

Rodeo

A film by Lola Quivoron



Julie Ledru Yanis Lafhi Antonia Buresi



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Lola Quívoron

Still Set | Film Website

107 mins | 2023 | In French with English Subtitles



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Hot-tempered and fiercely independent, Julia (Julie Ledru) is a gearhead who thrives in hostile environments and turns every situation to her advantage. She has a talent for scamming condescending men who think it's cute that she shows interest in their used motorbikes—and can't fathom her riding away with gleeful abandon. Her obsession with the high-octane world of urban 'Rodeos' - illicit gatherings where riders show off their bikes and latest daring stunts - sparks a chance meeting with a volatile clique. Julia strives to prove herself to the ultra-masculine gang by performing cons and running errands for their incarcerated ring leader, Dom. She finds a surprising connection with Dom's wife, Ophélie (Antonia Buresi) and son, a risky move that puts a target on her back. Julia is unsure who she can trust as the ultimate heist comes down the pike.

About the film

Interview with
Lola Quivoron
(director)

Antonia Buresí
(co-screenwriter and actress)

Emmanuelle Bayamack -Tam
(author)

by **Marilou Duponchel**



MD : Lola, how did you come across this environment that you film in *Rodeo* but also in your short film *Au loin Baltimore*?

LQ : It's an environment I know since I was a child, when I lived in the suburbs of Paris and I saw young people doing motocross in front of my building. I met the young people of *Au Loin Baltimore* in 2015 while I was still at Femis. It was the summer. I had come across videos on social media of kids who were cross-bituming and called themselves "*Dirty Riderz Crew*." I contacted the leader of the group, Pack, who invited me to spend some time on their training line in a suburb of Paris. That day, I was really taken by it. It was a physical encounter. The engines are very strong, what they do quite brutal, it's very impressive. They cross each other on lines that are narrow two-way roads. I went back there about fifty times and I became friends with them. I wanted to understand the environment, its rules, its philosophy etc. What is this practice? Why do they do it? Who are these young people? *Au Loin Baltimore*, my graduation short film, dealt with the practice of "cross-bitumen" in a rather "naturalistic" way. And since 2015, I have never stopped spending time in this environment, and documenting it, with clips, short films, or photo reports.

Rodeo, my first feature film, written over a period of nearly 5 years, was built on a more assertive relationship with fiction. When I went with the "Dirty Rider Crew" on the lines, I was often the only girl. The few others were either on the back of the bikes or on

the side of the road, but hardly any of them rode. That's also why I invented the character of Julia: it responded to a rather intimate desire to see this dream of joining a community come true.

Rodeo was born out of the meeting with the community I had been following for years and my intimate desire to see a young woman rider one day lift her bike. *Rodeo* is for me an epic and "sur-naturalist" film. It goes beyond the naturalism of *Au Loin Baltimore*, in its relationship to color, narrative and direction. It pushes filmmaking to the very limit. We shot with an Arri Alexa Mini camera, in a cinemascope format (2:39), with anamorphic Master Prime lenses. Like the classic westerns. This gives a spectacular strength to the documentary look that I also wanted to preserve. I wanted to make people physically feel the bodies carried away by the speed and adrenaline of "bike-life." To show the brutal side of it, the relationship to death, to the asphalt.

MD: Before *Au Loin Baltimore*, you directed *Stand*, a short film in which you filmed a shooting range in Paris. This is also a predominantly male environment, but in which you featured a woman. Can you tell us about the recurrence of this motif in your films?

LQ: What interested me was the exploration of this closed universe, a place cut off from the ordinary world. We plunge ourselves into a closed, secure, very masculine and very codified

environment. The clients are mainly men, cops, former soldiers or civilians who are learning to use their weapons. I was fascinated by their rituals, their technical language, and the way they deploy their weapons as appendages of themselves.

In this system, we see Sandra, the woman who helped manage the place, to organize it. She was passionate about all calibers, a champion marksman. She immediately appeared to me as a character in her own right, a warrior who was a bit of an outsider to this environment, an unusual heroine. I quickly became attached to her - I think there was a bit of a mirror effect. The film tells the story of her journey within this very virile world.

