

**CARMEN  
KASSOVITZ**

**AUDREY  
DANA**

**AUGUSTIN  
BOUCHACOURT**

# CAMERA OBSCURA



**PRODUIT PAR  
CHRISTOPHE STARKMAN**

**ÉCRIT ET RÉALISÉ PAR  
MARY NOELLE DANA  
& SONIA SIEFF**



# synopsis

Cléo is a feminist college student who works catering jobs to make ends meet. During a high-end fashion shoot, world-famous photographer Alice Klein decides the hired model just won't do, and sets her eyes on the opinionated young woman. When Cléo expresses her extreme distaste for all things fashion-related, Samuel, the cynical production assistant, makes it clear she doesn't have a choice.



# the directors



## Sonia Sieff

Photographer and director Sonia Sieff found her path at 17 through travels. She learned the trade on movie sets with renowned directors of photography, before turning to fashion.

Her style is about mastering light with a loving eye and highlighting her subject's body and personality through nudes and portraits.

These last few years, while collaborating with numerous international fashion magazines, she has been working on personal projects and exhibitions.

Her first book *Les Françaises* was published by Rizzoli in 2017. It compiles pictures that were then presented in Paris, Marseille, Brussels and Munich. Her second book focuses on Oran, following the footsteps of a young Yves Saint Laurent. It was published in September 2019.

Simultaneously, she's developed her directing skills by working on short movies and advertising campaigns. She's currently working on a documentary about her father, as well as on her photography book.



## Mary Noelle Dana

French-American writer Mary Noelle Dana has co-written, script-doctored and/or contributed to various screenplays and pieces for film, advertising, TV and editorial content, including two commissioned short films with co-director Sonia Sieff.

She has contributed to the street art anthology *From Style Writing to Art* (2010), written the Dance chapter in Julien and Gérard Camy's *Sport et Cinema anthology* (2016). From 2009 to 2018, she was a journalist and an interviewer for Radio Lumière (Festival Lumière de Lyon) and Radio Festival (International Cannes Film Festival).

In 2018, she founded Cinégraphies, a series of talks, workshops and masterclasses presented in Arles, dedicated to cinematography, screenwriting and moviemaking, in partnership with the Rencontres d'Arles. Its second edition will be held in September 2020. That same year, she worked on Medecins du Monde's *Unsung Heroes* book, an extensive portrait series exploring the violences exerted on women throughout the world. She has been a contributor for the online magazine *Bande à Part* since January 2020 and is currently co-writing the dystopian feature-length film *Gala*.

She's represented by Laurent Grégoire.



# a word with the directors

## How did this project come to life?

**Mary Noelle Dana:** Sonia and I met working on *Ex*, a short movie Baccarat asked her to direct. She was looking for a scriptwriter. In 2016, our paths crossed again when we wrote and directed together the César Academy's 'Upcoming Talents' short movie.

**Sonia Sieff:** We were both looking forward to working together again, to put our compelling compatibility to play, reuniting a dynamic duo that merges what we're all about: fashion, beautiful imagery and feminism. We first started writing a feature movie, but soon realized that to convince producers we'd need to prove our ability to turn words into moving images and lead a team.

**MND:** From the very beginning, we knew that we were tackling a vast subject. We had imagined characters filled with richness and contradictions. We extracted a key scene from our original script which could be turned into a fierce, fun story. It had to stand on its own.

**SS:** We wanted to create something surprising, something that would showcase the plurality of the fashion world, the pleasure with which it chops heads off alongside its brilliant liberating power. We had to make it short and impactful, to show what's hidden behind the glamour. The script went through many versions, that we trimmed down to the essence of our subject and intentions. Meeting Christophe Starkman was definitely a milestone.

## What inspired you?

**SS:** Our daily lives, for starter, and the causes dear to our hearts. I've been a photographer for 20 years now, I know every aspect of the industry, its violence sure, but also that peculiar comedic sharpness, that duality is quite unique. That unique duality and the current need to rethink and denounce the codes of that pyramid, are really the core of this movie.

