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François Margolin presents

Boarding Gate

A thriller by **Olivier Assayas**



FESTIVAL DE CANNES

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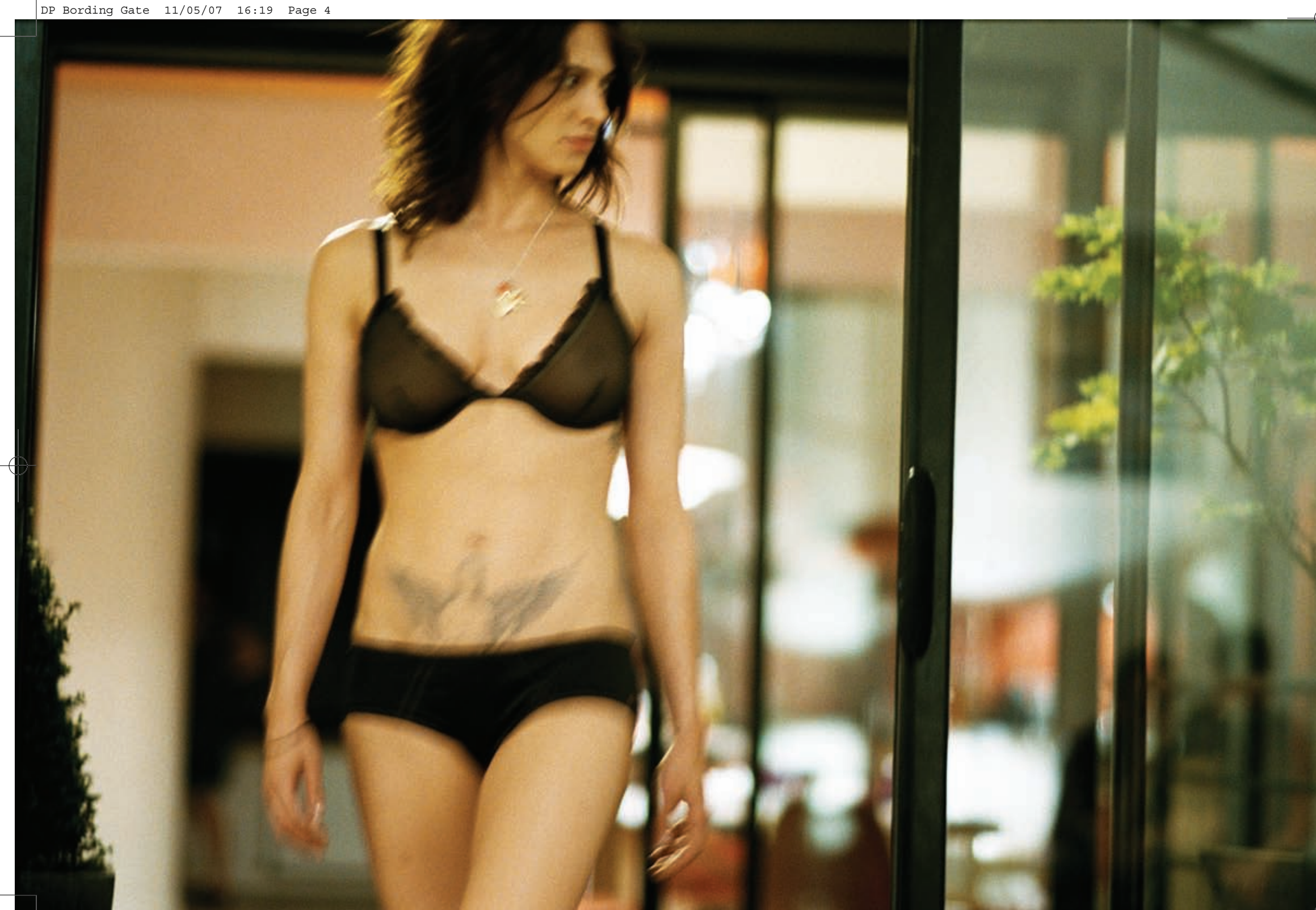
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Synopsis

Sexy ex-prostitute Sandra (**Asia Argento**) hooks up again with debt-ridden entrepreneur Miles (**Michael Madsen**). Mixed signals incite the former lovers to give it another go, but rekindling an old romance isn't on Sandra's agenda. She is forced to flee to Hong Kong to seek out a new life. Attractive young couple Lester (**Carl Ng**) and Sue (**Kelly Lin**) promise Sandra papers and money. Nothing turns out as expected for Sandra, whose feelings and intentions remain a mystery till the end.

