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**MONGOLIA**  
*The Darhat Horseman and the White Stallion*

A 52' documentary by Hamid Sardar

**Provisional delivery: May 2019**



## LOGLINE

In the Darhat valley of northern Mongolia, the horses of the nomadic tribes are disappearing. Bandits are stealing them to sell to Russian abattoirs for just a few rubles. .

But Shukhert, a crime-fighting Darhat horseman, is relentlessly pursuing them to the Taiga mountain range of Mongolia, on the border with Siberia

## RESUME

Ethnographer Hamid Sardar has been studying the lives of these last nomads for the past decade, and this year, he was invited to accompany Shukhert on his relentless quest. Hamid investigates what this equine theft says about modern-day Mongolia, through tribal rivalries and encounters with bandits and gold hunters.

When his white stallion disappeared, Shukhert embarked upon a race against time to track down the bandits, find his horse, and bring it home before winter. In this documentary, like a Western set in the East, life seems stranger than fiction – despite this being an absolutely authentic tale.

Horse thefts are commonplace in this region, each triggering epic hunts across the spectacular steppes of northern Mongolia.

From Buddhism to Shamanism, from horses to reindeer, and from hunters to those looking for gold, his journey is punctuated by a range of encounters that help explain the diversity of this complex region with its ethnic and socio-economic tensions.

Thanks to his knowledge of the Mongolian territory, culture, and language, and his extensive experience of the region over the past 10 years, Hamid Sardar takes us on a journey into a world accessible only to a rare few, where safety and justice are pushed to their limits.



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## CONTEXT

The Darhat Valley, located between Mongolia and Siberia, is both a geographical and cultural frontier. The luminous steppe disappears into the wild, dark Taiga mountains, which marks the transition to the Arctic tundra. It is where Buddhism and Shamanism, and where Mongols on horseback and reindeer breeders meet.

Today, in this unspoiled valley, traditional ways of life are under threat from human activity and climate change. Almost half of the Darhat people have given up their nomadic lifestyles and moved to the city. The other half continues its migration with its herds of horses.

The last Darhat nomads are known for breeding magnificent white horses whose tails have symbolized peace since the time of Genghis Khan in the 13th century.

Despite being considered as “angels amongst the horses”, the white mounts of Darhat are threatened with extinction, most of them having been sold by the nomads for economic reasons. They are now disappearing even faster because of Tuvan bandits from the Russian side of the border, who steal Darhat horses to sell them for meat.

While the Mongolian government ignores this traffic, Darhat tribes are getting organized to deal with the problem themselves. The horseman Shukhert is one of the figureheads of these local, spontaneous militia. Proud of belonging to the Darhat, he feels that he has inherited this mission handed down from King Bogo Khan to his ancestors: Monitoring and protecting the huge frontier between Mongolia and Siberia.



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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I have spent more than 20 years of my life moving between France, the USA and Mongolia. Whether breeding horses, researching ethnography or making documentaries about nomad communities, I always find myself coming back to the 'Land of the Blue Sky'.

For my latest project "The Darhat Horseman and the White Stallion", I return to Mongolia and more specifically to the Ulaan Taiga, a landscape which is both dear and familiar to me. I want to continue documenting the ongoing crisis between nomads and sedentary communities. My main character is a bounty hunter named Shukhert, who has also been my friend for ten years. Shukhert is also going through a transition process from a nomadic to a sedentary lifestyle.

The majority of films and documentaries (including my own) about nomadic reindeer herders depict them in a heroic and romantic way, living traditionally in the wild. Through the prism of Shukhert's experiences, this film hopes to move away from such sugarcoated interpretations and reveal more ambiguous aspects of their culture. Through his story, we witness the tensions in the region, between Mongolian horse herders and Tsaatan reindeer herders.

For me, Mongolian horse culture is not just a research subject, it is also a lifelong passion, one that I share with Shukhert. When I moved to Mongolia in 2000 to conduct ethnography and photography projects, I bought horses to build up a herd and preserve the best bloodlines in Mongolia. But over the years, wolves and bandits have jeopardized that project. Just like Shukhert's, my beautiful horses have now almost all disappeared.

At that time, coming to live in Mongolia was a way for me to reconnect with my equestrian childhood. I grew up riding horses on the shores of the Caspian Sea, the other side of the Kalmyk Steppe in the former Soviet Union. The Kalmyks, a people of Mongolian origin, affectionately call their horses "toulpar" (flying horse) and they have a proverb which claims that 'riding a "toulpar", you can have breakfast in Isfahan, lunch in Tehran and dinner in Baku.'