**MND:** I spent several years helping luxury houses create media content. Fashion and advertising have always been personal subjects of dissent and reflection. The Fashion and advertising world underlines the clear connection between female objectification and violence against women. We wanted to dig deep into that, in a non-manichean way.

## Any particular memory from your time on the set?

**MND:** It's a collection of memories, which started before we even set foot on set. First, the casting - complicated yet exhilarating. Carmen Kassovitz, such a raw young talent - she was 17, younger than what we were looking for, but we fell in love with her immediately. She is the epitome of this new generation of girls, tenacious, in touch with her feelings. Finding Augustin Bouchacourt, who instantly understood every dimension of Samuel's character. And the pleasure of directing my sister Audrey, who's a great actress, in a different kind of role that those she usually takes on.

From writing to directing, from editing to sound design, everything excites me. Working with Sonia again was a blast. And then, meeting and collaborating with Pierre-Hugues Galien: in the hands of his team, the camera becomes this organic, fascinating, shape-shifting creature.

**SS:** Shooting a 20-minute movie in two and a half days! Having to juggle with all the imperatives of a short movie was a real booster for me, it confirmed our hunger for film directing, for construction. The technical and artistic teams were so generous, every step of that frantic journey.





the team

# producer CHRISTOPHE STARKMAN



Former engineer Christophe Starkman turned to production out of sheer passion.

As a studio manager intern, Christophe had the opportunity to learn from every body of work required to create a movie and, in doing so, to grasp the production chain as a whole.

His rapid rise in the business led him to work with such renown directors as Jean-Paul Goude, Jean-Baptiste Mondino, Olivier Dahan, Jonathan Glazer, Tony Kaye...

In 1998, he started the production company Why Us, partnering with Première Heure, and quickly became known for his ability to handle budgets, plan strategies and create strong bounds with his teams and clients.

He fine-tuned his expertise with movies artists (Wong Kar Wai, Olivier Dahan...), advertising geniuses (Sebastien Chantrel, Arnaud Roussel) and photography visionaries (David Sims, Stephane Sednaoui, Tom Munro and Peter Lindbergh whom he accompanied during his last 15 years).

In addition to producing major artists, Christophe had the chance to work with acclaimed actors such as Brad Pitt, Charlize Theron, Penelope Cruz, Kate Winslet, Cate Blanchett, Christoph Waltz, Ewan McGregor, Emily Blunt, Julianne Moore, Jane Fonda, Helen Mirren, ...

In 2016, he founded his own company, 109 Paris, and has since been developing his projects independently.

## a word with the producer

### How did you get involved in this project?

Sonia and I had met with the idea of working together. When she mentioned the short movie she had written with Mary Noelle, it piqued my curiosity and I immediately asked to read it. I fell in love with the story and the characters in a flash, and offered to produce it.

I know those characters, I've been working with them for 20 years now. The canny photographer, the young woman thrown into a world she can't grasp, a drama queen stylist, a neurotic assistant/producer... It had it all.

### What challenges did you face in this endeavour?

Not only did we have a very small window to shoot a lot of scenes, we also had to compose to build the perfect team if we wanted to capture the clever writing the directors put into this film. Because we all know that between what you write and what you actually shoot, you might be in for a surprise. I think we passed the test successfully.

### A particular memory you brought back from the set?

The fact that I actually wasn't on set. (laughs) After 6 months of careful planning, I had to fly out to Los Angeles to work on a movie with Peter Lindbergh. Ironic, isn't it.



director of photography

# PIERRE-HUGUES GALIEN



Director of photography, cameraman, steadicam operator and photographer Pierre-Hugues Galien (AFC) learned the trade with Yves Angelo. He puts his precise vision to the service of feature and short movies, documentaries, including *Too Close to our Son* directed by Yves Angelo, *Now or Never* directed by Serge Frydman or more recently *Selfie*. He's also worked on numerous advertising campaign for luxury brands.