I believe that *Stand* sets up something that I will unpack in all my other films. Each time, I bring my gaze to worlds that are largely dominated by the male gaze and male bodies. I am like a foreign figure amongst them. This is clearly a very recurrent motif of writing and directing, which for me allows me to produce fiction, to question the reality of gender stereotypes, to propose an atypical, almost "alien" look. I look at things from my difference.



System and games of representations

ETB: What's funny is that the first time I met you Lola, you already talked to me about systems. I think that's an important word for you: infiltrating a system, understanding a system.

LQ: I do love to get inside a system, to look at it from the inside, to understand how it works and to deconstruct it. I like to lose myself in this exploration, to take the time to research how I am going to look at things, to choose my place to tell the story.

In my short film *Fils du loup* - a film about a young boy who learns to train his attack dog for the first time - what interested me most was to show the conditioning of a system that enslaves the body. Animal training, through its orders, and its technicality sets up a dominant and violent relationship, above all for the animal, but also for human beings. It is a film about the relationships of dominance between beings. The young inexperienced boy discovers how training works and how to dominate this dog called "Iron." With him, we ask ourselves how we can somehow leave behind the violence of conditioning. His naivety shows us an alternative way of relating to the animal, but more widely to the Other. He deconstructs the system.

It reassures me a lot to think that the paradigms of a great system of thought, for example, can be destroyed. For some years now, there has been a lot of talk about "deconstruction," about deconditioning, especially of women in relation to what is expected of them. How to become again the subject who





has a gaze. How to get out of the injunctions conditioned by the dominant male gaze. How not to reproduce the violence of certain power relationships? The phenomena of deconstruction are forms of inner revolution that are a big driving force for me, that make me think about politics in a very concrete way. It's an incredible basis on which to build a world that would give more place to diversity, to how many identities there are out there and how they're represented, to non-binarity, but also to the unexpected, to the beauty of monsters, to the incongruous, to the strange and to eclecticism etc.

MD: *Rodeo* is also a system film. However, within this system, the characters are never reduced to the masculine image they convey. Each one exists individually and collectively and escapes any assignment to an identity.

LQ: I worked a lot on the journey of each character, how they grow, and how in their evolution over the course of the story, they sometimes challenge our beliefs and norms of representation. The character of Julia aka "Stranger" is a perfect example. It surprises us because it escapes the fixity of a single, uniform representation. Her face changes all the time, her outfits, her traits. She performs multiple figures, navigates between genres, codes, social environments. At the beginning of the film, it's difficult to follow her, to pin her down. She escapes, eluding a static image of her. She is driven by a passion, by an irrepressible desire to live differently and elsewhere, to redraw horizons.

AB: The whole question of transfeminism, of disidentification, is to get out of gendered codes, of normalized identities with the idea of the invention of another subjectivity. Julia is a little bit in all that, she even frees herself from a certain readability. You could see her as an androgynous girl or a lesbian but she eludes these representations, she straddles the borders and that's what she ends up bringing to this community by coming in through a sort of opening created by the death of a member of the community. She occupies a vacancy, she lodges herself into this hole, which is also a place of possibility too.

LQ: Stereotypes are imposed by people who look at things too fixedly. It's good when the lines move. Julia is the "stranger"



who defies the boundaries, the radar of assignments. She makes it difficult for us to “read” her. During the writing, I was careful not to essentialize the characters of the B-more crew. Violence for example is always treated from the point of view of the characters’ subjectivity, that’s why it eludes assignment. I wanted the brutality of the relationships to come across in a fluid way, between the looks they give each other and the bodies. In **Rodeo**, a character is never violent in and of himself. He is violent because he’s defending himself, because he’s frustrated, because he’s ashamed, etc. What interests me are the acts, the

performances, but I want us to feel the path that leads them to act. For example, Manel violently rejects Julia because his image as a very gifted rider has been weakened by the accident, but also because he refuses to let a young woman come to help him. He reacts strongly because he doesn’t understand that gender representations can be reversed. At the end of the film, we learn that he offers a 'Yamaha WRF' to his sister. It’s quite beautiful to witness this progression and to discover that the character is not locked into a circuit of thought, that he is not categorically sexist etc. In a story, it’s essential to be surprised by the characters and



how they deconstruct themselves. The writing took place over a long period of time. Of course, the script is marked by my activism, my experience as a woman in society, my relationship to violence, without any moralizing. All this forged what I call the mythology of the film. After that comes the meeting with the riders, the meeting with Julie, the energy of the actors, their expression, their language, their truth.

