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## Harmony Lessons Emir Baigazin



Emir Baigazin  
(Kazakhfilm JCS)  
Director

### Director's Biography

Emir Baigazin, born 1984, is a young Kazakh director emerging among a number of talented central Asian filmmakers. He graduated from the Kazakh National Art Academy and already attended the Berlinale Talent Campus as well as the Asian Film Academy (Pusan). His film *Zhan's Videodiary* has been nominated for "Best debut" at the Kazakh award ceremony "Zhastar – 2009".

### Filmography

*Zhan's Videodiary* (2009)  
*Fatshedder* (2008)  
*Steppe* (2007)

### Production Company's profile

Founded in 1928, JSC Kazakhfilm's main activity is the production and post-production of feature, documentary and animation films, development of projects as well as their preparation. They produced and co-produced short, full-length feature films and animation films.

### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
35 mm

Estimated Running Time:  
100 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Kazakh

Shooting Start:  
01/2011

Production Company:  
Kazakhfilm JCS

Contact:  
kino1984@inbox.ru

### Synopsis

One day, during a school medical check-up Aslan, a 4th grade pupil, drank an ill-fated glass of water. Next day his life changed.

Four years later Aslan turns into a strongly pronounced perfectionist suffering from anancastia. He keeps his belongings clean, does not tolerate the sight of glasses, washes hands after every class and follows an established routine of rituals. The person breaking this order is Bolat, a school gang leader whose main activity is to collect taxes from school pupils.

Aslan has a friend, Madi, the only person at school who keeps a relationship with him. He repeatedly tells Aslan about a sarcoma on his leg, worsening from daily beatings by Bolat for late submission of school taxes. Madi dies from the infected sarcoma and Aslan begins to manufacture a self-made weapon during his initial-military training class. The teacher, powerless to eradicate the school racketeer system, resigns on the day Aslan finishes his weapon. When Bolat remains alone in the classroom, Aslan points his weapon at him and pulls the trigger. The bullet hits another pupil and Bolat attacks him. Aslan stops the assault by stabbing him with a sharpened pencil. Bolat loses his life. Aslan is called in for interrogation by police who found a pencil at the crime scene which, supposedly is connected to the murder. A similar pencil belonged to another pupil – Mirsain, who is consequently put in isolation with Aslan. Aiming at retrieving a confession from one of the suspects, the police uses violent methods, which cause a hematoma on Aslan's leg to progress into sarcoma. The piercing pain from sarcoma transforms Aslan's personality, freeing him of his neurotic anancastia. He stops his rituals, eats from the same spoon of Mirsain and forgets his personal hygiene. All that bothers him now is the pain from sarcoma.

One night Mirsain notices that Aslan is shaking under the blanket. He walks over, lifts the blanket and sees a blood-soaked mattress. Aslan's throat is bleeding and he is holding a sharpened broken spoon. He grabs Mirsain by his neck. They fall on the floor. Aslan overpowers Mirsain and beats his head against the iron leg of the bed killing him. But investigation team decides that Aslan's killing Mirsain was an act of self-defence.

After some time in hospital his sarcoma is treated and Aslan returns to school. One day he heads to the lavatory to wash his ink-stained hands. Standing by the sink, Aslan notices that the glass which has always been there, is now gone.

### Director's Note

Based on the psychological illness of the main character, both an indicator of his state of mind and the development of the film, «Harmony Lessons» will be filmed in an existential manner. Aslan is an introvert. By nature, Aslan is not a hero – he is an observer.

An emphasis on geometry isn't accidental. Geometry requires accuracy and harmony and does not tolerate any chaos. Based on the important theme of human nature research, we will shoot in a style where geometrical and visual perfection play the foremost role. Nobleness and monumentality of this form will let us return to the eternal values of art such as elevation and beauty.

## Sunny Days Nariman Turebayev



Nariman Turebayev  
Director

### Director's Biography

Nariman Turebayev graduated from the Kazakh Academy of Arts in 2001. In the same year he completed the short film *Antiromantika* and was selected to attend the 4 months program at "Résidence de Cannes". His first feature *Little Men* was selected for the International Competition at the 2003 Locarno Film Festival.

### Filmography

*Antiromantika* (2001)  
*Little Men* (2003)  
*In the A. City* (2008)

### Production Company's profile

Based in Almaty, Kazakhstan, Kadam-Arshat Studio aims at helping young and emerging Kazakh filmmakers in developing and producing their first features. Although collaborating with several international productions such as Duo Films (France) and Pandora Film production (Germany), Kadam Studio wishes to strengthen independent film production within Kazakhstan.

### Filmography Production

*About Love* (2006)  
*Baiterek* (2009)  
*Shouga* (2007)

### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
35 mm

Estimated Running Time:  
90 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Russian

Shooting Start:  
01/2011

Production Company:  
Kadam-Arshat Studio

Contact:  
narik@nm.ru

### Synopsis

He wakes up, brushes his teeth, drinks a cup of tea and goes out of his flat. Usual morning of an usual man. But, what's not so usual – the toothpaste is about to finish, the tea is cold and was made a week ago. And the flat may be taken away because of his big debts. Another not so usual detail – nobody calls him by name. He is nameless and he remains nameless to the end of the film.

This film gives an insight into five days of the life of my protagonist who, during this short time, tries to find money to pay his debts. Of course he doesn't find money but instead he loses many other things. Generally speaking, this is a story of losses.

