

# THE SALES GIRL

## Mongolian, 2022



### Synopsis:

It all starts from a banana, coincidentally the more phallic fruit of all. When student Namuuna slips on a banana skin and breaks her leg, she is forced to find a temporary replacement for her afternoon job that requires a great deal of discretion. And who better than shy and loner fellow student Saruul (Bayartsetseg Bayangerel) can guarantee secrecy? It doesn't take long to convince Saruul that the money is good and the job is easy, despite being a bit out of the ordinary. In fact, the task consists in tending a Sex Shop, selling all sorts of oddly-shaped pleasure enhancers, making few occasional deliveries and, at the end of the day, going personally to hand over the day's earnings to Katya (Enkhtuul Oidovjams), the shop owner, an eccentric middle-aged woman living with a cat in a sophisticated apartment.

Saruul starts working at the shop and, gradually, the routine meetings at the end of the shift bring the two women closer. They cannot be more different in age, experience and social league; one is from a modest family, the other leads a glamorous albeit solitary life. Saruul is fascinated by Katya, her mysterious past, her exotic Russian name and provenance; she is outspoken, daring, funny and sexually liberated, while Saruul is unexperienced, confused and doesn't even have the guts to tell her ambitious parents that she'd rather be a painter than the nuclear engineer they would like her to become. A sweet friendship blossoms while Saruul's adventure in the sex shop brings her in touch with worlds and situations she couldn't even imagine; sharing a prison cell with a bunch of prostitutes, being harassed by an old man, and most of all discovering her own sexuality and desires and challenging her fears.



**Country of Origin**

Mongolia

**Country of Filming**

Mongolia

**Language**

Mongolian

**Production**

Nomadia Pictures

Mongolian Film Industry Association

**Runtime**

123 mins

**Cast**

Saruul

Bayartsetseg Bayangerel

Katya

Enkhtuul Oidovjamts

Namuunaa

Bayarmaa Khuselbaatar

Saruul's Mother

Sarantuya Daaganbat

Saruul's Father

Bazarragchaa Byambajav

Tovdorj

Ganbayar Gantogtokh

Anujin

Tselmuun Odgerel



## Crew

Director	Sengedorj Janchivdorj
Writer	Sengedorj Janchivdorj
Producers	Sengedorj Janchivdorj Khuslen Byamba
1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Director	Nomuunzul Turmunkh
Cinematographer	Otgondavaa Jigjidsuren
Gaffer	Selenge Batsukh
Music	Dulguun Bayasgalan
Production designer	Otgonjargal Danaa
Production manager	Otgontogos Namsrai
Sound Engineer	Batjargal Gankhuyag
Editing/Special effect	Munkhbat Shirnen
Color grading	Bandia Tuukht Ariunbold Tugsjargal
Make-up	Enkh-Orchlon Mendbayar



**Director's Statement:**

I think an artist spends his lifetime searching for their inner person. So, with this movie, I simply tried to put my inner person out there. I tried expressing it with the characters of Katya and Saruul. There is no manual for life and it is impossible to have one, in my opinion. However, you are the writer of your own book, the life.

Katya lives in the past while Saruul lives in the future. Although Saruul is studying for a major pure out of her parents' pressure, she accepts her future and living towards it. Katya lives in her past, which she can't let go of. But, there is no present time for both characters. So, the conflict is their encounter in the present. There is no past because it is gone and there is no future as it has not arrived yet. But we have present time only.

Everybody asks that why I choose sex shop on this movie's plot point. It is very simple. It has been thirty years since Mongolia transitioned into democracy. In that sense, new things and concepts are even newer in Mongolia. Sex shop is not a topic freely discussed back home, so in this movie, it is just baited to lurk an audience.

For example, if a baby is given a choice of candy with a regular wrapper or a flashy one, the kid will likely to go after the flashy one. Just like that, if Katya was an owner of a grocery store, I don't think the audience would have been flattered with the idea.

Also, I think the topic of sex is relatively sensitive, not freely discussed not only in Mongolia, but all over. I am not suggesting to talk about it freely as if an evening broadcast of political news. We all know that face to face, live communication is getting less and less. We are getting behind screen and communicating in the cyber space. We are losing live communications. Sex is not just about reproduction. It is the essence for live communication, relationship.

I really love the music; thus, I personally really focus on the choice of the music of my films. The main character has no one, no friends, but she had music. She had music and earphone only. She communicated with her music. Music is wonderful art. It expresses everything from sadness, to happiness, to heartbreak. But the scariest thing is that music encourages loneliness. Through my search for a music that expresses the inner world of Saruul, I chose Dulguun, the Magnolian.

