



PATHE FILMS
presents

LOL

a
Lisa AZUELOS
film

starring

Sophie MARCEAU Christa THERET

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“LOL”

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

“What is happening to our babies?” lament 99,99% of all mothers sooner or later, when looking at their teens. “We brought these little beings, all soft and warm, into the world and then you turn around one day and find yourself looking at these long drinks of water wearing slim jeans,” smiles Lisa Azuelos. The idea for LOL came to her one evening when her daughter, 14 at the time, had her first mixer. “Seeing my daughter and her friends dancing – sometimes to the same music I played at her age, I might add – brought tears to my eyes. Hearing them talk about guys made me laugh and made me think. They were almost grown-up women and they were still little girls – our little girls! I immediately thought there was a movie in there.”

The writer-director usually starts working from a detail of her own life, a certain moment, a flash. “I think I have pretty good powers of observation... I watch, take note and then let it settle little by little. I don’t try to tell extraordinary stories, I’m much more about identification. If I have strong feelings at a certain point, I figure it must be the same for other people.” *Ainsi soient-elles*, *15 Août* and *Comme t’y es belle* all fit with this dynamic and all comment on a couple. In *Lol*, that has been transposed to a mother-daughter relationship.

As Lisa often says, the initial aim is to elicit a laugh or a smile. “Why don’t they have teen comedies in France? The only thing available to French teens is gore flicks or American teen movies that don’t really talk about their lives. I wanted to make a real feel-good teen movie which was 100% homegrown French.”

Yet *Lol* is more than a funny movie. As with everything this writer does, there is a sociological dimension which shines through in the story of Anne and Lola. A recently divorced mother and her 15-year-old daughter, they are both actually beginners when it comes to the loves they encounter or re-discover.

“Watching your daughter grow up in 2008 means facing some tough issues for mothers like me, who had their own little feminist battles to fight. We had to struggle against our own parents or against our husbands to win the right to be free, to lead our lives as we saw fit, and now we have a hard time affording that same right to our daughters. Seeing them with access to sexuality, so young, frightens us. We’d like to protect them from the dangers and inconveniences that await them and yet we feel like such throwbacks when we say things like, ‘Hey, careful, girls are fragile.’ Do we raise our sons today like their sisters? No, probably not, though we’ve read all the right books and articles on becoming open-minded and fair mothers... When it comes to sexuality, it’s still tough-going, and the protective, old-fashioned model can still seem like the only one possible.”

Lisa also wanted to address the gulf that can exist between the unconditional love we have for our children and the degree of exasperation which they are wont to elicit in us. “They are little darlings until 13, then all of a sudden wham! They turn into fireballs of hostility. Adolescence is pretty much one outrage after another! Keeping your cool across from a girl who’s bellowing over her bowl of cereal requires a sort of super-powerful sense of humor. I thought it might be a good idea to share that with other parents!”

The other area for reflection that guided Lisa’s writing was about trying to understand how 2008 teens are different from those of the late twentieth century. When the film went into production with Sophie Marceau agreeing to play ANNE, people in the business started spreading the word, a little too quickly, that *Lol* was *La Boum* (*The Party*) twenty years later. But Lola (Lol) is not Vic. Their stories are completely different and the context isn’t the same at all. Lisa Azuelos is struck with just how much internet, cell phones and MSN have changed the mode of communication between young people. “They tell each other much more, instantaneously, and that greatly accelerates their relationships. What’s more, most kids have parents, even grandparents, who are divorced. It’s odd, because they no longer believe in marriage or in enduring love. They’ve become much more pragmatic and, at the same time, they dive right in. They fall in love, for real... but not forever, not anymore, and they know it. Their freshness is no longer in their dreams – it has swung into action.”

Is there a possible dialog between the world of the parents and that of the children? For Lisa Azuelos, there is no doubt about it. “Teenagers’ words and codes are like a border they throw up to protect their universe. But all borders are, by definition, imaginary. We aren’t that far away from our adolescence and they aren’t that far away from their maturity. We can try to understand one another. Take the title *Lol*, for example. I’m sure most parents will think it’s just short for the main character’s first name. But LOL, in [internet chat rooms and text messaging] means ‘laughing out loud.’ After seeing this film, I think – I hope – that parents will have at least learned that much!”

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SYNOPSIS

It takes place during the course of one school year. Lola, 15, is going into tenth grade. On the first day back, she rejoins her group of friends (Stéphane, Charlotte, Maël, Paul-Henri, Mehdi, David, Provence, et al) and especially her boyfriend, Arthur. He casually drops that he has slept with another girl over the summer. Whether out of jealousy or provocation, she says that she, too, has taken that step over vacation. Furious, Arthur breaks up with her on the spot. Maël, best friend to both of them, doesn't know what to do. And Lol's troubles don't end there. Communicating with her recently divorced mother, Anne, has become quite impossible – especially as she discovers that her mother lied to her about her love life. The school work isn't going very well and, what with friends betraying friends and rivalries in matters of the heart, the group of friends is on very shaky ground.

LOL

THE CHARACTERS

LOLA: She has just turned fifteen. She's in tenth grade. Her boyfriend, Arthur, tells her on the first day back at school that he has slept with another girl, just to see. Lola leads him to believe that she has, too. War is declared between them as Maël, their best friend, looks on aghast. Lola (Lol) who usually tells her mother everything, now keeps secrets, especially since she realized that her mother has been hiding a part of her love life as well.

ANNE: Lola's mother, a forward-thinking modern mother of three with high marks for family communication, proud of being an architect with a strong connection to her offspring. But by night she smokes grass and sees her ex-husband and hides it from her children. For her, love is what she feels for her children... When it comes to men, she no longer really believes in it.

ALAIN: Lola's dad and Anne's ex-husband. A little lost in his newfound role of ex-husband who is sleeping with his ex-wife again, he is nevertheless trying his best.

ANTOINE: On the face of it, she is everything Anne can't stand – a cop, and one stationed at police headquarters. But he is a total hunk, he is available, and he is terribly attracted to her. Ow!

MAEL: Arthur's and Lol's best friend. He is in love with her and when she breaks up with Arthur it should be good news – but how can he break with being her good “buddy” and not betray his perennial best friend?

ARTHUR: Lol's not very mature but very macho boyfriend. A good guitar player, sexy, it's not hard for him to make Lola jealous.

GERBERE : The gang's eminently unlikeable Science and homeroom teacher.

LOL

CAST

Lola	Christa THERET
Charlotte	Marion CHABASSOL
Maël	Jérémy KAPON
Paul-Henri	Emile BERTHERAT
Arthur	Félix MOATI
Medhi	Louis SOMMER
Stéphane	Lou LESAGE
Provence	Adèle CHOUBARD
Isabelle de Peyrefitte	Jade-Rose MOUSSEUX
David Lévy	Warren GUETTA
Anne	Sophie MARCEAU
Alain	Alexandre ASTIER
Antoine	Jocelyn QUIVRIN

LOL

CREW

Written and directed by	Lisa AZUELOS
Produced by	Romain LE GRAND
Executive Producer	Eric HUBERT
Director of Photography	Nathaniel ARON
Set Design	Yvon FUSTEC
Sound	Laurent POIRIER
Line Producer	Bruno MORIN
Assistant Director	Sébastien DEUX
Production Manager	Philippe MORLIER
Costume Design	Jürgen DOERING
Still Photographer	David KOSKAS