

WORLD PREMIERE AT VENICE FILM FESTIVAL  
& TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL - GALA  
FRANCE, BELGIUM 2016

French, English  
105 minutes | Colour | DCP 4K

**EMMANUEL  
SALINGER**

Produced by: Frédéric Jouve (Les Films Velvet)  
Coproduced by: Les Films du Fleuve, Kinology,  
France 3 Cinéma, Proximus, RTBF (Télévision belge)  
Screenplay: Robin Campillo and Rebecca Zlotowski  
Cinematographer: George Lechaptois  
Editor: Julien Lacheray  
Production Designer: Katia Wyszkop  
Costume Designer: Anais Romand  
Original music composed by Rob

Aspect ratio: 2.35  
Sound format: 5.1

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# PLANETARIUM

A FILM BY REBECCA ZLOTOWSKI

AMIRA CASAR PIERRE SALVADORI WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF LOUIS GARREL DAVID BENNETT DAMIEN CHAPELLE



## INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR REBECCA ZLOTOWSKI

How did the idea for this film come about?

It's always difficult to answer that question without going into every underlying stimulus that makes a given subject the right one, the one you'll live with for three or four years, as is the case with a film project. I could cite the critical political climate that surrounds us – submerges us – the desire to film a foreign actress who settles in France, to assert characters with powerful destinies, a strong longing to believe in fiction...

I felt a need to comment on the slippery twilight world we have entered into using storybook tools. I thought of something Duras said that is so unsettling when you think about it: "We never know what's on the verge of changing."

And on another level, I wanted to go further in my work with actors. My first two films were shot over short periods and left me hungry for more. I felt an urge to explore this aspect. I wanted to get my actors into trance-like states, explore possession rituals, their physical manifestations – without going as far as Rouch in *Les maîtres fous* – even if, as the project evolved, this avenue would not play such a large role.

Is this what led you to the spiritualism practiced by the Barlow sisters?

Yes. Very rapidly, I became interested in the destiny of the Fox sisters, three American sisters and mediums in the late 19th century who played an important role in spiritualism, the forerunner of Spiritism, and a great Americana myth. Their success was considerable and they gave birth to a doctrine that would thrive with hundreds of thousands of followers worldwide, all the way to intellectual European circles... A less well-known episode fascinated me: One year, a rich banker hired one of the sisters to incarnate the spirit of his late wife. I loved the story. It was the starting point of a totally Hitchcockian thriller...

But you left the world of finance for the world of cinema: Why?

I wanted to make a French film, in my tongue. I began fantasizing about a European tour with the sisters, who were now only a two-some. I made the banker into a movie producer because to me the world of cinema resonates a hundred times more intensely with spiritualism than the world of finance. Ghosts, specters, séances... Even the vocabulary is evocative... But I was put off by the 19th century Victorian setting, so I transposed the story to the 1930s,

## SYNOPSIS

Paris, late 1930s. Kate and Laura Barlow, two young American spiritualists, finish their world tour. Fascinated by their gift, a powerful French film producer, André Korben, hires them to shoot a highly ambitious film. In the vortex of cinema, experiments and feelings, this new family doesn't see what Europe will soon go through.





using a Jewish producer, the victim of a smear campaign that would precipitate his fall... This was right after the sad affair of Dieudonné and his anti-Semitism which affected me deeply, like all forms of racism.

Is that how another historical inspiration arose? Producer Bernard Natan who was handed over by the French government to the Nazi occupants in 1942?

Exactly. I didn't need to search far to find this producer whose fall had been programmed. He had existed. Bernard Natan was a rich movie producer of Rumanian origin, a naturalized French citizen and Croix de guerre who had started from nothing. He acquired Pathé Cinéma in 1929 and was the victim of an anti-Semitic campaign. He was dismissed from his post, stripped of his French nationality, and sent by French authorities to Auschwitz via Drancy. A sort of little-known Dreyfus affair in the world of cinema.

And yet Natan bought and created the studios on Rue Francoeur – the current location of La Fémis, the film school I attended for four years... But no plaque, no mention of his existence was visible – an oversight since corrected – and no one, or hardly anyone, knew his name. Whereas he had produced French films throughout a major decade in filmmaking, brought sound films to France, and put a lasting stamp on French production. His tragic destiny interested me and I wanted to talk about it, use the cinema as a tool for justice. But not with a biopic – one destiny, no matter how exceptional, is not enough to tell a story. And so, with his granddaughters' consent, I freed myself of the restrictions imposed by a true biography. In the film, everything or almost, is fic-

tional. Real elements (the porno slander, extracts from shareholder meetings, etc.) are interwoven with purely imaginary ones. I imagined the Fox sisters meeting with Bernard Natan, renamed Barlow and Korben (which in Yiddish means "he who is sacrificed"), and the creation and fall of this strange family. The story was there.

