

QUINZINE
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2026

Shana

A film by **Lila Pinell**



Emmanuel Chaumet and Charles Gillibert present

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Lila Pinell

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With
Eva Huault Noémie Lvovsky
Inès Gherib Anaïs Monah Bettina de Van Sékouba Doucouré Solal Bouloudnine
Sarah Benabdallah Anthony Sonigo Geneviève Krief Adam Lévy-Zauberman Lisa Nyarko
Sarah Djourou Maëva Dahan Divine Mboyo Sarah Bramms and Martin Jauvat



*S*hana navigates the trials and tribulations of everyday life with boundless energy and the support of her group of friends. When her grandmother passes away, she inherits a ring that is supposed to protect her from bad luck. Shana certainly needs this helping hand. Especially since her toxic partner has been released from prison, and misfortunes are piling up...



Interview with Lila Pinell

Shana comes out of the connection you have forged with Eva Huault over the last fifteen years.

Yes. In July 2007, I shot my first documentary at a children's summer camp. Eva was ten and a half. I filmed all the children but she and her two friends, Emma and Salomé, formed a trio that I could not let go. That's how I got to know her. Then, the four of us kept meeting up as part of an informal project. They would come to my apartment and I would film them cooking and acting as if they lived alone in my home. It never came to anything, unfortunately, but they radiated crazy vitality that I adored. After that, we kind of lost touch, until I met Eva again in 2019, when she was twenty. She filled me in on her life, and pretty soon I was overwhelmed by the urge to film her in a work of fiction. I could see that the idea appealed to her. Above all, I already knew that she would make a good actress. She caught the acting bug as a child already. That's how we came to make a short feature, *Le Roi David* (2021).

What made you want to keep working with her on your debut feature, *Shana*?

To start with, filming the environment around her. Her character moves around, like the ring, from one story, world or situation to the next. In that respect, she is a wonderful narrative engine. Shana gets everything around her moving, and stops those worlds from closing in on themselves. She sticks her foot in the door, she knocks down fences. She is in her own right a principle of motion. It was also a way of slipping in very personal touches, of putting out there what I feel strongly about, all mediated by Eva Huault. Although we are very different and do not belong to the same generation, we have a lot in common. I developed the character of Shana for *Le Roi David* by delving into her life, my life and those of other women I met. Also, I wanted to perpetuate the character, digging deeper into the complicated place she occupies in her family of non-practicing Jews who nonetheless respect certain traditions. In *Le Roi David*, I had barely touched on those



subjects. What place does she really want for herself? In the film, she is assigned multiple roles as daughter, sister, partner, and so on, but none of them really suits her. There is, in her, the desire for emancipation but she is not really able to put her finger on it. It leads her into confrontational situations and conflicts that seem to resolve nothing.

Despite being born in Morocco, Shana's grandmother refuses to acknowledge her Arab origins and even spouts racist arguments, while Shana neither embraces nor proclaims her Jewish identity. The film sketches a kind of reverse legacy: it's not an identity that is passed on but a way of dodging it.

I wanted to explore how family legacies are always passed on in a twisted way. You think you are passing something on, and that is always true, just not necessarily what you thought it was and how you thought you would. With people I know, and their parents or grandparents, I've often seen things like that happen, accompanied by a lot of shame, 180's and things brushed under the rug. The

subjects that interest me are all passed down between generations: love, violence, silences, and what you make of them. I do not judge my characters or any community. I observe how fear, a wrench or a painful backstory can turn into words that hurt, belittle or erase another person.

Where did you get the idea for the ring, which acts as a kind of amulet?

The interesting thing about the ring is the way that it brings closer together, in a way Shana herself had never imagined, two cultures, Arab and Jewish, that are held to be clearly divided now, but were not always so. The ring speaks to ancient interplays and a shared experience that it is important to hold onto today.

The film operates on multiple narrative levels—social naturalism, comedy, mythological fable or even breakneck thriller. What appealed to you in the idea of exploring all these different paths?

