



Entertainment • Corporate Communications
600 W. 9th Street, Suite 715
Los Angeles, CA 90015
ofc: 213 624 7827 | fax: 213 488 0398

QUEENDOM

AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

Produced by Igor Myakotin and Agniia Galdanova

Starring Gena Marvin

Executive Produced by David France

WORLD PREMIERE - 2023 SXSW Film Festival

Documentary Feature Competition



Press Contact

David Magdael & Associates

David Magdael - dmagdael@dmagpr.com

Vince Johnson vjohnson@dmagpr.com

Tommy Tang - ttang@dmagpr.com

Sales Contact

Submarine

Josh Braun - josh@submarine.com

UTA

Mikey Schwartz-Wright

Schwartz-WrightM@unitedtalent.com

Mins 98 | Language Russian with English Subtitles | **Year 2023 |**

Country France, United States

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

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

2023 SXSW Film Festival Schedule

World Premiere - Saturday, March 11, 2023 at 6:30 PM at Alamo Drafthouse (Lamar E)
Sunday, March 12, 2023 at 2:00 PM at Alamo Drafthouse (Lamar A)
Friday, March 17, 2023 at 3:00 PM at Alamo Drafthouse (Lamar B)

LOGLINE

Gena, a queer artist from a small town in Russia, stages radical performances in public that become a new form of art and activism - and put her life in danger.

SYNOPSIS

Gena, a queer artist from a small town in Russia, dresses in otherworldly costumes made from junk and tape, and protests the government on the streets of Moscow. Born and raised on the harsh streets of Magadan, a frigid outpost of the Soviet gulag, Gena is only 21. She stages radical performances in public that become a new form of art and activism. By doing that, she wants to change people's perception of beauty and queerness and bring attention to the harassment of the LGBTQ+ community. The performances - often dark, strange, evocative, and queer at their core - are a manifestation of Gena's subconscious. But they come at a price.

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT - Agniia Galdanova

As a teenager, I had a hard time accepting myself and constantly endured humiliation and beatings because of my “unfeminine” look. From an early age, I often pretended to be a boy, and wore shapeless clothes and heavy shoes. This was my refuge from the stereotype that a girl should be feminine. Years later, I was beaten up by two men in the very center of Moscow just because they had mistaken me for a guy in a skirt. I decided to explore the themes of sexuality and gender identity further in my work. My initial idea was to follow several drag queens across Russia. One of the first potential characters I met was Gena. After spending time together, I was mesmerized by Gena’s artistry and courage. To me, she wasn’t one of many drag queens. She was an artist embarking on a journey of self-discovery.

I hope that when someone from Russia or any other country where being queer is illegal watches QUEENDOM, the film and Gena will give them the confidence to accept themselves and share their truth with the world, however dangerous it could be.

DIRECTOR'S Q&A - Agniia Galdanova

How did this film come about? How did the idea originate? What inspired you?

Drag culture and the LGBTQ+ community in Russia is important to me and is driven by my experiences growing up. I was bullied because of my looks when I was growing up. And as the Russian government was getting more hostile toward the LGBTQ+ community, I was fascinated by the resilience and beauty of the drag queen community, which was going deeper underground because of numerous threats. Many of the queens were my close friends.

My original idea was to create a documentary series following several drag queens across Russia. One of the potential protagonists was Gena. The series evolved into a feature documentary focusing solely on her life and art. It was a revelation to see Gena grow as a person and as an artist as we were filming with her. She was pushing the artistic boundaries and delivering a clear message - love yourself. We instantly connected and started collaborating. It’s an everlasting bond that will continue after the film is finished.

How long did it take to make the film? From concept to finish.

We started working on the film in 2019 and finished it in February 2023.

Why did you make this film?

I wish I could have seen someone like Gena when I was growing up in Russia. I made the film because I was mesmerized by Gena’s artistry and inspired by her courage to be her true self in such an oppressive environment as Russia. I could feel her fear, but I never saw her waver from her intention. There’s no one else like Gena. When I saw Gena struggling to fit in a small town built on top of the biggest gulag camp, I wondered how she could be two very

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

different people. But then I saw how she blossomed and transformed while experimenting with makeup and making spectacular and otherworldly costumes from junk and tape - I knew I had to make a film just about her.

