

THE MURALIST

When an exiled artist returns to paint his last mural, the wall—and his forgotten family—become a mirror of everything he lost

Directed by Sengedorj Janchivdorj

116 minutes | Mongolia | 2025 | Mongolian with English subtitles

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SYNOPSIS

In the post-Soviet sprawl of Ulaanbaatar, a city grappling with its own reflection, a lone artist wages a silent war against time. Bayaraa, a muralist etched with the landscapes of his past, has returned from a European exile to the skeletal remains of a Soviet-era factory outside the city. Part-time living in a rooftop tent, he dedicates himself to a monumental task: resurrecting his painting on a canvas of crumbling concrete. His only companion in this self-imposed exile is his neighbor's rejected dog, a quiet witness to his artistic obsession.

Each day, Bayaraa descends the factory's facade, a solitary figure splashing bold, abstract art across its surface—a stark contrast to the urban decay that surrounds him. His only confidante is a whimsical, sardonic red balloon that floats above, a tether to his conscience and the memories he has tried to outrun. But the city's relentless march of progress threatens to silence his art; bulldozers are set to demolish the factory, and with it, Bayaraa's last chance at redemption.

His defiant act of creation does not go unnoticed. A group of Japanese tourists, led by the perceptive young interpreter Kozue, becomes captivated by the unfolding masterpiece. Their fascination leads to an interview for a prestigious art publication, thrusting the reclusive Bayaraa into an unwelcome spotlight. Under the glare of studio lights, the questions chip away at his carefully constructed facade, exposing a decades-old wound: the family he abandoned. The interview becomes an unintended confessional, and for Kozue, a devastating revelation. She is the daughter he left behind.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The spark for *The Muralist* was a single, powerful image: a man painting a masterpiece on a wall slated for demolition. In Ulaanbaatar, a city where the nomadic soul strains against the concrete of its post-Soviet sprawl, this act of defiant creation felt both urgent and deeply Mongolian. Our protagonist, Bayaraa, lives in self-imposed exile—not only from his country but from his past. His monumental mural becomes his public confession, a final, desperate attempt to reclaim a history he chose to abandon.

Building on the cinematic language of my previous film, which won the Grand Prix at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, my approach is rooted in intimacy. We stay close to Bayaraa, using long, meditative takes to immerse the audience in his solitude. The film's visual texture merges gritty urban realism with poetic surrealism, where Bayaraa's only confidante is a sardonic red balloon floating above him. But the core drama unfolds in the quiet, unnerving silences between a father and the young interpreter who, unknowingly, begins to dismantle the walls around his heart.

Ultimately, *The Muralist* questions what we fight to preserve when everything—our cities, our art, our memories—is ephemeral. The conflict is not merely about saving a wall from bulldozers, but whether a connection can be rebuilt from the ruins of a broken promise. Through Bayaraa's desperate, beautiful act, audiences witness the struggle to forge a future from a past that cannot be erased—a profoundly human story that, while rooted in the unique tensions of modern Mongolia, speaks to any community grappling with the cost of progress.

— Sengedorj Janchivdorj



ABOUT DIRECTOR SENGEDORJ JANCHIVDORJ

Sengedorj Janchivdorj is one of Mongolia's most prolific contemporary filmmakers, celebrated for blending poetic realism with sharp social insight. After beginning his career as a theatre lighting technician, he earned a directing degree from "Bers" College of Media and Cinematic Arts and debuted with White Night (1998). Over the next two decades he directed more than twenty features, establishing a distinct voice that bridges stage and screen.

His 2021 film The Sales Girl travelled the world, winning the Yakushi Pearl Award at the Osaka Asian Film Festival, the Uncaged Award for Best Feature at New York Asian, and selections at Busan, Adelaide, and Barcelona. Most recently, Silent City Driver (2024) captured the Grand Prix at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, confirming Sengedorj's standing on the international circuit. Beyond directing, Sengedorj chairs the Mongolian Film Industry Association, mentoring emerging talent and championing Mongolian cinema abroad.

RECENT AWARDS

Silent City Driver (2024)

- Grand Prix Winner - Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival

The Sales Girl (2021)

- Yakushi Pearl Award - Osaka Asian Film Festival
- Uncaged Award for Best Feature - New York Asian Film Festival
- Golden Cyclo Award - Vesoul International Film Festival

Career Highlights

- Best Director - Mongolian Academy Awards 2016
- Chairman - Mongolian Film Industry Association



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

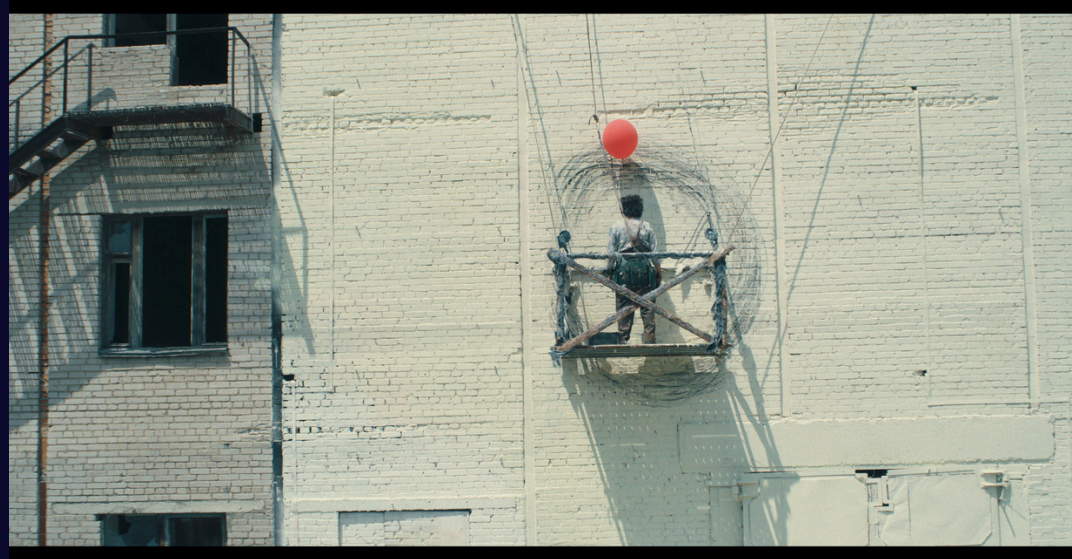
Runtime	116 minutes
Language	Mongolian with English subtitles
Camera	RED Helium 8K
Resolution	5120 × 2880, 23.976 fps
Aspect Ratio	16:9
Sound	5.1 (LRCLfeLsRs)
Color Space	Rec. 709 / 2.4 gamma
Format	Digital

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director: Sengedorj Janchivdorj
Production Company: MFIA in association with Wonderful People
Producer: Javkhlan Sonomdorj
Executive Producer: Khishigjargal Dashdorj



FILM STILLS



FESTIVAL CONTACT



Primary Contact

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International Sales & Festival Representation

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Director Contact

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ONLINE PRESENCE

🌐 **Website:** <https://themuralist.art/>

🎬 **FilmFreeway:** <https://filmfreeway.com/projects/3541407>

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