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18TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF ASIAN PACIFIC COUNTRIES IN VLADIVOSTOK



FILMFESTIVAL



GOOD AFTERNOON, BEST DAY!

Awardees of the 18th Asia-Pacific Film Festival Pacific Meridian



On the Primorsky Stage of the Mariinsky Opera and Ballet Theater, the results of the 18th International Film Festival of the Asia-Pacific countries Pacific Meridians were summed up. The Grand Prix for Best Feature Film went to LONG DAY filmed by a Chinese director Luo Yumo. The best short film was named AUSTRAL FEVER by Thomas Woodruffe. Russian animator Kirill Khachaturov was awarded for Best Director in the movie NAKED. The award for Best Actress went to a lady from the Philippines Isabel Sandoval for her role in her own movie, filmed in the United States, LINGUA FRANCA. Dan Beirne was awarded the title of Best Actor for his work in THE TWENTIETH CENTURY by Canadian Matthew Rankin. His compatriots Madeleine Sims-Fewer and Dusty Mancinelli received the Special Jury Award for their directorial thinking in the short film CHUBBY. The FIPRESCI Jury named THE WHALER BOY by Philipp Yuryev as the Best Feature Film, and among the short films they noted the work of Canadians Guy Maddin, Evan Johnson and Galen Johnson STUMP THE GUESSER. The NetPAC Jury gave the Award for Best Asian Film to Maria Ignatenko's debut IN DEEP SLEEP. Young actor Sergei Giro, who played in the new film by Valery Todorovskiy HYPNOSIS, received the Yul Brynner Award. Audience Choice Award for the Best Russian Film went to a Yakut film directed by Dmitry Davydov SCARECROW. Unfortunately, due to epidemiological circumstances, many laureates will receive their prizes by mail, but this does not by any means reduce the amount of excitement and joy. After ringing the bell and the end of the ceremony, everyone went to celebrate the end of the Festival and prepare to patiently wait for the next, 19th one.



DYUZHEV'S METHOD

A wonderful actor, beginning film director Dmitri Dyuzhev led the closing ceremony of Pacific Meridian, and also held a creative meeting with the audience on the big stage of the Gorki Theater, where he read poetry, sang beautifully, and communicated with his fans. And it was hard to believe that many years ago little Dima did not want to be an actor at all, but thought to go sailing.

Choosing a Path

— My father was an actor. For 20 years, he traveled to the actor's exchange in Moscow, he received offers from various theaters — from Pavlodar, Kamyshtin, Saratov, Alma-Ata. He agreed, and we moved again. We lived in communal apartments, in theater rooms, in a circus hostel. And my father was looking for his director, the embodiment of his inner Hamlet, life on the verge of "to be or not to be." All or nothing. He searched but did not find. I can't imagine how hard it was for him. After all, he also had a family with him. Once he had to go against his creativity and say: now I am not an actor, I am just like everyone else, a normal person — and become a pragmatist. He left the theater, went into business. But the love for the profession still lived in him. I remember how often at night he would tell me, the boy: shall we go for a drive? And we went to the theater. My father was

a patron of the Astrakhan Drama Theatre. He even established a local theater award, he was respected and loved by performers. Not only for funding. So, at night we came to the already closed theater, the watchman opened it, turned on the duty light. I sat in the audience, and he stood on the stage — and read. And at some point he saw my interest, my interest in what he was doing. He saw it when I myself had not even realized it yet. He saw and said: and I know what you need to do in life. And he began a long conversation about the future, about the choice of profession, about the fact that I need to become an actor. I was not ready for this. Of course, I went to a theater group, studied at a school for gifted children at the faculty of Arts and Aesthetics, played in school productions in high school, and of course, my dad often forced me to learn poetry, text passages (the ones he liked), listen to classical music. I didn't think of becoming an actor. But my father was convincing, he found the right words.

And I have no regrets. For everything I thank God. For the wisdom of my father (my mother was upset: "where are you taking your son? How is he there in Moscow"), because everything turned out like this.

Obedient Actor

— From the moment I received my second higher education — the Advanced Course for Screenwriters and Film Directors, the Workshop of Vladimir Khotinenko — I became an ideal actor. You see, in directing, you can never go wrong in creating this artificial world. You can always be right, because there is bound to be a real person on earth who, in exactly the same situation, did exactly what you dictated to a character and how you demanded to play from an actor. And even though millions may say that this does not happen, in fact, it definitely somewhere happened that way. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with the obedience of an actor to a director; a director, based on the above, doesn't make mistakes. In addition, I am a student of Mark Zakharov, and he was an absolute dictator. He drew up a scene in his head and clearly told everyone how and what to do. He called us universal soldiers who can do anything, nothing is impossible for us. "Whatever I ask you, you do it first. And then you can already wonder whether it was necessary or not."

Demanding Film Director

— As a director, I demand obedience from actors. But in part, in rare cases, I allow them to show independence. I have already told you what method of work Mark Zakharov used. Pavel Lungin works in a completely different way. He is an intuitive director. Tells what happens in this scene, what happens in the characters and where to come. And he leaves, leaving the artists to comprehend and try all this. They begin to search, grope their way, their characters begin to learn to live, live their lives in this reality of a film. And when, after a while, the director returns, we show him what we have invented. He sweeps aside inaccuracies, corrects something, in the end, the only correct path is groped. And so over and over and over again.

Exploring Yourself

— I offer the actors my own method, based on the study of human psychology and their state at the time of their characters' play, on the understanding of "what is happening to me at the moment of my playing." I propose a way of studying oneself in the space of an actor's existence, the way of an actor in working on a role as the perception of a psychoanalyst who accepts a patient — their character, their role. The character must tell everything, and the actor must disassemble them, like a psychoanalyst, understand where this and that comes from in them, why in such a scene he behaves this way and not otherwise. And, since we all come from childhood, the actor needs to come up with, in co-authorship with the playwright, their character's past, childhood. A lifetime which was before. And then, playing the scene, the actor will understand that they — their character — lived, what they are talking about and what is behind it and why they are now like that.

