



The 50s were a period of significant changes in world cinema. The post-war Italian film movement Neorealism was created at the end of the World War II. As the end of the Neorealism was eventually recognized movie "Umberto D." by Vittorio de Sica's. In the 1950s, the so-called Pink neorealism has begun. Critical understanding of reality and its ugly reflection has been replaced by comedies full of humors, happy life and optimistic pathos.

In French cinema of this period, the directors are trying to advance and underline the copyright policy, at the end of the decade one of the most interesting and various film movement in the world "New Wave" is born. The Hollywood of the 1950s is at the zenith in terms of diversity of genre and visual. The golden age of American cinema combines the films of Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, John Wayne, Elia Kazan, Billy Wilder At this time also Japanese director, Akira Kurosawa, is appearing to the public. His films "Rashomon", "Seven Samurai" have gained worldwide recognition. Young directors appear in cinematography in England, who are called "angry young people", because they do not accept compromise. It is followed by the formation of social realism - sharp criticism of the environment, politics, social or economic problems.

In Georgia, in 1953, the "Georgian Film Studio" was established on the basis of the "Tbilisi Film Studio." In this space Rezo Chkheidze and Tengiz Abuladze were shooting the landmark film of Georgian cinema "Magdana's Donkey". This film broke the epoch of a "shortage in films" and the authors created a distinctive film style. "Magdana's Donkey" is a screen adaptation of a short story by Georgian writer Ekaterine Gabashvili. On its visual / aesthetic side, the influence of Italian neorealism is obvious. This influence is even more noticeable in Tengiz Abuladze's next film "Other People's Children", which the director shot based on a real story - newspaper article.

Neorealism depicts the post-war Italian life in an unvarnished way, the protagonists of the films are the representatives of poor working class, people who try to deal with injustice and hunger on their own. People starring in these films are mostly non-professional actors, which further enhances the naturalness and authenticity. In addition to the visual and aesthetic resemblance of "Magdana's Donkey", the film stands close to Italian neorealism in terms of its themes and understanding the characters. Injustice against poor people, protection of one's own dignity, search for justice - becomes a highlight in films of Georgian directors. Widow Magdana's children Mikho and Kato find a dying, abandoned donkey on the road. They will bring him back to health, take care of him and call him "Lurja" (which means dun, blue). The donkey made it much easier for Magdana to lead the big family.

With the help of Donkey Magdana would bring milk and yogurt to the city to sell. The happy existence of the family turned out to be temporary. The old owner, tradesman Mitua demanded the return of his abandoned donkey, bribed the court, and confiscated the "blue" from the widow Magdana.

The film by Rezo Chkheidze and Tengiz Abuladze won a special jury award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1956 for the Best Short Fiction Film. Young authors Rezo Chkheidze and Tengiz Abuladze started a new age in Georgian cinema with the film "Magdana Blue" and focused on an ordinary people with everyday problems, feelings, thoughts, and views.

Tengiz Abuladze and Rezo Chkheidze mastered the profession of director at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (today also known as Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography), the screenwriter Karlo Gogodze introduced the script to the directors after returning to Tbilisi and soon they started shooting the film. One of the cameramen of "Magdana's Donkey" is a pioneer Georgian cinematographer Alexander Digmelov. The main part of the film was shot in the village called Uplistsikhe. The role of Magdana was played by the popular actress of that time - Dudukhana Tserodze.

While working on the script, several versions were created, according to one of them the film completely coincided with the first source - the final part of Ekaterine Gabashvili's story - the court returned the donkey to Magdana. According to the second, Magdana's eldest son told the story described in the film to pioneers with red neck scarf. But eventually they have chosen the version as it is in the final. The film faced a major setback when the finished version was banned by the heads of the film studio. As Rezo Chkheidze recalled later, "Magdana's Donkey" was shown to writers and poets in Georgia, although some of them were skeptical about choosing Donkey as the main protagonist. The fate of the film was decided by the reaction of Galaktion Tabidze, he liked the young directors' debut and openly supported it.

"Magdana's Donkey" paved the way for the beginner directors in the world of cinema. And Georgian cinema, which until 1956 consisted mainly of films of heroic-pathetic ideology and aesthetics, offered authors a new space for thinking and self-expression. "Magdana's Donkey" became a kind of a precondition and preparation for the great creative processes that began in the Georgian cinema in the 1960s.

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