

Shellac presents

OUR ETERNAL SUMMER



A FILM BY ÉMILIE AUSSEL





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with Agathe TALRICH, Marcia FEUGEAS, Matthieu LUCCI, Idir AZOUGLI, Nina VILLANOVA
Antonin TOTOT, Rose TIMBERT, Louis PLUTON, Emmanuel ROL, Safinah MIXTY MIHIDJAY

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egle.cepaite@shellacfilms.com

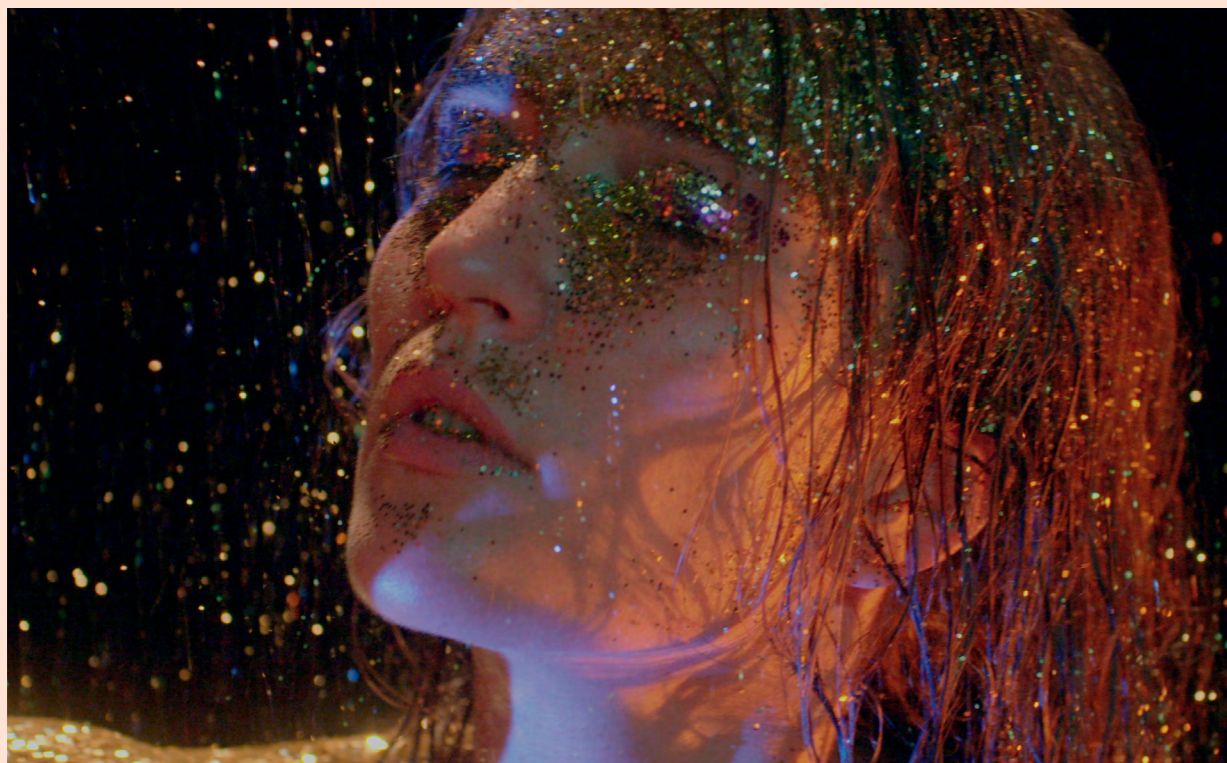
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Synopsis

To live and to love at the age of 18, immersing yourself in the carefree summer days and nights, losing your best friend suddenly, and realizing that nothing lasts forever. It's a time of decisive encounters in order to be reborn.







Director's note

While my first short-films were focusing on teenage turmoil and rites of passage, I felt the urge in *Our Eternal Summer* to also address the inherent violence of losing a loved one at a young age by telling this fundamental drama to Lise and her group of friends, coping with the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Lola on a summer's night. Elliptical by nature, this film mostly is about aligning with feelings rather than with the script I wrote with Emmanuelle Bayamack-Tam after I read her novel *Si tout n'a pas péri avec mon innocence*. We both share a vivid interest for teenage years, with all the energy and solemnity they bear, as well as for the romanticism induced by diving into a character's interiority.

