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Competition

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TORONTO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL 2016

PAULO BRANCO, WIM WENDERS & GIAN-PIERO RINGEL PRESENT

REDA KATEB
SOPHIE SEMIN
JENS HARZER

WITH A SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BY
NICK CAVE

The
**BEAUTIFUL
DAYS of
ARANJUEZ**

a film by
WIM WENDERS

FROM THE PLAY BY PETER HANDKE



ALFAMA FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH LEOPARDO FILMES

SUPPORTED BY CNC, FFA, MEDIENBOARD FILM- UND MEDIENKUNSTWERKE, RADIO E TELEVISÃO DE PORTUGAL. A FILM BY WIM WENDERS "THE BEAUTIFUL DAYS OF ARANJUEZ" WITH REDA KATEB, SOPHIE SEMIN, JENS HARZER, NICK CAVE AND PETER HANDKE.
COSTUME DESIGNER JUDY SHREWSBURY. EDITOR BEATRICE BAHN. PRODUCTION DESIGNER URSULA HERVANI. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PIERRE DEBIE. WRITING AND SCREENPLAY BY JOSEPHINE DEBIE AND PIERRE DEBIE. CASTING ANGELA FRECH. PRODUCTION MANAGER THIERRY CHENAGNE. PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR FRANCESCA PERUZZI.
PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR (GERMANY) MARTINA HEIDIG. POST-PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR ANDREW SCHNEIDER. PRODUCED BY PAULO BRANCO AND GIAN-PIERO RINGEL. WRITTEN BY WIM WENDERS BASED ON THE PLAY BY PETER HANDKE.

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Synopsis

A beautiful summer day. A garden. A terrace. A woman and a man under the trees, with a soft summer wind. In the distance, in the vast plain, the silhouette of Paris.

A conversation begins: questions and answers between the woman and the man. It deals with sexual experiences, childhood, memories, the essence of summer and the difference between men and women, it deals with feminine perspective and masculine perception.

In the background, inside the house that opens onto the terrace, on the woman and the man: the writer, in the process of imagining this dialogue and typing it down. Or is it the other way around? Might it be that those two characters, over there, tell him what he's putting down on paper: a long, final dialogue between a man and a woman?

With *THE BEAUTIFUL DAYS OF ARANJUEZ*, Wim Wenders stages the play by his longtime friend Peter Handke. Its subtitle is "A Summer Dialogue". Seldom has the nature of the difference between men and women been shown more clearly, and to what extent their aspirations, expectations and view of the past might diverge. And how, in spite of this

THE BEAUTIFUL DAYS OF ARANJUEZ

- or precisely because of this -, the dialogue that engages is captivating. It's a duel, a Q&A game. Its fundamental condition : unconditional honesty.

The actors Sophie Semin (*Beyond The Clouds*, *The Rite of Spring*) and Reda Kateb (*Zero Dark Thirty*, *A Prophet*) lead this moving dialogue in a stunning way, while the trees surrounding them, the view on the Île-de-France plain extending to Paris on the horizon, become the background to that intimate, haunting play. Jens Harzer plays the writer, Peter Handke's alter-ego so to speak, and Nick Cave appears as himself.

After 3 American LPs (1969), *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* (1971), *Wrong Move* (1975) and *Wings of Desire* (1987), this is the fifth film collaboration between Peter Handke and Wim Wenders. It will be exhibited in 3D in selected theatres.



Director's Statement



If I look at all my films,
I see two extremely different categories or principles at work.
There are those that came into being strictly in the shooting process,
largely made without a screenplay,
as an adventure that cast and crew went into with me.
(And those are not just documentaries, but also fictional films.)
And on the other side there are those
that were planned minutely from beginning to end, down to every detail,
following a firm storyline or based on a novel.

Between those two opposites there are many shades and variations,
and it seems to me that I tried each and every intermediate form.

But one thing is for sure:
I never made a film like “The Beautiful Days of Aranjuez”.
Not just because it is based on a text written for the stage,
not just because it is spoken in French,
not just because it is shot in “Natural Depth” 3D,
not just because it takes place in one single location,
not just because it was produced in just ten days,
no,
mainly because it is my first film
whose wishful thinking actually became its final shape.