In 1978, the Iranian Revolution interrupted my connection with the wild shores of the Caspian Sea and those flying Kalmyk horses. My family was forced into exile, first in Europe and then in the United States. It was no doubt that sense of nostalgia for a paradise lost, where horses were free and wild, that drew me back to the lands in the East, first studying Sanskrit and Tibetan at Harvard, then going to live in Mongolia.

Mongolia is an ethnographer's dream, a vast country that covers an area the size of Western Europe and is the cradle of many Turkic, Tungusic and Mongol peoples. But moving there was also a stage in my own personal development. I went in search of childhood pleasures and memories, on a quest for a way of life that was close to nature and wild animals and which I thought I would never find again. What started out as a research project in Mongolia ended up becoming a way of life.

Today, as a film-maker, I sometimes think about Robert Flaherty and his film 'Nanook of the North', how what starts as a naïve ethnographic quest becomes a sort of anachronistic creation. Through this process, the artist in me can take part in the story, while the ethnographer in me would never allow it. Experimental participation replaces participant observation. I am no longer there to record myths and customs, but to actively enter the legends and to encourage my companions to act like heroes.

Levi-Strauss says that a large part of ethnography is like self-confession: the way we portray and understand others in the end reveals a lot about us. The ethnographer, like any other traveler, studies a part of himself in the destination and the subject. In a sense, this film is a project of personal redemption, set in the epic scenery of the Mongolian taiga, a near-impossible mission to pursue Tuvan rustlers as far as the Russian border and to find our lost horses.

Unseen and intimate, the camera creates a special proximity throughout the film. This is achieved thanks to the rapport with my characters and the Sony AR3 and AS3 full-frame 4K cameras that produce images of movie theater quality. These small cameras allow me to blend easily into the spontaneous action. They also enable me to change angles regularly and produce cinematic axial cuts without interrupting the action. Filming up close using large aperture ZEISS cinema lenses will bring an emotional intensity to my main characters.

That intensity will contrast with the freedom of the aerial shots. Using the latest generation of drone, a top-of-the-range DJI Inspire 2 with its fabulous camera that shoots in 4K, I will highlight my main character's emotional complexity, alternating close-up shots with aerial shots of the steppes and snowy mountains of the Ulaan Taiga. The camerawork is controlled and stylized with the aim of telling stories in the most aesthetic and cinematographic way possible.



## PROLOGUE

Shukhert is a Mongol bounty hunter. He's a handsome and iconic figure, riding a white horse and trailed by a ferocious but loyal black dog (who behaves more like a wolf than a dog). Shukhert belongs to the Darhat tribe, a nomadic people that live in Mongolia's northern Hovsgol Province bordering Russia.

Shukhert is proud of his Darhat ancestry. Before the Communist era, the Mongol king, the Bogdo Khan, appointed the Darhat tribe to guard the northern frontier. The Darhat are renowned for their breed of beautiful white horses (Darhat Tsaagan), a powerful and unique creature adapted to life in both the grasslands and the mountains.

But today, the age of the nomad and the horse is coming to an end in Mongolia. More than half of the Darhat nomads have already abandoned nomadism and settled in towns. Shukhert himself lost his herd in a powerful storm a few years ago and now lives in the nearby town of Ulaan Uul where he barely gets by as a part-time mechanic.

Shukhert is not happy in town. He misses the countryside, and longs to be reunited with his white horse and the black dog he left behind with his nomadic relatives. But he takes every opportunity to escape the dreary town and help his brother who still lives as a nomad. During periods of migration, he lends his nomad relatives a hand with his truck and when horses go missing, he rides out into the mountains to find them.

"I was a man of the steppe; my spiritual wealth and pride consisted of horses; mare's milk my favorite drink. My chief diversion was to inspect our flocks and our herds of horses...now I ride a motorcycle in the muddy streets of Ulaan Uul and sleep inside a fence." Somewhere deep in his soul, Shukhert regrets the decision to settle down. For despite all the technological progress in the town he does not appear any happier. How could he be if we cannot ride, hunt and pitch camp wherever he pleases?

The figure of Shukhert evokes both pathos and admiration. In town he seems like a caged animal, and finds almost any excuse to go back out onto the steppe. Before the summer wrestling tournaments (naadam), for example, he gets in shape by wrestling with horses. "It's better than training in a gym with iron weights," he says.