He loses his girlfriend and his best friend. He loses his documents. They switch off electricity and disconnect the phone in his flat. His mother, who went abroad with her new husband, forgets about him and never calls. And it means that he loses her too.

But it seems he's not disappointed so much by all these losses. Maybe, because he wants to believe that they merely are the deliverance from old weight on the eve of his new year of life (the last day of these five days is his 25th birthday). And he wants to believe that he will start this new year being free, that he will find there new love, new friends and many other new things.

Perhaps, this is why he didn't try so much to hold onto the things he was losing. But, also perhaps, he is just one of those idlers who are not able to understand what they should do in their useless lives. Who knows? It depends on your point of view. So – we shall see.

### Director's Note

To me there are two kinds of cinema – films on heroes and on outcasts. Often a hero becomes an outcast or, an outcast turns into a hero. My film tells the story of an outcast and nobody else. Who are outcasts? People not able to live in society. They pretend to live like everybody else, but inside they are empty. This absence may lead to something bad. Cinematographically this type of people is an inexhaustible source of ideas. An outcast is not a serious intellectual and doesn't have outstanding talents. He feels his own loneliness deeply. Loneliness is the usual state of an artist. By making a film about an outcast I can be frank and tell a simple story.

## The Fierce Horse Rustlers Adilkhan Yerzhanov



Adilkhan Yerzhanov  
Director

### Director's Biography

Born in Djezkazgan, Kazakhstan in 1982, Adilkhan Yerzhanov completed the Kazakhstan National Academy of Arts in 2009 specializing as Film Director. In 1999 he won the JSC "Khabar" competition for Best Scenario of the first Kazakhstan animated series *Kozy-Korpesh* and *Bayan-Sulu*, which were broadcasted nationwide in 2002.

### Filmography

*Brothers Shorty* (2008, Short)  
*Karatas* (2009, Short)  
*Disc Seller* (2009, Short)

### Production Company's profile

Born in Almaty, Kazakhstan, Yerkegal Mashir graduated from Kazakh-Turkish Lyceum in 2002, passed full course of cinematography in cinema school and entered KAZNAI named after Zhurgenov, a TV producer, faculty of cinema and TV. He represents the project with Comsystem where he stands as Head of business development department.

### Filmography Production

*Bakhytzhama* (2007)  
*Self-portrait* (2007)  
*Brothers Shorty* (2008)



Yerkegal Mashir  
(Comsystem)  
Producer

### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
HD (Red One)

Estimated Running Time:  
100 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Russian, English, Kazakh

Shooting Start:  
09/2010

Production Company:  
Comsystem

Contact:  
erkegali@gmail.com

### Synopsis

The idea is that a contemporary little man who lost ideals and who lives according to pragmatic interests revived sense of knighthood and quixotism. An eccentric policeman, like a modern Don Quixote, arrived in a little village where there was no belief in anything. His belief in his own magnitude infected surrounding people. His deception made the villagers believe in high ideals and life was filled with a sense of meaning.

The idea of picture is in triumph of thought over reality and victory of blind faith over commonness. The idealist policeman wants to change decadent life in the village and turns illusions into a weapon against hopeless life of poor people.

A real situation in provinces of Kazakhstan is reflected in the plot. Decay that was not liquidated by the USSR breakup will never be truly shown in mass media controlled by the censors. Dominance of corruption and mental superstitions created a bitter misunderstanding between people and the state institutes.

The main hero is a metaphor of the legend of batyr from folklore, who saves people in difficult times. If this hero appeared in our time he would have the same problems as our hero of our script.

### Director's Note

This film will be heir of westerns' genre, and so will the appropriate atmosphere, laconic dialogue, epic plans, expressive characters, angles of Sergio Leone. The style of reportage will be added to the reality of shooting because the very idea of a script is in contradiction with reality. This dialectic will affect the contrast of Western genre and documentary character. I would like to revive rear-projection, of artistic image, of eccentricities of cutting, pastiche of trash movies, life inside the frame in the spirit of the baroque, minimalism, music will be used as a counterpoint to the style of conventional lighting, similar to nature.

## Pasture in the Skies (Jolbakan)

### Elnura Osmonalieva



Elnura Osmonalieva  
Director

#### Director's Biography

Elnura Osmonalieva, 29, is a young filmmaker from Kyrgyzstan. She comes from a region in southern Kyrgyzstan where the citizens have a reputation of being rebellious and strong. Her interest in cinema stems from the desire to bring a better future for her country. She made her first short film *Farewell* in 2008, a protest against the transfer of land to neighbouring countries, a taboo in Kyrgyzstan.

#### Filmography

*Farewell* (2009)  
*Almaz* (2010, project)

#### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Documentary

Format:  
HD

Estimated Running Time:  
85 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Kyrgyz

Shooting Start:  
04/2010

Contact:  
eosmonalieva@gmail.com

#### Synopsis

Nomadic herders, Tokon and Tutu live high up in the mountains. Despite hard work and little financial return, they feel happy. They share 32 years of marriage and a life in the city given up for existence as Kyrgyz nomads. Tutu's ancestral land formally belongs to the state, but according to Kyrgyz custom it is theirs and each summer they take their old green tent and their animals to Jolbakan.

Tokon is a traditional healer and treats people on a daily basis. Though unable to explain her knowledge of medicine and of the human body, she successfully fixes shattered bones, spinal hernias and slipped disks, and cures people from liver cirrhosis and rheumatism. She also helps couples to have children. Her father was a healer too, however he did not pass on any of his knowledge as the Kyrgyz understanding of healing energy requires that little is spoken about the power of healing. Healers also have the obligation to help everybody who is in need for treatment without asking for payment. Patients leave as much as they want to thank for help.

