

a film by JULIA TROFIMOVA

THE LAND OF SASHA

MARK EIDELSHEIN MARIA MATSEL EVGENIA GROMOVA

PRODUCED BY KATERINA MIKHAILOVA, KONSTANTIN FAM DIRECTED BY JULIA TROFIMOVA
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY EGOR POVOLOTSKIY PRODUCTION DESIGNER ALEXANDRA ANTONOVA EDITED BY MARSEL SHAMSHULIN MUSIC BY SERGEY STERN
SCREENPLAY BY MARIA SHULGINA, ELIZAVETA TIKHONOVA, JULIA TROFIMOVA BASED ON THE BOOK "THE LAND OF SASHA" BY GALA UZRYUTOVA

SYNOPSIS



18-year-old school graduate Sasha is indecisive to choose painting as his profession. He does not want to let down his mother, who wants him to make a safe career choice. The meeting with his father, whom Sasha never knew, complicates things even more. But when Sasha meets an unusual girl Zhenia, he has no other choice but to grow up.

THEME



Both Sasha and his mother are coming of age. For Sasha it means breaking free from his mother, taking life-changing decisions and being responsible for them. For his mother coming of age is letting her son go.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

FILMOGRAPHY

Страна Саша / The Land of Sasha
(debut feature film, Russia, 2021)

Инсталайф / Instalife
(TV series, Russia, 2021)

Пять минут на любовь / Five minutes for love
(short film, Russia, 2020)

Трамвай / The Tram
(short film, Russia, 2019)

The Narrator
(short film, USA-Russia, 2018)



JULIA TROFIMOVA

Julia Trofimova was born in Kaluga, Russia and currently lives in Moscow. She studied Screenwriting and Filmmaking in New York Film Academy (USA) in 2017-2018 and Directing in Moscow School of New Cinema (Russia) in 2018-2019. In 2019 she directed a dark comedy short “The Narrator” (USA/Russia) and a sci-fi drama short “The Tram” (Russia). In 2020 Julia directed a dramedy short film “Five minutes for love”. All her short films have been running successfully at 70 + world festivals. In 2021 Julia directed a dramedy web series “Instalife” (Russia).

MAIN CAST

MARK EIDELSHTEIN
as Sasha



MARIA MATSEL
as Zhenia



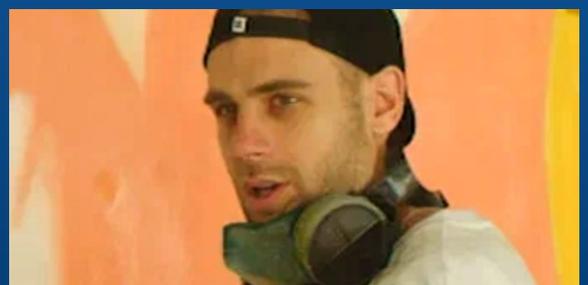
EVGENIA GROMOVA
as Sophia



ALISA TARASENKO
as Liza



DMITRY ENDALTSEV
as Maks



THE LAND OF SASHA



Genre: Romantic comedy-drama
Duration: 82 min
Country: Russia
Language: Russian
Subtitles: English
Format: DCP
Aspect ratio: 2.4:1
Sound: Dolby 5.1
Screen ratio: 16:9

MAIN CREW



Directed by Julia Trofimova
Story by Gala Uzryutova
Screenplay by Julia Trofimova, Maria Shulgina,
Elizaveta Tikhonova
Cinematography Egor Povolotskiy
Original music Sergei Stern
Editing Marsel Shamshulin
Production design Alexandra Antonova
Sound Vladislav Vdovin
Assistant Director Elia Krupina
Casting Vladimir Golov, Olga Aulina
Produced by Katerina Mikhaylova, Konstantin Fam

