

LES FILMS VELVET PRESENT

**MINA
FARID**

**ZAHIA
DEHAR**

**BENOÎT
MAGIMEL**

**CLOTILDE
COURAU**

**NUNO
LOPES**



QUINZAINÉ
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2019

an easy girl

A FILM BY **REBECCA ZLOTOWSKI**

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LES FILMS VELVET
present

an easy girl

a film by **REBECCA ZLOTOWSKI**

starring
MINA FARID, ZAHIA DEHAR, BENOÎT MAGIMEL and **NUNO LOPES**
with the participation of **CLOTILDE COURAU**

SCREENINGS

MONDAY 20th

08:45 am - Théâtre Croisette - Press & Industry
08:30 pm - Théâtre Croisette - Official Premiere

TUESDAY 21st

04:30 pm - Cinéma Alexandre III
10:30 pm - Cinéma Les Arcades

FRENCH RELEASE
AUGUST 28th

QUINZAINE
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2019

2019 / France / Colour / 91'

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Synopsis

**Naïma is 16 and lives in Cannes.
She has given herself the summer to choose
what she wants to do with her life.
Then her cousin Sofia, with her alluring lifestyle,
arrives to spend the holidays with her.
Together, they will share an unforgettable summer.**



Interview

REBECCA ZLOTOWSKI



An easy girl

The title is mischievous and instantly calls into question the cliché by playing with the very attribution it aims to refute: this girl called “easy” is in my view a powerful girl. I wanted to propose a different look at a woman whom society at best mocks, at worse despises.

And if easy girls existed, then what would a difficult girl be? What is an easy life? Does such a thing exist? This is how we should understand the film’s Pascalian highlighting of her crucial choice of occupation. How much it is due to chance: a chance reunion with a cousin one summer, whose example, with all its highs and lows, makes you decide to seize your independence; the coincidence of having a body that opens up possibilities and pleasures.

The origin

As is often the case, there was a double starting point: sentimental on one hand, political on the other, with a powerful desire for fiction triggered by my encounter with Zahia Dehar.

The emotional starting point was the death of Philippe Elkoubi, the casting director, with whom I've always worked: to try and overcome the sorrow that overwhelmed me, I immersed myself in work. Above all I needed to write an impulsive film – sun, sex and pleasure. At that time I was also preparing a TV series, *Les Sauvages* (shot after the film and due to be broadcast in September on Canal Plus), and I dreaded spending two years of my life on a dark, heavy project, cut off from the joys of cinema. So I turned to this film to find that which belongs only to cinema, with the freedom only cinema allows, which would speak more personally, more independently – a less collective work than the series.

The Subject

Very quickly I understood that the subject would be the question of power, of domination, on every front: physical, sexual, cultural, financial. Of course that year, which had been focussed on the Weinstein affair, had led everyone – me included – to think about these issues in one way or another, but I hadn't had to wait for that to become interested.

Years before, I'd cut out a magazine story, a first-person narrative told in the manner of a witness report, about two young women and some married men on the Riviera who spent time on luxury yachts, and the trade-off that took place between them: gifts, invitations, dinners, in exchange by tacit agreement for the young women's presence, their bodies, nights of partying and pleasure... But against all expectations, and despite the moral tone I imposed on this exchange despite my better judgement, the young woman talked of the sweetness of that summer, its constant caress, its civility – even its romanticism, despite the hypocrisy that underlay their relationships with these men. This story touched me by its strength and by its sweetness.

An encounter

If the subject imposed itself quickly, it was because of an encounter – even a recognition, one might say – between Zahia Dehar and myself. A young French woman of Algerian origin who became famous a few years ago after a story splashed across the headlines, Zahia had an unprecedented career (in the sense Eric Rohmer gives this word in *Suzanne's Career*), a remarkable trajectory. Her perfectly arched silhouette, her mystery, her shyness and the air of the unknown that surrounded her, all had left a powerful impression on me as on everyone else – an immediate sympathy for her, as for all women, often social defectors, who are victims of public buying for blood... but I had no idea I would meet her one day.