With a national award for excellence in teaching, Tokon is a respected algebra teacher. Working her last year before she retires, she walks five kilometres each day to the school. When the school year ends she and Tutu move to the mountain pastures of Jolbakan. Lavish emerald Jolbakan hosts Tokon and Tutu for a month and a half. When its grasses are eaten and the cutting of wool is over, they prepare to move further. It is a daylong road up to the alpine pastures. The summer rains are hard and often turn into hail.

Tutu is a good husband and very proud of Tokon. However, there are days when some of the villagers try to belittle him because he does not have a male child and he drinks to forget the perceived deficiency. Usually, Tutu is busy with the cattle and various chores, and in the night likes to play his komuz. His father taught him to play it and as they get ready to leave Jolbakan for the big pasture, he sits out by the fire, looks out on the vast night sky full of stars, listens to the night birds and then caresses his instrument and the air fills with the sad and wonderful music of his forefathers. When he was younger he used to cry wondering why God left him without a son. Now, with two male grandchildren from his only daughter he is confident one of them will take his place.

#### Director's Note

I was sent to a school where all lessons were held in Russian; in my class there were two Kyrgyz. In summer my mum took me to Akjol where my grandmother told me stories of her childhood. When Tutu, my uncle, played his *komuz* facing the night sky I knew what being Kyrgyz meant. I liked being Kyrgyz and decided that I would go with the name. Akjol was welcoming, loving and mysterious. I was eager to become a village girl again, to be part of this world, to have my grandmother treat me with sheep fat when I got ill and to listen to her tales. *Pasture in the Skies* is a story that needs to be told for the Kyrgyz herding culture to live on, for modernity to explore tradition.

## Princess Nahzik (Princessa Nahzik)

### Erkin Saliev



Erkin Saliev  
Director

#### Director's Biography

Erkin Saliev graduated as Designer of Cinema and Television from the Cinematography Institute (VGIK), Moscow in 1981. Since then he is Art Director at the state cinema studio Kyrgyzfilm. His interest in the arts and his role has been awarded in 2004 through a Diploma from the Kyrgyz Prime-Minister for contribution to the development of cinematography.

#### Filmography

*Maymyl* (2000)  
*Oblako* (2004)  
*Ray dlya mamy* (2009)

#### Production Company's profile

Sanzhyra Film Production Company was founded in 2002. The main funds were given by Kyrgyzstan and international investors. Sanzhyra specializes in producing art house films that aesthetically portray Central Asian and Eastern lifestyles, philosophy, culture and national traditions. Film-director N.Egen was one of the founders of Sanzhyra.

#### Filmography Production

*Sanzhyra* (2002)  
*Sunduk predkov* (2005, co-production)  
*The Old Walls* (2009, co-production)



Gulmira Kerimova  
(Sanjyra)  
Producer

#### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
HDV

Estimated Running Time:  
75 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Russian

Shooting Start:  
08/2010

Production Company:  
Ordo Production

Contact:  
eriksaliev@yandex.ru

#### Synopsis

Nahzik, a 7 year old girl, lives in a small village situated on the picturesque shore of Lake Issyk-Kul with her mother Aijan. She works in a trout farm.

In the other side of the house, lives a couple: Kolya-baika and Anara-eje, left unemployed after the collapse of the Soviet empire. Kolya-baika is a beekeeper, and a poacher. He sets up fishing nets in the trout farm at night and is assisted by his nephew Arzyke. Sometimes Aijan smuggles a few dozen trouts from the farm and Kolya-baika and Arzyke sell them to the tourists during high season. Everyone struggles to survive in this remote mountainous region, where the "world financial crisis" means little to the locals. Only Nahzik continues to live in her own world of fairy-tales, which is reflected in her drawings. Through Kings and Princesses, the main characters of her fantasies, she expresses pain and longing for a father she never knew. Nahzik's father has been kept a secret.

One morning Erjan, an artist, arrives in the village from Kazakhstan. He has returned after an unsuccessful trip to Europe, where he tried to sell his paintings. The time of global economic crisis is not the best time to seek glory and money. Eight years passed since the last time he visited, and now he's back, hiding from financial debt. He stays at Kolya-baika's, takes walks in the area, starts sketches, and finishes them in his room. Nahzik acquaints Erjan, follows him everywhere, watching a real artist at work. One night she witnesses his intimate meeting with Aijan, who ignores Erjan's questions about Nahzik. He quickly realizes who Nahzik's father is. There are endearment and love in his eyes when he looks at the girl. The growing relationship between father and child is cut short by two criminals from Kazakhstan looking for the debtor on the run. Arzyke, in love with Aijan and overwhelmed by jealousy, discloses Erjan's whereabouts.

Erjan is in trouble and Aijan chooses to help him to escape. Erjan sails off on a motorboat, taking his paintings along. Criminals fire at him in the pitch black night. After discovering the artist's empty room, Nahzik searches for him throughout the village. Although young, she realizes who Erjan is. "Daad! Daad..." calls Nahzik, running along the shore.

This is a story about how world global events have their effect on simple people, living in the most remote areas of civilization; and how even those kinds of events cannot rob someone's ability to love and to be loved.