About Children and Profession

— Am I ready for my sons to choose the acting path? You know, sometimes I am asked how to help a child develop their acting skills, how to understand whether they have them or not. And I answer: see if the child has a difference from the rest, a slight degree of foolishness, let's say, an endless desire to be in the center of attention, to evoke emotions in people. So, this share of foolishness does not allow the child to concentrate, does not give him perseverance, does not allow him to develop in other directions. They often do not like numbers, do not have a good memory. Such a person constantly swallows emotions from others, and cannot live without it. Whatever they do, even if they did not become an actor, but chose a different profession, they will be the one other talk about in the collective "ah, what an actor!". It is impossible to remove or crush. It is in the essence of nature... As for my eldest son, much to my and my wife's relieve, is not. He is an excellent student, restrained in emotions, he will definitely follow a different path. But the younger one behaves exactly as I told earlier. And nothing can be done. Can't stop. And it is not necessary. It can be much worse. This is when the children of successful actors, without this very share of foolishness, choose the acting profession with their mind, reason. And they go to the acting. This is the problem. They do not understand the whole tragedy that awaits them. Without this core, this disease, this muse, this acting principle — no matter what you are taught, nothing will come of it.



PLAYING BY HEART

During the Pacific Meridian Festival, Professor of the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts (RSIPA) Veniamin Filshinsky visited Vladivostok. He conducted a two-day master class “The Etude Method in the Actor’s Profession” at the Far Eastern State Institute of Arts, which was one of the many events leading up to the opening of the Primorsky branch of the RSIPA, the Higher School of Music and Theater Arts in 2024.

— We are talking after the first day of the master class. What are your impressions now?

— Today, there was a theoretical part, and tomorrow it will be practical one; and this, as they say in Odessa, “is apples and oranges”. In the theater, you can beautifully speak and do nothing. Therefore, the practical part will show whether I will be able to inspire them with the examples of their own attempts. Having become acquainted with them, I naturally understood that I needed to transform my intentions. I already have particular individuals and a sense of their level – what they understand and what I have to explain them.

— How long does it take to understand whether there is a new Khabensky there or not?

— Well, what Khabensky could it be? Nothing is clear yet. One must also understand that these master classes are a specific experience. We have both theater actors and students there. People differ in age and experience. In fact, I am usually invited to perform at different places – some institutes or pedagogical organizations. There was once a revolutionary moment: two of my colleagues, a scenic speech specialist and a plasticity specialist, and I were invited to the theater. It would seem, why go there? Actors also work there; this is a professional place, which means that they are all well trained and educated.

— It turned out to be different.

— We got a thing or two to teach them. According to Stanislavsky, even People’s Artists of the Soviet Union can be taught for three weeks every two or three years. He even put forward that program at the Moscow Art Theater, but did not meet with understanding from the People’s Artists, despite that time was the heyday of Stanislavsky. It seemed to the artists that they could do that. The idea of learning or not learning is very good, but dialectical.

I myself have a desire to learn. For example, I flew here on a plane and not only prepared for a master class (although, I prepared very much, even more seriously than was required), but at the same time did my own business at the institute, master’s degree. We teach the so-called filmmakers-educators. They are not filmmakers; it is a completely different profession. The filmmaker-educator does not stage the play, but is responsible for how the artists play. And I suddenly made one important discovery on the plane. We are talking about a serious problem – combining the teachings of Stanislavsky with the teachings of Nikolai Vasilievich Demidov. And this is the biggest personality that I have been promoting for 25 years. We even managed – with my modest efforts included – to publish a four-volume edition of Demidov’s works in St. Petersburg. A man of colossal power, a student of Stanislavsky, who later became his opponent.

Many people are fond of his methods, for example, there is such a wonderful teacher in the USA, Andrey Malaev-Babel, the grandson of the writer Isaac Babel, by the way. In our Department, there is Alisa Ivanova, who is very keen on Demidov’s work. However, when it came to staging the performance, the stop-machine turned on. Because it turned out that his methods were not tested, Demidov himself practically did not leave performances, in any case, he did not have time to write about it. Everything written sounds talented, peculiar and profound, it actually continues Stanislavsky’s important postulates. But this is very revolutionary, and it is not yet clear how applicable it is to staging a performance.

So, what I am getting at. I began to brag that I was learning myself. And all my works of recent years are an updated technique. Previously, it seemed to my colleagues and me: we would have to deal with ourselves; there is no time to teach others and to waste strength. But I have been convinced more than once: these master classes are a noble cause. They should be, there is a cultural process going on and it should be the property of all Russia, not only Moscow and St. Petersburg.

— You said that Demidov was Stanislavsky’s student, and then his opponent. Which students are more interesting to you, those who trust you, or those who argue and rebel?

— My training is free. Everyone can speak his or her own way. There is no need to be silent and agree in everything. I also need feedback.

By the way, my student Evgenia Boginskaya is working in my institute now, she is from Vladivostok. Now we have a teacher and a director at the Lensovet Theater. And another girl, Ksenia Kravets, worked as an actress in Vladivostok for many years, and now she entered our magistracy to study. Now, Evgenia is a teacher of the workshop, and Ksenia studies with her. Although, they once worked together in Vladivostok. I was also very pleased to meet my student Semyon Serzin. I arrived and I got a call: Veniamin Mikhailovich, this is Senya Serzin. I said: I’m sorry, I’m in Vladivostok now.

And he: So me too. It turned out that we live in the same hotel. And I will watch his film THE MAN FROM PODOLSK with great interest, because Serzin is very gifted and deep. When I was studying, I was silent, but already during my studies, I put on a good performance, or rather half of the performance, based on Blok’s TWELVE. The second half of the performance was THE BRONZE HORSEMAN; two such well-known Petrograd subjects were combined into one production. Senya was already interesting then. He studied as an actor, and then directing was added. But the most interesting thing is that Semyon does not match my tastes. He is engaged in contemporary drama, avant-garde, although I have already read that he would like to arrange a dialogue between contemporary theater and academic one. This is evidence of his intelligence.

— Semyon tells that you demand the truth from your students in everything. Could you explain?

— Unfortunately, I am one of the very few people who take Stanislavsky seriously. Usually, it is just for the record – like, I’ve read it. And I read it in great detail. Well, maybe not everything, but I have not read many things for a long time. I have my own Stanislavsky. For example, I am terribly fond of reading his notebooks, because I see very interesting implications. So, Stanislavsky was for the truth. By the way, a signal copy of his book was published in 1938, he read it shortly before his death and said: how uninteresting. Because he was a genius.

such a Vyacheslav Kokorin, a Russian director and teacher, he came to my master class, looked, and then said: You are simplifying Stanislavsky. It was a compliment for me. I am not oversimplifying, but I understand it.

— You told about Semyon Serzin; whom else of your students do you follow?

