



THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET

A film by Stéphane Demoustier



France, Belgium / 2019 / 95'

with Roschdy Zem, Melissa Guers, Anaïs Demoustier, Annie Mercier, Pascal-Pierre Garbarini, Chiara Mastroianni

Production: Petit Film in co-production with France 3 Cinéma, FraKas productions

International Sales: Charades

LOCARNO SCREENINGS - PIAZZA GRANDE

Press Screening: Wednesday 07/08 | 21:30 | PalaCinema 1

Official Screening: Thursday 08/08 | 21:30 | Piazza Grande

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SYNOPSIS

16 years-old Lise is accused of murdering her best friend. Her parents stand by her as naturally expected. But once in court, her secret life begins to unfold and the plot thickens. Who is Lise really? Do we really know the ones we love?



PRODUCER'S NOTES

Jean des Forêts

From the start, I found the premise of this project as exciting as it was risky. We would shoot a movie about a murder trial that would induce a kind of Pavlovian response in the viewers—a thirsting for the truth, a nearly physical yearning for the facts—and then refuse to acknowledge that response. *THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET* was suggesting that we could do without the facts altogether.

But if you want to mess around with the audience's expectations without disappointing them to distraction, you had better project their expectations onto something else. In this story, that 'something else' is deeper, more primal, and it lies in the relationship Lise's family has with the central, defining question of the film.

From the moment the trial begins, we can feel doubt insinuating itself in the courtroom; we see the first cracks appear in the armor of Bruno's confidence. Bruno doesn't question his daughter's innocence per se, but he does begin to question the images he carries of her in his head.

As the case advances through cross-examinations and arguments, the question emerges: Did Lise kill Flora? And as soon as it emerges, that first question is swept away by a new one, more emotionally charged one: Will Lise be convicted?

By refusing to twist the plot into knots for the sole purpose of a neat resolution and by focusing on secondary characters -the people who do not and cannot know the whole truth- and transforming them into protagonists, this film frees itself from the constraints of the genre and reveals a more essential truth.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Stéphane Demoustier



The birth of my children completely changed my life. Right away, I was filled with immense joy, instantaneous love. Then I felt the weight of responsibility, mixed with a certain anxiety. But then, and most significantly, I felt mystified by their otherness.

Because "the flesh of my flesh" is not my own. No matter how much I want it to be. No matter how much I feel that it is.

There is, of course, a difference between what I project of myself upon my children—the overwhelming closeness I feel with them—and the reality of their independence. To me, it seems that this tension between kinship and individuality, between inheritance and independence, communion and the incommunicable, stands at the very core of the parent-child relationship.

THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET exacerbates this natural tension by asking: To what extent can we know our own children? How much do we really understand them? Are there limits to the love we can feel? Is a parent's love unconditional?

I decided to set THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET during the criminal trial, two years after the actual events. And I chose to tell its story from the point of view of the observers in the courtroom—and not through the eyes of the defendant. In essence, I wanted this to be a film about a trial as seen by those who were there, watching from the benches.

The courtroom is, after all, a place where truth is meant to be found, ferreted out, revealed. And yet, over the course of its revelation, the truth often shifts. And changes form. In this particular trial, the basic building blocks of truth, the facts (Did Lisa kill Flora?) have gone missing. The parents do not know what happened; and in appealing to the court for answers, they will be left to believe in the only kind of truth a court can provide: a verdict.

All legal proceedings inevitably redefine events; they seek to interpret, frame and sequence them. A criminal trial revisits a moment in the past—a moment that is off-camera, unseeable—and attempts to recreate it in a formal and strictly regulated context.

THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET plays with the suspense inherent in any trial. The audience's expectations are left hanging, suspended in the air, the way the protagonists are left hanging as they await their fate. And when the final verdict comes, it comes tainted with doubt.

As is often the case in criminal trials without incontrovertible proof, there is always a shadow of doubt. Lise's family and friends feel that shadow. And so does the audience.

Paradoxically, Lise's family does learn one vital thing from the trial: they do not know their daughter and will never really know her entirely. By admitting the limitations of their own capacity to understand, they change their relationship to Lise and to each other. One subtle shift can trigger another. This is one truth the story tells us we can rely on.

The primacy of family, questions of kinship and inheritance, and the irrevocable nature of violence were major themes in my first film, 40-LOVE, and I have chosen to explore them more intensely, more radically, in THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET, in terms of point of view, construction and style.