Lise and her friends tend to think of themselves as invincible, immortal. As Lola vanishes, their beliefs fall apart and their vulnerability surfaces. Lise

wanders through a radiant Marseille, looking for a meaning to what actually is meaningless. Lola's disappearance triggers this sudden journey from the realm of teenage recklessness to adulthood, this realisation of the the transient nature of things, of this painful truth : nothing lasts forever. The ordinary, intense joy and languidness at the start are simply swiped off when the film's pace and form dissolve into mystery. I wanted to be as close as possible to this feeling of loss, to the void left by a loved one dramatically gone, by building the film around ellipsis, breaks, through the multiplication of voices, emphasising both the soundtrack and silences. From the initial careless ballad, through the central requiem, to the finale where theater turns into catharsis, *Our Eternal Summer* matches Lise's states of mind and soul until she simply leaves us a little grown up, serene and yet inconsolable from this tragedy upon which she will have to build her future self.

Reinventing the story, the characters, with the actors, while casting them has drawn a porous line between fiction and documentary, giving the film

this sense of proximity. This film deals as much with a bunch of friends as it does with loneliness. It also addresses love, friendship through landscapes, faces, voices. My artistic training has sort of always drawn me towards conceiving filmmaking as painting emotions, with faces shot as if they were landscapes, with landscapes themselves being affected by the characters' feelings. Therefore the sea, the sun, Mediterranean lights, close-ups are essential to this depiction. *Our Eternal Summer* advances thanks to breaks, absences, off-screen moments, and formally constructs the void, the separation, in the way it is perceived through the eyes of a teenager. The film also mixes different voices, speeches – from the most trivial within the group of friends to the most impassioned when it comes to intimate conversations or inner thoughts, underlining this urge to tell yourself. And again, there remain long silences where the wind invades the sound space until Postcoïtum's music takes the floor.

Émilie Aussel
September 2021



Interview with the director

FOR INFOOGGI - JULY 17TH, 2021

Your film generates a deep sense of truthfulness from the very beginning. How did you manage to achieve that?

Undoubtedly thanks to the work with the actors and the immersion that started while casting the young people who could embody the story's characters. I did the casting myself, with the help of an assistant, and this experience enabled me to meet many people and absolutely dive into the subject of the film. It consisted in interviewing the teenagers I met and ask them about their relationships, with friends or lovers, and how they were actually

considering loss. Once the actors casted, we rehearsed for a long time as to reshape the script and the characters with them, to turn the words of these characters into the actors', but also as to build up the group they form on screen. The friendships and bounds created in the process exist within the film. It matters to me to find inspiration among the youth I cast, to fuel the characters with actual personalities and therefore to achieve what you call "truthfulness".

In the first 15 minutes of the film, you succeeded in grasping a sense of youthful joyfulness. After the turning point of the film, however, the tone dramatically changes and the feeling of immersion deepens for the audience. What are the risks in filming those emotional moments without losing credibility?

The beginning of the film is very improvised. We had very little time to shoot and had to be able to follow the actors without restraining them. It is all about having them immersed into genuine situations with specific directions

and let them *be*. I wanted this first part - the "happiness" part - to be lively, fleeting, and have this radical breaking point after the event. Then, the film's rhythm changes and focuses on Lise's interiority. The pain induced by the loss invades the film and is felt by the other characters as well in a sort of *circulation of feelings*. The group fades away, gives room to more personal, intimate feelings. I chose to have this film based on feelings rather than on a script, to dare expose them. And credibility is a matter of acting, of the relationships between the beings on screen. I believe all the necessary elements for the audience to be as close as possible to feelings they have experienced in the past, to relationships echoing their own existence, are gathered here.

The youth in your film often demonstrate their belief in their invincibility until trauma comes and strike them. They then gain consciousness of their frailty. Through this transition from invincibility to frailty, could one say this film is a coming-of-age story?

“At 18, we believe everything lasts forever” says one of the character. Of course, as long as you haven’t lost anything or anyone, you believe things can be eternal, and that is until you experience painful losses, sudden break-ups and come to the realisation that you are not invincible. *Our Eternal Summer* is about learning through understanding the ephemeral condition of life, human beings, relationships. Sometimes, one has to build oneself with wounds that can never heal and yet, as some of the film’s characters show, without trying to get over this pain, one manages to find strength in those wounds.

