



Locarno Festival
Piazza Grande

Fanny Ardant

Tewfik Jallab



Blue Monday Productions presents

Lola Pater

a film by
Nadir Moknèche

Screenings



**Locarno Festival
Piazza Grande**

WORLD PREMIERE

In presence of Nadir Moknèche, Fanny Ardant & Tewfik Jallab

Thursday, August 3rd - 21:30

Festival del film Locarno / Piazza Grande

INDUSTRY SCREENING

Friday, August 4th - 17:00

Rialto 1 / Locarno

PRESS SCREENING

Wednesday, August 2nd - 21:30

Palacinema / Locarno

CONTACT IN LOCARNO 2-6 August 2017

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Synopsis

When his mother dies,
Zino decides to go looking for his father.
But 25 years ago, Farid became Lola...

WITH: FANNY ARDANT, TEWFIK JALLAB, NADIA KACI

**BLUE MONDAY PRODUCTIONS - VERSUS PRODUCTION
FRANCE - BELGIUM / FRENCH / 2017 / FEATURE FILM**

Interview of Nadir Moknèche

Film director & Scriptwriter

How did the desire to make a film about such a character come about?

In the 80s I lived in Pigalle. Two transsexual prostitutes worked my street and I had a good neighborly relationship with them. One afternoon in the month of May when I was coming back from the university, one of them shouted at me and asked me if she could come to my place to watch the opening of the Klaus Barbie trial on television. It was May 11th, 1987, and I was hurrying home precisely to watch its retransmission on Antenne 2. I remember very distinctly the condescending air of my 22 years and my status as a law student: “A whore who’s interested in the Barbie trial!” That’s how I discovered a completely different life: a person born a boy who felt like a girl. She was my first “Lola”. After that I found other “Lolas”, recorded the stories of other transsexuals.... a disbarred lawyer, Algerian women who had fled their country, and for some, internment in a psychiatric hospital.

Another element that triggered my desire to make the film was the encounter with a group of women who approached me after viewing my film “Viva Laldjérie” to express their enthusiasm. It finally dawned on me that they were transsexuals. Among them was Pascale Ourbih, from the same district of Algiers as me; we have since become friends.

Lola is a woman, and a father. Who inspired the character of his son?

My father arrived in Paris in 1946. He was 19. He worked as a painter in the construction field and died at age 40 when he fell from the top of scaffolding.

I've always wanted to talk about the father I never knew, but I couldn't bring myself to tell his tragic story.

I knew he was a fan of Coccinelle (first French artist known to have undergone a sex change), who he went to see and applaud at Madame Arthur's...

But here begins the fiction, the telling of a story. I tried to look at myself from a different perspective, imagining a father living somewhere who had become a woman; would I accept to see him or not? And I ended up saying to myself that it would be better to have a father who was alive, even if he didn't fit the traditional image of pater, than to have a father who was dead.

Lola lives as a couple with a woman. Is it typical for transsexuals to live with women?

I have always tried to avoid clichés in my films. But by that I don't mean that there isn't a certain amount of truth in them. But I wanted above all to distance myself from the themes generally associated with transsexuals: homosexuality, prostitution, drugs, the cabaret, by trying to show another facet of Algerian immigration in France (now called Muslim).

Farid/Lola continues to love women, even after her sex change. A heterosexual become lesbian. Zino, her son, was not born by accident; he is the fruit of love.

And so the character of Lola, who is a far cry from the clichés, is disturbing. As long as a transsexual remains marginal, living in a separate world, she is accepted, even adored. If she tries to live a normal life, let alone that of a father, she becomes a thorn in society's side.

The encounter between Lola and her son had to be conflicting in the beginning...

The inherent tension in the character of a transsexual father breaks down traditional symbolic construction: patriarchy, the image of the father, even of the Semite god. Zino follows a path that starts with refusal and ends in acceptance. He somehow becomes our

collective conscience. First ashamed and disgusted, he finally comes to accept the free choice of this father. But then subsequently, he revolts against a father who had abandoned him.

Why didn't she sacrifice herself for her son?

The reasons for a sacrifice can be ambiguous. It's easy to feel comfortable with one's unhappiness. To make the person for whom one has made a sacrifice suffer sooner or later.

Lola concealed nothing from no one. Her wife, Malika, knew about the situation. A sex change was vital for Lola.