#### Director's Note

This story comes from personal experience and from the life of close friends. A village on the seashore, a house for two families, a trout farm, persons and their relations are combined in one topic. The girl and her fabulous world contrast with the surrounding. The harsh atmosphere in provinces of former USSR deserves a realistic reflection defining the film's style – reserved monochrome scale, absence of bright emotional actions of heroes, absence of structured theatrical compositions. Deep feelings are born on the base of harsh realities. The creative team is ready to find the best solution, to experiment and improvise. Authors are ready for inventions.



## The Singing Grannies Nurlan Asanbekov



Nurlan Asanbekov  
Director

### Director's Biography

Born in 1964, Nurlan Asanbekov graduated from the Russian Theatre Academy of Arts, Moscow, majoring in music theatre. Between 2005 and 2007 he was General art producer and art director for the Kyrgyz National Opera and Ballet Theatre. His first short, *Lullaby*, was shot in 2005 and won at the international Festival of Tashkent as Best Short.

### Filmography

*The Loss* (La Perdida) (2009)  
*Gena-Sacura* (2007)  
*The Holy Spring* (2006)



Gulbara Tolomushova  
Producer

### Production Company's profile

Gulnara Tolomushova graduated from the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography, Moscow, majoring in Motion Picture Aesthetics. Among her many activities she is Deputy Chairman of the Filmmakers Union of Kyrgyzstan, she is member of NETPAC and also member of the Central Asian Pen Club. In 2006 she received a Certificate of Merit of the Kyrgyz Republic for her contributions.

### Filmography Production

*Duet* (1999)  
*The life equal to the Universe* (2000)  
*Oedipus* (2004)

### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
HDV or Beta SP

Estimated Running Time:  
100 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Kyrgyz

Shooting Start:  
05/2011

Producer:  
Gulbara Tolomushova

Contact:  
nuras\_64@mail.ru

### Synopsis and Director's Note

The world is changing in our souls when the earth melody sounds; along with the wind, stones and water.

This movie reveals such human frailties as greediness, envy, false price, intriguing... People greedy for success, with no culture, forgetting about traditions can kill or damage the fragile world of art. They are ready to go over the heads of their grandmothers forgetting about respect towards the elderly people, thus defying the spiritual traditions of our people. Folk songs are superseded by modern music technologies, usually by dull performances of conceited persons.

I want to say that grandmothers are eternal, they are helpful, and they are the keepers of ancient stories, legends and songs. They are free from ambitions; they just want to be helpful to us as long as possible.

This film should be developed as a modern fairytale – legend, i.e. folk vocal drama of the film should be dedicated to grannies that cannot just speak, but sing among themselves and sing to other people. The other life of the town itself and its residents should be styled as the social comedy involving semi-documentary, outdoor dynamic shootings.

Eduard Burnett Taylor in his book "Primitive Culture" wrote that the Russians in Siberia listening to the talks of the barbaric Kyrgyz were affected with the endless flow of poetical improvisation of those barbarians and said, "Whatever these people see causes new fantasies in them!" Therefore we will use the dialogs in rhymes and improvisation style in the movie.

Every corner of our republic is full of stories and legends that keep on living in the memory of people. We should reflect the mythological line of paganism and Tengrianism against the background of the decaying and collapsing town. Yet the mystery of the environment and devastated town must have common tonal colors.

The folk singing will come into antagonism with the primitive modern rhythms of pop music.

The dynamics of interior greediness of people must reach its peak of degeneracy, as contrasted with the steady attitude of grandmothers, through legends and stories.

This movie can reveal all negative aspects of mentality of our society at the modern stage. Primitive frailties haunted by the instincts of gain and influence will raise the question of retention of national songs, traditions and culture, and solicitous attitude to the people and the world we live in.

## Buzkashi! Najeeb Mirza



Najeeb Mirza  
Director

### Director's Biography

This is Najeeb's fourth documentary film in Central Asia, a region he knows and loves. For three years he worked in Central Asia before choosing film to share the rich stories he was exposed to. His previous films are: *The Sweetest Embrace: Return to Afghanistan* (2008), a feature-length documentary shot in Afghanistan; *Falak: Song of the Soul* (2005), filmed in Tajikistan.

### Filmography

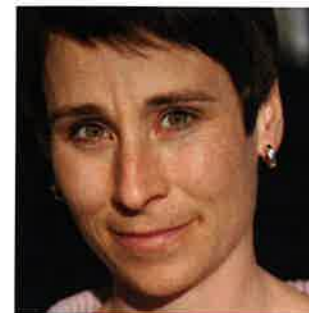
*The Sweetest Embrace: Return to Afghanistan* (2008)  
*Falak, Song of the Soul* (2005)  
*Herders' Calling* (2004)

### Production Company's profile

Buzkashi Productions is a fully-owned subsidiary of Oxus Apertura Films ([www.oxusfilm.com](http://www.oxusfilm.com)), and was created as a legal entity for the purposes of this production. Oxus Apertura Films, as its name implies, has a focus on Central Asia – *Buzkashi!* is its fourth film in the region.

### Filmography Production

*The Sweetest Embrace: Return to Afghanistan* (2008)  
*Falak, Song of the Soul* (2005)  
*Herders' Calling* (2004)



Micheline Shoebridge  
(Buzkashi! Production)  
Producer

### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Documentary

Format:  
HD

Estimated Running Time:  
100 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Tajik, Uzbek, Russian

Shooting Start:  
09/2009

Production Company:  
Buzkashi Productions Inc.

