



PRESS & SALES CONTACTS

Assel Aushakimova

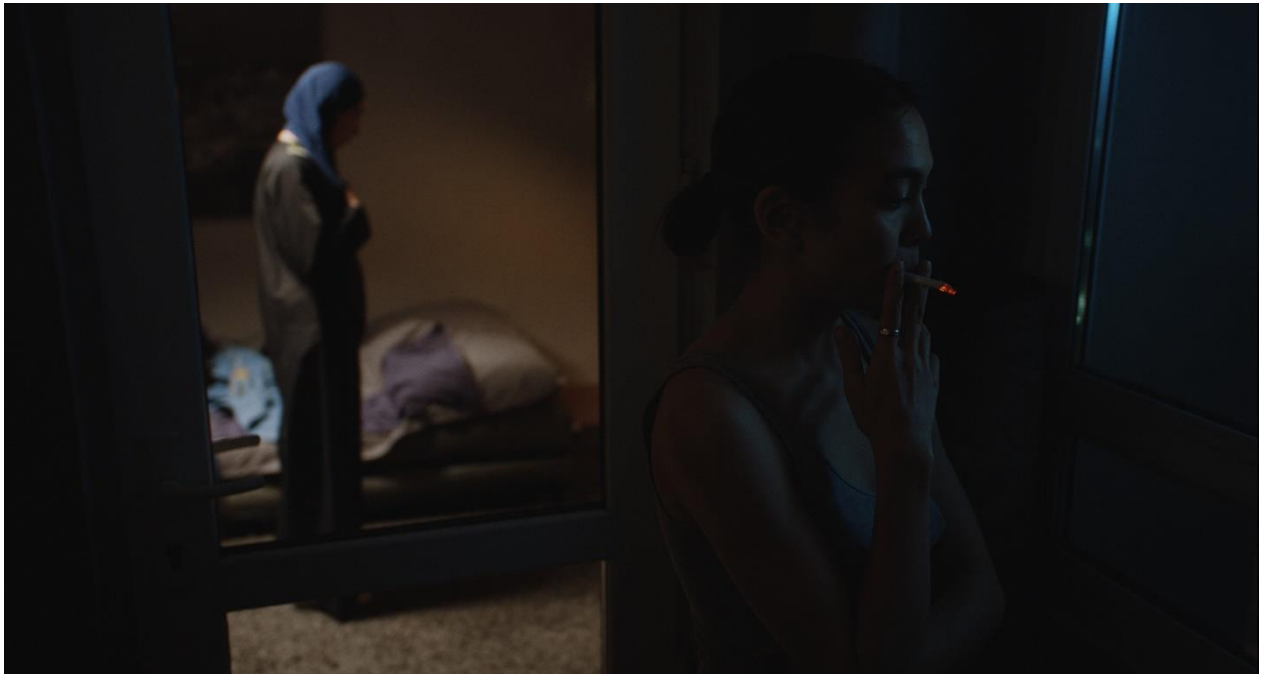
Risk pictures

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WELCOME TO THE USA

SYNOPSIS

November 2017, Almaty, Kazakhstan. The country is preparing to celebrate the Day of the First President of Kazakhstan (1st December). Aliya is a 36-year-old Kazakh woman. Aliya for the first time in her life tried to play the Green Card Lottery and won. Now she cannot decide whether to leave Kazakhstan or stay. On the one hand, Aliya is tired of the stagnation, corruption, dictatorship of the Kazakh society; she wants changes in her life. On the other hand, she is afraid of uncertainty and to start all over again in a foreign country.



WELCOME TO THE USA

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In the film, I intended to reflect my thoughts about emigration from Kazakhstan and the reasons for this process. This is a mass process that the Kazakh authorities prefer not to notice. Any sane person in Kazakhstan, including myself, sometimes thinks about emigration. My second short film THE NEWS was on this topic and I wanted to expand this theme in my feature debut. The main reasons for emigration are stagnation, corruption, passivity, dictatorship, and the homophobia of the Kazakh society.

