



SHORT FILM

competition

FESTIVAL DE CANNES



THE TWENTY SECOND
BRITISH INDEPENDENT
FILM AWARDS





Logline

Living in war-torn Eastern Ukraine Anna is an aging single mother who is desperate for a change. Lured by a radio advertisement, she goes to party with a group of American men who are touring the country, searching for love.

Synopsis

Anna, a middle-aged single mother, lives in a small industrial town in war-torn Eastern Ukraine. She works in a meat processing plant, lives in a rundown apartment and dreams for a better life for herself and her 16-year-old daughter.

Desperate for a change, she is lured by a radio advertisement to attend a party organized for foreign men who are touring the country, searching for love. Despite not having been out for years she decides to take part in the event.

At the party, Anna is confronted with the realities of old age, with the American men's real intentions, and by her underaged daughter who is also attending the event. Both mother and daughter realize the absurdity and indignity of the situation and abandon their dream for a better life.

Film Premiere: **Cannes 19' - Official Selection In Competition.**

Film Details: **UK / UKRAINE / ISRAEL**

Date of completion: 2019

Genre: **Drama**

Running Time: **15', Color**

Aspect Ratio: **1:2.39**

Screening Format: **2K DCP, .mov, mp4 (HD)**

Sound: **5.1 DCP, or Stereo**

Shot on **Arri Alexa, 24p, original format 2.8K**

Dialogue Language: **Ukrainian, English**

Subtitles: **English, Italian, French, Spanish, German, Hebrew, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Arabic.**

Student Film: **NO**

First Film: **NO**

Anna was shot in January-February 2019 in Ukraine and complete in May 2019. The film is distributed by [168 Wardour Filmworks](#)

Director's Statement

I first visited Ukraine in 2012, while traveling across Europe in a van. It was an important step for me personally as my grandmother was born in Khust, a small Ukrainian border town. She witnessed how Ukraine, like the rest of Eastern Europe became a part of the USSR, and then later gained its independence, which is now once again threatened. When I went, I was fascinated by the mixture of Eastern and Western traditions, by the people, and was heartbroken by Ukraine's poverty and the rampant corruption that plagues its institutions. In the nightclubs of Odessa, on a hot summer evening, I witnessed events similar to the ones depicted in *Anna*. These clubs are notorious for being hot spots for the type of men and women who seek others while harboring secret agendas. The men ogle women as if they were the pieces of meat hanging in Anna's workplace. The women size up the men according to the perceived value of their shoes.

The men, hoping to take advantage of the women's despair and desire to move abroad, try to seduce them with promises of a possible relationship. The women, pretending to be unaware of the obvious scheme, make promises of their own and scam free drinks, expensive dinners, and gifts from the men. The savviest and most determined women will, in turn, seduce naive men with promises of love and everlasting marriage, only to quickly divorce them once they set foot in their new home country. So, each side attempts to take advantage of the other and more often than not fails at it but then returns the next evening for more of the same. For underneath the cynicism and objectification there is the driving force of hope, that on one of these evenings an interaction will lead to something deeper and more meaningful - a real connection based on genuine feelings, a relationship that will lead to a better life.

After observing what went on at the nightclubs of Odessa I discovered the existence of the “love tours” that are depicted in *Anna* and found the subject compelling enough to return to Ukraine six years after my original visit, and capture it on film. In *Anna* the backdrop is wintry and cold, but regardless of a country's regions everyone ultimately harbors dreams and aspirations. These international dating events, which have been organized since the fall of the Iron Curtain, continue to take place, with groups arriving in Ukraine many times a year. The mass parties in which men are usually outnumbered 1 to 10, now take place almost exclusively in East Ukraine, the industrial and more impoverished part of the country.

Ironically, Svetlana Barandich who portrays Anna, participated in such an event more than 20 years ago. And, an actress that we auditioned for the role of the translator told us that she was recently hired as a translator for one of these events. She said that, similarly to the corresponding scene in *Anna*, she would make up conversations and that “All men and women were always Leo,” for it was the only astrological sign for which she knew the English word. This is an important story of hope and despair, one which I have attempted to capture as authentically as I could.

Dekel Berenson - Director

Dekel Berenson is an award-winning Israeli filmmaker and storyteller currently based in London. After completing a mandatory three-year service in the Israeli Defence Forces, he obtained a Master's degree in International Relations and European Studies and traveled the world as a human and environmental rights activist. Over the past three years, he has combined his two passions, making artistic films of high quality that bring light to real-world social and humanitarian issues. His 3rd film, *Anna*, will premiere in competition at the 72nd Cannes Film Festival.

