

Girlhood

Een film van Céline Sciamma

Nadat de 16 jarige Marieme (Karidja Touré) met onvoldoende cijfers van school is gestuurd, ontmoet ze de vrijgevochten Lady (Assa Sylla), Adiatou (Lindsay Karamoh) en Fily (Mariétou Touré). Ze sluit zich bij hen aan, wordt omgedoopt tot Vic en doet al snel mee aan rebelse feestjes in hotelkamers, winkeldiefstal en vechtpartijen. Wanneer ze dan ook nog eens verliefd wordt op een vriend van haar broer, wordt de breekbaarheid maar ook de veerkracht van een kansarme tiener in een voorstad van Parijs op indringende wijze duidelijk.

GIRLHOOD is een realistisch coming-of-age drama van Céline Sciamma (Water Lilies, Tomboy) over het opgroeien in de harde realiteit van een uitzichtloos bestaan.

Openingsfilm van Quinzaine des Réalisateurs - Filmfestival Cannes 2014
Geselecteerd voor Toronto International Film Festival 2014



Speelduur: 112min. - Land: Frankrijk - Jaar: 2014 - Genre: Drama
Release datum bioscoop: 29 januari 2015
Distributie: Cinéart

Meer informatie over de film:

Cinéart Nederland - Janneke De Jong & Noor Pelsler
Herengracht 328 III / 1016 CE Amsterdam
Tel: +31 (0)20 5308848
Email: janneke@cinéart.nl & noor@cinéart.nl
www.cinéart.nl

*Persmap en foto's staan op: www.cinéart.nl
Persrubriek - inlog: cinéart / wachtwoord: film*

cinéart - Herengracht 328 III - 1016 CE Amsterdam - T: 020 5308848 - email: info@cinéart.nl

Cast

Karidja Touré
Assa Sylla
Lindsay Karamoh
Marietou Touré
Idrissa Diabate
Simina Soumare
Cyril Mendy
Djibril Gueye

Marieme / Vic
Lady
Adiatou
Fily
Ismaël
Bébé
Djibril
Abou



Crew

Writer-Director
Production
Casting
Cinematography
Editing
Sound
Music
Assistant Director
Script
Set Design
Production Manager
Make-up

Céline Sciamma
Bénédicte Couvreur
Christel Baras
Crystel Fournier
Julien Lacheray
Pierre André / Daniel Sobrino
Para One
Delphine Daull
Roselyne Bellec
Thomas Grézaud
Gaëtane Josse
Marie Luiset

Céline Sciamma

Girlhood (Bande de Filles, 112' – 2014)

Festival de Cannes 2014 – Directors' Fortnight – Opening Film

Tomboy (82' – 2011)

Berlinale 2011 – Panorama – Opening Film

Water Lilies (Naissance des Pieuvres, 85' – 2007)

Festival de Cannes 2007 – Un Certain Regard

Prix Louis Delluc for best first film



THE GENESIS

The characters themselves sparked the project. The teenage girls that I would regularly see hanging out in the vicinity of Paris' Les Halles shopping center, or in the metro, sometimes in Gare du Nord train station: always in a gang, loud, lively, dancing. Wanting to delve deeper, I sought out their blogs and came to be fascinated by their esthetics, styles and poses.

Beyond their irresistible energy, their profiles reflect all the themes that are at the heart of my ongoing work as a filmmaker: the construction of a feminine identity within the framework of social pressure, restrictions and taboos, of which the question of plays on image and identity are central. It was my desire to continue working around the question of youth and initiatory narratives, but in a contemporary corollary, anchored in the political reality of France today.

These unique protagonists carry within them the promise of depicting a realistic portrait as well as the fictional dynamic necessary for narrative tension. Although the story is generational and very much rooted in French society, it also belongs to the realm of cinematic mythology: youth subjected to societal restrictions and taboos. It is a story that is better told in France today by the young women who were brought up in these poor minority areas.

TALENT SCOUTING

Casting took place over a four-month period. At first, Christel Baras, the casting director, scoured the streets of Paris and its working-class suburbs. Open casting calls gave us the chance to meet hundreds of young women in situation - in the streets, shopping malls and fairgrounds. We were looking for girls with strong physical charisma and powerful identities. It was essential to compose a group with both strong affinities and contrasts. With the use of improvisation as a basis for choosing our actresses, we then introduced the text, the film's dialogue being very scripted. Karidja Touré, Assa Sylla, Lindsay Karamoh, and Marietou Touré stood out from the rest. I would nevertheless like to point out that we were struck by the generally high quality, presence and energy of the majority of the girls we met. Intelligence, humor, inventiveness and style: the casting process reinforced my belief that it was absolutely vital to film these girls and this youth.