When I began writing, it was difficult. I wanted to interweave multiple narrative

threads. How could all that fit in one film?! When I did a writing residency with Le Groupe Ouest, I arrived in a state of complete bewilderment. I had never written a feature film script. There, I was urged to let go of the real and to try to picture a story without all the scenes that I had firmly in mind. The starting point was an array of issues that were playing on another part of my mind: origins, transmission... And with all I know of Eva and the people around her, I could allow myself to dream. It helped me bring order to the story I wanted to tell, and flirt with genre filmmaking. The narrative constraint

of finding the money, the ring that is a jinx... All of it gave me a framework to play with the codes. There was no other way of kick-starting the film. I need to have fun when I'm writing.

With *Shana*, there is a sense of having fun in genre filmmaking that is very rare in French social cinema, alongside truly comedic scenes. What were your influences during the conception of the movie?

There is a Coen brothers' movie that I saw when it came out, *A Serious Man*. I had a panic attack in the theater and left before





the end. I saw it again shortly before I started writing *Shana*, and this time I really enjoyed it. I was struck by the humor, which had passed me by completely. The film left a big imprint. Except their protagonist is the opposite of Shana. In critical situations, he freezes, whereas Shana, in her own way, always tries to front up. And then the Safdie brothers' *Uncut Gems*. They take mindboggling liberties from a foundation rooted in reality. The mix of anxiety and humor really resonated with me. Those movies were made by men with male protagonists. I'm a woman, telling the story of another woman, and naturally the result is very different than the films I've mentioned, but there is something in the tone of them

that I like. Pretty robust stories that are also very funny. That's how I see life. Eva Huault likewise. She told me so many stories of hard knocks while making me laugh. I wanted to capture that tone to tell the story of Shana's adventures. More generally, I'd say that all my films with serious themes have to be funny too. If not, I can't bring myself to screen them.

Paris is often shot in close-up. What aspect of the city did you want the film to show?

The intersection of the two worlds that I had dreamed up for her: her adopted world in the working-class area around Belleville, and the more upscale world she actually comes from. In Paris, there are people from every

background and social class. Shana is able to navigate events in a housing project and in a very swanky neighborhood, and that's what I love. There is no need for wide shots, her territory is revealed in the seams.

What did the decision to work on 16mm entail for your process on set?

Firstly, I knew that it would demand rigorous preparation, where everything is on the page. There is no improvisation. Each scene was blocked. The actors had to know their lines by heart because you cannot do endless takes. I really enjoyed that on *Le Roi David*. And when I shot rehearsals for *Le Roi David* on my phone, with the girls squabbling, it felt like reality TV filmed on the fly. I often asked myself how to film that without the vulgarity of the point of view. Shooting on 16mm allowed me to change up the point of view, and thereby avoid voyeurism.

That's very surprising because the vitality of the action makes it look like the scenes were shot as they happened. How did you put together your cast of strikingly magnetic actors and actresses?

Same as I did for a lot of documentaries. For documentaries, you are looking for actors—people who play themselves but are still actors. I simply applied the same logic: people close to the character, whom I didn't have to go very far to find. I didn't want to audition six hundred people in the hope of turning up a gold nugget. Sékouka Doucouré, who plays Moïse in *Shana* and had a supporting role in *Le Roi David*, was

closely linked to an organization, Le Labec, in the 20th arrondissement, which gives free acting classes local youth, led by a drama teacher with whom Sékouka had worked very closely for a number of years. After *Le Roi David*, Eva started taking those classes and made a lot of very good friends, who joined her on Shana, playing characters very close to themselves.

And Noémie Lvovsky?

Initially, for Eva's mother, I wanted an unknown face. I started out working with a person I really like but the role expanded quickly, and I needed an actress with a solid body of work to call upon. Noémie was the obvious choice. She immediately blended in with the rest of the cast, leaving her own imprint on her character. Something very powerful happened between the two women. Noémie showed great generosity toward Eva. In the scene where Eva had to cry, Noémie did absolutely everything in her power to help her get there. She did that scene FOR Eva, which I found very touching.



