

# PRESS NOTES

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CPH:DOX 2025

# WE LIVE HERE

Original title: ATAMEKEN



# WE LIVE HERE

Kazakhstan, 2025, 80 mins

a film by  
Zhanana Kurmasheva

## PRESS NOTES

**World premiere**

CPH:DOX 2025

DOX:AWARD Competition

Press materials can be downloaded [HERE](#)



# Contacts

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## Production

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## World Sales

TBA



# Logline

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In the desolate Kazakh steppe, a former Soviet nuclear test site, three generations confront its haunting legacy, reflecting on humanity's fragile relationship with its environment and future.

# Synopsis

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Set in the Kazakh steppe, a former Soviet nuclear test site, ***We Live Here*** offers a stark warning for humanity's future. Between 1949 and 1991, 456 nuclear tests left a legacy of radioactive contamination and suffering. As ecologists map uninhabitable areas, a nearby family struggles with the echoes of the past. Convinced their daughter's illness stems from radiation, they seek proof while she feels torn between love for her homeland and the sense of looming danger it still holds. The steppe becomes a haunting metaphor for our planet, on the brink of becoming a nuclear wasteland.





# About the director

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## Zhanana Kurmasheva

Zhanana Kurmasheva is a Kazakh director with a focus on documentary filmmaking. She holds a BA and MA in Film Directing from the Kazakh National Academy of Arts.

Zhanana has participated in a number of international workshops and training programs, such as the East-West Talent Lab at the goEast – Festival of Central and Eastern European Film in 2022. Her debut feature-length documentary, **We Live Here** (2024), has been supported by the Berlinale Doc Toolbox Program, Eurasia Doc (Doc Monde) Script Development Residency, GZDOC (Top 10 Documentary Projects), and Tokyo Docs, where it won Best Pitch.

She is the laureate of the Kulaguer-2011 award for her student documentary **I Am 20 Years Old!**. Her short documentary **Zhenya** (2013) was showcased at numerous international film festivals in Moscow, New York, Yerevan, Sevastopol, and Almaty, receiving acclaim for its nuanced storytelling. Her work reflects a profound engagement with social issues and cultural identity, establishing her as a rising voice in Kazakh documentary cinema.



## Filmography

2024 / *We Live Here* / feature documentary

2013 / *Zhenya* / short documentary

2011 / *I am 20 years old!* / student documentary

# Director's statement

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***“Only the devil has no hope.”***  
***– from the book written by Bolatbek, one of the protagonists.***

Some places on Earth carry a weight that is almost impossible to put into words. I've traveled to a handful of places, in Kazakhstan and beyond, but nowhere else have I felt the spectrum of emotions I experienced at the Semipalatinsk Test Site. It is a place of immense beauty and profound sorrow—a paradox etched into the land itself.

The vast steppe carries an eerie sense of timelessness, as if caught in a loop where the clouds never quite lift from the horizon. The radiation feels almost alive, a sinister force that silently infiltrates homes, luring people with an invisible pull in the dead of night like the sirens of Greek myth.

I remember driving to a wintering ground in the middle of the test site. The sunset that evening was breathtaking, its brilliance contrasting sharply with the stories of devastation tied to this land. I looked at the dry, scarred earth and felt pity for all it had endured. But then, as the light painted the steppe in fiery hues, a thought struck me: this land will outlast us all. It has survived explosions, poison, and neglect. It endures, unmoved by human arrogance, its grandeur reminding us of our insignificance. That moment helped me understand why people refuse to leave. For them, this is not just home—it is atameken (in Kazakh, “homeland”), sacred ground that bears witness to their shared history. The land remembers what it has endured and what they have endured. They have suffered together and remain bound by mutual resilience. No other place could offer them that kind of connection.

