

METROPOLITAN FILMEXPORT, ORIGAMI FILMS and BEE MOVIES
Present

An ORIGAMI FILMS and BEE MOVIES production

A film by Lola Doillon

Fanny's Journey

Le Voyage de Fanny

With
Leonie Souchaud

With the participation of
Cécile de France
Stéphane Grootd

From the book by Fanny Ben-Ami published by Editions du Seuil
Written by Anne Peyrègne and Lola Doillon

Duration: 1 h 34

Released May 18, 2016

You can download the poster, press kit and photos for the film at:

www.metrofilms.com

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THE STORY

At the tender age of 12, Fanny is already very stubborn! But she is also a brave young girl who is looking after her two little sisters while hidden away in a children's home far from her parents.

Before hastily fleeing, Fanny takes charge of a group of eight children and sets off on a dangerous journey through occupied France to reach the Swiss border.

Amongst the fear, laughter and unexpected encounters, the little group learns how to be independent and discovers teamwork and friendship ...

PRODUCTION NOTES

A COMING OF AGE STORY ON A CHILD'S LEVEL

In her first feature film *ET TOI, T'ES SUR QUI? (JUST ABOUT LOVE)*, Lola Doillon faithfully conjured up the first blushes of love and the pain of adolescence. For her third film, she wanted to work with children and anchor her story in a historical context. It was her producer Saga Blanchard, with her since the beginning, who unearthed the book by Fanny Ben-Ami which inspired *FANNY'S JOURNEY*. *"I wanted to tell a story of liberation but speeded up"* said Lola Doillon. *"As the heart of the film evokes the passage from childhood to adolescence and the emotional experiences of these young heroes: the anguish of separation, the fear of the unknown, of forgetting - which Fanny fights with her camera – and of death, but also their optimism, energy, courage and perseverance."*

Although the film is set in occupied France, the filmmaker left out images of war and the arrest of the parents. Above all else, this was about adopting the children's point of view: *"What interested me,"* she continues, *"Was to live through the events through the eyes of a group of children, to show how these children, who were not underneath the bombs but still suffered the violence of abandonment and the fear of being orphaned, lived during the war and make us experience it from their point of view."*

Of course, this project was also an opportunity for Lola Doillon to tell young people about this troubled time in our history. *"Many of them",* she adds, *"Depending on their age, still don't know or only know a little about this period of history even though the last witnesses are getting old and gradually disappearing."* The film was therefore an excellent means of passing on the memory of the Holocaust - always at a child's level. That's what convinced Fanny Ben-Ami to give the rights to her book to the director: *"What I want is for my message to be understood so that it does not happen again,"* she says. *"We live in a very fragile time; we hear a lot of raised voices that closely resemble those that we heard at the time. This is very dangerous, including for people who are not Jewish. Because after the Jews, they will find other targets. We are all concerned."*

FROM REALITY TO FICTION

Fanny, the young, 12-year-old heroine at the head of a small group of children, is the cinematic double of the book's author. Before settling down to write, Lola Doillon wanted to meet Fanny Ben-Ami in Tel Aviv, where she now lives, to better understand the story of her parents and sisters. *"I needed to immerse myself in her past and her memories of the children's home,"* she said. *"She told me many things, some of which are included in the film and some not. I was also inspired by other secret stories by children that were rescued by different organisations and everyday stories. And I sought the help of archivists and historians in the interests of accuracy."*

When she first read the script, Fanny Ben-Ami didn't find her story in its entirety, which troubled her somewhat: *"I wrote to Lola to say that it didn't happen quite like that"* she says. *"For example, the Resistance and the underground were neither here nor there, though they were nevertheless very important to me. And then, after thinking about it and talking with friends, I realised that a film was not a book and that it was for others, not for me. And that there were aspects of my journey that*

were important in my eyes but not necessarily for the film. In the end, I think Lola did well and that in her script, the essentials are there and the main points are said."

The author accepts and is glad that FANNY'S JOURNEY is a feature film of fiction and not a documentary, *"because the spectators will be able to put themselves in the places of the characters, they will be able to empathise, suffer or laugh with them."* Lola Doillon noticed that a work of fiction has its own rhythm and its own narrative logic: *"It forced me to change the path and some contextual elements,"* she said. *"But I obviously followed the thread of the key historical events which were the framework of this adventure and everything that I changed remains true, inspired by real events that were recounted by other people who lived through that time."*

CHILDREN ARE THE HEADLINE ACT

The success of FANNY'S JOURNEY largely rested on the choice of young actors. Therefore, Lola Doillon met, in France and Belgium, almost a thousand children - some of whom already had acting experience - and allowed herself to take a very flexible approach. *"For example, I allowed myself to modify the script to adapt it to one child or another that we thought were great,"* she says.

