



FIRE IN THE EYES

a project for a historical mini-series



The personal stories of six emblematic Bulgarian women
map the cultural and historical landscape of the first decades
after the Liberation through the kaleidoscope of a
many-faced femininity.



AT A GLANCE

01 Genre

Drama/
Historical

02 Format

Six episodes of one
commercial hour

03 Target audience

18-65 ALL

04 Team

Screenwriter: Valentina Angelova
Director: Petar Krumov
Executive producer: Miramar Film

In-spi-ra-tion

Who *breathed* life into the idea for the series?





Boyka Velkova

explores femininity through the prism of grace, tenderness, sexuality, strength and passion. The idea for the series came to her out of her work as director of the productions “The Road to Aphrodite”, “The Colour of Deep Waters” and “Empire of Beauty”. Why has no one told the story of Bulgaria’s great women yet?

It is time!



“Fire in the Eyes”

What is it about?



SYNOPSIS

A young woman faces an insurmountable loss – of a child, of a beloved, of her dreams. Devastated and without hope, she tries to go on, relying on her experience and her intuition. Overcoming the insurmountable, she manages to gather up the threads of her life and to create a new meaning that pushes her up from the bottom.

This is one and the same story, lived through countless times from the dawn of time until today – the story of woman. It is also the story of six of the most emblematic figures in Bulgarian culture – Ekaterina Karavelova, Mara Belcheva, Dora Gabe, Roza Popova, Elisaveta Konsulova-Vazova and Elisaveta Bagryana.





THE TITLE

Inspired by the beautiful poem “The Captive” by Dora Gabe, the title of the series points to the inner fire hidden in each of the women it tells about. The fire slumbering in the eyes of each of the six heroines is different – it can be a blaze that burns to ashes with passion or a wisdom that smoulders like embers, it can be the bright flame of joy or the scorching heat of a dream. It can flash like the spark of genius or flare up like lightning of righteous fury. It can be the soft glow of forgiveness or resemble a half-spent coal waiting to catch light again with new force. It can sweep on mercilessly like the lava of wrath, burn without pity with the fiery tongues of a forest set ablaze, or warm a disconsolate soul with the flickering light of a candle.





