



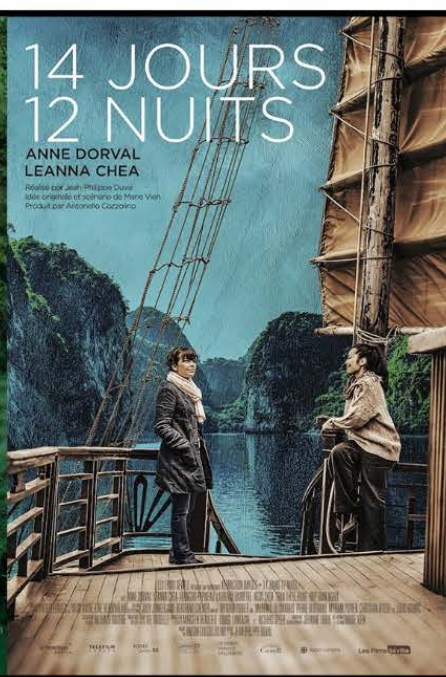
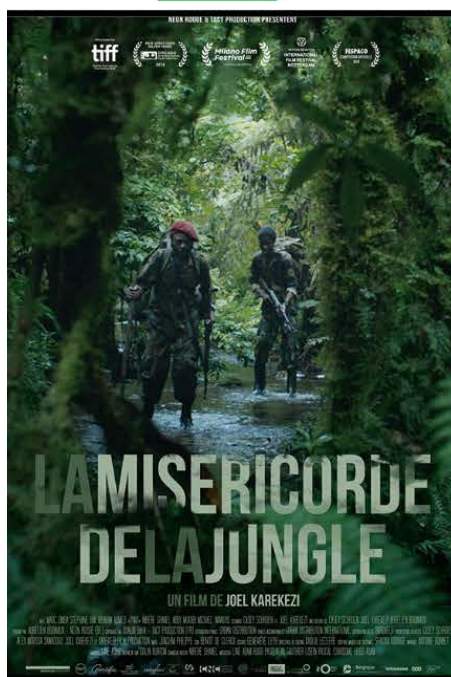
THEATRE RAYMOND KABBAZ PRESENTS

A WEEK OF FRENCH LANGUAGE CINEMA

March 18-23, 2022



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM



–PROGRAM–

About the event "A Week of French Language Cinema"

March 18th – 23rd

For the thirteenth year, we work in collaboration with the Consulates of France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, the Quebec Government Office in Los Angeles, and Le Lycée Français de Los Angeles to present A Week of French Language Cinema, with nightly screenings of critically acclaimed French language films, from Friday, March 18 through Wednesday, March 23, 2022.

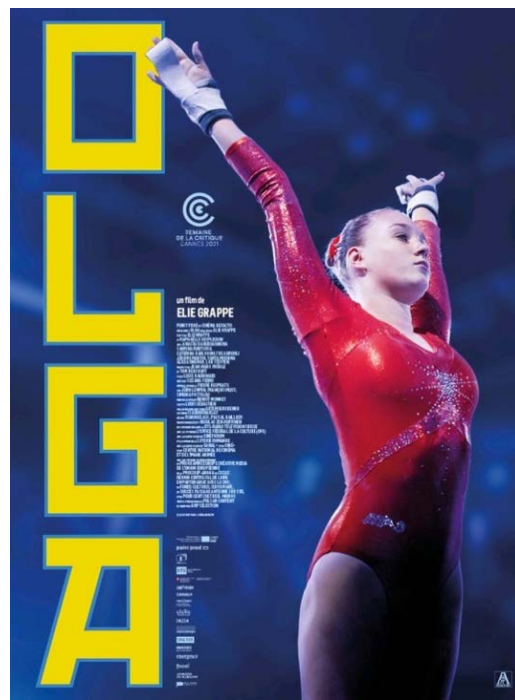
This collection of feature films celebrates the richness and diversity of the global French-speaking population, and relishes in the variety of stories told in one language across all five continents. A Week of French Language Cinema is celebrated every year in conjunction with International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF)'s annual celebration of French language and Francophone cultures on March 20th.