Julie, Julia, Ophelia: empowerment and impediments

ETB: The character of Julia, this girl who does not at all subscribe to the codes of femininity, is like some of my heroines. These characters of girl-boy, boy-girl are part of our worlds. At the same time, in *Rodeo*, Julia's femininity is constantly questioned by the boys, even if she steers away from flirtatiousness and all the gender-related clichés.

LQ: I dreamed of seeing a female thug character, it's really something that was like a big hole in my life. I really like mafia movies, war movies, movies with a lot of violence. Very often, women are absent from these stories, or at least they aren't the driving force. I dreamed of exactly this character. I had a hunch about this Julia aka Stranger, I wrote her, but I also spent a lot of time finding her. Social networks are incredible tools for this kind of research. I had been struggling to write the script for a long time. On Instagram, I found the account "Inconnue_du_95". Her name is Julie Ledru and she's a biker. We met in Beaumont-Sur-Oise, in the suburbs of Paris. I knew this town that I had come across

during the first commemorations for the death of Adama Traoré. I thought it was a sign. She arrived in her old Honda jacket and she told me her whole story. I told her about this female character that she seemed to understand in a very obvious way. When I came back from the meeting, I called Antonia and I told her "*It's so weird, this girl is a huge liar. She told me her life story, it's the story of the movie.*" I don't know how to say it, but it was like a miracle, like the two ends of something coming together. The real and the fiction. So I started to rewrite my film with her face in mind, her body, which resolved a lot of the issues I was facing in the writing. Julie was grafted onto the character, like alchemy, she had the experience of this character in her. The film is the portrait of this young woman, Julie-Julia. She told me things that were integrated into the script immediately after our meeting. She told me that she had rescued a guy who had crashed his motorcycle. That day, he had taken a real tumble and she had rushed over to help her, but he had rejected her for the sake of his public image. The guy did not want to be saved by a girl. Julie found this to be grossly unjust.

ML: How did Julia react to reading about this character of Julia?

Julie Ledru was incredible, she quickly understood the complexity of this character who is at the same time troubled, violent, manipulative... Like me, she has difficulty identifying herself as feminine or masculine. Julie, Julia and I are "non-binary" beings. Then, from the moment the actor meets her character, you can do anything, you just need to have a little confidence and let yourself be guided. With her, we built this character. We worked on her intensity, her speed (she is always one step ahead), her brutality, her irreverence, her

hairiness. Julia is a chameleon who transforms herself constantly, who changes her appearance, her mask. She usurps other people's places, Ben's, Domino's. In the film, it feels like her body is a kind of envelope that can be dressed in a soccer jersey, a t-shirt from the day before, that can be in a bra, naked. She remains a subject body. And her playing around with appearances to help her in her quest makes her fluidity convincing. It is as if her body existed and didn't exist. There is a form of metaphysics in it, both material and immaterial. It interests me in a big way because it is in this that one gives a force to the female body, in its non-affiliation, the fact that it is not sexualized, the fact that it pushes back when it's reified, when it's cast as an object. Julia rebels against those who photograph her. I see Julia a bit like the Medusa who blows into bits the person who dares look at her. If Julia is desired, it's because she has accepted it. The only looks she can bear are those of Kais and Ophelia. The rest of the time, Julia never stops fighting against all forms of predation, oppression, strangeness or misplaced desire, fantasy.

I feel like one of the big subjects of the film is Julia's body. It's a body that struggles among other bodies that are different from hers. I was obsessed with the idea that it was her female body that created the fiction. **Rodeo** is about a character trying to find her place in this sad world. She is looking for a motor, a raison d'être. This motor, she finds it in her bike, but also in theft, a grand heist that she does just for the beauty of it, and for recognition.