— I follow many. Before, I even kept up with everyone. Now, I don’t have time. Unfortunately, I didn’t even follow up on the last graduates due to the pandemic – a very good, very talented course has graduated. They already have grandiose plans. They staged Tadeusz Solobodzyanek’s play OUR CLASS, and for the first time a student performance will receive the Golden Soffit award. They were invited to Krakow, Melikhovo, Moscow – and everything flew overnight due to the pandemic. Can you imagine how offensive it is? More about the students. Indeed, Konstantin Khabensky became a wonderful theater figure and personality. He has a charitable foundation and he helps a lot. Just like Ksenia Rappoport does. So, I follow them. But I haven’t seen all the films – it is just impossible. Misha Trukhin – I often see him, he is very talented. Misha Porechenkov is a fantastic actor. Here is the film PODDUBNY – it is a hit, 10 out of 10! But good actors need good directors who will help them develop.

— Many actors say that they can never call themselves professionals, as they have no limit to perfection. What’s



Then there was a period, when Stanislavsky was toxic, his teaching brought a lot of harm – he tried to fix irrational processes in a rational way. And a crowd of people of little talent made it such a law, they thought that if they learn all this and do it, then it will be so. And even at the current master classes, these children’s eyes widened in surprise, because I cancel many of Stanislavsky’s terms. I consider them harmful: you need to treat them deeply, and when they are used only arithmetically, they bring harm. In art, the rational is a dangerous thing. The funny thing is that Stanislavsky himself wrote: I feel that I am doing a lot of harm. That’s just the kind of person he was. You can always say: Yeah well, it’s hard. Better to figure it out. I do not want to exaggerate my merits, but I have always tried to figure it out. I do a lot in my own way, and sometimes they catch me, they say: Why are you twisting Stanislavsky? There was

your opinion, when, after all, a person of such a profession can afford to say that he has taken his or her place?

— Indeed, not a single serious artist will say: “I took my place”. Does it mean to take place in art? The words “to take place” mean a stop. How can I say that I have succeeded as a teacher? Stupidity. Oleg Valerianovich Basilashvili will never say so, although he is a great actor. All the same, he will think, search, and quarrel with the directors a thousand times.

— Well, do you believe that actors are born or become?

— The first collection, which we released under my editorship, was called “How Actors Are Born”. To which one witty theater critic by the name of Zolotovitsky said: I think that they are born just like everyone else. It was witty. However, talent is needed, it doesn’t work without it. And also, it takes character and hard work.



LOOKING FOR TRAUBERG

Director Daria Khrenova presented at the festival the film *SON OF MONGOLIA*, directed by her grandfather Ilya Trauberg. For Daria, the restored and voiced black-and-white motion picture is a part of her research into the mysterious life of her grandfather and, in general, the beginning of a long journey into live action.

— Let's start with your grandfather who directed *SON OF MONGOLIA*

— I am now doing a documentary investigation about my grandfather Ilya Trauberg, who died under unclear circumstances in Berlin in 1948. He was there as the head of the "DEFA" studio. It was organized from scratch, after the war, on the basis of a former German film studio. The plan was to make a studio of the GDR, although then there was no GDR yet, but they already intended to lead part of Germany along the socialist path. Soviet "culture-officers" were sent there, my grandfather was one of them.

In 1948, international relations deteriorated when the Cold War broke out. Many 'culture-officers' were arrested in Ber-

lin, but only Ilya Trauberg was killed. I have a document at home stating that he died allegedly of heart disease, he was 43 years old. But he was just a pilot in the war, and they don't take a pilot with a heart condition. All historians write that he killed himself – he was pursued by the NKVD. But the reason is still not clear, I have been doing research on this for three years. Until recently, I knew absolutely nothing about my grandfather, he was erased both from the history of cinema and from the history of the family. We didn't even know where he was buried. Now his biography looks like a mystery and a detective.

With each of his films, some strange things happened – no one saw *SON OF MONGOLIA*. It is a great movie, though. As

a former film expert, I can say without fear or favor that this is a very good film, of a high artistic quality, with amazing actors.

— This film is said to be generally the beginning of Mongolian cinema

— Yes, Lenfilm came there with its own base. Before that, Mongolia did not even have such a concept of "cinema". The result is a truly Mongolian film. All Mongols are watching and wondering: "why the movie about us is made by them, rather than us?". The New York Times even called it Movie of the Year.

But the film is absent from the history of cinema, from text-

books. It turned out that no one could see it, because it is in Old Mongolian. Although it was shown in the Soviet cinemas, even Adrian Piotrovsky wrote a long article about it. This means that the film was still in Russian, but in Gosfilmofond it was not found in such a form.

Several times I was looking for a budget – even the Mongols tried to help me get grants. But maybe I'm not a very good producer, it didn't work out. As a result, I think: if I don't do it now, I will never do it. I rented the Mosfilm studio and invited the actors to do the dubbing. I am very grateful to them, because all of them, Volodya Mishukov and others, came for free. The Foundation has cut the price of a copy by half. I wanted to return this film to a series of masterpieces, good Soviet films, although I don't even know if it can be called a Soviet movie or a Mongolian one? Such an interesting mix there, without politics, although everything is about geopolitics.

In addition, I wanted to make a film about my investigation of my grandfather's story, like in *FINDING VIVIAN MAIER*, where a boy bought an archive at a flea market, found photographs there, and behind them the whole life story of their author. I wanted to follow the same path. My film will be called *THE GHOST TRAIN*, it is still "brewing".

— Do you have a directing interest in your grandfather's films, or are you restoring his films simply as part of your research into his life?

— I actually want to make live-action films, I have already made a short film. Filming documentaries takes many years, it is exhausting, agonizing and does not give the same pleasure that I get when I work with actors.

It is important for a director to make their own way in the career. I wondered how my grandfather managed to do it. He did it quite cheerfully. He worked as an assistant to Eisenstein on the filming of *OCTOBER* and then simply bombarded

him with letters. Their treatment with each other was rather boorish, they really flaunted their style, wrote rude words to each other. And although Trauberg's famous brother, Leonid Trauberg, was working at Lenfilm at that time, he got to the studio thanks to Eisenstein. I learn how he acted, and I understand that it is enough for me to go through this.

I watched all the documents as the first film started, my idealism allowed me to think that it was easy and simple to shoot in Soviet cinema. Nothing like this. Every little thing had to be fought for. My grandfather even wrote: "if the issue is not resolved, I'll quit". Wow, he hasn't filmed anything yet, but he is already threatening and demanding. That's the spirit! This is an important point for a director, although why should I learn this?

