



Story by Nicolae Chistol

Genre: Drama / Contemporary

Language: Russian/Ukrainian

Runtime: 15 minutes

THAW

LOGLINE

In a war-torn Ukrainian village, Marjana and Ilja face the hardship of a premature birth, a desperate search for help, and the explosions tearing through their everyday life.

STORY

Ukraine, at the end of winter.

Marjana (23) and Ilja (24) are surviving in a nearly abandoned village. They've long planned to leave the country: their papers are ready, their bags packed, their money set aside.

During a bombardment, Marjana goes into labor early, and the plan falls apart. Ilja goes out into the night to find the nurse, Natalja, while the birth takes place under extreme conditions, as bombardments continue in the distance.

With a newborn now in the house, leaving is no longer possible. Marjana lets go of the idea of fleeing without ever saying so out loud; Ilja, instead, carries it inside him as a weight — a missed chance he can't let go of.

One morning, a nearby explosion shatters the house's windows. Gripped by panic, Marjana runs inside and clutches the newborn to her chest to protect him, ending up smothering him. Ilja comes home, discovers the tragedy, and, overwhelmed by helplessness, walks away in silence.







NOT THE WAR ON THE FRONT LINE, BUT THE FRAGILITY OF THOSE WHO CANNOT DEFEND THEMSELVES

THAW doesn't tell the story of war, but of the people who endure it. Marjana's labor in a hostile environment is not a heroic mission, but the desperate, natural instinct to fight against being erased by destruction. The focus tightens on small details, making the audience physically feel the same isolation as the characters.

The whole film plays on a strong visual contrast: on one side, the deep intimacy of a mother protecting her newborn; on the other, the cruelty and tension of a merciless environment.









THAW

In THAW, war is heard through a sonic deception. The mechanical hum of a military drone constantly blends with the mundane sounds of domestic life, such as Ilya's motorbike engine or a washing machine running. This confusion builds a steady tension until the final impact is revealed.

War never enters the scene directly: there are no soldiers, no front line, no combat is ever shown. It always stays off screen, present only through the effect it leaves on things and bodies: the sudden dark of a blackout, glass shattering, the shadows of a flock of birds crossing the sky, a nest built from fiber optic strands fallen from drones. The only direct contact with the front is mediated, through the bombing footage Ilya silently scrolls through on his phone, a war experienced from a distance even while it's being fought at home.