Gena was born and raised on the harsh streets of Magadan, a frigid outpost of the biggest gulag camp in the Russian Far East. Her parents passed away when she was a child. Brought up by her grandparents, she had the courage to come out to them early on. It was unbearably difficult. Gena says that when her grandfather realized their “grandson” was “not like everyone else,” he took her to the guardianship authorities and wanted to give her up, yelling: “We adopted a normal one! And we don't need THIS anymore!” But despite fear and misunderstanding, they still love her.

After witnessing Gena’s relationship with her grandparents who raised her, I kept thinking about how important unconditional love is. I was raised without a dad, and my mom was busy providing for the family. That’s why I connected so profoundly with Gena, who was also brought up without much-needed family support and care. In the LGBTQ+ community, people who are usually abandoned by their relatives find new families among queer peers. Gena is not an exception. But she never gave up on her grandparents. At the end of the day, they do love and care for her. Gena’s forced maturity and her lust for life motivated me to make this film.

I hope that if someone from Russia, or any other country where being queer is illegal, watches QUEENDOM, it will give them the confidence to accept themselves and share their truth with the world, however dangerous it could be.

Did the film change from your original idea for the film as you were filming or in post?

Gena was 20 years old when we started our collaboration, and over several years, she flourished into the incredible artist she is today. Starting with art performances in public, Gena gradually realized that she has the platform on social media to create positive change in society through her art. The catalyst for Gena’s political stance was the moment when she participated in the protest demanding the freedom of the opposition leader Alexei Navalny. It was an important moment for Gena’s evolution as an activist.

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched an aggressive full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Gena couldn’t stay silent, and she knew she had to oppose it through an art performance in public to draw attention to the horrific war that the Russian government had started. Gena wrapped her naked body with barbed wire and marched the streets of Moscow in the freezing cold. The protest-performance resulted in Gena’s arrest. From that point on, it was a whirlwind of events - from Gena’s release from detention to her daring escape from Russia. No one, even Gena herself, could have anticipated such an unexpected turn of events. She had to make choices about leaving the only home she has ever known, losing friends that love her, accepting that she might never see her grandparents again, and not knowing if she made the right decisions in an extremely short period.

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

In the end, Gena's life became the story that represented so much about before and after, old and new, love and loss.

What were the challenges in making this film?

One of the challenges was keeping the crew and protagonists safe. Filming in Russia, especially with someone like Gena, who uses her art to protest in public, posed a considerable risk, and we had to evaluate each shoot and be careful everywhere we filmed. There were many close calls, and it was often a dangerous task. Still, we wanted to reveal the real story of what was happening inside contemporary Russia, especially around the often invisible LGBTQ+ community.

What were the successes that you had in making this film?

I developed a deep bond and a meaningful connection with Gena that I hope is felt while watching the film. The trust we felt for each other created a true collaboration that allowed the film crew - which was very small at all times to preserve the intimacy and for safety reasons - to capture candid moments between Gena and her grandparents as well as during moments of intense feelings and concern for her future. We created a safe space where Gena's truth is revealed through observational cinema.

We are proud of the film's visual language, including several performances featuring Gena that give a glimpse into her inner world and emotional state. The performances - often dark, strange, evocative and queer at their core - are a manifestation of Gena's subconscious.

What do you want audiences to take away from this film?

At the core of the film is Gena's relationship with her grandparents, who love her even though they disapprove of how she expresses herself or even who she loves. It is a clash of generations that many can relate to and understand. But it's also a film about the danger of being queer in Russia today. Gena has to make some painful decisions that make us all wonder - could we do that? Are we brave enough to stand up to the government? Could we leave friends, home, and family behind for something we believe in? Would we do what Gena did?

We hope audiences feel empowered and confident to live their most authentic selves despite the abusive environments they might live in, even if they must flee their home to live freely. We believe the film - and Gena herself - serves as a reminder that the most powerful way to fight prejudice against the queer community is by being true to yourself and not being afraid to show who you are - whether in public or a family setting. That is only the way to change people's minds. Gena did it. Could you?

