

66°

Festival del film Locarno

7-17 | 8 | 2013

Open Doors

Focus on the South Caucasus:
Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

10-13 | 8 | 2013



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Abysm

Oksana Mirzoyan

Armenia



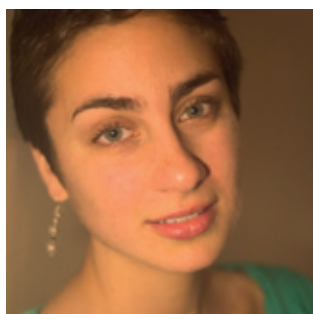
Oksana Mirzoyan
Director

Director's biography

Oksana Mirzoyan was born in 1984 in Baku, Azerbaijan, but later fled the ethnic conflict that coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union and relocated to the U.S. In 2012, Oksana wrote and directed the successful short film *140 Drams*, which Atom Egoyan called "the hope kindled by the new generation of Armenian filmmakers".

Filmography

Le Petit Bijou (2010)
140 Drams (2012)



Emily Mkrtichian
Producer

Production company profile

G Production is a collection of three friends making films they are passionate about.

Production filmography

140 Drams, Oksana Mirzoyan (2012)

Technical Information

Fiction / 90' / HD / Color

Production Status:
Writing & development

Shooting Language:
Armenian

Shooting Start:
12/2014

Total Budget:
146,124 Euro

Funds Secured:
45,000 Euro

Production Company:
G Productions

Contacts:
emily.mkrtichian@gmail.com

Synopsis

An abrupt and unexplained tragedy has struck a small family. A mother and daughter have lost their brother and son. He died while serving in the army, in the remote borderlands between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We watch the survivors of the family for the 40 days of mourning following the death.

The soldier's twin sister feels the death as a combination of the deep personal loss of a piece of her own body and mind, but also with the dull numbness of a listless teenager. She has her own dreams of becoming a great writer, but is convinced she must go abroad to be successful. Now, with the loss of her brother, she knows that she must always remain near to her mother and take care of her. Still, in the wake of her brother's death, she continues to write, hoping that she can find some way to express herself and her feeling of loss.

The soldier's mother is devastated. We see her turn from the one who was always the caregiver to someone in need of care. She finds love and support in her young daughter and also in a long unacknowledged love interest.

The film begins with scenes from a traditional Armenian Orthodox funeral: covered furniture, clocks stopped at the time of the son and brother's death, a coffin in the living room, the rhythmic shuffle of visitors in and out; and ends with a eulogy delivered by the twin who still remains, the only one left to tell the story.

In these 40 days, this mother and daughter try to find and heal the empty space left by their son and brother. Mourning is a period when miscommunication abounds, pain and pleasure are heightened, and expression can only take place through moments of pure silence or allegory. In a small apartment in a small city, they search for things to fill the emptiness – love, religion, family, friends, passions, and creation.

Their own emotions are set against the backdrop of a country riddled with its own empty spaces and unanswered questions.

Director's Note

This is a story of empty spaces. Physical spaces, like the forbidden and untouchable green pastures that separate the front lines of the Nagorno-Karabakh war. And the psychological spaces left behind by the loss of a life, due to that war. In what way do we all have our empty spaces - our unanswered questions and traumas - and how do we try to make them whole? *Abysm* is my attempt to express this emptiness, this void that we all know and which becomes a part of our bodies and our worlds as we grow up – not only as a sad, mournful thing, but as something which we hold in common and which brings us all together.

House of Others

Rusudan Glurjidze

Georgia / France



Rusudan Glurjidze
Director

Director's biography

Rusudan Glurjidze was born in Tbilisi, Georgia, in July 1972. From 1990 to 1996 she studied Film Directing and Scriptwriting in George Shengelaia's class at the Georgian State Film & Theatre Institute. Rusudan's films were successfully screened and mentioned at official selections and special programs at many international film festivals.

Filmography

Nocturni (1993)
Oscari (1996)



Zurab Magalashvili
Producer
Cinetech, Georgia



Juliette Lepoutre
Co-producer
MPM Film, France

Production company profile

Cinetech is one of the most dynamically developing independent film production companies in Georgia. The company was founded in 2006 as a result of a merger of several successful production studios and administrative organizations in the film sector. Its aim is to produce and co-produce the work of independent filmmakers.

Production filmography

Ori, Miguel Ángel Jiménez Colmenar (2010)
Chaika, Miguel Ángel Jiménez Colmenar (2012)
Dzma, Teona Mgvdeladze-Grenade and Thierry Grenade (2013)

Technical Information

Fiction / 110' / Digital / Color

Production Status:
Pre-production

Shooting Language:
Georgian, Russian

Shooting Start:
11/2013

Total Budget:
700,500 Euro

Funds Secured:
140,000 Euro

Production Company:
Cinetech Film Production

Contacts:
ycfgeo@yahoo.com

Co-production Company:
MPM Film, France

Synopsis

Can you return to what was once your home after you escaped and survived a terrifying war, when your home is now occupied by the "winners"? Any chances for new life, or leave again?

The Caucasus in the 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR. Military hostilities are already in the past. Nobody is being killed. Calm has settled. The sacrifices made are justified. The winners are not being tried. Everything that was previously owned by the defeated now belongs to them.

A downpour. A decrepit military vehicle covered in mud creeps up the rain-washed, bumpy road. In the distance, a village appears with its scattered houses spread along the flank of a hill. Not a single living soul can be seen through the barren fences, deserted yards and cross-shaped nailed windows. The car staggers along the uninhabited village road and stops next to one of the houses. Earlier, this house belonged to someone, but it was abandoned inside an hour one night, just like the other houses. People left the village in fear. Driven by the instinct to survive, everything was left as it was, only the cattle were driven away.