Though the director chose the children individually, she also wished to see them work as a group. *"Some were perfect alone but it didn't work as well with others,"* she says. *"There had to be a chemistry between them – I'm thinking especially about the three sisters who formed a group within the group."* The filmmaker organised working groups to observe how the children were able to interact with each other: *"Bit by bit they let themselves go,"* she said. *"They had set off on the same adventure and they helped each other out."*

The search for the main role lasted a very long time. Finally, it was thanks to the Belgian casting director that Lola Doillon unearthed little Leonie, 12 years old, who had no prior filming experience. *"It was unsettling to see that this girl had such force, such intelligence, such daring, exactly like the character,"* confirms the director. *"Fanny's kindness interested me less than her stubbornness. I wanted to show that her faults are as useful to her as her qualities and thanks to her impulsive temperament, positive rage and determination, Fanny refuses to give up and fights in her own way to carry out the mission that has fallen to her. That's what I was looking for in the child who would play Fanny and Leonie had a lot of that."* Fanny Ben-Ami confirms that she had a rebellious temperament as a little girl: *"I was rebelling because what we lived through was unfair,"* she says. *"My parents did not return from the camps despite what was promised. Throughout this period, I was angry with adults. I said to myself - 'You will not own me and you will not own the children either!' "*

In her first film, Lola Doillon showed her ability to direct teenagers: she demonstrates the same ease in working with children. Without doubt because she has kept the same "primitive" sensibility of a child, as she recognises herself. *"The most complicated thing,"* she points out, *"Is that there is a way of operating, a different language to find with each of them to get them to play in the same scene. Aside from the text, we mostly had fun with the language, the situations, working on emotions and on letting go. A child who works too much on the text in advance risks losing all spontaneity. For a child, acting in a film is like a game: it's very instinctive. They play in both senses of the word!"* Leonie agrees: *"Lola had a very playful manner. She was patient. When we didn't get it, she explained it to us, took her time and didn't get annoyed. She took the time to redo the take until we understood".*

TWO SPARKLING SUPPORTING ROLES

Though adults are not often present in FANNY'S VOYAGE, two of them still distinguished themselves for the crucial role they played in rescuing the children. Beginning with Mrs. Forman who is inspired by Nicole Weil-Salon and Lotte Schwarz, both utterly dedicated to the protection of children during the war. *"From the children's testimonies, I imagined Mrs. Forman as obviously - and necessarily - severe, out of the numerous adults who had to help them prepare for the trip,"* explains the director. *"At the same time, I wanted her to allow her tenderness and emotion to escape when she is forced to entrust the responsibility of the children to Fanny."* Lola Doillon, 1st assistant director on POT LUCK by Cédric Klapisch, knew Cécile de France well. *"I thought of her as, to my eyes, she is the embodiment of a woman who's strong, smart, straight-forward and generous,"* she said. *"Her acting style allows her to subtly go from very harsh and severe to someone who's gentle and kind in the same scene."*

It is precisely the contrast between the harshness of the character and her kindness that seduced the actress: *"I loved the contrast between the viewpoint of the innocent, amazed and frightened children, and the hardness of the school headmistress – this authority that was necessary in order to teach the children to be independent, to live without parents, alone, to be able to save themselves,"* says Cécile de France. The screenplay also blew her away: *"I read the script, I cried and I immediately called Lola,"* she continues. Then the character had to be built, even if she was inspired by two women who really existed: *"We wanted to create a school headmistress who physically scared the children a little,"* says Cecile de France. *"She therefore has a somewhat rigid hairdo. As she did not have time to get ready, she isn't very well turned out. We also worked on the tone and voice to make sure it was good and harsh. There were all these little details thanks to which, after a few days, we had created a real character, very well drawn, and nothing like me."*

After finding refuge in the mountains, the children are taken in by a kind farmer who is moved by their fate. The director was aware that some of her character's dialogue could be difficult to pull off - but not with an actor like Stéphane Grootd: *"When I went to see him to talk about the film, I told myself I was going to change his dialogue,"* she said. *"But when he read it, he spoke it with such ease that everything worked, everything was just right! In the end, we barely touched anything."*

