

FEBRUARY

Directed by **Kamen Kalev**



Bulgaria / France

125 min. / 1.78 / 5.1

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SYNOPSIS

February follows Petar during three distinct periods of his humble life in rural eastern Bulgaria. Sun, work, land, sheep and birds. But there is nothing ordinary about this unconventional man, who follows his poetic path and accepts his destiny with no regrets.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Petar's character and the places depicted in the script are tightly linked to my memories of my grand-father and the village my mother grew up in: Razdel.

The village is located in the West part of Strandja, very close to the Turkish border. This proximity is also reflected by the local dialect full of Turkish words. Up to this day, the village follows its own pace far from the fast mutations of the urban area. This village and its isolation, very characteristic of border regions, creates a powerful impression of living outside of time.

The events of the three chapters are inspired by real moments of my grand-father's life: the remote shepherd's hut, the hills full of antique tombs and their looters, the naval base barracks in Bourgas and Petar's decision to join his sister Gelyaza to spend the rest of his old days with her.

The need to tell this story in three parts came with the idea of making a film dealing with life's predetermination. A child becomes an adult, the house gets empty, the gestures are repeated. The soil, the sheep, the birds, the water. Everything that connects man with nature. Life is determined by the ancestors and the habits we grow up with.

However, my purpose is not to reduce the film to an anthropological essay on a man's life. I want to make a film that goes beyond daily realism, in which poetry and mysticism reflect the invisible forces that move us forward in life and whose meaning cannot be grasped. A "contemplation film" about the human's unconditional energy towards death.

In the first part, the child Petar finds a fascinating and mysterious statue in an abandoned sheepfold. Despite his father's forbidding, Petar goes back to the sheepfold, bewitched by his discovery outweighing the monotony of his life.

In the second part, the seaman Petar leaves his village to do his national service on a remote island. He discovers poetry and meets people very different from his own background. But Petar is no longer a child and seems to be determined: he knows who he was and who he will become.

In the last part, the old man Petar joins his seriously ill sister. On his way, he walks through a forest in the middle of a snow storm. Between life and death, his body and mind seem to drift into an almost ecstatic state. The old man does not seem to be afraid, on the contrary. He makes one with the forces of nature.

I want to observe a character whose main feature is to be reserved. Despite this introverted personality, the spectator will have the feeling of following a complex character and will be able to connect with his peculiar universe, his sensitivity and his energy.

The genuine characters that I know, the language I heard and the places I saw, are constituting the fundamental substance of this film. They are part of my culture and create stories that can only be told in this specific country through that language. The cinematographic reality acquires such a power and moves deeply thanks to this authentic link between the auteur and the context.

I distrust mischievously emotional films with clear-cut topics in which auteurs give standard answers that you can either accept or reject. My sensitivity is directed towards films that give the possibility to spectators to transcend image and sound to find their own answers beyond the questions they raise. I think of Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Carlos Reygadas, Béla Tarr, Lucrecia Martel and Miguel Gomes.

The rhythm of the film is particularly important. Redundant days and long sequences describe the monotone life in which each action seems to be already written. Despite this feeling of endlessness, life goes by in a flash and suddenly the hero finds himself very close to death. In the end, his ordinary life filled with thousands of repetitions, takes new proportions.

My film was shot to have a naturalist aesthetic. The contrasts are both soft and beautiful. The light is natural. Despite a realistic image, the general impression on the film will be odd because of the specific rhythm, the scarcity of dialogues, the characters and the uncommon events.

I wanted to have very few camera movements. The characters are the ones moving and changing the value and the intensity of the shots. The composition is classic and the point of view is impartial and patient.



DIRECTOR – KAMEN KALEV

Kamen Kalev's debut feature film *Eastern Plays* (2009) was selected at the 41st Directors' Fortnight and brought Kalev the Best Film and Best Director prize at the 22nd Tokyo International Film Festival, as well as the Grand Prix du Jury of the 22nd Angers Festival, among many other international awards.

His second film *The Island* (2011 – starring Thure Lindhardt and Laetitia Casta) again premiered at the Directors' Fortnight and established Kalev as a daring young filmmaker pushing his own boundaries to the point of no return.

His *My Dear Night* (2014) became the opening short of *The Bridges of Sarajevo* omnibus (Official Selection of the Cannes Film Festival, 2014) and was among 12 other European films directed by Jean-Luc Godard, Sergei Loznitsa, Ursula Meier, Cristi Puiu, etc.

Kalev's third feature film *Face Down* (2015) is his most socially engaged project reflecting on Bulgaria's protracted transition from totalitarian regime to democracy.

FILMOGRAPHY

2015 : TÊTE BAISSÉE, 110 min

2013 : “MY DEAR NIGHT” LES PONT DE SARAJEVO, 6 min
Cannes Film Festival – Official Selection Special Screenings

2011 : THE ISLAND, 95 min
Cannes Film Festival 2011 – Directors' Fortnight

2009 : EASTERN PLAYS, 95 min
Cannes Film Festival 2009 – Directors' Fortnight
Premiers Plans Angers Film Festival 2010 – Grand Jury Prize
Tokyo IFF 2009 – Sakura Grand Prix, Best Director Award, Best Actor Award (Christo Christov)
Bratislava IFF 2009 – Best Director Award, Best Actor Award (Christo Christov), Prize of the Ecumenical Jury
Estoril FF 2009 – Special Prize of the Jury
Warsaw IFF 2009 – Best Film Award
Antalya Golden Orange FF 2009 – Youth Jury's Award

2007 : RABBIT TROUBLES 8 min
Cannes Film Festival 2007 – La Semaine de la Critique

2005 : GET THE RABBIT BACK, 6 min
Cannes Film Festival 2005 – La Semaine de la Critique



CAST

Petar (Child)	Lachezar DIMITROV
Petar (Yound Adult)	Kolyo DOBREV
Petar (Old)	Ivan NALBANTOV
Petar's grandfather	Christo DIMITROV
Captain Kassabov	Milko LAZAROV
Kuna	Alexia GEORGIEVA
Poet	Nencho KOSTOV

CREW

Director / Scriptwriter	Kamen KALEV
Camera / Editor	
Director of Photography	Ivan CHERTOV

Production Design Costumes	Ivelina MINEVA
Music Composer	Petar DUNDAKOV
Casting	Yoana ILIEVA
Sound Engineer Sound Recordist Sound Mixer Sound Editor	Pierre-Yves LAVOUÉ Sofia ZHECHEVA Christophe VINGTRINIER Thomas ROBERT
Folley Artist	Daniel GRIES
Colorist	Yannig WILLMAN
1 st Assistant Director	Filip ANDREEV
Key Grip	Danail VUCHKOV
Gaffer	Vladimir VARADINOV
Location Manager	Iva PETKOVA
Makeup	Rositza ZABUNOVA
Producers (Bulgaria)	Filip TODOROV Kamen KALEV
Bulgarian Production Company	WATERFRONT
Co-Producers (France)	Diane JASSEM Céline CHAPDANIEL
French Production Company	KORO FILMS