The steppe is alive in its own way. One morning, I woke early to film the dawn. It was overcast, the air heavy with a sense of emptiness and stillness. I saw cows lying in the gray light, staring at me with an intensity that was both meditative and unsettling. They chewed slowly, as if marking time. Then, suddenly, sparrows began chirping and hopping around. Their liveliness was startling—an assertion of vitality in a landscape that seemed almost lifeless. I realized they were not just living; they were singing to convince themselves they were alive.

My connection to this story is personal. My mother, born near the village of Kainar where nuclear tests left their mark, would warn me: “Don’t tell anyone where I’m from. Especially not any future suitors. People think we’re sick.” This stigma follows the people of Semipalatinsk wherever they go. To this day, locals speak of the shame and fear tied to their origins. The world sees them as damaged, marked by the radiation that still haunts their homeland.

This is why I could not let go of this story. It is not just about the land’s resilience; it is about the people’s resilience—and vulnerability. Their lives intertwine with the steppe in ways that are deeply human. Together, they navigate the aftermath of destruction, clinging to hope and dignity despite the scars they carry. Through this film, I wanted to explore the dualities of this place and its people: devastation and beauty, despair and perseverance, silence and the echoes of life. The Semipalatinsk Test Site asks questions that resonate far beyond its borders: How do we live with the consequences of our actions? Can life endure where death has lingered? The answers lie in the steppe’s whispered winds, in its scars, and in the quiet, steadfast people who refuse to leave—or at least, it holds the truths we must confront if we are to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.





# About the team

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## Banu Ramazanova - Producer

Banu Ramazanova is a Kazakh producer and director of both documentary and fiction films. She holds a BA with Honors in Film and Screen Studies from Bath Spa University the UK and an MFA in Filmmaking from the New York Film Academy (Los Angeles).

Her debut feature-length documentary **Over the Barriers** (2020) earned 14 awards and was showcased at numerous international festivals. As a producer, she has worked on several notable films, including **Little Love** (2022) and **1986. December Chronicles** (2021). She also served as executive producer for a number of projects, such as **Summer of 1941** (2021). In 2024, Banu participated in the prestigious Berlinale Doc Toolbox Programme with *We Live Here*. She is currently working on her PhD, her research focusing on the interaction between international trends and Kazakh culture in local documentary filmmaking.

Banu continues to make a significant impact on Kazakh cinema, both as a creative force and as a scholar.

## Aidan Serik - Editor

Aidan Serik is filmmaker, director, and editor from Kazakhstan, with expertise spanning both documentary and fiction filmmaking. Passionate about exploring human nature and advocating for human and women's rights, her work combines narrative integrity with an experimental approach to storytelling.

An esteemed alumna of the Kazakh National Academy of Arts, Aidan has been an active figure in the Kazakhstani film industry since 2013. A skilled editor, she has worked on the acclaimed feature film **Fire** (2021) by Aizhan Kassymbek showcased at the Busan International Film Festival, **Madina** (2023), **Joqtau** (2024), and most recently **We Live Here** (2024). Her directorial work includes short films and impactful documentary projects, such as **Silk Road** (2021) and an educational series exploring critical themes **Youth 4 Human Rights** (2019).

Committed to fostering growth in Kazakhstani cinema, Aidan Serik strives to mentor emerging filmmakers, helping them access the educational opportunities she once sought.

# About the team

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## Kuanysh Kurmanbayev - DOP

Kuanysh Kurmanbayev is a Kazakh cinematographer specializing in both documentary and fiction filmmaking. A graduate of the Kazakh National Academy of Arts (Cinematography), he has worked on numerous notable projects since 2016.

His cinematography career began with **Aialdama** (2016), a debut short by Dias Kulmakov, which earned the Best Cinematography prize at the Baikonyr Film Festival in Kazakhstan. His subsequent credits include the acclaimed feature film **Granata** (2020) and the documentary **In Search of Absinthe** (2019), produced by Kazakhfilm. In 2022, his work on the documentary feature **Voice of the Glacier** was recognized with the Best Cinematography award at the Uluslararası Afet Film Festivali (UAFF) in Turkey.