Svetlana Alekseevna Barandich - Anna

Svetlana is a professional theater and film actress who began acting at 17. In 1985 she graduated from the theater and drama studio at the Kiev National Academic Drama Theater. From there she worked in a number of theaters in the Ukraine and Kiev until in 1995 she received a degree in theater studies at the Institute of Theater Arts. Since the 2000's she has actively been filmed in television and in commercials.

Vova Ivanov - Director of Photography

Based in Berlin. Graduated in 2007 from the Kiev State University of theatrical art, television and filmmaking, specializing in Cinematographer. Became member of the Ukrainian National Union of cinematographers since 2010. In 2018 graduated from the Konrad Wolf Film University Babelsberg, with a Master of Fine Arts in Cinematography. As a Director of Photography since 2006 completed 19 feature and TV feature films, over 70 commercials, music videos, and short films.

Production

Anna is a Ukraine / Israel / UK co-production, produced by [ESSE Production House](#), [Blue Shadows Films](#) and [168 Wardour Filmworks](#)

Merlin Merton

Producer. Merlin Merton started off as a freelance producer on music videos, picking up several UKMVA nominations. In 2013 he founded Blue Shadows Films, a production company renowned for its bold features such as *10,000 Saints* (2015), which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, and *Butterfly Kisses* (2017), winner of the Crystal Bear at the Berlin Film Festival.

Olga Beskhmelnytsina

Producer. Olga Beskhmelnytsina is the CEO of UART, a project manager, and a producer. She holds two Master degrees (International Economics and Documentary Filmmaking). Having started her career as a Producer's Assistant at The Ukrainian Motion Picture Association in 2012, she soon became a Line Producer at MaGiKa Film. She has completed many international film, animation, and exhibition projects.

Paul Wesley

Executive Producer. Paul is an actor, director, and producer who has garnered an extensive worldwide fan base as a result of his work in front of the camera over the last 15 years. His producing credits include *'Before I Disappear'* which won the audience award at SXSW as well as competing in the *'Venice Days'* section of the Venice Film Festival. Wesley's production company 'Citizen Media', has a development deal at Kapital Entertainment, which currently has 13 shows on air.

Andrew Carlberg

Executive Producer. Named by Variety as one of "Hollywood's New Leaders," Carlberg is an Academy Award-winning film, television, new media, Broadway and Los Angeles stage producer. A portion of his numerous stage and screen credits include ABC's *Castle*, Broadway's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Side Show*, the Neil LaBute penned feature films *Some Girl(s)* and *Dirty Weekend*, Jennifer Morrison's feature directorial debut *Sun Dogs* (Netflix 2018), and the 2019 Academy Award winner for Live Action Short Film, *Skin*.

Elad Keidan

Executive Producer. Studied film at the Jerusalem film school of Sam Spiegel. Anthem, his graduation film, won the Cinéfondation selection in Cannes 2008. Another short, And On He Walks participated in the Locarno film festival in 2011. His first feature Afterthought took part in the Cannes Official Selection in 2015 and won several local awards. Elad lives in Tel Aviv where he teaches, lectures and gives story tutoring to film students and professionals.

Credits

Anna - Svetlana Barandich
Alina - Anastasia Vyazovskaya
Eric - Eric R. Gilliatt
Translator - Alina Chornogub
Party Organiser - Liana Khobelia
Ian - Istan Rozumny
Drunk Man - Pavel Levitsky

Writer & Director - Dekel Berenson
Director of Photography - Vova Ivanov
Producers - Merlin Merton, Vitaliy Shermetiev, Olga Beskhmelnytsina
Executive Producers - Natalia Libet, Elad Keidan, Omar Parker, Charlie Canning Burt,
Dima Konoplov
Line Producer - Olga Maksruk
First Assistant Director - Janina Kucher, Andrej Krutij
Second Assistant Director - Elena Brazhnik
Third Assistant Director - Lera Ruban
Casting Director - Alla Samoylenko
Assistant Casting Director - Pasha Nikitiuk, Anastasija Gusar, Tasia, Pleshivtseva

First Assistant Camera - Sasha Paholok
Gaffer - Dima Amelichev
Sparks - Dmitrij Levchenko,
Valerij Klapchenko

Art Director - Kara Baleyana
Assistant Art Director - Sergej Shishkin
Costum Designer - Sasha Klimovich
Costume Assistant - Igor Klimovich
Costume - Karolina Shermeta
Make-up - Alla Leonova, Svetlana Polikashkina
Digital Image Technician - Yaroslav Nemoj
Steadicam Operator - Vova Olejnik