When focusing on Lise and Lola as a “duo that should have been”, the film somehow keeps the form of an ensemble film. Would you say group interactions, in your story, prevail over lonesomeness and individuality?

I wanted the feelings to flow from one character to the other and the film to deal with solace. It is impossible to find solace on your own. To me, Lise is the character through which the emotions flow and the others share her





feelings, so much so that they end up forming an ensemble, a choir (in the lyrical, tragic sens of the word). The pain induced by loss gives birth to loneliness and despite her loneliness, Lise deals with others, grows up.

Your characters talk together but also to invisible presences, through monologues. How did you approach these multiple forms of expression?

I wanted to instill a sense of literary, romantic writing to both transcend and acknowledge reality and eventually dive into the characters' interiority. That is the purpose of this multiplicity of voices. The need and the way to talk about yourself matters especially at a young age. Those addresses to invisible presences, clandestine thoughts, things one wishes to say but cannot because the other is gone or would not understand, have always been the heart of the project. While casting them, I asked the

teenagers to start a monologue as if they were talking to loved ones who are long gone or they're afraid to lose. That is a way to expose one's frailty and embrace it.

There are words but silence also holds a fundamental position in the film. At the same time, music is very present. How did these two media - silence and music - integrated the characters' emotions ?

Silence was obvious from the start : it goes with the impossibility to talk to the departed friend, it embodies absence and Lise's incapability to find the necessary words to stay together.

Postcoïtum's music is crucial to the film and offers multiple tone variations according to the energy of the scenes, matching the characters' feelings. I have been working with them on my short films and their score is already at play during filming, helping the actors to find their way through the scenes. While writing *Our Eternal Summer*, I kept on listening Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem's* "In Paradisum". Postcoïtum found inspiration in it for one of

their tracks and we therefore had the impression to reach something sacred, atemporal.

In *Our Eternal Summer*, one can sense how different forms of art have fueled your filmmaking. Theater, but also painting in the attention you give to landscapes. How did your artistic training contribute to the stylistic depth of this first feature ?

Picturesque inspiration was essential to me. I have a Fine Arts background and am always looking towards painting. What I am aiming at is painting feelings, have the landscapes echo the characters' interiority. There is a romantic dimension to this filmmaking desire. My work is always very much connected to places, Marseille, the sea. I grew up on the Mediterranean shores and my creativity is fueled by their lights. As far as theater is concerned, the way actors take risks, expose and sometimes make fool of themselves fascinates me.





ÉMILIE AUSSSEL

Emilie Aussel (1980, France) studied fine arts then cinema at Le Fresnoy. After creating video art and installations, she turned to narrative fiction with four shorts focused on coming-of-age stories, presented at Rotterdam, Clermont-Ferrand and others.

Our Eternal Summer is her debut feature film.

FILMOGRAPHY

TA BOUCHE MON PARADIS, 29 min (2016)

PETITE BLONDE, 15 min (2013)

DO YOU BELIEVE IN RAPTURE ?, 43min (2013)

L'IGNORANCE INVINCIBLE, 35 min (2009)

CAST

Lise Agathe Talrich
Lola Marcia Feugeas
Malo Matthieu Lucci
Marlon Idir Azougli
Rita Nina Villanova
Cosmo Antonin Totot
Eve Rose Timbert
Elias Louis Pluton
Soa Safinah Mixty Mihidjay
Sam Emmanuel Rol

CREW

Director

Émilie Aussel

Screenplay

Émilie Aussel,
Emmanuelle
Bayamack-Tam,
Yacine Badday

**Director
of photography**
Mathieu Bertholet

Costume designer
Anna Ostby

Sound

Jean-Michel Tresallet,
Céline Bellanger,
Josefina Rodriguez,
Mathieu Farnarier

Editor

Vincent Tricon

Color grading

Isotta Trastevere

Original score

Postcoïtum
(Damien Ravnich
and Bertrand Wolff)

Production manager

Julien Tellier
Eric Védrine

Line producer

Francine Cadet (Shellac)

Producer

Thomas Ordonneau
(Shellac)

Coproducer

Productions
Autrement Dit

Associate producers

Kinomatik and Label 42

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