Where do you find inspiration or who/what has influenced you as a filmmaker?

My inspiration for the kind of documentary films I make comes from reality itself. Marina Razbezhkina, my film mentor and teacher, influenced how I approach documentary films. Her method requires the student to be a one-person filmmaker. I had to direct, produce, film, and edit my films. This experience was invaluable and shaped my understanding of how to make a film on a deeper level because you deal with reality on your own. This type of approach

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

requires your total dedication; you have to immerse yourself in the world of your protagonist and be ready to leave your comfort zone. It's not a job. It's a lifestyle. What's good about being inspired by reality is that you never know where it can come from. You have to be open to the world of possibilities and serendipity. While making QUEENDOM, I stayed true to the observational approach, but I also knew that I wanted to develop a new visual language that reflects my vision of Gena's world.

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER
Agniia Galdanova

Agniia Galdanova is a Sundance and IDFA-supported documentary film director. Her previous film, "One Step Forward, One Step Back," about a family's dream to live far from civilization in the Altai Mountains, premiered at the Message to Man International Film Festival. Her work focuses on complex human relationships told through immersive observational language. Her new film QUEENDOM about a young queer artist Gena Marvin is set to premiere at SXSW 2023 in Documentary Competition.

PRODUCER
Igor Myakotin

Igor Myakotin is an Emmy-nominated BAFTA-winning filmmaker who co-produced the feature-length documentary WELCOME TO CHECHNYA (Sundance '20, Berlinale '20). He is a 2022 Sundance Producing Fellow and was named by DOC NYC as one of the "40 Under 40" working in documentary film. Igor believes that cinema is not a way to escape reality but to embrace it with all its peculiarities and darkness. Currently, Igor is producing QUEENDOM (2022 Sundance Producers Lab and Summit, Gotham Market Week, CPH:FORUM, Big Sky Pitch), directed by Agniia Galdanova.

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

FULL CREDIT LIST

Director

Agniia Galdanova

Producer

Igor Myakotin
Agniia Galdanova

Executive Producers

David France
Jess Search
Arnaud Borges

Co-Executive Producer

James Cost

Cinematographer

Ruslan Fedotov

Editor

Vlad Fishez

Principal Cast

Gena Marvin

Cinematography by

Ruslan Fedotov

Additional Cinematography by

Aliaksandr Tsymbaliuk

Nikolai Zheludovich

Aleksander Elkan

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Edited by

Vlad Fishez

Music by

Damien Vandesande

Toke Bronson Odin

Sound design & Re-recording Mixer

Andrey Dergachev

Color by

Ruslan Fedotov

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Filmmakers would like to thank