The driver, a forty-year-old military man, who was awarded the ownership of that village after the war, brings a family of dejected citizens to one of the houses. A family who had lost their dwelling due to armed clashes. A new life has to start in that house where twilight sheds its sepulchral glow over the frozen rooms, the bleak village roads, the deserted cemetery, and the booby-trapped citrus plantations growing wild.

They meet another family, who have been placed in the same deserted village, but are displaced at the same time. After having lost their house and their identity somewhere else, they are now supposed to look for a new beginning.

But for them it seems impossible to create a peaceful environment. The war continues, or rather what they do is continue to fight - without soldiers, without deaths and bombs...

The fertile land stands in stark contrast to the absence of the people who once lived here. Finally, the new inhabitants have to decide whether to stay or leave.

Director's Note

This is my story of my personal pain because 20 years ago I lost my own home, and with it I lost my childhood, my memories, my past and part of my identity. I remember how a continuous flood of refugees headed for the frozen capital, wrapped in darkness. As they ran away they were sure that they would come back soon, but twenty years have passed and still they wait to return to their homes. My desire to make this film came from our Georgian story, but it has become a universal problem. Due to all sorts of tragic events, numerous people have lost and are still losing their own home or country, a part of their soul now owned by others.

Khibula

George Ovashvili

Georgia / France / Germany



George Ovashvili
Director

Director's biography

George Ovashvili is from Tbilisi, Georgia. He graduated from the film department of the Georgian State Institute of Cinema and Theatre in 1996. His first feature film *Gagma Napiri (The Other Bank)* won over 50 international awards. He was selected for L'Atelier at Cannes 2011 and is currently filming his second feature film *Corn Island*.

Filmography

Wagonette (1996)
Mzeris Doneze (Eye Level) (2005)
Gagma Napiri (The Other Bank) (2009)



Nino Devdariani
Producer

Production company profile

Alamdary LLC was founded in 2002 by George Ovashvili and Nino Devdariani. Its focus is on producing films that – although primarily about the modern history of Georgia – aim to tell universal stories about the way war and conflict affect people's lives and minds. Alamdary has co-produced its films with a variety of companies from France, Germany, Czech Republic and Kazakhstan.

Production filmography

Gagma Napiri (The Other Bank), George Ovashvili (2009)
Corn Island, George Ovashvili (in production)

Technical Information

Fiction / 120' / 35mm / Color

Production Status:
Writing & development

Shooting Language:
Georgian

Shooting Start:
10/2014

Total Budget:
915,000 Euro

Funds Secured:
164,000 Euro

Production Company:
Alamdary LLC

Contacts:
alamdary@ymail.com

Co-production Companies:
Arizona Productions,
Guillaume de Seille, France

42film GmbH,
Eike Goreczka, Germany

Synopsis

Khibula begins when the President of a newly independent former Soviet state flees his presidential palace as an insurgent army is about to take over the city. With a group of armed supporters he flees into the mountainous region where he was born. In a village deep in a valley he is welcomed as a saviour. Things change when reports reach the President's entourage about heavily armed militia who are apparently in pursuit of the President. The President decides to flee further up into the mountains, on foot. He doesn't want to endanger his hosts and, furthermore, there are rumoured to be loyal troops in a village near the country's northern border. The President is confident these troops will help him regain the power he was democratically elected to.

The journey into the mountains turns out to be full of pain and suffering, both physical and psychological. It is cold in the mountain and the pursuers are not only human but also animal. The sound of airplanes, gunshots and the howling of wolves chase the President from hide-out to hide-out. He also notices that the group of armed supporters with whom he left his Presidential Palace has shrunk to a mere handful of loyal soldiers.

It turns out that there are no loyal troops waiting to help the President regain power. His prime confidant – the former First Minister – tries to persuade the President to go into exile in the neighbouring country where he will be able to join his wife and children. The President doesn't want to talk to his wife on the telephone and he bluntly refuses to leave his country: his place is with his people.

The President chooses to remain on the run. It is unclear where he intends to go and it seems as if the people who he thought were with him for protection are actually his captors. If the President does not know where he will go next, what about his guards – or captors?

The final stages of the President's journey have all the makings of a self-sacrificial descent into martyrdom. It seems as if the President is surrounded by disciples who have all turned into Judases to a Christ without followers. The cold and rugged landscape looks on as the President meets his fate in *Khibula*, his own personal Golgotha.

Director's Note

Khibula will tell a visual story of sacrifice, betrayal, power and decline. Although the story is based on the life (and death) of Zviad Gamsakhurdia – the first president of Georgia – there are human archetypes buried in the story. Julius Caesar, the passion of Christ and King Lear are all archetypes of power, sacrifice and decline. The story of *Khibula* is not in any way an attempt to tell the true story of Gamsakhurdia's mysterious death. I want to record a man's final journey as if I am part of the guilty Caucasian landscape that looks on passively as a once powerful man meets his fate.

Long Gardens

Nika Shek

Armenia / Azerbaijan



Nika Shek
Director, Producer



Sarik Hovsepyan
Director

Director's biographies

Born in Armenia in 1982, Nika Shek graduated in 2002 from the Russian State University of Cinematography (VGIK). Her short and documentary films have received awards and nominations around the world. She participated in the Berlinale Talent Campus. She has just finished her first feature film.

Sarik Hovsepyan was born in Armenia in 1974. Since 2002 he has been working as a producer and has produced 7 documentaries, 5 shorts and one feature film. *Long Gardens* is his debut as a director.