I wanted to show Kazakhstan nowadays in the film. How much has the country and society changed since the times of the USSR? The topics of migration from Kazakhstan to Europe and USA, the hidden conflict of society and sexual minorities, the rapid Islamization of society are taboo topics for discussion in Kazakhstan. It is like a deep internal inflammation of modern society, which is carefully covered by thick layer of cosmetics. Our film reveals all these wounds of society. A difficult question of female choice: to live as all or to live as want? Love or Sacrifice? Choose yourself or public opinion? What does it mean the popular term "Freedom"? Is it an illusion of great opportunities or a great responsibility?



WELCOME TO THE USA

CAST

Aliya	Saltanat Nauruz
Sister	Dinara Aliyeva
Mother	Kul-Sara
Assel	Aida Zhetpissova
Friend	Daniyar Beisov
Niece	Sultana Bektasova
Zhanna	Zarina Zharmukhametova
Dina	Assel Muhanova
Dan	Nurzhan Tumenov
Nata	Yuliya Brezinskaya
Tanya	Alisa Kashirina



WELCOME TO THE USA

CREW

Written and directed by	Assel Aushakimova
Produced by	Assel Aushakimova
Associate producer	Zhanna Utarbayeva
Line producer	Marzhan Aushakimova
Director of photography	Sardar Baimoldin
1st AC	Amir Zarubekov
2nd AC	Sanzhar Malaysarov
Best boy	Kanat Temirhanov, Azizali Abishev
Production design	Nazim Marat
Makeup design	Greta Orlova
Sound	Erlan Utepbergenov, Daut Zhantassov
Editor	Azamat Altybasov
Colorist	Aidos Nurbulatov
Casting	Assel Aushakimova

WELCOME TO THE USA

ASSEL AUSHAKIMOVA, Director, Screenwriter, Producer

Assel is a Kazakhstani director, screenwriter and producer. Assel graduated from the International Film Business Academy of the Busan Asian Film School in 2021. Her first feature film *WELCOME TO THE USA* had its world premiere at AFI Fest 2019 (New Auteurs). This is the first feature film in Kazakhstan with the protagonist from the LGBTQ community. It was awarded Grand Jury Prize as Best International Narrative Feature of NewFest New York's LGBTQ Film Festival 2020 and it continues to be screened at many international Queer film festivals. Assel participated in the Meetings on the Bridge 2021, BOAT Meeting 2020, Script POOL Tallinn 2018 and Eurasia spotlight 2017 (special mention of the jury). She is currently working on her second feature film project that has been selected for the Biennale College Cinema 2020-2021 of Venice IFF.



FILMOGRAPHY

2019 *Welcome to the USA*

2018 *The news* (short)

2017 *So tired* (short)

WELCOME TO THE USA

AWARDS

Best International Narrative Feature – NewFest New York's LGBTQ Film Festival 2020

FESTIVALS

AFI FEST 2019 (New Auteurs)

OUTFEST FUSION 2020

WICKED QUEER 2020 (Competition)

OFF CAMERA International Festival of Independent Cinema 2020 (Competition)

Inside Out Toronto LGBTQ Film Festival 2020

NewFest New York LGBTQ Film Festival 2020

MIX Copenhagen 2020

Perlen Queer Film Festival Hannover 2020

Image+Nation Film Festival LGBTQQueer Montreal 2020

Film Festival for Women's Rights, Seoul 2020

Milwaukee Film Festival 2020

International Film Festival of Ottawa 2021

QueerTactics Film Festival Vienna 2021

Imagining Queer Bandung, Berlin 2021



WELCOME TO THE USA

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Run time: 95 min

Aspect ratio: 1.85:1

Audio: 5.1

Color

Language: Russian, Kazakh

Kazakhstan, 2019