Kuanysh's versatile portfolio spans music videos, TV series, and documentaries, showcasing his talent for visual storytelling across diverse genres. Additionally, he is the co-founder of Gornaya Lab, a film photography laboratory, reflecting his deep passion for analog photography and the cinematic arts.



# About the team

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## Akmарal Mergen - Composer

Akmарal Mergen (Zykayeva) is a Kazakh composer, sound producer, singer, and multi-instrumentalist. She holds degrees from the Kazakh State Conservatory and from the Musicians Institute in the US. Her career in film composition began with **Horse Thieves: Roads of Time** (Yerlan Nurmukhambetov & Lisa Takeba, 2019), which opened the Busan International Film Festival and was featured at Tokyo IFF. In 2020, she was selected for Berlinale Talents as a film composer, further solidifying her presence in the international film scene. In 2022, she composed the music for **QAS**, directed by Aisultan Seit, which won Best Director at the Shanghai IFF 2023. For this project, Akmaral played all the instruments herself. Her work was nominated for Best Original Music at AFA17 and won the Best Music Award at the Critic's Choice 2023 by the Association of Film Critics of Kazakhstan. Beyond her work in film, she has contributed to the cultural landscape with projects like **Qazaq Lounge** (2013), reinterpreting Kazakh folk music, and mentoring emerging composers through the Batyrlab residency in 2022. She is also widely known for her singing, having released 5 albums since her solo album in 2009. With her distinct musical vision, Akmaral continues to shape the soundscape of contemporary Kazakh cinema.





# Interview with Zhanana Kurmasheva

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By Sevara Pan

## **Could you talk about the genesis of the documentary?**

It all began three years ago when I visited a village near the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site (now known as the Semey Test Site). As I listened to the stories of the locals and read articles—many of which conflicted—I was shocked. I learned that the people there had been harmed not only by the USSR for establishing a nuclear test site on their land, but also by present-day society, which seems to believe that simply closing the test site has solved all the issues. While some efforts have been made to support the community, many challenges remain unaddressed, and the residents continue to feel frustrated. My connection to the site is personal—my mother was born there. She would often tell me, “Don’t tell anyone I was born there,” because those from the area were stigmatised, labeled as “sick” due to the lasting effects of the nuclear tests.

I initially thought the story would centre solely on the ecologists who had studied the site for over 20 years. However, as I delved deeper and uncovered more details, I realised the narrative couldn’t be confined to just them. The health issues and other pressing concerns were equally important, and it became clear that they too needed to be part of the film. The filmmaking process spanned three years. We had little funding early on, but we managed to secure a small grant from the French company Little Big Story, which helped fund our trailer and research. That allowed us to travel to the site and shoot some scenes for the future film. We then found more characters and did additional expeditions. Finally, in the third year, we received financial support from Kazakh Cinema, which enabled us to make the film. This is my first feature-length film, and to be honest, it wasn’t easy. The information surrounding the Semipalatinsk polygon is often contradictory, with much of it still classified as ‘top secret.’ The subject is still sensitive for both the authorities and local residents—an old wound that, for some, remains painful.

## **The film opens and closes with unsettling views of the former nuclear test site, accompanied by black-and-white photographs of families scattered across the land. Could you elaborate on the significance of these scenes and how they relate to the film’s overall message?**

The faces in these photographs belong to those claimed by radiation. Why show this again at the end of the film? Because I wanted to emphasise that it keeps returning. It’s still here, waiting for the next act of violence, the next death. If we continue with our wars, the cycle will repeat, over and over. It’s like a myth about a monster that returns, taking one child after another. In this case, the monster is radiation.

I heard various stories from locals about those who died during or shortly after nuclear testing. One that left a strong impression on me came from the old man in the film. Shortly after the test site was closed, the area was left abandoned. The closure coincided with the collapse of the USSR and the beginning of our country's independence—times of turmoil and unemployment. When locals heard that China was accepting scrap metal, many went to the mines to collect rails, rebar, and cable. To feed their families, a few men ventured down into the mines and were almost instantly poisoned by radiation. One was rescued, but soon died as well.