Filmography

The Song of Stones (2001)
There I Saw the World (2002)
From Two Worlds as a Keepsake (2012)

Production company profile

The company was set up in 2006 by Nika Shek and Sarik Hovsepyan. Since its creation Fund after Aghasi Ayvazyan has produced or co-produced 5 shorts, 6 documentaries and one feature film.

Production filmography

From Two Worlds as a Keepsake, Nika Shek (2012)
Fantastic Nostalgia, Nika Shek, Sarik Hovsepyan (in development)

Technical Information

Documentary / 90' / HD / Color

Production Status:
Development

Shooting Language:
Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani

Shooting Start:
11/2013

Total Budget:
300,000 Euro

Funds Secured:
10,000 Euro

Production Company:
Fund after Aghasi Ayvazyan

Contacts:
nikashek@gmail.com

Synopsis

Two neighboring countries – Armenia and Azerbaijan – have been in ethno-political conflict since 1988. In May 1994 an armistice was signed between the parties of the conflict. The agreement is valid to this day but the borders are still closed.

There are two stories interwoven into one another in our film. The first is: "We Have Parted without War", about the inhabitants of two villages – one Armenian (Kerkenj) and one Azerbaijani (Kizil-Shafag) – who peacefully made exchange of their villages, houses and properties. A story about the past, about the amazing people who have become hostages of a conflict kindled by politicians, and who have shown a high degree of courage and mutual support, as well as the ability not to yield to provocation, to control their emotions and, more importantly, to understand that those on the other side of the border are victims of the same situation as they are, not enemies with whom dialogue is impossible.

All these qualities will be needed for the heroes of our second story: "We Choose Peace" – about the Present, about us – five directors from Armenia and Azerbaijan, about the sympathy arising between us, about relations based on more subtle feelings than those of hatred and, in consequence, the voluntary decision to ignore the political situation and jointly create a film about the Past, Present and Eternal.

This story will show the development of our relations during the creation of the film, a unique exchange between the villages – proving the possibility of inter-ethnic dialogue.

Director's Note

Long Gardens as a joint project by Armenian and Azerbaijani filmmakers. The first and most striking fact is that this will be the first ever attempt to make a common film project by partners from countries long engaged in conflict (25 years). This film is the first joint project of Independent Filmmakers from Armenia and Azerbaijan. Also this project is unique in fact that it needs the support of a third – neutral – party, who will act as both general producer and budget distributor, and will be the intermediary for creating a common platform for the final postproduction stage.

Madona Nino Gogua

Georgia



Nino Gogua
Director

Director's biography

Nino Gogua was born in Tbilisi in 1988. She graduated in TV-Radio journalism at Tbilisi State University. She has been working for *No Comment*, a news-reporting program on TV, for print and online media as well as for the Georgian Literature Museum as a cultural event manager. She tried her first non-budget documentary project two years ago.

Filmography

Nok10 (2011)
St.3d (2012)



Natia Guliashvili
Producer

Production company profile

CineMark was set up in spring 2012 by Georgian directors and producers. It soon found support for its first project, *Madona*, from the Georgian National Film Center; the project was also nominated for the Robert Bosch Prize for Co-production competition in Berlin and Wiesbaden, in 2011 and 2012. It was also a participant in the Baltic Sea Forum for Documentaries in 2012.

Production filmography

The Things, Nino Gogua (in pre-production)
Venera, Eka Tchitanava (in production)
When You Are Not Young Any More, Tsira Gvasalia (in production)

Technical Information

Documentary / 60' / HD / Color

Production Status:
In production

Shooting Language:
Georgian

Shooting Start:
08/2012

Total Budget:
50,000 Euro

Funds Secured:
23,000 Euro

Production Company:
Cinemark

Contacts:
cinemarkgeorgia@gmail.com

Synopsis

55 year-old Madona Naroushvili is the only female public bus driver in Georgia. Once famous – a proletarian hero as a tram driver – she is now a woman struggling against the stigmas and privations of the conservative culture.

Doing a so-called “man’s” job, not being “feminine enough”, she lives alone with her mother in a small, one room apartment. Even Madona’s mother nods when people say, “You have a son, not a daughter”. In conflict with her family and society, she refuses to give up her passion for driving.

Though masculine endeavors set Madona apart, she will not be recast and continues to fight for her identity as a woman who defies gender expectations. Driving her whole life, having every type of driving license, proving that she can do this “manly job” professionally, hasn’t been enough to make society rethink its heteronormative values.

In this documentary portrait we glimpse the present and historical circumstances, the hopes and the determination that have driven her. It’s a picture of her never-ending fight.

She owns a little room in the former administrative building of the tram service where all the other former tram drivers live. Madona has decided to improve her life herself – she begins to renovate the little room she owns, for first time in her life, she wants to have what she deserves, a normal way of living. And for this not only does she work hard as a bus driver to save money, but she also rebuilds everything in the house with her own hands, alone. She does everything – from making a cement floor to rewiring the power circuit and repairing broken walls.

Despite her efforts the home is becoming unsafe – only 50 m from the tram building a huge construction project for a new line is going on. The site fills Madona’s and her neighbors’ houses with dust and noise, and their lives with fear – if their tram home were demolished, where would they go?

Today Madona drives the number 84 bus once every two days for 12 hours. The film portrays her, the society around her and the delicate conflict about her social gender role, observing the development of her aim – to renovate her apartment despite the new rail line. Though Madona could rebuild her flat almost alone, it asks, will she be able to enjoy it?

Director's Note

As I see it, what Madona is struggling for is to legitimize her own taste, her decision, her professionalism, her social role as a female, her right to be happy not looking at what kind of job she has. For me she is struggling with a traditional, strict society, questioning heteronormative values. In fighting back she gets hurt, but she does not give up. And that makes her special to me.

