

An underwater scene with a diver on the left and a large manta ray on the right. The water is a deep teal color. The diver is wearing a dark mask and a light-colored swimsuit. The manta ray is swimming towards the right. The title 'TWO BREATHS' is centered in white, serif, all-caps font. Below it, the subtitle 'a poetic story by Kateryna Kurganska' is written in a smaller, lowercase font, with 'a poetic story by' in yellow and 'Kateryna Kurganska' in white. The background shows a coral reef at the bottom with several small yellow and black fish swimming around.

# TWO BREATHS

a poetic story by Kateryna Kurganska

Dedicated to everyone who **had to give up their home...**





...and to remind that humans must live in harmony with nature  
**for an unending future.**

High Concept Short Film      Adventure / Drama / Fantasy

## **Allegorical tale of loss and letting go...**

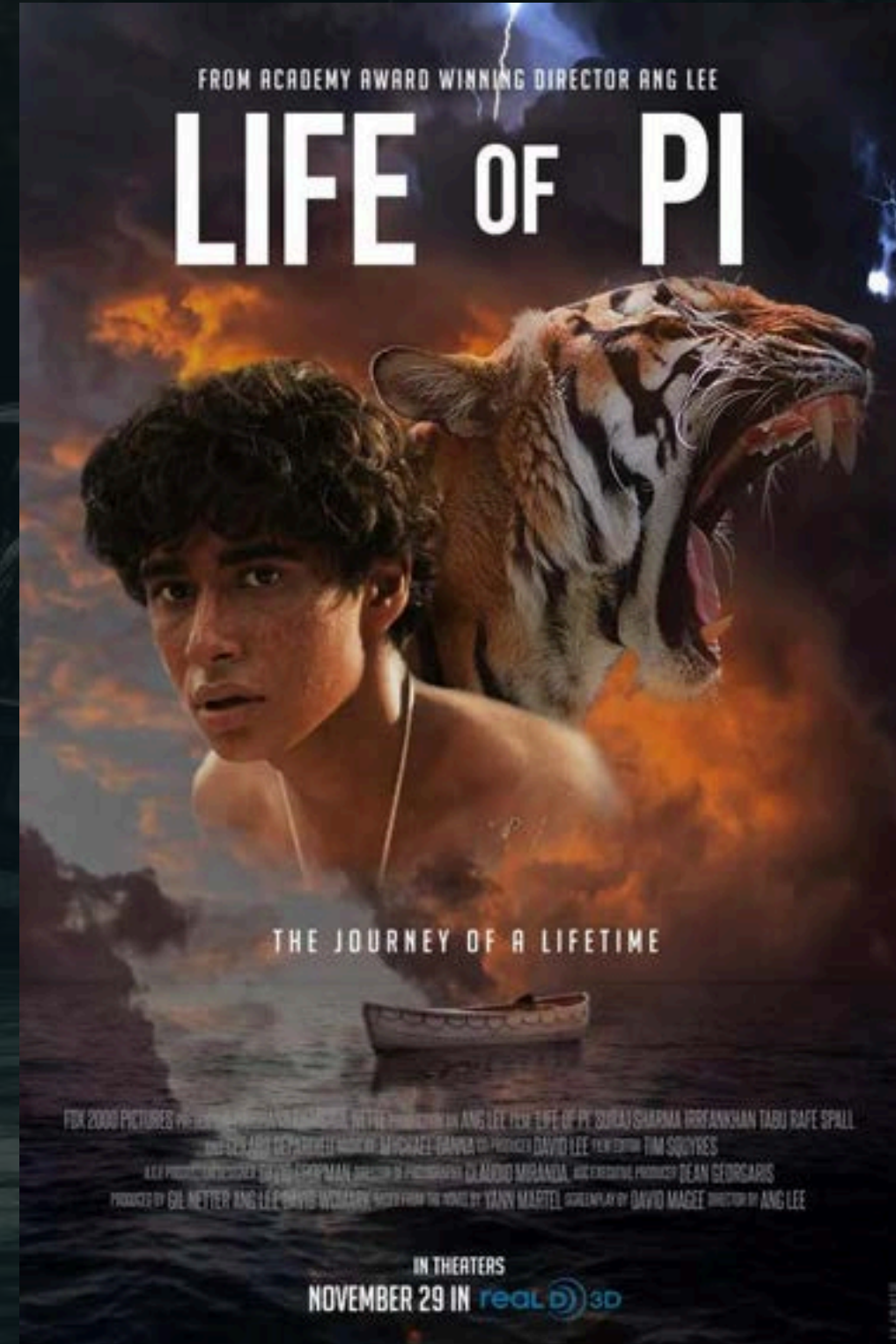
This story is the culmination of experiences and the poetic nature of the uncertainty of life from the filmmaker who knows all too well the ripple effects of **war**.