As a film-maker it's also important for me to reveal the Darhat cavalier's hidden motivations. Shukhert's self-appointed role as a horse vigilante seems, at times, to be a displacement of his own nostalgia for the nomadic life he was forced to abandon. For Shukhert, preserving the White Horse from Tuvan bandits is not just about protecting Darhat cultural heritage, but also about redeeming his own lost innocence. For Shukhert, the loss of a horse can be symbolically interpreted as a loss of a part of his soul, and his expeditions into the taiga to track horse thieves can be allegorically read as the shaman's flight into the underworld to ransom people's souls.

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## THE BLACK DOG

Shukert's black dog is also an important and iconic foil to his character. Animal totems are usually exclusively wild species; domestic animals could no longer inspire man since they had lost their wild instincts and had come to depend on humans for survival. The dog, however, appears as an exception to this rule, most probably because of the courage and valor it demonstrated next to his masters in battle and during the hunt.

Shukert's black dog, like himself, is also a misfit. He's a cross between a Mongol bankhar and a Kafghaz mastiff. The nomads in the valley don't like the dog and have threatened to shoot him. They complain that he's more a hunting dog than a shepherd, posing a danger to both humans and other domestic animals. Shukert's black dog faithfully accompanies his master and protects him on his quest.



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# THE WHITE STALLION

The spiritual connection between Mongol and horse expresses itself in various aesthetic components of the culture as well as many of their rituals and superstitions. The spiritual connection between Mongols and white horses finds various aesthetic expressions in Darhat culture such as the practice of fetching a bride on nine white horses.

Shukhert, leaves town again, this time to accompany his younger brother to catch nine white horses and prepare them for the bridal reception. But horses in Mongolia live in the mountains all winter and when they are rounded up in the summer they have become a little difficult to ride. They've been running from wolves all winter.

Each herd is presided over by a stallion that protects them from wolves. Shukhert's brother owns a magnificent white stallion.

The white stallion is particularly valuable; because he's one of the rare stallions in the area that is genetically homozygous, meaning that all of his offspring turn out to be white.

The White Stallion is famous in the valley as a wolf-killer, snapping their backs with his powerful front kicks. "Unlike other Mongol horses," Shukhert explains that, "Darhat White stallions have developed a unique strategy to combat wolves. They will run rapid circles around the herd preventing the wolves from the dividing the herd."

Shukhert also has a peculiar bonding ritual with the stallion. Once a year he will catch the magnificent animal and wrestle with it in front of the herd.





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# THE STORM

On the day of the wedding Shukhert accompanies the groom's party with nine white horses to fetch the bride. During the wedding a powerful rain storm sweeps across the valley, flooding all the rivers. When the famous white stallion goes missing after the storm, Shukhert suspects the Tuvan bandits and he swims across the flooded rivers in pursuit. But it looks like he has finally met his match. The thieves are Tsaatan reindeer nomads reputedly led by a notorious shaman, are stealing horses and selling them

to Russian meat canning factories across the border. Winter is approaching and there is already a light touch of snow on the mountains in the horizon.

Shukhert must find the white stallion before the bandit shaman reaches the border. It's a race against time. If the Darhat cavalier does not find the missing stallion, the herd is doomed to perish in Mongolia's harsh winters.



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# INTO THE TAÏGA

The Darhat cavalier crosses the river and heads towards the 'Foggy Place', the first in a series of high passes that lead into the taiga. On top of the pass Shukhert cuts some hair from the mane of his horse and ties it in knots to wooden branches that stick out of a pile of rocks called an "ovoo". The ovoo is a monument to the 'spirit-master' of the land. In ancient times, when warriors left on campaigns they would throw a pile of stones on top of the pass, when they returned they left another pile - to see how many had perished. To tie a thread onto the ovoo ensures that one will return.

Shukhert passes a group of men who claim to be collecting nuts and berries, but the bloody hides tucked under their gathering of antlers suggested other contraband. Their eyes emit a sort of diabolical glow after spending long days wading through cold rivers, sleeping in mud and eating animal flesh.

We sit in a circle and someone starts to pass around a bottle that appears to contain blood - a brew that is equal parts wild boar blood and vodka mixed with sugar. The hunters believe is a potent tonic. After a round of this questionable brew we part with the blood drinkers who direct us down to where they had last seen a group of the reindeer people.

