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SIBYL



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2019 OFFICIAL SELECTION

Distribution for Colombian Territory

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

SYNOPSIS

Genre: Drama / Comedy
Shooting language: French
Country: France
Year of production: 2019
Duration: 99 min

Sibyl, a jaded psychotherapist, returns to her first passion: writing. But her newest patient Margot, a troubled up-and-coming actress, proves to be a source of inspiration that is far too tempting. Fascinated almost to the point of obsession, Sibyl becomes more and more involved in Margot's tumultuous life, reviving volatile memories that bring her face to face with her past.





FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTOR

- Sibyl** 2019
(Feature film)
- In bed with Victoria** 2016
(Feature film)
- Age of Panic** 2013
(Feature film)
- Two Ships** 2011
(Medium-Length film)
- Des ombres dans la maison** 2010
(Documentary)
- Solférino** 2009
(Documentary)
- Sur place** 2007
(Short film)

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Justine Triet

Justine Triet is a graduate of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Her first films question the place of the individual within the group. SUR PLACE (2007) was shot during the student demonstrations and SOLFÉRINO (2008) during the presidential elections. In 2009, she directed DES OMBRES DANS LA MAISON in a township of São Paulo. Her first fiction short, VILAINE FILLE, MAUVAIS GARÇON (TWO SHIPS), won a number of prizes at French and international festivals (European Film Award, Berlinale 2012; Grand Prix, Angers First Look; Grand Prix, Belfort; preselection for best short, 2013 Césars). Her debut feature LA BATAILLE DE SOLFÉRINO (AGE OF PANIC) was selected for ACID in Cannes 2013 and nominated for a 2014 César in the Best First Film category. VICTORIA, her second feature, opened the Critics' Week in Cannes in 2016. Starring Virginie Efira, the film was nominated for five Césars, including Best Film and Best Actress.





INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Justine Triet

Like AGE OF PANIC and IN BED WITH VICTORIA, SIBYL is the portrait of a woman struggling to balance her professional and personal life, grappling with her emotions and anxieties. Are your films always a form of veiled self-portraiture?

I take inspiration from certain things happening within my inner circle, from research, from films, and no doubt a little bit from myself, but honestly, I'm not Sibyl. My cowriter Arthur Harari and I really had fun going deep into fiction, deliberately damaging our characters. I get the impression that in the end, they no longer resemble me at all.

Woody Allen's film ANOTHER WOMAN haunted me from the moment I started writing. Oddly I don't love that film, but its main narrative fascinates me: a woman seeking calm and inspiration is confronted with another woman, who plunges her into a dizzying abyss that makes her life break apart. That film was my initial reference.



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Justine Triet

Did you do any research on psychoanalysis?

No. I did meet a number of shrinks and asked them if they'd ever had an unsettling experience with a patient. One of them confessed that she'd gone through her father's grave illness at the same time as one of her patients was going through it. Her own father died sooner than the patient's did, and she had to end the analysis because she felt extremely brutalized by the patient. That nourished the script, as did the television series IN TREATMENT.

The film explores a number of motifs: motherhood, filiation, creativity, couples, passionate love, the mid-life crisis, duality, how neuroses are passed down... What is the dominant, central theme?

It's how we handle the question of our origins. How we find ways to forget them, and how they suddenly reappear. It's a film about identity, roots. Where do I come from, who am I, what have I done, can I reinvent myself? Sibyl is haunted by the origins of her child, her book, and Margot.



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Justine Triet

This leads us to the question of immorality. Sibyl transgresses the code of ethics when she records her patient for use in her future book. The film also features a filmmaker who models her actors like clay. Does the creative act always require some form of vampirism or predation?

To an extent, yes. But beyond that, in the film, everyone is manipulating everyone. In Sibyl's case, her need to write prompts her to break all the rules. She leaves reality and enters fiction in order to experience certain things. At the same time, it's playful. Creation is like a game with no rules. Of course Sibyl goes too far, because her life had gotten bland. She gets carried away. The writing and the book turn her into a locomotive that runs off the rails no sooner than it starts chugging. She feeds not only on Margot but on everything and everyone around her... including herself!



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Justine Triet

The film within the film reflects the game you refer to, playfully combining comedy and cruelty.

By this point in the film we need that blend, because this is when things really start going off the rails. When Sibyl goes to the island, she's entering a world of fantasy, no longer entirely real or normal. It's far away, it's beautiful, it's fake. The shoot was perfect for that. I needed it to bring the comedy and the insanity, two elements that shouldn't necessarily mix.

At one point on the shoot, Margot says the movie business is crazy and she's afraid she'll lose her mind. Do you sometimes worry about that yourself?

The movie business is a microcosmic society where life speeds up and intensifies. Everything takes on monumental proportions. The tiniest problem becomes a tragedy. The hierarchy is brutal and completely grotesque. It's a ridiculous, comical milieu, but when you're living in it, experiences are heightened. I enjoyed making fun of it, and it served the story. It almost begs to be satirized. Altman's *THE PLAYER* was a reference in that regard. Even in a serious film, like Minnelli's *TWO WEEKS IN ANOTHER TOWN*, everything that has to do with the film biz has a comical, satirical side.





INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Justine Triet

This is your second film with Virginie Efira. VICTORIA was a career milestone for her, and it seems like you two are starting to form a cinematic bond.

With this film, I felt I was discovering new faces of Virginie. She understands everything I'm looking for, we worked quickly. The ice was broken, I could ask her anything and she trusted me. She abandoned herself completely. And she doesn't limit herself to the primary logic of the script. She's prepared to explore all facets of her character down to the illogical contradictions. I took an almost physical pleasure in filming her, molding her like clay. I wanted to rough her up, but in a good way: see her cry, fall apart, stumble and get up.

