



A FILM BY
BAKYT MUKUL / DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU

THE ROAD TO EDEN

FROM DIRECTORS
A FATHER'S WILL

MARAT
ALYSHPAEV

BAKYT
MUKUL

SHAIYR
KASYMALIEVA

BUSURMAN
ODURAKAEV

ANARA
AZHYKANOVA

KALIPA
USENOVA

OMURZAK
TOKTOMURATOV



BILIMKANA

DIRECTED BY BAKYT MUKUL / DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU
CO-PRODUCERS ELNURA OSMONALIEVA / BAKYT MUKUL / DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER SAMARA SAGYNBAEVA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER CHINARA KAMCHIBEKOVA MUSIC BY BALASAGYN MUSAEV
SOUND BY KALYBEK SHERNIYAZOV / MARS TUGELOV EDITED BY AKTAN RYSKELDIEV PRODUCTION DESIGNER BAIYSHBEK ISMANOV
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU WRITTEN BY DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU / BAKYT MUKUL

THE ROAD TO EDEN

INTRODUCTION

«Akyrky Koch» (The Road to Eden) - is a social drama from Kyrgyzstan written and directed by two directors - Bakyt Mukul and Dastan Zhapar Uulu. This feature about devaluation of art and artists in the modern Kyrgyz society is a collaboration of two directors and was co-produced by the National Film Studio "Kyrgyzfilm" with the financial support from the State Department on Cinema under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Information of the Kyrgyz Republic and Bilimkana Foundation. The world premier of the film will take place as part of the main competition of the Tallin Black Nights Film Festival.



THE ROAD TO EDEN



SYNOPSIS

A retired writer, Kubat Aliev, is living his last days as a famous and poor writer in a society increasingly concerned by wealth. A widower, he has no children and his only wish is that literature continues to bring enlightenment to his small and disillusioned nation. He sees the possibility of a continuation in his friend, a younger and an equally talented writer, Sapar. However, Sapar is very ill and is in need of an expensive treatment. On the day that Kubat decides to sell his apartment to save the bed-ridden writer's life, he learns his own younger businessman brother is beaten up by collectors for debts. Kubat finds himself torn between his overwhelming desire to save the sick writer's life and the pressure to help his kin.



THE ROAD TO EDEN

CAST

Kubat Aliev – MARAT ALYSHPAEV

Tilek – BAKYT MUKUL

Meerim – SHAIYR KASYMALIEVA

Sapar – BUSURMAN ODURAKAEV

Alina – ANARA AZHYKANOVA

The teacher – KALIPA USENOVA

Sakyn – OMURZAK TOKTOMURATOV

Journalist – GULSINA CHOTONOVA

Chief Physician – RUSLAN KURMANALIEV

Nurse – TYNARA ABDRAZAEVA



THE FILMMAKERS



BAKYT MUKUL
DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER

Bakyt Mukul is an actor and filmmaker from Kyrgyzstan. He was born in 1965 and received training as drama actor in 1993. He is a Member of the Union of Filmmakers of the Kyrgyz Republic and Member of the Asia Pacific Screen Academy (APSA), Australia. In 2016 he shot his debut feature film "A Father's Will" with Dastan Zhapar Uulu which won the main prize for debut films "Golden Zenith" at the Montreal World Film Festival. The film won more than 30 international prizes. They were also nominated for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards APSA in the Best Screenplay nomination in Australia in 2017. "The Road To Eden" (2020) is their second joint work.



DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU
DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER

Dastan Zhapar Uulu is a filmmaker from Kyrgyzstan. He was born in 1988 and graduated from the Kyrgyz State Institute of Arts in 2010 specializing in Theatre and Cinema. He is the member of the Union of Filmmakers of the Kyrgyz Republic and Member of the Asia Pacific Screen Academy (APSA), Australia. In 2016 he shot his debut feature film "A Father's Will" with Bakyt Mukul which won the main prize of debut films "Golden Zenith" at the Montreal World Film Festival. The film won more than 30 international prizes. They were also nominated for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards APSA in the Best Screenplay nomination in Australia in 2017. "The Road To Eden" (2020) is their second joint work.



THE FILMMAKERS



ELNURA OSMONALIEVA CO-PRODUCER

Elnura Osmonalieva was born in Kyrgyzstan, the heart of Central Asia, in 1981. She attended a Soviet school and later studied in the US just a few years following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. She is an advocate for art and education. Her film work explores human experiences in the circumstances of poverty and strong societal pressures. She graduated from the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. She made several short and feature films that won numerous awards at international film festivals. In 2015 her short film Seide was in official competition of the Venice Film Festival and participated in Sundance, Santa Barbara, Clermont Ferrand, Oberhausen, San Francisco, Melbourne, Raindance, BFI Film Festival, Eurasia, Tehran where he film won Special Jury Mention.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director of photography: DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU

Production designer: BAIYSHBEK ISMANOV

Editor: AKTAN RYSKELDIEV

Music: BALASAGYN MUSAEV

Sound: MARS TUGELOV

Associate Producers: SAMARA SAGYNBAEVA

Executive Producers: CHYNARA KAMCHYBEKOVA, ZEYNE KASMANKULOVA

Co-Producers: ELNURA OSMONALIEVA, BAKYT MUKUL, DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU

Scriptwriters: DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU, BAKYT MUKUL

Directors: BAKYT MUKUL, DASTAN ZHAPAR UULU



PRODUCTION NOTES

BACKGROUND

The concept for the film belongs to one of the co-directors - Dastan Zhapar Uulu. He told his ideas about a story of an old man who escapes from the hospital to his co-director, Bakyt Mukul when they were working on "A Father's Will". After the success of the film they started working on this idea and wrote the script.