ETB: There is a floating between two love stories and I think that's very true-to-life. At no point do you make the film about one or the other. The two stories remain in suspense. **LQ:** She is a woman so inevitably one expects her to be able





to desire a body, more specifically a male one, but one realizes that indeed she can, perhaps, desire a woman. The fact she doesn't concretely respond to these two forms of desire allows us to undo the stereotype. Expectation is a form of stereotype. It's necessary to thwart expectations, to create surprise, to disturb the spectator's unconscious. I notice that people often say about **Rodeo** that it gives the viewer the sensation of being shaken in all directions like in a washing machine. With Rafael Torres Calderon, we set up the film as a discontinuous line, with its deviations, its forks, its hairpin turns, and its U-turns. The story is made of ruptures, of contrasts. Some scenes are edited with "jump cuts." There are big ellipses. This gives an effect of speed, instability, precariousness, edginess. I like that we are taken away and shaken in all directions like in a merry-go-round, that we are carried off in this lust for living with boundaries, in the middle of the action, without psychology.



We edited the film like a war film, without breathing, without giving you the chance to rest. Since the editing of **Headshot** (a documentary co-written with Antonia Buresi) Rafael and I have been guided by this sentence of Edouard Glissant: "We understand the world better when we tremble with it. For the world trembles in all directions." We must tremble with the character of Julia to understand her. In this crazy and oppressive mazelike circuit, what keeps the thread of the discontinuous narrative going is this encounter with Julia. I wanted us to be linked, to never leave her. This produces a very concrete relationship with the character, with her mysteriousness. At first, we see her as an unvarying block of anger, but which is sculpted and refined as she opens up to the gaze of Kais, and Ophelia.



ETB: Can you tell us about the character of Ophelia? How did you build her?

LQ: Antonia was very involved in the writing of the film. We had a lot of writing sessions together, a lot of rereading. It's a film that has been a part of our daily life for 4 years.

AB : The life we share, the struggles that go through it, the

discussions and the various commitments around the questions of feminism, anti-racism have influenced our reflection with regards to the story under construction. I had a rather natural approach to the dialogues in certain sequences, it refers to the acting. It begs the question of incarnation, of the carnal, emotional, spiritual dimension which will nourish the words, we have to keep them simple to give them that space. It's a space

where I'm interested in intervening, the relationship to rhythm, the scansion, the subtraction of the unnecessary.

LQ: The character has always existed, but the name changed several times. It was the same face but not the same vibe. Antonia is Corsican so I was interested in adding that ingredient to the mythology of Rodeo. There was a version of the film where Julia actually ended up in Corsica at the end.

AB: This idea of escape and flight has stayed with us for a long time.

ETB: It's still present in the film, this escape angle. You can believe in it for a very long time.

AB: We were inspired by some of the real people in my family, in terms of the character's imprisonment, the fact that she's reduced to her home environment and living without a voice. She's completely dependent economically on this invisible Domino. She supports her husband's isolation by her absence from the world. It reminded me of things I've seen in my family, of women who are prisoners' wives. The fact that she is Domino's wife was a powerful trigger for the story, Julia's function with Ophelia could be justified. Otherwise, this house was just a place of refuge that was hard to connect to the story.

ETB: The child is also a prisoner, hence his hyperactivity. The child and the mother are like lions in a cage.

AB: Absolutely. She also has a conflicted, even unhappy, relationship with motherhood. It's a bit of a negative image of



femininity that Julia is confronted with when she comes into contact with Ophelia, and at the same time there's a sort of liberation that takes place between them. You spoke about objects earlier, there is a circulation of key objects in this claustrophobic atmosphere. There is Julia who brings the groceries, provides the link with the outside world and at the same time enables this life of reclusion. There's Ophelia who gives Julia all the trappings of femininity to go and deceive the world and perform her gender. There is the knife which is a tool that calls for revenge but also emancipation. There is the piston, then the bequest at the end as tools of a possible liberation. What I find quite exciting is that there is always this idea of a breach, of something that opens up, that hints at possibilities. For Ophélie, the injunction is too powerful, she is subjugated and too settled in her life to support this choice. The moment at the warehouse is only a fleeting escape. At the end of the film, Domino becomes Dominant again. He closes the door.

Actors and characters, a meeting and alchemy

ML: How did you work with the other actors, all of whom are mostly non-professionals?