As a director today, in the preliminary stage of a production,
you have to write a “Director’s Intention”,
for the financing, the public funding or the possible distributors.
In that paper you’re supposed to present, as honestly as possible,
how you see the finished film and how you anticipate to shape it.
Most of the time you never want to see (or be haunted by) that text again,
as in the course of the preparation and the shoot
a film emerges that differs from that first projection,
either willingly or due to circumstances,
cast, budget, weather, locations or whatsoever.



“Firstly, things turn out differently, and secondly, as you think” seems a good rule of thumb for filmmaking.

In this case - for the first time -
I publish my “Director’s Intention” in the press book,
because - for the first time - I have nothing against confronting
the wish or desire for a film, its existence as sheer imagination,
to the actual film that came out of it.

Peter Handke calls this text “A Summer Dialogue”.
He wrote it in French for the stage,
and the play has already been performed in Germany and France.
I would like to make “The Beautiful Days of Aranjuez” as a film,
and shoot it entirely outdoors.

The play itself and the author have encouraged me to do so.
Allow me to explain myself in more detail.

The text deals with two characters, a woman and a man,
who may not be a couple (anymore?),
but have clearly known each other for a long time.
They are sitting at a table, in a garden or a park,
surrounded by trees through which,
from time to time, the wind blows.
In the plain below, fields are stretching out,
and far in the distance you see the city of Paris.
It is summertime...

With a few hesitant words, a long conversation begins
that touches on many things:
on the woman’s first sexual experiences
about which the man seems to be endlessly curious,
on observations suggested and provoked by the nature around them,
or on memories they both ponder about.
Sometimes it’s like a game of questions and answers,
sometimes it’s a fast back and forth debate
and sometimes it leads to longer soliloquies.
And then there are also long pauses and silences.

In that relationship between the woman and the man,
but also in that summery dialogue
there is great freedom, serenity and peace.
This is almost a utopian situation,

considering how long this peace lasts.
(Well, not quite until the end...)

As we will be shooting out in the open,
the wind will play a part, and so will sunlight and shadows.
We will hear the twittering of birds,
the rustling of leaves in the treetops
and sometimes a plane in the sky.

Time goes by.
And it does so differently than it could ever go by on stage.
In my imagination, or my wishful thinking,
you’ll have the feeling
that it is not only one day that goes by, but many;
a somehow indefinite “summer time”.
For a while, the morning light might shine,
then perhaps a soft rain has set in,
and the two are sitting at their table under a big umbrella,
listening to the sound of raindrops,
then here they are, sitting in the evening sun,
then under a cloudy sky again,
and suddenly it is twilight, then again a glaring light...

We will move on slowly through the play, every day a bit further along,
without worrying about a continuity of weather or light.
On the contrary: our only continuity is the flow of language and thoughts.



It will be helpful for the transitions
that sometimes in the course of our film,
(definitely at the beginning and at the end,)
we will go inside the house
in front of which our summer dialogue is taking place.

This is an ancient house,
built in the late nineteenth century.
Sarah Bernhard had lived here for a while, it was her country residence,
set on the only hill for miles around,
hence this view stretching all the way to Paris...

From the garden, a big open door leads into a dark hall.
Inside, in the semi-darkness, stands a neon-lit jukebox.
A open door leads to the study of the “author”.
Like “the woman” and “the man” outside,
he is also played by an actor.
He is the third member of our cast, and I take a liberty with him:
there is no such character in the theatre play...

From his desk in front of the window,
the author has a good view of the garden and the little terrace
where the woman and the man are sitting.

When we see him for the first time,
in the beginning of our film, behind his desk,
using a pencil to write down on the still blank pages of his notebook
the initial description of the situation,
- as the opening text of the play does -
we will hear his inner voice
that will lead us into this summer dialogue.

As we look with him through the window into the garden,
there is no one to be seen, though.
The woman and the man “do not exist yet”.
The camera moves away from our writer
(while we still hear his inner voice),
crosses the hall and finds its way into the open,
and only now, when it discovers the table on the terrace,
the woman and the man are sitting there.

When they start exchanging their first remarks, hesitantly,
these first words may simultaneously be heard
from the inner voice of the author,
that will then fade gradually and flowingly
into the dialogue between the actors.

In the middle of our summer dialogue,
during a pause in the conversation between the woman and the man,

we will come back to the author,
who’ll pause in his writing and will get up
to select a song in the jukebox in the hall.
The actors hear the music in the distance,
but their dialogue goes on undeterred.