Contact:  
najeeb@oxusap.com

### Synopsis

From the shadows of the majestic Pamir Mountains of Central Asia comes a story of passion, murder and sport. The sport of Buzkashi reflects values of honor and integrity, but in this new age of money and power, its future is at stake. *Buzkashi!* follows three fascinating Buzkashi players: Azam, the heroic "Rocky" of Buzkashi; the young Askar, playing for his murdered father's honor; the wealthy Khurshed, Askar's arch rival, who allegedly buys off better players to help win. We follow the characters over one year, climaxing with the colorful Nauruz tournaments of Spring. In the process we enter into the personal lives of these weekend warriors in a distant part of the world, and through it people who may initially appear foreign quickly begin to feel surprisingly familiar.

Buzkashi is an ancient sport originating in Central Asia – it is said to be the precursor to polo. The nomadic Central Asians, in their efforts to protect their herds against predators, developed extraordinary horsemanship skills that led to the sport of Buzkashi, where hundreds of riders fight to carry the goat carcass across the goal line. Requiring tremendous strength and stamina, Buzkashi became a symbol of strength and honour among peers and enemies alike.

The passion of the sport did not fade with the forced settlements that herders experienced during the Soviet period, nor did it vanish with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the devastation that followed, especially in Tajikistan: a total collapse of their economy and a ravaging civil war in which not a family was left unaffected.

Despite their setbacks Central Asians remain guided by the longstanding principles of a rich and ancient culture founded on honour, respect and integrity.

These are the values that Tajikistani players like Azam and Askar abide to, learned from their fathers and grandfathers. But there is change in the air: where once the might of the individual was the central point of the game, increasingly players are using alliances and team strategy to win, with techniques such as blocking and specialized role play to keep other players from getting access to the goat carcass. The wealthy Khurshed is one such player. For many, this is change is a corruption of the age-old principles passed through the generations, but for others it is the reality of politics and power in this day and age: if money can buy off the country, can it not also buy off the sport of Buzkashi and the generations of tradition?

### Director's Note

There are many elements that can divide people: race, religion, language, ethnicity, appearance. These divisions are further compounded with distance, where the absence of personal contact allows for fertile imagination or political gain in which differences between people are highlighted. This is the way in which Muslims are currently portrayed, for example. Perpetuation of such notions of *The Other* separates people and threatens our mutual security. Sport is a relatively easy entry point to explore stories that cross cultural and linguistic lines. Coupled with good filmmaking, such films can offer a fun and beautiful journey that allows us to step into the lives of others.



## Halola Bakhtyar Khudonazarov



Bakhtyar Khudonazarov  
Director

### Director's Biography

Bakhtyar Khudonazarov was Born in Tajikistan during the Soviet Union period on May 29, 1965. In 1989 he graduated from the State University of Cinematography (VGIK). Bakhtyar Khudonazarov won the prestigious "Silver Lion" with *Kosh ba Kosh* (1993).

### Filmography

*Lunniy Papa / Luna Papa* (2000)  
*Chic / The Suit* (2005)  
*Tanker Tango* (2006)



Veit Helmer  
(Veit Helmer-Filmproduktion)  
Producer

### Production Company's profile

Filmproduktion is a small independent film production. Based in Berlin and managed by owner Veit Helmer, the company started producing cutting-edge short films. Within the last 16 years, more than 14 short films on 35mm and 70mm were produced. Since 1998 the main activity is producing feature films for theatrical release, with special attention on international marketability.

### Filmography Production

*Absurdistan* (2008)  
*Behind the Couch* (2005)  
*Gate to Heaven* (2003)

## Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
35 mm

Estimated Running Time:  
100 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Tajik, Russian

Shooting Start:  
08/2011

Production Company:  
Veit Helmer-Filmproduktion

Contact:  
veit.helmer@arcor.de

## Synopsis

The film is set in a village in the Pamir Mountains. Shirin, an attractive woman of thirty, lives with her husband Bagram, proprietor of an illegal winery, and her old, nagging mother-in-law. They have everything their hearts desire – except children.

By the main road is a lively car park with a small hotel and a café. A truck driver by the name of Timur turns up. He makes friends with a denizen of the car park, the homeless boy Rustik, who is ten years old. Timur tries to attract Shirin's attention, but without success. Bagram becomes increasingly annoyed by Shirin's infertility. Enraged, he divorces her under Islamic law. Shirin goes back to her parents. Bagram's friends look for a new wife for him. But to everyone's surprise he decides that he wants Shirin back. Shirin's parents are humiliated and consider that the way only of regaining their honour is through the rite of Halola. The village priest explains the rite, quoting the Koran:

*If a man divorces his wife / He cannot remarry her / Until she has wedded another man / And been divorced by him; In which case it shall be no offence / For either of them to return to the other / If they think that they can keep within / The bounds set by God.*

Bagram can't bear the thought of another man touching Shirin. He therefore decides to stage a phoney nuptial night and chooses an honest man, to play the role of bridegroom – Timur. Bagram makes Timur give his word that he won't lay a finger on the bride.

Timur instantly regrets giving his word when the wedding scarf falls from the bride's face: before him stands Shirin. Shirin tells him that she will take the blame upon herself. And suddenly nothing can hold them back...

