

LA VIE EST BELLE
PRESENTS

The Duchess of Warsaw

A FILM BY JOSEPH MORDER

ALEXANDRA
STEWART

ANDY
GILLET

LA VIE EST BELLE presents "THE DUCHESS OF WARSAW" starring ALEXANDRA STEWART & ANDY GILLET | Produced by CÉLINE MAUGIS | Screenplay JOSEPH MORDER
Dialogues HAROLD MANNING | Director of Photography BENJAMIN CHARTIER | Set Designer CHLOÉ CAMBOURNAC | Editor ISABELLE RATHERY | Sound MATHIEU VIGOUROUX,
LAURENCE OHAYON & MATTHIEU DENIAU | Original Music JACQUES DAVIDOVICI | In Coproduction with PAPAYE, STUDIO ORLANDO, LES MACHINEURS, KNIGHTWORKS, SEDNA
& SING SING With the support of RÉGION ILE-DE-FRANCE, FONDATION PIERRE BERGÉ YVES SAINT LAURENT, FONDATION POUR LA MEMOIRE DE LA SHOAH, SOFICA MANON 3
& CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINEMA | With the participation of BACKUP MEDIA, PROCIREP, ANGOA AGICOA | International Sales CARAVAN PASS | Distribution EPICENTRE FILMS
Directed by JOSEPH MORDER



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Valentin, a young painter, lost in an imaginary world, meets up with his grand mother, Nina. Reunited for a few days, they wander the streets of a fantasized Paris. Valentin tells her of his inability to love. Nina, however, refuses to unveil her painful past. To lighten Valentin's burden, she eventually talks of her deportation to the concentration camps. In the early morning light, Valentin manages to add color to his paintings and truly begin to live.



"Films are lies that reveal the truth"

When I started working on this film, I wanted to work with real scenery, reworking it « à la Jacques Demy », but deep down, I really wanted to use canvas paintings for the setting. I'm used to filming in natural environments, but I've always dreamed of filming in a real Hollywood setting. So we used 8X4-meter canvasses, like Méliès in his films, where the actors played in front of life-size paintings.

This film is a tribute to Méliès and to the Frères Lumière. Their work is immortal and a constant inspiration to movie makers.

Apart from Nina and Valentin, we used cardboard cutouts with live voice recordings for all of our characters. We wanted to shoot a traditional film with simple tools in opposition with today's CGI-heavy movie industry where anything and everything can be conjured visually. This timeless approach is precisely what characterizes modern times. We studied all kinds of works with Chloé Cambournac, my Art Director and we focused on the last ballet in « An American in Paris ». We called upon several art schools. Nina's apartment, for instance, was inspired by Matisse, Duffy, Bonnard and Vuillard. These early 20th century paintings represented bourgeois interiors. Furthermore, Chloé introduced me to Saul Leiter, an American painter and photographer and a precursor for using color in his photo-features in the 1950s. He also took some amazing snapshots of New York and Paris. And that's exactly what I wanted to capture - that certain Parisian style that I loved so much in those Hollywood movies I'd watch as a kid - a mix of delight and gravity. For me it is essential to handle serious subjects lightheartedly, with a touch of humor: it's a great way to trigger the pathos and even flushes out the subject.

THE DUCHESS OF WARSAW is the film I've always dreamt of filming: surreal images attempt to visually describe what words cannot.

Joseph Morder



2014 - France - 86 min - DCP - Color - 1.85 - sound 5.1

JOSEPH MORDER was born in 1949.

His parents, Polish Jews, got married in Caracas. Joseph spent most of his childhood in Guayaquil, Ecuador where his passion for Hollywood movies began before he moved to France. Through his genre-bending filmography marked by The French New Wave, melodrama, musicals and by his own life, he has taken on all subjects and all styles. His original perspective on loss of memory, on the Jewish religion or on children was acclaimed by the Berlin and Locarno film festivals. Joseph Morder has made many movies, shorts and full-length features, documentaries, personal stories... He films in super 8 mm, 35 mm and video.