



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

SLOW (15)

Director: Marija Kavtaradze

Starring: Greta Grineviciute, Kestutis Cicenias

Lithuania/Spain/Sweden, 2023, 1 hour 48 minutes, Lithuanian with English subtitles

"A supremely confident piece of filmmaking that negotiates the tricky terrain of non-typical sexualities with sensitivity, humour and a refreshing lightness of touch." **Wendy Ide, Screen International**

Marija Kavtaradze is a Lithuanian writer and film director who graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music, Theatre and Film Directing Studies in 2014. *Slow* is her second feature film. Her first, *Summer Survivors*, made in 2018, premiered at Toronto Film Festival, and was the most appreciated Lithuanian film of 2019. The title *Slow* comes from a song by Leonard Cohen, which Marija was listening to a lot while she was writing the script.

She describes her film as a love story where characters try not to be led by any representation of how we expect love to look. In the film our expectations of romance, gender roles and the need to get approval through desire and sex are all questioned by the two seemingly incompatible main characters, who seek intimacy with each other. Marija says their relationship - between a sensual woman and an asexual man - was a puzzle, a math problem she had to solve. "That's why I struggled," she says "and at the same time enjoyed the writing process so much. I had to rethink everything I thought about relationships."

Marija worked very closely with her actors, who both brought a great deal in rehearsals to developing their movie characters, and she used an Intimacy Coordinator, which facilitated their working together and made for a feeling of intimacy on screen, without being voyeuristic.

James Kleinmann in **The Queer Review** (Sundance 2023) writes, "Bareiša's sensitive cinematography - shot on Kodak 16mm film - has a gorgeous grainy look that enhances Kavtaradze's meditation on tactility. With its handheld closeups, our attention is heightened to touch, as we see hands come together, or Dovydas' fingers run across Elena's face. Using natural light contributes to the sense that we're right there with these characters in their most private spaces and moments."

Marija has said she seeks to see different people on screen, different kinds of relationships, rather than confirming what we are so often used to seeing, the cliches of romance and sexual attraction.

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