Dolly Grip - Alexandr Posvyaschnij
Location Managers - Anna Salieva, Julija Degnera
Assistants - Evgenij Brazhnik, Denis Zinchenko, Vlad Zaharov, Roman Koldij
Editor - Yegor Troyanovsky
Post-production Supervisor - Charlotte Stade
Colorist -Dmitry Valsylenko
Sound Designer - Andrii Nidzelskyi
Sound Mixing - Andrii Rohachov
Music Supervisor - Yaroslav Lodygin
Script Advisor - Marta Parlatore

Background Artists:

Yuri Morenko, Joe Krapek, Peter Pain, Joseph Harrison, Dmitriy Durnev, James Martin, Valery Kovalenko, Pavel Kovalsky, Pavel kucherov, Daria Batoska, Vsevolod Tsymbal, Alex shutiy, Anatoly Oleinik, Igor Bukhaltsev, Anatoly Shyshko, Viktoria Boiko, Kristina Gredneva, Vladimir Bebeshko.

The director wishes to thank:

Charlotte Stade, Alexey Zgonik, Denis Ivanov, Igor Savychenko, Yulia Konoplyova, Olena Savchenko, Igor Ryzhkov, Toby Fell Holden, Judith Mandy, Dominic Davey, Andrew Krakower, Ben Nisman, Angeli Macfarlane, Shalom Eizenbach, Patrick Campbell, Patrick Ewald, Gitit Wainer-Arie, Adar Shafran, Vered Heller, Reut Shapir Ben Naftaly, The Haifa Film Festival, Adi Cohen, Jordi Rediu, Anna Ilnitskaya, Maryana Golovko.

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ANNA - CONTACT & SOCIAL MEDIA

THE FILM - ANNA

<https://www.annashortfilm.com/>

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9842732>

[/https://www.facebook.com/annashortfilm19](https://www.facebook.com/annashortfilm19)

DIRECTOR - Dekel Berenson

Nationality: Israeli.

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FESTIVALS

More than 60 festivals as of 30/11/2019

Best British Short Film - British Independent Film Awards (BIFA) 🏆

72nd Cannes Film Festival France - ***World Premiere***

44th Toronto International Film Festival Canada - ***North American Premiere***

Molodist Film Festival - Ukraine - ***National Premiere***

Galway Film Fest. Ireland

Female Themed International Independent F. Festival - Luis University China

Qinghai Golmud Gobi Extreme Carniva IChina

Lviv International Short Film Festival Wiz-Art Ukraine - **Audience Award 🏆**

Duhok International Film Festival Iraqi

CineFest Miskolc International Film Festival Hungary

UrbanWorld Film Festival USA

Calgary International Film Festival Canada

Athens International Film Festival Greece

Helsinki Int. Film Fest. Finland

DC Shorts Film Festival USA - **Outstanding International Narrative Film 🏆**

World Of Film International Festival Glasgow UK

Tirana Film Festival Albania

Humano - International Film Festival of Human Rights Mexico

Beast International Film Festival Portugal

Catacumba Film Festival Spain **BEST ACTRESS** 🏆

UK Jewish Film Festival UK

Brest European Short Film Festival France

Fenêtres sur Courts France

Stockholm International Film Festival Sweden

Batumi International Art House Film Festival Georgia

Sound & Image Challenge International Festival Macao

Malter Film Festival Hungary

San Diego International Film Festival USA

Bosphorus Film Festival Turkey

Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid Spain

Richard Harris International Film Festival Ireland - **Best Actress** 🏆 ([Ashmina](#) won **Best Short Film** 🏆)

Asiana International Short Film Festival Korea

Cinemaforum Poland

Long Memory Short Films Int. Italy

Dhaka International Film Festival Bangladesh

Brest European Short Film Festival France

KFFK / Kurzfilmfestival Köln Germany

AFI Fest USA

Fiaticorti Film Festival Italy

IKUSKA Muestra de cortometraje de Pasaia Spain

Bengaluru International Film Festival India

Dijon Short Film Festival - **Grand Prix of the European Competition** 🏆

Fenêtres sur Courts France

Festival du Film Court de Villeurbanne France

Blue Danube Film Festival Austria / Hungary

Braunschweig International Film Festival Germany

Batumi International Art House Film Festival Georgia

Chiliwack Film Festival Canada'

Gazte Film Fest Spain

London Film Week UK - **Best Short Film** 🏆

Sound & Image Challenge International Festival Macao

Queen Palm International Film Festival US

Les Arcs Film Festival France

Seashore Film Festival, Turkey - **2nd Place** 🏆