This evening Switzerland is honored with the film **OLGA**, and are thankful to the **Honorary Consul of Switzerland in Los Angeles, Mr. Franco Zimmerli** for his opening remarks.

On-site exhibition of paintings and works on paper by **Renée Caouette**, a local artist of French descent.

Wine generously provided by the **Alliance Française de Los Angeles**.

Find out more about our next screenings for this week, our sponsors, and our upcoming events at the end of the program.



About tonight's film "OLGA"

Switzerland / 2021 / 1h35min

At 15, Olga (Anastasia Budiashkina) is a budding champion, amongst the best Ukrainian gymnasts and aiming for the European championship. But her journalist mother's investigation into the corruption prevailing at the highest state level in 2013 in Kiev raises direct threats to their lives. In order to keep Olga safe without her having to give up on her sporting ambitions, her mother sends the teenager (a very determined young woman: "the boss, it's me!") to Switzerland, the country of her deceased father.

This is a film centered on the bodies of gymnasts in action, with their rituals, their few words and the implacable quality of successes and failures. Olga captures, with an excellent sense of atmosphere, the paradoxes of adolescents perfecting a total control over their emotions even as they are boiling inside them. There is a permanent underlying tension (perfectly inhabited by the protagonist) and an interior conflict that intelligently echoes more widely with an external conflict taking place in Ukraine. These mirroring ideals perfectly match one of the revolutionary chants of Măidan: "for our freedom, we will give body and soul."

Elie Grappe, the director of the film said about his feature: “I wanted to film the passion and tell the story of a heroine who, unwillingly, must reconcile her personal aspirations with history. I wished to tackle the issue of identity from a teenager’s perspective: a taxing time, a time when we seek emancipation and to fulfill our desires. It is also a time when identity is unclear, in one’s flesh even, because the body changes... and it is also when one starts addressing political issues.”

–DETAILS–

ELIE GRAPPE – Director



Elie Grappe is a young director from Lyon who is very promising since he is only 28 years old. He studied classical music at the Lyon National Conservatory for ten years before studying cinema at the École Cantonale d’Art de Lausanne in Switzerland between 2011 and 2015. As part of his curriculum, he directed *Répétition (Rehearsal)*, then his graduation short film: *Suspendu*. Both films were selected by several international film festivals. It is interesting to note that both films feature dancers, an art quite close to gymnastics, who must face personal challenges while confronting the discipline of the sport. In a way, tonight Elie Grappe continues in this momentum by delivering us a finer, more accomplished story of those hard-working people with high aspirations. This is probably because, in addition to having perfected his technique, he has found a theme for the film that sincerely moves him. Indeed, in late 2015, he co-directed a documentary about an orchestra where he could film a Ukrainian violinist who had arrived in Switzerland right before Euromaidan. Grappe confesses that he was deeply touched by her confusion as she was telling him about the revolution and the impact the images had on her. The director says that developing *OLGA* has been unbelievably thrilling: casting the actors, looking into the historical records, going about writing this drama almost as a documentary. He did a lot of research and watched numerous films, but he also gathered in this film extracts of the demonstrations directly filmed with telephones by the protesters.

ANASTASIA BUDIASHKINA – as OLGA



Olga is played by the former member of the Ukrainian national team at the European Junior Championships in 2016, Anastasia Budiashkina. Before making her first steps in the cinema for the feature film presented tonight, she was and still is a real gymnast. She dedicated 15 years of her life to artistic gymnastic and now she is in the third year of coaching degree. In 2016, Elie Grappe was part of the spectators at the European Championships where she was competing. He went to her, to meet her team, and to ask them about the movie. Later, he decided she would play Olga. Other gymnasts in the movie are also portrayed by real-life gymnasts – former Swiss national team members Caterina Barloggio and Thea Brogli and another Ukrainian gymnast Sabrina Rubtsova. Fortunately for the director, project, and viewers - she is both a professional actor and a professional athlete accustomed to competing in large-scale arenas. Thus, she succeeded in delivering an astonishing, raw, and faithful incarnation of Olga. Her expressive blue eyes, which exhibit her character's vulnerability flawlessly, and her gymnastic skills convey a mind-blowing documentary veracity. We can understand why this performance earned her the AISGE Award for Best Actress (Winner) during the Festival International de Cine de Gijón.