For me personally this story is not about driving as a fact. Everyone could be Madona, everything could be “a car” – an occasion for a conflict. Also my challenge is not to prove or underestimate Madona’s way of life, but to show the process of her struggle.

Naked in Baku

Arzu Gulijeva

Azerbaijan / Estonia



Arzu Gulijeva
Director

Director's biography

Arzu Gulijeva (born in 1987) graduated from the University of Tartu with a BA degree in sociology and social work. She has been involved in several audiovisual and TV projects in Azerbaijan and Estonia as a co-author. Since 2011 she has been working on her own creative documentary project in collaboration with the film production company Silmviburlane.

Filmography

Naked in Baku will be Arzu Gulijeva's debut film.



Ülo Pikkov
Producer

Production company profile

Silmviburlane, set up in 2006, is a small and mobile film production company in Tallinn, which produces animation and documentary films by young directors. In 2010 Silmviburlane co-produced a 57-minute documentary *Normal*, which was the winner of the Robert Bosch Stiftung Promotional Prize for Joint Film Productions by German and Eastern European filmmakers.

Production filmography

Normal, Sandra Van Slooten, Volker Maria Engel, Heilika Pikkov (2010)
Big House, Kristjan Holm (2011)
Flowers from the Mount of Olives, Heilika Pikkov (2013)

Technical Information

Documentary / 70' / HD / Color

Production Status:
Writing & development

Shooting Language:
Azerbaijani

Shooting Start:
01/2014

Total Budget:
110,620 Euro

Funds Secured:
7,620 Euro

Production Company:
Silmviburlane

Contacts:
ylo@silmviburlane.ee

Synopsis

In the midst of the turbulent development of the South Caucasian oil capital, Baku, where residents are woken not by alarm clocks but by the *muezzin* sunrise call-to-prayer, and evening television leaves no room for even the most innocent form of erotica, lives a young man named Vusal – a nude model working at the Academy of Art.

Vusal, the protagonist, comes from a family of intellectuals in a small village in the mountains. After finishing school, he fulfilled his parents' wish for him to continue his education in the Azerbaijan capital Baku. After receiving his university diploma, Vusal's life took a completely different turn, one that deviated from traditional Moslem morals, a successful career and his former image of himself. He became a nude model in an art school and a professional *bon vivant*, something very far from his parents' original dreams for him, challenging many taboos around nudity and sexuality.

Vusal has had many lovers. Some of them pre-arranged married women, others young ladies coming from strict and traditional Moslem families. He likes to photograph his beautiful lovers after having sex with them and the women, although they risk the wrath of society, do not mind photos being published on his Facebook profile. Vusal considers his photographs to be an art form and finds nothing shameful about them. Women are conscious of the fact he has more than one girl and take it surprisingly calmly, although sometimes they fall in love with him and end up broken-hearted.

After being in a big fight with his neighbours Vusal is kicked out of his apartment. The neighbours don't like the fact that he has so many female visitors. They think that women should only visit men after marriage because then there is no danger of "THAT" happening between them. Being homeless and with serious money problems, Vusal becomes depressed and leaves on a trip to Georgia where he meets his new love, Monika – a young Lithuanian girl from a similar family background. They fall in love and after 7 months they get married. But not everything seems to be so good now. Vusal is struggling between his lovers and his new wife.

The story speaks about freedom and how different "right" and "wrong" can be. The story speaks about young people who want to enjoy their lives despite their environment. The story speaks about the struggle between the Caucasian identity and western influence, that seems so tempting yet is so hard to grasp.

Director's Note

Vusal has a special interest in women and their bodies. Being an Azeri woman myself and knowing the fact that even nowadays it is strictly forbidden in many families to have any sexual relationship with a man before marriage, made me wonder - do Vusal's women hide their relationship from their families? What makes them take risks like this? I met Vusal's lovers. Some of them revealed a heartbreaking story about their lives and family relations. There, it was clear to me – these girls have reasons to risk being his lovers and have stories to tell to the world. The central theme in this film is freedom and the way it relates to mentality and sexuality.

Pipeline

Asif Rustamov

Azerbaijan / Germany



Asif Rustamov
Director, Producer

Director's biography

Asif Rustamov was born in 1975 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and studied both at a private Economic University and in the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Art's film direction faculty. He works as a film director as well as editor, scriptwriter and producer. His filmography includes shorts and documentaries. Since 2009 he has worked at the Buta Film Cinema Company.

Filmography

The House (2007)
With the Back to Kiblah (2009)
Downstream (in production)



Ayhan Salar
Co-producer
Salarfilm Produktion, Germany

Production company profile

The Buta Film company was set up by Ilgar Najaf to produce films in 2005, since when it has brought together a group of young filmmakers. Most productions are documentary and short films, but there are a few low budget feature films, too. In 2011 Buta Film produced its first feature film – *Buta* – which won an Asian Pacific Screen Award for Best Children's Feature Film.

Production filmography

With the Back to Kiblah, Asif Rustamov (2009)
The Last, Teymur Daimi (2011)
Buta, Ilgar Najaf (2011)

Technical Information

Fiction / 85' / digital / Color

Production Status:
Writing & development

Shooting Language:
Azerbaijani

Shooting Start:
08/2014

Total Budget:
400,000 Euro

Funds Secured:
20,000 Euro

Production Company:
Buta Film

Contacts:
asif_rustamov@yahoo.com

Co-production Company:
Salarfilm Produktion, Germany

Synopsis

The film's protagonist Rasul (40) is a simple-minded and kind shepherd, a Karabakh refugee (Karabakh is an Azerbaijan territory occupied by Armenian forces due to ethnic war between these countries). He lives in a desert-like valley with his wife Marina and two children. Rasul's main occupation is to graze a little flock of sheep in the shrubby steppe for scant reward. He spends every day observing nature and his animals in complete solitude. His family lives in poverty. They often remember how happy their life was back home in Karabakh. They watch television - mostly Turkish soap operas and news.