SON OF MONGOLIA interested me more with its lightness. In a rare modern film, there would be such lightness and at the same time the characters would not seem stupid. And I still do not understand how my grandfather did it. But not all of his films were successful. For example, there was a rather disastrous film about Kirov, filmed in Leningrad. There are phrases like "the enemies of the people must be destroyed." They told him off for this, of course. Then he moved to Moscow, began to work at Mosfilm. And then the war had already begun, and he became a pilot. There are just a lot of documents, thousands as for today.

— Does it become clearer to you about your grandfather, or is his personality more and more enveloped by myths?

— No, the story of death becomes more confusing, and the person became clear to me. We found him alive in the German chronicle, where he speaks from the stage. Hans Klöner translated him, in whose apartment my grandfather was found murdered. Not all documents can be trusted. He became quite clear to me. I have little faith that this was su-

icide. They are from Odessa. When I told about suicide, then no, unlikely. If only he, as a military man, could shoot himself – because it was a culture among officers, they shot themselves.

— Can you compare what you have filmed as a documentalist with the themes and characters that are attracted to live-action films?

— There are Buryat Cossacks, or rather Russians living in Buryatia, funny and interesting people – I wanted to make a comedy with them, I tried to submit it to the Film Fund. For ten years I have participated in competitions, but to no avail. But I need to finish this research, it takes up a lot of energy, I just can't turn off. It seems to me that I always crawl very deep into pressure points, because I am very empathic for others, and I just lose my energy. After filming Pavlensky, I just fell apart, for two or three years I could not come to my senses. Still, they think that if you shoot a documentary, then you come and take an interview. Not everyone realizes that you work hard day and night, that you are getting very deep into this. And now, when they tell me: there is a good story for a documentary, I think no, I just want to live. I will be wasted again, I will get into someone's drama. And live action films will not just become my thing, but I will be a way more a master there than in documentaries, where I completely belong to the character I shoot. I depend on them, whether they go to the right or to the left – and I have to follow them to the right and left. If they go to set fire to the Lubyanka, I will follow them. Or shoot the rams like these Cossacks – and I will have to follow them. I have no choice. In the documentary, I cannot say no. But in live action films I can. It doesn't leave such personal drama in you.



DIAMOND HUNTRESS

Producer Katerina Mikhailova brought two films at once to Pacific Meridian – CONFERENCE by Ivan I. Tverдовskiy and IN DEEP SLEEP by Maria Ignatenko. Katerina told VIFF Daily what success is in producing today.

On the one hand, the year was terribly difficult, and on the other, so productive. It so happened that the film IN DEEP SLEEP was at the Berlinale and at Kinotavr, and CONFERENCE – at Venice Days and also at Kinotavr. All these festival successes, of course, became possible thanks to the authors and the team, partners, co-producers of films, the Kinoprime Foundation, which supported us on time. I would call my personal merit the ability to see talented material in the form of a script and a talented director in the person of Masha Ignatenko and Ivan I. Tverдовskiy, to listen sensitively to the authors and bring what has been started to the end. And also – to attract attention and resources to the project, even in this difficult time.

First of all, I watch some previous work of the director with whom I am going to work like short films or commercials. I am interested in what topics the author is taking on, and it is important that these topics are not flat and one-layer. So far, I am engaged in auteur cinema (although I strive to try myself in commercial cinema), but here the author's opinion is very important. For example, as for Masha Ignatenko, I saw her short film YUHA, and this is such a new film language, such an uncut diamond. This film haunted me for a long time. Or

my new project, Veta Geraskina's film IT'S NOT HER NAME with Svetlana Khodchenkova, is also a very vivid thing, a script that deals with the topic of relationships, acceptance of each other, seemed to me extremely interesting.

The perfect situation is when you have an idea or suddenly they bring you a script that you would like to do, and you lead the project from the very beginning. It's like trying to grow a whole tree from a seed. Since 2004 I have my own company Vega Film, and I grow just such seeds. From searching for a script to attracting resources, filming, searching for festivals and distributors.

Probably, the first project you worked on is most often remembered. And it was Ksenia Zueva's film NEAREST AND DEAREST, because this is the first feature film, which became the debut of both Ksenia and me. That consistency in actions, in what we wanted to say together, and the resonance that this film caused, of course, became an ideal exemplary situation. This is also an excellent example of the joint work of a director and producer – we equally understood what we wanted to do and why. Finding consensus between a director and producer is always important, but not always easy to do.

Especially in auteur cinema, where people are creative. A director must understand that a producer is not a philanthropist, he or she also has his or her own reasons to create this film.

It so happens that all this time I worked as a producer of auteur films, but, of course, I would like to try to do commercial films as well. We have now filmed, for example, the pilot of a web series – we offer it to platforms, presented it at a pitching, and it will be a commercial story. In addition, we have a project for the film NIHAO, MOSCOW – about the adventures of a Chinese woman in the Russian capital, with Yang Gē in the lead role. But still we cannot get resources for production.

I am followed by the veil of a bold and radical producer – primarily because of CONFERENCE. But not only because of it: at one point I had several projects, very authorial and quite dramatic, hard in semantic and emotional pressure. I would like to take part in an easy romantic story

The period of self-isolation could not but affect us. We have canceled the shooting of the project with the tentative title WALTER, on which the director Robert Def is working. Then Mosfilm closed, where we did the post-production of Veta Geraskina's film IT'S NOT HER NAME. Several foreign partners made off, who now simply do not know no dates, no whens, nothing. Private investors are also now conserving their capital, so the situation for auteur cinema is now very difficult. And one shouldn't think that the platforms are now rich in money – no, they are very selective. Therefore, we cannot do without state aid. Of course, our plans were disrupted, but there was an opportunity to reassess values and reflect on why I am all doing this. After all, every project is two years of your life. You need to carefully choose what you spend them on.

In the 2000s, I lived in Norway for a long time, and then returned to Moscow. My childhood movies are Tarantino and Fincher. A series of happy accidents brought me to the cinema. Having already returned to Russia, I worked with the Youth Center of the Union of Cinematographers, was in Amedia, and one day I ended up at a pitching. I heard there about the script of Yulia Dimitrova and Svetlana Smirnitckaya MARCH, APRIL, MAY, which resembled WALKING THE STREETS OF MOSCOW and JULY RAIN and I liked it so much that I bought it out. The script was later transformed into two other projects, but this was the beginning of my work in cinema.



A PERSON WITH INTUITION

The Actress Ksenia Lavrova-Glinka is going to be the host of the Pacific Meridian closing ceremony for the second time.

I basically begged to take me to the festival, Ksenia admits. – Because I really love it. It has this unique atmosphere. It inspires. There are so many interesting films from dozens of countries; there are so many events in the program. You don't know where to go and what to do first. So far I have managed to watch A MAN FROM PODOLSK, visit the Pospelov Fort, attend some workshops – this is incredible.

