



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
UN CERTAIN REGARD
2022 OFFICIAL SELECTION

BUTTERFLY VISION

A FILM BY
MAKSYM NAKONECHNYI





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SCREENINGS

WEDNESDAY 25TH MAY AT 5:00PM - SALLE DEBUSSY
THURSDAY 26TH MAY AT 11:45 AM - CINÉUM SCREEN X
THURSDAY 26TH MAY AT 5:30 PM - SALLE AGNÈS VARDA
FRIDAY 27TH MAY AT 10:00 AM - CINÉUM AURORE

PRESS MATERIAL AVAILABLE AT WWW.WILDBUNCH.BIZ/MOVIE/BUTTERFLY-VISION/

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A person in a white camouflage suit stands on a white, eroded cliff face. The person is wearing a white balaclava and a tactical vest. The cliff face is steep and shows signs of weathering and erosion. The sky is a clear, deep blue.

SYNOPSIS

After spending months as a prisoner in Donbas, Ukrainian aerial reconnaissance expert Lilia returns home to her family. But the trauma of captivity continues to torment her and surface in dreamlike ways. Something growing deep within Lilia will not allow her to forget, yet she refuses to identify as a victim and will fight to liberate herself.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The idea for this movie came to me back in 2018 while I was editing a documentary about Ukrainian women who were fighting in the ongoing war. One of the protagonists said that she had made a deal with her fellow combatants: they would kill her rather than let her be taken prisoner by the enemy. And I began to think about how what awaits a female soldier captured by the enemy could be worse than death. Coming up with the plot, I understood that I wanted it to be a story about hope and humanity in utterly hopeless circumstances.

Since 2014 thousands of soldiers have returned from war, and they do not always receive a warm welcome at home as one would expect. Some end up feeling humiliated or aggressive, harming themselves and other people, or simply unable to find a suitable place for themselves.

To explore this situation in an ethical way, I tried to shoot as neutrally as I could, without labeling or highlighting anything as right or wrong. In the face of trauma, everybody is equal.

In the editing, jump cuts and image glitches manifest the deep ties between Lilia's past and present. We see those image ruptures in the aerial reconnaissance footage, in the news streams, in the ultrasound pictures. This resembles the way the traumatic past disrupts the continuity of Lilia's current life.

The realistic depiction of the characters' lives clashes with the surreal dream scenes. Interspersed throughout the entire film, Lilia's dreams reveal her deeply buried trauma and also her power. Truly feeling her experience, decisions and emotions gives her a clearer view of herself and the surrounding reality, leading to an understanding that a bigger war is unavoidable.

Maksym Nakonechnyi, 2022

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Why did you choose to show the point of view of a female soldier?

It's the result of the countless stories, revelations and interviews I've heard, and of how all that affected me. Thinking about it now, I understand that this film is for me a kind of search for markers in a society traumatised by war, where hatred is nurtured by the full range of the media. A female soldier who has undergone the same ordeal as Lilia could be stigmatised or perceived as a heroine. If she continues to make her own decisions, even if they are not unanimous or not necessarily understood, she gives a good example (moral and human) of a person who has remained standing, well-grounded, and who faces up to reality in all its harshness. Once I had the idea for the story, it was vital to convince Iryna Tsilyk to join me as co-writer. She directed the documentary that inspired this story and gathered a lot of relevant experiences. Iryna has a veteran family member. Although I outlined the plot myself, Iryna brought a lot of vivid and precise details to the script. In addition, her work on the dialogue has been invaluable.

You chose to counterbalance the harshness of the story with surrealistic elements. Can you explain your aesthetic choices?

One of my goals was to convey discreetly the feeling that war continues to follow a person even in peacetime. To achieve this, I decided to make the film in a hyperrealist style. The surrealistic dream sequences show that trauma resides in the unconscious, which invisibly controls life and actions. I think the main conflict is between Lilia's outer life, which includes the point of view and expectations of others, and her inner world where she sees her true



self, feels her needs and desires. Dreams express this internalised process and symbolise the transformation she goes through, without explaining it to the viewer but setting the right tone.

The colours of the film are those of military camouflage uniforms, blended with the space of civilian life. The dirty greys, pale blues and the blues of winter uniform; the olive, khaki and dark green of classic army uniforms; the ochres, terracotta and sandy colours of autumn are all noticeable in locations, landscapes and costumes, creating an imperceptible presence that constantly accompanies the characters.

I also wanted to draw attention to the role of the Internet, the media and social networks in our lives and to show how they facilitate the escalation of violence during a conflict by allowing hatred and chaos to be expressed, with disastrous consequences. The visual elements of these media are incorporated in the texture of the film so that we can look at them from the inside and realise how they influence the reality they speak about.

And the dream sequences?

The bomb craters and trenches are terrible places, but they're familiar to Lilia. These landscapes constitute the majority of images she saw through her screen during drone reconnaissance flights. They are the marks left by war, the wounds that deform the earth. This draws a parallel with Lilia's body, also deformed by the war (scars left by torture, stretch marks on her abdomen, c-section scar).

During the war, Lilia's drone flew over the wounds of the earth, and in a dream, a butterfly does the same. In addition to being the symbol of the psyche, it's also the code name used by Lilia who, through her reconnaissance work, was able to fly. Although it takes place in a dream, it manifests the "superpower" she acquired to maintain her dignity and personality in real life. This flight isn't at all smooth: it's jerky, like a

butterfly, or mechanical, brisk, like a reconnaissance drone. The flight also contributes to the soundscape of the film. The drone's characteristic hum represents the boundary between dream and reality.