It is now late September, but the weather shows no compassion showering us with a wet snow that turns the forest trail into a cold swamp. As we leave behind the firm steppes ride further into the taiga it becomes obvious that we have reached the limit of horse country. Shukhert's horse sinks to its armpits, then its neck begins to twist against the mud and press sideways, he looked up at Shukhert seemingly asking when he's was planning to get off? Shukhert disengages his feet from the stirrups and throws himself into the mud and begins to walk on foot while singing to his horse.



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## THE BOAR HUNT

In the morning, under a blanket of fresh snow, Shukert begins to shave away at his last brick of tea, which he boils in a dirty old casserole. To placate the spirits he offers the first portion of the tea in all directions. Waiting for the daylight temperatures to rise we sit around a huge log fire drinking tea and the last few biscuits remaining in his pouch. When the black dog lies down then gets up and walks around to sit down again, Shukert says it is a good indication that we will bag some game. On the trail Shukert tells me there are wild boar in this area and he plans to track them to replenish his supply of meat for the journey.

The Darhat can usually tell what game lies ahead by the manner in which their dogs bark. The sable and squirrel, brings out a short volley of yaps. Moose and bear draw out a deep long bark - the same as when strangers approach camp. But the scent of wild boar elicits an angry bark. Following the angry barking dog, Shukert shoots a boar. He takes a moment to pay respect to the dead animal, touching the animal's feet with his forehead in a gesture of thanks, for if the spirit does not leave in peace it can follow the men and leave what they call 'black tracks' - an animal ghost trail that will haunt them with bad luck.



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## THE GOLD MINES

The horse trails up in the Darhat Valley leading into the Taïga have dramatically changed in the last few years because of the illegal influx of artisanal gold miners into the pristine watersheds. Deer and many other large mammals have been hunted almost into extinction, and the fish, which the local reindeer people also rely on for food have all but disappeared. Where the Reindeer People once collected berries in the summer the Darhat gold miners are now overturning entire valleys in search for gold.

Along the banks of the “Cuckoo” river, we see big holes where men searching for gold have removed the earth. Blue silk scarves tied to trees next to the river indicate places gold was found. The men, both Darhat and Tuvan, are at work, digging away at the river bank with big chisels.

The earth is put into large pans and carried to the river where it is slowly churned and washing down in the freezing water.

Shukhert recognizes a friend by the river. They take a break and share a smoke. “We hope to find enough gold so we’ll will no longer be compelled to live in the forests hunting squirrels for a living,” he tells Shukhert.

After a meal of boar meat, the men pool their energies together to break the ice and lift out a large boulder out from the riverbed using big logs. They collect the mud and gravel underneath it using long poles with ends fashioned into tin scoops. As they wash the contents away in their pans, TARTHUK’S eyes widen. The first glitter of gold appears from the sludge.



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# THE TSAATAN REINDEER PEOPLE

Borqarluk is one of the most beautiful places in the Hovsgol taiga - a ring of connected valleys each with its own small lake, twisting and turning below the seven frozen peaks of the Aghii mountains - just like the hidden land described in the guidebooks to the mythical kingdom of Shambhala. This enchanted place is where the bandit-shaman Ghosta camps with about 70 reindeer. Ghosta is the most reclusive of the reindeer people. He lives alone with his adoptive daughter and her fatherless son. "I don't like towns," he says, "neither do my reindeer, they get sick whenever they go near human settlements and their dreary cows!"

Next to camp the semi-domesticated reindeer are usually tied together in pairs to prevent them from grazing too far. While extremely docile they have not turned dumb like cattle and still retain the charisma of wild animals. When woman milk the deer they always wear their headscarves as a sign of respect just as they do when greeting a tribal elder. They call each reindeer by name - Three Eyes, Wild and Blue, depending on their markings, disposition or hue and carry the milk back to the teepee placing first portion, called the 'doj', on the alter beside the idols of the ancestor spirits.

Unlike other reindeer breeding cultures, they do not traditionally breed their reindeer for meat. They depend on a healthy domesticated reindeer population for milk and to ride into the forests to hunt for food and furs.

While their language and blood are eroding, their cultural identity remains firmly rooted in their spiritual relationship with their deer and the landscape. The taiga, is not just the source of their livelihood but is inextricably linked with their shamanic song-lines. Their deceased ancestors have become infused with the spirits of these mountains and rivers, their voices invoked by the shaman after every migration. The cultural identity of the Tsaatan, now more than ever, depends on the health of their reindeer, with which they move and hunt in this territory. Once the reindeer cease to exist so will this unique relationship between these people and their sacred landscape.