At what moment did Natalie Portman come onboard?

Very rapidly. She was almost unconsciously connected to the film from the start.

I met Natalie Portman ten years ago through two mutual friends who are my link between the United States and France. We met practically on the day I found out I'd received CNC (French National Center for Cinematography) funding for Dear Prudence... She incarnated a sort of "guardian star" who took an interest in my work very early on. I obviously wanted to film her, but no projects seemed right. She lived in the United States, I didn't want to make an American film. It wasn't the right moment. But I believe that our unconscious imaginations are clever. I knew she was going to move to France and in a certain sense I did everything in my power – though I was unaware of it – to have a subject ready to present her. I offered her the role and she agreed before the script was even finished. It all happened with such astonishing ease, the complete opposite of the complications you might imagine with a star of her caliber. Today I realize how lucky I was, but at the time, our collaboration – her coming to Europe, to the world of French cinema – made so much sense that I never imagined it could fail.

What changes for a film when you know early on that a star of Natalie Portman's status is part of the project?

I've always liked working with professional actors and I'd chosen stars in the past: Tahar Rahim, Léa Seydoux, Olivier Gourmet... So it was not totally new to my habits.

But the presence of an American star in a French project creates a very particular sort of responsibility. What exactly does bringing an American actress to France entail: It poses real cinematographic questions. Which language will be spoken? What does it mean for the French public? For French backers? For the other actors? You must always consider the emotions aroused when actors find themselves together on a set.

When Natalie Portman joined the project, it made an impact on the casting, on people's commitment to the film. Her acting has an expressiveness – she can portray any emotion – that is very different from French acting. There is this idea that emotions are there to be acted out rather than interiorized. In France, there is a certain mistrust of American film orthodoxy (where actors use their bodies differently, with a full music-hall range), as if it rubbed against the interiorization in French arthouse cinema, where the actor practically becomes a co-author of the film... For me there is no contradiction or opposition, rather a whole other approach that is both stimulating and complementary.

Once she accepted, how did it shape the film?

Natalie has a strong personality, she's a woman who takes her destiny in her own hands, and this was an asset to Laura's character. I rarely see the qualities I admire in female characters: Willpower,

unaffectedness, a power to act, ambition that is not materialized through seduction, rather through the mind, intelligence and capacity to adapt. The film also emphasizes the heroine's need to renounce a certain harshness, her anesthetized sentiments and emotions, and totally let go, through and for the cinema. I think I often work on this in my films.

In addition, we were bringing a huge American star to France to specifically talk about MittelEuropa – that cosmopolitan Paris where intellectuals from all over Europe mingled – and the pre-war period, which is a terrifying notion when you think about it. Our first conversations about the film coincided with the first wave of terrorist attacks in 2015 and I became aware of the country I lived in through the eyes of a foreigner. I saw France and Europe through her eyes.

In saying this, are you trying to establish a likeness between the period we are going through and the end of the 30s?

No, not directly. I'm neither an economist nor a historian, and drawing similarities would be naive, precocious and imprecise. Yes, there is a strong rise of populism and we are in the midst of tremendous decline at all levels – moral, religious and political – but the eras cannot be superimposed. If the collective conception of the thirties seems contemporary on the surface, that's okay with me as long as this echo incites people to think. In terms of fiction, the 30s carries a threat that is a true characteristic of the thriller genre. Simply said, we know something awful is going to happen; disaster is near, hanging over our heads. It's a powerful narrative tool with meaning and atmosphere, and I needed it to evoke present times.

Was it at this moment that screenwriter and filmmaker Robin Campillo intervened in the writing? You are also a screenwriter for other filmmakers, how did you apprehend this writing duo?

I went to Robin with this basic outline: "In the Paris of the 30s, how can two American women meet a film producer strongly inspired by Bernard Natan?" Curiously enough, it was Eastern Boys, an impressive and deeply moving film that convinced me to go see Robin rather than The Returned, which was written and directed by him, even though the series contained the know-how of a fabulous, powerful fantastic film that was original and realistic and had no special effects, like I wanted my film to be.

