SHEPHERDS OF THE EARTH
Stories from the Cradle of Humankind

PRESS KIT
A FILM BY IIRIS HÄRMÄ LENGTH 75 min. LANGUAGE English & Daasanach (subtitled)
PRODUCTION VISA KOISO-KANTTILA, Guerilla Films, Finland IN CO-OPERATION WITH YLE, ERKKO LYYTINEN
Researchers collect ancient fables of Daasanach tribe in Turkana – the Cradle of Humankind – and they find out that the tribe is the greatest threat to local nature.

“What are we to say what's right or wrong?”
The story of the film takes place in Turkana, Kenya. This unique place is also known as the Cradle of Human-kind where the discoveries of pre-historical human origins are made. The area is nowadays inhabited by the indigenous pastoral tribe called Daasanach.

Our main character Álvaro Fernández-Llamazares, Spanish ethnobiologist arrive to Turkana to study the relationship between humans and nature. He becomes friends with a tribe member Job Nasak, who guides him into the daily life of the village.

Álvaro gets impressed by traditional fables and animal stories of the tribe and he is asked to collect them for the first ever Daasanach language story book. The stories paint a picture of vivid nature and a rich wildlife. But while exploring the national park Álvaro discovers dry and bare landscape with hardly any animals left. So starts a fascinating story from the Cradle of Humankind, a story of the nomadic people’s struggle to survive, of poaching, nature reserve rangers, tribal wars over scarce resources and prehistoric fossils. The two worlds of biologists and the tribe members collide revealing the values of wildlife and nature for both.

This is a story about us – Homo Sapiens. Where do we come from and where are we heading to?
My guideline of the film is: The Cradle of Humankind now. The film shows us the biggest threats for the earth: climate change and animal extinction, and challenges us to see our part in it.

I feel compassion for people whose contribution to the climate change has been minimal, but who are most at risk of its devastating effects and have least resources to withstand and adapt to it.

The film’s message is great love for the nature and also fear of its loss. But it also holds a message of hope that stems from the power of making the change. The film defends the beauty of our world and its biodiversity and cultural diversity.
FAQ

WHY IS THE TOPIC OF THE FILM RELEVANT TODAY?
The film addresses the interwoven crises of climate change and biodiversity loss through the traditional stories and songs of the Daasanach community of Northern Kenya. We are only just beginning to unlock the teachings embedded in these stories as we are simultaneously becoming aware of the rapid pace at which many of these traditions are being lost.

WHAT MAKES THIS FILM UNIQUE?
This heartfelt film is ultimately a celebration to all the sublime storyscapes of Africa, filled with memories, teachings and wisdom. It pays tribute to all the storytellers who keep alive the stories of our world. Through their words and chants, we embark on a unique journey from deep in our sacred memory, which takes us back to the shores of ancient Lake Turkana, where fossils of some of our earliest human ancestors were found.
M.A. IIRIS HÄRMÄ is a documentary film director renowned for her artistically high-quality films that depict their characters in a gentle and humanistic way.

She has produced and directed several award-winning short and feature-length documentaries that have acclaimed international reputation at various film festivals around the world. She has a degree in cultural management and a degree in cultural studies (ethnology).

M.A. VISA KOISO-KANTTILA is a producer based in Helsinki, Finland. He established production company Guerrilla Films in 1999 and has been active in producing documentary films since then. He is also an award-winning film director and cinematographer.
Guerilla Films produces documentary films of high artistic quality and content for international broadcasters (YLE, SVT, NHK, ARTE etc.), cinemas and film festivals. The company has been operating continuously since 1999 and has produced several award-winning documentary films which have been widely presented throughout the world. IIRIS HÄRMÄ and VISA KOISO-KANTTILA are the owners of the company.