– This year the festival presented a drive-in theatre; ICE-2 is one of the films people can watch there. Both in this film and its first installment you have a supporting role, very modest one, but you still managed to give us a comprehensive idea of this character.

– This was a collaboration with the director, scriptwriter, make-up artists. We managed to capture her spirit, her style – a lady who is a little eccentric. A lot depends on the right interpretation of the character. It was hard to work in ICE-2, like trying to fit into your old shoes. I had forgotten who she was, that aunt of the main character, how she breathes, moves; I had to remember and mold myself back into that shape. But that is the beauty of a thorough makeup, proper costumes; they switch your instincts on. For me, that is the most important part of the job. As Robert De Niro said, intuition is the main tool of an actor. What leads you, where it leads you – it is inexplicable, but if you feel it, you will succeed. That is why when you have a proper costume, a certain task to portray, your intuition will show you the right way.

– Do you think about the life of your characters after the film is over, about their existence in the world you helped to create?

– Wow, that is some question! No, I have never thought about it. I think that viewers do that because they always seem to need the information about every little detail. I remember the second season finale of the INTERNSHIP series when my character faints and that is it. People wrote so many letters, asking if Zhenya died, what had happened to her. I was literally bombarded with those questions. People needed to know what was going on after this cliffhanger. It is really hard to explain that cliffhangers exist to make people use their imagination, continue the story in their own way.

– What is your process for choosing a part to play, what are the most important criteria?

– The quality of the script. You might read one, and it is an utter rubbish. I was once invited to take part in TV series with very good actors. But when they gave me the script, it turned out that it was full of swear words. All the characters spoke like that. Of course, I turned it down. I cannot stand such things.

– You like to say that you are a rebellious actress with your own opinion and take on everything. Do you think that directors might be scared to cast you?

– They sure are! Yes, I am not a meek obedient type, but if

there is harmony – good atmosphere on set, politeness and friendliness, I am always ready to compromise and try to show the same respect towards my colleagues that they treat me with. But as soon as I see someone slacking, I lose my temper.

– Have you noticed the change in the industry due to the pandemic? They say that there are fewer projects, fewer parts to play.

– I am not really sure. There are some offers I am considering... Yes, we failed to finish KAMAZ project after the restrictions have been lifted – this is a story about the plant, cars, drivers and their job, and even about the Paris-Dakar Rally. It is a huge project, I really enjoyed being a part of it, it is a story about real men. And a bonus was that there are almost no female parts, and one of them is mine. Now this TV project is in postproduction and, hopefully, will be soon released.

– How did your lockdown go?

– It was wonderful! After it I feel like a phoenix, rising from the ashes. I am really grateful for the lockdown, because it made us stop, pay attention to ourselves, our inner world, our children, our family. I really benefited from that time – mostly, in terms of communication with my children. Besides, during the lockdown I completed a project I have been dreaming of for a long time. I started my own YouTube channel about cooking, it is called BocaLavra. I am really proud of myself for being able to find another dimension of my personality – because I enjoy cooking very much. I believe this lockdown to be a catalyst of future changes. I would compare it to a fever. The higher the fever gets, the more useless things in your body get burnt. Same with the lockdown – it burned many useless things.

– Do you think that film industry will change after the crisis?

– I really hope so, especially for the content to change for the better. I have watched a lot of Russian and foreign films during the lockdown and realized that we lag behind in many things: preparing the materials, complexity of ideas, artistic value. We need to catch up. But some things we should not catch up on, I believe. The new rules for the Berlin Film Festival, the Academy Awards horrify me. I have no issues with minorities, I have a lot of friends I respect and appreciate, but how can one group of people dictate their rules to the majority? By the way, my friends, who belong to that community, believe that such decisions and people who lobby them discredit the whole idea of liberty, equal rights and a chance to live the life you want. I think that all initiators of such innovations and amendments have lost their minds. There is nothing better than a man and a woman coexisting in this world, they are so different and so beautiful. We are like different planets, how can you standardize that? I do not understand it... But I hope for the best.

– Are you an optimist in general?

– I am a realist. I am a little afraid of people who are always happy and cheerful. I hate the word "positive attitude". But doom and gloom are not my story either. Again, I am a realist, trying to look at things objectively, dissect them, discover my own mistakes, and draw conclusions. The proverbial glass is neither half full, not half empty; it just has something in it. That is the way it is.

– So, tell us about your BocaLavra channel, what do you talk about there, what do you cook?

– Everything! I love cooking. But since I have a big family and not enough time, I prefer quick and easy dishes that taste good. That was the main idea for the channel as well.

– Are you a fan of a healthy diet, or are there things like a fried piece of meat on your channel too?

– There is everything that is tasty and easy to cook. I watch what I eat, but to a certain extent. For instance, I do not like pork very much, but love cured pork fat. Taste and simplicity are my basic rules. I do not like recipes with a ton of ingredients and a whole fridge of products for one dish. Once there was this recipe on the Internet that started with the words, "The easiest way to cook fried rice". I checked it out, but it turned out that you needed a whole page worth of other ingredients. A tea spoon of this, a few drops of that, a pinch of one thing, a handful of another, as well as adding something else. Pure horror! My recipes do not have a long list of components, exotic products that are difficult to find; what they do have is taste, an unusual take on everyday food.

– Would you like to play a chef in a film?

– I don't know, maybe. It is not about what your character does, but whether it is an interesting personality, whether you have something to show to the audience with it.



SCREENPLAYS, MOVIES, AND GARDEN WALKS

Participants in the competition for the 18th Pacific Meridian Festival were asked how they spent the quarantine and what they did in self-isolation. Each one of them outlined both pros and cons.

Yumo Luo, LONG DAY, China

— The result of self-isolation is that I have a period of free creation. I finished the script for the next movie, read a lot of books, watched a lot of movies, and got to know the Korean director Sang-soo Hong and I was deeply shocked by his movie. During this time, I missed a good opportunity to shoot a short film.

Dmitry Davydov, SCARECROW, Russia

— I wrote two scripts, reviewed several old ones, watched a whole bunch of films. But there is a lot to do in our village in summer – construction works, for example, or repair.

Michael Acros, VALERIO'S DAY OUT, Columbia

— I have been really productive and reclusive. My partner and I have built a garden and we took walks to feed the feral cats in the neighborhood. I frequently bike to the levees surrounding the Mississippi River and have

become fascinated with these river shack communities that were built on this historic public/private land. My new project takes place here. I definitely miss the physical element to film festivals. Especially to meet and drink with like-minded humans celebrating this ancient art form.