LQ: We chose the actors with Julie Allione, the casting director. It was an exciting job shaping the **B-more** team. Usually, when we do open casting calls, we bring the actors in one by one, it's often a two-person relationship. Julie brings people in groups of 4, sometimes 12. This immediately creates a form of cohesion, a sort of band. We had almost 200 applications. More than 150 people came to Paris for the casting.

Before the shooting, we isolated ourselves for ten days in northern France to rehearse with Antonia, Yanis and Julie. Julie has a particular relationship with her body. She has a very low energy,

almost the opposite of the main character. It was necessary to get him ready to receive Julia's fury. Julie toned her body. She trained herself to stand up straight, to walk like Julia, to scream without damaging her voice. At that time, a very strong bond of trust was created.

Then there was the work with the B-More group. We worked a lot before the shooting. It was during improvisation exercises, researching scenes from the film, that the actors each domesticated and met their fictional character. It was great to see how they were constantly in dialogue with them. The fiction was sculpting them, but they were also letting themselves be sculpted by intimate things about themselves. It was this chemistry that I wanted to film. My directing completely revolved around them. It's the energy of the characters that guides the way I want to film them. I am there as a guide,





as a catalyst, who directs the energy, concentrates it or disperses it. It's a free, common, collective game of influence, where each actor carries the responsibility of his character. The characters in my film are potential subjects who struggle with their own issues: those of fiction, of the scene, but also of their own relationship to reality.

For example, the scene where Julia comes back with the first big stolen motorcycle is the moment when we realize that she is upsetting the established order of the garage. Each rider had a singular reaction linked to what happens, but also to his way of intimately receiving this reality. The character of Mous, played by Ahmed Hamdi, is at the same time close and familiar to Julia, and at the same time he calls her a "charo de cité," a thief. He embodies how ambivalent fascination can be. He distrusts Julia, but he admires her. He is the first to support her when she enters their garage for the first time. She reminds him of an "Amazon" who will "fuck mothers." I really like this line, which is also very disturbing, both feminist and sexist at the same time. I wanted to capture this complexity.

ETB: Yesterday, I spoke to you about how to make the dialogues of the film seem real, which is still a challenge, especially when it is a question of making young people speak, especially from the suburbs. Here, everything is so real.

LQ: It's their realness, their commitment to the game. They gave it their all. They listened a lot, we rehearsed a lot and above all, they felt free. The actors give the score to follow. Not the other way around. For the group scenes, what mattered most was their energy. It was sometimes very intense to bring it out. This was done through physical exercises that we did just before shooting. The truth of their acting had to take precedence over everything else. In the garage sequences with the "B-more" crew, I absolutely wanted them to appropriate the place to the point of knowing it by heart, so that the film crew was almost too numerous. We shot

a lot, in a form of continuity, so that we never lost the energy. As soon as a take was finished, we moved on. I love working like that, making **masters**, which are very long, like tunnels where we play the whole sequence from A to Z by deciding, for example, to follow Julia in a close-up. We then follow her in all her movements, then we do the same thing with the other characters, we multiply the points of view. In the editing, the collected material was vast but of an incredible density. What's really great about this method is that we are very quickly close to the truth, to simplicity, it's like a score that we adjust as we go along. From the moment we said "action," the characters lived the scene for twenty minutes.

The character of Julia became more and more established as the shooting progressed. We shot almost in order. The first scene of the film is the first scene that we shot. We had both just arrived, we didn't know the team. It was necessary to immediately place the cursor very high in terms of energy. At the beginning, we try to follow this little character who flares up with anger a bit like in **Rosetta**, but she gets out of frame. I was obsessed with this idea, I always told Raphaël Vandenbussche, the film's cinematographer, that we had to be connected to her like an umbilical cord.

For the ride sequences, we left them free, it wasn't choreographed. We organized an event called Rasso and brought in a lot of extras from Paris and Bordeaux. The actors in the film all ride in different ways. The most complicated thing is to know how to position yourself, you are always on the edge, it's all based on trust.

AB: It's very interesting to create this group dynamic for people who don't usually act. It gives an effect of training and it allows for a form of autonomy. What you proposed



to them was very written but you suggested directions without blocking their imagination and spontaneity with definitive lines.