One of the radical choices we made for this film was to focus so much of our attention on Lise, a character who says little and seems almost inscrutable. We knew we had to find a young actress with exceptional charisma and a depth of character that could handle the role. I was sure that we needed to try street-casting her—and I was right. Melissa Guers had never acted in a film before, but she has that magnetic power, intensity and force of personality I was looking for. Her Lise is more mysterious than opaque. Melissa has succeeded in making Lise both an ordinary girl—and an extraordinary young woman.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY

Stéphane Demoustier

After several short films selected and awarded in international film festivals, Stéphane Demoustier (Lille, 1977) wrote and directed his debut feature 40-LOVE. The film premiered at Venice's Critic's week 2014.

He then wrote and directed CLEO & PAUL, a medium length film that premiered in Generation Berlinale and opened in theatres in France in 2018.

Stéphane Demoustier is also a producer. In 2008, he founded the production company Année Zéro through which he produced more than 30 short films.

THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET, his new feature film, will open in France on February 5, 2020.



CAST

Roschdy Zem
Melissa Guers
Anaïs Demoustier
Annie Mercier
Pascal-Pierre Garbarini
Chiara Mastroianni



CAST BIOGRAPHY/FILMOGRAPHY

Roschdy Zem is a French actor and filmmaker of Moroccan descent. He shared the award for Best Actor for his role in the film *DAYS OF GLORY* at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival.

Versatile and determined to not be typecast in "arab" roles, Roschdy Zem developed his range, playing a General of Napoléon in *MONSIEUR N.* (2003), a Jewish father in *VA, VIS ET DEVIENS* (*LIVE AND BECOME*, 2005), and a transvestite in *CHANGE MOI MA VIE* (*CHANGE MY LIFE*, 2001) alongside Fanny Ardant. He also appeared in roles highlighting issues in mainstream French society as well as in films promoting aspects of French and North African history such as *CAMPING A LA FERME* (2005), based on a script from Azouz Begag. Since 2006, he has directed five movies such as the film *OMAR KILLED ME*, *CHOCOLAT* with Omar Sy or *PERSONA NON GRATA* which was released in France last July.

In Stéphane Demoustier's film, he plays a caring father who discovers his daughter during the trial that will determine her life.

Anaïs Demoustier is a French actress. She has appeared in more than fifty films since 2000.

Enthusiastic about comedy from an early age, she took theatre lessons from very young. As a teenager, she auditioned and began working with Isabelle Huppert in Michael Haneke's *LE TEMPS DU LOUP* (*TIME OF THE WOLF*). From then on, her career was launched and she made a series of films, including Isabelle Czajka's *L'ANNÉE SUIVANTE*, Christophe Honoré's *THE BEAUTIFUL PERSON*, and Juliette Garcias' *SOIS SAGE, L'ENFANCE DU MAL* by Olivier Coussemacq, *BELLE ÉPINE* by Rebecca Zlotowski, *THÉRÈSE DESQUEYROUX* by Claude Miller, *QUAI D'ORSAY* by Bertrand Tavernier, *THE NEW GIRL FRIEND* by François Ozon, *BIRD PEOPLE* by Pascale Ferran, *THE HOUSE BY THE SEA* and *GLORIA MUNDI* by Robert Guédiguian....

Very active, Anaïs Demoustier is expected in no less than three films at the end of 2019, including *THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET*, in which she plays the charismatic Prosecutor.

Melissa Guers is a 22-year-old French actress trained at the Sucs-en-Brie Conservatory. Her performance in *THE GIRL WITH A BRACELET* is her first role in a feature film.

In Stéphane Demoustier's film, she perfectly portrays a mysterious and disturbing young girl accused of the murder of her best friend.



CREDITS

Direction: Stéphane Demoustier
Script: Stéphane Demoustier
(based on the script of ACUSADA by G. Tobal and U. Porra Guardiola)
Photography: Sylvain Verdet
Sound: Emmanuel Bonnat – Julie Brenta – Emmanuel de Boissieu
Editing: Damien Maestraggi
Music: Carla Pallone
Casting supervisors: Marine Albert, Brigitte Moidon
Set Design: Catherine Cosme
Costume design: Anne-Sophie Gledhill
Line Producer: Thomas Jaubert
Location manager: François Pichon
First assistant director: Guilhem Amesland
Continuity girl: Bénédicte Kermadec
Production company: Petit Film
Producer: Jean des Forêts
Supervising producer: Amélie Jacquis
Coproducers: Cassandre Warnauts and Jean-Yves Roubin
Coproduction: France 3 Cinéma, FraKas Productions
International sales: Charades
French distributor: Le Pacte
Belgium distributor: Cinéart
Press representative (FR): Matilde Incerti
Press representative (International): Claudia Tomassini

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