Among the various myths that are a theme running through the film, there are the ten plagues of Egypt. Why that choice?

The film opens with the Passover ceremony, which celebrates the end of enslavement and the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt. It was after bringing ten plagues on Egypt that Moses was able to obtain their release. I wanted the plagues as a recurring theme in *Shana* to lead to the "liberation" of Shana. Some drove the scenes, such as when blotches appear on her body when she meets with a client (infection of boils) or in the jewelry store at the end, when she fakes losing her baby (the final plague: death of the firstborn).

In the Passover dinner scene, there is mention at the table of a form of "sweetness" in slavery. Perhaps echoing Shana's "captivity"?

The Passover meal is partly made up of foods that symbolize aspects of the story of the escape from slavery. These include *haroset*, which combines dates, honey and dried fruit in reference to the mortar that the slaves used to seal the stones to build the pyramids. Every family has a different explanation for its sweetness. A friend of mine told me that in her family, they say *haroset* is sweet as a reverse way of expressing how hard it is to free oneself. Freedom is scary. It's a leap into



the unknown and a learning process. Shana also has to learn to be free. It's not easy to untie yourself from what you know, however much suffering it has caused you.

The depiction of mechanisms of control is incredibly complex and precise. Shana is no fool, she's aware of the situation, yet she stays. How did you manage to get the right balance?

By talking with a lot of young women whom Eva knows about her experiences and those of others, I realized that we had all been subjected to a situation of control, although not necessarily one with a man who beats you. It's extremely common, in relationships obviously, but also in the workplace. Just routine for a lot of people. Approaching that from a spectacular angle is the exact opposite of what I was trying to do.

Do you think you will continue to film Eva as she goes through life, in the same way that François Truffaut filmed Jean-Pierre Léaud?

It's not a project that I have laid out, but clearly I would be delighted to work with her again. On *Shana*, everything happened so fast, on a shoestring. It was epic. So I'm not even thinking about my next film yet but, yes, through her, I can envision all kinds of things. I know that we have a lot of stories to tell together. There is our work and, at the same time, a strong bond of friendship, two things which had never been so interconnected for me before. Whenever Eva tells me about something, I want to film it and pass it on. Our relationship has worked like that for years. She is a huge inspiration for me. ■

In conversation with Ludovic Béot, April 2026.





Cast

Shana Eva Huault • Yolande Noémie Lvovsky

Inès Inès Gherib • Kenza Anaïs Monah • Ilana Bettina de Van • Moïse Sékouba Doucouré • Samuel Solal Bouloudnine • Latifa Sarah Benabdallah • Rabbi Anthony Sonigo • Marie (Shana's grandmother) Geneviève Krief • Adam Adam Lévy-Zauberman • Lisa Lisa Nyarko • Sarah Sarah Djourou • Gigi Maëva Dahan • Divine Divine Mboyo • The Waitress Sarah Bramms • Martin Martin Jauvat • Ines Anane Ieléna

Crew

Written and directed by Lila Pinell • Cinematography Victor Zébo • Sound Nassim El Mounabbih
Editing Emma Augier and Jean-Christophe Hym • Sound Mix Simon Apostolou • Production
Design Laure Satge and Valentine Fell • First Assistant Director Caroline Ronzon • Color
Grading Marie Gascoin • Production Manager Thomas Belchi Serrano • Produced by Ecce Films,
Emmanuel Chaumet – CG Cinéma, Charles Gillibert • Co-produced by France 2 Cinéma • With
the participation of France Télévisions • With the essential support of Ciné+ OCS • In association
with Cineventure 11 • With the support of La Fondation Gan pour le Cinéma, Procirep-Angoa •
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Eva Huault (Films)