VEGA FILM

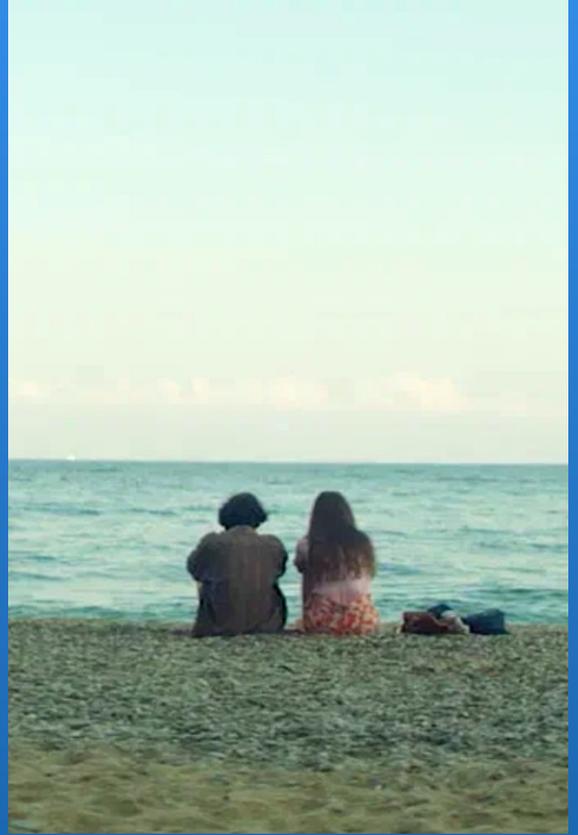


VEGA Film is a Moscow-based film and TV production company founded and run by Katerina Mikhaylova in 2014. The company is focused on co-production and Russian independent films.

The company credits include NEAREST AND DEAREST (2017) by Kseniya Zueva, screened at Tallinn Black Nights, IN DEEP SLEEP (2020) by Maria Ignatenko, that premiered at Berlinale Forum and CONFERENCE (2020) by Ivan I. Tverdovsky, co-produced with Estonia, UK and Italy, that had its world premiere at Venice Days, and INSTALIFE, a web-series that premiered at a major Russian VOD platform in summer 2021.

In 2021 Vega Film produced two features by emerging Russian talents: THE LAND OF SASHA, a first feature by Julia Trofimova, and SASHA by Vladimir Beck, made in partnership with a major national studio Mars Media. Two more debut features have been completed in 2021: ANOTHER NAME by Veta Geraskina, co-produced with Bulgaria and Germany, and THE SUN WILL RISE TOMORROW by Robert Def. Currently Vega Film co-produces two feature films: ACHROME by Maria Ignatenko (release in 2022), and FROST by a Serbian director Pavle Vučković (in financing).

STILLS



Q&A with Julia Trofimova

-Adapting the book

I am truly interested in books and movies about youth - maybe that's my way of staying young. I came across the book by Gala Uzryutova and thought it was very different from anything I had read recently - it was full of light, the relations described were sincere, but also somehow loving and caring. So, I thought it would be great to share the emotion I had with the broader audience, through the means I know - filmmaking. I contacted the author and said I would like to adapt her book to screen. She was delighted!

After I had written the first two drafts, I felt that the voices of my characters were still not where I wanted them to be. I invited the screenwriting duet - Maria Shulgina and Elizaveta Tikhonova to rewrite the dialogue and help with the structure. That also enhanced the tone I've been looking for - dramedy.

I am always inspired by two directors - Paul Thomas Anderson and Noah Baumbach. When I was writing a script, I watched “Francis Ha” many times.

-The films themes

It's coming of age in its broadest sense. In my movie both mother and son pass through this stage, but for each of them coming of age has a different meaning: for the main character Sasha it means taking responsibility for the first time, for his mother - letting her son go. And it's definitely a movie about love.

-Casting

The main character Sasha it took a long time to cast. I knew exactly who I was looking for and I could not find him - till I met Mark (Eidelshtein). Mark could only do it in a month after the planned shooting schedule. There was a dilemma if we could wait - waiting meant extra costs and crew changings.

I'm grateful to the producer Katerina Mikhaylova, who was ready to shift the production schedule and make it happen. Casting Zhenya - played by Maria Matsel - was totally different. I knew from the very beginning I want to have her in a movie, and I even used her picture in my pitch. Casting Evgenia Gromova who plays Mom - was very intuitive. I invited her for reading in pairs with Mark (when he was already attached), we had a small talk a few minutes before the read and I immediately knew she was the Mom.

-About the cast

It was really a collective work. I love working with actors, it's my favorite part of directing. I am grateful to my actors for trusting me and being ready to look for a solution. I'm this type of person who likes to search. I don't like to be directive; I prefer when we are looking for the right solution together. So, we improvised a lot, we changed many lines while shooting and we tried to create a natural atmosphere.

It helped a lot that all the actors got along together very well!

-What were you most excited to film?