LQ: I don't like to talk about "directing" actors. It's a term that reminds me more of training... I prefer to talk about "guiding" the actors. There is no direction. Actors don't know right away how

they are going to play this or that scene. Neither do I. We start out together, in the fog, and after a while, things become clearer and the horizon becomes clearer. The time we spend searching can't be shortened and allows us to find the scene. Nothing is ever obvious. Each time, working together allows the deep, magical and imaginary force of a scene to emerge. This is also how the mythology of **Rodeo** is woven. By letting the unconscious part come out. The actors are at the origin of this magic, of this chemistry. The shooting of a scene is successful when it goes beyond what is written.

Besides, the script is a morbid and austere document that generates very little creativity. I never gave them anything to read. I preferred that they keep their imaginations wide open. Never close themselves off and never settle on a preconceived idea of the film. What I did a lot was to bring them together during the tests, to improvise scenes around the film, but which aren't in the script. I told them the story of the film all the time, in different ways. I had the impression that they received the film much better like that, it also allows us not to sacralize it, it's no longer a document to follow and, above all, it becomes **their** film.

Heist film and fantasy

ETB: You are right in the middle of this reality, which is the reality of your actors, but there is also a purposefully dreamlike side to your film. There is magic, and then you don't give any explanation when Julia does these sorts of fumigations as if to protect herself. What is she doing with this thing anyway?

LQ: It's sage, to purify her body. This esoteric relationship comes from my intimate belief in the power of energies, dreams, signs and symbols. This theme is also a legacy of a film I made called **Ça brûle** (produced by Année Zéro in 2020), which I lit, framed and edited alone. It's a very unique object that I love very much, which continues to inspire me and guide me in life. In a documentary/fiction mode, the film tells the story of a meeting between a young boy, Khalillou, and a young woman, Samaya. This film was at the origin of the dreamlike quality of **Rodeo** in which I wanted to keep this belief, to embody it in Julia's body.

Moreover, it so happens that the actress has this same esoteric relationship to the world. She gives great importance to the inner richness of the world of dreams, of the imagination, of meditation. Her ultimate goal is to one day experience "leaving her body." Her intimate belief in the immaterial has greatly influenced the character of Julia.

ETB: It's funny that you talk about immateriality because there is something about your film that is very anchored in the material, the prosaic, there is gravel, metal, sparks. There is a certain harshness of the material, it is a rough film in which there are many objects, races, toys, the motorcycle obviously, the piston.

LQ: Yes, there is a form of density, that's why I speak of "supernaturalism." The closeness to the material through the close-up, my obsession with objects, significant details and symbols, densifies the point of view, poeticizes it. I believe that the singularity of *Rodeo* lies in its own mythology, its internal structure, which for me is like a layer of signifiers. In fact, when you build a film by writing the script and then editing it, there is the conscious and rational part of the story, but there is also and above all its deeper and unconscious dimension. This is for me the most important part, the one that is also the most difficult to bring about. The work in sound editing, then in mixing allows to dig deeper into this imaginary and unconscious dimension. The work around the sound allows us to play with the immaterial, the evanescent, with what emerges but is not seen. To work with sound is to be haunted by energies, by

ghosts, by motifs, the mysticism of the film. The lust for life, death, Julia's dreams, the appearance of Abra. The force of the natural elements is omnipresent. In the sound, Abra is materialized by the wind of the speed, the current of air which knocks against the door of the garage, by the blades of the fan, then of the helicopter which we hear in the dreams... Fire also is a real motif which we tried to bring to life in a real continuity with regards to the sound. It highlights in a concrete way the fire of the desire of Julia in its desire for recognition. Burn the wings to shine, to light the night.

ETB: The film also flirts with a particular genre, the heist film. In *Rodeo*, it doesn't take up the whole story but it contributes to the rise of the tragedy. You can feel that the outcome is going to be tragic. I was wondering how you managed to bring about this tragedy?

LQ : In the first versions of the film, we realized with Raphaël Torres, the editor, that what Domino's character is about is crazy capitalism, its violent spiral, fierce competition, money as a fetish, society sees everything, requires maximum flexibility. Domino asks Julia to be flexible even when she has a damaged body, even at night. He controls everything and asks to go to work because there is a demand. The film can also be read in this way. What is a bit tragic is that she needs to expose herself to so much danger and to imagine that only this diabolical and incredible robbery will allow her to be recognized. I believe that in this quest there is a form of sadness, but also a lot of excitement.