Also at the end, after the last words by the actor,
we return once again inside the house
and find the workplace of the author empty.
As we look outside the window,
also the actors are gone and the table stands there empty..

So there will be a certain, sparse interplay
between our couple and the author who invents them
and who’s in the process of making up their dialogue.

I intend to shoot this long, peaceful, utopian conversation
strictly outdoors, in nature, with all the original sounds.
And after my experiences with “Pina”, “Cathedrals of Culture”
and “Every Thing Will Be Fine”,
I also want to shoot “Les Beaux Jours d’Aranjuez” in 3D.

If you have seen one of my films in 3D,
you know that this has nothing in common
with the kind of 3D you see in American films.
Our process, “Natural Depth”,
invented by the great European pioneer Alain Derobe,
is not based on effects,
but strictly on the principle of imitating with two cameras,
as precisely as possible, what (and how) two eyes see.
And after a few minutes you’ll all forget
that you ever saw a film differently in the cinema.

I am confident that this way,
with this great text by Peter Handke,
a beautiful, peaceful and unique film can be crafted,
that I want to shoot with a small team and with sparse financial means,
in two weeks in June.

I thank you for your attention.

Wim Wenders



That was the “Director’s Intention”, a few months before the shoot.
What amazes me most, reading this again,
is that the film in spite of its deliberate limitation (10 shooting days)
and its complex technology (3D)
took place in a climate of freedom
like I never witnessed it on a set.
(One cause was certainly that Paulo Branco, our producer,
was so relaxed and never uptight about anything.)
We didn’t lack a thing, neither in terms of time nor in creative choices.
And of course there was still a lot of space for improvisation and changes.
(And I don’t just mean that the writer is no longer using a pencil,
but is now working on a typewriter.)

The only thing I didn’t quite know yet then
was in which direction the score was going to develop.
Okay, all music was supposed to come out of the jukebox,
(and the Wurlitzer was an homage, anyway,
to Peter Handke’s “Essay on the Jukebox”).

In his text of this “summer dialogue” two references to music appear.
“Man of Constant Sorrow” an old blues classic,
is quoted by the woman as “Woman of Constant Sorrow”
who she feels she represents.
Peter handed me that on a plate, I figured.
Many musicians have covered the song, Bob Dylan among them,
but I rather wanted to hear it afresh.
My friend Till Hertling took up the challenge
and recorded a very coherent, rather contemporary version of the tune.

And then, in the play, the woman and the man quote a song
by the Troggs, “Love Is All Around”.
(An old jukebox favorite of Peter Handke’s,
as I remember well from those days
when one used to spend more money on feeding the music box
than for the drinks you’d consume in that café or bar.)
Sophie and Reda, my two actors, had to first learn the song
in order to be able to quote and hum it.
I can do it in my sleep. (And Peter, too, I guess.)

But our writer, when he takes a time-out,
goes to the jukebox a few times,
and so the big question came up: what are his other choices?

Already when I imagined for the first time a neon-lit Wurlitzer
in the dark corridor of the Sarah Bernhardt villa,
the idea came up, or rather the desire,
that a song could first be heard from the jukebox,

and then its singer would magically appear there, in the semi-darkness.
I probably always took these (by now outdated) music machines
as some kind of “projectors”
that could put a piece of music with its lyrics, but also its singer,
right in front of you, so that you might (almost) see them.

A couple of weeks before we started to shoot I went to a Nick Cave concert,
at the “Grand Rex” in Paris.
At the end, Nick played a few songs solo,
and I was most impressed by a love song, “Into my arms”,
that I knew well, but that really moved me,
just performed by Nick alone, at the piano.

It made me think of my dream of the mysterious Wurlitzer appearance
and all of a sudden it was obvious who that should be:
this very song and its singer (and author).
That Nick Cave accepted my invitation so spontaneously
was something I had hoped for, but it was still a great delight.
I didn’t really tell my small crew
why I had a grand piano delivered to the house
that barely fit through the old doors of the corridor.
They were quite speechless,
when Nick Cave stepped out of the car on the second last day.
(And kept playing for all of them after the shoot had finished.)

What other tunes the writer selected in his jukebox
remained in the dark during the filming
and was only decided in the editing room.

