

OFFICIAL ENTRY - UKRAINE  
BEST INTERNATIONAL FEATURE FILM - ACADEMY AWARDS® 2022

DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY NATALYA VOROZHBIT

# BAD ROADS

REASONS8 FILMS PRESENTS A KRISTI FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH UKRAINIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION  
A FILM BY NATALYA VOROZHBIT ANDREY LELYUKH IGOR KOLTOVSKYY ANNA ZHURAKOVSKAYA YULIYA MATROSOVA  
OKSANA VORONINA ZOYA BARANOVSKAYA SERGEI SOLOVYOV MARYNA KLIMOVA YURI KULINICH  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY VOLODYMYR IVANOV EDITOR ALEXANDER CHORNY EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ANDRII YAREMII MARINA PSHENICHNIKOVA  
PRODUCED BY DMITRIY MINZYANOV YURIY MINZYANOV EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NATALYA VOROZHBIT

FILM MOVEMENT  
UKRAINIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION  
REASONS8

“FOUR TENSION-FILLED TALES  
SET ALONG THE DANGEROUS BYWAYS  
OF UKRAINE’S DONBAS.”

-VARIETY

“A HOWL OF ANGUISH  
OVER THE IMPACT OF HOSTILITIES  
WITH NEIGHBORING RUSSIA.”

-SCREEN DAILY



# BAD ROADS

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Four short stories are set along the treacherous roads of Donbass, Ukraine during the war. There are no safe spaces and no one can make sense of just what is going on. Even as they are trapped in the chaos, some manage to wield authority over others. Originally presented on stage at the Royal Court Theater in London and adapted powerfully by writer/director Natalya Vorozhbit, **BAD ROADS** presents a series of tension-packed vignettes, each built around a dangerous encounter on the byways of Eastern Ukraine. With a particular sensitivity to the vulnerability of women during wartime, Vorozhbit's debut feature, Ukraine's official submission to the 2022 Academy Awards, "reflects the gloomy political reality of Ukraine and the pressure that Russia exerts on everyday life" (*IndieWire*).

## CONTACTS

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## **Director's Statement**

When you turn onto a forgotten back road, you never know where you may wind up. The back roads in my film take us into conflict zones, where people living in fear and hatred have learned to deal with dire situations; and have found extraordinary ways to emerge as survivors.

In this world, children go through life as innocent and defenceless witnesses, as stray dogs pick up the sound of incoming shell fire before humans are able to. By setting the film in a place where antagonism between civilians and the military was palpable but remained silent, restrained and muted, my aim was to shoot it in a quasi-documentary style, continually asking characters who are you, why are you here and what is going on?

The film depicts violence coming out of nowhere sparking major conflict. My hope is that conflict will release its hold on the human heart, and give way to a new era.

## **About the Director**

Natalya Vorozhbit was born in Kiev in 1975 and graduated from the Moscow Literary Institute. *BAD ROADS*, her first film, was originally presented on stage in 2017 at the Royal Court Theater in London. In 2009, The Royal Shakespeare Company produced her play *THE GRAIN STORE*. Her play *MAIDAN: VOICES FROM THE UPRISING* was staged in 2014 at both the Royal Court in London and Teatr.doc in Moscow.

Vorozhbit was head writer for the acclaimed 2010 Russian TV series *SCHOOL* and wrote the feature films *STEEL BUTTERFLY* (2012), *WILD FIELDS* (2016) and *CYBORGS* (2017). She is presently developing her own second feature film project.

## **About the Production Companies**

Kristi Films was created in 2016 by Yuriy and Dmitriy Minzyanov to work with debut auteur filmmakers. Short films by the company have participated in many international festivals and have been nominated for prizes by the European Academy. *Bad Roads* is the company's first feature.

## **About the Producers**

Yuriy Minzyanov graduated from the prestigious Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) in Moscow in 1979. He is a member of the European Film Academy. In addition to Kristi Film, Yuri serves as a producer at Star Media - one of Ukraine's leading television and film production companies.

Dmitriy Minzanyanov graduated from the Kiev National University of Culture and Arts. He worked in film distribution before becoming a production executive at Star Media and going on to co-found Kristi Films.

## **About the Cast**

It took 18 months to put the cast together, as Natalya and producer Yuriy Minzyanov made scouting trips to numerous provincial theaters, having resolved to avoid famous faces in favour of others who would resonate as the regular people Natalya had written about.

Igor Koltovskyy, the School Principal in the first episode, is an acting coach and director of children's theatre, who had appeared only a few times on screen. He was contacted to work as an acting coach for the cast, but after their meeting Natalya offered him the role.

Andrey Lelyukh, who plays the Commander, has appeared in a number of television films and runs his own small theater company in Kiev.

Anna Zhurakovskaya and Ekaterina Zhdanovich, the young girls in the second episode are non-professionals Natalya discovered at a sports boarding school near Kiev, quite like the one Natalya, herself, had attended.

Yuliya Matrosova, who plays Granny, is a company actress with the provincial Chernihiv Youth Theater.

Maryna Klimova, makes her screen debut as the Journalist in the third episode. Natalya auditioned a number of actresses before discovering Maryna, as a company player at the Odessa Academic Ukrainian Musical and Drama Theater. She has just joined the prestigious Kiev State Drama and Comedy Theater.

Many actors refused to take the role of the brutal militant in the third episode, until Natalya persuaded Yuri Kulinich that taking up the challenge could boost his career. To date, he has appeared in episodic television.

Zoya Baranovskaya, the Young Woman in the last episode, graduated from the Kiev National I.K. Karpenko-Kary Theater, Cinema and Television University in 2005. She has since made several appearances in film and on television.

Oksana Voronina, the Old Woman, was the most well-established and versatile cast member, having played aristocrats and villagers in many films and television programs. She worked at the Lesya Ukrainka National Academic Theater of Russian Drama in Kiev until her death after a long illness in July 2020.

Sergei Solovyov, the Old Man, has made several television appearances. He is based in Kharkov and best known in regional theater circles.

Natalya budgeted plenty of time to rehearse scenes in the production offices before shooting began. As she made the transition from playwright to director, she endeavoured to use to her best advantage methods acquired after close observation of theater directors at work on her plays.

## **THE CAST**

School Principal - Igor Koltovskyy  
Commander - Andrey Lelyukh  
Soldier - Vladimir Gurin  
Young Girl - Anna Zhurakovskaya  
Young Girl's Grandmother - Yuliya Matrosova  
Journalist - Maryna Klimova  
Militant - Yuri Kulinich  
Young Woman - Zoya Baranovskaya  
Old Woman - Oksana Voronina  
Old Man - Sergei Solovyov

## **THE CREW**

Writer / Director - Natalya Vorozhbit  
Cinematographer - Volodymyr Ivanov  
Producers - Yuriy Minzyanov and Dmitriy Minzyanov  
Editor - Alexander Chorny  
Production Designer - Marina Pshenichnikova  
Costume Designer - Andrii Yaremii  
Sound Designer / Sound Mixer - Oleksandr Shatkivskyi  
Makeup Artists - Elvira Mamedova  
Associate Producer - Sergei Neretin  
Production Manager - Vasiliy Belous

## **PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Kristi Films  
in association with Ukrainian Cultural Foundation

## TECH SPECS

Running time: **105 minutes**

Aspect ratio: **2.39:1**

Shooting format: **digital**

Language: **Russian/Ukrainian**

Production countries: **Ukraine**