ETB: It's a rather dark film, the only way to escape all these contradictions and assignments is death.



LQ: For me, she doesn't die to escape the assignments and effects of power. It's this evil world that consumes her. It's her anger that sets her on fire. It's also a transcendence, as she rises from her ashes and her specter recedes into the prospect of another world. Julia is a kind of Phoenix.

Raoul Walsh's *White Heat* left a big impression on me. It's the story of Cody, a thug with a scar who lives with his mother. He's a nasty piece of work, he's pretty ugly, he hangs out in the mob. I don't really remember the plot but I know that the end is beautiful, and that's what partly inspired the ending of *Rodeo*. He's running from the cops who are after him, he's planning to rob a petrochemical plant. The last shot of the film is an explosion while Cody is still up the chimney, a dead duck. I haven't seen many films noirs either, but this one really impressed me, the termination in this death, in this escape, was super beautiful. A

relationship to transcendence, to a detachment from reality. For me, death is a form of resolution that is not necessarily negative. The idea that death is the origin or continuity of life, is related to my readings on Taoism and Shintoism during lockdown. In *Rodeo*, Julia enters the crew because she takes Abra's place. She finds herself haunted by him. Their first meeting leaves its mark. He tells her "you fly," it's the call of life and death, as something that is part of the same reality. He says to her "we meet on the other side of the line." From this meeting, Julia is almost already dead. It's like a spell that is cast.

ETM: Here again, your ending is not your ending, your resolution is not your resolution because afterwards there is the sequence where Kylian finds the money. The scene takes place during the day, there is something more sunny, a perspective, a rebirth, an opening. I imagine that you thought of stopping the film before.

LQ : Yes, but this is really the very interesting work of discussion, very rich, that we had with Charles Gillibert and Romain Blondeau. They really pushed for this epilogue sequence to exist. Julia is a character who goes all the way, she gives it her all, she doesn't let herself go, she puts herself in danger, she looks for the adrenaline, the moment. But she is also a character who sees in Ophelia and Kylian a way to build a form of utopia. This is what makes her touching. The end pays tribute to her utopia, her belief and her desire to escape.

ETM: Sometimes I can't stand the use of music in certain films. Here I find that it's always at the right time.

LQ : It's the first time I put music in one of my films, I didn't know who I would work with. I was given a lot of albums to listen to but I didn't like it, it was too academic or predictable. This guy's name is Kelman Duran, he's from Los Angeles, he's of Dominican origin. He was at Calarts and he made movies there. He became a music producer and his thing is to take reggaeton samples and he transforms the sound scepter, it distorts it completely. He loops them endlessly so that it becomes strange. It's post-reggaeton which is originally a festive, dancing music. He slows down certain segments, roughs up the rhythm a bit, creates breaks, loops. It produces completely melancholic, metallic pieces. What he did for the film is sublime.

ETM: You are hyper-attentive about questions of language, naming, words. You had explained to me for example the choice of the title *Rodeo*.

LQ : *Rodeo* is a term of bike life that is very accepted in the United States and is not at all pejorative, whereas it is in France because of reactionary journalists and politicians who use this word to talk about this practice of cross-bitumen as a form of delinquency. I wanted to avoid putting a sharp accent on the "e" of *Rodeo* to refer directly to the American language, it is also a way to reappropriate this term. I wanted to change the title at one point but the riders told me not to. I wanted to call the film *La dalle*, like hunger, like a tombstone, like irrepressible desire. *Rodeo* is good, there is movement. *Rodeo* is also a struggle, a fight to hold on and not to be expelled from the screen.

MD : Are there any films that have influenced your writing?



LQ : I had several film-friends, which accompanied the writing of *Rodeo*, and in which there is a lot of talk about fury... *La Fureur de Vivre (Rebel Without a Cause)*, *De Bruit et de Fureur*, etc. *De bruit et de fureur* is a great film. I like its brutality, its immense poetry, its dreamlike force. I feel like I understand the violence of each character. To think about the light of the dream sequences, Raphael Vandenbussche and I were very inspired by the "blue- king" from the dream scenes with the appearance of the woman and the bird. The character of Julia is very much inspired by the paranoid figures of the cinema. I'm fascinated by unappealing, drug-addled characters in the grip of sometimes self-destructive existential crises.