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As a blizzard rages outside, Shukhert and the Bandit Shaman huddle near the fire inside Ghosta's wigwam, the orange light of the fire leaking out of the cracks in the barrel stove provides the only source of illumination. While Handa breast-feeds her voracious infant, Ghosta cracks open a bottle of vodka, the first in a sequence that were to stir up the evening conversation. "I will become immortal in this forest after I pass away," the bandit shaman explains. In his youth, when the communists settled the Tsaatan on a collective farm, Ghosta ran away. He would often steal horses and dash across the border to sell them to his Tuvan relatives. He rode with his uncle and teacher, a notorious shaman called Gombu, who reputedly used his magic powers to manipulate the weather and confuse the authorities.

With the increase in commercial hunting in recent years, wildlife numbers have significantly decreased depriving wolves of their natural prey. With no wild animals left to eat, the wolves now seem to be targeting domestic reindeer calves as an easy meal. Unlike other reindeer breeding cultures, the Tsaatan do not traditionally breed their reindeer for meat. They depend on reindeer for milk products and to ride to hunt for food and furs. But today their forest is becoming increasingly empty as commercial hunters enter the taiga to supply the traditional Chinese medicine market with bear paws, deer tails and musk pods.

"The wild game which we rely on for food," snarls Ghosta, "is being wiped out by Mongols who herd sheep and cows in the grassy valleys below the taiga." With the decreasing game many Tsaatan have now reluctantly started to kill and eat their reindeer. No wonder why some of them have thrown in their lot with the Tuvan horse thieves. "You'll never have a chance out there alone if you don't speak Tuvan," says the shaman. "If they hear you speak a word of Mongol they'll shoot you on site."



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# THE SNOW PASS

Shukhert rides above the tree-line again to crossed over a 10,000 ft. pass that seems possessed of nothing but sharp rocks bruised by patchworks of green and orange lichen. Before us are the magnificent snow peaks of the Agiin Taiga range. These seven peaks form a natural buffer between Shishget river in Mongolia and the Oula Khem in Tuva.

To catch up with the bandits, we must now take a dangerous short-cut over a high pass covered in deep snow. A blizzard catches up with us as we reach the top of another pass. In the snow storm there no clear way down; Shukhert's dog sensing the impasse stops and lies down in the snow making low moaning and whining sounds. Shukhert dismounts and looks down into a snow chute straight ahead.

As the snow begins to pile up on top of the pass, Shukhert recounts a benevolent ghost story. Some years ago a family of Tsaatan reindeer nomads were crossing here and a little girl vanished in the snow. Her spirit is said to still roam these mountains, appearing to people of pure heart guiding them in times of trouble.

Fresh snow gives away under our feet as we plummet down provoking a small avalanche that luckily piles up to block my fall over the next granite lip. Visibility is so poor that I can barely see ten feet ahead but the reassuring voice of Shukhert defies the elements, urging along his dog and horse, until we reach the bottom of the bowl.

By dusk we reach the tree line – “We are entering a sacred forest,” says Shukhert, “where the Tsaatan reindeer people bury their ancestral shamans in tree shrines.” We stop to make offerings. In the twilight, a sable suddenly scampers across the trail and the black dog, exhausted after the pass, offers a semblance of a chase, but he cannot keep up with the little creature that leads us into a wooded gully where we decide to make camp.

In the manner of ancient hunters, Shukhert cuts down two pine trees and sets them ablaze at an angle so they will burn all through the night. In the manner of ancient hunters, he spreads a bed of hot coals which he covers with about 10 inches of earth – his bed for the night!



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## THE FINAL PURSUIT

Only miles from the border the Darhat cavalier catches up with the fresh trail of Tuvan bandits. From the tracks it looks like they're driving at least 10 horses which is slowing them down. But if they know they're being pursued there's a danger that they will start killing the horses before the border in order to pack-up the meat and run faster.

But in the dreamscapes of northern Mongolia, inhabited by reindeer, bear, horses, eagles and wolves, humans no longer occupy the center of the image. They are just one element floating across the scene. In fact, without the animal companion life would not be possible and man would appear lost.

This spiritual connection with the environment and animals is an essential part of the Mongol soul, a place that is bound up with talking beasts and the voices of ancestors, a place that awakens a sense of healing and well-being, yet something utterly contrary to the laws of civilized men.

Will Shukert find the White Stallion and return to the valley in time for the winter migration?







