



EXCLUSIVE

## FACE VALUE

**ROSALIE** Stéphanie Di Giusto's new drama looks at a bearded woman in 1870s France...

**W**hen Stéphanie Di Giusto (2016's *The Dancer*) discovered the story of Clémentine Delait, known as the 'most illustrious and celebrated bearded lady in France' in the late 19th century, she was hooked. 'She always refused to be a carnival freak. She really just wanted to live her life as a woman and just stand for her own destiny, her own person,' she tells *Teasers*.

After researching 'other women who suffered from hirsutism', the French director decided, 'I didn't want to make a biopic – it really wasn't my intention.' So she instead conjured her own fictional story, *Rosalie*. The film stars Nadia Tereszkiewicz in the title role – a woman living in a small 1870s French community, who is about to marry debt-ridden café owner Abel (*The Taste of Things*' Benoît Magimel). But then, much to his horror, he discovers that she has to shave every day to conceal her hairiness – until Rosalie suggests she uses her appearance to attract curious customers to his ailing business.

Finding an actor to play Rosalie was no easy fix. After fruitless auditioning of many young actors, Di Giusto bumped

into Tereszkiewicz, who'd featured in *The Dancer*. 'I offered her to come for a test. As soon as she put on the dress and the beard, it was something so natural, so organic for her, because I felt that all the actresses that came... there was something very disturbing for them. They started scratching their face, or they were awkward, something just didn't work. Whereas for Nadia it was so natural.'

Also casting Magimel ('the most talented... if not the best actor of his generation in French cinema,' says the director), Di Giusto calls the film 'an unconditional love story', especially as Abel gradually bonds with his wife. 'For me, the idea was to have sensuality in unexpected places, to change and play – or challenge – the codes of cinema and the kinds of bodies that we're used to seeing in love scenes and here have a kind of unexpected eroticism,' she says. 'And to surprise the audience with a sensuality that we can feel.' **JAMES MOTTRAM**

**ROSALIE OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 7 JUNE**



### Nadia Tereszkiewicz

**What did you think about Rosalie when you first read the script?**

I saw some pride in her look and something that was strong and at the same time really feminine, because the movie questions femininity and where we put it and I saw something in the posture that I liked, and I wanted to know more.

**How did you find acting with Benoît Magimel?**

It's a huge chance because the way he was looking at me changed me every day. He's more than an actor in the way that he needs to create reality. So he rejected me in the first half of the movie... He rejected and was disgusted by the character, but also by me in the way that we didn't talk. I felt rejected. And I understood the huge generosity of that, because it created in me something... I tried to please him, I tried to have his attention, like the character.

**You speak Polish, French, English and Finnish. Which nationality is closest to you?**

I especially feel European. I don't know America. Of course, I would love to go there, but I have this passion for being European and to travel in European cinema that excites me a lot – to know that movies can travel. **JAMES MOTTRAM**