When I met Robin Campillo to discuss this bit of a story, he said: "What interests me in your project, is that it's the story of Moses and Aron. It's the story of two sisters, one of whom has a gift the other doesn't have, but the other one can sell it." This allusion to the legend of Moses and Aron, where Moses understands divine thought but doesn't know how to transmit it, and Aron, a master orator who falsifies ideas the second he formulates them, seemed incredibly rich to me. The guiding line for the girls was there. A powerful, secret sorority. An unshakeable bond based on a total absence of communication and a profound misunderstanding. The love between the two sisters moves me. It's a bond of fascinating intimacy I'd wanted to explore again ever since Dear Prudence.

Concretely speaking, how did you work together? What did Robin Campillo bring you?

Writing four-handed obliges you to constantly reinvent your own rules. I write for others, so I'm used to "holding the pen." Robin came in at both ends of the spectrum. In the beginning for the overall structure of the film, its balance, meaning and coherency. And at the end for the fine details, that is the dialogues, which can entirely change a scene. Robin systematically "protected" the film from screenplay tricks, rejecting the temptation to use

spectacular scenes, of being too lyrical, of explaining the dangers and menaces hanging over the characters in terms that were too blunt. The screenwriter is the biographer of the film's hopes and Robin would remind me why I should keep a scene ambiguous rather than clarify it or smooth it over. It's as if thanks to Robin Campillo, the film nourished and respected its own subconscious.

What do you mean by the subconscious of a film?

More than before, I trust the subconscious work that takes place during the creation, writing and directing process. This doesn't mean I've gone over to improvisation – there is very little improvisation in my films. But I wanted to trust in the characters' power of suggestion, in the extremely meticulous work on the sets and costumes which was so important in this film. I wanted to avoid demonstrativeness, the overly-stressed intentionality that can so quickly dominate period films.

For example, the dream fantasy sequence where the father (incarnated by my own father...) returns, speaking Yiddish in the midst of soldiers in World War I uniforms: This scene was written over and over until the very last minute. What costume would Salinger wear, what would his father say to him? That very morning, Robin read me a passage from Flaubert's *Salammbô* which arises several times in the film in unexpected places, addressing an issue that permeates the film (the lack of privacy amongst soldiers yet a closeness that creates bonds of incomparable strength, "the pre-war"). After one long year of writing, we needed this breathing space to let the film's truth emerge at the last minute.

How did you think of Emmanuel Salinger?

He came onboard very quickly but in a roundabout way. It started with the eyes of Peter Lorre in *M*, where an innocent man stands accused. To me, the eyes of Lorre and Salinger are completely superimposable. They've always accompanied me in my imaginary world of film.

Moreover, I felt that to be legitimate, this story about ghosts needed to bring back a phantom from my own past, or at least from the film industry. Though Emmanuel Salinger obviously didn't disappear after *The Sentinel* and *My Sex Life...* or *How I Got Into an Argument*, he suggests this sort of appearance/disappearance trick. We leave him when he's 20, he reappears with a head of white hair, like in a David Lynch film.

I also thought a great deal about Esther Kahn, the story of a young woman who discovers that she is able to feel through the theatre. This is clearly a masterpiece I thought about while making this film. The porosity of these imaginary worlds (Salinger's as an actor, Desplechin's as a filmmaker) naturally led me to Emmanuel and our first tests blew me away. He was the first actor I'd met for the role.

And that's when Lily-Rose Depp showed up...

This role was essential because the film is the story – in almost equal proportions – of the creation of a three-part family: two sisters and a movie producer. I not only needed a sister for Natalie Portman, I needed a young actress who was capable of putting herself in a trance-like state, of communicating with phantoms, and who could make us believe it.

Like with *Dear Prudence*, I didn't want to go the street casting route. I preferred to search amongst the young women who already knew they wanted to act, who could imagine their life as an actress. There is a sort of imprint on the body and mind that reassures me; I don't have the impression I'm robbing them of their adolescence and plunging them into the working world. Because in a certain sense that's what the cinema is, even if it's fun, unpredictable and gratifying as well.



And there was the language issue too. In the film, Kate is an English-speaker who quickly picks up French...

When Natalie sent me a photo of Lily-Rose Depp, in a certain way designating her – because she too was no doubt astonished by their resemblance – I had one of my intuitions. I liked everything about her. She had this amazingly slender body topped with a strange, swanlike, strong-willed face that was incapable of making girlish pouts. I also liked the fact that she had been chosen by Natalie, who immediately took her under her wing. I loved it that the making of this fictional pair of sisters came about like that. And even though Lily-Rose Depp was still a very young woman with little experience, her name provoked a form of excitement, curiosity and desire. She was not an unknown. It was logical, she'd been shaped by the desire of others – like Natalie at the same age incidentally – by the world of child celebrities... So the role I wanted her to play, that of a young spiritualist on a world tour, a child who already possessed a gift and knew its meaning, was coherent. Everything came together. And it gave the film greater balance because narratively speaking, Korben's character was very powerful and I was afraid it could destabilize the film. Contemplating two actresses as seductive and powerful as these two rebalanced the forces in action.