The film's protagonist, the old man, has witnessed not just one but dozens of such stories in his lifetime. He has lost many relatives and friends—his eldest son among them, who died by suicide (suicide was also considered one of the illnesses linked to radiation exposure). Listening to these stories felt like seeing faces frozen in time. When they were captured on camera, these people had no idea what lay ahead. They smiled, looked ahead, and thought about the future. I wanted them to remain in our memories as they were then. Though they are buried in this land, in a way, they remain part of it. These photographs remind us that they are still here. They were the people we knew and loved.

Speaking of the film's language, I loved working with my DOP, Kuanysh Kurmanbayev, to create all of the shots together. Kuanysh really grasped the film's messages and ideas and worked hard to convey them through the images. The whole team helped us bring these scenes to life during the shoot. I appreciated our teamwork—it felt like everyone knew exactly what each scene meant, thanks to our thorough preparation. Some ideas even came from my producer, Banu Ramazanova, who delved into the film's topic.

**The nuclear tests ended in 1991. In what ways does the film remain deeply relevant today? How did that urgency inform your choice of characters?**

I asked myself the same thing—why are we still dealing with this issue if it was supposedly closed when I was born, in 1991? Why are we still worrying about it? My concern is that the test site is still not fenced off. It's almost absurd. It's not acceptable for people to be living, walking, and driving through this area. Why hasn't it been contained?

Back in the Soviet era, there was no room to question the nuclear tests. The late Professor Atchabarov led expeditions to the Semipalatinsk test site in 1957 and 1959 to study the impact on local populations and wildlife. He took his findings to Moscow, hoping to alert the Soviet government to the effects of radiation. But instead of support, he faced hostility. He was presented with alternative studies that supposedly refuted his findings and was subjected to threats.

He was even told to never speak of it again. Atchabarov later wrote about this in his book. It wasn't until 1989, with activists like Olzhas Suleimenov, that the movement against nuclear testing started to gain momentum, leading to the test site's closure in 1991. When the Soviet Union collapsed, we suddenly found ourselves in a new reality— young, independent, and facing our own challenges for the first time. The test site was closed, but the land remained open. People, struggling to survive, started scavenging metal to sell. It was a tough time, not just for us, but for all the former Soviet republics. That's when our government realised these problems were now ours to solve.

After the Polygon was closed, the government reached out to Japan, the US, and other countries, seeking financial help to support those who had fallen ill because of the nuclear tests. But for a young government and a new nation, this was an overwhelming challenge—one we are still dealing with today. Back then, the research mostly focused on the first generation affected by the tests, since the younger generations hadn't even been born yet. But now, they are here, and the need for more research is urgent. The problem is, these studies are costly and complex. Our specialists and doctors also lack the resources to fully understand the long-term effects of the nuclear tests on people. Meanwhile, families still need medical help. Parents are terrified as they watch their children fall ill with no clear explanation.

Of course, they believe the nuclear testing is to blame. But doctors argue that since the tests ended so long ago, there is no direct link. So parents are left in fear, and doctors are stuck without enough research to provide definitive answers.

For me, this topic is relevant for two main reasons: first, the need to properly fence off the test site, and second, the long-term effects of ionising radiation across generations. That's why I chose an ecologist as one of the protagonists—someone who's been studying the Semipalatinsk test site since it was closed and knows every inch of it. Through his work, I came across a family that spans four generations, all affected by the nuclear testing.

Now, the granddaughter, the fourth generation, has been diagnosed with aplastic anemia, a condition linked to radiation exposure. However, according to the decree, it's not officially recognised as a radiation-related illness for the fourth generation. Since she was born long after the tests ended, it's assumed her illness isn't connected to radiation, and we know that radiation-induced diseases aren't typically passed down genetically. This uncertainty leaves the family in fear, and they push for more research. The issue is still urgent today because the consequences of radiation can't be fixed in a year. Research, creating the right conditions for recovery, and compiling the necessary documentation and data are all long-term processes. As for the people, the effects of ionising radiation on their health haven't disappeared. Many are still suffering from illnesses and need ongoing medical care.