### **Director's Biography:**



### **Feature Film List:**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1998      | General Director of "Tsagaan Shunu" feature film                        |
| 1999      | General Director of "Divaajingaas amidrald hureh zam" feature film      |
| 2001-2003 | General Director of "Muruudliin khulug ongots" TV series with 20 eps.   |
| 2005-2006 | 2nd Director of "Burte Chono" Mongolian and Japanese joint feature film |
| 2010      | General Director of Adam/Oxygen feature film                            |
| 2011      | General Director of "Bodliin Khulgaich" feature film                    |
| 2012      | General Director of "Narnii ungu" feature film                          |
| 2012      | 2nd Director of "19" feature film                                       |
| 2013      | General Director of "Larydma" feature film                              |

2014	General Director of "Urgeeleg" feature film
2014	General Director of "Omariin Erel" feature film
2015	General Director of "Bosuul" feature film
2016	General Director of "Lovers" feature film
2017	General Director of "White Blessing" feature film
2018	General Director of "Life" feature film
2019	General Director of "I am The Sun" feature film for children
2021	General Director of "The Sales Girl" feature film
2022	General Director of "Restart" Anthology feature film

### **Theatre Dramas List:**

2000	Director, "Unetei Jaal" by Sergey Mikhalkov Director, "White Nights" by Fyodor Dostouevsky Director, "Cosmetic Surgery" by Jargalsaikhan Sorogdog
2012	Director, "Way to the Heaven" by Jargalsaikhan Sorogdog
2013	Director, "Between Worlds" by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt

### **Awards:**

- Youth Leader from Mongolian Youth Union, Mongolia
- Order from Mongolian Government, Leader in the art and culture sector
- Recognition of "Adam/Oxygen" at Nara International Film Festival, Japan, 2010
- Recognition of "Adam/Oxygen" at Sindy International Film Festival, South Korea, 2011
- Local film award of "Goo Maral " by "Bodliin Hulgaich" feature film, Mongolia
- Best Director, "Mungun Mod" award , Mongolia 2016
- Best Film, Academy Awards Mongolia, "Bodliin Hulgaich" 2011
- Best Film, Academy Awards Mongolia, "Urgeeleg", 2014
- Best Director, Academy Awards Mongolia, "Lovers", 2016
- Best Influential Movie for Youth, Imax movie awards, "White Blessing" 2017
- Nominated for 11 International Film Festival, "White Blessing" 2017
- Best Movie, Ulaanbaatar International Film festival, "Life" 2018
- Best actress of Osaka International Film Festival 2022, "The Sales Girl"
- "Uncaged Award for Best Feature Film" New York Asian Film Festival 2022, "The Sales Girl"
- "Window on Asian Cinema" Busan International Film Festival 2022, "The Sales Girl"
- "Official Selection" Adelaide International Film Festival 2022, "The Sales Girl"
- "Official Selection" Asian Film Festival Barcelona 2022, "The Sales Girl"
- "Official Selection" Asian Pacific Screen Awards 2022, "The Sales Girl"
- "Official Selection" World Film Festival Bangkok 2022, "The Sales Girl"
- "Golden Cyclo" Award for Best feature film, Vesoul International Film Festival in Asian Cinema, 2023, "The Sales Girl"
- "Official Selection" Udine Far Ears Film Festival, 2023, "The Sales Girl"
- "Official Selection" Red Lotus Asian Film Festival Vienna, 2023, "The Sales Girl"
- "Official Selection", Minneapolis St.Paul International Film Festival, 2023, "The Sales Girl"
- "Official Selection", TARTUFF Tallin Black Night Film Festival, 2023 "The Sales Girl"



### **Screening/Awards:**

- Osaka Asian Film Festival 2022  
Yakushi Pearl Award
- New York Asian Film Festival 2022  
Uncaged Award for Best Feature Film
- Busan International Film Festival 2022  
Official Selection to Window on Asian film
- Adelaide International Film Festival 2022  
Official Selection
- Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2022  
In Competition
- Asian Film Festival Barcelona 2022  
Special mention of Jury

- World Film Festival Bangkok 2022  
Official Selection
- Vesoul International Film Festival in Asian Cinema 2023  
Golden Cyclo Best feature film award
- Far East Film Festival, Udine 2023  
Audience Award Purple Mulberry
- Minneapolis St Paul International Film Festival 2023  
Official Selection
- Red Lotus Asian Film Festival Vienna 2023  
Official Selection
- TARTU Film festival, Tallin 2023  
Audience Award
- Kinoshock International Film Festival, Anapa 2023  
Best Movie Award
- Kinoshock International Film Festival, Anapa 2023  
Best Music Award
- Kinoshock International Film Festival, Anapa 2023  
Best Screenscript Award
- The Films from the South Festival, Oslo, Norway 2023  
Official Selection

**Links:**

<https://asianmoviepulse.com/2022/03/film-review-the-sales-girl-2021-by-janchivdorj-sengedorj/>

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<http://eastasia.fr/2023/01/26/black-movie-2023-the-sales-girl-de-sengedorj-janchivdorj/>

<https://youtu.be/Nh4bWqTP0Bs?si=Du3rUHbqHgjoHcTw>