

## Tulpan

Kazakstan 2008

### Director

Sergey Dvortsevov

### Screenplay

Sergey Dvortsevov

Gennady Ostrovski

### Director of Photography

Jola Dylewska

### Cast

*Asa*

Askhat Kuchinchirekov

*Samal*

Samal Yeslyamova

*Ondas*

Ondasyn Besikbasov

*Boni*

Tulepbergen Baisakalov

*Beke*

Bereke Turganbayev

100 minutes Subtitles

**Happy New Year! Welcome to our traditional post-Christmas 'yak' slot, with tonight's film being the first Winchester Film Society has ever screened from Kazakstan.**

*Tulpan* shows such an unfamiliar world, it might as well be Mars. This is a place where the horizon is a straight line against the sky in every direction. There are no landmarks, no signs, no roads. It is dry, dusty, cold and windy, and nothing seems to be green. This is the world *Tulpan* takes place in, and I can think of only one other story that would feel at home there: *Waiting for Godot*. *Tulpan*, which won Un Certain Regard at Cannes 2008, is the first feature by Sergey Dvortsevov, 45, born in Kazakhstan, whose documentaries have been about people in the old Soviet republics living between tradition and the future. What does this sound like to you? Ethnographic boredom? If you live in a place where this film is playing, it is the best film in town. You'll enjoy it, not soon forget it, and you'll tell your friends about it and try to persuade them to go. There has to come a time in everyone's life when they see a deadpan comedy about the yurt dwellers of Kazakhstan. The film's closing shot is epic in its meaning and astonishing in its difficulty.

*Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times*

Investing the ethnographic documentary with sly wit and wry absurdity, *Tulpan* is a quiet revelation. Unfolding in glacial takes, Dvortsevov's film has an observant, anthropological edge. Life in the desert is bitter – a cycle of struggle in which survival is a cruel victory. The pace and nature of this life are superbly studied in a series of wide-angled shots, in which the foregrounded 'action' – the grazing of sheep, the excited games of children – hints at a totality of nature that exists around and beyond the frame. But it's no mere museum piece. Though beset by financial and technical troubles during production (not least due to the remote location shoot), the fates finally shone on Dvortsevov while his camera was rolling. Happy accidents give the film a surrealist air – two donkeys charge into frame to mate; a concerned camel stalks the makeshift ambulance that's carrying her son. In that sense, *Tulpan* is a glorious patchwork, a synthesis of 'found' film and careful construction that moves smoothly from the sublime to the ridiculous. Natural performances add to the realism, and though the cast are largely non-professional, Dvortsevov has the confidence to shoot a series of striking and sensitive close-ups amidst the panoramas. A Herculean task from the director and one that deserves to find an audience.

*Matt Bochenski, Little White Lies*

*Our next screening...*

**Katalin Varga (UK)**

Tue 25 January 2011

Dir: Peter Strickland

Remarkable low budget debut filmed in the Transylvanian mountains.



Voting for 1 Day: A-8 B-19 C-11 D-0 E-3 Attendance: 51 Rating: 67.7%