

# MOON

Harvest



## A Film by Amarsaikhan BALJINNYAM

MONGOLIA | 2022 | Drama | Color | 90'

Mongolian | DCP | 24fps / 2.39 : 1 / 5.1



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# SYNOPSIS



**Debut feature by popular actor turned director Amra Baljinnyam, on the inner world of a child and of a man. A story about childhood and parenthood based on the short novel of T. Bum-ERDENE.**

HARVEST MOON explores the inner world of a child and of a man, and their relationship to their fathers.

When his father gets seriously ill, Tulgaa who works as a chef in the city, travels back to his village. Soon the father dies, and he decides to stay to fulfill the harvesting his father promised to do. While working in the field he meets a ten years old boy, Tuntuulei, who lives alone with his grandparents while his single mother works in the city.

The sharing and the relation between Tulgaa and Tuntuulei make them challenge their own self.



# Amarsaikhan BALJINNYAM

## Director, Screenwriter, Producer, Actor



### Biography

Amarsaikhan Baljinnyam is a writer, actor, director, and producer, who have made history in the Mongolian cinematic world as the first Mongolian to step onto the international stage with his role as Ariq Boke (Khubilai Khan's brother) in the Netflix original series MARCO POLO.

He acted in more than twenty films, which have outstanding ratings from global critics and audiences. In the moment when Mongolian cinema evolved from propaganda, Baljinnyam articulated a new tone in the local industry.

His first written script, FAITH, feature film won 3 nominations at the Cinema awards of Mongolia, including Best Movie of the year and was the highest grossing film.

Baljinnyam's vision of writing and acting mongrelised once again in the art house film, UNDER THE TURQUOISE SKY (2021) by KENTARO, which premiered as the Opening film at 68th International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg and won FIPRESCI award, starring with Yagira Yuya (*NOBODY KNOWS* by director Hirokazu Kore-eda). The film is currently screening widely in arthouse cinemas in Japan.

HARVEST MOON is Amarsaikhan BALJINNYAM's debut film as a director.

# Amarsaikhan BALJINNYAM

## Director, Screenwriter, Producer, Actor

### Filmography

#### Filmography as Director

2022 - HARVEST MOON

#### Filmography as Actor

2021 – UNDER THE TURQUOISE SKY by KENTARO – as Arma

2019 – THE MONGOLIAN CONNECTION by Drew THOMAS, as Ganzorig

2019 – BUMBARDAI (short) by Luvsangaldan ERDENEBAJSUREN, Erdenebayar NAMBARAL, as Father

2016 – TRAPPED ABROAD 2 by Erdenebileg GANBOLD as Garid

2014 – 2016 THE MARCO POLO – A Netflix original series by John FUSCO – As Ariq Böke (Khubilai Khan's brother)

2014 – TRAPPED ABROAD by Janchivdorj SENGEDORJS, as Garid

2011 – THIEF OF THE MIND by Janchivdorj SENGEDORJS, as Gansukh

#### Filmography as Producer

2019 – THE MONGOLIAN CONNECTION by Drew THOMAS

2014 – TRAPPED ABROAD by Janchivdorj SENGEDORJS

2011 – THIEF OF THE MIND by Janchivdorj SENGEDORJS

#### Filmography as Scriptwriter

2021 – UNDER THE TURQUOISE SKY by KENTARO (co-writer: KENTARO)





# In CONVERSATION with the DIRECTOR



***HARVEST MOON* is your debut film as director. And all the first films are special in so many different ways. What makes *HARVEST MOON* so special for you to be your first film? Why did you choose *HARVEST MOON* to be your director's debut film?**

Born and raised in Mongolia, I truly admire my country's rich history, culture and unique nomad lifestyle that has been getting rarer in the world. As an artist, I've been observing the influence and impact of this lifestyle on people's emotional states at different ages, how we think, how we react or interact. *Harvest Moon* is perfect for me to express Mongolian people's heart and mindset through daily challenges of our modern society. In fact, I want my debut film to introduce Mongolian people authentically to the world, as an individual or as a nation, and with Mongolia's truly exotic landscape as a background for the world audience to have a real cinematic experience.

***HARVEST MOON* is adapted from the short novel *TUNTUULEI* by T. Bum-ERDEN. How did you find out about the book?**

The author of the short novel *Tuntuulei* Mr. Bum-Erdene and I had worked together in two films that I previously produced. Almost 10 years ago, I shared with him my idea to make a film about father and son's relationship. He suggested me to read his short novel *Tuntuulei*. This is how I first fell in love with the story. Tuntuulei's story has been stuck in my heart since then.