SCRIPT

Dastan Zhapar Uulu and Bakyt Mukul co-authored the script. The idea changed numerous times over the course of several years. Finally the co-authors choose to follow this line of an old writer whose friend is very ill and his salvations is finally dependent on the writer's irresponsible brother. The script was written in three months.

SHOOTING

Principal shooting started on August 22nd 2019 and finished October 15th 2019. Initially the film needed to be shot in the spring however due to financing the schedule moved. The scene with a stream of nomads was the hardest one to shoot. The team looked for a location for a long time and found it in Turgon gorge in Issyk-Kul district. The Art Department constructed decorations to create old castle ruins. The scene involved more than a hundred horsemen, camels and eagle hunters, and a herd of sheep and used the help of local villagers. Everyone worked hard for the scene to work. It took a day to film the scene. Other scenes were shot in Karakyz and Jergez villages, in Karakol city and Bishkek city. The scenes in the residence for the elderly involved some of the real residents and was also one of the more interesting ones in terms of production.

BUDGET

The budget of the film is about 140 000 USD. National Film Studio Kyrgyzfilm in co-production with Bilimkana Foundation.



DIRECTORS STATEMENT

A few years ago, I was working as an assistant of the DoP in one documentary film. Director and scriptwriter of the film was a seventy years old man who graduated from the All-Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) in Moscow during the Soviet Union. On the way in shooting I went to the house of thing elderly director in order to help him with bags. When I got to his place I was truly shocked - the flat was full of books and pictures and there was no food in the kitchen. After the shooting I found out that he was making a film on his retirement money. He could not finish film editing as he spent all his money for the shooting.

This episode of my life had pushed me to the writing of the script about a talented man. I was especially influenced when I read how the former actor has been left with nothing and how a formerly successful musician died in a retirement house. While writing the script, we have visited senior residential home. We were surprised when we met musicians, television workers and artists there. We then understood that we were moving in the right direction and decided to include such characters in the story. Among several pictures left by the artists we have decided to recreate one of the successful works by Vincent van Gogh. Several artists inspired us and we wanted our film to inspire our viewers giving them food for thought this way.

The film covers many themes from the loneliness in old age, to simple social problems and the role of art in society. It is a story about people with a big heart and about their will, courage and noble acts. Our aspiration and passion is a result of the work of our group having spent several years creating this film.

The lead character of our story is a widower Kubat who is a writer. He lives alone and it seems like he has been forgotten by the people. The film is about him as he makes a decision to save his friend Sapar despite the odds. He decides to sell the only thing he owns - his apartment. But his nephew Tilek destroys all his plans borrowing the money from the sale and promising to give it back as soon as possible. This way he causes the death of Sapar. As a result Kubat is left with nothing; he loses his friend who dies from not being operated, he becomes homeless and moneyless so he decides to go to the retirement house. We live in a society where close people can deceit you and leave with nothing. Tilek does not care about artists and uses his uncle to solve his problems that arise from dishonest life. It is a film at the end of which the harsh reality and materialism conquer spiritual and moral values.

With the help of the film we should not only narrate the story but enlighten, inspire, and create significant social changes.

Dastan Zhapar Uulu, co-author of the screenplay and co-director.



VISUAL STYLE

Visually we initially set out to make a black and white film. The monochrome image helped us to explain how the lead character felt himself. He is a window, his life is void of bright colors, he is suffocating in a city where everyone is concerned with wealth only. His life becomes colorful only when he returns to his village. Black and white image also accentuates the actors' play more by avoiding disruption of attention by color. The light played an important role since monochrome gives a good opportunity to work with contrast and gradation of light. Light and shadows give us the necessary accents in the frame providing depth and cinematic look. We also focused on the work with space in the frame. Working with the art department we worked on the decorations that helped us create a rich picture.

Dastan Zhapar Uulu, co-author of the screenplay and co-director.

REVIEW

KYRGYZ FILM CRITIC GULBARA TOLOMUSHEVA:

The Road to Eden is about the most hard pressing issues that face our society. This film is about a state in which there is no ideology. The lead character of the film writer Kubat Aliev believes that perhaps he is also responsible for the current lack of spirit in the society. His wisdom is in that he does not make tragedy in lack of money or lack of material resources. He knows that he will not live on the streets if he loses his apartment. The most important thing for him is to be able to help those who find themselves in a difficult situation.



INFORMATION ABOUT THE FILM

Production Studios:
KyrgyzFilm in association with Bilimkana Foundation
Country: Kyrgyzstan
Genre: Drama
Colour: Black and White/Colour
Screen ratio: 1 - 2.35 (Cinemascope)
Film Language:
Kyrgyz (with English/Russian subtitles)
Running time: 121 minutes
Budget: \$140.000
Shooting Format: Digital Red Epic Film

CONTACTS

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PRODUCERS

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Dastan Zhapar Uulu - dastankg88@gmail.com

LINKS

IMDb: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13195124>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/akyrkykoch>
Official teaser: <https://youtu.be/hbmDQT0ZQmc>