### **What led you to focus on different generations in the film?**

First, I wanted to draw attention to the issue and emphasise the need for reexamination. While there are old decrees and documents on the subject, new ones are needed. We must approach this problem with a present-day perspective. That's why I focused on this family, affected across four generations. The older man and his son have documented how nuclear tests impacted their health—medical records, test results, and radiation exposure measurements.

Yet for the fourth generation, represented by a young girl, there is no official recognition and no records addressing how radiation may affect future generations. The second reason is that this issue extends beyond the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site or Kazakhstan—it is a global concern. Wars are breaking out all around us, even close to home, which is really alarming. As I researched, I was struck by the sheer number of nuclear weapons and test sites worldwide. It made me realise this issue is not just about one test site—it's about how humanity risks turning the entire Earth into a global nuclear test site.

My producer Banu Ramazanova once asked me: what if this isn't just our past, but our future? This is a genuine concern for us. The old man represents the past—he witnessed the tests, lost many loved ones, and experienced it all firsthand. His son represents the present—still grappling with the consequences of events from decades ago. He has no choice but to keep going. And the girl represents the youth, our children, and the future.

### **As you follow your characters' daily lives, you repeatedly return to images of the land. What significance does this motif hold within the story?**

I had mixed feelings when seeing the land. On one hand, I felt sorrow for everything that had happened there. On the other, I couldn't help but be struck by its beauty—so vast and stunning.

For the Kazakh people, the steppe is sacred. We love it because it's our motherland, the place where we were born. The territory of the Semipalatinsk test site is also seen as the cradle of Kazakh culture, where many of our great poets and writers were born. Loved ones are buried there, and their graves must be cared for. Psychologically, it's difficult for these people to imagine living anywhere else. The locals also rely on cattle breeding, which ties them to the land. Like a mother, it has nourished them, providing meat, grass, and food. But at the same time, it has held radiation inside, capable of harming them. This duality defines the land.

The land and the people share a painful history. They've been through it all together. Only the land can truly understand their feelings and scars, because it has endured everything they have. Visually, I wanted to draw a parallel between the wounds of the land and those of the people. We see clear signs of what happened, both on the surface of the land and on the faces of the people.



**The images of the land are often paired with another recurring symbol in the film: horses and cattle. Could you discuss the relationship between these two motifs and how they connect to deepen the story's themes?**

The locals depend on livestock since it's their main source of food. However, these animals graze in areas that are contaminated with radiation, feeding in places where the levels of radiation are dangerously high because these areas aren't fenced off. As a result, people unknowingly consume radioactive meat and milk, which affects their health and shortens their life expectancy.

Horses, on the other hand, aren't just a part of everyday life—they have a deep cultural and spiritual significance. They are mythological creatures in Kazakh folklore, and they represent a link between the living and the dead. Like other animals, horses are also very sensitive to environmental changes, like radiation or explosions, and they react much faster to danger than humans do. This makes them an essential part of how the locals sense and respond to threats.

**How did you approach the film's sound design and music?**

I was fortunate to have Akmaral Mergen, a composer from Kazakhstan, working on this film. She is incredibly sensitive to detail, which is crucial for conveying meaning through sound, rather than words. From the very beginning, I wanted to highlight the presence of radiation—something invisible and inaudible, yet always there. We can't see it, but we can feel it. The wind wasn't just wind; it carried radiation with it. I wanted the audience to sense how radiation seeps through doors, lingers in the grass, and hides in unseen places, creeping toward us. The sounds of the vast steppe were just as significant, as life there is so different from that in the city. These natural sounds, along with moments of silence, also played an important role in revealing the characters' emotions, anxieties, and premonitions. Our sound designer, Ilya Gariyev, also did a great job, crafting unique, original sounds for the film.

