
ANASTASIA SALTYKOVA
AYUR BADMAYEV
A FILM BY ANASTASIA SALTYKOVA
TUVA
SCREENPLAY ANASTASIA SALTYKOVA VITALY SAVENKOV
CINEMATOGRAPHY DMITRY SOLOVYOV DMITRY SAKHAROV
PRODUCTION DESIGN VALENTINA KUPRIYASHKINA
MUSIC VYACHESLAV ONOPRIENKO
SOUND LEV EPSHTEIN EDITING DIANA ROIBU
PRODUCERS ANDREY BORISOV ANASTASIA SALTYKOVA

TUVA?

Narrative short film

Directed by Anastasia Saltykova

Genre	Drama · road movie · comedy
Language	Russian
Subtitles	Russian, English
Country	Russia
Running time	25 minutes
Production completed	October 2026
Project status	Debut film · student graduation project
Aspect ratio	2.51:1

LOGLINE

A journalist on the verge of being fired flies to Tuva for a career-saving report about a shaman and draws a Buddhist monk into the journey.

FESTIVAL SYNOPSIS

Lena, a journalist facing divorce and professional failure, travels to Tuva to report on a shaman and save her job. When her cameraman fails to arrive, she draws Eres, a Buddhist monk and former cinematographer, into the journey. Their travels become a comic and tense battle between two people all too skilled at protecting themselves. Lena masks her pain with sarcasm and bravado; Eres hides his fear and sense of defeat behind monastic restraint. Gradually, they begin to understand each other, but an incident on the road shatters their fragile trust and forces them both to confront what they have been trying to escape.

Extended synopsis

Lena, a thirty-year-old journalist facing divorce and professional failure, travels to Tuva to film an exclusive report on a shaman and save her job. Her cameraman fails to arrive, her husband ignores her voice messages, and the trip increasingly feels like a desperate attempt to prove that her life has not fallen apart completely.

On a deserted road, Lena almost runs over Eres, a Buddhist monk. Eres has a camera, and Lena urgently needs a cameraman. After a series of awkward jokes, provocations and a small act of theft, she all but drags him into the journey to the shaman.

Their travels become a comic and tense battle between two people all too skilled at protecting themselves. Lena masks her pain with sarcasm and bravado. Eres hides his fear and sense of defeat behind monastic restraint. Gradually, it emerges that he was once a cinematographer who left Tuva to pursue his dream, only to return feeling he had failed. Now he plans to leave for Tibet and abandon his former life for good.

As they argue, they begin to understand each other. But the lightness vanishes when an incident on the road brings back Eres's feelings of guilt and helplessness. He explodes, confronting Lena with everything she has been trying to escape: an empty home, loneliness and a love that has long gone unanswered. For Lena, this is a betrayal by someone who had reached out to help her.

Left alone in the Tuva steppe, Lena finally stops pretending to be strong and caustic. She tries to call her husband, but once again the phone simply rings. At that moment, dogs attack her. Eres arrives in time to save her.

In the morning, Lena wakes up at the shaman's house. He turns out to be Eres's father. This almost mystical encounter changes them both. Eres decides not to leave for Tibet: he stays to finally talk to his father and perhaps stop hiding from his former dream. Lena gives up trying to "fix" her old life and finally listens to her feelings.

In the final scene, Lena and Eres sit back to back. When Eres asks "TUVA?" — "Are you coming?" — the answer no longer needs words.

CONCEPT CREATOR AND DIRECTOR

Anastasia Saltykova



An actress, director, screenwriter and television presenter from the Rostov region.

At 15, she dreamed of becoming an actress and director. She later moved to Moscow and enrolled in the acting department at the Institute of Russian Theatre. During her studies, she staged many productions herself, developing a director's eye from within the acting profession. She went on to work in theatre, film, television and large immersive projects. She has received international acting awards for her role in the film Muse.

As a travel programme presenter, she wrote scripts, filmed and presented stories about journeys around the world. Her encounter with Tuva inspired her debut film, TUVA?.

CONTACT

mail@saltukova.info

The story behind the film

This film is a very personal story for me. I wanted to tell a story about people who may belong to different cultures, speak different languages and see the world differently, yet at some point become the only ones who can truly hear and support each other.

A few years ago, I visited Tuva for the first time and was so struck by the place that I promised myself I would make a film there one day. After that trip, I enrolled in a directing programme and returned to the same places with a film crew two years later.

Tuva is a fully fledged character in my story: a place where cultures, religions and worldviews meet; a land where Buddhism, shamanism and contemporary life coexist. That is why only Tuva could bring my characters together and mark the beginning of their inner journey.

In my story, shamanism is neither an exotic curiosity nor an ethnographic detail. It is a dramatic key to exploring growing up, finding oneself and a person's inner journey through mythological thinking and the Tuvan worldview.

Before turning to directing, I spent many years working as an actress and television presenter, making programmes about travel and other cultures. Much of that experience shaped this work. For me, the film became the first project to bring together all my professions: writer, director, actress and explorer of human stories.

At a time when wars are unfolding around the world, I felt an urgent need to avoid the language of division. I wanted to look to the East as a safe, silent space where one could hear oneself, another person and the world anew.

Anastasia Saltykova
Concept creator and director

Film stills







Film stills







Cast & crew

AUTHORS

Director, concept
Anastasia Saltykova

Screenplay
Anastasia Saltykova
Vitaly Savenkov

Production design, assistant director
Valentina Kupriyashkina

Composer
Vyacheslav Onoprienko

Producers
Andrey Borisov
Anastasia Saltykova

CAST

Lena
Anastasia Saltykova

Eres
Ayur Badmayev

Shaman, father
Marat Oorzhak

LOCATION FILMING

Cinematography
Dmitry Solovyov

Focus puller
Eres Mongush

Production sound
Andrey Borisov

ACTION SCENES

Action cinematography
Dmitry Sakharov

Camera assistants
Dmitry Popovich
Maxim Stepanov

Focus puller
Nikita Krutov

Production sound
Andrey Puchkov

CREW

Drivers
Alexey Khoyugban · Arbay-Ool Bolat · Subuday Kuular

Dog handlers
Alina Biche-Kys · Viktoria Gurova · Polina Golberg

On-set assistance
Ilya Podsechenov · Ivan Istomin · Timofey Shebeshev

POST-PRODUCTION

Editing director
Diana Roibu

Editor
Kristina Esina

Sound
Lev Epshtein

Colourist
Vladimir Spevak

MUSIC

"Zashchishchatsya ochkami (t.A.T.u. version)"

Music and lyrics
Demyan I.K.

Music producer
Sergey Nikolienko

Sound engineer
Timur Babin

Performed by
ORLY (Svetlana Kuldyushova)

© licensed by First Music Publishing LLC

"On the Edge"

Music and lyrics
Mengi Mongush · Chingis Sorzhu

Performed by
ODUCHU

WITH THANKS

Special thanks
Kur Baazandorzh · Alexey Khoyugban · Art-tsalam Khertek · Dmitry Sakharov · Svetlana Kuldyushova · Andrey Zlobin · Mikhail Tabaev · Eres Mongush

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tyva
Office of the Supreme Shaman of Tuva
Tuvan Republican Branch of the Russian Geographical Society