Once, Rasul is visited by his brother Ali who suggests that Rasul should apply for a job as a guard for the oil pipeline nearby. Ali uses his connections to get Rasul this job. Now Rasul every day covers the total distance of 30 kilometers, making a roundtrip.

Patrolling his territory one day, Rasul witnesses a crime scene. Two gangsters get out of an expensive jeep, drag a victim from the trunk and plan to kill him. Rasul kills both gangsters at the very last moment with his rifle and saves the stranger. The victim turns out to be a rich businessman by the name of Abbas who owns a number of gas stations in city. As an expression of Abbas' gratitude to his savior, he promises to help Rasul whenever he can.

But Abbas realizes that sooner or later the gangsters will come for him again, and so he anonymously informs on Rasul to them. When the gangsters come to the village, a shootout ensues between them and Rasul. Rasul is wounded but the gangsters have to retreat. Ali arrives just in time to take Rasul to the doctor. The gangsters come back to the valley in their absence. They seize the sheep and set both the cabin and the stall on fire. Marina and the children, who have hidden in the stall, are suffocated by the smoke and die in the fire.

Rasul is terrified by what has happened while he was gone. Having buried his wife and children and repaid the owners of the sheep, he leaves the valley for the city.

Abbas meets him there. Abbas promises Rasul to give him a job at a gas station.

Rasul starts his new job a couple of days later. All he has to do is to fuel the tanks of cars with gas, most of them being high priced jeeps. Rasul quickly comes to the realization that Abbas intends no vengeance on the gangsters.

Rasul returns to the valley and resumes his work as a pipeline guard, walking 15 kilometers every day in both directions.

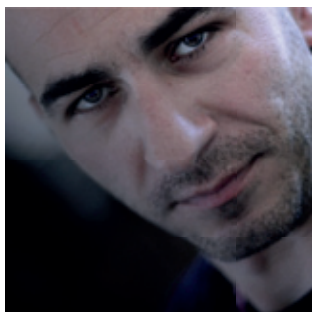
Director's Note

Rasul left his native land due to a nationality conflict that proved to be beneficial to the financial oligarchs and local politicians as a measure of control of the region and its resources. Rasul becomes a refugee for the second time. This time, it is a businessman, Abbas, who sacrifices Rasul for financial gain. A simple-minded shepherd becomes a victim of a criminal conflict between people he doesn't know. While they are busy making a profit, he loses everything he has. Even this time, however, Rasul fails to learn the lesson.

See you in Chechnya

Alexander Kvatashidze

Georgia / France / Estonia / Netherlands



Alexander Kvatashidze
Director, Producer

Director's biography

Alexander Kvatashidze graduated from Nikoladze Art College in 1996 and then from Tbilisi State University in 2001 with a BA. In 2006 he completed a graduate course at California State University in San Jose, Department of Film and Television. Since 2001 Alexander has been a DOP for many local and international film and TV projects and gradually moved to directing and editing.

Filmography

Pilot (2004)
Goodbye (2006)



Rebecca Houzel
Co-producer
Petit à Petit Production, France



Eero Talvistu
Co-producer
Exitfilm, Estonia

Production company profile

Lokokina Studio was set up in Tbilisi in 2008 by two filmmakers: Alexander Kvatashidze and Nikoloz Tarielashvili. Both have over ten years of experience in film. Lokokina Studio has produced and co-produced three documentaries and two short films. Currently the company is developing two documentaries and one fiction film.

Production filmography

The knights of Georgian Chant, Nana Janelidze (2009)
Will there be a theatre up there, Nana Janelidze (2011)
The Audience Hall, Nico Tarielashvili (2013)

Technical Information

Documentary / 90' / HD / Color

Production Status:
In production

Shooting Language:
Georgian, French, Italian,
English, Russian

Shooting Start:
07/2012

Total Budget:
220,000 Euro

Funds Secured:
45,000 Euro

Production Company:
Lokokina Studio

Contacts:
sandygeorgia@gmail.com

Co-production Companies:
Petit à Petit Production, France
Exitfilm, Estonia
DNU Film,
Rolf Oryhel, Netherlands

Synopsis

If you go to war, the war will come home with you...

When I was 22 I went to war. And I took my camera.

But I didn't go because I wanted to make my career as a journalist or a filmmaker.

I went because I was in love.

In my home country, Georgia, in 1999, I met a French photographer called Françoise. She told me she was going to cross the Caucasus Mountains to photograph the war in Chechnya. All we Georgians knew about Chechnya was that it was a kind of hell on earth, a place where Islamic fundamentalists played football with journalists' severed heads. So I realized that I had to go with Françoise, to protect her.

I was a young, naive art student who wanted to prove to this alluring and talented older woman that I was not just a kid – although, of course, I still was. I knew that I could be kidnapped or killed, but desire was stronger than fear.

My trip to Chechnya brought me into contact with war reporters: an exceptional tribe of courageous idealists, hardcore conflict veterans and eccentric adventurers who risk their lives and their relationships with their loved ones to report the truth.

The interconnected tales of six of these intrepid and charismatic people – and the story of my friendships with them – form the basis of this film. Throughout thirteen years of timeline we follow the stories of their ambitious projects and professional success. But there are consequences, too: kidnapping, murder and suicide.

