography and Best Actress at the 2020 Tribeca Festival, where David was also nominated for Best New Director. He was shortlisted for the 2021 "Someone to Watch" Independent Spirit Award for his work on the film. The film was released theatrically and digitally by Utopia Distribution in August 2021 and is streaming on Hulu.

David's sophomore narrative feature, 40 DAYS, was selected for the prestigious 2022 Oxbelly Screenwriters and Directors Lab in Greece. The project was hailed by Screen International as one of «13 international projects in development from promising screenwriters and directors.

David is also the editor of several renowned feature films, including Christina Choe's 2018 Sundance award-winning NANCY. He is a Sundance Institute alumnus and received his MFA in Film at Columbia, where he teaches in the Graduate Film Department.

Production company's filmography

Assol Abdullina's company intends to coproduce with Brave productions.

Brave production's catalogue includes "Stop-Zemlia" by Kateryna Gornostai (Crystal Bear winner, Berlinale Generation 14+ 2021), "Anna" by Dekel Berenson (Best British Short Film at BIFA 2019) as well as co-production of "Parthenon" by Mantas Kvedaravicius (Critics' Week at Venice IFF 2019) and "Forever-Forever" by Anna Buryachkova (Orizzonti Extra Competition at Venice IFF 2023)

David Gutnik



Assol Abdullina



THE FUTURE EPIC

Kyrgyzstan

Director

Dalmira Tilebergen

Screenwriters

Dalmira Tilebergen, Aisha Kamchibekova

Producer

Aisha Kamchibekova
aisha.kamchibekova@gmail.com

Genre

Fiction film in the genre of sci-fi dystopia

Budget

1,000,000 €

Project's state of progress

Development

Funding obtained

Not yet

Estimated start date of filming

August 2025

Possible co-producers

Department of Cinematography under the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic

Type of partnership expected in France

Co-production, distribution

Synopsis

In a post-apocalyptic world, where nuclear devastation renders Earth uninhabitable, a privileged elite escapes to the Space Station JANNAT (Paradise), leaving the less fortunate in the underground city of TOZOK (Hell). They are called KORKUT (fear).

Those left on Earth's poisoned surface, a group of people calling themselves DOGU (East), mutate and become resistant to radiation. They dream of their children being taken to Jannat for a better life. Dogu attach kites near their dwellings as a signal of their presence. Jannat's rulers, maintaining order and offering hope, select certain children to be taken by cyborgs. One such cyborg, NUKER (warrior), takes AYLA, a mute girl about 10 years old with special intuition.

Nuker and Ayla set off for the Baikonur station, where all children are taken to Jannat. En route, thanks to Ayla, Nuker meets his mother and learns he is Dogu, and his name is TAYMAS (will not stray from the right path). She tells him that when the wealthiest were fleeing from Baikonur to Jannat, she managed to persuade one of the soldiers to take him along.

Doubting his mission, Taymas (Nuker) decides to leave the girl with his mother and seek answers. However, Ayla, after visiting a contaminated source, becomes seriously ill, and the Korkuts with their leader SAVAS (war) come for her. Taymas defends the girl, fighting them off.

As Ayla's condition worsens, Taymas takes her to Baikonur, where she could be treated. Denied help there, Ayla dies in Nuker's arms. In anger, he wrecks everything around him and is remotely deactivated.

After burying the girl, he returns to his mother's dwelling, where an old man tells him that the Korkuts are not terrible; they try to help people. They came for Ayla to save her.

Taymas descends to the underground city, where he meets Savas, who turns out to be a girl named MELEK (angel). She removes the chips from his body. After this, he remembers that

children are not taken for a carefree life.

Residents of Jannat have lost the ability to give birth to children. They use Dogu children to restore their reproductive function.

Taymas and Melek, gathering people, head to Baikonur to save the Dogu children.

There, they fight against cyborgs, many die. At the crucial moment, Dogu come to their aid, and together they defeat the cyborgs and take the children.