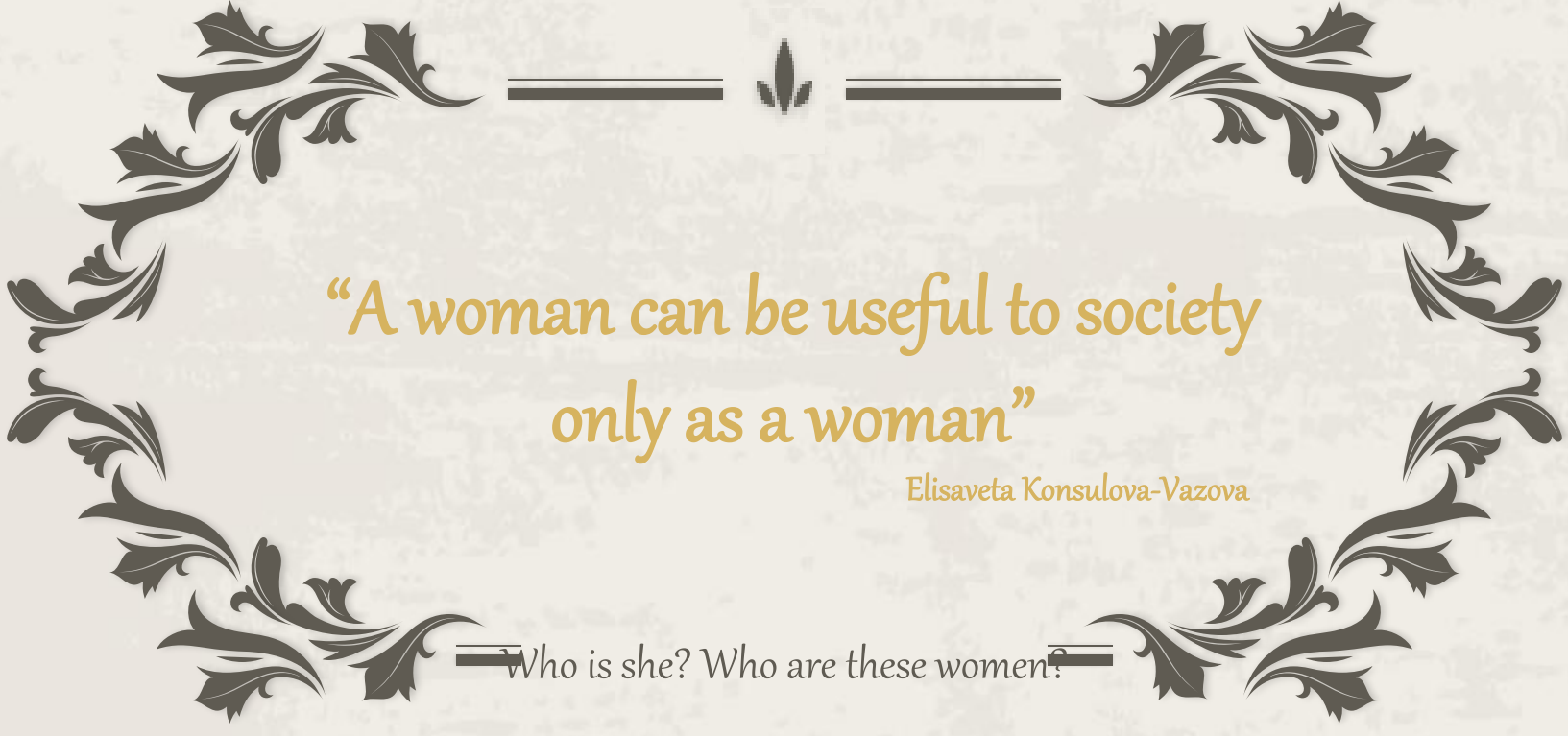
THE CAPTIVE

Her hands are pale and mute,
gold hair upon her shoulders,
and fire in her eyes lies dreaming...
So an old story tells it.
He led her up into the tower
and closed the heavy door,
and through the cold dark spaces
went back alone into the night.
She stands there, dazed and timid,
a timid hope in her breast,
she keeps a fire on her lips
and lowers her heavy lashes.

And countless eyes look on
from where, unseen, he vanished...
– Below, the sea is roaring
and the deep abyss is moaning.
And strange, unheard of, unknown,
beyond these lofty walls
foreign lands stretch away
and hide their secrets deep...
There the nights are slowly measured
by a belfry clock that keeps watch,
and from the evening vault look down
cold and distant stars.

Dora Gabe





*“A woman can be useful to society
only as a woman”*

Elisaveta Konsulova-Vazova

— Who is she? Who are these women? —



Ekaterina Karavelova

Bulgaria's Eleanor Roosevelt

A teacher, translator and publicist, co-founder of the Bulgarian Women's Union and one of the founders of the Committee for the Defence of the Jews, wife of Petko Karavelov, Ekaterina Karavelova is remembered in history as the only "woman-man", who during the battle of Slivnitsa went out onto the square to calm the population.



Mara Belcheva

the refined lady in black

The muse of Bulgarian poetry and one of the most beautiful, well-read and respected ladies of the twentieth century, Mara Belcheva is only 23 when her husband Hristo Belchev is murdered. After his death she is courted by the most prominent men of the time, but loses their favour for good once she falls in love with Pencho Slaveykov, one of our greatest intellectuals.



Dora Gabe

the poet everyone is in love with

One of the most gifted Bulgarian poets and the first woman to publish a book of poetry in Bulgaria, wife of the literary scholar Prof. Boyan Penev, Dora Gabe leaves no one indifferent – neither by her talent, nor by her beauty, nor by her intellect. Her life is inseparable from love scandals, the most famous of them being the love she and Elisaveta Bagryana shared for Boyan Penev.



Roza Popova

Bulgaria's Sarah Bernhardt

An actress, director, translator, playwright, teacher, writer and nurse, Roza Popova is one of the most talented, celebrated and uncompromising Bulgarian women, and her name is inseparably linked to the cultural life of Sofia, Plovdiv and Ruse. She is married to Stoyan Popov, better known as the children's writer Uncle Stoyan, who becomes her producer and creates the travelling theatre "Zora", later renamed "Roza Popova".



