SUMMERTIME

A FILM BY CATHERINE CORSINI

CÉCILE DE FRANCE  IZÏA HIGELIN  NOÉMIE LVOVSKY
Why did you choose to set Summertime in the 1970s? I really wanted to pay tribute to feminist women, who have often been vilified, called sex-starved neurotics... For years I haven’t really been a true feminist myself. I almost saw feminism as a utopia, a vision of the future, which I realized I had many of the benefits I live by today to these women who fought and campaigned for them. Many of them were homosexual. Thanks to this movement, they were finally able to make themselves heard. Actually, the homosexuals have really been instrumental in the emancipation of women in general. I was appealed by the vitality, the audacity of the feminist movement. I don’t see anything quite similar today. I realized that feminism puts the human element first, and it has been the main principle in the writing of the film.

The historical material is intrinsically mixed with Delphine and Carole’s personal journey... Finding how to connect an intimate story to History was the focus of our debate while we were writing the script. How can you campaign for a cause, be heard by others’ sake, but still find it hard to defend your own “cause” in your private life? I could relate to this dichotomy, and it brought interesting elements to fiction and drama. Delphine feels uneasy in her private life, yet she has the courage to release a man incarcerated because he is gay, and to vote for laws against an “anti-abortion” doctor.

How did the casting go? I wrote the part for Cécile de France, I knew she would be perfect for it. It was just obvious. I like her brightness, her bravery, her style. When you already have an actor in mind, it’s simple. For Delphine, it wasn’t as easy. To stand up to Cécile, we didn’t need an actress with comparable weight. A girl who wouldn’t exactly be the “Parisian” type, so that she’d look convincing enough on screen. Iza Higelin had this character, this raw and wild side. She has quite a fiery temperament. I think that acting costs her dear, and this is what makes her so touching.

Out of the two characters, Delphine is the one I can relate to the most. This is probably why I found it so difficult to cast the right actress to play her.

How did you direct them? The one you have in mind, you always get disappointed. So now, rather than finding an actor to play the character, I try to find characters to them, and let the characters reveal something intimate about them. When something happens, it’s like a chemical reaction, and actors definitely become impressed with their parts, they don’t even come out and breathe any longer.

For the first time I used a digital camera, and it allowed me not to stick to the script too much, to capture moments on the side which completely nourish the film, to invent new scenes, to take liberties, to show more freedom, or even to reintroduce scenes I had written with my screenwriter Lauretta Polmanss and then put aside, thinking I might use them later.

You keep creating echoes between political and intimate issues, for instance in the scene when Manuel points out to Carole that she had written with my screenwriter Lauretta Polmanss and then put aside, thinking I might use them later.

INTERVIEW WITH CATHERINE CORSINI

SYNOPSIS. 1971. Delphine, the daughter of farmers, moves to Paris to break free from the shackles of her family and to gain her financial independence. Carole is a Parisian, living with Manuel, actively involved in the stirrings of the feminist movement. Their encounter turns their lives upside down.

Why did you chose to set Summertime in the 1970s? Playing with nudity was almost part of the logic and the writing of these years. Suddenly, people found it normal to be seen naked, with hairy armpits! But oddly enough, the wish to show it arrived slowly, while we were shooting. At first, I felt more comfortable focusing on the beauty of landscapes and farming. I was more inspired by paintings, by Manet, than by the human element. I didn’t want to do a story which was full of blood and violence. And when I decided that she wouldn’t wear a bra, suddenly the character began to take shape, as a liberated Parisian woman who feels comfortable with her body, and who walks around naked in her apartment. Cécile offered me this freedom which I find so beautiful about her, and who passes for a character of Carole perfectly, as a validant woman with a strong personality. And during location scouting, I had the opportunity to talk to farmers who were young at that time. They told me about the difficult conditions some of them had or still have to endure.

And what about your wish to film bodies in total freedom? In this film, I had the opportunity to show women’s bodies without moralizing the look. I was able to bring back women’s bodies which that wasb no longer taken seriously, because she knows she is a homosexual and she doesn’t come to terms with it. As for the scene where they make love in the fields, we didn’t write it much. It is a raw, carnal moment which turns into a funny one because of the cows mooing next to them.

And why filming the countryside? When they have a picnic with Delphine’s mother, we get the impression that the mother could open herself to Carole’s feminism. In a way, the actors direct their films. In order to succeed in making people believe in their characters, they need to build something.

And what about the end of the film? Behind the decision not to have a happy ending, at least not a too obvious one, lies the idea that women’s fight for their emancipation and the fight to know oneself are long roads to take. If Delphine had managed to leave the farm so quickly, we would have thought that it wasn’t a story worth telling! At the end of the film, I feel like she still has to fight. Besides, I like love stories in which the characters miss each other. It’s more realistic. What happened in our life wasn’t the right time, it may be that they are still in love with each other, it’s just like it is.

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DIRECTOR’S FILMOGRAPHY

2015...... SUMMERTIME
2012...... THREE WORLDS
2009...... LEAVING
2006...... AMBITIOUS
2003...... THE VERY MERRY WIDOWS
2000...... REPLAY
1998...... THE NEW EVE
1995...... JEUNESSE SANS DIEU
1993...... LES AMOUREUX
1987...... POKER

CAST

Carole ................................................. Cécile de France
Delphine .............................................. Izïa Higelin
Monique .............................................. Noémie Lvovsky
Antoine ................................................. Kévin Azaïs
Adeline ................................................ Laetitia Dosch
Manuel .................................................. Benjamin Bellecour
Fabienne .............................................. Sarah Suco
Marie-Laure .......................................... Nathalie Beder
Charlotte .............................................. Calypso Valois
Maurice ................................................ Jean-Henri Compère
Professeur Chambard ......................... Bruno Podalydès

CREW

A film by Catherine Corsini
Screenplay Catherine Corsini, Laurette Polmanss
Original Soundtrack Grégoire Hetzel
Cinematography Jeanne Lapoirie (AFC)
Editing Frédéric Baillehaiche
Sound Olivier Mauvezin, Benoît Hillebrant, Thomas Gauder
Production Design Anna Falguères (ADC)
Costumes Jürgen Doering
Makeup Silvia Carissoli
Casting Brigitte Moidon, Aurélie Guichard (ARDA)
Production Manager Angeline Massoni

Produced by Elisabeth Perez

A co-production : CHAZ Productions, France 3 Cinéma, Artemis Productions
With the participation of Canal+, OCS, France Télévisions
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