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## EPILOGUE

Like the quest for the Grail, Shukhert's journey is one of initiation, from what is known and petrified to what is new. The path sometimes leads through a threshold world, a taiga of chaos, and it is only when all is destroyed and inverted that one sometimes rediscovers the very values one set out to begin with, but now bathed in a new light, reaffirmed in the context of greater understanding of how they relate to oneself and others.

To enlist the help of his Tsaatan relatives and find his horses, the Darhat cavalier needs to see beyond his personal need for tribal revenge and see the greater economic forces that have divided the two communities; the same forces that have pushed both the Darhat to mine the rivers and the Tuvan Reindeer People to steal horses.

The two groups living on the fringe, people of the horse and people of the reindeer, the Darhat and the Tsaatan, Buddhist and shaman must learn to take advantage of one another's resources to survive in this endangered world. If this relationship breaks down, the fabric of traditional society will collapse. But to become whole again, the horse and the deer, the male and the female must also come together within the hero himself.

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## PRODUCER'S NOTE

When we met Hamid Sardar at the International Adventure and Discovery Film Festival at Val d'Isère, we were immediately seduced by the beauty and power of his films. We helped him to complete his last film, 'Le Chemin Des Vents' (France 5), and, from the very beginning, we nurtured a desire and ambition to produce his next films. 'The Darhat Horseman and the White Stallion' is therefore the first chapter of a long-term collaboration.

With his precious knowledge of the territory, his own life experiences and the power of his cinematic vision, Hamid quickly convinced us of the need to make this new film. Mongolia is a mysterious country that seems to elude western rationality, a place full of complexities impossible for the uninitiated traveler to understand. Hamid is therefore in a position to be a genuine interpreter, but also a questioner.

Having lived and reared horses in Mongolia for more than ten years, Hamid has developed a valuable and trusting relationship with Shukhert and the nomads. His work as an ethnographer and his previous films, especially 'Taïga' (FIPA Gold award, 2015), allowed him to visit the wildest and most remote regions of Mongolia whilst simultaneously gaining unprecedented access to a clandestine world operating on the edge of the law. Being familiar with horse thefts and the individuals who gravitate towards this activity, Hamid will also no doubt anticipate and provoke situations that are conducive to the drama of the film.

The plot structure borrows elements from fiction and westerns to highlight Shukhert's quest, to show him as a character in his own right, also dealing with an inner identity struggle which is revealed through the narration. In addition to conjuring up images connected to the landscape, Mongolia's open spaces and horse-riding adventures, the western genre was also a way of raising the question of justice, vengeance and good and evil. In keeping with his approach as a scientist and anthropologist, Hamid will avoid simple black and white distinctions in order to create a mosaic of situations and characters able to convey the complexities of a country and a region where ancestral balances are now threatened by globalization.



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# FILMOGRAPHY

## HAMID SARDAR - DIRECTOR



Hamid Sardar is a writer, photographer and award-winning film-maker based in Paris/France. He is a scholar and explorer who earned his Ph.D. degree at Harvard University in Sanskrit & Tibetan Studies and participated in the National Geographic expedition that discovered the hidden falls of the Tsangpo River in Tibet (1999). Most recently he has dedicated his time to exploring Mongolia and bringing awareness to the plight of her various nomadic traditions through his award winning photography and films. His images have appeared in prestigious publications such as National Geographic Adventure, Geo, Le Figaro and Paris Match.

His documentary film 'The Reindeer People' was awarded the prize for the Best Film on Culture at the Banff Mountain Film Festival in Canada (2004).

His film 'Balapan' received the prize for Best film on Culture at both the Telluride (2006) and Banff (2006) Mountain film festivals. His third film 'Tracking the White Reindeer' (2008) received the awards for Best film on Culture at Banff for a third time a row. His latest film, "Taïga" focusing on the plight of nomadic herders in Mongolia, received numerous international film awards including the prestigious FIPA "Gold" (2015) in France.

2017 : **Tibet, The Way of the Winds** / 52min / Dream Catcher Motion Pictures and les gens bien production / France 5

2014 : **Taïga** / 52 min / A propos Productions / France 5, Ushuaïa TV

2008 : **Tracking the White Reindeer** / 52 min / Zed / France 5, TV5 Monde

2005 : **Balapan, the Wings of the Altaï** / 52 min / Zed / Voyage

2004 : **The Reindeer People** / 52 min / Zed / Best film at Banff World Media Festival



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