

Panopticon

A film by George Sikharulidze

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cinéfondation
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George Sikharulidze

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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.

Technical Information

Working Title: Panopticon
Director: George Sikharulidze
Screenplay: George Sikharulidze
Nationality: Georgian
Genre: Drama
Format: HD
Length: 100 min
Shooting location: Georgia

Production Company: 20 Steps Productions
Address: Akhmeteli 10a, 0159 Tbilisi, Georgia
Tel: +995 32 2520945
Producer: Vladimer Katcharava
Email: katcharava@20steps.ge

Director's Information

George Sikharulidze was born in Tbilisi, Georgia. At 18, he moved to New York, where he received a B.S. in Media Studies from NYU and an M.F.A. in Film Directing from Columbia University.

His short films include *Red Apples* (2016), *A New Year* (2017) and *Fatherland* (2018) which have premiered at the Clermont-Ferrand International Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival and Sundance Film Festival respectively.

Currently, at the Cinéfondation Residence, he is writing his first feature *Panopticon*, which explores adolescent sexuality and Christian fundamentalism in Georgia.



With the support of HP. Printed on an HP Indigo Digital Press.



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Synopsis

In 2018, well after the dissolution of the Soviet atheism, Georgia is the country of growing Orthodox Christianity. Rooted in this fundamentalism are the emerging fascist organizations, which perpetuate conservative values on nationalism, religion and sexuality. One such battle is against sex clubs and brothels run by Muslim immigrants that offer a solution for Georgian youth in a country where premarital sex is a religious taboo for girls, but a cultural mandate for boys.

A 16 year-old Sandro is at a formative moment in his life when his single father abandons him to become a monk. Vulnerable and susceptible to ideological influences, Sandro's mind and body are pulled from all directions – he must navigate between his search for a father figure which results in a growing devotion to God, the influence of the Fascist organizations on young

boys and his pure love for his girlfriend, all of which is in direct conflict with his awakening sexuality that begins to manifest in immoral ways.

Statement of Intent

I want to make this film because it deals with my teenage life in Georgia and themes that I have started to explore in my shorts, like religion, sexuality and the consequences of their conflict. I want to talk about this social system and how it affects the men of tomorrow, a generation of boys who are at risk of psychological damage as a result of these pressures, like going to a brothel to enter “manhood” as a requirement before marriage, while maintaining an Orthodox Christian faith as a sure sign of nationalistic identity.

Sandro is a product of a culture in which he is alienated and unable to confide in anyone

and this frustration builds inside of him. I want to study how religious fundamentalism can lead to sexual deviancy and a trauma that will haunt young boys through their manhood. But it's also a story that captures the young Georgian spirit and the joys of being a teenager. Sandro is a good kid with a kind heart, who falls into immorality in his search for a father figure. Like many other boys his age, he fights for survival – a trial that will determine his future and prove to be a revelation of his humanity, with its dark perversions, as much as a study of the Georgian society that nurtures it.

Synopsis

En 2018, bien après l'effondrement de l'athéisme de l'ère soviétique, la Géorgie est le pays du christianisme orthodoxe en pleine croissance. Les organisations fascistes émergentes, enracinées dans ce fondamentalisme, perpétuent les valeurs conservatrices dans le nationalisme, la religion et la sexualité. L'une de ces attaques vise les sex-clubs et les maisons closes dirigés par des immigrants musulmans qui offrent une solution à la jeunesse géorgienne dans un pays où le sexe prémarital est un interdit religieux pour les filles et une mission culturelle pour les garçons.

Sandro, 16 ans, est à un moment crucial de sa vie lorsque son père célibataire l'abandonne pour devenir moine. Vulnérable et sensible aux influences idéologiques, l'esprit et le corps de Sandro sont tiraillés dans toutes les directions. Il doit naviguer entre d'une part sa recherche

d'une figure paternelle qui l'entraîne dans une dévotion grandissante à Dieu, l'influence des organisations fascistes sur les jeunes garçons, et d'autre part son amour pur pour sa petite amie, ce qui provoque un conflit direct avec les manifestations immorales de l'éveil de sa sexualité.

Note d'intention

Je veux faire ce film parce qu'il traite de ma vie d'adolescent en Géorgie et des thèmes que j'ai commencé à explorer dans mes courts-métrages, tels que la religion, la sexualité et les conséquences de leurs conflits. Je veux parler de ce système social et de ses conséquences sur les hommes de demain, une génération de garçons meurtris par des troubles psychologiques résultant de ces pressions, comme aller dans un bordel pour entrer « dans la virilité », condition préalable au mariage, tout en main-

tenant une foi chrétienne orthodoxe comme un signe certain de l'identité nationaliste.

Sandro est le produit d'une culture dans laquelle il est aliéné et incapable de se confier à qui que ce soit, cette frustration se construisant à l'intérieur de lui. Je veux étudier comment le fondamentalisme religieux peut conduire à la déviance sexuelle et à un traumatisme qui hantera les jeunes garçons jusqu'à leur maturité. Mais c'est aussi une histoire qui capte l'esprit jeune des géorgiens et les joies de l'adolescence. Sandro est un gentil garçon au cœur bon qui tombe dans l'immoralité à la recherche d'une figure paternelle. Comme beaucoup d'autres garçons de son âge, il se bat pour survivre, une épreuve qui déterminera son avenir et s'avérera être la découverte de son humanité, avec ses perversions obscures, autant qu'une étude de la société géorgienne qui le nourrit.

