

What do we see when we look at the sky?

A film by Alexandre Koberidze



New Matter Films, Sakdoc Film, rbb &
German Film and Television Academy Berlin
Present

What do we see when we look at the sky?

Was sehen wir, wenn wir zum Himmel schauen?

A film by Alexandre Koberidze

Original Title რას ვხედავთ, როდესაც ცას ვუყურებთ?

Countries Germany, Georgia **Language** Georgian **Subtitles** available English, German **Genre** Drama

Runtime 150' **Format** DCP | Color | 1:1,66 | Dolby 5.1 **Year** 2021

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Berlinale Screenings

Monday, March 1st

4pm

Virtual Cinema 25 | Private screening

Wednesday, March 3rd

7am (accessible for 24 hours)

Virtual Cinema | Press only

Wednesday, March 3rd

5pm

Competition | Official Screening

Logline

A chance encounter on a street corner has Lisa and Giorgi fall in love at first sight, but an evil spell is cast on them. Will they ever meet again?

Synopsis

It's love at first sight when Lisa and Giorgi meet by chance on a street in the Georgian city of Kutaisi. Love strikes them so suddenly; they even forget to ask each other's names. Before continuing on their way, they agree to meet the next day. Little do they know that an evil eye casts its spell on them. Will they manage to meet again? And if they do, will they know who they are? Life goes on as usual in their hometown, street dogs stray, the soccer world cup begins and a film crew on its quest to find true love might be what they need.



Director Alexandre Koberidze

Biography



After studying microeconomy and film production in Tiflis, Alexandre Koberidze moved to Berlin and studied directing at the German Film- and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB). During his studies, he directed several successful short films, starting with his short Colophon (2015) that gained critical plaudits at the Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen. His first feature “Let the summer never come again” (2017) won multiple awards at many festivals worldwide, including the Grand Prix at FID Marseille.

Filmography

WHAT DO WE SEE WHEN WE LOOK AT THE SKY?

Germany / Georgia 2021 | Fiction | 150 min.
German Film- and Television Academy Berlin
in Co-Production with
New Matter Films, Sakdoc Film, rbb

Festival:

Berlinale Competition 2021 (World Premiere)

LINGER ON SOME PALE BLUE DOT

Germany/Israel 2018 | Documentary | 28 min.
German Film- and Television Academy Berlin

Festival:

Duisburger Filmwoche (Premiere)

LET THE SUMMER NEVER COME AGAIN

Germany / Georgia 2017 | Fiction | 202 min.
German Film- and Television Academy Berlin

Festivals:

Berlin Critics Week (Premiere)
Fid Marseille – Grand Prix & Prix Premier
Achtung Berlin – Special Mention by
the German film critics association
FIC Valdiva – Special Mention
Janela International De Cinema Do Recife – Award
of the Brazilian film critics association for the best
film and for the best edit
German Film Critics Association –
Best Experimental Film 2017
IBAFF Murcia – Grand Prix

THE PERFECT SPECTATOR

Germany 2017 | Fiction | 5 min.
German Film- and Television Academy Berlin
Festival:
Hof International Film Festival (Premiere)

COLOPHON

Deutschland 2015 | Fiction | 20 min.
German Film- and Television Academy Berlin
Festival:
International Short Film Festival Oberhausen –
Special Mention

LOOKING BACK IS GRACE

Germany 2014 | Fiction | 10 min.
German Film- and Television Academy Berlin
In Co-Production with Arte
Festivals:
Landshuter Kurzfilmtage (Premiere)
Interfilm Berlin – Second Price

Director's Statement

It is strange to write about the film I made, it is strange because there are too many things I want to write about. I could write about the reason our film starts with an image of kids leaving school. I could voice my retrospective regrets that I did not start the film as it was in the script – with an image of a step. I could talk about why we shot some part of the film on 16mm and some of it digitally, or why the kids order 11 ice cream cones and not 12 as Bondo Dolaberidze does in the film this scene refers to.

I could write endlessly about my actors, about Giorgi Bochorishvili who I grew up with and who is always the first on my mind when I think about the cast; about Ani Karseladze who was born to stand in front a camera; about Oliko Barbaqadze who doesn't get much screen time, but whose every second makes me happy that I made this film; about Giorgi Ambroldze who left after his few days of shooting and became the European arm wrestling champion, about Vakhtang Panchulidze who has been a star of Georgian Cinema since

the 70s and who I was lucky to work with.