In the morning they leave the house and escape. Bagram is infuriated, and hunts the elopers. Shirin is in Timur's mountain hut. She tells him that she has conceived a child – she can feel it. Rustik falls into Bagram's clutches. Timur rushes to his rescue. Bagram demands that Timur return Shirin in exchange for Rustik. Timur replies that he does not feel guilty since Shirin does not love Bagram. He tears Rustik out of Bagram's arms and moves to leave. Bagram reaches for his rifle and fires at Timur's back as he's leaving... and misses. Suddenly Shirin appears in the trembling sights of the rifle. She runs towards Timur and embraces him joyfully. The figures of Timur, Shirin and Rustik recede into the dusty distance.

### Director's Note

„Halola“ is the name of an Islamic divorce ritual. The story takes place in a small, remote town in the south of Tajikistan, and leads to an unexpected love adventure. The film will show the weakness of the ritual, how it operates as a strict regulation excluding any sort of human feeling. The story touches on something universal about the themes of women and society. By focusing on how one particular woman in a specific culture the universal aspect of the problems of women in the wider world are highlighted. Tradition and patriarchy put both men and women under tremendous pressure and obligations, even in their intimate relations.

## Ener Bayram Abdullayev and Lora Stapanaskaya



Bayram Abdullayev  
Director

### Director's Biography

Born in the Kaahka region of Turkmenistan, Bayram Abdullayev is a playwright, scrip writer, film director and a member of the Turkmenistan's Union of Writers and the Union of Filmmakers. As writer he is also author of a number of scientific works, narratives, plays for the Turkmen drama theatres, a number of scripts for documentary and feature films.

### Filmography

*Yandym* (1995)  
*Weel of Love* (2007)  
*Berch* (2008)



Lora Stapanaskaya  
Director

### Director's Biography

Lora Stapanaskaya is a TV journalist, film scriptwriter, film director a member of the Union of Filmmakers of Turkmenistan. She graduated at the Leningrad State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography. She wrote Twenty scripts for documentary, feature and animation films produced at Turkmenistan TV and "Turkmenfilm" Studio, producing and directing films.

### Filmography Production

*Yandym* (1995)  
*Berch* (2008)  
*Mollanepes* (2009)

## Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
HD

Estimated Running Time:  
80 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Turkmen

Shooting Start:  
04/2011

Contact:  
logrigstep@mail.ru

## Synopsis

Love is the greatest of all God's gifts to people living on the Earth. Love is what we desperately need in our pragmatic time. We need love to continue to stay a human being.

Our film is to promote the idea that love is that real devotional value we should always protect. We should not give up. We should not meet halfway in order to stay a human being.

Summer day was dying down. The sun, having left zenith, has moved on the West at some instant sharply to roll down to horizon. On a dirt road two bullock carts ("arbas") discordantly squeaking loaded with bags. People come back from a mill. They lived freely there. Some small villages stretch along a railway line. Some of the villages were sheltered directly at a foot of mountains. Each village has not more than some dozen houses.

All peasants knew each other. By traditions of their grandfathers they became related with families, together rejoiced to posterity, together mourned deceased, went to one school, purchased goods in one "big" shop, and went to one miller. Peasants were proud of the mill. It was very ancient. Nobody could define precisely what century it was built at the falls of the mountain river Hasar.

The small river was narrow, shallow. When the water is high it spread, raged, ringed on the rest of the neighbourhood, and the mill buzzed non-stop in the same way. There was something bewitching in the mill's work, and people did not get tired to observe how their "wet-nurse" worked.

Breaking from a rock, water fell in a tray. The tray directed its force on wooden blades. Blades, rotating, pulled behind themselves millstones – half-ton round and flat boulders. And those, in turn, split up, frayed grain. Elders in the neighbourhood used to say: the tastiest bread comes from this flour.

In the summer the mill often stood idle - there was no water pressure enough, so line of people gathered in the courtyard of miller Ablesen in the working days. There were horses, donkeys, camels, arbas with different wheels crowded there, but disputes in turn did not arise, and Ablesen-aha did not allow any disorders.

This old man was under seventy. He was short, but had strong shoulders, the big lion's head which has grown grey-haired beard and big hair. The rolled up sleeves opened powerful hands with hillocks of muscles and the blown up veins.

### Director's Note

Kara - Kum Desert is for us the Planet, where feelings and devotional problems of an individual are perceived equally. The more original characters, nature, mode of life, traditions are the more important their universal essence is. This style gives us freedom to find proper stylistic devices: an image, a sign, symbols are at the core for us. Such an approach also facilitates editing when consequence of actions are not obligatory. The plot's line are developing, interacting and complement each other: the story of Yagmur's love and the story of Ener's love. By the end of the film, each of us will get absorbed in the reminiscences of our own love story.



## Aral Ella Vakkasova



Ella Vakkasova  
(Avesta Film)  
Director

### Director's Biography

Ella Vakkasova studied practical film-making at the Ealing Film Studios' Met Film School in London. From here, she accepted a place at the UK's National Film and Television School, in the Fiction Direction Department. In parallel to directing and producing her own work, she also shot and directed promotional films for Glenrothes, LG Mobile and Adidas.

### Filmography

*Let Me Speak* (2007)  
*Witness* (2007)  
*Dreamer* (2006)

### Production Company's profile

Ella Vakkasova is setting up her own production company in Tashkent at the moment. It's called Avesta Film Productions. She will be working in the close relationship with Bayram Film Studio. The Line Producer, Bakhodir Adilov, who will be working on ARAL brings in his extensive experience of working in local TV and film productions as well as coproduction with NHK.

### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
35 mm

Estimated Running Time:  
120 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Uzbek, Russian

Shooting Start:  
08/2011

Production Company:  
Avesta Film

Contact:  
mail@ellavakkasova.com

### Synopsis

Aral-kum. A 10 year old Aral runs away from his father in the middle of the desolate desert. He hides inside a lonely corroded ghost boat. His father stops outside. The wind blows a thin top layer of sand and melts into ripples. He picks up a handful of soil, which immediately runs through his fingers leaving a small dusty cloud. He has to convince his son that there's nothing left for them here. But it seems that he has to convince himself first. He walks away.

Inside the boat Aral kneels in a dark corner listening to his father's disappearing footsteps. An eye of a strange creature peers at him through the hole in the corroded metal. The eye suddenly disappears followed by a loud sigh. The boat is tipped from a gentle push. Outside a snooping camel turns his head away from the boat and reaches for a dry saxaul with its wide lips.

Six years later it's near the end of the Soviet era in the socialist Central Asia. Aral is the son of a fisherman-turned-farmer from the shores of the vanished sea, he is also a dreamer with no real life skills. His emotional withdrawn father had to borrow money from his wife's brother and is desperate to pay back his debt. He sends Aral to a big city to earn money.

In the city Aral develops a friendship with a lonely old man called Ulmas who for some unknown reason detached himself from life and people and who grows fond of the boy. His house is full of relics giving a glimpse of the man's long and interesting life. Aral's attention is attracted to a painting on the wall of a man with one eye closed. Ulmas interprets it as we need to have one eye closed looking inside us.

In the daily life of the big crowded bazaar Aral comes across different characters. One of them is a gypsy girl who plays a trick on him.

Aral comes to visit Ulmas again. The boy is a good listener. Ulmas shares his thoughts and memories, one of which is of his early childhood, when his mother used to run a thin thread from his belt to a big old tree and leave him play safely. He remembers the soothing sound and sparkling waters of a deep stream running through the garden. But being tied to the tree he could never reach it.

Eventually all the melons are sold and Aral is ready to go back home. The next morning he wakes up to discover that all the money has gone. Desperate and terrified to face his father he chooses not to return home, but to remain in the city. The events that follow lead him to discover the true nature of the vanishing sea in his heart.

### Director's Note

Growing up in the Soviet Uzbekistan I carry memories of being in the middle of a pot of different cultures. The colourful palette of clothing, different traditions, nature, music, architecture... It was never dull and grey, as remembered by my generation coming from the other parts of the USSR. The old traditions rooted into Muslim culture comfortably co-existed with a Soviet atheist pro-Russian mentality, which could appear peculiar to an outsider. I would love to recreate that atmosphere in a city. Noisy oriental bazaars, hot lazy sunny days, water flowing in canals, lazy dreaminess of the childhood when life was one big journey and anything was possible.

## Barzagh Saodat Ismailova



Saodat Ismailova  
Director

### Director's Biography

Saodat Ismailova was born in Tashkent, where she graduated from the State Art Institute. In 2002 she got 2 years residency as filmmaker at the "Fabrika", the research and communication centre of "United Colours of Benetton". Saodat made three short films, screened in international film festivals, an award winning documentary *Aral: Fishing in an Invisible Sea*.

### Filmography

*Aral: Fishing in an Invisible Sea* (2005)  
*Tale of the three Khanates* (2009)  
*Rahul Sharma* (2009)

### Production Company's profile

MAP is an organization devoted to develop projects that act as bridges between cultures and traditions, presenting new realities and cultures that lack exposure or are in danger of disappearing, our goal is to present these cultures, creating awareness and providing a tool for these cultures to better survive the process of globalization. MAP works in collaboration with Foundations, NGOs, or any organization dedicated to preserve the world's heritage and culture.

### Filmography Production (all projects)

*40 days of silence*  
*Avalanche* (Carlos Casas)  
*Barzagh*

### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
35 mm

Estimated Running Time:  
110 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Uzbek, Russian

Shooting Start:  
Summer 2012

Production Company:  
MAP Productions

Contact:  
isaodat@gmail.com

### Synopsis

Lutfia a woman at her late forties arrives to the city from a distant village in a search of her niece – Nigora. The moment she finds her, Lutfia suddenly dies. This death puts the family together causing all the problems and wounds to burst loud.

The family is undecided on whether to take Lutfia to the city where her family is or take her back to the village where she lived her married life, where her children are and where her husband's grave is. Tursun, Lutfia's younger sister decides to take Lutfia's body back to the village against of the family's approval. Elders believe that Lutfia returned to the city to die in the place of her birth.

Tursun and Nigora, hire a taxi, and start their journey with the body to a distant southern village.

Reorganization of the roads, creation of new borders and guilty consciences of the characters, make a nine-hour trip into a long and exhausting three days journey.

Crossing wasted post soviet industrial cities, eating in road cafes, getting stuck in police stations, sleeping in a village house, taking a bath in the Panj river, exchanging pieces of soap for food, pushing the car to closest village, worshiping the shrine of a saint takes three living and a dead further into high mountains, where they get lost. Yellow glowing flat landscape, with an enormous sun hanging low, gradually changes to high rocked mountainous labyrinth covered with thick fog. The journey reveals the story of Nigora and her husband that recently died, unveiling the reason of Lutfia's early death. We discover relationship of the two sisters Tursun and Lutfia. Lutfia's life with a man she never loved, and her regrets.

The driver finds himself being a part of someone's last and intimate life ritual. His fears each time crossing police stations and distrust towards the women bother him, but he doesn't dare leaving them in the middle of nowhere with the dead body. Feelings are slowly growing in the driver towards Nigora.