Gena's grandparents

Ismail Luceat-Anima

Lex Blank

Oleg Makhnorylov

Deoxys Io

Pavel Kolomeytsev

Daria Savonina

Andrey Skatkov

Roman Valynkin

Quamaz

Anastasiya

Yulia

Flavia

Artists in Exile

Judith Depaule

Adèle Costa

Tatiana Efrussi

Editorial Consultants

Tyler H. Walk

Ricardo Acosta

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Charlotte Munch Bengtsen

Alex O'Flinn

Peter Kerekes

Consulting Producers

Alice Henty

Melody Gilbert

Associate Producers

Arjun and Elena Joshi

Nikolai Kovtunencko

Additional Cinematography

Askold Kurov

Maxim Tomash

Sergei Borsuk

Sergey Stasrostin

Nikita Lychev

Voleemor

Yulia Morozova

Vera Vishnevaya

Shamil Hasanzanov

Location Sound Mixers

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Agniia Galdanova

Agatha Carioca Vandesande

Ilya Rodionov

Production Assistants

Yulia Smyshlyaeva

Tatiana Ochinskaya

development producers

Marfouga

Anna Gudkova

Liza Vorobyova

Development Cinematographers

Artem Emelianov

Anna Zalevskaya

Vitaly Shkotov

Masha Terentieva

Pete Minakov

Development Editors

Anna Zalevskaya

Pavel Volchek

Yuri Pivovarov

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Development Translators

Ivan Nechepurenko

Loretta May

Development Copywriter

Valeria Tsyganova

Music Clearance

Dawn Sutter Madell

Additional Translators

Tomas Naglis

Jesse Mars

Titles and Credits Design

République Studio

Poster Photographer

Boris Camaca

Poster Design

République Studio

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Post-production Services

DumDum Films

Digital Intermediate Colorist

Ruslan Fedotov

Digital Intermediate Online Editor

Vlad Fischez

Digital Intermediate Conform Artist

Vlad Fischez

Visual Effects Artists

Vasiliy Raevskiy

Mic Sachkov

Post-production Sound Services by

Doli Media Studio

Sofia, Bulgaria

Supervising Sound Editor

Andrey Dergachev

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Doli Media Studio Manager

Lyubomir Chochov

Doli Media Studio Assistant

Iliyan Apostolov

Dialogue Editor

Ruslan Khusein

Foley Studio

Kyrgyzfilm

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Foley Artist

Ivan Savelev

Foley Recordist

Sergei Radzievskyi

Foley Editor

Anna Zobova

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Audio Sync Engineer

Konstantin Danilin

Transcription

Natalia Slavina

Closed Captions Services

Mistral Artist

Jerry Rudes

Bookkeeper

DAVID HARRISON

Production Accountants

LUTZ & CARR

PATRICK SMITH

Production Counsel

Gray Schwartz LLP

David F. Schwartz, Esq.

&

Kondas Law

Patrick Kondas, Esq.

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Fiscal Sponsor

THE FILM COLLABORATIVE

LYNNETTE GRYSEELS

Impact Producer

Aggregate

Alison Byrne Fields

Sales Representation

Submarine Entertainment Sales

Josh Braun

Dan Braun

Ben Braun

Matt Burke

Ben Schwartz

United Talent Agency

Mikey Schwartz-Wright

Billy Offer

Grace Royer

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

PUBLICITY

David Magdael & Associates

David Magdael

Vince Johnson

Tommy Tang

Will Zang

Jennifer Hast

Festival Distribution by

The Film Collaborative

footage courtesy of

SOTA

TBD

Song Credits

“Siboney”

Written by: Ernesto Lecuona

Performed by Connie Francis

Published by: EMI Feist Catalog Inc.

Courtesy of Polydor Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

‘De La Cabeza’

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

performed by DJs Pareira

written by Mariano Caloso and Diego Irasusta

published by Música Cómeme

administered by Freibank Music Publishing

courtesy of Música Cómeme

“Human”

by Sevdaliza

Written By Sevdaliza

Composition: Sevdaliza, Mucky

Production: Mucky, Sevdaliza

Drum Programming: Mucky

Arrangement: Mucky, Sevdaliza

Recorded, Mixed and Mastered by Mucky and Sevdaliza at Soundkings

Reynard Bargmann / Rabies Publishing/Maktub Music Publishing administered by Cloud 9
Music B.V..

" Strichka "

written by Jonathan Illel / Alina Pash / Fabien Leseure /Damien Vandesande

Performed by dOP & Alina Pash

Published by Circus Company / Because Editions

Courtesy of dOP Only

" Your Fellin' "

Written by Sammy Doylestien & Ryan Williams & Clement Alchelbaum

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Performed by dOP & Pillow Talk