A close-up, low-key photograph of a young girl's face. Her eyes are dark and looking slightly away from the camera with a somber or determined expression. Her hair is dark and appears to be braided or styled in a way that frames her face. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows and highlights on her skin.

**Logline:**

After a man-made disaster decimates an evergreen island, a stranded 11-year-old girl must find the tenacity to leave behind her home with the help of an unlikely friend – the majestic Manta Ray, spirit called *Two Breaths*.

# If You Like



# CHARACTERS



the Protagonist

# AVA

a true island child (11 y.o.)

Ava is the central character in this story.  
She is a survivor on a desolate island.

Nevertheless, her existence is threatened,  
her imagination and her love of family keep her going.  
Through a combination of resourcefulness, courage,  
and intellect she has made the most  
of her limited resources...

Despite it all,  
she still carries the innocence of youth.





*Played by **Maia Ann Puuwai***



A close-up portrait of an older man with a white beard and mustache, looking slightly to the right. The background is dark and textured, possibly foliage.

## Ava's GRANDPA PETER

*played by **Romeo Garcia***

Peter is Ava's loving Grandfather and a vehement conservationist, who instills in her a deep belief in nature and the importance of home from an early age.

He raises her to be strong and independent and always to remember where she comes from. Unfortunately, these potent convictions also prevent him from escaping the island with Ava during the evacuation, ultimately leaving her all alone. Ava still draws a lot of strength from her memories with her Grandpa; they help her overcome the many obstacles on her path to safety.



Ava's (*almost*) only friend

# MR. FISH

*a plushie Manta Ray*

Mr. Fish is a very special, one of a kind Manta Ray and Ava's best friend. Unlike other Mantas, he lives on land with Ava and is made of fine plush fabric and polyester. Intricate oceanic patterns decorate its belly and he always has his deep, intelligent gaze set on the surroundings.