The burial procession for Nigora is a search of forgiveness mixed with a silent love story, expressed in her reserved glances at the driver.

August, 50 degrees of heat, three days on the road, two women, the man and the dead body, in a car falling apart, lost in the mountains, cut from the outside world. Tursun feels guilty for taking the body back to the place from where Lutfia wanted to escape all her life. Nigora blaming herself for her aunt's death and fighting with unexpected love feelings. Will they achieve the final burial site of Lutfia?

### Director's Note

In august 1999, my aunt Lutfia came from her village and died. It was my first close experience with death. My mother decided to take her back to the village to bury her. *Barzagh* is an intimate story of my family. Crossing more than a thousand km through Central Asia, will give me a chance to explore, document and visualize today's reality, imprinted by rich and tense historical past, diverse beauty and inseparable problems. Death has always been an intriguing subject for me. Responsibility for one's personal actions, communal tasks and idea of self annihilation based on Islamic understanding of afterlife is a driving force behind the project.

## Gaulish Village (Galskaya Derevnnya) Shukrat Karimov



Shukrat Karimov  
Director

### Director's Biography

Born in 1979 in Uzbekistan, Shukrat Karimov graduated from the Tashkent Art Academy in 2009. He already participated to a number of Film Festivals such as "Le Printemps de Paris" and the "International Film Festival Eurasia". His short film *Feu Rouge* won at the 3rd Festival International Kirghizstan – France – Germany in Bichkek, Kirghizstan.

### Filmography

*Feu Rouge* (2009)  
*Vivre Autrement* (2009)  
*Village Gaulois* (2009)



Aleksey Gurkin  
Producer

### Production Company's profile

Central Asia Film is represented by Aleksey Gurkin. In 2008 he has been awarded Chevening Scholarship to pursue postgraduate studies in the UK 2005 Royal British Society of Television Award for Best Short Drama / 2005 Kodak Award for Best Cinematography. Both awards received for final degree production project – short drama 'Fragile'.

### Filmography Production

*Feu Rouge* (2009)  
*Cinquante soms* (2009)  
*Village Gaulois* (2009)

### Technical Information

Docu/Fiction:  
Fiction

Format:  
HD

Estimated Running Time:  
115 minutes

Shooting Language:  
Uzbek

Shooting Start:  
09/2011

Production Company:  
Central Asia Film

Contact:  
shukrat.karimov@rambler.ru

### Synopsis

This true story could have taken place in Khalmion, an average village of the Ferghana Valley. For 40 years the inhabitants have been learning French. They do so out of genuine interest, through hard work, and are very successful. In fact, they are so successful, that the French government decides to award Islomiddin Azimov, a 70 year-old who brought French language to Khalmion, the Order of the Academic Palm. Aminatou, a French documentary filmmaker living in Central Asia, decides to document the event. Daniar, a student of Azimov, hears the news while visiting the capital, and decides to meet Aminatou.

Daniar enthusiastically assists Aminatou, exaggerating some details, to the point of calling Khalmion a real Gaulish village. The village chief, secretly dreaming of becoming president, is obsessed with this comparison. He suddenly realises that transforming Khalmion into a French village is the key to achieving his political ambitions.

Predictably, the village chief has his very own idea: he forces all Khalmion inhabitants to improve their knowledge of French, a 10 meter Eiffel Tower replica appears in the village square, and all the village milk is set aside for the French cheese maker, flown in from France to make camembert. As a result, by the time Aminatou arrives in Khalmion, she finds the village on the verge of revolution. The final touch to this surreal picture is when the community tractor falls in the canal representing the Seine river.

This revolutionary mood lingers on only long enough to build a barricade opposite the village administration building. On the next day, the revolutionaries have all gone back to their daily business. However, Aminatou feels that she has to bring long-awaited freedom to the people of Khalmion. Without a revolution Khalmion cannot be considered a real French village. She succeeds in organising a revolt and the village chief is forced to compromise.

Due to the arrival of a high rank French official, the French embassy decides to anticipate the award ceremony. The delegation has no clue that they will arrive in Khalmion on the third day of the revolution.

The village chief, exhausted, disillusioned and fearful of punishment by the country's authorities for sabotaging an important state event, goes completely crazy. Villagers hastily leave Khalmion where Daniar, Aminatou and Islomiddin Azimov are left alone to deal with the delegation about to arrive.

### Director's Note

This film is a tentative of transformation, of interpretation and rehabilitation of my lost roots, a tentative of auto-identification. As citizen, it is with vague nostalgia that I discovered this ancestral and idyllic paradise in a disappearing province, where I admired the spirit openness, the optimism and the curiosity of its inhabitants. The archaic lifestyle is strangely confronted with the French language, a language that the inhabitants have been practicing for the past forty years. The absence of contacts with French people however, makes such effort useless for those intoxicated with the idea of gain.

## Open Doors 7 – 10 | 8 | 2010

### Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August

Open Doors Welcome Dinner  
By invitation only

### Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> August

Meetings one to one Cinéfondation  
Open Doors Workshop

### Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August

Meetings one to one Open Doors

### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August

Meetings one to one Open Doors

### Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August

Round Table  
Forum – Spazio Cinema  
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 central Asian films will be presented in the Open Doors Screening.



63°

Festival del film Locarno

4-14 | 8 | 2010

Open Doors:  
focus central Asia





# The Festival would like to thank

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