As for the music, the composer and I had extensive talks about the feeling, mood, and message we wanted to express in each scene. Sometimes, she'd ask why I wanted to convey something in a particular way, and we'd discuss whether certain sounds or instruments could achieve it. I have to say, she approached the sound work with remarkable nuance and precision. This creative process wasn't about creating endless variations; rather, she captured the message and emotion from our initial conversations and built from there.

**I am interested in the associative edits you weave into observational scenes. For instance, in one moment, we see horses charging across the present-day land, intercut with blue-hued archival images of a mushroom cloud, and the milk from livestock spilling onto the ground. Could you elaborate on the creative decision to use such associative edits and evocative imagery?**

We introduced these montage scenes to express our shared sense of foreboding and anxiety about our fragile world—one still struggling to recover from the nuclear tests of the past, while also facing the looming threat of wars. On one hand, these scenes reflect the memories of the old man; on the other, they convey the granddaughter's anxiety about her health condition, which forces her to be home-schooled and limits her activities.

These scenes also mirror the stages of a nuclear explosion and its aftermath: first, preparation; then the explosion; followed by the mushroom cloud and fallout. If such explosions were to occur globally, they could lead to a nuclear winter, with smoke and debris blocking out the sunlight. These stages became a 'red thread' throughout the film, giving weight to each phase, with the most powerful explosion happening only in the final scene. The editor, Aidan Serik, suggested using the stages of a nuclear explosion as a basis for building these montage scenes. And we arrived at this creative decision while reflecting on the Doomsday Clock and the threat of catastrophe. For me, the core feeling here is premonition—a sense of worry and concern about our future, coupled with reflections on the past. That's why I chose to use these associative edits, blending archival material with live footage.

**Ecologist Dmitry Kalmykov says in the film: “There is nothing in the law about resettling people, about the inadmissibility of human habitation, or about compensation for fatal diseases. It's as if there were no people there at all.” The title *We Live Here* seems to stand as a statement?**

Earlier, I mentioned the significance of this land to the people. When choosing the title for the film, I wanted to emphasise this while also highlighting the absurdity of the situation—people live on a former nuclear test site, and yet it's considered normal. When we discussed the title with the team, we often noted its static nature, and each time, I realised that this is exactly what I wanted to convey. Yes, the characters move and drive the story, but the situation remains unchanged.

The land is still the same, and our lives are still the same. We are endlessly spinning in the wheel of history, believing we are moving forward, but in fact, we are stuck. The cycle of war hasn't stopped, and we've reached a dead end, unable to see a way out. We've done this to our Earth, ourselves, and our humanity. For me, the title was very important because I wanted it to express this idea and reflect the characters' situation. They continue to live there, and it's frustrating that we allow them to. Why do we show such indifference?

**Why was it important to include the ecologists in the narrative? How does their portrayal—seemingly isolated as they inspect the former test site in white hazmat suits—resonate with the film’s themes?**

During one of our conversations, the ecologist told me that as a child, he dreamed of becoming an astronaut. But at some point, he realised that he already had a planet to explore: Earth. To me, he was a kind of hero—a human tackling a monumental issue. He has dedicated so much of his life to this cause, trying to make a difference. And while he’s had some success in bringing about change, he worries he might not live to see the bigger transformations.

I wanted to highlight two contrasting ideas—on one side, rational thought and science, and on the other, feelings and emotions. If the locals represent emotions, the ecologists embody reason. We see them analysing soil samples from the test site, then cut to scenes of livestock grazing on that same land. Later, we watch the locals eating the meat. It is all interconnected. The real horror is that the land the ecologists are walking on in their protective suits is still open and accessible to everyone. The way the ecologists are portrayed against the vast steppe also makes us think about how mortal we all are—we’re just tiny specks compared to the vastness of the earth. What could happen to us if we keep going down this path? The whole planet could end up as a nuclear test site, where lonely people—responsible for all this mess—wander around aimlessly.