How did the meeting go?

I met Lily-Rose quickly and very casually, "à la française," without going through dozens of middlemen. She had barely made one film and was living in Los Angeles. It was important for me to do tests with her alone, then with Natalie to see if the sisterhood would work.

The casting virtually stopped the second she walked into the room. We went for a walk, chatted about cinema, about her desires, about the commitment it demanded, then we worked over a few scenes, in both languages. She has a double-culture, a double-lexicon, a double-brain capable of operating on two continents.

I wanted Kate to be a responsible character, adult and strong-willed, who knew what it was to survive from town to town, from country to country. She'd known lean times and excess, she liked alcohol from a too young age, and yet she could burst into peals of childlike laughter and look upon birds as a precious gift.

This very young actress with a frail physique also had a form of expressiveness that evoked the era of silent movies, like Lilian Gish. This might explain why she is one of the rare adolescents where nothing needed to be changed, not a hair on her head, to make her fit into the costumes of a period film... She had just turned 16 and it was very moving to sense that she was going to make other films, have the destiny of an actress.

The screenplay tells the story of a producer who is seeking to give fresh impetus to the cinema via new techniques. Planetarium was shot at a time when the cinema itself is moving from one era to another, from film to digital. Once again, another superimposition. Yes, in the current climate of gossip and scandals, where conspiracy theories have become the matrix of all thought, there is a deep mistrust of images. Of course, this is partially due to the anthropological aspect of the digital revolution. For what is a digital image worth compared to film, if it no longer guarantees that

what is happening in front of the camera really happened? But everything cannot have been a dream, an apparition. So the digital format revives ghosts, and even if it has brought us to the brink of a crisis, to the great conspiracy theories and trickery, I persuaded myself that we needed to reinvent new stories with the tools at hand. Slander, conspiracy theories, homophobia, racism and anti-Semitism all have the same powerful workings as fiction: Storytelling in the service of the nauseating. The very opposite of the cinema: Glorious glowing, positive fiction where the false, where artifices create reality. That is why, above and beyond its banality today, using digital technologies for this movie made sense.

Is that what explains why you shot the film with the new Alexa 65 digital camera, known for certain scenes in *The Returned*, but still very rare, especially in France?

Yes. It was a long journey for I come from the school of thought where you don't cover yourself by setting up cameras all over the place to film non-stop, rather choose a scene's point of view with the pressure of a 10 or 12-minute magazine and a single camera. The idea that shooting is an exciting, costly moment, one that puts the actors in a state of edgy excitement.

I think this comes from my intuition that the cinema is not there to capture the living, rather record what's disappearing. So for once, I was tempted by digital technology. But I was disappointed because I couldn't find the right technology, one that would reproduce the same emotion as film and use the same protocols. Then I heard about the Alexa 65, which renders the same quality as film thanks to a phenomenal quantity of data,



particularly in low-light conditions. When there's not much light, this camera allows you to obtain a maximum amount of reality despite all, almost transfiguring the image through an excess of reality. Yes, you could say it transfigures reality into hyper-reality. I thought this would be fabulous for a period film with costumes. We weren't going to try to reproduce the era mimetically rather reinvent it with today's tools.

We did tests. And as of the first insignificant ones – a face against a black background – we immediately realized that something special was going on. Whereas to start with this camera had been an intellectual choice (the suspect digital format), in the end, we felt like adventurers using a brand new technology. The camera created a sexy, exciting aura, just like the character in the film who thought he would revolutionize the cinema by inventing a camera that could film ghosts... We obviously liked this metaphysical angle and it made sense.

By a strange irony of fate, Alexa 65 memory cards contain so much data that you have to reload them exactly like a film magazine... We felt the same excitement as shooting with real film. Each era, filmmakers must have asked themselves: "What is there that belongs to us only?" For example, something they don't have in TV. Today, the Alexa 65 is the tool that belongs to the cinema only.

The film encompasses a great number of diverse and powerful themes and threads: spiritualism, sisterhood, the portrait of a powerful woman, the making of a family, the rise of extremism and Nazism in Europe, cinema in the 30's... How did you connect all these themes? And was opening so many doors intentional?