## What did you like in the project?

When my agent told me about the project, the theme struck a chord, but it's the script that really did it for me. The text was incredibly sharp and flowing. I've worked extensively with fashion brands on their shows or campaigns. This elegant critique of the world of fashion photography and its microcosm seemed really relevant to me. I had just filmed a movie with Loïc Prigent and Catherine Deneuve, just as sharp and crisp. But here, the feminist intention took it a step further.

## What was so peculiar about the script?

The richness of its characters, all of them so well written, walking a fine line between grotesque and reality. People working in fashion can be quite surprising, endearing, sophisticated and simple at the same time. I especially appreciated the keen characterisation. The writing was precise and thorough. These are the qualities you look for in a successful short.

## How were things on set?

The preparation was very efficient. We confirmed our locations quickly. I loved the liveliness with which every choice was made. It translates onto the screen.

We had 2.5 days to shoot. With such short timing, it is vital to break down things precisely beforehand so that the right amount of time can be allocated to each scene. Whenever we faced a challenge, in terms of our work plan, or a scene, the directors would adapt, find solutions and correct the script instantly as we went. That was a first for me.

## How did you turn those words into images?

The lighting had to match the script's intentions, which were specific, due to the story itself. It had to be a vector of its dramaturgy. We started in a car and in a studio with a pretty standard light, a bit dirty, a bit bland, the kind of harsh light you typically find in a poorly lit studio at the beginning of the day. As we move forward into the morning, and as games of seduction are deployed, personalities unveil. The light had to evolve in a striking and fulfilling glow. I tried to bring these intentions to life with as much precision and finesse as possible.

Cléo

# CARMEN KASSOVITZ

Carmen Kassovitz trained with Julie Mauduech. 2019 marked her debut with a bang: she's in a short movie, a TV series and a feature film. *Camera Obscura* was her first role.

She's a high school senior in Paris, and will be taking the Baccalaureat exam this year.

filmography

2019 · *L'été nucléaire* - Gaël Lépingle

2019 · *Stalk* (web-series) - Simon Bouisson



Samuel

# AUGUSTIN BOUCHACOURT

Born in the North of France, Augustin started theater when he moved to the Parisian suburbs.

He's a Cours Florent graduate, where he trained with Jean-Pierre Garnier, Bruno Blairet, Félicien Juttner and Cyril Anrep.

In addition to his frequent roles on stage, he and a couple of friends launched their own production label: GANACHE STUDIO.

filmography

2017 · *Gangsterdam* - Romain Levy

2017 · *Les gens sont méchants* (short) - Aurélien Grellier-Beker

2014 · *La Brume* (short) - Eléonore Wismes

2014 · *Le Sel* (short) - Aurélien Grellier-Beker



Alice Klein

# AUDREY DANA



Audrey Dana is a French-American actress and director. She was the 2008 recipient to the Romy Schneider award, and the winner, in 2015, the Henri Langlois Newcomer Award. She was also received two French Academy Award nominations for her roles in *Crossed Tracks* and in *Welcome*.

In 2020, she'll present her third feature as a director, *Hommes au bord de la crise de nerfs* and will appear in *Profession du Père* directed by Jean-Pierre Améris, alongside Benoit Poelvoorde.

filmography (extract)

- 2019 · *Would I lie to you: The Beginning* - Michel Munz et Gérard Bitton
- 2019 · *Heavy Duty* - Bertrand Blier
- 2017 · *If I Were a Boy* - Audrey Dana
- 2015 · *French Cuisine* - Florent Emilio Siri
- 2015 · *Boomerang* - François Favrat
- 2014 · *French Women* - Audrey Dana
- 2012 · *The Secret of the Ant Children* - Christine François
- 2010 · *The Clink of Ice* - Bertrand Blier
- 2010 · *What Love May Bring* - Claude Lelouch
- 2009 · *Welcome* - Philippe Lioret
- 2009 · *So Close* - Olivier Nakache et Éric Toledano
- 2007 · *Crossed Tracks* - Claude Lelouch