Although he was only acting, Stéphane Grootd was thrilled by the project: *"Lola is very sensitive and I thought to myself that she was going to tell this story with originality,"* he says. *"What I like in meetings and projects is this originality."* The change in tone from his job as a comic also appealed to him. *"This is the first time I've done a period film and the more I continue in this business, the more I want to erase our friend Stéphane Grootd, who I know well, in favour of characters who are damaged, tortured, hidden and complex,"* he continues. The actor particularly enjoyed his fellow actors, adults and children. Regarding the actor playing the Nazi officer, he said: *"His look made me into this farmer who puts up Jewish children. If the goal of an actor is to forget oneself in favour of the character, the fact of forgetting can also come from someone else."* He is equally enthusiastic about his young colleagues, *"Sometimes it's easier to act with children because when they are good, they are much better than adults,"* he enthuses. *"They have a spontaneity that arouses emotions from God knows where."*

A BIG RESPONSIBILITY

In the end the director, like her actors, felt a huge responsibility in bringing the journey of Fanny Ben-Ami to the screen. *"I asked myself the question of my legitimacy to tell such a story and talk about Jewish children while not being Jewish myself,"* said Lola Doillon. *"But I justified it to myself by saying it was the history of France, and the history of Europe, and as such, I had a right – even a duty - to tell it".* Cécile de France shares this sense of responsibility: *"It's draining and difficult to interpret these women - these heroines - who really existed,"* she said. *"It took a lot of personal investment and I had to immerse myself in the history: to read all the testimonies, it was hard."* But it's without doubt the arrival of Fanny Ben-Ami on set which reassured the filmmaker in her artistic approach: *"She arrived on set with a lot of apprehension,"* she concludes. *"She was anxious at the idea of physically plunging back into that moment. But seeing the team and all the children coming to her to ask questions about her past with interest and kindness, she was reassured. When she left two days later, she confided in us that she was calmer: she understood that we were not digging up her past but that we had the same desire to pass on and pay tribute to her story."*

IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA

CECILE DE FRANCE

Mrs Forman

Selected Filmography

- 2015 **FANNY'S JOURNEY** by Lola Doillon
SUMMERTIME by Catherine CORSINI
- 2014 **TERM LIFE** by Peter BILLINGSLEY
IN HARMONY by Denis DERCOURT
- 2013 **MÖBIUS** by Eric ROCHANT
CHINESE PUZZLE by Cedric KLAPISCH
- 2012 **SUPERSTAR** by Xavier GIANNOLI
In competition at the Venice Film Festival 2012
- 2010 **UN BAISER PAPILLON** by Karine Silla
GARDIENS DE L'ORDRE by Nicolas BOUKHRIEF
THE KID WITH A BIKE by Jean-Pierre DARDENNE and Luc DARDENNE
Grand Prix at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival
- 2009 **HEREAFTER** by Clint EASTWOOD
SISTER SMILE by Stijn CONINX
- 2007 **MESRINE : KILLER INSINCT** by Jean-François Richet
- 2006 **MON COLONEL** by Laurent HERBIET
A SECRET by Claude MILLER
- 2005 **ORCHESTRA SEATS** by Danièle THOMPSON
THE SINGER by Xavier GIANNOLI
BAD FAITH by Roschdy ZEM
- 2004 **LA CONFIANCE RÈGNE** by Etienne CHATILIEZ
RUSSIAN DOLLS by Cedric KLAPISCH
César for Best Actress in a Supporting Role 2006
- 2003 **I, CAESAR** by Richard BERRY
HIGH VOLTAGE by Alexander AJA
- 2002 **POT LUCK** by Cedric KLAPISCH
César for Most Promising Actress in 2003
- 2001 **IRENE** by Ivan CALBERAC

2000 **L'ART (DÉLICAT) DE LA SÉDUCTION** by Richard BERRY

Television series:

2015 **THE YOUNG POPE** Paolo Sorrentino

STEPHANE DE GROODT

Jean

Selected Filmography

2016 **CORPORATE** by Nicolas Silhol

2015 **FANNY'S JOURNEY** by Lola Doillon

2014 **PARIS XILLOUGBY** by Arthur Delaire
UNE HEURE DE TRANQUILITÉ by Patrice Leconte

2013 **SUPER HYPOCHONDER** by Dany Boon
GAZELLES by Mona Achache
BARBECUE 2012 by Eric Lavaine

