

A FILM BY LÉA FEHNER

A man with short dark hair and a light beard is shown in profile, looking towards the right. He is wearing a dark, possibly black, jacket. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

SILENT

VOICES

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Stills, poster and full director's note available on the following FTP :

<ftp://rezofilms.homeftp.net>

login : festival / password : rezo



Léa Fehner

Born in Toulouse in 1981 into a travelling theatre background, Léa Fehner decides to study film. Following a time at INSAS (Belgium), she enters the screenplay section of FEMIS and graduates in 2006 with congratulations from the jury. She has directed four shorts : Caillou, Dora, Ceux qui tiennent les murs and Sauf le silence, which was selected for several international festivals and shown on CANAL +.

During her studies she went on two internships abroad, one at the film center in Bamako, the other in Cambodia, alongside Rithy Panh. She has shot her first feature Silent Voices with Rezo Productions. Its screenplay is the result of a lot of documentary research at Fleury Merogis prison.

In 2007, she was the winner of the 9th Emergence session and received the Prix Junior for Best Screenplay attributed unanimously for this same project.

An elderly woman wants to meet her son's murderer. A sixteen-year-old girl who has crossed paths with a young hoodlum needs an adult to accompany her to the prison visiting room. A young medical supplies delivery man is offered a deal to take the place of a gangster inmate so that the latter may escape. Two women, one man, three destinies that come together in the visiting room of a prison...

THE DIRECTOR

SYNOPSIS

TECH. INFO.

Running Time: 118 min

Ratio: 1.85

Sound: DTS SR and Digital

Original Language: French

CAST & CREW

Cast: Reda Kateb, Farida Rahouadj, Pauline Etienne, Marc Barbé, Vincent Rottiers, Julien Lucas, Dinara Droukarova

Producers: Jean-Michel Rey, Philippe Liégeois

Screenplay: Léa Fehner, Catherine Paillé

Cinematography: Jean-Louis Vialard, AFC

Sound: Julien Sicart, Didier Cattin, Jean-Marc Schick

Editing: Julien Chigot



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Near a prison that I used to pass by every morning, a woman had taken the habit of screaming. She was trying to speak to the man, her man, who lived behind the high walls. Her body would rise, scream, hoisting her delicate figure on the tip of her toes to try to reach him. Too often the rumble of the street swallowed her words, but she resisted and fought so her voice could go pass these walls.

To me, there was something about this place that was terribly indecent and powerful. Across the walls, the barb wires, the look of people passing by, the roar of the cars, and the prison bars, a man and a woman were exposing there intimacy just so they could go on living. I was profoundly touched by the woman's gesture, by her determination to communicate, by her despise of the outside world, as well as the extraordinary freedom that flowed out of her. A challenge towards the walls and the world.

I started listening to these voices that pass through the walls, which defy the silence and try desperately to create a bridge between two worlds. "Silent Voices" was born from these voices and from this scream.

Born from a long documentary work and many encounters made

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



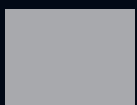
at the Fleury Merogis and Vill-pinte prisons (Paris suburbs), the film, in its own way, is looking into shedding light on this shadowy place and on its extension to the world of free men: the parlor.

Neither locked up inside, nor free on the outside, I wanted to give a voice to those who are near the

prisoners, to these people whose destinies are silent, and interrogate this link that resists despite the flesh and these bruised heart. Prison is a place that creates at its best indifference, at its worst despise. I wanted to fight this state of fact and speak up, show in the best possible way the plurality of paths that lead to it to resist commonness, simplicity and ignorance.

The parlor is a burning moment where everything is condensed, where lives, suspended outside, explode, freethemselves from the look of their guards. A space-time continuum where speech becomes the only vector of relationship. Prevented speech, timed speech, invigilated speech, but a speech that always tries to inhabit the void, to summarize the days of absence, to soothe the days of separation. Here we allow ourselves anything. Anything but silence...

It always seemed important to me to make a story that is usually left to the short news item, to sensationalism or a too often simplistic journalistic treatment. I don't claim any generalization, I don't wave any flag, I only hope that cinema



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can be a place that helps to access the complexity of trajectories to ward off prejudice and stereotypes; a place which helps to represent what is hidden and take one step back to interrogate in a more profound way the society in which we evolve and what drives it from under.

At the gate of the prison, horizons seem too often already confiscated. This is why I chose to show 3 characters which everything divides from this universe. Three trajectories that are not forced, but quite on the contrary, chosen. Three characters that will, each in their own way, seize their story and exist, live, laugh, decide in front of a submissive world. It's their determination to push the walls and break them that I wanted to put to light. Believe in the possibility of choice, of taking a turn, of a personal and particular path far from determinism. Explore how a system can decide how to sculpt you and how a possibility to resist still remains.

Zorah, Stéphane and Laure could have stayed ordinary, could have continued on their paths if drama or encounters hadn't brought them to the prison. They are not assassins, thieves, they didn't choose in their journey the presence of this place, they didn't even suspect it. But Zorah's drama, Laure's love

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tenderness of a woman who can only be opposed to her. Laure will learn love and abandonment, she who, strong and secretive, will exhaust herself trying to make possible those visits at the parlor even though she can't go without adult supervision. Stéphane, finally, to whom life has always denied everything, who could never seize an opportunity, will act as a free man for the first time by switching with someone else therefore sentencing himself to become a prisoner.

In front of a society that separates, builds walls, barriers, I want to defend a cinema that would have the virtue of uniting, to permit acknowledgment where there is strangeness. I want to put forward the power of a stream against the bed hemming it in. If one holds on, resists, asserts himself, the others will follow...

and a crazy and surprising proposition for Stéphane will bring them together in this place. Until it becomes their destiny, until their lives play there...

To access it, Zorah will have to meet the sister of her son's murderer, make a friend out of her by lying to her, enter the intimacy and