Did you choose Adèle Exarchopoulos based on her work in BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOR?

Not at all! Though I loved her in that film, I wasn't thinking of her when I wrote the script, I had an older actress in mind. She came to the project later on. She auditioned and was amazing. Adèle has an incredible power, a rare grace. You look at her. The role is tricky because it could be played just technically (fall apart, cry, panic, etc.). But Adèle never relies on technique, she actually puts herself in the emotional state the scene requires, and that's how she becomes the character.



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Justine Triet

Did you get the idea to cast Sandra Hüller after seeing TONI ERDMANN?

Of course! But I actually met her 10 years ago at a festival, and she really struck me before I'd even seen her work. She has a rare intelligence, and she's also a theater actress in Germany. To say she works a lot is an understatement! You feel she can do absolutely anything, and every time it's incredibly fleshed out and original. She brings a lot of burlesque, but always mixed with seriousness. She really impresses me.

The ending is beautiful, highly ambiguous and very open, at once happy and unhappy... As Sibyl gazes at her daughter, we think of Truffaut's words in another context, "Looking at you brings both joy and pain." Joy at seeing her daughter, pain because she is reminded of Gabriel.

Yes, that's right. The end of the film is impure. We can read in liberation or appeasement, but the wound has not healed. Sibyl doesn't show her daughter her tears, and we feel the child is a bit lost, wondering not only where she comes from but also who her mother really is. We don't know who she is either. Her life is brimming with lies. But they are not malevolent, they are arrangements with reality, loving lies. To keep love in her life, she lies.





SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

VIRGINIE EFIRA

- SIBYL - Justine Triet **2019**
 POLICE - Anne Fontaine
 CONTINUER - Joachim Lafosse
 BENEDETTA - Paul Verhoeven
 UN AMOUR IMPOSSIBLE - Catherine Corsini **2018**
 LE GRAND BAIN - Gilles Lellouche
 PRIS DE COURT - Emmanuelle Cuau **2017**
 ET TA SŒUR - Marion Vernoux **2016**
 VICTORIA - Justine Triet
 UN HOMME À LA HAUTEUR - Laurent Tirard
 ELLE - Paul Verhoeven
 CAPRICE - Emmanuel Mouret **2015**
 LE GOÛT DES MERVEILLES - Eric Besnard
 UNE FAMILLE A LOUER - Jean-Pierre Améris
 DEAD MAN TALKING - Patrick Ridremont **2013**
 20 ANS D'ÉCART - David Moreau
 LES INVINCIBLES - Frederic Berthe
 COOKIE - Léa Fazer
 EN SOLITAIRE - Christophe Offenstein
 LA CHANCE DE MA VIE - Nicolas Cuhe **2011**
 MON PIRE CAUCHEMAR - Anne Fontaine

ADÈLE EXARCHOPOULOS

- 2019** SIBYL - Justine Triet
 THE WHITE CROW - Ralph Fiennes
2018 REVENIR - Jessica Palud
2017 LE FIDÈLE - Michaël R. Roskam
2016 ORPHELINE - Arnaud des Pallières
 THE LAST FACE - Sean Penn
 ÉPERDUMENT - Pierre Godeau
2015 LES ANARCHISTES - Élie Wajeman
2014 QUI VIVE - Marianne Tardieu
 THREE DAYS - Mikhaïl Kosyrev - Neterov
2013 I USED TO BE DARKER - Matthew Porterfield
 LA VIE D'ADÈLE - CHAPITRE 1 & 2 - Abdellatif Kechiche
2012 DES MORCEAUX DE MOI - Nolwenn Lemesle
2011 CHEZ GINO - Samuel Benchetrit
 CARRÉ BLANC - Jean- Baptiste Leonetti

GASPARD ULLIEL

- 2019** SIBYL - Justine Triet
2017 UN PEUPLE ET SON ROI - Pierre Schoeller
 9 DOIGTS - F.J Ossang
 LES CONFINS DU MONDE - Guillaume Nicloux
 EVA - Benoît Jacquot
2016 JUSTE LA FIN DU MONDE - Xavier Dolan
 LA DANSEUSE - Stéphanie Di Giusto
2014 SAINT LAURENT - Bertrand Bonello
2012 TU HONORERAS TA MÈRE ET TA MÈRE - Brigitte Rouan
2011 LA PRINCESSE DE MONTPENSIER - Bertrand Tavernier



CAST

Sibyl VIRGINIE EFIRA
Margot ADÈLE EXARCHOPOULOS
Igor GASPARD ULLIEL
Mika SANDRA HÜLLER
Edith LAURE CALAMY
Gabriel NIELS SCHNEIDER
Etienne PAUL HAMY
Dr Katz ARTHUR HARARI



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CREW

DIRECTOR JUSTINE TRIET
WRITER JUSTINE TRIET

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ARTHUR HARARI
SOUND SIMON BEAUFILS
ACTOR DIRECTION COLLABORATOR JULIEN SICART
PRODUCTION DESIGNER CYNTHIA ARRA
COSTUME DESIGNER TOMA BAQUENI
EDITOR VIRGINIE MONTEL
SOUND EDITOR LAURENT SÉNÉCHAL
SOUND MIXING INGRID SIMON
DIRECTION OF PRODUCTION SIMON APOSTOLOU
DIRECTION OF POST-PRODUCTION NICOLAS LECLERE
PRODUCED BY JULIETTE MALLON
PRODUCED BY DAVID THION Y PHILIPPE MARTIN
IN COPRODUCTION WITH LES FILMS PELLÉAS
FRANCE 2 CINÉMA
LES FILMS DE PIERRE
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AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES CINÉMA
SCOPE PICTURES

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH MK2 FILMS
WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CANAL +
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LE CNC

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