The film takes place against the backdrop of the war in Chechnya; a particularly bloody conflict which has now been forgotten by most of the world. But this could be any war, in any country. As I reflect on the motives which drove these people – people I knew and admired – to risk everything to tell the world what was happening in this inhospitable mountain enclave, I offer a fascinating insight into the peculiar psychology of war reporters: contemporary heroes whose business is death, and who have to face up to their own mortality every time they go to work.

Director's Note

This film is about a part of my life.

It tells a story of a very intense and enthralling phase I went through in my twenties and it involves people who will remain in my memory as individuals who helped me become who I am today.

Although it is a personal story, a love story one might say, it explores notions of universal concern. The film's characters are the war reporters who stand behind the images that reach us, but who themselves are mostly forgotten or ignored. My curiosity focuses on the motivation behind why these people go to war, to the places that locals run away from. What questions they carry, what they want to learn from war, and what they actually end up with.

Sleeping Lessons

Rusudan Pirveli

Georgia



Rusudan Pirveli
Director

Director's biography

Rusudan Pirveli graduated in Japanese and film directing. Her shorts and documentaries – experimental, narrative, comedy and drama – have been screened at numerous festivals. Her first fiction feature, *Susa*, was selected for Berlin, Rotterdam and San Francisco and was awarded 2 Grand-Prix, Best Director, Best Actor and Special Prize at various festivals. She is also an editor.

Filmography

Neighbours (2001)
The Window (2005)
Susa (2010)



Aleksandre Chkhaidze
Producer

Production company profile

Caucasian Filmmodrom is a relatively young company based in Tbilisi, Georgia. Set up as an independent film company, it aims to support projects and films by young Caucasian filmmakers. The company develops and produces short, documentary and feature films, cooperating with international partners in both creative and executive roles.

Production filmography

The Window, Rusudan Pirveli (2005)
Azari, Aleksandre Chkhaidze (2008)
Susa, Rusudan Pirveli (2010)

Technical Information

Fiction / 100' / HD / Color

Production Status:

Writing & development

Shooting Language:

Georgian

Shooting Start:

10/2013

Total Budget:

400,000 Euro

Funds Secured:

185,000 Euro

Production Company:

Caucasian Filmmodrom

Contacts:

pirveli@hotmail.com

Synopsis

Zuka (19) and his friends spend all their days together on the street, having fun, racing cars at high speed, jumping out of abandoned buildings, settling disputes with other youngsters with their fists, hanging out in the yard and so on.

One day a friend Jibe asks Zuka to help him commit a robbery. The random victim of their first crime is a woman (39). They threaten her with a knife and take away her jewelry and handbag. Life goes on in the usual way until one day Zuka comes across the woman they robbed. He opens up to Filter (45), whom he moved in with after the police began investigating the robbery, revealing the embarrassing feeling left by running into the woman. The talkative Filter interprets Zuka's story in his own way, arousing Zuka's curiosity and interest towards the woman, inspiring him to make efforts to approach her. Zuka tries to get acquainted with the woman, and starts night telephone conversations with her. Eventually he succeeds and the woman agrees to meet him. Here their bizarre love affair begins. The woman leads their relations. She imposes rules and creates tension. Zuka completely loses his head over her. Zuka's friends continue their entertainment. But Zuka is involved with less enthusiasm. Frequently their violence is against their own friends.

Zuka and the woman meet each other regularly, in secret. Their relationship becomes more and more intimate and profound. The friends want to get hold of a weapon. This becomes another reason to increase the distance between them and Zuka. Zuka tries to avoid his friends. He spends more and more time with the woman and Filter. His friends become suspicious. They openly accuse him of betrayal and indifference. Involuntarily Zuka shows violence towards the woman. It's hard for her, but she manages to forgive.

The friends try to find out the reason for Zuka's estrangement. He refuses to satisfy their curiosity and does not answer their questions. They try to find out his secret on their own.

Impudent interference by his street friends puts an abrupt end to Zuka's love affair. Having lost the woman, Zuka is desperate, he attacks his friends. Zuka suffers badly from his loss and tries everything to get the woman back, but in vain. In a final attempt he gets involved in another criminal act, which also involves Filter and leads them to tragedy.

Director's Note

The story is full of strong emotions, unexpected plot twists and strong characters with distinctive features, and that's what attracts me. A large part of the film needs to be shot on the city streets. The colors and the lighting natural to late autumn colors will help create a special mood. The minimal usage of artificial light in interiors, with deep contrast, will ensure the atmosphere of intimacy and emphasize the strong feelings.

The casting deserves special mention. The success of this film lies in the natural charisma and features of the leading actors. The idea for the sound is to use rich, naturally recorded effects to make the audience feel the atmosphere.

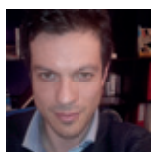
Territoria

Nora Martirosyan

Armenia / Switzerland / France



Nora Martirosyan
Director, Producer



Alexander Iordachescu
Producer
Elefant Films, Switzerland



Jeff Kalousdian
Producer
20 Years Later Production, Armenia

Director's biography

Nora Martirosyan is an artist and film director living and working in Montpellier, Rome, Yerevan.

A graduate of Le Fresnoy (France) and the Rijksakademie (Amsterdam), she has directed several award-winning short films. She is a co-founder of the production company Heolfilms, which is developing *Territoria*, her first full-length feature. In 2012 she created Heolfilms, a French production company.

Filmography

Les Complices (2009)
1937 (2007)
Courant d'air (2003)

Production company profile

Elefant Films is an independent film production company based in Geneva, Switzerland. Dedicated to support ambitious arthouse film projects, Elefant Films has established co-productions with international partners since 2004.

With over 20 films produced, fictions, documentaries and more recently interactive formats, Elefant Films is recognized as being a committed partner in the film industry.