Lola succeeded in rebuilding her life, in creating ties, a family, with Catherine, Fred, her students, in this place that appears to be a haven of peace. But she was missing the key component, her son.

She is paralyzed with fear at the thought of confronting him, of being rejected, as Malika had rejected her.

Is Lola's attempt to commit suicide inevitable?

The suicide attempt is in answer, in hindsight, to the idea of a sacrifice one has refused to make. The perspective of losing her son again after having found him is unbearable. The text message that she sends him sheds light on this attempt: "Before we met, there was hope that someday we would see each other. Then all of a sudden, my life no longer made any sense."

How did the idea to entrust this role to Fanny Ardant come to you?

While I was having lunch at my mother's one day, we were talking about the script, about the character. All of a sudden my mother exclaimed: "Don't look for anyone, there's only one actress who can play the role. Not two, not three, only one: Fanny Ardant." I confess that I dissimulated my enthusiasm so as not to give her all the credit for this brilliant idea. But immediately I thought of a masculine silhouette in a raincoat hurrying into a dark alley. It was in "Vivement dimanche!", which I saw when it first came out. That's when I discovered Fanny Ardant. Her energy and humor had really struck me. She has that Italian style that I love so much in actors.

I watched Truffaut's and Scola's films again. It was in the film "La

Famille” that I saw Fanny play the piano.

With an actress like her, so famous and adored, at the very center of the film, weren't you afraid that she'd take up too much room?

Everything went so quickly: the first meeting, reading the script, discussions about the character...

After our first interview she sent me a very clear message: “I’m in your hands. You are the director.” I could thus work in complete freedom.

The close-up in the mirror, that was pretty bold to have asked her to do that...

It was Fanny who proposed it! I wouldn't have dared. She often quoted a scene direction from the script: “Lola rediscovers her masculine features. How is this shown?”

At one point during a makeup session, she felt we were skirting the issue. With a rapid gesture she took off her makeup, applied a brush and presto, there was Farid's face as we see it in the film. The gift of a great actress!

And the actor that plays Fanny Ardant young (Farid), how did you choose him?

Ahmed Zerari participated in the casting call for the role of Zino. And there, I had like a vision of Fanny as a boy. Those who were skeptic were finally convinced when they saw the shot where both genders appear.

The flash-back of Lola as a youth wearing the red flamenco dress – was that always in the script?

The underlying myth of all transsexuals is remembering the time when he first discovered his future as a woman...with the consequences one can imagine.

The role is played by a boy from the north districts of Marseille, who came to the casting call with his parents (his mother wearing a veil).

Proof that preconceived ideas are worthless.

How did you choose Tewfik Jallab?

By a casting call. I had also seen him in films. I really like his carefree, down-to-earth, playful manner. And his virility, which was going to hit Lola's hyper-femininity head on.

I wanted him to be a piano tuner. Beyond the natural affinities created with Lola, I wanted him to do work that required serious professional training. This meant that Zino had already made decisions, taken directions for his life. A responsible man. He is the reflection of his parents and of Rachida, his aunt.

Is Rachida a kind of second mother?

The role played by Nadia Kaci is representative of the Algerian immigration that took place in the 90s during the period of civil war. Defending her freedom whatever the cost, and that of others in consequence. She accompanies Zino's self-questioning. She is the trigger for his awakenings: "One can't change the course of things, but we, we can change."

How did you choose the shooting locations?

After having filmed Algiers, the city of my childhood, I had to film Paris. Other than for a few short periods, I have lived in Paris for over thirty years. I have roamed its streets on two wheels for about as long. A sort of permanent location scouting.

The locations have inspired the script: Poliveau street and its "modern" architecture for Malika, Haussmanian style buildings for Zino, the Passage Verdeau where I took courses in theatre for several years, the hotel for its Roman décor and of course the Seine: the passage from the left bank to the right on a motorcycle.

The cat on the roofs, is that a reference to Chris Marker?

Indeed. More precisely, it's when Belmelok walks along the guardrail of the building, with the Pantheon, the Eiffel Tower and the minaret

of the Grand Mosque of Paris, etc. behind him.

Aren't you afraid of being reproached by some because you didn't choose a transgender actress?

Why not an Algerian or an Arab woman? Should Shakespeare be played solely by British aristocrats? The identity of the actor with the role would mean the end of representation. Theatrical and cinematographic acting allows for questioning identities and for exploring them at the same time – it would be wrong to deprive ourselves of this possibility.