Comments from Olivier Assayas

ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

A news brief caught my eye about the murder of French financier Edouard Stern during an S&M session. It seemed like something right out of my film DEMONLOVER. That triggered the story of a murder involving an ambiguous sexual relationship and the world of modern finance. I also thought about a woman on the run, trying to escape both the murder and the past. So the first part of the story ended up being centered around the confrontation between a man and a woman, their cat-and-mouse game. I wanted the second part to be about her escape, her being desperate and on the move. I knew the first part could pretty much take place in any Western city. But the second part had to be Hong Kong. I know that city well, but I had never filmed there before. I had been dreaming about it a long time.

BOARDING GATE

I chose this term as a title to evoke the idea of a passage between two worlds. Early on, I wanted the film's title to be the word stamped on passports when leaving Hong Kong: "departed." But I found that Scorsese had just finished a film with a similar title!

B MOVIE ECONOMICS

After DEMONLOVER and CLEAN, I had originally wanted to make a very French film focusing on provincial life. But the project met with a lot of financial complications. A sign of the times. While waiting to see if my French film was going to happen or not, I decided to write and even shoot quickly another project. Why not make a sort of B movie in English? Why not take my place in the new order of film finance by constructing a project around B movie economics? Slashed budget and fast shoot, but all the benefits of complete creative freedom. It was something I knew how to do. I made IRMA VEP under similar circumstances and for the same reasons.

In March 2006, I scouted locations for BOARDING GATE, followed by Paris pre-production to start shooting in July 2006. We shot for six weeks, three in and around Paris and three in Hong Kong. The film ended up costing less than 2 million euros.

THE KEY IS TO SHOOT QUICKLY

Frankly, I didn't feel any loss. Less locations makes it easier to shoot for less. In Paris, we shot primarily in the office and apartment of Miles (Michel Madsen). For the other locations, I wanted to shoot in the outskirts to give the feeling of a no man's land which could just as easily be Paris or somewhere else. The industrial suburbs of a modern industrial city somewhere in the Western world. This would only strengthen the contrast with ultra-urban Hong Kong.

The key is knowing how to shoot quickly. This is something I learned a long time ago by simple survival reflex. It's essential to have a solid crew of technicians and actors ready to take the same risks as the director. This requires a lot of energy because the constraints and the pressure forces you to constantly invent new solutions. This was definitely the case in Hong Kong. Shooting there isn't really costly if you do it the local way. If you go there with a full Western crew, Western habits and a Western infrastructure, then things will quickly turn expensive and heavy.

ASIA: ALWAYS READY AND WILLING

The narrative was inseparable from my desire to work with Asia Argento. She was the only actress capable of truthfully incarnating the different facets of the character. Asia is a physical actress. You can tell she has fun doing action scenes, running around with a gun in her hand. She was behind the film the whole way, always ready and willing, even for the toughest acrobatics. And she fell in love with Hong Kong, where she had never been to before the shoot.





ASIA: ALL INSTINCT

Asia is one of few actresses completely at home on a film set with no regard to stature. She has been on film sets since she was very young so she's more at ease with technicians on a chaotic set than shut away in a dressing room. Asia has a certain freedom in the way she thinks, reacts, in the choices she makes. This isn't something she puts on. She simply puts it out there very courageously. She's innately rock 'n' roll, which isn't very common among actresses. There's nothing prefabricated about her. She's all instinct with an uncommon intensity. She's a surprising actress who doesn't discriminate the trivial from the sophisticated, B movie situations from the most intimate. She's completely herself every time, and with the utmost generosity. Each take she comes up with something new, but she's

always in the heart of the film, in the heart of her character. She has a nearly unreal bond to the camera.

MICHAEL MADSEN

I met Michael Madsen through Nick Nolte, which was a good sign. I was looking for an actor with a strong physical presence who could play both dangerous and seductive. When I contacted him, he was able to find the time in his schedule to do the film. He was patient enough to stick with us every time we moved the shooting dates. We only needed him 10 days or so as his character shot only on three locations in Paris.

WHEN MICHAEL MET ASIA

The scenes between Asia and Michael were shot in chronological order. Their first shot together, the one with the cufflinks, was actually their first meeting. They had never seen each other before. Seduction started instantly between them, but also a certain defiance.