2011 **ASTERIX AND OBELIX: GOD SAVE BRITANNIA** by Laurent Tirard

2009 **WITHOUT A TRACE** by Grégoire Vigneron

2008 **THE WHISTLER** by Philippe Lefebvre

2007 **BABY BLUES** by Diane Bertrand

2006 **ASTERIX AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES** by Thomas Langmann & Frédéric Forestier

2005 **SAINT-JACQUES LA MECQUE** by Coline Serreau

2004 **25 DEGREES IN WINTER** by Stéphane MUILLET
TROIS PETITES FILLES by Jean-Loup Hubert

2002 **HOP** by Dominique Standaert

1994 **MAUVAIS GENRES** by Francis Girod

BEHIND THE CAMERA

LOLA DOILLON

Director - Writer

Lola began very young in film, initially as a camera assistant and then assistant editor on the films of Patrice Chéreau, Jean-Pierre Mocky, François Dupeyron.

She was then a casting director, notably for Jacques Doillon and Michaël Haneke, then an assistant director on films by Jacques Doillon, Cédric Klapisch and Benoît Graffin.

Then she directed three short films including one (MAJORETTES) that was selected in the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes. Lola directed her first feature film ET TOI T'ES SUR QUI? as part of the Un Certain Regard official selection at Cannes in 2007.

For her second feature film, IN YOUR HANDS, Lola directed Kristin Scott Thomas and Pio Marmaï. FANNY'S JOURNEY is her third feature film.

ANNE PEYREGNE

Screenwriter

After studying literature, Anne entered FEMIS in the directing department. On leaving school, she directed (and co-directed) a number of documentaries, including LES PASSEURS for Planète, selected for the États Généraux of Documentary Films in Lussas and for Cinéma du Réel. Always interested in fiction, she soon turned towards script writing. She writes for several series (*Vénus et Apollon, Les Bleus, Odysseus...*).

In 2014, she wrote Lola Doillon's third feature film. At the same time, she co-directed an "episode" in the documentary LES PASSEURS for ARTE, shot in 1995, about an undertaker's business in Burgundy.

SAGA BLANCHARD

Producer

Saga took her first steps into the movie business on set in 1995. She occupied the posts of stage manager, production secretary and then administrator. In 1998, she joined the Cédric Klapisch and Bruno Levy company (Ce qui me meut et Move movie) with whom she worked as a production coordinator and executive producer on all of their productions for over ten years. She created the short film department there and produced five short films, including MAJORETTES by Lola Doillon, selected for the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes in 2005.

Saga and Lola Doillon continued their collaboration with Lola's first feature, JUST ABOUT LOVE in 2007, an official selection in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes Film Festival 2007. In 2009, she created the production company Origami Films and produced IN YOUR HANDS, Lola Doillon's second feature film with Kristin Scott Thomas and Pio Marmaï, then LOW PROFILE, Cécilia Rouaud first feature film, with Denis Ménochet and Vanessa Paradis.

MARIE DE LUSSIGNY

Producer

After having managed the admin and financial departments at France 2 Cinema, and as such managed the acquisitions and co-productions of films at France 2, in 2006 she joined Epithète Films as head of business affairs on the productions MICMACS by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, MUSÉE HAUT, MUSÉE BAS by Jean-Michel Ribes and THE YOUNG GIRL AND THE WOLVES by Gilles Legrand.

In August 2009, she created Bee Films, a production company of short and feature films. She produced J'ADORE CA!, a short film in 3D by Sophie Blanvillain. Followed by AFTER, the first feature film by Géraldine Maillet with Julie Gayet and Raphaël Personnaz released in January 2013.

VICTOR HADIDA & SAMUEL HADIDA

Co-producers

Victor Hadida is the President of Metropolitan Filmexport, a distribution and production company created in the 80s by David Hadida, run by him with his brother Samuel. Over a thirty-year career, Metropolitan Filmexport has become the leading independent European distribution company, according to the annual ranking conducted in 2007 by the European Audiovisual Observatory. Among the many publicly and critically acclaimed films that have contributed to Metropolitan's reputation, are the LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy by Peter Jackson, David Fincher's SEVEN, THE WOLF OF WALL STREET by Martin Scorsese, the HUNGER GAMES saga and coming soon THE BFG – BIG FRIENDLY GIANT by Steven Spielberg, adapted from the book by Roald Dahl.

This brilliant career introduced Victor Hadida to the most influential positions in the profession and then in July 2006, he was unanimously elected President of the National Federation of Film Distributors, which represents more than 50 companies in France.