2026 - *Shana* by Lila Pinell • 2025 *Mystik* by Raphaël Quenard & Azedine Kasri • *Illustre inconnue* by Marc Fitoussi • *Des femmes comme les autres* by Dominique Cabrera • 2024 - *Baise-en-ville* by Martin Jauvat • *Des preuves d'amour* by Alice Douard • *Je le jure* by Samuel Theis • *Bagarre* by Julien Royal • *Coka Chicas* by Roxine Helberg • 2023 *Le Dernier des Juifs* by Noé Debré • *Petites mains* by Nessim Chikhaoui • 2022 *Pas de vague* by Teddy Lussi Modeste • 2021 *Le Roi David* by Lila Pinell

Noémie Lvovsky (Selected filmography)

2026 *Shana* by Lila Pinell • *Quasimodo* by Jean-François Richet • 2025 - *Eleonora Duse* by Pietro Marcello • *Le Sens des choses* by Keren Ben Rafael (série) • 2024 - *Le Médium* by Emmanuel Laskar • *Nice Girls* by Noémie Saglio • 2023 - *Jeanne du Barry* by Maïwenn • *Sambre* by Jean-Xavier Delestrade (série) • 2022 - *La Grande Magie* by Noémie Lvovsky • 2021 - *Viens je t'emmène* by Alain Guiraudie • 2020 - *Filles de joie* by Frédéric Fonteyne, Anne Paulicevich • 2019 - *La Bonne épouse* by Martin Provost • 2018 - *Les Estivants* by Valéria Bruni Tedeschi • 2017 - *Demain et tous les autres jours* by Noémie Lvovsky • 2016 - *Chocolat* by Roschdy Zem • 2015 - *La Belle saison* by Catherine Corsini • 2014 - *Jacky au royaume des filles* by Riad Sattouf • *Les Jours venus* by Romain Goupil • 2014 - *Adieu Berthe* by Bruno Podalydès • 2011 - *Camille redouble* by Noémie Lvovsky • *17 Filles* by Muriel & Delphine Coulin • *L'Apollonide, souvenir de la maison close* by Bertrand Bonello • *Les Adieux à la reine* by Benoit Jacquot • 2010 - *Copacabana* by Marc Fitoussi • 2009 - *Les Beaux gosses* by Riad Sattouf • 2008 - *Un cœur simple* by Marion Laine • 2006 - *Actrices* by Valéria Bruni Tedeschi • *Faut que ça danse !* by Noémie Lvovsky • 2005 - *Backstage* by Emmanuelle Bercot • 2004 - *Rois & Reines* by Arnaud Desplechin • 2002 - *Les Sentiments* by Noémie Lvovsky • 2001 - *Ma femme est une actrice* by Yvan Attal • 1999 - *La vie ne me fait pas peur* by Noémie Lvovsky • 1997 - *Petites* by Noémie Lvovsky • 1994 - *Oublie-moi* by Noémie Lvovsky



Lila Pinell

A French director and screenwriter, Lila Pinell studied philosophy before joining the Master's program in documentary directing at Lussas. Her first film, *Nous arrivons* (2009), looks at the daily life of a community of children at a self-managed summer camp. It was on that shoot that she met Eva Huault, who would go on to play Shana in the film of the same name. Lila then collaborated for several years with Chloé Mahieu, with whom she co-directed the documentary *Nos fiançailles* (2012) and *Kiss & Cry* (2017), their first feature-length fiction (selected at ACID). In 2021, Lila directed *Le Roi David* on her own, winning the Grand Prix at Clermont-Ferrand and the Prix Jean Vigo. ■

Filmography

Shana / 1h20 - 2026

Ice thérapie, co-directed with Chloé Mahieu / 60' - 2022

Le Roi David / 41' - 2021

Kiss & Cry, co-directed with Chloé Mahieu / 80' - 2017

Business Club, co-directed with Chloé Mahieu / 58' - 2015

Boucle Piqué, co-directed with Chloé Mahieu / 41' - 2014

Nous arrivons / 53' - 2009



Photos downloadable at www.filmsdulosange.com