Dogu and the underground people rejoice, burning down Baikonur as they leave.

Melek finds Taymas dead in battle. They take his body and bury him as a human, next to Ayla.

Melek helps the Dogu people take down their kites.

Director's note

As the director of «The Future Epic,» I envision a gripping narrative that delves into themes of societal division, resilience, and the quest for redemption amidst a postapocalyptic backdrop. Our story unfolds in a world torn apart by nuclear devastation, where the remnants of humanity are segregated between the privileged elite aboard the Space Station Jannat and the less fortunate inhabitants of the underground city of Tozok. At its core, our film explores the dichotomy between the haves and the havenots, embodied by the contrasting fates of those dwelling in Jannat and those struggling to survive in Tozok. The elite, ensconced in their orbital sanctuary, represent a semblance of order and hope, while the denizens of Tozok, dubbed the Korkut, grapple with the harsh realities of their subterranean existence.

Central to our narrative are the Dogu, a resilient group of individuals who have adapted to the radiation-ridden surface of Earth, clinging to the hope of a better future for their children.

Symbolized by their kites fluttering against the toxic winds, the Dogu embody the indomitable spirit of humanity amidst adversity.

Our protagonist, Taymas, initially known as Nuker,

epitomizes the journey of selfdiscovery and redemption. As a cyborg tasked with ferrying children from Earth to Jannat, Taymas grapples with his identity and purpose. Through his encounters with Ayla, a mute girl with a profound intuition, Taymas confronts his past and ultimately embraces his humanity.

The pivotal moments of our film are underscored by themes of sacrifice and salvation. Taymas's decision to defy his directives and protect Ayla, even at the cost of his own life, symbolizes the triumph of compassion over indoctrination. Likewise, the revelation of Jannat's true nature as a facade for exploitation ignites a collective uprising led by Taymas and Melek, culminating in a daring rescue mission to liberate the Dogu children from their fate as fodder for the elite's machinations.

In crafting the visual and thematic elements of «The Future Epic,» I aim to immerse the audience in a world both hauntingly dystopian and achingly hopeful. From the desolate landscapes scarred by nuclear fallout to the ethereal vistas of space, every frame will evoke a sense of awe and introspection. Through meticulous attention to detail and nuanced performances, we will breathe life into characters grappling with their place in a fractured world, inviting audiences to ponder the timeless question of what it truly means to be human.

Ultimately, «The Future Epic» is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of empathy. It is a cinematic odyssey that transcends genre conventions to deliver a poignant meditation on the enduring quest for meaning and redemption in a world teetering on the brink of oblivion.

Producer's note

As the producer and screenwriter of the project, I am thrilled to express my enthusiasm for bringing the project «The Future Epic» to life in the best possible way.

THE FUTURE EPIC

This project is the culmination of collaborative creativity with my mother, Dalmira Tilepbergen, a director and screenwriter herself. I am confident that we complement each other perfectly - she with her knowledge and experience, and I with a fresh perspective and structured approach.

«The Future Epic» is a drama set in the world of a science fiction dystopia, unveiling both personal and universal conflicts, touching upon themes of conscious choice, acceptance of responsibility, and the pursuit of a higher purpose. As the project's producer, the message we convey in our future film is of utmost importance to me. I believe the meanings we've embedded will be clearly understood by the audience thanks to our metaphorical storytelling.

The metaphorical nature of the plot is crucial to our story. Two worlds - the Heavenly City of Jannat and the Underground City of Tozok - embody the sacred symbols of Heaven and Hell. These worlds vie for humanity, or what remains of it. People hope for assistance from Heaven, unwilling to take responsibility for their lives, and fear Hell, unwilling to confront their fears and understand themselves.

Our story introduces a plot twist. Jannat (Heaven) becomes a detached entity, observing from above without engaging in the sorrows and anxieties of the people. The people see only a reflection high in the sky, not even knowing who lives there, and whether there remains anyone there in the sense of humanity. The inhabitants of Jannat are «detached from Earth.» Tozok (Hell) turns out not to be what the people of Dogu thought.