CAST

AROUND THE FILM

Anastasia Budiashkina: **Olga**
Sabrina Rubtsova: **Sasha**
Caterina Barloggio: **Steffi**
Thea Brogli: Zoé

AWARDS

Oscar of the Best International film (2022):
official selection to represent Switzerland

Cannes Festival (2021): « Semaine de la critique »
selection, SACD Prize

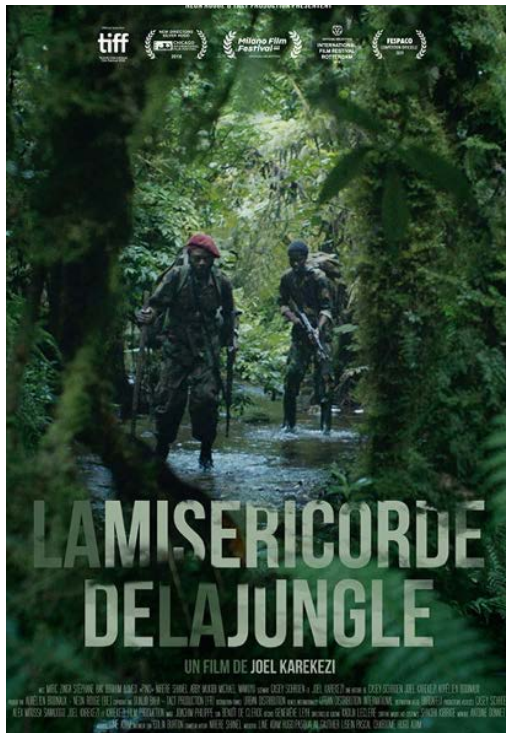
Angers European First Film Festival (2020):
Visio Foundation award for feature film script
Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival
(2021): Audience award (international
competition), TV Prize

The film is co-written by Raphaëlle Desplechin, screenwriter of ‘Our Struggles’, by Guillaume Senez with Romain Duris, of ‘On tour’ nominated and in competition at the Cannes Film Festival, and of *Pris de court*, by Emmanuelle Cuau with Virginie Efira. She is the sister of Arnaud Desplechin, who directed ‘Kings and Queen’ and ‘A Christmas Tale’.

Elie Grappe chose Pierre Desprats for the music of the film, who did for example the music of *Wild Boys* by Bertrand Mandico. The music is primordial in the film because, according to Pierre Desprats, “The music shifts the point of listening. It focuses on a physical sensation. During the demonstrations, a more rhythmic base causes excitement in the stomach. With the scratching on Olga there is a skin and surface sensation. The music produces tension that could be illustrative, it creates suspense, but at the same time we thought it as something always related to the body, to the loss of reference points”.

NIGHT 3 – CANADA – March, Sunday 20th

When the elders leave us, a link to the past disappears with them. The Innu woman of letters, Joséphine Bacon, embodies this generation that witnessed a time that is soon to be over. With charisma and sensitivity, she leads a fight against oblivion and the disappearance of a language, a culture and its traditions. Following in the footsteps of Papakassik, the caribou master, JE M'APPELLE HUMAIN proposes an incursion into the history of a multi-millennial people alongside a free woman who has devoted her life to transmitting her knowledge and that of her ancestors. In her language, Innu means "human".