**You are also the scriptwriter of *HARVEST MOON*. How did you work on the script? Did you work together with the author of the book, T. Bum-ERDEN?**

Not at all. I wrote the script by myself. I feel like I am the only craftsman who can tell the story translating exactly my vision. Before *Harvest Moon*, I worked on two scripts for the films: *Under The Turquoise Sky* and *Faith*. Those experiences helped me a lot in the scriptwriting process of *Harvest Moon*.



**How different is the film from the literary version?**

Not much but the film is more enthusiastic and uplifting on how Tulgaa and Tuntuulei accept one another as father and son, even if they are not. The ending of my film is the actual beginning of Tulgaa and Tuntuulei's journey for the rest of their lives. The bond between the two remains very strong.



## How would you introduce *HARVEST MOON* to your audience?

Nowadays, in our contemporary culture our energy and flow of thoughts are fully occupied by unnecessary stuff and tasks, but we have to choose to make time for those important inner questions that have to be answered. Through *Harvest Moon*, you will enjoy the solitude into the exotic Mongolian nature with our heroes who are also starting their journey of finding out those answers to overcome their fear, searching for empathy and unconditional love through unexpected ways. So I welcome you to break-up with society's loud noise and enjoy the humanistic story that leads us to our roots.



## You are an actor turned director. What was the urge for you to make your own film?

To be honest, I don't know. I honor my profession as actor as a God's blessing. Yet, storytelling is something in my blood. When I was a kid, I usually played by myself, talking to myself. Most of the time I improvised the stories and imagined myself playing inside the story as one of the characters. Sometimes I felt it was difficult to act repeating the script's dialogue. So I decided that I should write the dialogues that work perfectly in the situation, and for that specific character. And now, I made my first film. I can only say that it's a pure joy for me starting the creative process of filmmaking, whether it is developing the idea or shooting the script.

## Why did you choose to play one of the main roles in your film?

When I wear my actor's hat, I am looking for playing a character to challenge me when I deliver his emotional mood. Tulgaa's role is exactly what I was looking for. He is quiet, but stormy and loud inside himself with many conflicts to overcome. He is an adult, who like a boy wants to be loved. He is a complex and rich character to perform. That's why I want to play his role.



## How was the process in selecting the cast?

Casting is the most enjoyable part of filmmaking for me, but the casting of *Harvest Moon* it turned out to be a nightmare. Because it was so difficult to find my perfect Tuntuulei. My priority for the casting is authenticity. I started my casting process from Tuntuulei's role, because the rest of the cast depended on him. Also for my scriptwriting I want to see the character even before the script was finished. When I see the characters in person, it is much easier for me to develop the script. So I kept looking for Tuntuulei from the beginning of the scriptwriting. Once I found Tuntuulei, all the rest of the casting was very easy.





**How was working with the young actor Tenuun GARAMKHAND, starring in the part of Tuntuulei?**

Tenuun acted in a couple of local and international productions before we worked together. I think he is born with a natural talent for acting. He is so gifted. When I first introduced him the story, his sense of believing in the situation was amazing. He knows exactly what kind of emotion his character is experiencing. He got it perfectly, which I found it rare for a child. I was so thrilled to work with him. I see how his future acting career looks so shiny.

**What is your next project?**

After *Harvest Moon*, I worked as an author and lead actor for the limited series, *VICTIM*, for one of the top OTT platforms in Mongolia. It was extremely well received by the audiences. Now I am working on my second directorial work, *MONGOL*, an epic drama feature. It is currently in production in the far west of Mongolia. *HARVEST MOON* was my love letter to Mongolian cultural heritage. *MONGOL* is dedicated to our history to remind people, especially the youth, what is our root and belief as a nation as well as an individual. Because cinema has the magic of uniting people.

*Interview, Ulambaatar, September 2022*

# CAST & CREW

Director	Amarsaikhan BALJINNYAM
Screenwriters	Amarsaikhan BALJINNYAM Bayarsaikhan BATSUKH
Based on	A short novel TUNTUULEI by T. Bum-ERDEN
Cast	Amarsaikhan BALJINNYAM Tenuun-Erdene GARAMKHAND Damdin SOVD Davaasamba SHARAV Tserendarizav DASHNYAM Delgersaikhan SANAA
Costume Designer	Bolor-Erdene NAIDANNYAM
Make-up	Oyunsuud JAMBALDORJ
Colorist	Ankhtamir TUVSHINJARGAL
Sound Designer	Evan MILLARD
Music	Odbayar BATTOGTOKH
Cinematographer	Josua FISHER
Editor	Bayarsaikhan BATSUKH
Production Designer	Bolor-Erdene NAIDANNYAM
Line Producer	Temuujin GALSUREN
Creative Producer	Isabelle GLACHANT
Executive Producer	Xavier DUMANS
Producer	Uran SAINBILEG
Production	IFI PRODUCTION
In Association with	THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MONGOLIA AUTHORITY FOR FAMILY, CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORLD VISION MONGOLIA ASIAN SHADOWS
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