

Technical Information

Working Title: The Prisoner
Director: Orkhan Aghazadeh
Screenplay: Orkhan Aghazadeh
Nationality: Azeri
Languages: Azerbaijani
Genre: Drama
Format: 4K HD
Length: 110 min
Shooting location: Azerbaijan

Director's Information

Orkhan Aghazadeh is a writer-director based in Azerbaijan. After his BA in *Journalism and Mass Communications*, he obtained a scholarship to do an MA in *Filmmaking* at London Film School, and graduated with distinction.

His first short documentary *A Letter to Lenin* was premiered at Leipzig International film festival. His graduation short film *The Chairs* was accepted by many festivals including Palm Springs Short FF, Angers Premiers Plans FF, Tampere FF, Brussels FF, Poitiers FF and won awards in others.

His first feature-film project *The Prisoner* was selected by the Cinéfondation Residency of Cannes Film Festival in 2020, and is currently in development.

THE PRISONER

a film by Orkhan Aghazadeh



cinéfondation
LA RÉSIDENCE

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Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or

even first feature film, and the merits of their feature film project. During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.

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In the darkness of the night a male body dancing at the window of the abandoned building in a female dress is being observed by prisoners.

Dans l'obscurité de la nuit, les prisonniers observent un jeune homme dansant en robe de femme à la fenêtre d'un bâtiment abandonné



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SYNOPSIS

Rasim, in his early twenties, is in jail almost by mistake. When his prison-mates find out he was dancing dressed as a woman at a wedding, they force him to do the same for them during his entire time in prison. On release, Rasim goes back to his village to start a new life – until he's forced to return to the city and dance again for prisoners in an abandoned building opposite the prison. Rasim can't stand it anymore and decides to commit suicide. When he's about to end his life, Rasim is distracted by a knock on his door. It's Nargis, a young woman also trapped in the city...

STATEMENT OF INTENT

In *The Prisoner*, I will explore the themes of choice and being trapped: what options do we have to determine our own lives?

Very little is known about life in Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus region. While featuring the stories of Rasim and Nargis being trapped in the city, the film also tackles the taboo issues of masculinity, conservatism and female subjugation that are always overlooked in the films of the region. I believe that cinema is a common language, and that life in an unknown country like mine can be interesting and relevant on screen to an international audience.

SYNOPSIS

Rasim, âgé d'une vingtaine d'années, est en prison presque par erreur. Lorsque ses compagnons de prison découvrent qu'il dansait vêtu en femme lors d'un mariage, ils le forcent à faire de même pour eux pendant toute la durée de son incarcération. À sa libération, Rasim retourne dans son village pour débiter une nouvelle vie – jusqu'à ce qu'il soit forcé de retourner en ville et de danser à nouveau pour les prisonniers dans un bâtiment abandonné en face de la prison. Rasim n'en peut plus et décide de se suicider. Alors qu'il est sur le point de mettre fin à ses jours, Rasim est interrompu par quelqu'un qui frappe à sa porte. C'est Nargis, une jeune femme également piégée dans la ville...

NOTE D'INTENTION

Dans *The Prisoners*, j'explorerai les thèmes du choix et du fait d'être pris au piège: quelles options avons-nous pour déterminer notre propre vie? Nous connaissons très peu de choses sur la vie en Azerbaïdjan et dans la région du Caucase du Sud. Tout en présentant les histoires de Rasim et Nargis piégés dans la ville, le film aborde également les questions taboues de la masculinité, du conservatisme et de l'asservissement féminin qui sont toujours négligées dans les films de la région. Je crois que le cinéma est un langage commun, et que la vie dans un pays inconnu comme le mien peut être intéressante et pertinente à l'écran pour un public international.