Shun Ikezoe, SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS, Japan

— During the quarantine I was able to reevaluate my life. What I really need and what I do not. I filmed the tranquility of my home. I learned that there was a universe I could walk through around my house. I connected with the world online, got to know films old and new, and then I closed my computer. It is a shame I was not able to go to a foreign film festival and talk to all of you in person.

Kirill Khachaturov, NAKED, Russia

— This period took nothing away from me, except for a powerful computer, which remained in Moscow during the quarantine. In February, my wife (producer Arina Khachaturova, VIFF Daily) and I went to the Spirit of Fire festival in Khanty-Mansiysk, and after that, we decided to visit my wife's dad to celebrate his birthday and return to Moscow after that. The

quarantine caught us up exactly at my father-in-law's place; my wife and I were sent to a remote job. So, we decided to stay. Why go to Moscow when we are 200 km from Ufa in a small town where the climate is good and everything is fine? So we stayed there until August.

As a director, I completely redesigned the module of my characters, made them a little more understandable to the audience. I made a systematic plan for my new film, which can be full-length, or maybe short. I came up with a mini-series – so far, there are five episodes of 5-10 minutes each. But the most important thing that the quarantine gave me was communication with parents.

Madeleine Sims-Fewer and Dusty Mancinelli, CHUBBY, Canada

— We were lucky in that we had just wrapped shooting our feature, VIOLATION, when COVID19 hit us. We have spent most of our time in post-production, and recently released the film at the Toronto International Film Festival. We are now looking ahead to our second feature! We definitely missed the festival experience, though TIFF did a wonderful job transitioning to a hybrid online and in-person event this year. We do hope that perhaps next year we will be able to travel with VIOLATION to other festivals around the world.

ROMANIAN WAVE, 1970S ARTHOUSE AND FORREST GUMP

The contest directors were asked which movies and film directors they grew up on and what they watch today.

Yumo Luo, LONG DAY, China

— The films of Taiwanese a director Hou Hsiao-hsien, Andrei Tarkovsky, a Hungarian director Béla Tarr and Robert Bresson made me grow up. After watching Béla Tarr's film THE TURIN HORSE, I determined to become a film writer. I am a cinephile. I have watched more than 2,000 movies. Now I prefer author movies with a strong personal style.

Michael Acros, VALERIO'S DAY OUT, Columbia

— The last few movies I watched are THE PAPERBOY by Lee Daniels, AFTER SCHOOL by Antonio Campos, FLESH EATERS by Jack Curtis, KAJILLIONAIRE by Miranda July, THE SERPENT'S EGG by Ingmar Bergman and THE HOWLING by Joe Dante.

Shun Ikezoe, SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS, Japan

— A lot of old experimental films, the Nouvelle Vague and ATG films have been my inspiration. I'm constantly inspired

by innovative films. For this film, I was inspired by Maya Deren and Philippe Garrel's LE RÉVÉLATEUR.

Kirill Khachaturov, NAKED, Russia

— Assuming films I grew up on, I can divide my life into three stages. I grew up in the city of Khabarovsk, and if someone there called me a cinephile, I would most likely be upset – back then, I did not even know a word like that. I watched commercial films; however, now, I do not remember a single name of the directors who filmed Schwarzenegger and other action heroes. Probably the most important film that has remained close to me so far is Robert Zemeckis's FORREST GUMP. Later, when I worked in the theater and studied at the Railway Institute, other films came into my life. For example, films by Wim Wenders. Then I was called to the army, where I did not watch anything. I returned, started to design, left for Moscow and after a while entered the Moscow School of New Cinema; from this point, the very different films started forming my personality. The Romanian New Wave, Albert Serra, and Philippe Grandrieux – in a word, those people who came to our School to teach master classes. Today, I watch the festival program of the Animation Fes-

tival in Ottawa. Before that, I watched the program of the festival in Annecy, then the festival in Odense. Not long ago I finished the series WHAT ARE WE DOING IN THE SHADOWS, based on the film by Taiki Waititi – in my opinion, one of the funniest TV series in recent years. I also watched over PARIS, TEXAS.

Madeleine Sims-Fewer and Dusty Mancinelli, CHUBBY, Canada

— We definitely have eclectic tastes as filmgoers. Growing up on different continents there were some differences in the films we grew up on, but also lots of crossover. Dusty grew up in North America and I was raised in England, but we were both fans of Scorsese, Haneke, Campion, the Dardenne Brothers, Kieslowski to name a few. We try to watch one film a day, but don't restrict ourselves to genre or style at all. Sometimes it is a blockbuster, another time a tiny arthouse film from the 1970's, sometimes an exploitation film – it's all educational!



KSENIA ZUEVA

Director of INTERVENTION

— You started your debut film **NEAREST AND DEAREST** in record time. Why did it not work out with **INTERVENTION**?

— Just before the premiere of **NEAREST AND DEAREST** in the summer of 2017, some partners offered to make a movie together. I started pondering on it. The story of love between a cardiac surgeon and his patient seemed to me the most preferable. And it originated in my head, then I met a cardiac surgeon Mikhail Abramyan, — the person I am very grateful to. He told me in detail about the illness of my main female character, helped me to properly observe all medical literacy, all the details. I started working on the script. It took a long time, I put it off and returned to it, in different states and moods. The script was constantly changing. In a way, he became a reflection of my state of mind over a long period of my life. However, when the first draft had been ready, my partners and I disagreed on some issues. We broke up. Then began a long, I would say painful, search for new producers who would understand me. This lasted about a year and a half, at the same time I continued working on my script — I added and removed some scenes, rewrote as all this ripened and transformed in me.

— Why were you interested in a theme of medicine?

— I have a special relationship to the profession of a doctor. I am obsessed with directing, but if you ask me about the profession that attracts me, I will answer that this is the profession of a surgeon. Besides, my grandmother is a doctor. As a child I spent a lot of time at her work, lived in her house, and this house was always full of her colleagues.

— All in white coats?

— At her place of work, yes, they wore white coats, and for me it was just so fascinating. At home, everyone usually gathered for feasts.

— And all this endless talk about bypass surgery, right?

— *(Laughing.)* They talked about many things. I was wildly interested. Also, her bookcases with medical books. Some phonendoscopes. And we also had a ritual: she told me about the sick before going to bed. *(Laughs.)* About different complicated medical histories at her work. This fascinated me more than any fairy tales. My grandmother is generally a parental figure for me. She shaped me. It is no coincidence that her figure is present in both **INTERVENTION** and **NEAREST AND DEAREST**. In general, making a film on a medical topic has always attracted me. And surgery is my passion. What could be more interesting than working with a human body?