VISUAL STYLE AND DIRECTION



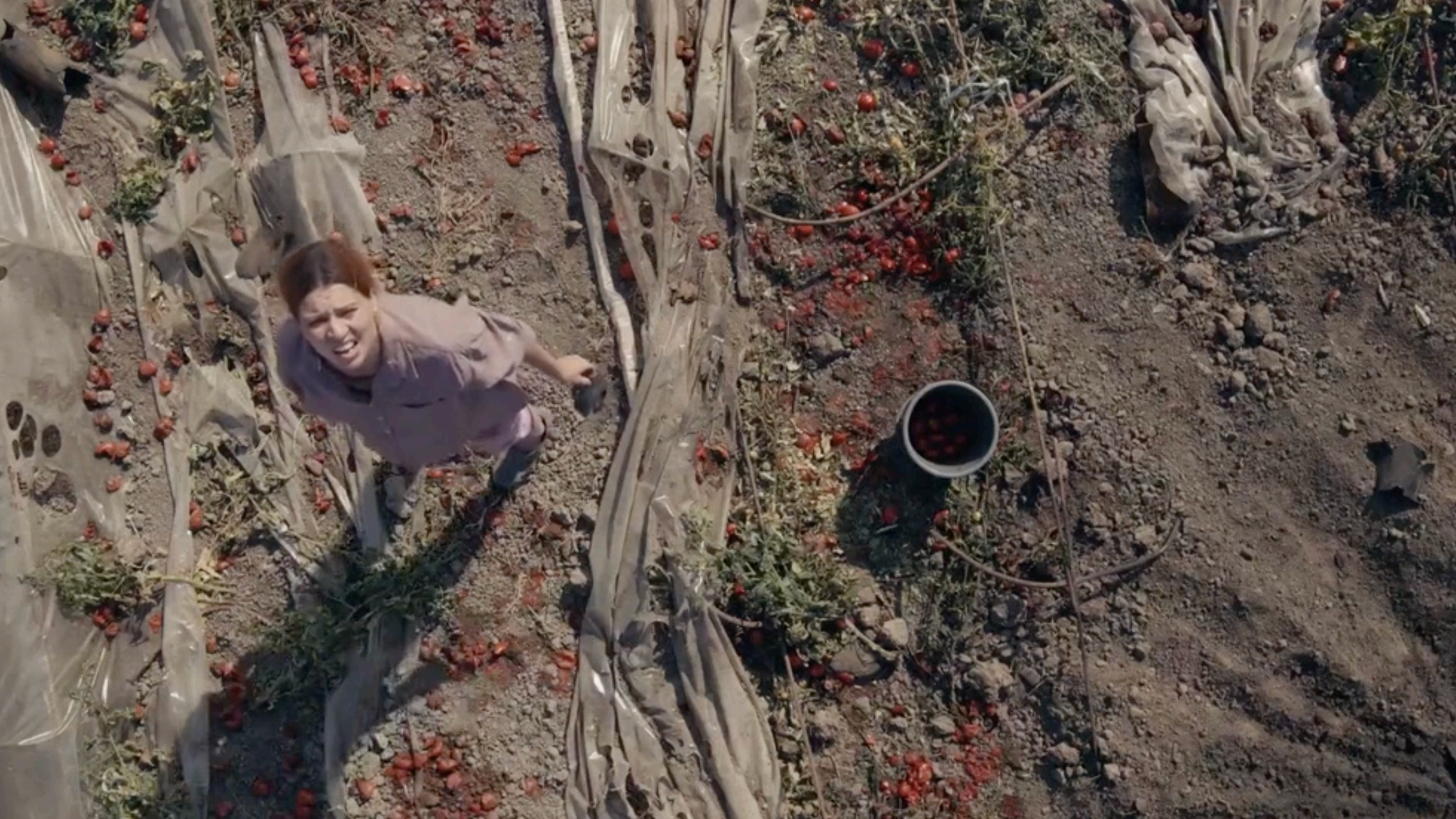
MARJANA

(23)

Marjana is very young and unprepared to become a mother. She loves Ilja deeply, but doesn't see him as mature enough, and some things she simply doesn't say; she keeps them inside. She's very emotional, reacts on impulse, and isn't someone who holds back. This is where her contradiction comes from: what she thinks stays unspoken, what she feels immediately becomes action.

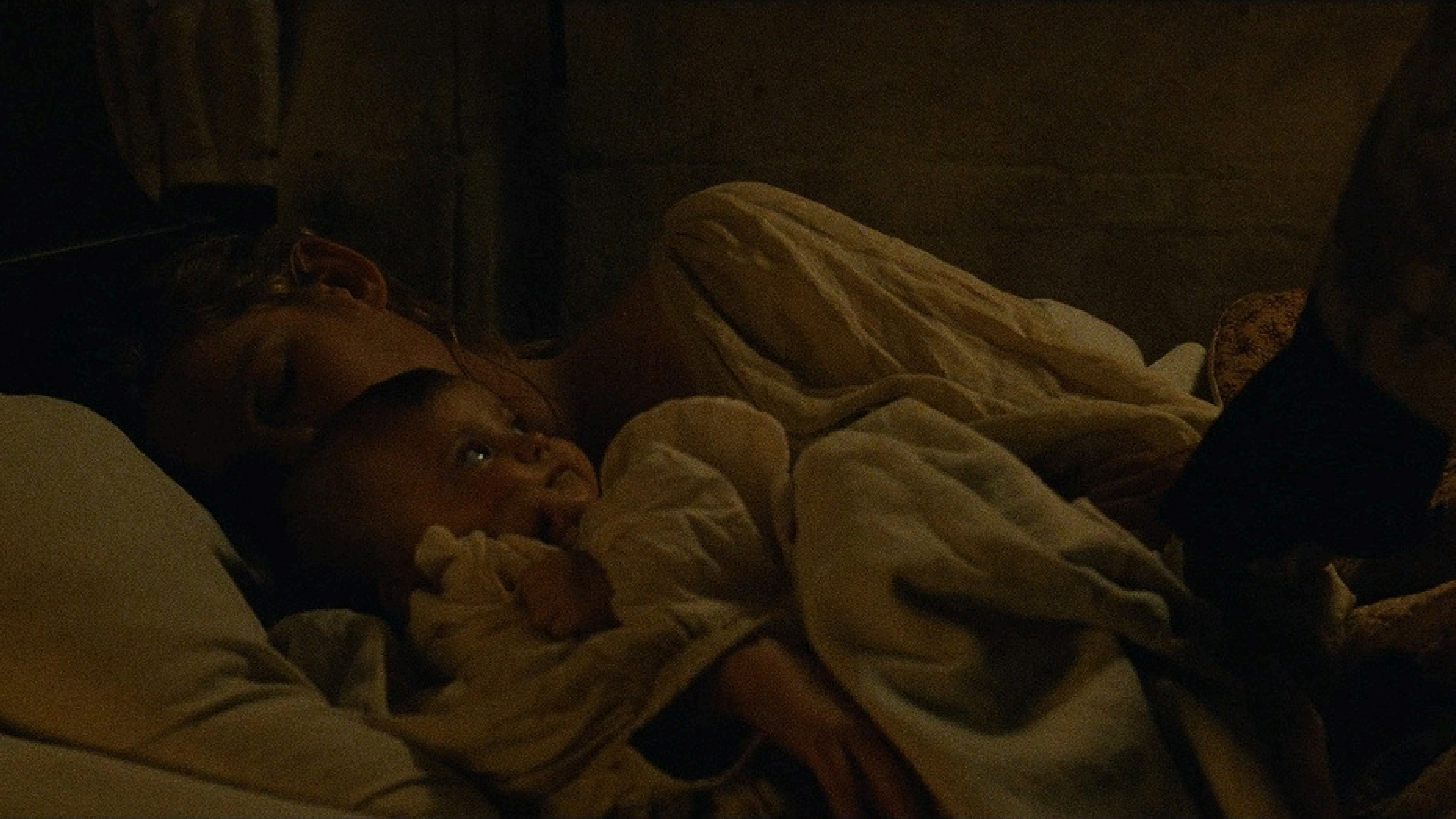
It's this same nature that carries her through a premature birth under extreme conditions, surviving on pure survival instinct alone.