He's a bit of a bear. He tries to completely identify with his role, to get under the skin of his character. This can be risky for him and those around him. Asia is pretty radical herself, so this produced a real electricity on the set. It was like a pressure cooker between them, as if they were constantly competing, checking each other out. Even if the shots were carefully laid out and the movements very choreographed, Michael always shook things up with his unpredictability. Both Asia and I had to manage to follow him. Sometimes even against him, we had to firmly hold on to the line of the scene. He broke a plate, he spit out a pit on the other side of the room, etc... Conversely, there are things that he resists, that he balks at doing, that he reacts to at a different moment. Everything had to constantly be integrated into the film. Asia is on the front line so she has to react in real time. I'm behind, but I still have to take in

everything and re-orchestrate so as not to lose the whole concept of the sometimes very long sequences. Michael can be very over-the-top and go to extremes. After a certain point, he can take you to some very scary places. Things can get out of hand and situations can take on a troubling truthfulness. Asia called his bluff and took some big risks. Michael didn't seem to like the idea of being pushed to the limits by a girl. For example, the sex play scene with the belt. I originally wrote something much simpler. But Michael had some very precise ideas about what Asia should do to him. There were some takes that scared both of us, Asia and me!

KELLY LIN AND CARL NG

Since I was going to shoot in Hong Kong, I wanted to do my film under the same conditions as Hong Kong cinema. I wanted to look toward the new generation of actors directly there instead of trying to cast out of Paris. Carl Ng, who plays Lester, is an actor-model who grew up in London. He's the son of Richard Ng, a star from the 80s. He has very strong presence which I immediately found right for his relationship with Asia's character. Kelly Lin has worked with directors like Johnny To and Patrick Tam, and she's one of the best new Chinese-speaking actresses around. BOARDING GATE is the first time she acts in English in an international film.

SONIC YOUTH'S KIM GORDON

I've known Kim Gordon for a while now. I met her and Thurston when I used one of their songs in my film IRMA VEP (1996). Then we stayed in touch. I had always been a fan of their work for many reasons, most of them having to do with experimentation and their use of improvisation. So it was very exciting for me to have the opportunity of working with them on the score of my film DEMONLOVER (2002). I also filmed them live, mixed with some experimental footage in my film NOISE. I knew Kim wanted to act. She had been in Gus



Van Sant's LAST DAYS. I knew she had spent some of her teenage years in Hong Kong where her father was, I think, teaching. So I had no trouble imagining her as this Cantonese-speaking American based in Asia.

SHOOTING IN HONG KONG

We were only a few Europeans on the set: Asia, the cinematographer, the sound engineer, the assistant, the script supervisor, our line producer and me. The rest of the crew was local. They understood that we were going to shoot like them: fast, hand-held. But they are accustomed to rushing about with the Steadicam, so they were amazed and puzzled by our precision regarding the shots and our obstinacy at redoing them until we got exactly what we wanted.



The unexpected difficulty we met in shooting the Hong Kong way was that their crews are big. Salaries are low, so there are numerous technicians for every job. For example, never less than six people around the camera. Also, the people of Hong Kong tend to be pretty noisy. This posed a problem when we did guerilla shots in the middle of a crowd. The crew had to be really careful to be as limited and discreet as possible. Sometimes we had to invent these schemes, pretend to prepare a shot just to keep the excess crew occupied so that we could go somewhere else and shoot something else.

In such guerilla conditions, the toughest thing is that you're forced to do a lot of illegal shots, like shooting in the subway without permits. We did that with a team of four people. We did two takes, then ran off. We did the same thing at the airport because we were restricted to shooting from a certain boutique in the main hall. Of course, it was impossible to get everything we needed from only this point of view. Our Hong Kong crew was terrorized of airport security and they tried to stop us from doing anything illegal. We had a hard time getting them to do the shots we really needed. I have to say that I understood their reluctance because I would never do something like that in Paris!

HONG KONG

I went to Hong Kong for the first time in 1984 as a journalist. But I had already been making short films for a while and was in the process of writing my first feature. I had never even been to the States yet, so Hong Kong was my first contact with a modern city from a European perspective. I stayed there for a few weeks, running around the city, meeting all the great filmmakers from the golden era of martial arts movies. It was an incredibly inspiring experience. Their notion of cinema was completely different from whatever I was acquainted with in the West. So, I suppose it

had a way of turning upside down a lot of the more conventional notions I had of how to make films. I guess it also had the side effect of making me kind of an oddity within the spectrum of French cinema. The actual feeling of the city itself had this strong impact on my approach to writing and directing. I returned to Hong Kong occasionally just to visit, but I always knew that one day I would go back there to make a film.

EAST-WEST CROSS-POLLINATION

I try to let real life inspire me and not movies. But movies somehow end up making their way into your subconscious to distort your imagination. In that sense, as there is something dreamlike in this film, also about its way of moving between fantasy and documentary, rough reality and cartoon, I suppose it does owe something to the cinema I love. Not necessarily Asian cinema - I have never thought that there was a separate strain of Asian cinema, but rather that Eastern and Western cinema have, at least during this last decade, been in this process of cross-pollination. It has been one of the exciting events within contemporary cinema and I have always felt part of it.