He is involved with his brother, Samuel Hadida, in all of Davis Films' projects, a joint production company. The experience gained during the remarkable development of the Metropolitan distribution company enabled Samuel Hadida to begin very early on in the production of feature

films. Audaciously he gave a chance to an as yet unknown writer, Quentin Tarantino, whose first screenplay he produced, *True Romance*, directed by Tony Scott.

Samuel Hadida currently produces or co-produces several films a year. These productions comprise the best of French cinema, European productions and co-productions, and American productions.

Multiple successes, recognised by the public and the profession, have shown him to be a shrewd producer. Out of a non-exhaustive list we can mention: David Cronenberg's *SPIDER*, *The IMAGINARIUM OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS*, written and directed by Terry Gilliam, *PERFUME - STORY OF A MURDERER* by Tom Tykwer, *GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK* by George Clooney, *THE BLACK DAHLIA* by Brian De Palma and the *RESIDENT EVIL* saga.

Among his many productions, Samuel Hadida has developed a special relationship with Christophe Gans. He produced his first films, *NECRONOMICON*, *CRYING FREEMAN* and *BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF*, one of the biggest successes of 2001 and also nominated for four César. In 2006, *SILENT HILL*, ranked number one at the US box office after its opening weekend. Samuel Hadida also maintains an ongoing collaboration with the screenwriter and director Roger Avary, whose first film he produced, *KILLING ZOE*, starring Jean-Hugues Anglade and Julie Delpy.

In 2015, Victor and Samuel Hadida co-produced the film by Gilles Legrand, with Olivier Gourmet and Georgia Scalliet from la Comédie Française, *THE SCENT OF MANDARIN* as well as *Un + Une* by Claude Lelouch, with Jean Dujardin and Elsa Zylberstein.

CAST LIST

Fanny
Erika
Georgette
Victor
Diane
Rachel
Maurice
Marie
Jacques
Mrs. Forman
Jean
Elie
Helga
Ethel
Mother at the Ose House
Fanny's Mother Flashback
Fanny's Father Flashback
Julien
Director
Police Chief

Leonie SOUCHAUD
Fantine HARDUIN
Juliane LEPOUREAU
Ryan BRODIE
Anaïs MEIRINGER
Lou LAMBRECHT
Igor VAN DESSEL
Malonn LEVANA
Lucien KHOURY
Cécile DE FRANCE
Stéphane DE GROODT
Victor MEUTELET
Elea KÖRNER
Alice HAUWE
Anna TENTA
Pascaline CREVECOEUR
Julien VARGAS
Jeremiah PETRUS
Pierre WALLON
Bruno MULLENAERTS

CREW LIST

Director	Lola Doillon
Producers	Saga BLANCHARD Marie DE LUSSIGNY
Co-producers	Victor HADIDA Samuel HADIDA Geneviève LEMAL Cédric KLAPISCH Bruno LEVY Anne Peyrègne Lola Doillon
Screenplay	Peter COTTEREAU Valérie DESEINE
Cinematographer	Miguel REJAS
Director of Photography	Julie BRENTA
Editor	Emmanuel DE BOISSIEU
Chief Sound Operator	Sylvain FAVRE-BULLE
Mixing	Gisèle-GERARD TOLINI
Original Music Composer	Pierre-François LIMBOSCH
In collaboration with	Isabelle PANNETIER
Head Designer	Marie MESSIEN
Head Costume designer	Natalie DE HEN
Chief Make-up Artist	Olivier PILORGET
Chief Hairdresser/Makeup artist	Joseph EMIELOT
Gaffer	Vincent UCCELLO
Head Grips	Pierre WALLON
Production Manager	Ophelia GELBER
Casting	Sébastien MORADIELLOS
Script Editing	Marie DUCRET
Location Manager	Eric GRANDJEAN Arnaud AUBEY

In coproduction with DAVIS FILMS, SCOPE PICTURES, FRANCE 2 CINEMA, RHONE-ALPES CINEMA, CE QUI ME MEUT. Featuring FRANCE TELEVISION and OCS. With the participation of Wallonie. With the support of Eurimages and the FOUNDATION FOR THE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST. In association with COFIMAGE 27 and A PLUS IMAGE 6. With the support of Clotilde BACRI HERBO, Bernard HERBO and ELECTRINVEST.

International sales: INDIE SALES COMPANY. Distribution France: Metropolitan Filmexport.