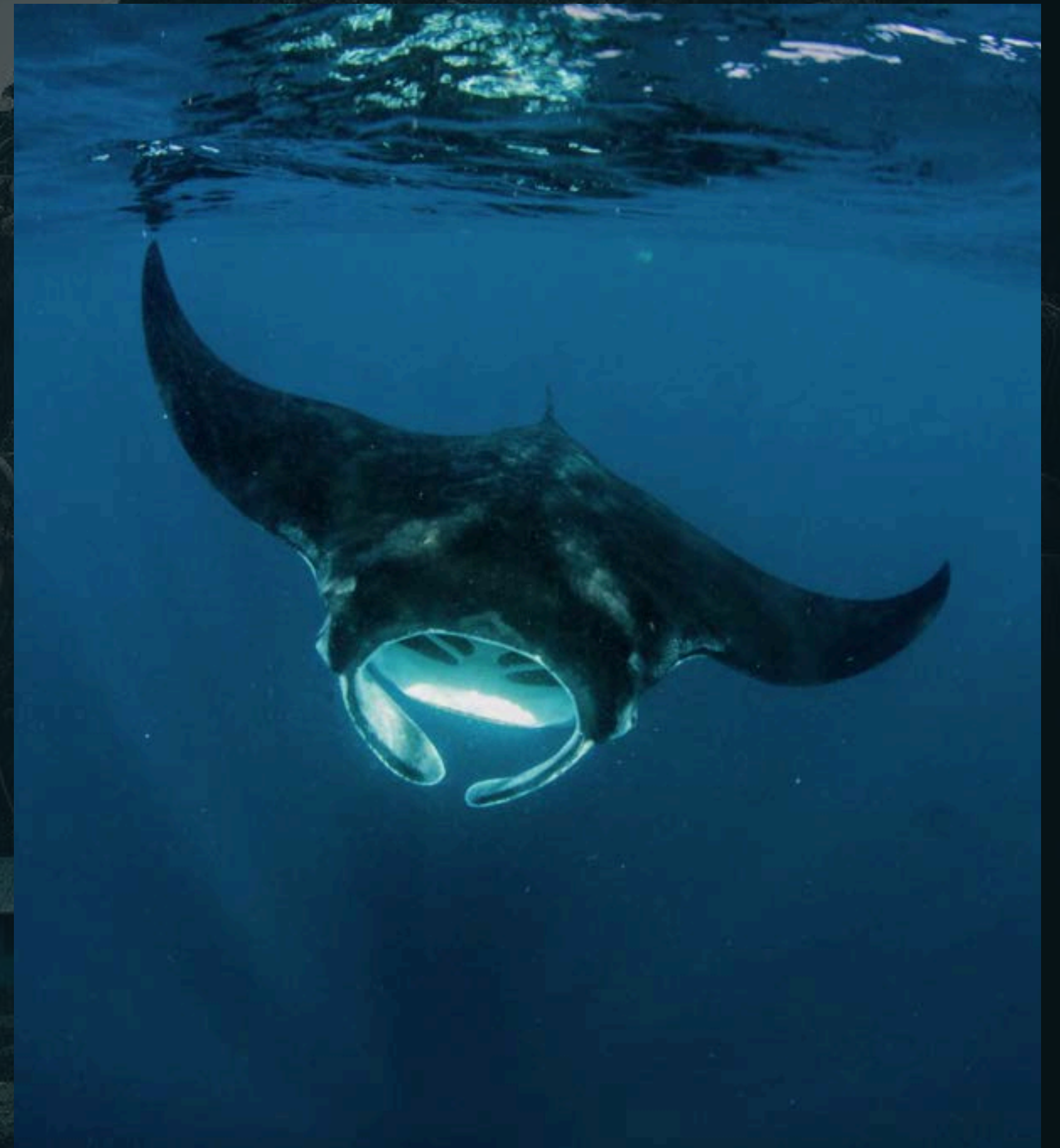


the Manta Ray

# TWO BREATHS

a mysterious creature of the Pacific

Two Breaths is a grand and majestic creature to behold. It gracefully glides through oceanic depths with its 29-foot wingspan and glows in the dark like some phosphorescent beacon. Two Breaths saves Ava from drowning while she is tangled up in fishing nets and ultimately guides her to safety in the end. Two Breaths is Ava's protector, her main connection to nature and her literal guiding light. "The name of the manta —hahalua (Hawaiian)—can be interpreted as **'two breaths.'**"





# Manta Rays Are

- Manta Rays Are **Harmless**
  - Manta Rays Are **Intelligent**
  - Manta Rays Are Among **The Largest Animals In The Ocean**
  - Manta Rays Have To **Swim To Stay Alive**
  - Manta Rays Are Classified As **Endangered**
- 
- A manta ray is shown swimming underwater, its large, flat body and long, thin pectoral fins clearly visible. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the lighting creates a soft glow around the ray.

real size Manta Ray :-)



And yes, we did it practically in the movie!  
**Real Manta Ray footage!**

the army

# MILITARY

representing **the humanity**



**What has happened with the island?**

A young woman with curly hair, wearing a pink shirt and a backpack, is looking down in a tropical setting. The background is filled with lush greenery and palm trees. The text "What has happened with the island?" is overlaid in a bold, yellow font.

2027.

In the not-too-distant future, a small-scale nuclear weapon was created to wage aggressive, tactical wars. Amid the aftermath of a test of such armor going terribly wrong, residents of a paradise-like island must forever abandon their beautiful home... Despite the grave danger, an 11-year-old Ava stays behind with her Grandfather, who refuses to give up and instills in her true love of her land. Ava and her Grandfather chose to adapt to the new reality, but while trying to save the slowly dying island, Grandpa dies.

Having just missed the final evacuation and now without a clear path to escape, Ava is left alone with her plushie toy Manta-Ray named Mr. Fish.

She continues her father's work and learns how to survive on her own.

When out fishing one day, Ava gets tangled up in the fishing nets and almost drowns, losing Mr. Fish to the deep waters.