I think that I'm in a good position to understand the problems of minorities. I have spoken of the freedom of women, including in interreligious marriage, which is forbidden for Muslims. There is always an openly homosexual character in my films. I hope I am contributing to changing mentalities. Must I wait for a fatwa against me to be accredited?

The choice of Fanny Ardant naturally imposed itself. She and I have invested body and soul in the character of Lola.



Nadir Moknèche

Filmography

2017 LOLA PATER

2013 GOODBYE MOROCCO

*Special mention in the Narrative Feature category -
Doha Tribeca Film Festival 2012*

2007 DÉLICE PALOMA (Paloma Delight)

*Best French-Language Film - Lumières Award 2008
Best Actress Award - Tarifa Film Festival 2008*

2004 VIVA LALDJÉRIE (Viva Algeria)

*Special Jury Prize - Florence France Cinema Festival 2004
Jury Prize - Athens Francophone Film Festival 2005*

2000 LE HAREM DE MADAME OSMANE
(Madame Osmane's Harem)

France Best Screenwriter Grand Prize 1998

1995 JARDIN (short film)

1994 HANIFA, AINSI VA L'AMOUR (short film)



Fanny Ardant

Selected Filmography

2017 LOLA PATER dir. Nadir Moknèche

2015 CHIC! dir. Jérôme Cornuau

2013 LA GRANDE BELLEZA (The Great Beauty) dir. Paolo Sorrentino

2013 LES BEAUX JOURS (Bright Days Ahead) dir. Marion Vernoux

Best Actress Nominee - Cesar Awards 2014

2008 IL DIVO dir. Paolo Sorrentino

2006 PARIS, JE T'AIME dir. Richard La Gravenese

2003 NATHALIE... dir. Anne Fontaine

2002 HUIT FEMMES (8 Women) dir. François Ozon

Best Actress - European Film Awards 2002

Silver Bear for Outstanding Artistic Achievement - Berlinale 2002

Best Actress Nominee - Cesar Awards 2002

2002 CALLAS FOREVER dir. Franco Zeffirelli

1998 LA CENA (The Dinner) dir. Ettore Scola

1996 RIDICULE dir. Patrice Leconte

1996 PÉDALE DOUCE dir. Gabriel Aghion

Best Actress - Cesar Awards 1997

Best Actress - Lumières Award 1997

1995 SABRINA dir. Sydney Pollack

1987 LA FAMIGLIA (The Family) dir. Ettore Scola

Best Actress - Nastro d'Argento 1987

1986 MÉLO dir. Alain Resnais

1984 L'AMOUR À MORT (Love Unto Death) dir. Alain Resnais

1983 VIVEMENT DIMANCHE ! (Confidentially Yours)

dir. François Truffaut

Best Actress Nominee - Cesar Awards 1984

1981 LA FEMME D'À CÔTÉ (The Woman Next Door)

dir. François Truffaut

Best Actress Nominee - Cesar Awards 1982



Tewfik Jallab

Selected Filmography

2017 LOLA PATER dir. Nadir Moknèche

2017 CE QUI NOUS LIE (Back to Burgundy) dir. Cédric Klapisch

2016 L'OUTSIDER (Team Spirit) dir. Christophe Barratier

2016 LE CONVOI dir. Frédéric Schoendoerffer

2013 LA MARCHE (The Marchers) dir. Nabil Ben Yadir

2013 NÉS QUELQUE PART dir. Mohamed Hamidi

2006 QUI DE NOUS DEUX dir. Charles Belmont

1994 KILLER KID dir. Gilles de Maistre

Cast

LOLA
FANNY ARDANT

ZINO
TEWFIK JALLAB

RACHIDA
NADIA KACI

CATHERINE
VÉRONIQUE DUMONT

FRED
BRUNO SANCHES

PAULA
LUCIE DEBAY

MALIKA
LUBNA AZABAL

XAVIER
BAPTISTE MOULART

THE RECEPTIONIST
LAWRENCE VALIN

Technical List

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NADIR MOKNÈCHE

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
JEANNE LAPOIRIE

EDITOR
CHANTAL HYMANS

SET DESIGNER
JOHANN GEORGE

SOUND MIXER
MARC ENGELS
BENOÎT HILLEBRANT
EMMANUEL DE BOISSIEU

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PAULE MANGENOT

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HAIR
JOËLLE DOMINIQUE

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