I could write more about why I gave my parents the parts of the cameraman and the director in the film. I could point out the similarities between football and cinema, two games I love to play. I could write about the gesture Leo Messi makes every time he scores a goal, what it means for me and what impact this gesture had on this film. I could tell you that I had the time of my life working on the music with my brother Giorgi, and how this music changed the film. I could recall the time I spent with our producer Mariam Shatberashvili and cameraman Faraz Fesharaki in Kutaisi and how in the end I wanted to write about Kutaisi, but as one writer wrote – who am I to write about Kutaisi?

Honestly, I wanted to write about all of this and much more. At some point I realized that if I went ahead, the resulting text would be at least as long as the script of the film. How should I choose what things to write about and what things to leave out, thus giving more meaning to some things and

less to others, which is the last thing I want to do? I think if this film makes sense, it is by means of talking about all the things above and many more together, not in separation. But as I had to write something, I wrote a small poem. Here it is:

Me and you
When I open my eyes, I see you.
When I close my eyes, I see you.
One may say I am blind, but I am not.
I see you, I see you, I see you...

Interview with Alexandre Koberidze

Q: Your film sets up a love story and then keep up the suspense of whether it will ever come to pass. How did you come up with the idea of a curse and of missed connections?

Alexandre Koberidze: When I was a child, I often had to wear a jet stone, usually on my hand, to protect me from the evil eye. Today, almost nobody is doing this anymore – but I would like to know why. Doesn't the evil eye exist anymore or is it simply that nobody believes in it? Of course, my story is not only about the evil eye but also generally about forces – good and bad – that seem to have been locked out of our materialist world but now and then still show themselves. I am interested in the respect for the inexplicable and the place such phenomena have in everyday life. The attraction of two people to one another is such an inexplicable thing. How is the thread strung that ties two people together, and why is it so painful when this thread breaks? Nobody really knows. The metamorphosis in the film to me is not so much an allegory or a metaphor, but something that happens in front of our eyes – everything else is a matter of interpretation.

Q: Children, dogs and football play a big part in the film. Can you explain how you decided to introduce these elements to the story?

AK: Somehow, Kutaisi is a city that belongs to its children, or at least there are certain times during the day when one gets that feeling. It is a little like the sequence in Nanni Moretti's "Dear Diary" in which the children have taken over the town. Since we were very much driven by what the city had to offer, it quickly became clear that children would play a big role – and anyway, is there anything more beautiful than to film children? Perhaps dogs! In such desolate times as ours, the exemplary existence of dogs with their dedication, honor and dignity is a real consolation to me whenever our paths cross. And in my films, I always try to give them some space in gratitude. There are a few things that give me joy, and one of them definitely is football. When we were location scouting, we went to a real stadium and came through the tunnel onto the pitch, just like the players do. And in that moment I finally understood that this would be my biggest dream: running onto the football field in a spanking new jersey, standing in the line with the rest of the team, beaming with pride, listening to the Champion's League theme jingle or the national anthem while preparing for the big match. Not going to happen, I know, but in the films I make I can get a little closer to this dream...

Q: The title as well as the film's conceit evokes a certain sense of magical realism, of the supernatural affecting everyday lives without anybody being surprised. Would you say that is a typical Georgian trope? Why this stylistic choice?

AK: There are two possibilities: either the characters in the film do, in fact, wonder what is going on, but we never happen to see them when they do, or they wonder but don't let on that they do. On one hand, it is important to me to leave people alone in crucial, intimate moments. There are things you must do and experience alone, and that is true for fictive characters as well. On the other hand, the range of human emotional reactions is completely overrated, and the reactions we see in the movies have nothing to do with reality. I don't necessarily think that reactions have to be realistic, but I would prefer them not to follow the templates we are used to see in films.

Interview with Alexandre Koberidze

Q: Talk to us about the music – it adds a charming and amusing tone to the film: what motivated your choice of music? And why the huge range between the main synthesizer themes, Georgian traditional chant and Gianna Nannini?

AK: I am often nostalgic for the time of silent movies. That genre was completely swallowed by the talkies, as if one would disturb the other or as if it was impossible for both forms to exist in parallel. I often try to make a kind of silent film, not literally, but in essence. Music always accompanied silent films, and I try to stay true to the genre. The music for the film was written by my brother Giorgi Koberidze. He brought in the variety. It was a long collaboration, and we were inspired by a range of sources, from Tom and Jerry, where the music is directly derived from the movements of the protagonists to the big soundtracks where the music is huge, like an opera. Giorgi composed many very different tunes that often break with expectations. That is important because you always need a counter point. Nannini's Notti magiche was the official song of the 1990 World Championship in Italy. I was only six at the time, but the song has stuck in my memory as a hymn to passion.