— Now it is clear why you did not abandon this idea, even after breaking up with the producers.

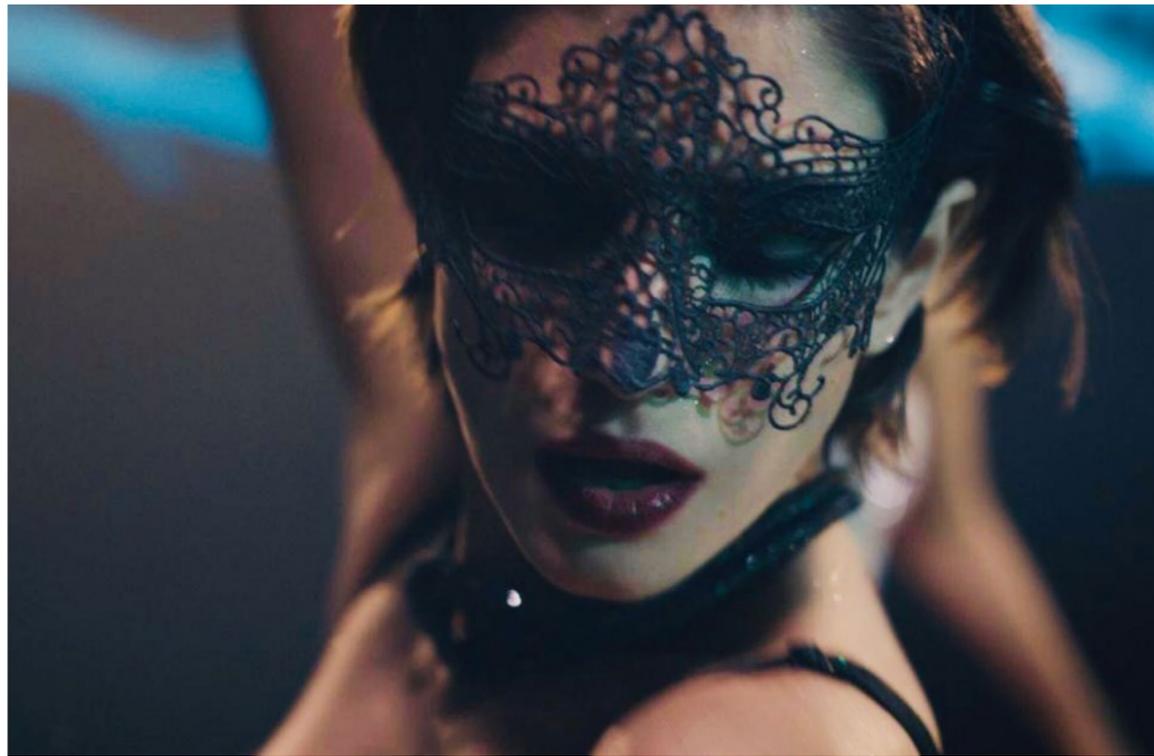
— I never give up my plans. For me, it is extremely important to implement them. I am true to my creativity. At the same time, I am perfectly aware that no one owes me anything and no one is obliged to understand me. It is normal that people may disagree, but the main thing for me is that I hear my inner agreement with what I intend to create. Then I start looking for people who agree with me. And sometimes you have to look for them for a long time. I found my

producers, I am very grateful to them.

You remembered that I started **NEAREST AND DEAREST** in record time. It took a long time before I found the producers to start filming with. For a long time I was looking for people who wanted to support me and run my script. Everything happened faster here. However, I must say that the form of **INTERVENTION** was changing and transforming until the end of the editing. The film literally from the synopsis to the final steps led me until it formed into what it was formed into. It was a really difficult process for the birth of a film work. But I am loyal to my creative processes. They contain the truth, although at times they are absolutely painful.

— Is there a connection between **Nearest and Dearest** and **INTERVENTION** for you? At least at the level of characters. In both films they are hurt, lost, unable to communicate with each other, but looking for love.

— Indeed, the themes of loneliness, lack of warmth, the need for love and tenderness, cold, dullness are quite clear things to me. By my current growing up, a circle of comfortable, dear, loving people has formed around me. But the world of cold five-story buildings, forests and fields, yards and clinics, people in hoodies is a significant part of my reality, which shaped me. And I felt chronically lonely. In each of my characters there is I, one way or another. In **Nearest and Dearest**, most of I was in the characters of brother and sister. In **INTERVENTION** most of I was in Masha. That is, it does not mean that I ...



— ...had a romance with a doctor?

— I wanted to say that, thank God, I did not have heart diseases, I did not happen to be on the operating table. However, when the cardiac surgeon Mikhail Abramovich Abramyan described to me the symptoms of mitral valve disease (what the main character had) — a person suffocates, coughs, cannot climb stairs — it seemed to me very metaphorical. The feeling that you are suffocating from this life, that there is no more power left. Until that moment when someone “repaired” your heart with tools, thereby returning you vitality. With literally surgical instruments, but the main instrument was love. As for your question about the romance, yes, my emotional and sensory experience takes place in this film, it is great and strongly shaped the film language. A very emotional motion picture came out.

— In an interview about NEAREST AND DEAREST you said that some of the characters from time to time annoyed you so much during the shooting you did not even want to look at the playback. Nobody annoyed you here?

— I filmed NEAREST AND DEAREST, already being cooled down. Again, a lot of time has passed between writing the script and filming the movie. During this period, I managed to grow up and look differently at what was written in acute emotions. By directing, I embodied an accomplished, long-standing idea. I approached it distantly. Besides, only the characters of the parents annoyed me. I had my own reasons. INTERVENTION was created here and now, with very fresh, actual emotions. A lot was born even on the set, I was merged with each of the characters, I passed everything through myself. So, nope, no one annoyed me. I do not remember the annoyance. I remember the joy of the playback because it worked out all the time. I shared the emotions of love scenes very much, but more often it hurt me.

— What about Masha? She is very unsophisticated, I would say.

— No, she was not annoying. She is very clear. She is a hostage to her environment, family, a victim of circumstances and is very honest in her love. She is sincere, rather than unsophisticated.

— A very curious comparison of her life with a stalled moped.

— Yes, very metaphorical. You turn yourself on with the last bit of strength and you get stalled. I think in images, once this image was born inside me from my own feeling of some kind of intimidation. Just like the eternal winter and cold among five-story buildings in the Machine World is a metaphor for my chronic feeling of loneliness.

