

LES FILMS DU POISSON PRESENTS

OLGA KURYLENKO
LAND OF OBLIVION

A FILM BY MICHALE BOGANIM

26. Settimana
Internazionale
della Critica

tiff. toronto
international
film festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2011

SYNOPSIS

April 26th, 1986. On that day, Anya and Piotr celebrate their marriage. Little Valery and his father Alexei, a physicist at the power station in Chernobyl, plant an apple tree. Nikolai, the forest warden, makes his rounds in the surrounding forests.

Then, an accident occurs at the power station. Insidiously, the radioactivity transforms nature. The rain is yellow, the trees turn red. Piotr, a volunteer fireman, leaves to extinguish the flames. He never returns. A few days later, the population is evacuated. Alexei, forced to keep silent by the authorities, prefers to disappear.

Ten years later, the deserted Pripjat has become a no man's land and a bizarre tourist attraction. Anya comes to the Zone every month as a tour guide, while Valery goes there to look for traces of his father. And Nikolai continues to cultivate a poisonous garden.

With the passing of time, will they be able to accept the hope of a new life?

CREW

Director and Script
Directors of photography
Sound
Sound Mix
Set designer
Editing
Music
Producers

Michale Boganim
Yorgos Arvanitis, Antoine Heberlé
Frédéric de Ravignan, François Waledisch
Anne Le Campion
Bruno Margery
Anne Weil, Thierry Derocles
Leszek Mozdzer
Les Films du Poisson
Vandertastic
Apple Film
Arte
Grading Dimension Pictures
Belka Films

In association with

France/Germany/Poland/Ukraine, 2011
115min, 35mm, 1:1.85, Dolby SRD,
French/Russian/Ukrainian

CAST

Olga Kurylenko
Illya Iosivof
Andrzej Chyra
Sergey Strelnikov
Vyacheslav Slanko
Nicolas Wanczycki
Nikita Emshanov

Anya
Valery (16 years)
Alexei
Dimitri
Nikolai
Patrick
Piotr

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I had traveled to the Ukraine several times before discovering Pripjat, a city near Chernobyl that was abandoned after the nuclear disaster. What struck me when I was exploring the "forbidden zone" for the first time were the personal stories of those men and women who experienced this incredible event firsthand. I wanted my film to be neither an indictment nor a historical reconstruction, but rather a drama inspired by the human experiences of certain individuals involved.

At the heart of this story, Anya. I wanted to tell the story of this young woman, whose life is completely upended by the events of April 25th. This young widow never comes to terms with her grief, and remains in denial about the loss of her homeland and her husband.

I wanted my film to be about love. The love of the characters for their land. Even if this land became poisoned, an oblivion land, nothing can stop Anya, Valery, Alexei or Nikolai to come back.

In addition to the residents of Pripjat, one of the main characters in this film is the place itself. I wanted the location, Pripjat and the forbidden zone, to be central in the film, not just as a shooting place. I wanted them to tell the story with the natural elements, and to contribute to a climate of harmonious atmosphere at the first part of the film, and the emptiness, abandon, for the second part.

The film strives to capture this event as a kind of never-ending disaster. The radioactivity continues its slow destruction far beyond the visible sarcophagus. It is this singularity that I wanted to be grasped. Chernobyl is a modern inferno stalked by invisible demons. The years no longer matter and time becomes immobile. As the disaster was unfolding, some of its victims intuitively compared it to a tree in the process of growing.

Michale Boganim

MICHALE BOGANIM

Michale Boganim was born in Israel. She came to Paris to study both anthropology at the Sorbonne and cinema with Jean Rouch.

When she returned to Israel, she continued her education in philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and started to work in photography.

This lead her to attending filmmaking classes at the National Film and Television School of London (Film Section of the Royal College of Art). She now lives between Tel Aviv and Paris.

FILMOGRAPHY

DIM MEMORIES

(Short Film, 2002)

Cannes Film Festival 2002

Directors' Fortnight

Winner of the Prize Gras Savoye

ODESSA...ODESSA

(Documentary, 2005)

Berlin Film Festival 2005

CICAE Award

Sundance Jury Award

Best director award at Jerusalem Film Festival

LAND OF OBLIVION

(First Feature Film, 2011)

Screenplay Award at Angers Film Festival

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