Interviewed in Paris, May 2022

About Lola Quivoron

Lola Quivoron grew up in the surroundings of Paris. After graduating in high-school, she moved to Bordeaux where she attended a preparatory class for Literature studies before attending the MFA in Directing at the prestigious school La Femis. She directed three short films, all selected and awarded in many festivals. Gun shooting center *Stand*, attack dog training field *Son of the Wolf*, as well as dirt biking and its acrobatics *Au loin*, *Baltimore* are some of the environments she explores and depicts in her fictions.

Since her Master studies, Lola has been doing a deep dive into the dirt biking culture through her photography, the clip *Androgyne* she directed for the DJ and composer Chloé Thévenin, and her last film *Burning Blue*, starring Khaled Refsi a gifted dirt-rider that she met on the roads.

In 2020, she co-directs *Headshot* with Antonia Buresi. This documentary plunges us into the intimacy of explosive and rebellious European youths. The film was broadcasted on Arte Channel as part of a special night in the program La Lucarne. Throughout her films, Lola Quivoron has tackled strong contemporary subjects such as male-dominated fields, violence, gender stereotypes, structures of domination, ways of rebelling against the status quo, and the quest for freedom.

Lola Quivoron began to write *Rodeo*'s script in 2015, by being a member of a parisian dirt-bike community, exploring it from the inside as a photographer. *Rodeo* was awarded the Jury Award at Cannes Film Festival 2022, in the Un Certain Regard Competition.

She is currently working on her new feature, a gangster movie based on her family story.



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Photography © Théo CAMPREDON

Cast

Julia **Julie LEDRU** • Kais **Yanis LAFKI** • Ophélie **Antonia BURESI** • Kylian **Cody SCHROEDER** Ben
Louis SOTTON • Manel **Junior CORREIA** • Mous **Ahmed HAMDI** • Abra **Dave NSAMAN** Clark
Mustapha DIANKA • Amine **Mohamed BETTAHAR** • William **Chris MAKODI** • Sergio **Gianni**
CAIRA • Marvin **Quentin ARIZZI** • Yan **Brice STRAEHLI** • Domino **Sébastien SCHROEDER**

Crew

Written by **Lola QUIVORON** with the collaboration of **Antonia BURESI** • Casting **Julie ALLIONE**
Cinematography **Raphaël VANDENBUSSCHE** • Sound **Lucas DOMEJEAN**, **Geoffrey PERRIER**,
Victor PRAUD • Editing **Rafael TORRES CALDERON** • Color Grading **Arthur PAUX** • VFX **Anthony**
LESTREMAU • Mixing **Victor PRAUD** • Set Design **Gabrielle DESJEAN** • Costumes **Rachèle**
RAOULT • Stunt **LM STUNT** • Original Music **Kelman DURAN** • Produced by **Charles GILLIBERT /**
CG CINÉMA



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usic Box Films is the prestigious North American distributor of acclaimed international, independent, and documentary feature films. Recent releases include Amanda Kramer's Outfest award-winning, hyper-stylish feature *Please Baby Please*, the Sundance and TIFF genre-bender *Leonor Will Never Die*, and Eric Gravel's César nominated thrilling social drama *Full Time*, starring Laure Calamy. Upcoming releases include Lola Quivoron's Cannes 2022 award-winning *Rodeo*; Rebecca Zlotowski's affecting adult drama *Other People's Children* starring Virginie Efira; and *L'Immensità*, the Venice favorite starring Penelope Cruz. Since its formation in 2007, Music Box Films has distributed award-winning films and art-house favorites that include Academy Award winner *Ida*, *Meru* (from Oscar-winning filmmakers Jimmy Chin and E. Chai Vaserhelyi), Christian Petzold's *Transit*, the popular Swedish comedy *A Man Called Ove*, and the original *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates the Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premier venue for independent and foreign films.

For more information, visit www.musicboxfilms.com.

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