One song imposed itself almost on its own.
We had recorded it a year ago
for the restoration of “The Goalie’s Anxiety at the Penalty Kick”,
the first film in my long collaboration with Peter Handke.
In “The Goalie” many a jukebox appears,
and in one of them I had an Elvis Presley song make a short appearance.
Boy, did I ever regret my juvenile carelessness later!
That song turned out to be totally unaffordable
when it came to reacquiring all music rights anew.
If we didn’t want to take out the scene altogether
we had to replace it with a new recording of our own,
with a song that had to fit the Elvis one spot-on, in rhythm and timing,
so we could exchange it digitally
and slip it into the old mono-mix without a trace.
Gemma Ray masterfully achieved that with “Half Way to Paradise”,
but the song was way too beautiful and it seemed a real pity
to just let it appear for 15 seconds.
Now it shines in its full length,

in mono, of course, a Wurlitzer song par excellence.

And then there was still the question of the opening and ending music.
To remain consistent, those had to come out of the music box as well...

For the first eerie images of the film of the Paris streets devoid of humanity
and for the glorious summer day that our story begins on,
I had a hard time finding a poignant song.
("Summer in the City" would have been too much on the nose...)
But then I rather thought: "Whose voice would I want to hear here the most?"
Immediately Lou Reed came to mind
and right away "Perfect Day" just could no be topped,
at least not to my ears,
an almost archetypal jukebox song in its ironic serenity.
To hear the opening of the film for the first time with Lou's voice
was probably my favorite moment
during the entire editing and postproduction phase.

What remained was the ending.
Which song coming out of the jukebox could carry and support that,
this apocalypse, this deep hole into which our writer is falling?
Which song could tell of his grief and his pain,
but still maintain all the beauty that he imagined as well,
especially the love that the text often discards
and that remains present nevertheless?

I must admit, I tried out a lot
and had many songs come out of the jukebox
until I found the one and only, the ultimate one, in my book,
that could not have been written better "to measure" for the film:
"The World is on Fire" by Gus Black,
from his album "The Day I Realized..."

With this song the neon-lit jukebox
finally turned into some sort of "Greek Chorus",
a singing accompanist to the action of our film.

"Hey, hey, hey, there's nothing left to say,
the world is on fire,
and I love you, I love you..."





Cast

The Man Reda KATEB
The Woman Sophie SEMIN
The Writer Jens HARZER
The Pianist Nick CAVE

Crew

Director Wim WENDERS
Script Wim WENDERS
From the play by Peter HANDKE
Photography Benoît DEBIE
Stereography Joséphine DEROBE
Sound Pierre TUCAT,
. Ansgar FRERICH
First Assistant Director Léocadie HANDKE
Editing Beatrice BABIN
Production Design Virginie HERNVANN,
. Thierry FLAMAND
Costume Design Judy SHREWSBURY
Line Producer Thierry CRETAGNE