It was interesting to develop the story of love on screen - from the very beginning, through falling in love up to the breakup. It's surreal feeling as if you are creating the true story with real people. My favorite scene is when Zhenya sings a song playing ukulele and Sasha realizes that he is falling in love and can't take his eyes off her.

-About the locations

I wanted to show a little bit of a different Russia - it's how you see your hometown when you are young. You don't see anything bad. Every corner, every street, every trash bin, every small staircase - they are all part of your youth and you really like it and don't want to let it go.

I wanted to shoot it in a location near the sea, so we chose a few locations on the south of Russia. My intention was to show the cosy place, which you as a young person don't want to leave. The sea would symbolize the big external world of adulthood.

-About the creative team

I was very lucky to have my team. We became great friends. The director of photography is Egor Povolotskiy. We worked together on my short film "The Narrator" which I shot in the USA when I studied there. Since that time, we have always been looking for the opportunity to work together. He has a great visual taste and enhances my vision.

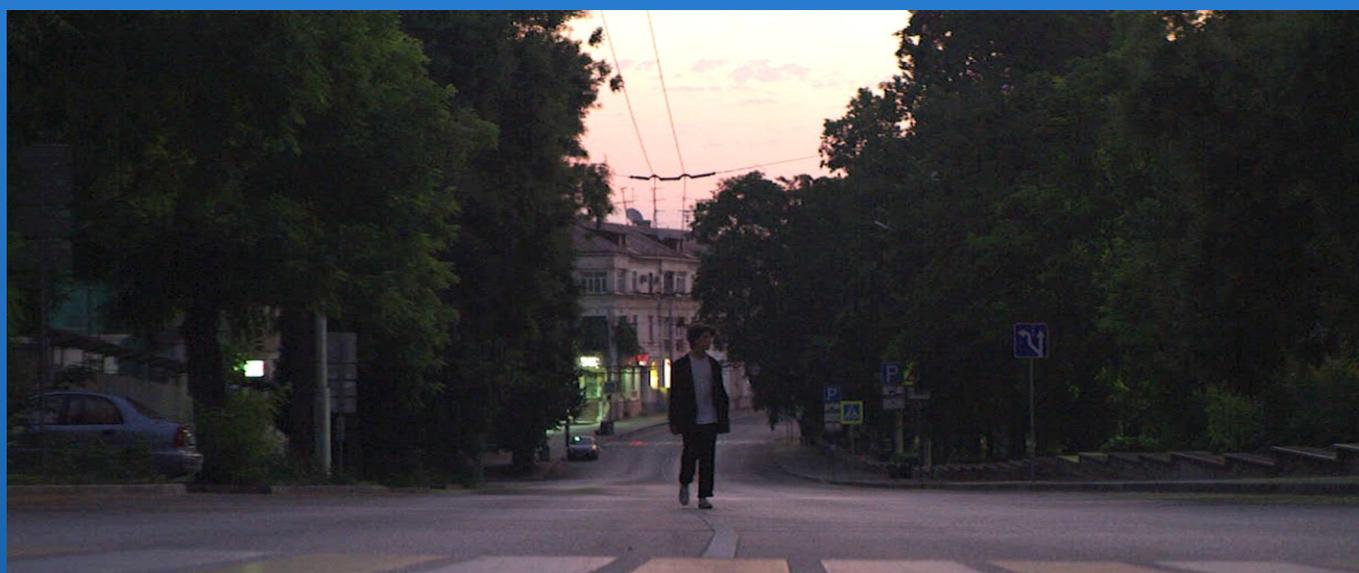
Alexandra Antonova was our production designer. I did not know her from before and it was a pure luck. I think she understood the feeling that I'm trying to express from the very beginning. In particular I like how she decorated Sasha's room.

Music was written by my friend with whom we also worked at “The Narrator” - Sergei Stern. He also wrote most of the songs in the movie. He and Maria Matsel who plays Zhenya performed the songs. There are also a few tracks from the modern Russian music bands which I like a lot - “Hmyrov” and “Sirotkin”.

-What do you hope audiences will respond?

I hope they will recognize this feeling of uncertainty at the very beginning, when there are too many options in front of you, pushing you to different directions and you are just cosy and comfortable where you are and don't want anything to change. But the change is necessary for your development. How this change in life happens to you and how not to be overwhelmed by it - that's what the film is about.

CONTACTS



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