Fortunately, a real majestic Manta-Ray comes to her rescue in all its grand beauty. Ava befriends the mysterious sea creature named Two Breaths that helps her cope with grief and loneliness.

When the danger of staying on the island grows, Ava must learn how to let go of the past and leave her home forever.

Her chance to escape comes about when she sees a patrol boat off the island's coast.

With encouragement from her Manta-Ray friend she swims for it. The soldiers onboard the boat have orders to terminate everything from the exclusion zone. They aim their weapons at Ava and Two Breaths and stop just short of shooting...

They drag Ava onboard but still try to execute the Manta-Ray... When Ava finally peers over the stern, all she sees is her plushie Manta-Ray toy, Mr. Fish, sinking in the sea in the background of a dying paradise.

A close-up, low-key photograph of a horse's face, focusing on its eyes and nose. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows and highlights that emphasize the texture of the horse's skin and the intensity of its gaze. The text "VISUAL LANGUAGE" is centered horizontally across the middle of the image in a bold, yellow, serif font.

**VISUAL LANGUAGE**



the "fuji film" soft look

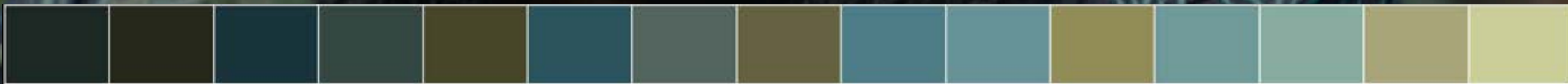
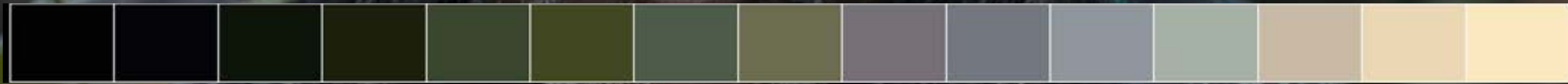
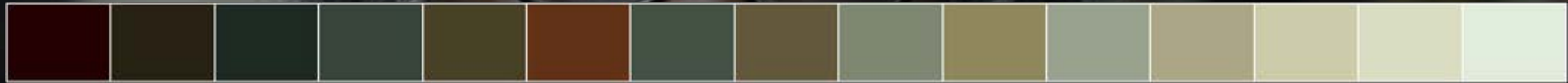
lots of soft natural light

moody landscapes and anamorphic imagery

wide shots of mossy forests and deep blue waters

breathtaking underwater cinematography

# Color Palettes





# STORY BOARDS



6A AVA TURNS WRIST AND LOOKS AT WATCH, TAPS IT.



6B



7A HOLDS WATCH TO EAR. IT'S DEAD!



7C

CAM BRIEFLY CATCHES UP WITH AVA.



7D TWO BREATHS BOUNCES ON BACK. DAPPLED LIGHT AS THOUGH BENEATH THE WAVES.

AVA RUNS UP TRAIL LEAVING CAM BEHIND.







# LOCATIONS

# The Dying Island









# Ava's and Peter's Home









A woman with dark, wet hair is crouching on a boat, wearing a dark wetsuit. She is looking down with a focused expression. The boat's interior is visible, featuring blue plastic seats and equipment. In the background, another person in a wetsuit is partially visible, and the ocean extends to the horizon under an overcast sky. The text "behind the scenes" is overlaid in a yellow, serif font across the center of the image.

behind the scenes



*Backstage · Two Breaths, Principal Photography*







*Backstage · Two Breaths, Principal Photography*







Writer/Director/Producer:  
**Kateryna Kurganska**

is a Ukrainian-American filmmaker based in Los Angeles. She was born and raised in Luhansk, Eastern Ukraine, and moved to the U.S. in 2014 as a refugee. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Education from Taras Shevchenko National University and an M.F.A. in Film and Television Production from USC's School of Cinematic Arts.

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A dense thicket of Monstera plants with large, perforated leaves. The leaves are dark green and have characteristic holes and splits. The background is filled with more foliage, creating a lush, tropical atmosphere. The lighting is somewhat dim, highlighting the texture of the leaves.

Thank You!