Even more so because we so rarely see these types of characters on the big screen. One of the central ideas of my filmmaking and this project, is to show faces and bodies that we never see on screen. Generally when these types of personalities are represented on screen, it's not to focus on the character but more so a kind of grand gesture showcasing them as part of a certain diversity. This movie isn't about diversity, but exclusiveness: The male and female actors are exclusively colored.

INTIMACY & STAGING

Girlhood is an intimate portrait, a classical coming of age story. It's not a film about minority working class areas, if roughly speaking we consider that a genre has emerged with its own rules and codes about this subject over the past twenty years in France. Hard-hitting films centered on social realism such as *La Haine (Hate)* or language centered like *L'Esquive (Games of Love and Chance)* immerse the audience into the rituals of these poor suburbs. With its contemporary characters, new faces and attitudes, *Girlhood* can be qualified as a fictional manifesto using a new, promising narrative approach.

The story is set in several neighborhoods on the outskirts of Paris. The suburbs of Bagnole and Bobigny. It depicts these areas, spaces and how people and things circulate within them. Our set up attempts to reinterpret these areas. All of the interior decors were created in a studio, where the colors were chosen and carefully thought through. A perspective was given: a space for creating the setting and the staging. *Girlhood* was shot in CinemaScope, the ideal format for filming a gang and the solidarity that stands out amongst these bodies. We used static shots with a very deliberate perspective as opposed to the Steadicam's predictable energy. We relied on travelling shots and often used sequence shots. It's an episodic narrative, with dramatic accelerations.

THE MUSIC

From the moment I started writing the screenplay, I contacted Para One, who had already written the music for *La Naissance des Pieuvres (Water Lilies)*, and asked them if they could compose an original score for the film. We agreed that we preferred to limit the score to one theme that would return several times during the course of the film. Thus each time richer (in composition and length) and therefore following the character's evolution. The musical theme would be developed as the story and the character progressed.

Another aspect that we challenged was to insert a strong musical presence within the storyline itself, in particular during the dance sequences. The high point, as well as the most daunting task for us, was to obtain the rights to Rihanna's song *Diamonds*. She gave us the authorization once she'd seen the sequence dedicated to the song.

THE ACTRESSES

It was clear to us all that **Karidja Touré** was a natural for the role of Marieme/Vic. It was the most difficult role to cast, because it required someone who was incredibly solid. The character appears in every single scene. The difficulty here lies in the paradox that the character has to appear unforgettable and unique whereas it was asked of the actress to maintain a blank slate. Someone who is immediately identifiable, yet also someone who can convincingly slip into different personas. For Marieme goes through several changes, multiple stages and must show many faces. She begins as a child, asserts herself as a young woman, and then progressively builds virility. It's an enormous challenge for any actress, let alone Karidja, who had never acted before. We worked a great deal before filming, constructing the different stages of her character, through costumes and hairstyles. In one day Karidja could put on the three different faces of Marieme/Vic. She is a very hard worker, with great focus and a wonderful ability to listen. She lent her body and her voice to the role and the staging, trusting what we were trying to accomplish. Vic's sidekicks had more radical parts. And we chose them accordingly.

Assa Sylla, with her charisma, dancer's body and elegance was a natural for Lady. She knew how to muster the necessary authority to become the leader of the pack, all the while being very sensitive to the role's ambiguity.

Lindsay Karamoh utterly charmed me with her sense of humor; she has a rare verbal delivery and intelligence. Adiatou's character was at the heart of the scenes that called for improvisation, calling to find someone with a funny streak.

Marietou Touré plays the role of the most enigmatic character in the gang, she speaks very little. Somebody with great presence was needed for the role. She has this miraculous thing about her: pure attitude, in every situation.

All of the girls demonstrated a great combative energy, coupled with a childlike side. A bit of melancholy, fragility and tenderness, which is the exact balance I had been hoping for. We met and worked together a dozen or so times before we started shooting the film. We put an emphasis on developing the group's energy, calling up different states and emotions and working on concentration. A friendship also grew among the girls and between us all. From day one of the shooting it already appeared that we had formed a group with a solid bond.