Arthur  
**HUGO  
HAMDAD**

Hugo Hamdad was 25 when he dropped everything to become an actor, completing his training with various acting classes, such as le Laboratoire de l'Acteur, where he received the best actor award. His next role will be for Christophe Barratier's upcoming movie.

filmography

- 2018 · **Une famille formidable** (tv) - Nicolas Herbt
- 2017 · **Profilage** (tv) - Sébastien Cirade et Julien Despau
- 2017 · **Juste un regard** (tv) - Ludovic Colbeau
- 2015 · **B6** (short) - Hélène Boucher
- 2015 · **Tata** (short) - Mathieu Buffler
- 2014 · **En attendant le soleil** (short) - David Arslanian



Martine  
**MADemoiselle  
AGNÈS**

Mademoiselle Agnès is an actress, a journalist, a TV presenter and producer.

In 2001, she created Lalala, a production company specialized in fashion documentaries and pieces.

She's just finished filming Emma de Caunes' new project.

filmographie

- 2012 · **Fashion !** (documentary series) - Olivier Nicklaus (producer)
- 2005 · **Signé Chanel** (documentary) - Loïc Prigent (producer)
- Since 2001 · **Habillé(e) pour...** (Canal +) - with Loïc Prigent
- 1991-2001 · **Nulle part ailleurs** (Canal +)



Hiro  
**AKIRA  
TSUKADA**

Akira Tsukada likes to keep his options open. He has appeared in 14 plays, 2 shorts, 1 feature film, 6 on stage readings and a music video, as well as a few ad campaigns.

filmographie

2019 · *L'île flottante* - Daniel Cohen

2019 · *Les petits hommes vieux* (short) - Yann Chayla



Maya  
**MAYA  
SARAC**

Polish actress Maya Sarac - now based in Paris - can be seen and heard on the silver screen, on TV, in advertising, on stage.