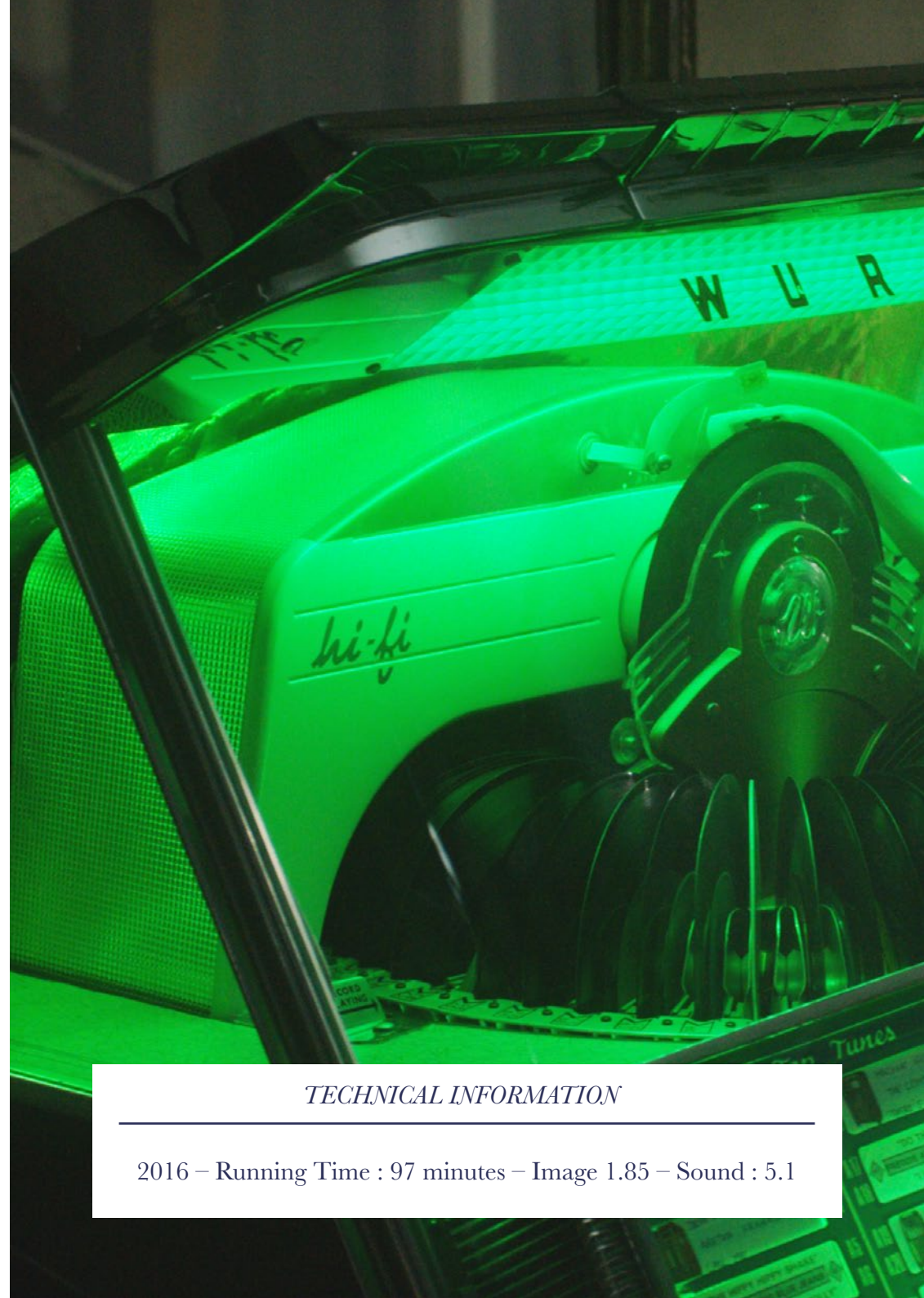
Produced by Paulo BRANCO & Gian-Piero RINGEL

A Coproduction between
ALFAMA FILMS PRODUCTION and NEUE ROAD MOVIES

In association with LEOPARDO FILMES
with the participation of THE CNC, FFA, MEDIENBOARD,
FILM- UND MEDIENSTIFTUNG NRW, RTP

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

2016 – Running Time : 97 minutes – Image 1.85 – Sound : 5.1



FILMOGRAPHY

Wim Wenders

- 2016 - THE BEAUTIFUL DAYS OF ARANJUEZ (3D)
- 2015 - EVERY THING WILL BE FINE (3D)
- 2014 - THE SALT OF THE EARTH
- 2014 - CATHEDRALS OF CULTURE, EPISODE "THE BERLIN PHILHARMONIC" (3D)
- 2011 - PINA (3D)
- 2008 - PALERMO SHOOTING
- 2005 - DON'T COME KNOCKING
- 2004 - LAND OF PLENTY
- 2003 - THE BLUES SERIES: THE SOUL OF A MAN
- 2002 - ODE TO COLOGNE: A ROCK 'N' ROLL FILM
- 2000 - THE MILLION DOLLAR HOTEL
- 1999 - BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB
- 1997 - THE END OF VIOLENCE
- 1996 - A TRICK OF THE LIGHT (WITH STUDENTS OF THE HFF MUNICH)
- 1995 - BEYOND THE CLOUDS (WITH MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI)
- 1994 - LISBON STORY
- 1993 - FAR AWAY, SO CLOSE!
- 1991 - UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD
- 1989 - NOTEBOOK ON CITIES AND CLOTHES
- 1987 - WINGS OF DESIRE
- 1985 - TOKYO-GA
- 1984 - PARIS, TEXAS
- 1982 - THE STATE OF THINGS
HAMMETT
- 1980 - NICK'S FILM - LIGHTNING OVER WATER
- 1977 - THE AMERICAN FRIEND
- 1976 - KINGS OF THE ROAD
- 1975 - WRONG MOVE
- 1973 - ALICE IN THE CITIES
- 1972 - THE SCARLET LETTER
- 1971 - THE GOALIE'S ANXIETY AT THE PENALTY KICK
- 1970 - SUMMER IN THE CITY