**The film was supported through Kazakh Cinema, the national film centre that receives funding from the Ministry of Culture and Information. What challenges did you face when making the film, and what are your plans for screening it in Kazakhstan?**

We tried to find international funding with our co-producer but eventually decided to seek funding here in Kazakhstan. My producer and I were delighted to receive support from Kazakh Cinema, the national film centre. This support felt like a positive message, showing that we could speak openly about this issue. Kazakh Cinema likely saw our film as important because Kazakhstan, from the very beginning of its independence, has chosen to renounce nuclear weapons. It’s a bold and important step, especially considering how scary it can be to let go of nuclear arms. For us, it symbolises a voice of peace from Kazakhstan. If nuclear powers followed suit, humanity would certainly feel much safer.

Since documentary filmmaking is still relatively underdeveloped in our country, the specific needs and nuances of documentary production are sometimes overlooked. Kazakh Cinema believed one year would be enough for us to make a documentary. As a result, we had only one year for pre-production, production, and post-production—a timeline that’s generally unrealistic, as documentary filmmakers require more time and a more flexible shooting schedule.

We managed to complete the film within this timeframe, thanks to our teamwork and, of course, the solid preparatory work of our producer, Banu Ramazanova. So some of the challenges we faced were related to the limited number of shooting days and the harsh conditions of the steppe. It was tough being out on the steppe, especially as we camped there. Our team endured gusts of wind and dust. We also had an old car from the ecologists, which was in bad condition, making it harder for us.

From the outset, Kazakh Cinema was aware of the story we wanted to tell, the reasons behind our choice of characters, and the message of the film. They didn't try to control the story, but they did check in with us to make sure we were on track with the documentary. That was the extent of their involvement, which we appreciated. We definitely want to screen the film in Kazakhstan, especially in Semipalatinsk, as it's important to the protagonists and local residents. However, since documentaries aren't particularly popular in our country, it won't be released theatrically. So we plan to screen it at film festivals and private screenings, and my producer is putting in a lot of effort to make it happen.

# Credits

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<b>Director and writer</b>	Zhanana Kurmasheva
<b>Producer</b>	Banu Ramazanova
<b>Cinematography</b>	Kuanysh Kurmanbayev
<b>Editor</b>	Aidan Serik
<b>Sound Design</b>	Ilya Gariyev
<b>Music</b>	Akmaral Mergen
<b>Starring</b>	Bolatbel Baltabek Nurbol Baltabekov Dmitry Kalmykov Inkar Baltabekova Nurgul Baltabekova Saltanat Baltabek Kairatbek Baltabekov Vladimir Matonin Denis Timofeev
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Yevgeniy Lumpov
<b>Assistant Editor</b>	Rayimbek Alzhanov
<b>Production Counsel</b>	Dmitry Kalmykov
<b>Backstage Director</b>	Bogdan Morozov
<b>Editor</b>	Saltanat Dungenbayeva
<b>Narrator</b>	Samat Kordabay
<b>Audio Description Narrator</b>	Samat Kordabay
<b>Aerial Camera Operator</b>	Kuanysh Kurmanbayev
<b>Camera Operator</b>	Bogdan Morozov
<b>Production Assistants</b>	Nurken Ordabekuly Islam Auelbek
<b>Line Producer</b>	Nadira Saduova
<b>Accountant</b>	Tatyana Baranovskaya
<b>Designer</b>	Asem Ramazanova
<b>Colorist</b>	Aidos Jumurov

**Development Co-Producers**

Little Big Story:  
Valérie Montmartin  
Vlad Ketkovich

**Developed at**

EurasiaDoc/Doc Monde:  
Vincent Sorrell  
Nikolai Bem

**Participated in International Labs**

Alternativa Film Labs  
GZ DOC  
Tokyo Docs

**Rough Cut Service**

Iika Vehkalahti  
Erez Laufer

*Selected at EFM Doc Toolbox 2024*