Elisaveta Konsulova-Vazova

the mother of the flowers

Elisaveta Konsulova-Vazova is one of the first professional women painters in Bulgaria, the first woman to paint a nude from life and the first to hold a solo exhibition; wife of Boris Vazov, the youngest brother of the writer Ivan Vazov. She has a happy marriage and family, a successful artistic career and an active social life, and she is also among the founders of puppet theatre in Bulgaria.



Elisaveta Bagryana

loved and denied

One of the most gifted Bulgarian poets and the best known abroad, an author of children's books and a translator, married and divorced, having agreed with her former husband never to see her son again, Elisaveta Bagryana is the grande dame of Bulgarian poetry.

A decorative border made of stylized black floral and leaf motifs, arranged in a circular pattern around the central text. The motifs are symmetrical and ornate, with some resembling acanthus leaves.

Episode synopses

Everything is love!



Episode One

Ekaterina Karavelova's daughter Lora takes her own life after a quarrel with her beloved Peyo Yavorov, while Ekaterina is in St Petersburg on a diplomatic mission. Unable to grasp or accept what her daughter has done, Ekaterina searches her memories for the moment when she and Lora began to grow apart, a rift that ended in a complete break between them. Examining both their lives closely, Ekaterina arrives at the devastating truth that she failed to be a good enough mother to Lora and unwittingly pushed her towards death. Ekaterina realises that she cannot live with this truth, so she buries it deep inside herself and takes refuge in the conviction that Yavorov is the direct and indirect cause of Lora's death.





Episode Two

A year earlier, shortly before she shares Ekaterina's life as a nurse in the Balkan War, Mara Belcheva loses her greatest love – the poet Pencho Slaveykov dies in her arms. Left alone in the deserted villa in Como, Italy, Mara recalls the other grievous loss of her life – the death of her husband Hristo Belchev, killed by mistake instead of Stefan Stambolov. Numerous suitors circle the young widow, among them Prince Ferdinand himself, but of them all she chooses the physically crippled and plain-looking Pencho Slaveykov. She follows the impulse of her heart and becomes the inspiration for the poetry of the only Bulgarian who came close to a Nobel nomination – a privilege that death took from Slaveykov. Mara finds the strength to go on after his death, rediscovering her own poetic voice.





Episode Three

A few years later one of Mara's closest friends – Dora Gabe – falls into depression after her husband Boyan Penev leaves her for his mistress Olga Miletich. Dora's condition deepens her sense of hopelessness about the irreversible choice she made some time before – at Boyan's insistence she underwent an abortion that left her sterile. She suppresses her devastating grief in order to support Boyan's career and accepts his open infidelities without complaint, until he decides to leave her for his affair with Olga. After their separation, with her family's help, Dora overcomes the depression and even takes Boyan back a few years later, after his mother's death. He soon begins to betray her again, however, and returns to Olga, who bears him a son. Dora finds a way to survive the loss of the man she loved and of the chance to be the mother of his child, and becomes one of the most popular and beloved poets for children.





Episode Four

Roza Popova's greatest dream is to create a theatre of her own together with her husband Uncle Stoyan – a good friend and colleague of Dora Gabe. During the Inter-Allied War, however, everything the two of them had gathered over the years is destroyed, and they part with their dream for the last time. Roza's path has always been thorny – above all because of the envy and ill will of her colleagues. Her two attempts to join the state theatre “Tear and Laughter” end with her walking out, the second time after an attempt on her life by an obsessed admirer. Roza's need to act and to make theatre of real quality wins out every time, and she starts again from the beginning. After her last attempt is destroyed by the bombardments in Dedeagach, for the first time she does not know how to go on. Her husband stays constantly at her side and, out of the ashes of their dreams, manages to create a new meaning – he inspires Roza to teach and to “infect” children and young people with her love of theatre.





Episode Five

An admirer of Roza Popova's talent and immense artistry, Elisaveta Konsulova-Vazova is about to lose the love of her life – her husband Boris Vazov, gravely injured in the bomb attack on the church of St Nedelya. Five other women pray for his life alongside her – their three daughters, Elisaveta's mother and Petra, the housemaid. Elisaveta tells her children about the blessed and fruitful road she and Boris have travelled so far, and remembers one of her greatest personal victories – winning the love of the supposedly tyrannical Vazov matriarch, Grandmother Saba. Elisaveta realises that together she and Boris can still create a great deal of goodness, beauty and meaning. When the doctors give no hope for Boris's survival, Elisaveta calls on her late mother-in-law to save her son. The women's prayers are not left unheard, and Boris returns to life.