Production filmography

Ryna, Ruxandra Zenide (2006)
L'Enfance d'Icare, Alexandre Iordachescu (2011)
Lullaby to My Father, Amos Gitai (2013)

Technical Information

Fiction / 95' / 1:1.85 / Color

Production Status:
Pre-production

Shooting Language:
Armenian, Russian, French

Shooting Start:
2014

Total Budget:
531,405 Euro

Funds Secured:
55,000 Euro

Production Companies:
Elefant Films
Heolfilms
20 Years Later Production

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20 Years Later Production
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Synopsis

A young boy, a teenage girl and a stranger cross paths in Nagorno-Karabakh, a geopolitical parenthesis defined by a ceasefire. Their personal desire to go beyond time and the borders collides with the reality of this paradoxical territory.

Mountainous Karabakh, this territory has survived under a ceasefire for sixteen years. The wheat fields are cut, figs and pomegranates ripen in the orchards—an illusion of peace in this territory of instabilities.

Alain, a man in his fifties, traverses this foreign land seeking a way out of a country that is only connected to the rest of the world by a single road. He receives insistent calls from a hospital in France reporting that his mother will only live a few more days. Unable to get there in time, Alain loses his grip on reality upon the death of his mother. He is stranded, unable to take any decision regarding the future.

Edgar, 8 years old, large plastic jugs in each hand, begins his daily journey to collect drinking water. The hilly landscapes, the peasants waiting in the fields for the water he brings, and the animals he meets along the way are all familiar to him. With rhythmic and measured footsteps, he arrives at the brand new airport, the promise of elsewhere. He longs for the plane that will bring him to his parents who left a long time ago to begin a better life abroad.

In the village where Alain has stranded himself, Manu, a 15 year old girl staying for the summer in the village, waits for her father, who lives abroad, and is arranging her travel to join him. The idea of leaving frightens her more than anything—leaving this earth is equivalent to the obligatory passage to the adult world.

The question of departure that motivates these three characters brings them together. Edgar follows Manu blindly. The word “love” is too big for his 8 years, and he has trouble acknowledging it.

The encounter with Manu tears Alain away from his melancholy. This beautiful girl symbolizes hope and freedom and revives Alain's desire for life.

Attached to Edgar as one is attached to childhood and drawn by Alain as one is drawn to adulthood, Manu tries to maintain the status quo between these two states, to maintain some sort of ceasefire in her intimate territory.

Director's Note

It all started with getting to know the place, this Territory whose name varies on different maps. This self-proclaimed republic is still not recognized by any state, near or far, it's a kind of **non-place** for the rest of the world.

The ceasefire has lasted for 17 years already. It seems that here time, captured in delineated borders, does not advance, but is. As if the past and future are compressed into the present, a present that lasts.

The border surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh defines a framework beyond which nothing is possible, nothing exists. This delimited territory makes me think in some way of a film studio, which can hypothetically contain the world within itself.

The Second Journey

Lévon Minasian

Armenia



Lévon Minasian
Director

Director's biography

Born in Gyumri, Armenia, Lévon first studied drama at the Institute of Theatre in Yerevan. He worked as an actor at the Araspel and Adjemian State Theatres in Gyumri. In 1996 he gained a Master's Diploma with distinction at the University of Paris VIII (France). An award-winning scriptwriter, he has also directed short films, produced mainly by French production companies.

Filmography

Lux Aeterna (1999)
Terra Emota (2000)
The Piano (2011)



Hrach Keshishyan
Producer

Production company profile

HK Productions LLC was founded in 2006 in Yerevan, Armenia, by director and producer Hrach Keshishyan. The company's main purpose was to produce films. Over time, however, the company has extended its range of services to include music videos, TV commercials, organization of different contests, theatrical performances, EXPOs, etc.

Production filmography

The Killed Pigeon, Hrach Keshishyan (2009)
The Diary of the Cross Stealer, Hrach Keshishyan (2010)
Garegin Nzhdeh, Hrach Keshishyan (2013)

Technical Information

Fiction / 100' / 35mm or HD / Color

Production Status:
Writing & development

Shooting Language:
Armenian, French

Shooting Start:
05/2014

Total Budget:
1,040,000 Euro

Funds Secured:
260,000 Euro

Production Company:
HK Productions

Contacts:
hrach.kesh@gmail.com

Synopsis

Yerevan, early 2000s. Eleonore, a French-born Armenian who returned to Armenia 40 years ago, dies, leaving three generations of men: her 75 year-old husband Hovanes, her 40 year-old son Grigor and Hovik, her 13-year-old grandson.

Among the personal effects of his wife, a faithful and exemplary spouse, Hovanes is amazed to discover a package of love letters written in French, addressed to a man in Paris but never sent. Hovanes, a convinced communist, having already lived through the collapse of his ideals after the spectacular fall of Communism, must face another painful disappointment: family happiness, in which he so believed, also proves to be false.

Grigor, who also discovers these letters, stumbles on a burdensome secret: his mother was pregnant with this man's child. His father is not Hovanes, but an unknown named Simon Badalian, living somewhere in Paris.

Hovanes decides to leave for Paris to meet this Simon, to give him the letters, while secretly hoping that it is all a mistake and that Eleonore never knew this man. As for Grigor, he wants to find his natural father. So they leave for Paris, each of them hiding from the other his true motivation. Hovik also has a personal reason to be in Paris. A complex game of hide-and-seek thus begins, full of misunderstandings, situations and unexpected revelations. Each character, through this play of mirrors and pretences, will eventually find what he is seeking.

Director's Note

The Second Journey is a comedy about the opportunity to relive one's life but in a different way, to have a chance to correct one's mistakes, to begin life again, living this time fully, making no concessions, living completely one's dreams and one's desires. To have the chance of a Second Journey.

