



The most important Armenian-born director since Sergei Paradjanov, Don Askarian has created a body of films that explore the history and spirit of his native land. He does so in a modern idiom, inflected with surrealist overtones and powerful imagery--often described as magical realist--that embrace the extremes of beauty and brutality. Born in 1949 in Nagorno Karabakh, in the former Soviet Union, Askarian traveled to Moscow to study history and art and worked as an assistant film director and film critic before being imprisoned in 1975. Emigrating to West Berlin in 1978, Askarian began to create his meditations on Armenia from his home in exile, beginning with an adaptation of Chekov's *The Bear*, in 1984. Since that time, he has directed a range of works, from documentaries to biographical essays to fiction features, that have been honored at festival screenings worldwide.