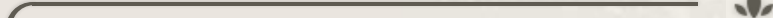




Episode Six

Dora Gabe's younger friend and rival, Elisaveta – Liza – Bagryana, faces the greatest trial of her life: to defend her freedom as a woman and a poet without the protection of the man she loves. Shortly before his divorce from Dora Gabe and his wedding to Liza, Boyan Penev, loved by them both, dies suddenly. Left without his love and his patronage, Liza repents of the courage it took to leave her narrow-minded husband Ivan Shapkarev, having accepted his mother's condition that she might become a poet but must give up her son Lyubomir. With Boyan's inspiration and support, Liza becomes one of the most recognisable Bulgarian poets. After his death, however, she feels uncertain and timid. Help comes from the most unexpected place – her eternal “rival” Dora gives her the faith and the courage to go on without hiding the light of her talent behind any man's shadow.





WHY DOES THIS SERIES MATTER?

* Uniqueness

No one has yet told the astonishing stories of these exceptional Bulgarian women.

* Exclusivity

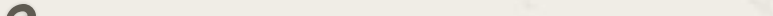
The series has the potential to be boutique, aesthetic and refined, of high visual and artistic value.

* Authenticity

Our consultant Prof. Mihail Nedelchev guarantees a truthful portrayal of the period.

* Depth

This is an educational, culturally exploratory and artistic reading of an important chapter of Bulgarian history.





Other similar series

“The Crown”

2016-

Because of the multi-layered and contradictory portrayal of real people

“Game of Thrones”

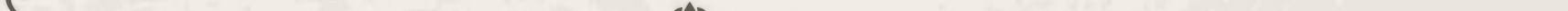
2011-2019

Because of the way the drama is built – every episode is like a finished film

“Scenes from a Marriage”

2021

Because of the intimacy and the in-depth exploration of relationships





147

years since the Liberation will be marked in 2025



“Fire in the Eyes”

is a wonderful opportunity to mark the occasion in an aesthetic, original and unusual way, with a focus on women's contribution to the development of our country.



Our team



Valentina Angelova

Screenwriter of the film “Petya of My Petya” and of the series “The Portal”, “Guilt”, “Undercover” and others



Petar Krumov

Director of the films “Hunger”, “Shame”, “The Barefoot Bull” and of the series “They, the Waves”, “Alpha”, “Scars” and others

Our team

M I R A M A R
film

Miramar Film

Executive producer – Mira Mar. A Bulgarian film and advertising production company, producer and co-producer of feature, documentary and animated films honoured at prestigious international festivals.



Boyka Velkova

Co-producer. Deputy Chair of the Bozhura Art Foundation. Actress and theatre director. In cinema she is known for her roles in the films “The Master of Boyana”, “Yo Ho Ho”, “The Bird”, “A Church for Wolves”, “Undercover”, “Elevator for Patients”, “Comfort” and others

Our team



Krum Rodrigues

Cinematographer of the films “The Warning”, “Triumph”, “Mother”, “The Island of the Blue Birds”, “Africa”, “Voevoda”, “Elevator for Patients”, “Rivers Without Bridges”, “Glory”, “Godless”, “Viktoria”, “The Lesson”, “The Color of the Chameleon”, “Shelter” and others



Prof. Mihail Nedelchev

Scholar, literary historian and theorist, literary critic, culturologist, essayist and publicist, author of books of monographic literary and literary-historical studies, essays and articles.



MIRAMAR FILM



Miramar Film is the executive producer of “Fire in the Eyes”.

Miramar Film is a Bulgarian film and advertising production company. Over the past 15 years Miramar Film has produced numerous TV commercials, offering complete services from the initial concept through production and post-production. The company also specialises in the management of concerts and corporate events, as well as in the design and construction of sets. Miramar Film is a producer and co-producer of feature, documentary and animated films that have won recognition at prestigious international festivals and achieved success at the national box office.





Thank you!

Any questions?

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Boyka Velkova
Bozhura Art Foundation

Miramar Film
executive producer

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