

NIKÉ STUDIO AND EX NIHILO PRESENT



keep

# SMILING

A FILM BY RUSUDAN CHKONIA



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FRANCE - GEORGIA - LUXEMBOURG / 2012 / HD / 91' / COLOR / GEORGIAN / FEATURE FILM

## CAST

IA SUKHITASHVILI, GIA ROINISHVILI, OLGA BABLUANI, TAMUNA BUKHNIKASHVILI, NANA SHONIA, SHORENA BEGASHVILI, MAKI CHICHUA, LELA METREVELI, IA NINIDZE, EKA KARTVELISHVILI, BEKA ELBAKIDZE, TAMAR BZIAYA, TORNIKE BZIAYA, AVTANDIL GOGESHVILI

## SYNOPSIS

"It's all about soul beauty, it's a beauty contest of Mothers, so dear Georgian mothers please keep on smiling." Georgia, Tbilisi, 2010... Mother's beauty contest... winner will get an apartment and 25000\$. Ten mothers, with seven of them belonging to the poorest population layer, will desperately try to win...

## CREW

SCREENPLAY **RUSUDAN CHKONIA** PHOTOGRAPHY **KONSTANTINE MINDIA ESADZE** EDITING **RUSUDAN CHKONIA, JEAN-PIERRE BLOC, LEVAN KUKHASHVILI** SOUND **PAATA GODZIASHVILI** ART DIRECTION **SOPO BAZGHADZE, MAMUKA ESADZE, DIMA ARSANIS, GIGA IAKOBASHVILI** COSTUMES **GEORGE NADIRADZE** EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **VLADIMIR KACHARAVA** PRODUCERS **RUSUDAN CHKONIA, NICOLAS BLANC** COPRODUCERS **MARC BORDURE, JANI THILTGES, ARNAUD BERTRAND, DOMINIQUE BOUTONNAT, HUBERT CAILLARD** PRODUCTION **NIKÉ STUDIO, EX NIHILO** COPRODUCTION **SAMSA FILMS, ALVY PRODUCTION**  
 A GEORGIAN FRENCH LUXEMBOURG COPRODUCTION WITH SUPPORT OF GEORGIAN NATIONAL FILM CENTER AND MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND MONUMENT PROTECTION

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Some years ago while shooting a documentary about street children, I discovered an unusual orphanage called "Bediani", where not only children are taken in, but their homeless parents as well.

At Bediani I met Tamari, a very beautiful and intelligent woman, the mother of seven children, who told me she had participated in a beauty contest for mothers. As I listened to her story, my feelings went from one extreme to another. It was such a tragic, painful tale but also so absurd that I could hardly keep from laughing. I knew immediately that I was going to make a film out of it.

"Keep Smiling" is a touching story, a vast reservoir of pain told with wry humor, a tale of ten Georgian women taking part in a beauty contest for mothers.

The media and contest organizers exploit the tragic lives of these Georgian women. Everything is part of a show designed to entertain the audience. The beauty contest, which appears

to be a promising and happy event at first, gradually becomes a hell. It takes place in post-Soviet Georgia, which is trying to rebuild itself after countless revolutions and ethnic wars.

For me it has always been interesting to see how people behave in an extreme situation, how it makes them do things they would never have imagined possible. The film is about what we need most: it is about dignity, about the need to be respected and about respecting yourself.

The film shows how easy it is to become a puppet in someone's hands and how hard it is to maintain self-respect. Does the end really justify the means? And does winning at the price of losing your dignity make you happy? How can you forgive your own weaknesses and those of your loved ones? How can you find the strength to carry on after such humiliation?

This is a social movie, with dynamic editing and hints of comic, if not cynical, political absurdity underlying the main theme.

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