The fact that we are so foreign to one another attracted me at the start: the way Zahia emphasizes her femininity in the most heightened and clichéd way – docility, silence, sophistication, the geisha disguise, tipping her into a camp aesthetic of which she is fully aware. That's where I stood when I heard from her on Instagram.

I was surprised she even knew my name... I saw her clips and was stunned when I heard her speak. (How many women, today, are omnipresent in the public sphere without us ever hearing their voices?) I discovered she speaks in an extraordinarily elegant manner: literary, anachronistic, entirely free of slang, restrained, reserved, with the unfathomable accent of a Lebanese, Syrian or Italian Bardot, impossible to define, the opposite of the young women who gravitate toward reality TV. The spoken speech of an Eric Rohmer character, that allured me instantly.



A Rohmerian character

I immediately thought of *La Collectionneuse*, one of my favourite films by Rohmer, and his most sensual, erotic, unsettling... Made quickly and released in 1968, it casts a brilliant eye over sexual liberation. Daniel Pommereul's tirade to Haydée Politoff, where he says: "You are the lowest rung of humanity," is exactly what common opinion has voiced about Zahia Dehar for a long time. And still does today. From which arose the question: what would *La Collectionneuse* be in 2019? What would this 'moral tale' be if told in exactly the same way, with the tools of cinema and literature, with langour, pleasure, sensuality? It seemed to be a subject into which to throw oneself.

An amoral summer tale

I built the film very quickly with the help of Teddy Lussi-Modeste, like an amoral summer's tale. A fairytale about power, including sexual power. *La Collectionneuse* examined domination, exploitation, liberalism, cynicism and naïveté, insouciance and pragmatism, discipline, love games. Without at all wanting to attempt a remake, faithful or not, I wanted with *An Easy Girl* to enter into a dialogue with him in order to make a film of its time, light, quick and bright. A dialogue between the other legacies that run through the film's subconscious: The Italy of Zurlini's *Girl With a Suitcase*, the girl seduced and abandoned by Pietro Germi... the guitar of René Clément's *Plein Soleil*, the two friends in *Adieu Philippine* and the pick-up artists in *Blue Jeans* (both by Jacques Rozier)... a personal mini pantheon of sorts...

A dialogue with all these films, a relationship with adventure rather than love. Sensations rather than feelings. A perfect subject for cinema. A modern idea, not seeing Sofia as tricked by her emotional immaturity and searching deep within love to dress some buried wound that would make her a victim... For her young cousin Naima, Sofia absolutely represents a positive and free model of the independence that she lacks in order to seize her destiny as she wants to, even if for her that means going to school, taking power through her studies to become a *chef de cuisine* – a more traditional journey but not without its own courage.

It was this courage that seduced me right away in the young Mina Farid, here making her screen debut. I met her in Cannes during the festival exactly one year ago; she lived there, we knew we were going to shoot on the Riviera, we weren't sure which city yet, (we needed yachts with pavement cafés and onlookers opposite, an image that anchored the film in my mind from the beginning) and Mina entered the room and right away made me feel as if I was the one being auditioned. Her childish obstinate orphan's strength overwhelmed me.

Sixteen

There was in her the same burgeoning consciousness as in Léa Seydoux in my first film, *Dear Prudence*, of which *An Easy Girl* could easily be the sunny aspect: optimistic, open and summery. It's an age I like, for its paradoxical toughness, while we love to associate it with insouciance. For me it's an age of terror, when every decision can shape your future, and where with each one you risk making the wrong choice.

An age when it's enough just to follow your path, as long as it leads upwards. The way Naima looked at Sofia with her synthetic beauty, contemporary and perfect, the way she let herself be seduced by this sweet, silky lifestyle, the way she could be touched by her interiority, so much more complex than it seems, the immediate familial goodwill she feels for her, all this interested me – a means to sweep away the cliché of feminine rivalry, and class conflict. There is a lot to learn from Naima's generation.



A feminine voice/over

An Easy Girl is therefore not the realistic rites-of passage story of two young Maghreb girls who encounter a group of party animals on the Riviera one summer, but a poetic tale inspired by that story. I emphasize the volatile aspect of film, scintillating and linked to the sun that illuminates it, to its insular, literary desire.