ILJA (24)

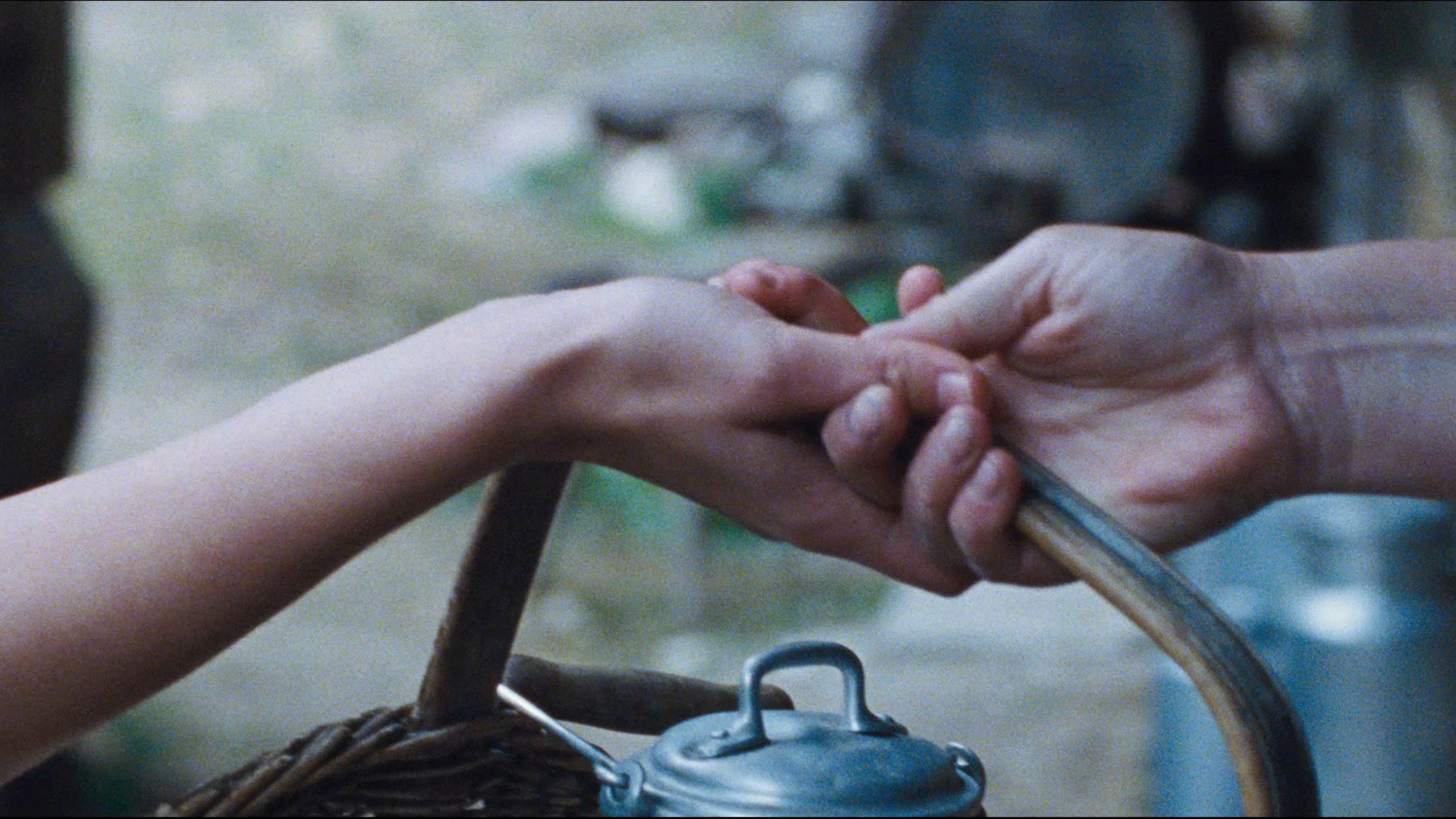
Ilja works on a farm in the village and knows how to handle himself with his hands. He earns little, and he knows it. He had proposed to Marjana that they leave the country, but the baby's birth, arriving earlier than expected, blows the plan apart. Faced with the weight of this new responsibility, he feels weaker and more inadequate every day. After the birth, a silence falls between him and Marjana that leaves him feeling excluded and utterly powerless.













The Urgency

Audiences have grown numb to the usual images of the front line. THAW sets aside the news cycle and geopolitics to show war directly on people's skin. It's a universal story about our extreme fragility, left defenseless against the cold indifference of technology.



THANK YOU!

Presented by Nicolae Chistol