FILMOGRAPHY

Reda Kateb

DIRECTOR

2014 - PITCHOUNE (court métrage)

ACTOR

2016 - DJANGO MELODIES by Etienne Comar
2016 - THE BEAUTIFUL DAYS OF ARANJUEZ by Wim Wenders
2015 - MON NOM A PIGALLE by Ekoué et Hamé (La Rumeur)
2014 - PITCHOUNE by Reda Kateb (court métrage)
2014 - LES CHEVALIERS BLANCS by Joachim Lafosse
2014 - HIPPOCRATE by Thomas Lilti
2014 - L'ASTRAGALE by Brigitte Sy
2014 - LA RÉSISTANCE DE L'AIR by Fred Grivois
2014 - LOST RIVER by Ryan Gosling
2013 - LOIN DES HOMMES by David Oelhoffen
2013 - QUI VIVE by Marianne Tardieu
2013 - LES GARÇONS ET GUILLAUME, À TABLE ! by Guillaume Gallienne
2013 - FISHING WITHOUT NETS by Cutter Hodierne
2013 - GARE DU NORD by Claire Simon
2013 - LE JOUR ATTENDRA by Edgar Marie
2013 - CHRONIQUES D'UNE COURSE DE RÉCRÉ by Brahim Fritah
2013 - LES PETITS PRINCES by Vianney Lebasque
2013 - ZERO DARK THIRTY by Kathryn Bigelow
2013 - UNE HISTOIRE D'AMOUR by Hélène Fillières
2012 - TROIS MONDES by Catherine Corsini
2012 - À MOI SEULE by Frédéric Videau
2010 - PIEDS NUS SUR LES LIMACES by Fabienne Berthaud
2009 - QU'UN SEUL TIENNE ET LES AUTRES SUIVRONT by Léa Fehner
2009 - UN PROPHÈTE by Jacques Audiard



FILMOGRAPHY

Sophie Semin

Born in Lorraine in 1961. Master's Degree in Private Law at the Paris II University, Master's Degree at the French Institute of Fashion, worked three years with the designer Yohji Yamamoto.

In 1992, after playing the part of the Young Woman in the film *The Absence* by Peter Handke, she integrated the Salant-Paul Weaver theatre workshop.

She mainly played at the theatre, among others:

Qu'une Tranche de Pain by Fassbinder – Bruno Bayen at the Théâtre de la Bastille.

Don Carlos by Verdi – Luc Bondy at the Théâtre du Châtelet.

The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian by Debussy – Claudio Abbado at the Berliner Philharmonie.

Oedipus by Seneca – Jean Claude Fall at the Théâtre des Quatre-Vents.

Le Voyage en pirogue by Peter Handke – Claus Peymann at the Burgtheater in Vienna.

Stella by Goethe – Bruno Bayen at the Théâtre MC3 in Bobigny.

Obломov by Gontcharov – Robert Hunger-Bühler at the Festspielhaus in Zurich.

Work with Edward Bond – at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes.

Till Day You Do Part by Peter Handke – Christophe Perton Comédie de Valence and the Berliner Ensemble.

Work with Anatoli Vassiliev – at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes.

Essay on the Successful Day, in collaboration with the photographer Lillian Birnbaum, Salzburger Festspiele.

Introspection by Peter Handke – Festival Avignon France Culture.

Souterrain Blues by Peter Handke – Christophe Perton at the Théâtre de Nice and at the Théâtre du Rond-Point.

Cinema:

The Rite of Spring by Oliver Herrmann.

Beyond the Clouds by Wim Wenders and Michelangelo Antonioni.

Voice for the film on Paula Modersohn-Becker by Corinna Belz.

The Beautiful Days of Aranjuez by Wim Wenders from the play by Peter Handke.





Contacts



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