NIGHT 4 – A MOVIE FROM A RWANDAN DIRECTOR – March, Monday 21st

War-weary Sergeant Xavier and fresh recruit Private Faustin are accidentally separated from their Rwandan battalion inside Congolese territory when it is called out suddenly on nighttime raid. They face a lack of water, food, and threats from malarial fever and jungle wildlife. The two seek to reunite with the battalion by heading westward but must remain wary of interacting with the local population given Congolese antipathy to the Rwandan Army and the presence of irregular rebel factions.

NIGHT 5 – QUEBEC – Tuesday, March 22nd

This moving drama follows Isabelle Brodeur (Anne Dorval) as she embarks on a journey to Vietnam, her adopted daughter's birthplace. During the trip, Isabelle learns the existence and whereabouts of her daughter's biological mother. Throughout this stunningly beautiful journey in the Vietnamese countryside, Isabelle discovers her daughter's country through the eyes of the woman who brought her into this world.



NIGHT 6 – BELGIUM – Wednesday, March 23rd

Two children, Abel and his little sister Nora, are starting a new school. Soon, Abel falls prey to a small gang of children who bully him day after day. To his sister who first tried to alert the adults, Abel urged her to not say a word, and she obeyed at first. When she finally decides to speak out, she too finds herself being bullied by the school bullies.

-OUR SPONSORS-



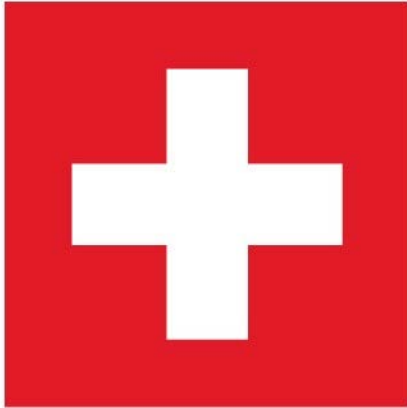
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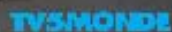
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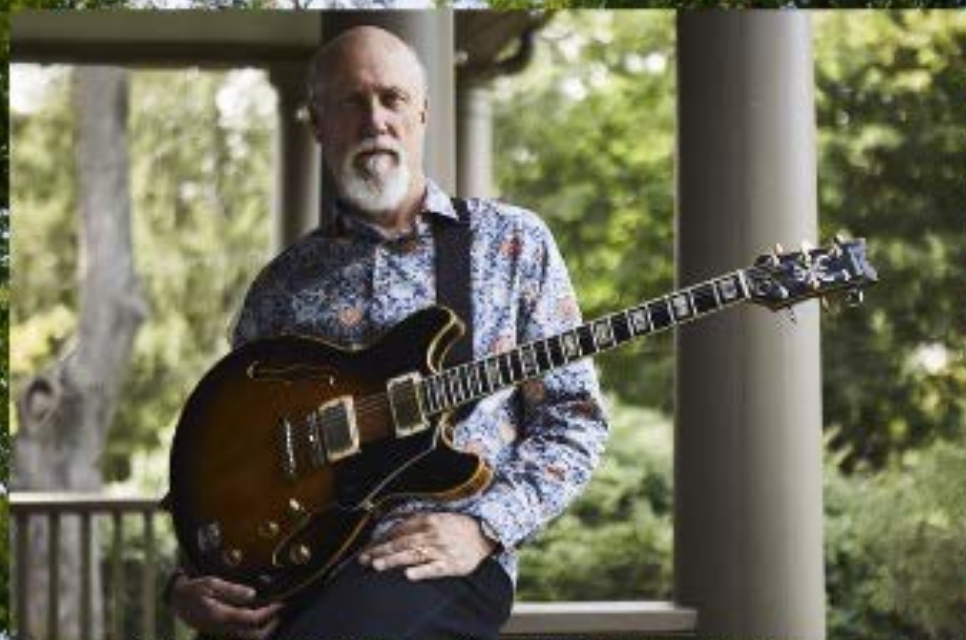


A still from the film Elsewhere. Directed and Choreographed by Mike Tyus & Madison Olandt, 2021.

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