I take that as a compliment. Assembling and portraying the complexity and ambiguity of an imaginary world in under two hours is always a difficult balance to achieve. This is where TV series have an edge over us, they can offer alternatives of opportune length. With Robin Campillo, we explored this diversity, putting the film first rather than following the screenwriter's manual. We worked on making it possible to interpret each scene on various levels – rational, poetic and political – without ever deciding for the spectator whether it was believable or not. The rational level: How do two young American spiritualists help a French producer film ghosts without seeing that he himself is the target of a cabal that

will cause his fall? The political level: The destiny of a makeshift family, thrown together by chance and solitude, in a world growing harder amidst escalating extremism. The poetic level: How the cinema opens one of the only doors possible in terms of belief and enables us to exorcise our own ghosts...

Faith, hope, sentiments between the characters, cinema and politics intermingle intimately. The fantasies and ghosts revived by Korben in the film respond to these principles.

Above all it was a possibility, I hope, to make an esthetic, beautiful and literary film.

If you had to slot the film in a genre, which one would it be?

An adventure film. I think we are asked to choose far too much, both in the critical and narrative sense, between naturalism and stylization. I don't want to have to choose. I think a lot about what Breton said about Douanier Rousseau: Magical realism.

At the end of the long, poetic path walked by the story's heroes, the film's message is that we don't really know our own secrets.

Paris, April 6th 2016



## DIRECTOR'S BIO

Rebecca Zlotowski was born in 1980 in Paris. After graduating from the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure and being a French Language and Literature agrégée, she joins the famous Paris film school La Fémis where she makes decisive encounters with other such distinctive filmmakers as Teddy Lussi Modeste, Jean-Claude Brisseau, Philippe Grandrieux, Antoine d'Agata (with whom she will collaborate with later on), and Lodge Kerrigan.

Selected at the 2010 Cannes Critic's Week, her first directorial effort *Belle Epine* gets the Prix Louis Delluc as well as the Critics Award for Best First Feature Film. Three years later, *Grand Central* is selected at the Un Certain Regard in Cannes. *Planetarium* is Zlotowski's third feature film.



#### NATALIE PORTMAN

“I had been wanting to work with Rebecca for a long time. I knew her before she was a filmmaker; we were together on the day she received funding for her first film, *Dear Prudence*. It was very moving to watch her become a filmmaker in person! From that moment on, I followed her career closely and saw her first two films, which I liked very much. I particularly like the fact that she puts so much of herself in her films, that she succeeds in being so personal – which is very much the case with *Planetarium*.

At a time in my life when I had the good fortune to be living in Paris, Rebecca proposed me this incredible role in a crazy scenario! Acting in French would be a wonderful challenge and I enthusiastically accepted.

On the set, it’s amazing to see to what extent she’s a team leader; everyone gets caught up in her energy and her vision. She already has a strong personality in real life, but on the set, you really feel that she knows what she wants. So she’s a team leader, but a sexy one! And she manages to make us all feel like a family, which is the ideal scenario in our profession, and all the more important because union rules are very different in France than in the United States. Here you shoot far fewer hours a day, almost half as many! This meant I could have a family life during shooting, which is very rare in the United States. In return, you have far less time to work. Whereas in the States we would do a dozen takes, here we could only do two! Rebecca had to know very precisely what she wanted so that we could rapidly move ahead.

It’s true, I sent Rebecca a photo of Lily-Rose Depp when she was looking for the actress to play my sister. When I saw the photo, I thought that this sisterhood would be credible. And Lily-Rose turned out to be a very talented actress: I love the way she plays her fear of talking to ghosts.

Then I saw the finished film, which turned out to be an extremely powerful experience for me. This magnificent, unreasonable idea that we can continue to communicate with the past, that we can talk to our dead. In the context of the Shoah’s terrible dark heritage, it really hit home. I was living in Europe during the shooting and couldn’t stop thinking about all the cemeteries under the cities. I think what moved me most in *Planetarium* was the spiritual dimension.”



#### LILY-ROSE DEPP

“What made me want to play in *Planetarium* was a mixture of the script, my meeting with Rebecca Zlotowski, and the closeness I felt to the character.

It was the first time I’d read a script in French. I studied in English, so when it comes to reading, it’s more my culture. For me, reading in French is more literary. It’s another culture, which I have as well and which I like a lot. I was tempted by the idea of acting in a film that was so French compared to the American cinema I know. Obviously, it’s not the language that determined my choice, but I wanted to work in France, on condition that I started with a beautiful film, and when I read the script, I knew I’d found it.