filmographie

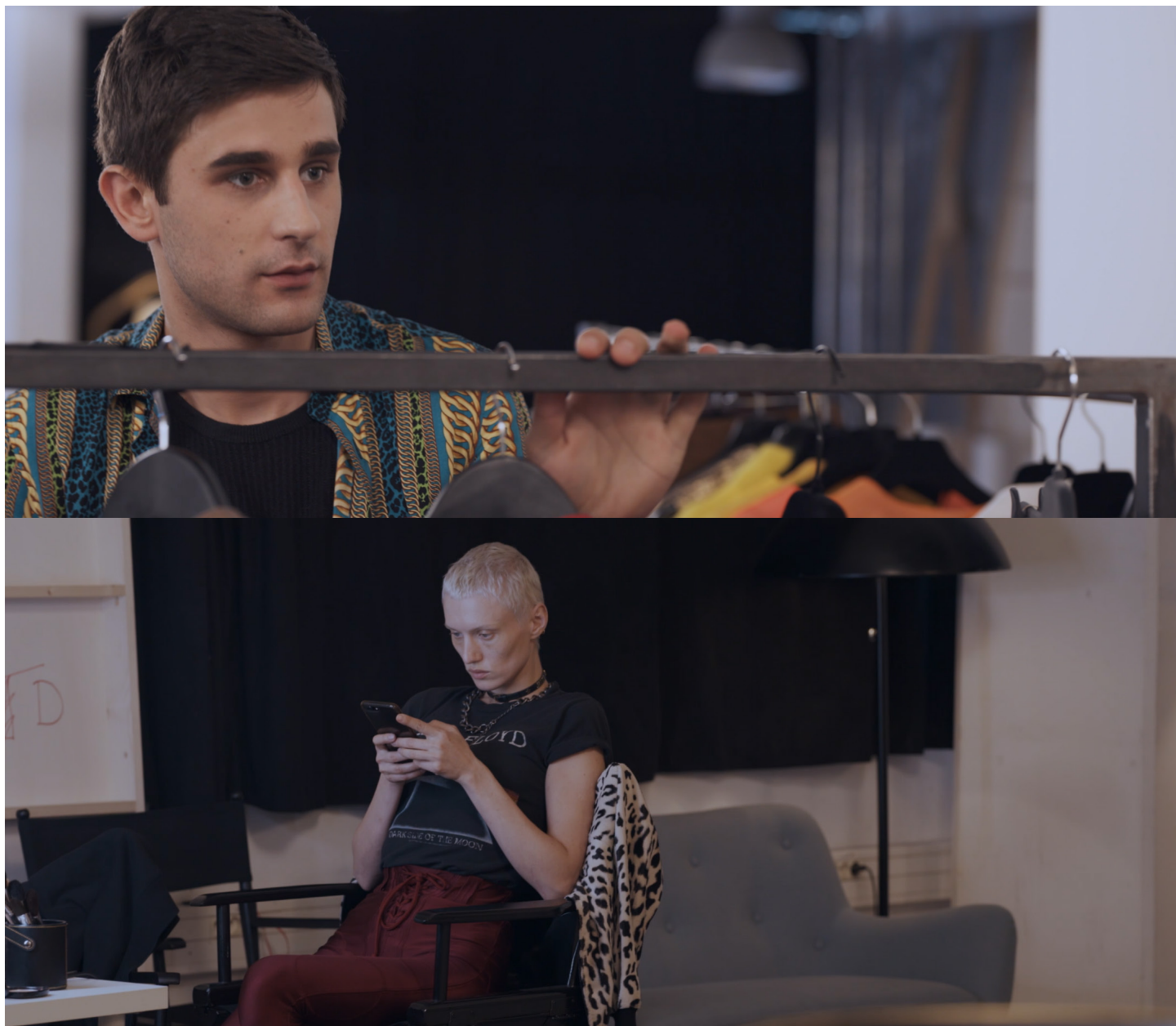
2016 · *L'Examen* (short) - Jun Cordon

2015 · *Slack Bay* - Bruno Dumont

2015 · *Planetarium* - Rebecca Zlotowski

The Intern  
**YOHAN  
BOS**

Yohan is an artist agent by trade. This is his first experience in front of the camera.



The Model  
**DEILA  
DEIDEI**

Parisian model Deila Deidei is a rising star. She's been seen on the catwalks for Vêtements, Y-Project, Junya Watanabe, Rick Owens, amongst others, and on the pages of Vogue Germany and M le Monde.





# CAMERA OBSCURA

**written & directed** by Mary Noelle Dana & Sonia Sieff  
**independently produced** par Christophe Starkman (109 Paris)  
**runtime** - 19min

**with**  
**Cléo** - Carmen Kassovitz  
**Alice** - Audrey Dana  
**Samuel** - Augustin Bouchacourt  
**Martine** - Mademoiselle Agnès  
**Arthur** - Hugo Hamdad  
**Hiro** - Akira Tsukada  
**Maya** - Maya Sarac  
**The Model** - Deila Deidei  
**The Intern** - Yohan Bos  
**Computer** - Sylvain Lewis  
**Photographer's Assistant #1** - Louis-Colin Andrieu  
**Photographer's Assistant #2** - Charlotte Favre  
**Set Design Assistant** - Sam Cavalier  
**Cléo's female friend** - Sarah Massart  
**Cléo's male friend** - Lukas Dana

**Director of photography** - Pierre-Hugues Galien (AFC)  
**Sound recordist** - Michel Kahrat  
**1st Assistant Director** - Naïs Graziani  
**Script** - Virginie Le Pionnier

**Editing** - Aurélie Cauchy, Manu Coutant, Eder Urrejola  
**Music Supervision** - Marine Sellem (SuperPitch)  
**Sound Supervision** - Grégoire Couzinier, Thomas Couzinier & Bruno Porret

**Costumes** - Justine Pearce & Khady Ngom

**Production Manager** - Gilles Vatinet  
**Casting Director** - Antoine Carrard

**featuring**  
Boys Wanna Be Her - Peaches  
I Love U So - Cassius







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