Just as they delved deep into the Earth, the Korkutys (inhabitants of Tozok) also delved deep into understanding consciousness and human nature. They lost their usual appearance but gained something more spiritually significant. They are empathetic, they are «closer to Earth.» In our story, the Earth plays one of the central roles - it is a plundered and abandoned planet that, after enduring shocks, grants special abilities to a new generation of people who remain living on it - the Dogu people. The inhabitants of Jannat, having distanced themselves from Earth, lost their ability to reproduce. All they have left is to take children from Earth for study and experimentation in the hope of possibly adopting the reproductive

function. This storyline leads us to the perception of Earth as a mother who gave life to humanity and what we offer in return for this priceless gift.

This brings us to another message about the conscious choice of humanity's future. The alarming state of the world indicates that we, as humanity, are on the brink of a global catastrophe. On one side is the daunting political agenda - the metaphorical Doomsday Clock has never been closer to midnight than now, and on the other is the eco-agenda, which forces us to choose between conscious consumption for the benefit of future generations and the immediate satisfaction of selfish desires.

Regarding the production aspect, I envision our project as a symbiosis between art cinema with elements of the adventure science fiction genre. I plan to structure the film in such a way that it will be attractive for both Class A festivals and commercial screenings in cinemas.

«The Future Epic» is my debut project as a producer. Although I have experience working in a production team, this project marks a new chapter in my career, and I am fully committed and ready to work on the project with total dedication. I am confident that this film can make a significant contribution to world cinema, and I will make every effort to realize it in the best possible way.

Director's biography

- Dalmira Tilepbergen is a film director, screenwriter, and poet with over 20 years of experience in film and literature.
- Her debut feature film, «*Under Heaven*» (2015), garnered several awards and prizes at numerous film festivals worldwide.
- Her second feature, «*The Gift*» (2023), had its World Premiere at the 2023 Venice International Film Festival, where it screened in the Production Bridge Program.
- Dalmira is a member of the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC), recognized as one of the leading authorities on Asian cinema.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2023: «*The Gift*» - Full-length feature film,

88 min. - Film Director / Screenwriter

- 2015: «*Under Heaven*» - Full-length feature film, 88 min. - Film Director / Screenwriter
- 2012: «*Well-being*» - Short fiction film, 15 min. - Film Director / Screenwriter
- 2011: «*Year of Fire*» - Documentary Film, 26 min - Film Director / Screenwriter
- 2010: «*The Most Terrible Weapon*» - Documentary Film, 52 min - Film Director / Screenwriter
- 2007: «*First Born*» - Fiction film, 15 min - Film Director / Screenwriter / Producer
- 2005: «*Crush Down from the Seventh Floor.*» - Documentary Film, 20 min - Film Director / Screenwriter / Producer
- 2004: «*Fragile Wings*» - Documentary Film, 25 min - Film Director / Screenwriter
- 2001: «*Tomogo*» (Cap for Falcon) - Fiction film, 25 min. Awards: Prize for Best Director of Feature Films and the Special Jury Award at the International Film Festival of Young Filmmakers 'Look in a New' in Almaty (September 2001). Participation at Film Forum of the CIS and Baltic States in Moscow (May 2002). Special Prize for Best Director - INPUT 2006, Taiwan, Taipei.
- 1996-2000: «*Beshkempir*» - Full-length feature film - Film Administrator

Production company's filmography

- Aisha Kamchibekova currently holds the position of Director at «Tasma Creative Group» LLC.
- Previously, from 2012 to 2017, worked as an associated producer at «Aitysh Film» studio
- During the same period, she played a key role in organizing the film festival «Kyrgyzstan is the country of short films».
- Additionally, she contributed to the production of films such as «Tomogo», «Kurmanjan Datka», «Under Heaven», and «The Gift».
- Aisha Kamchibekova also has experience as a screenwriter.

Aisha Kamchibekova



Dalmira Tilepbergen