I met Rebecca very simply for coffee and the two of us went for a walk. I liked who she was. Her ideas about the film and about the character were very clear. I was immediately convinced.

Kate’s character touched me because many of her personality traits resounded in me. I have a cheerful, sunny side, but like her I also have a more closed-in, shy side. I’m in my own world. Kate’s feet are not 100% on the ground, sometimes she seems to float between life and death. Playing the role of a medium inspired me, it was very powerful. I’m not entirely rational myself and I like the idea that spirits stay with us after their death. Then came the first readings with Natalie and Emmanuel. It all slowly started coming together and I was very happy to work with these two actors.

Natalie has obviously had an incredible career and I’ve seen most of her films. I’d been told there was a resemblance between us, so when I found out, on top of it, that she’d been the one who told Rebecca about me, I was really touched. Today, when I see images of the film, it seems obvious to me that these two women are sisters.

Then came time to shoot. I loved watching Rebecca work, her way of having very sure choices, her perfectionism, her precision. Paradoxically, whereas the story is sad, the set was joyous. What scared me most were the scenes where I had to cry. But then all I had to do was put myself in the character’s emotional state – and look up at the sun to help me a bit (laughter) – and it came. The tears flowed, I couldn’t even stop myself! I liked this borderline state. I didn’t want to have to use drops, I wanted to really feel it inside. The most fun scene to shoot was the one of the party, when it’s snowing at night. Emmanuel carried me on his shoulders, Natalie gave me champagne, we were intoxicated. I scraped my leg during this scene but I didn’t want to stop, despite the blood, despite the cold.

At the end of the day, this will have been my first real role in the cinema. I think I was very lucky to play in a film like that, with Natalie and Emmanuel. And Rebecca.”



### EMMANUEL SALINGER

"I met Rebecca when she was a student at Le Fémis and I lectured first year students. Then about a year ago she called me to get together for a drink, out of the blue, very casual. She told me about her story, which I immediately loved. I was expecting her to propose me a supporting role. But no! But she offered me the role of Korben! It had been a long time since I'd had a proposal of that scope. The screenplay totally won me over. It was obvious that I would accept. Later, on the set, it was great because you could see she knew what she wanted. So even if you were searching, there was direction. She never lets her actors wander aimlessly. Korben was a very moving character to play because he gets caught up in the film the moment he is drawn to something he never dreamed could touch him. An otherness we can all relate to, whether it be philosophical, visceral, etc. It's something that imposes itself on him, that calls out to him, imperatively, almost authoritatively. He can't hide. He has a rendezvous with a part of himself he's never wanted to know. He's going to get his fingers burnt. This aspect really moved me. Yes, it prompts his ruin, but at the same time, it forces him to face something essential in himself. And beyond that, the film talks about how the cinema goes hand in glove with phantoms. Jean Cocteau said that the cinema is "death at work." When you watch a film, you see something that's already no longer there. I love the way *Planetarium* revisits this idea. Based on the script, you might have expected the narrative to be classical, but during the editing, Rebecca adopted a contemporary narrative mode that takes into account the speed today's viewers are used to. It's quite amazing to see what Rebecca did with all the material she had. There was enough to make a film twice as long! It's not so much that she sacrificed scenes, rather she cut out a lot of beginnings and endings to get straight to the bone. It's faster, more surprising, quite simply a more modern way of telling a story."



### PIERRE SALVADORI

"Rebecca offered me the role of Servier in a rather amusing, unusual way. She first told me about the film that Servier was supposed to shoot in her film, suggesting that I make this "film in a film." The story of a guy who can't bear that his wife died, and who tries to enter into communication with the deceased woman via a clairvoyant. Obviously, he falls in love with the clairvoyant without knowing whether it's the medium or his wife he loves. And conversely, when she falls in love with him through this hoax called clairvoyance, the medium doesn't know if she is betraying the wife or becoming her spokeswoman. In short, a mysterious and ironic love trio that conjures both guilt and vaudeville. I loved the story and even wanted to make a film about it as a filmmaker, me Pierre Salvadori! In short, I agreed to make the film in the film. Then she suggested that I play the role of Servier in the film. I gradually understood that she was giving me a role in her film! What finally convinced me was that Rebecca asked me to be her "ally" on this project. That was the word she used, "ally." Her desire to have people around to support her in this ambitious project was thrilling. And from an almost philosophical point of view, for a filmmaker like myself it's interesting to see another viewpoint, to go over to the side of the actors. As an actors' director, she was someone who uninhibited people. She kept things light, as if hiding the importance of the filming from the actors. I took note of her techniques to relax actors for my own directing. She is also very precise, she doesn't submerge you with words, which is also very soothing for an actor. The real surprise was that she asked me to act emotions. Not just play a director who's directing. For example, in the scene where Servier tells Korben he doesn't want to work with him anymore, her instructions were: "Leave him as if you were leaving a lover." To be honest, it took me thirty years back, when I took acting classes to become an actor. But at the time my stage fright was stronger than the pleasure and I quickly gave up. It was wonderful, even luxurious, at age 50, to have this opportunity and to realize that, thanks to her kindness as an actors' director, I no longer had stage fright, only the pleasure of acting."