Q: Filmmaking plays a very important part in the story of “What do we see when we look at the sky?”... It's depicted as a long and painful process, sometimes the film goes bad, but when it works, it reveals truths that people didn't see before. What is your take on the relationship of film to lived reality, and on its role in the audience's lives?

AK: A few years ago, I was in Finland for a few days over New Year's Eve. I had the very strange feeling of being uncertain whether things were as I saw them, and Aki Kaurismäki just shows them as they are or whether things were as they were because Aki Kaurismäki had shown them that way. Cinema has a huge power to influence the way we see things, and it creates behavioral patterns that then become part of our daily repertoire. To give an example, I am convinced that the way we kiss today is derived from the movies. I am sure one could do some interesting empirical research on that. And isn't it exciting to know who is responsible for the most beautiful moments in our lives?

Giorgi Bochorishvili



Giorgi Bochorishvili was born in 1985. He studied acting at the Theatre and Film State University of Tbilisi. Giorgi is a famous actor successfully working both in cinema and theatre. In 2018, he appeared in the film Horizon (director: Tinatin Kajrishvili) which was screened at the Berlinale in the Panorama section. He worked together with Alexandre Koberidze on the films “Germany at War” and “Let the Summer Never Come Again” which was successfully screened internationally at different festivals and won several prizes. “What do we see when we look at the sky?” is his third collaboration with Koberidze where he got one of the main roles.

Vakhtang Panchulidze



Vakhtang Panchulidze was born in 1956. He started his career as a non-professional actor at the age of 19. He has acted in about 15 films and has created a few memorable characters. Among them is the role he played in the famous Georgian comedy “Everyone wants love” (1980) directed by Giorgi Shengelaia. With the role in the film “What do we see when we look at the sky?” marks his return to cinema after almost thirty years.

Ani Karseladze



Ani Karseladze was born in Kutaisi Georgia. She is a cinema enthusiast, venturing in experimental videos and moving images. “What do we see when we look at the sky?” is her first film.

Giorgi Ambroladze



Giorgi Ambroladze is a Georgian sportsman, arm wrestler. He has won several gold and silver medals in the World and European Arm-Wrestling Championships. “What do we see when we look at the sky?” is his film debut.

Oliko Barbakadze



Oliko Barbakadze was born in 2001. She has been interested in acting from a very young age. She attended dance and theatre classes and participated in school plays. She is currently studying at the Black Sea University in Tbilisi, Georgia. “What do we see when we look at the sky?” is her film debut.



NewMatterFilms

About New Matter Films



New Matter Films is a German production company, founded in 2020 by Luise Hauschild and Mariam Shatberashvili in Leipzig and Berlin. In close collaboration with writers and directors, New Matter Films develops German and international fiction features and selected documentaries. Always approaching film with a high artistic standard, New Matter Films seeks to both engage and challenge audiences.

Filmography

WHAT DO WE SEE WHEN WE LOOK AT THE SKY?

Germany/Georgia 2021 | Fiction | 150 min.

German Film and TV Academy Berlin

in coproduction with Sakdoc Film, New Matter Films and rbb

Director: Alexandre Koberidze

Festival:

Berlinale Competition 2021 (World Premiere)

Biography

Producer Mariam Shatberashvili

Mariam Shatberashvili grew up in Georgia and Germany. She held different positions in the film industry before she went on to study production at the German Film- and Television Academy Berlin. Her work as a junior producer for the film “O beautiful night” by Xaver Böhm (Berlinale Panorama 2019) and as producer of successful short films such as “Change” by Annika Pinske, was followed by her first feature film, the German-Georgian co-production “What do we see when we look at the sky?” by Alexandre Koberdize.

Producer Luise Hauschild

Luise Hauschild was born and raised in Leipzig. She’s been working in the film industry since 2015 and started studying production at the German Film- and Television Academy Berlin. She produced many successful short films, like “Everything Alright” (nominated for the German Short Film Award). In 2019, she produced her first feature film “Everyone’s talkin’ about the weather” by Annika Pinske (German Short Film Award winner), currently in postproduction. In 2020 she founded the production company New Matter Films together with Mariam Shatberashvili in Leipzig and Berlin.



About Sakdoc Film

Sakdoc Film is a film production company based in Tbilisi, Georgia and founded in 2008. They produce and co-produce creative documentaries, short and long fiction films for local and international audiences. Aside from its production activities, Sakdoc Film also acts as a film organization. It has been running Pitch.Doc, a project forum held in frames of CinéDoc – Tbilisi International Documentary Film Festival and TIFF – Tbilisi International Film Festival.