OPENING UP MY WORLD

I think my career has been about desire, inspiration, and partly about survival. My films and my interests in filmmaking have gradually drifted from the framework of the French film industry, which to my taste has become embarrassingly insular, embarrassingly conventional. It's a very difficult time for modern French filmmakers. If you're into mainstream comedies, then no problem, you can do whatever you want on any budget you want. If you are into anything else, then it's a tough struggle. I have always hoped I was making my films for some kind of international audience, not just for France. But now, when I want to get my films financed in France, they tend to consider me as an outsider. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to get projects moving. So I guess that I might as well go all the way: as absurd as it may seem, it has become more coherent, economically, to make my films in English rather than in French. And in terms of my inspiration, it does open up my world to new stories, new characters, broadens my choice of actors... So there is some logic to it all. And my next film will be a typically French affair.





Olivier Assayas



Born in 1955, Olivier Assayas studied painting and literature, directed short films and wrote for Cahiers du Cinéma between 1980 and 1985. He co-wrote two films of director André Téchiné, RENDEZ-VOUS and SCENE OF THE CRIME. Assayas is also the author of film books "Hong Kong Cinéma" (1984), "Conversation avec Bergman" (1990), "Kenneth Anger - Vraie et Fausse Magie au Cinéma" (1998) and the autobiographical "Une Adolescence dans l'Après-Mai" (2005).

Assayas starts shooting SOUVENIRS DU VALOIS (SPRINGTIME PAST) in June 2007 with Juliette Binoche, Charles Berling and Jérémie Renier.

- 2007** BOARDING GATE
- 2006** NOISE (documentary)
- 2006** PARIS JE T'AIME ("Quartier des Enfants Rouges")
- 2004** CLEAN
- 2002** DEMONLOVER
- 2000** LES DESTINÉES SENTIMENTALES
- 1998** FIN AOÛT, DÉBUT SEPTEMBRE (LATE AUGUST, EARLY SEPTEMBER)
- 1997** HHH : A PORTRAIT OF HOU HSIAO HSIEN (documentary)
- 1996** IRMA VEP
- 1994** L'EAU FROIDE (COLD WATER)
- 1993** UNE NOUVELLE VIE (A NEW LIFE)
- 1991** PARIS S'ÉVEILLE (PARIS AWAKENS)
- 1989** L'ENFANT DE L'HIVER (WINTER'S CHILD)
- 1986** DESORDRE (DISORDER)

Asia Argento (as Sandra)

In addition to Olivier Assayas' BOARDING GATE, Asia Argento also stars this year in Abel Ferrara's GO GO TALES and Catherine Breillat's UNE VIEILLE MAITRESSE. Asia's recent film credits include Tony Gatliff's TRANSYLVANIA, Sofia Coppola's MARIE ANTOINETTE, George Romero's LAND OF THE DEAD and Gus Van Sant's LAST DAYS.

Asia has twice won the David di Donatello (Italy's Academy Award) for Best Actress: in 1997 for Peter Del Monte's COMPAGNA DI VIAGGIO and in 1994 for Carlo Verdone's PERDIAMOCI DI VISTA!

Other film credits include Rob Cohen's XXX, Michael Radford's B. MONKEY, Ferrara's NEW ROSE HOTEL, Michele Placido's LE AMICHE DEL CUORE, Patrice Chereau's LA REINE MARGOT, Nanni Moretti's PALOMBELLA ROSSA and Michele Soavi's LA CHIESA.

Asia made her acting debut when she was only nine years old in Sergio Citti's TV miniseries "Sogni e bisogni". Her first leading role was in Cristina Comencini's 1989 film ZOO. She is the daughter of famed Italian horror director Dario Argento. She has starred in three of his films: 1993's TRAUMA, 1996' THE STENDHAL SYNDROME and 1998's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. She will soon be seen in his new film, THE THIRD MOTHER (LA TERZA MADRE).

Asia also wrote and directed two films: SCARLET DIVA (2000) and THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS (2004).