### LOUIS GARREL

"Rebecca is a longtime friend. When she was at La Fémis, she asked me to play in one of her short films but I had to turn her down. Afterwards, it became a joke between us. She'd say: "Since you turned me down at La Fémis, I'll never offer you another role!" In the end, she offered me a role in *Planetarium* and I redeemed my sins by accepting! I liked the way the screenplay was written. This sort of dream-like writing, where you advance like in a dream – or in a nightmare. It was beautiful, this idea of a producer who turns a blind eye because he wants to see the film he fantasizes about – at any cost. Then Rebecca told me I would play the role of a French actor back then. I liked the idea because I like films about the cinema. Then she explained that he was a slightly ridiculous, slightly vain actor – very alone with his little dog... It was fun to play with the caricature of an actor, because as a spectator, I like stereotyped characters. Nonetheless, I suggested that we try and redeem him a bit by imagining a moment when he's tender with Natalie Portman's character. When she first starts out on the set, he sees her panic and comes over and says to her: "Don't worry, you're just afraid." I thought it would be interesting for this ultimate diva to be the only one who really looks at her and realizes that for her, becoming an actress is totally overwhelming. It seemed to me that the film was about that too, how dizzying it is to do something different with your life than what was planned. Rebecca instantly agreed to my suggestion, which no doubt says something about her as a director. On the set, she's like an alchemist. She puts several ingredients together, then shakes them up and waits to see what happens. It's very refreshing and a nice change from the naturalist cinema we've seen in France these past years. Here, she found a subject that allowed her to experiment with lots of different forms. And she not only played with hybrid cinematographic forms, she did the same with the actors by combining French and American actors whose acting techniques are very different. The imaginary world of an American actor is more credulous than that of a French actor, who is more rational. Oftentimes, French actors are reduced to their presence, their persona. Whereas with Americans, you can ask them to make us believe that an extraterrestrial invasion is true and they'll act with great sincerity. Here, Rebecca asked Natalie Portman not only to make us believe she's a spiritualist, but also to be moved beyond belief by becoming an actress. The film doesn't take it for granted that Natalie Portman is an American actress. To the contrary, she's an American woman who discovers during the film – under the very eyes of the spectator – the upheaval that the cinema can cause."



**GEORGE LECHAPTOIS,  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

"This is my third film with Rebecca and it's getting better and better. For *Planetarium*, in terms of image, we wanted to create something that corresponded to Korben's desire to achieve modernity in the 30s cinema. We wanted to superimpose his experiments at the time (absurd, yes, but touching) with a form of research on our side, today. We first thought about digital technology, except that in 2016, it's no longer a new format. We did numerous tests in different formats, but they didn't lead to much. Then at the last minute, this brand new digital camera, the Alexa 65, came out and the tests immediately convinced us. We didn't want to recreate an old image with a grainy texture, like Todd Haynes did with *Carol*. We wanted a mutant, contemporary format. The Alexa 65 has a large-sized sensor that produces an image close to medium-format photography. I usually don't care much for digital images, but here I found them interesting. There was far more detail in the skin and fabrics, and a certain softness to the image. And contrary to traditional digital cameras where you can shoot for hours, here you have to change the 500 Giga cards every ten minutes, that's how much data the camera records. This meant that the shooting rhythm was the same as with 35mm where you had to change reels every ten minutes. *Planetarium* is the first film entirely shot with this camera. In *The Returned* only a small part was shot with it. On the set, Rebecca is extremely enterprising and she pulls everyone along in her wake. Here she undertook a rare and unusual film that highlights many different emotions. For me, *Planetarium* is a wonderful film, in the sense that it fills you with wonder."