The Valley

Nariné Mkrtchyan and Arsen Azatyan

Armenia



Nariné Mkrtchyan
Director, Producer

Director's biography

Nariné Mkrtchyan and Arsen Azatyan worked at the Armenfilm Studio from 1981. In 1990 they set up Aysor-Plus Film Productions. To date they have directed 11 shorts and 4 full-length features based on their scenarios. Their work has featured at international festivals such as Berlin, Montreal, Rotterdam, Busan and Moscow, garnering favorable reviews and several awards.

Directors' Filmography

Bobo (1991)
The Return of the Prodigal Son (2008)
The Glass Trinket (2013)



Arsen Azatyan
Director, Producer

Production company profile

Aysor-Plus Film Productions is an independent film production concern created in 1990 in Yerevan, Armenia. The company's films have been shown at more than 60 IFFs, including Berlin, Busan, Rotterdam, Moscow, Montreal. Its projects participated in several prestigious project and film markets such as; Asian Project Market, Cinemart, European Film Market, Connecting Cottbus, etc.

Production filmography

The Return of the Prodigal Son, Nariné Mkrtchyan and Arsen Azatyan (2008)
The Glass Trinket, Nariné Mkrtchyan and Arsen Azatyan (2013)
The Romanticists, Areg Azatyan and Shoghik Tadevosyan (in post-production)

Technical Information

Fiction / 100' / HD 4K / Color

Production Status:
Writing & development

Shooting Language:
Armenian, German, Turkish

Shooting Start:
05/2014

Total Budget:
480,000 Euro

Funds Secured:
40,000 Euro

Production Company:
Aysor-Plus Film Productions

Contacts:
aysor.plus@gmail.com

Synopsis

During World War I, Oliver Wagner, about 30, the military doctor, an officer from German Army, along with his work, takes photos of the construction of Berlin-Baghdad railway in the eastern part of Ottoman Turkey, witnesses a different reality.

The eastern part of Ottoman Turkey is the western part of historical Armenia where during that period, using the building of the railway as an excuse, the population was forcibly evicted, leading to massacres and eventually full-scale genocide.

Forgetting his professional duty, Oliver starts to photograph everything that happens there following the vandalism of the Turks.

Suppressing his emotions, he secretly photographs how the Armenian people are killed, robbed, tortured, slaughtered, and raped.

Eventually Oliver Wagner's nerves give way. Realizing that he can no longer stand aside, he disobeys orders and leaves, isolating himself in a hut in a valley where neither his fellow soldiers, nor the Turks looking for him in order to liquidate both him and his materials, can find him.

The valley is the border of the Ottoman Empire. On the other side is Eastern Armenia where groups of refugees run away at nights escaping from the slaughter.

Every night Oliver goes out from his hideaway in the valley with his donkey, photographic equipment and weapon, to help. One day he finds among the torture victims a young girl of about 18, covered in blood. He carries her to the hut and keeps her there, taking care of her. For a long time he tries hard to revive her but, despite his efforts, he cannot save the girl. And he leaves her lying there in his hut...

...Once, as usual, during his night searches, he hears a voice, a woman's heartbreaking suffering and mumbling voice. The voice leads him.

...Again killed people, massacred, slaughtered people... but the voice is still there, it's calling him. Among dead bodies, blood and mud, the officer finds a newly-born baby, he is incredibly happy! The baby is alive, still holding its mother's cut, bloody breast in the mouth.

...Smelling blood and dead bodies everywhere, hyenas attack and start to gnaw the bodies. The hyenas are as always in groups. The officer ties his photographic equipment and the baby to the back of the donkey and hits it to make it go. He stays behind to fight the predators.

With the photographic evidence and the baby tied to its back, the donkey gradually disappears. On the horizon, the hyenas continue to devour the German officer...

Director's Note

There is no need to explain why we, as Armenian filmmakers, have decided to touch on this topic on the threshold of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

However surprising it may seem to the world, if more attention had been paid to the Armenian Genocide, the Jewish Holocaust probably wouldn't have happened...

It is a psychological drama and we are trying to go deeper into the tragedy of an individual. Moreover, the film will have a certain philosophical view of tragedy, as in the great Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

We are deeply assured that the more subtle and the more personal the film is, the more impressive our accents will be.

Festival del film Locarno

7–17 | 8 | 2013

Open Doors

10–13 | 8 | 2013

Friday 9th August

Open Doors Welcome Drink
by invitation only

Saturday 10th August

Ateliers (Open Doors Club)
Carte Blanche Chile Screenings (work in progress)*

Sunday 11th August

One-to-one meetings (Open Doors Club)
Carte Blanche Chile Screenings (work in progress)*

Monday 12th August

One-to-one meetings (Open Doors Club)
Ateliers (Open Doors Club)
Carte Blanche Chile Screenings (work in progress)*

Tuesday 13th August

Open Doors Award Ceremony (Forum – Spazio Cinema)

To complete the Open Doors program and to create bridges between the Festival's audience and Open Doors, a selection of films from the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) will be presented in the Open Doors Screenings.

*The screening schedule and location can be found in the Industry Guide.

For more information: opendoors.pardo.ch

The Festival del film Locarno would like to thank

Ateliers du Cinéma Européen (ACE)
ARTE
Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC)
Città di Bellinzona
European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs (EAVE)
Producers Network, Marché du Film, Festival de Cannes
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**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**

Acknowledgments:

Carlo Chatrian, Artistic Director
Nadia Dresti, Delegate to the Artistic Direction / Head of International
Martina Malacrida, Head of Open Doors
Ananda Scepka, Open Doors Coordinator

Open Doors Selection Committee:

Martina Malacrida
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