— The men in the film are very mundane: the owner, the deceiver. Why is that?

— Just ordinary people. Gosha has severe emotional dysregulation, he is hysterical, traumatic, again, a hostage of the environment and family. He is addicted to Masha, for him it is such a model of love. Masha is sacrificial and needs a partner and warmth, so she forgives him any monstrous emotional outburst in the name of that volley of tenderness that he gives her after, repenting. He, in his turn, allows himself to lose his temper on her, knowing that she will still endure. She had no other experience, after all, she is young, she just does not have to understand life like her new lover, a 50-year-old doctor. Of course, she is completely blinded and stunned by the meeting with this man, the embodiment of strength, a mixture of a parent and a guardian angel, who called her in a gentle voice, and even touched her heart, saved her life.

I would not say that he is a deceiver — he is a person

who manifested in a certain way in the circumstances in which he fell. He really fell in love with her. This is absolute, mutual love at first sight. I know my colleagues who condemned this character. But I never did. I am very sorry for him. And because of his complexes, fears, past, present, everything that happened is traumatic and difficult for him. Perhaps even more difficult than for Masha. Moreover, he did not deceive. He did not tell her. And he did not tell, because he was not ready, that is how the circumstances developed. But the secret became clear. In this sense, it is a multifaceted tragedy. And mutual trauma in the final. But what will happen next is a very good question. The final is open.

— What function do dreams and fantasies perform for you?

— This is called compensatory fantasy. In such fantasies, people hide from the hard and cruel reality. For example, a child feels bad because during the lesson the class teacher behaves toxic, humiliates, screams. And the child begins to fantasize that he is, say, a star warrior in a spaceship. Your own life is so hard and unbearable that there is a substitute for it in your own imagination. This is the case with Masha. In addition, any love is accompanied by an abundance of fantasies about the object of love; fantasies during the sexual process are generally normal things. It was interesting for me to show the scene of how Masha “break off” her accumulated sexual tension in connection with her object of desire on another partner, and to display this process of fantasy during sex. Since I am building the story through Masha’s perception, it was important for me to immerse the viewer in her reality, where fantasies and dreams are a large part of her. As for the dreams: this is a reflection of her state of mind, I myself created them intuitively, unconsciously, so that they could

be interpreted in different ways by everyone, including from the point of view of psychoanalysis. I think that the beast in her dream is a symbol of her fear of male aggression. Just like her fear of dogs, the barking of which accompanies her in reality throughout the film, is in general a fear of something aggressive, of a threat that comes from her father and boyfriend.

— Can you tell about the medical component of the story, about heart surgery and its significance?

— Masha says to her beloved: “You have seen my heart.” Besides the fact that he literally sawed up her breasts, saw the heart, touched it with his hands and worked with it, he also saw who she was and what she really needed.

— Isn’t the metaphor too straightforward?

— No, it is spot-on. Believe me, the phrase “You have seen my heart” is of great importance. I once personally pronounced it, and it was not the fruit of some exalted states. Speaking-up such a phrase consciously to a person is, firstly, a great rarity, and secondly, it is worth a lot. Then I realized that I was pronouncing it, perhaps, for the first time in my life.

— At what stage did you choose Anya Chipovskaya for the role of Masha?

— I saw Masha as a girl of fantastic beauty and magnetism, so that there was no chance of resisting her. I was looking for just such a face so that the hero of Andris KeiĶs was blinded, so that he would not have a chance not to enter into a romantic relationship with her, would break all his taboos. I was torn between three actresses. By chance, at the birthday party of our common friend Marusya Fomina, I met Anya. She took a seat nearby. At some point, I raised my head, looked at her and saw my her-

oine. I took Anya out into the corridor, said: “I need to call you for an audition — can I send you a script?” She seemed a little bewildered, but agreed. Then she read, we met, talked for about five hours, lived and bemoaned this story together. Then she came to audition, and I had no doubts that she would be Masha.

— Pavel Popov played in your short film GELYA, he is known for a number of serials. But here he is drastically different.

— Yes, the incredible transformation. Pasha was my fellow student from the Boris Shchukin Theatre Institute. I am a fan of his talent and pulchritude since the student days. He is a real performer. He really has a gift. I asked him to shave, because it suits him very much. I have always felt this unbridled wild masculinity in him. I tried many boys for this role. I showed Pasha’s auditions with another actress to one of my close and trustworthy people, and he confirmed my intuitive feelings, he influenced my decision. I am still very grateful to him. After that I connected Anya and Pavel in paired auditions, and there was no doubt that he would play the role of Gosha. In the filming process, he exceeded all my expectations.

— Can you tell us about your casting with Ivan I. Tverdovskiy? You both starred in each other’s movies.

— Ivan and I have love at first touch. But this is not about male and female things. Ivan is like a brother to me. Our first meeting happened at one very traumatic event for both of us. It was very hard for me emotionally, Vanya was sitting next to me, and I put my palm in his. And he hugged me, and I hid in his arms, like a chick under the wing of a large bird. From that moment on, we never parted.

— Well, is this a reason to be filmed in each other’s movies?

— (Laughing.) We became very close, we have an emotional connection with him, which implies a common understanding of some things without words. I came to Vanya to support him at the premiere of JUMPMAN, we stayed together afterwards, and suddenly he asked me: “Why don’t you ever film me, Ksyusha?”. It was so unexpected and direct that I instantly looked at him as an artist and saw... I saw what eventually took place in INTERVENTION. The image flashed before my eyes in a few seconds, and I said to him: “Okay, I’ll shoot you.”

— And how did you get to him in return?

— Vanya really likes the film 14 STEPS by Max Shavkin (*Ksenia played the role of a student Anna there. — VIFF Daily*), I think that was the primary impulse. Well, and we keep in touch steadily, we talk about life. A year ago at Kinotavr Vanya said that he wanted to send me a script. It was the script of CONFERENCE, I read it, it was really impressive. I came to audition. Later he said: “I know that you have something to tell me about.” So he embodied on the screen my personal trauma through the heroine Galya. I gave myself to Ivan entirely, Tverdovskiy on the set is a clear and strict director. A brilliant leader.

And as an actor, Vanya is as organic as a child. As soon as I said: “Start!” — and he easily turned into his character, from the first take. I often let the actors improvise, and Vanya later told me during the dubbing that he himself did not understand where he got these phrases that his character says. In general, he is a strict director whom I obey and an obedient artist who trusts me. And in life we are just very gentle with each other, we talk a lot and laugh.



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