What is the meaning of the title?

Butterfly is Lilia's code name. The title reflects the character's great degree of awareness of her situation, her responsibility for her actions, and for her own existence. It expresses her ability to understand her true nature and the reality that surrounds her. Having observed the war mainly from the sky, Lilia manages to see the role she played in it from a certain distance.

Lead actress Rita Burkovska delivers an exceptional performance as the complex Lilia. Can you tell us about working with her on the character?

I didn't know who to cast until the last moment. I chose Rita for her unique personality, her unconventional yet restrained style of acting, as well as her strong moral and civic positions. All this convinced me that she could create her own Lilia, different from my own vision.

During pre-production, we conducted extensive research together, mainly by talking to people – female soldiers and veterans, former military and civilian prisoners. A fundamental element unearthed by our research was that not all these people had been broken by their traumatic experience; rather, it led them to develop unique qualities and even to become better versions of themselves.

Rita's physical preparation was also long and complicated: it included working with a dietician and a personal trainer to help her gain or lose weight during filming. She also learned the basics of tactical medicine and drone handling, even though it doesn't feature in the film. This preparation helped her understand the body language and way of thinking of someone like Lilia.



During rehearsals, we also paid close attention to physical work, with regular training. Rita also wrote Lilia's diary of captivity diary based on the testimonies of veterans and former prisoners. We referred to this text a lot during filming. We also focused on working with volume and space. Her performance can be delicate and subtle, eloquent even without words.

How does the film reflect the current socio-political situation in Ukraine?

Since the beginning of the large-scale Russian invasion, the world has turned its attention to our country. The film shows what the soldiers who defended Ukraine were doing, before everyone in our country, and internationally, admitted that a war is a war. It examines events that led to the current disaster seen through the eyes of someone who survived the atrocities committed by the aggressor, who knew that the aggressor would not stop, and who considered it her duty to fight.

In the film I tried to highlight the social problems that I consider to be the consequences of trauma. As Ukrainians, and as a global society, we have become hard, deaf and ignorant. Hatred and death have become normalised, which increases the need to designate an enemy. Over the past eight years, thousands of soldiers have returned. They have not always been welcomed home as one would have expected. Civilian life, in which there is less of a tendency to divide the world into black and white, can be harder for them to survive than war. But society has a hard time accepting, helping and re-socializing people suffering from PTSD. Some of these people feel humiliated, or become aggressive, towards themselves and others, or can no longer find their place. We accept this tension, which has become familiar since the beginning of the war, and the challenges it entails. But as we are seeing today, it's a matter of survival.



BIOGRAPHIES

Maksym Nakonechnyi is a Ukrainian director and producer. He received his degree in directing from Karpenko-Kary Kyiv National University of Theatre, Cinema and Television (2012). He has worked on various TV projects and co-founded the independent production company Tabor, which produces documentaries, fiction films, theatre productions, commercials and social advertising. Maksym has directed the fiction shorts *Invisible* and *New Year with Family*. His debut feature, *Butterfly Vision*, will premiere at Cannes 2022, in Un Certain Regard.

Rita Burkovska is a Ukrainian actress. After studying at Kyiv National University of Theatre, Cinema and Television, she performed in numerous theatre roles. She worked in the School of Dramatic Art Theatre for Igor Lysov's laboratory and organized a workshop based on the works of Erasmus of Rotterdam in Pechersk Theatre. In 2017, she participated in Marina Abramovic's performance art piece *Generator* at PinchukArtCentre. She then starred in *Parthenon*, directed by Mantas Kvedaravicius, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2019. *Butterfly Vision* is her second feature role and will premiere at Cannes 2022, in Un Certain Regard.

Liubomyr Valivots is a Ukrainian actor who grew up in a stage family and spent his childhood in the theatre. He studied at Kyiv National I.K. Karpenko-Kary Theatre, Cinema and Television University. He works regularly with young people in the Pechersk Theatre in Kyiv and often appears in films and TV series. The character of Tokha marks his first role in a feature film debut.





TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Original Title	Бачення метелика / Bachennya metelyka
International Title	Butterfly Vision
Countries of origin	Ukraine, Czech Republic, Croatia, Sweden
Year of shooting	2022
Running Time	107'
Format	4K
Languages	Ukrainian, English
Subtitles	French, English

CAST

Rita Burkovska
Liubomyr Valivots
Myroslava Vytrykhovska-Makar
Natalka Vorozhbyt



CREW

Directed by

Screenplay

DP

Sound Designer

Editors

Original Music

Production Designer

Costume Designer

Production

In coproduction with

Producers

Co-producers

With the support of

International Sales

French Distribution

Maksym Nakonechnyi

Maksym Nakonechnyi and Iryna Tsilyk

Khrystyna Lyzohub

Vasyl Yavtushenko

Ivor Ivezić, Alina Gorlova

Džian Baban

Maria Khomyakova

Sofia Doroshenko

Tabor

Masterfilm, 4Film and Sisyfos Film Production

Yelizaveta Smith, Darya Bassel

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Ministry of Culture and Information, Eurimages,
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