Published by Circus Company

Courtesy of dOP Only

Funding Provided by

Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program

IDA ENTERPRISE DOCUMENTARY FUND

InMaat Foundation

IDFA BERTHA CLASSIC FUND

THE JONATHAN LOGAN FAMILY FOUNDATION - EMPOWERING WORLD-CHANGING
WORK

Fritt Ord Foundation

DOC SOCIETY

Current Time TV Award to the Best Pitch at Artdocpitch

Special Thanks

Krapivina Raisa

Arjun and Elena Joshi

Agatha Carioca Vandesande

Damien Vandesande

Benjamin Daussy

Coralie Manant

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Arnaud Borges

Jess Search

Florent Vassault

Mike Lerner

Marina Razbezhkina

Alain Nagler

Alana Waksman

Alessandro Ubaldi

Alex Tomi

Alexey Platonov

Alyona Bocharova

Amanda Hillsberg Arya

Amanda Lebow

Andrea Alarcon

Andronik Khachiyani

Ania Trzebiatowska

Anna Makh

Anna Mongayt

Anna-Maria Kantarius

Askold Kurov

Athanasios Karanikolas

Barbara Raab

Beadie Finzi

Bente Roalsvig

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Boris Matveev

Boris Stefanov

Carrie Lozano

Chandra Jessee

Claudette Godfrey

Coralie Manant

Daniil Antonov

Dasha Slyusarenko

Denis Smagin

Director Nichego

Dmitriy Fesenko

Dominic Davis

Dumitrita Pacicovschi

Elhum Shakerifar

Emma Mørup

Evan Neff

Fanny Dugas

Fenton Bailey

Freddy Neumann

Fredrik Nedelmann

Heather Haynes

Heidi Pullyard

Henner Winckler

Holly Stanton

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Igor Kompaniets

Isabel Arrate Fernandez

Iva Dimitrova

Jesper Jack

Jess Kohl

Jesse Mars

John Burgan

Jonathan Bertin

Jonathan Illel

Jose Rodriguez

Karina Zrajevskaya

Kat Schulze

Katherine Hurley

Katya Sedlyarova

Keisha Knight

Keto Khursevich

Khadija Khan

Kirill Sorokin

Kristal Sotomayor

Kristin Feeley

Ksenia Gapchenko

Ksenia Gapchenko

Langdon Page

Laura Tatham

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Laurent Danielou

Lex Cocker

Mansky Vitaly

Maria Clement

Maria Eismont

Maria Santos

Marie-Genevieve Vandesande

Marina Naumova

Mark Wollemann

Marusya Syroechkovskaya

Maryana Drogoveyko

Masha Pavlova

Matias Aguayo

Max Tuula

Max Tuula

Maxim Gorbunov

Maxwell Anderson

Maya Daisy Hawke

Mika Altskan

Mike Lerner

Milton Tabbot

Monica Baptiste

Nadya Stepanova

Nastia Korkia

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Nevo Shinaar

Nicolas Ouvrard

Nigel M.V. van Ommeren

Nikki Heyman

Niklas Engstrøm

Nina Guseva

Nino Maisaia

Olga Babych

Olga Privolnova

Olivier Tournaud

Paul McGuire

Phillip Moronov

Rebecca Lichtenfeld

Rick Minnich

Ronald Visser

Rory Thost

Sabine Lange

Sarah Choi

Scarlett Robertson

Sebas van der Zwan

Sergei Sergeev

Sergey Nesterenko

Shoshi Korman

Sima Timofeeva

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Soheil Rezayazdi

Susan Jacobs

Suzana Peric

Tanya Varavva

Teona Tomi

Tereza Simikova

Theresa Boylan

Tomas Naglis

Torstein Grude

Tue Steen Müller

Vasiliy Mirolubov

Vera Krichevskaya

Victor Nemeth

Weinshtein Alexander

Weinshtein Alexander Junior

Weinshtein Tatiana

William Krinsky

Yaroslav Golovkin

Yulia Vorobyova

Zaferhan Yumru

Zeynep Güzel

This film was developed with artist support from Sundance Institute Documentary Film
Program

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

Sundance Producers Fellowship Advisors

Andrea Meditch

Violet Feng

Bob Moore

Amanda Spain

Daffodil Altan

Sundance Producers Fellows

Yoni Golijov

Dawne Langford

Lindsey Dryden

Neyda Martinez

Sundance Institute Staff

Carrie Lozano

Maria Clement

Kristin Feeley

Paola Mottura

QUEENDOM
AN AGNIIA GALDANOVA FILM

PRESS NOTES

The Film was Pitched at

The Artdocfest Pitching/ Current Time TV

Big Sky Pitch at Big Sky Film Festival

CPH:FORUM at CPH:DOX

Gotham Market Week

The Jonathan Logan Family Foundation

IDA Enterprise Documentary Fund

Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program

InMaat Foundation

IDFA Bertha Fund Classic

DOC SOCIETY

Doli Studio

Submarine

UTA

The Film Collaborative