Michael Madsen (as Miles)

Michael Madsen played the evil Budd in both "volumes" of Tarantino's opus KILL BILL. His other recent credits include David Zucker's SCARY MOVIE 4, Uwe Boll's BLOODRAYNE, Frank Miller's SIN CITY, Jan Kounen's BLUEBERRY and Lee Tamahori's DIE ANOTHER DAY. Acclaimed performances as deranged killer in John Dahl's Kill Me Again (1989) and then as Susan Sarandon's rough-edged boyfriend in Ridley Scott's THELMA AND LOUISE (1991) led to Michael's breakthrough performance as the sadistic jewel thief Mr. Blonde in Quentin Tarantino's 1992 hit RESERVOIR DOGS.

Born in Chicago, Madsen began his career at the Steppenwolf Theatre Company. He was soon cast in a variety of supporting roles in movies such as WARGAMES, THE NATURAL, FREE WILLY, MULHOLLAND FALLS, SPECIES, DONNIE BRASCO AND WYATT EARP. In addition to his film work, Madsen has contributed voice work to some of the biggest-selling video games, Grand Theft Auto III, Driver 3, Yakuza, True Crime: Streets of LA and Reservoir Dogs. He was also the voice of Maugrim the wolf, captain of the White Witch's secret police, in THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA.

Michael will next be seen in Jon Keeyes' LIVING AND DYING, Mark Young's TOOTH AND NAIL, Mark Mahon's STRENGTH AND HONOUR, Robby Henson's HOUSE, Raul Inglis' VICE and Quentin Tarantino's INGLORIOUS BASTARDS, Bishop's HELL RIDE and Rodriguez & Miller's sequel SIN CITY 2.

Kelly Lin (as Sue)



Taiwanese-born actress Kelly Lin has become one of the biggest names in the Hong Kong film industry. She recently starred in Patrick Tam's AFTER THIS OUR EXILE (FU ZI) and Qunshu Gao's THE TOKYO TRIAL (DONGJING SHENPAN). She will next be seen starring in the Johnny To segment of TRIANGLE and also his upcoming features SPARROW (MAN JEUK) and GODLY DETECTIVE. Kelly's other credits include Andrew Lau's THE LEGEND OF SPEED, To's FULLTIME KILLER, Tsui Hark's ZU WARRIORS and Wai-Man Cheng's SLEEPING WITH THE DEAD. A graduate of the University of California at Irvine, Kelly was named the sexiest Asian star in the world by FHM magazine.

Carl Ng (as Lester)

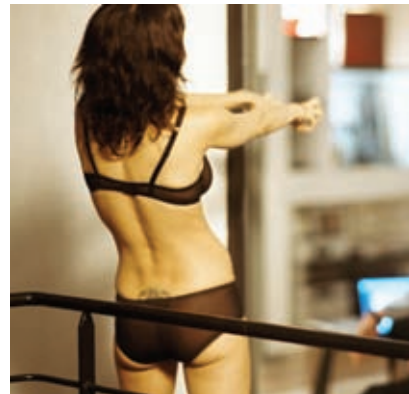
Carl Ng is one of Hong Kong's new generation of actors. Born in Hong Kong but raised in London. He trained in the UK and started his career treading the boards of various fringe theatres in London, including the Donmar Warehouse under the helm of Sam Mendes. In 2003 Carl returned to Hong Kong and has since worked on various productions such as Marko Mak's COLOR OF THE TRUTH and SET TO KILL, Cheng Pou Soi's LOVE BATTLEFIELD, Dante Lam's THE TRIAD ZONE and HEAT TEAM, Yong Fan's COLOR BLOSSOMS, Chung Ning Wong's MIDNIGHT RUNNING, James Yuen's HEAVENLY MISSION, Johnny to's YESTERDAY ONCE MORE, Jingle Ma's HAPPY BIRTHDAY and Nicholas Chin's MAGAZINE GAP ROAD. Olivier Assayas' BOARDING GATE represents his first role in a French and international film. Describing the experience as one of the few times or projects where the multicultural cast is not typecast through stereotypes and indicative of the director's passion for cinema and the East. Carl currently resides in Hong Kong preparing for his projects.





Cast

Sandra **Asia ARGENTO**
Miles **Michael MADSEN**
Lester **Carl NG**
Sue **Kelly LIN**
Lisa **Joana PREISS**
Andrew **Alex DESCAS**
Kay **Kim GORDON**





Crew

Director/Screenwriter **Olivier ASSAYAS**
Cinematographer **Yorick LE SAUX**
Editor **Luc BARNIER**
Sound **Daniel SOBRINO**
Production Designer **François-Renaud LABARTHE**
Costume Designer **Anaïs ROMAND**
First Assistant Director **Matthew GLEDHILL**
Script Supervisor **Agnès FEUVRE**
Casting **Antoinette BOULAT**
Executive Producer **Sylvie BARTHET**
Producer **François MARGOLIN**
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