Filmography

WHAT DO WE SEE WHEN WE LOOK AT THE SKY?

Germany/Georgia 2021 | Fiction | 150 min.
German Film and TV Academy Berlin in coproduction with Sakdoc Film, New Matter Films and rbb
Director: Alexandre Koberidze

Festival:

Berlinale Competition 2021 (World Premiere)

TAMING THE GARDEN

Georgia/Switzerland/Germany 2021 | Documentary | 90 min.
Sakdoc Film in coproduction with Mira Film and CORSO Film, premiered at Sundance Film Festival
Director: Salome Jashi

Festival:

Sundance Film Festival 2021 (World Premiere)

A SAIL

Georgia 2021 | Documentary | 60 min.
Director: Anna Dzipashipa

THE DAZZLING LIGHT OF SUNSET

Germany/Georgia 2016 | Documentary | 74 min.
Sakdoc Film in coproduction with MDR/Arte and YLE, awarded at Visions du Réel 2016
Director: Salomé Jashi

Festival:

Visions du Réel 2016

DOUBLE ALIENS

Latvia/Georgia 2015 | Documentary | 56 min.
Sakdoc Film in co-production with Latvia's VFS Films, premiered at IDFA
Director: Ugis Olte

Festival:

IDFA 2015

BAKHMARO

Germany/Georgia 2011 | Documentary | 60 min.
Sakdoc Film in co-production with ma.ja.de. filmproduktion and MDR/Arte
Director: Salomé Jashi



About DFFB

The German Film and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB), founded in 1966, is one of the most prominent film schools in Europe. Focusing on the essential crafts of filmmaking, the school offers five specializations: Screenwriting, Cinematography, Directing, Producing and Editing & Sound. The DFFB is a place where young filmmakers from Germany and abroad come together to develop and realize creative and innovative films. Every year, around 80 films are produced at the DFFB and screened at film festivals all over the world. They also find their audience in German cinemas. With its internationally oriented education programmes Serial Eyes and NEXT WAVE as well as the Film Network Berlin, the DFFB also offers attractive specialization and networking opportunities.

Filmography

A FISH SWIMMING UPSIDE DOWN

Germany 2020 | Fiction | 103 min

Director: Eliza Petkova

Festival:

Berlin International Film Festival 2020

I WANT TO RETURN RETURN RETURN

Germany 2020 | Fiction | 30 min

Director: Elsa Rosengren

Festivals:

Festival de Cannes 2020/3rd Prize Cinéfondation

Festival Premiers Plans d'Angers 2021/European Student Film Award

TÁBOR

Germany 2020 | Documentary | 45 min

Director: Stanislav Danylyshyn

Festival:

IDFA 2020

LAND OF GLORY

Germany/Hungary 2019 | Fiction | 27 min

Director: Borbála Nagy

Award:

German Short Film Award 2020

Credits

Cast

Giorgi Bochorishvili
Ani Karseladze
Oliko Barbakadze
Giorgi Ambroladze
Vakhtang Fanchulidze

Director & Writer

Alexandre Koberidze

Director of Photography

Faraz Fesharaki

Editor

Alexandre Koberidze

Music & Sound Design

Giorgi Koberidze

Production Design

Maka Jebirashvili

Costume Design

Nino Zautashvili

Commissioning Editor rbb

Verena Veihl

Co-Producers

Anna Dziapshipa

Ketevan Kipiani

Luise Hauschild

Producer

Mariam Shatberashvili

Production Company

German Film- and Television Academy Berlin

Potsdamer Straße 2
10785 Berlin, Germany

Co-production

New Matter Films

Nikolaistraße 6-10
04109 Leipzig, Germany

Sakdoc Film

24g Khazbegi Ave. Hall 5, F143
0160 Tbilisi, Georgia

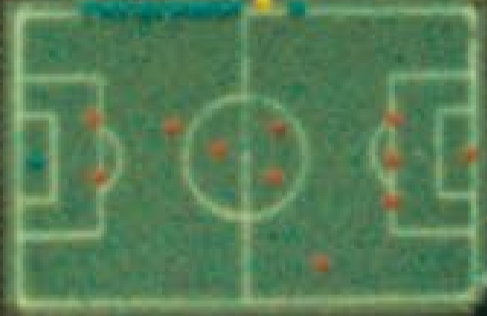
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