Literary as regards the reference to Pessoa's "The Anarchist Banker" in one of the film's long scenes. In this marvellously clever story on contradiction and liberalism, he summarizes the absolute paradox: to be a speculator, a banker on one hand and an anarchist on the other. In the same way that you can give yourself sexually right away, fully, while retaining mystery and power.

Literary, too, the voiceover I have wanted for a long time. Not only as the assumed legacy of a certain French cinema, but through a political ambition to be able to access the interiority of a story narrated by the girl – not only the usual boy caught in his contradictory torments, his intimate diary. To give the voice over to one of the *collectionneuses*. By making a tale for today.

Music

I had the music in my head, which had to contrast with the contemporary bodies and places. From Ravel's *Jeux d'eau* to Poulenc... pure 19th Century romanticism. And a much loved Schubert, only played on a guitar. A melodic line familiar to everyone. Niagara (80s French band) for love on the beach... I needed familiar tracks, so for the first time I didn't have to commission a score, a revolution in my way of operating on this point.



Rebecca Zlotowski was born in 1980 in Paris. She holds an agregation in French Literature and graduated from the prestigious École Normale Supérieure, then joined the FEMIS, the famous Parisian film school, in the screenplay department. There she met other directors, such as Jean-Claude Brisseau, Philippe Grandrieux, Antoine d'Agata and Teddy Lussi-Modeste, with whom she had continued to work (she co-wrote *The Price of Success* by Teddy Lussi-Modeste in 2017).

Her first film, *Belle Épine* (*Dear Prudence*), screened in Critics' Week in Cannes in 2010, and was awarded with the Louis Delluc Prize and the Critics' Week Grand Prize for best first film. Three years later, her second film, *Grand Central*, screened in Official Selection at Cannes, in Un Certain Regard.

The Summoning, her third film, screened at the 2016 Venice Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival, amongst others. She is completing the post-production of her first mini-series, *Les Sauvages*, for Canal Plus, co-written and adapted from a novel by Sabri Louatah.

Rebecca Zlotowski

TV Series

2019 *Les Sauvages*

Cinema as director

2018 *AN EASY GIRL*

2016 *THE SUMMONING*

2013 *GRAND CENTRAL*

Un Certain Regard - Cannes 2013

Winner - Golden Swan - Cabourg

2010 *BELLE ÉPINE*

Critics' Week - Cannes 2010

Winner - Louis Delluc Prize for First Film, 2010

French Syndicate of Cinema Critics' Award for First Film, 2010

Screenwriter

2017 *THE PRICE OF SUCCESS* by Teddy Lussi-Modeste (co-writer)

2015 *DESPITE THE NIGHT* by Philippe Grandrieux (co-writer)

2013 *YOU AND THE NIGHT* by Yann Gonzalez (co-writer)

Medium Length Films

2007 *CONSTANCE A TOKYO* (co-writer and co-director with Aurélia Morali)



Cast

Naima
Sofia
Philippe
Andres
Calypso
Dounia
Dodo
Stewart

Mina FARID
Zahia DEHAR
Benoît MAGIMEL
Nuno LOPES
Clotilde COURAU
Loubna ABIDAR
"Riley" Lakdhar DRIDI
Henri-Noël TABARY

Crew

Director
Screenplay
in collaboration with
1st Assistant Director
Casting Director
Production Manager
DP
Sound

Production Designer
Wardrobe
Make-Up
Editor
Production
Producer
Associate Producer
Associate Producer
Co-production
International Sales

Rebecca ZLOTOWSKI
Rebecca ZLOTOWSKI
Teddy LUSSI-MODESTE
Jean-Baptiste POUILLOUX
Julie ALLIONE
Thibault MATTEI
George LECHAPTOIS
Nicolas CANTIN
Pascal VILLARD
Caroline REYNAUD
Marc DOISNE
Rozenn LE GLOAHEC
Isabelle KERBEC
Miwoo KIM
Géraldine MANGENOT
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