**KATIA WYSZKOP, PRODUCTION DESIGNER**

"It was Rebecca herself who initially made me want to work on *Planetarium* because I liked her previous work. Then I read the script and grew very enthusiastic. Rebecca has so many appealing ideas. Curiously enough, she reminds me of Isabelle Adjani in *Adolphe* by Benoît Jacquot, a film which greatly inspired me at the time. Rebecca too is very inspiring; she gets you fantasizing, thinking, imagining. She showed me references and images that she and her art director, Jean-René Etienne, had assembled on Tumblr. Way before the preparation phase, we had a big meeting with the director of photography, the costume designer and the production supervisor, where Rebecca defined what she wanted. A sort of joint venture with all of the artistic directors. Afterwards, we all worked in our own manner. For example, for Korben's apartment, I watched a number of Marcel L'Herbier's and Jean Epstein's films and started off with a highly-stylized decor, a very 1920s trip. In the end, when we found the house, we toned it down to something else.

But globally speaking, we wanted to go after something stylized, get away from realism. This allowed us to keep the "set" aspect, which in a naturalist film – to the contrary – you would try and subdue as much as possible. Here we were literally swimming in pretense. So my focus was more on the color schemes, dark tones, reds, dark greens, to obtain something sensual and fantastic. For example, we had wallpaper made that supported this fantastic, anti-realist side.

For the *Bird of Paradis*, the famous aviary in the nightclub, I explained my idea to Rebecca one night. I saw her face and knew she wasn't convinced. So I took my idea further. We're talking here about pure invention, which in fact is rather rare – and very exciting – for a set designer. Rebecca isn't afraid of pushing limits. That's what's fabulous with her. Everything's possible, everything's open. Your field of imagination is never restricted. You can suggest anything. And if the idea is good, she'll use it. For me, it was a major encounter."



**ROB, COMPOSER**

"This is the third original soundtrack I've composed for Rebecca so we've worked in the continuity of her first and second films. Our working method hasn't changed, it's instinctive and there's a deep bond. My job is to try and understand what makes Rebecca vibrate in relation to her story. We advance slowly, feeling our way with impressionist-like strokes. Before even having me read this script, she had me listen to scores composed by Bernard Herrmann, saying that we could dare to go in that direction and use the great themes of Hitchcockian films noir. That in itself was great because it not only freed me musically, it told me that I could eventually let myself be anachronistic. I began looking for a starting point in music from the 20s, historical contemporaries like Schönberg, Olivier Messiaen and Stravinsky. In the end, we agreed on something that was very organic, like a fist blow in the gut. This is by the way the common ground in the three films we've done together. In *Dear Prudence* it was the electric guitars; in *Grand Central* the percussions. Here it was the choirs and intense use of orchestra music. For this film, I composed a lot more than for the others. It took over two hours of material to figure out exactly what Rebecca wanted. We finally ended up with a somewhat irrational sound – brutal, carnal, almost magical – achieved with percussion instruments playing over orchestra music. Space-time no longer existed, it was great. There are a number of sonorities you're not used to hearing, which can even create a certain unease...

We were very lucky to record at Abbey Road, where I found the incredible sound I've heard my entire life in films, a sound we all know. It was so inspiring to be there with these unbelievable musicians who find the best in every score. For someone like me with a rock background, it was an amazing experience to work with the best film score musicians around.

My involvement in the film was absolute. I put my heart into this story which profoundly moved and touched me, in particular because it's so much Rebecca's story. It was a dream to be able to compose both great cinema themes for actresses who cry – a sort of film score fantasy with violins recorded at Abbey Road – and blend that with something more intimate, almost experimental."





#### MAIN CAST

Laura Barlow	Natalie PORTMAN
Kate Barlow	Lily-Rose DEPP
André Korben	Emmanuel SALINGER
Eva Said	Amira CASAR
Servier	Pierre SALVADORI
Fernand Prouvé	Louis GARREL
Juncker	David BENNENT
Louis	Damien CHAPELLE

#### MAIN CREW

Cinematographer	George LECHAPTOIS
Production Designer	Katia WYSZKOP
Costume Designer	Anais ROMAND
Script Girl	Cécile RODOLAKIS
Makeup	Saraï FISZEL
Hair	Catherine LEBLANC-CARAES
Original music composed by	ROB
Sound	Olivier HESPEL, Charles AUTRAND, Alexis PLACE, Sébastien PIERRE, Marc DOISNE
Artistic Director	PARTEL OLIVA
1st Assistant Director	Jean-Baptiste POUILLOUX
Casting	Philippe ELKOUBI
Editing	Julien LACHERAY
Line Producer	Laziz BELKAI
Post-production Supervisor	Pierre-Louis GARNON