

a film by Gabrielè Urbonaitė

# RENOVATION







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90 min. / super 16 mm → DCP / 1.85:1 / 2025 /

Lithuania, Latvia, Belgium

Genre—Drama

## LOGLINE

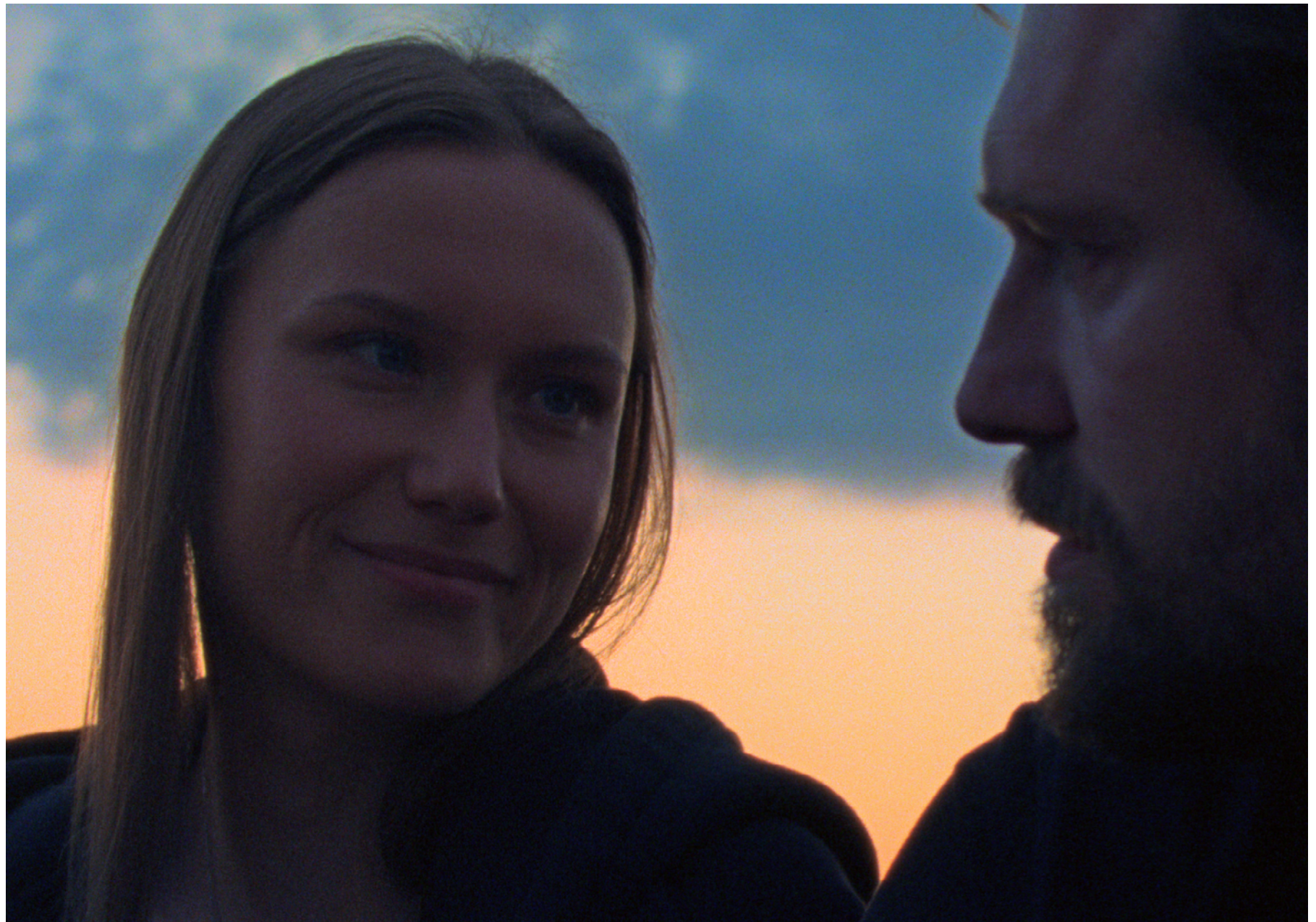
True renovation begins from the inside.

## SYNOPSIS

Present-day Vilnius, Lithuania. Ilona, a perfectionist 29-year-old, feels the pressure to be settled and successful by the time she turns 30. At this turning point in her life, she begins to question how she truly wants to live. She moves into a seemingly perfect apartment with her boyfriend Matas, with whom things are getting serious. But as the building's renovation begins, it's not just cracks in the walls that are revealed — Ilona's inner doubts also start to surface.

She strikes up an unexpected friendship with Oleg, a Ukrainian construction worker. After spontaneously telling him she's a poet, she actually begins to write poetry. Their connection deepens her uncertainty: does she really want to settle down and start a family?









**GABRIELĖ URBONAITĖ**  
scriptwriter & director

Gabrielė Urbonaitė (born in 1993, Vilnius, Lithuania) is a writer, director and editor. She directed several short films, including *The Swimmer* that won the “Silver Crane”, the National Lithuanian Film Award. She participated in Berlinale Talents, Talent Camp Odense, and Reykjavik Talent Lab, and was named Mountainfilm Emerging Filmmaker in 2020. As an editor, she worked on Lithuanian Film Award-winning *Remember to Blink*. She holds a BFA in Film from Emerson College and an MFA in Screenwriting & Directing from Columbia University.

## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

### SOLASTALGIA

(director, editor), short documentary, 2021, USA  
Mountainfilm Festival (USA), All Living  
Things Environmental Film Festival  
(India), Nòt Film Festival (Italy)

### LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

(co-writer, director, editor), short narrative,  
2018, Lithuania  
Santa Barbara International Film  
Festival (USA), International Short Film  
Festival in Drama (Greece), Olympia  
International Film Festival (Greece),  
Kaunas International Film Festival  
(Lithuania), Schlingel International Film  
Festival (Germany)

### BACK

(writer, director, editor), short narrative, 2016,  
Lithuania / USA  
Princess Grace Film Award (USA);  
Special Jury Mention and Best  
Lithuanian Actress Nomination at  
Vilnius International Film Festival  
(Lithuania), Best Student Film  
Nomination at National Lithuanian  
Film Awards; Best Student Film, Best  
Student Director and Best Actress in a  
Student Film at Glendale International  
Film Festival (USA); Best College

Narrative Short at Reading Film Festival  
(USA)

New Filmmakers LA (USA), 2Annas  
Film Festival (Latvia), Beijing Film  
Academy's International Student Film  
& Video Festival (China), Sulmona  
International Film Festival (Italy),  
Zubroffka International Short Film  
Festival (Poland)

### THE SWIMMER

(writer, director), short narrative, 2013,  
Lithuania  
Best Short Film at the National  
Lithuanian Film Awards “Silver Crane”,  
Special Jury Mention at the Brest  
European Short Film Festival (France),  
Award of Merit at the Women's  
Independent Film Festival in Los  
Angeles (USA), Audience Award at the  
Vilnius International Film Festival “Kino  
Pavasaris” (Lithuania)  
  
Washington West Film Festival (USA),  
Kaunas International Film Festival  
(Lithuania), Stockholm International  
Women's Film Festival (Sweden),  
Schlingel International Film Festival  
(Germany)





## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The idea for the film came to me one afternoon about seven years ago, after watching Kieslowki's *CAMERA BUFF*. I was living and studying in the U.S. at the time, and seeing a setting so similar to my hometown Vilnius, Lithuania made me nostalgic for home. The key components of the story came to me instantly: a woman in a relationship with a man, her life seems fine on the surface, but deep down she's discontent, and she meets a construction worker with whom she develops a special connection.

I was writing while approaching 30, but feeling that the things I planned to achieve—having my own home, a family, being settled and fulfilled—still were far away. In *Renovation*, I wanted to capture this feeling, the complexity of this age. On one hand, you're still very young, you can change your mind about your career, partner, or lifestyle. On the other hand, you start realizing that there's not enough time to try everything—that you have to make choices. In today's fast-paced, high-pressure world, whatever choice you make, it's becoming harder and harder to feel fulfilled and good enough.

While an existential crisis at 30 might be a universal experience, it's also culturally specific. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine made me realize how alive Soviet-era traumas are in us, in my generation born already in independent post-Soviet countries. We feel pressure from our parents to live a certain way, along with the existential threat of today. Constantly reminded of life's fragility, we begin to reevaluate how we truly want to live. I wanted to convey the reality of living with a war on the periphery—feeling the anxiety about it, but also the need to carry on with our lives.

I wanted to explore these serious themes with humor and light, as balance is important for me both in life and in cinema. I'm fascinated by how human existence unfolds in everyday life, in small, often overlooked moments. This connects to the decision to film in mostly one location, a Soviet-era apartment building under renovation, which becomes a natural metaphor for Ilona's internal transformation. To highlight the poetry in everyday ordinary moments, I chose to shoot on 16mm film, capturing the intimate dynamics with warmth and tactility.









## CAST:

ŽYGIMANTĖ ELENA JAKŠTAITĖ  
ŠARŪNAS ZENKEVIČIUS  
ROMAN LUTSKYI  
LAIMUTĖ ŠTRIMAITYTĖ  
MARYNA ZDARANKOVA  
JŪRATĖ VILŪNAITĖ  
AISTĖ DIRŽIŪTĖ-RIMKĖ  
HELENE BERGSHOLM  
JOLANTA DAPKŪNAITĖ  
NERIJUS GADLIAUSKAS

## CREW:

SCRIPTWRITER & DIRECTOR  
GABRIELĖ URBONAITĖ

PRODUCER  
ULJANA KIM

CO-PRODUCERS  
ALISE ROGULE  
DOMINIUS JARMAKOVIČS  
KRISTIAN VAN DER HEYDEN

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
VYTAUTAS KATKUS

PRODUCTION DESIGNER  
SIGITA JONAITYTĖ

EDITOR  
ARMANDS ZAČS

SOUND DESIGNER  
IVETA MACEVIČIŪTĖ

COMPOSER  
EDVARDS BRODERS

COSTUME DESIGNER  
MONIKA VĖBRAITĖ

MAKE-UP DESIGNERS  
RŪTA PADVELSKYTĖ  
GIEDRĖ JAROCKAITĖ

CASTING BY  
UGNĖ ŠIAUČIŪNAITĖ  
MARIJA KAVTARADZE

WITH THE SUPPORT OF



**LRT**





**PRODUCTION:**

STUDIO ULJANA KIM  
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