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A FILM BY
ALICE WINOCOUR

revoir paris

In Select Theaters on June 23, 2023

[Still Set](#) | [Film Website](#)

104 mins | 2023 | In French with English Subtitles

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LOGLINE

Three months after surviving a mass shooting at a Parisian bistro, Mia (Virginie Efira) is determined to reconstruct the sequence of events by bonding with fellow survivors, and piecing together their stories to rediscover her own.

SUMMARY

After an idyllic date night full of red wine and a late-night motorcycle ride home, Mia (Virginie Efira) stops at a Parisian bistro to take shelter from a downpour. Her reprieve is shattered when a gunman opens fire. Three months later, with a frustratingly hazy memory of the attack, Mia finds herself numbed and unable to resume her life. Her friends and partner seek something from her that she can no longer give. Determined to reconstruct the sequence of events and reestablish a sense of normalcy, Mia finds herself repeatedly returning to the bistro where the shooting happened. In the process, she forms bonds with fellow survivors, including wry banker Thomas (Benoît Magimel) and orphaned teenager Félicia (Nastya Golubeva). When she remembers that a stranger helped her make it through the attack, Mia resolves to find him, if only to make sure that he is alive. *Revoir Paris* is a moving meditation on grief, healing, and the importance of connections forged in tragedy.

INTERVIEW ALICE WINOCOUR

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF THE TITLE *REVOIR PARIS* (*PARIS MEMORIES*)?

It's the idea of looking at the city in a different way. After the attack, Mia is in limbo. She is no longer herself, and the city is no longer hers. She's starting to take stock of her life, and she senses that she needs to reconfigure it, that something needs to change. Of course, there's also a more direct meaning : Mia is "seeing Paris again" after the black hole of the attack. She's seeing Paris through new eyes as a first step on her road to recovery, though she doesn't really know this yet.

REVOIR PARIS IS FICTIONAL, BUT OBVIOUSLY IT BRINGS TO MIND THE ATTACKS OF JANUARY 2015 AND PARTICULARLY THOSE OF NOVEMBER 13TH. HOW DID YOU YOURSELF EXPERIENCE THESE EVENTS?

My brother was at the Bataclan on November 13th. While he was hiding, I stayed in contact with him by text for part of the night. The film was inspired by my own memories of the trauma and by the account my brother gave in the days after the attack. I experienced for myself how events are deconstructed, and often reconstructed, by memory.

MIA ALSO CONNECTS WITH OTHERS, THROUGH PEOPLE SHE MEETS IN A SURVIVORS' ASSOCIATION. WHERE DID YOU GET THIS IDEA?

In the weeks that followed, I began to go on forums for victims who had regrouped by sector, and it was very moving to see hundreds of people looking for each other, trying to find each other, trying to find possessions they had lost during the attacks. They were all looking for news of the people they had been with, who they exchanged a look with, who they spoke to, maybe just a few words of encouragement... I met a group of people trying to rebuild their lives by occasionally returning to the scene together.

I was very struck by the idea that you can't reconstruct yourself on your own. There have to be at least two of you, it's a communal thing. That's why I wanted to make a choral film with a lot of characters from different backgrounds.

THE FILM SEEMS TO BE VERY WELL RESEARCHED...

The psychiatrists I met talked about the idea of a diamond at the heart of a trauma, the positive things that come out of a traumatic event, such as friendships, love affairs, strong bonds which would not have formed if the event had not taken place.

They also explained the phenomenon of the flashback, or involuntary recurrent memory, which is very different from conscious memory and from the classic cinematographic flashback. Here it means that mental images suddenly and involuntarily surge up and invade your consciousness, dazzling your mind like a kind of psychic break-in, and causing you to relive a past traumatic experience.

IS THE FILM A CONTINUATION OF AUGUSTINE AND DISORDER, GIVEN THAT YOU'RE WORKING WITH THE IDEA OF TRAUMA AND POST- TRAUMATIC STRESS?

In AUGUSTINE the body talks when you have no words to express your suffering. DISORDER is really a self-portrait, in the sense that I projected all my own fears and anguish into the character of a soldier returning from the field of battle. The notion of post-traumatic stress is deeply anchored in me as a result of my own family history. There's nothing I can do about it, but I'm trying gradually to get past it.

REVOIR PARIS FOCUSES ON HOW THE VICTIMS OF AN ATTACK ARE AFFECTED, BUT NOT AT ALL ON THE TERRORISTS AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS. WAS THAT YOUR CHOICE FROM THE OUTSET?

I was less interested by the attack itself than by the traces it leaves on the victims. None of them have a global view of the attack, only fragments, snatches, random images, like the splinters of a smashed mirror.



"I WAS LESS INTERESTED
BY THE ATTACK ITSELF
THAN BY THE TRACES IT
LEAVES ON THE VICTIMS."

My personal experience led me to concentrate on the survivors, with the idea of having Mia probe her own memory. That's the focus of the film. What struck me when I met the victims was that every one of them was determined to rebuild themselves and find happiness again. The film was intended to convey this desire for recovery.

AS YOU SAY, MEMORY IS UNRELIABLE. THERE'S A WOMAN WHO ACCUSES MIA OF HAVING SELFISHLY SHUT HERSELF UP IN THE TOILETS DURING THE SHOOTING, WHILE IN REALITY IT WAS THIS WOMAN WHO SHUT HERSELF UP. WAS THIS ACCUSATION VOLUNTARY, OR WAS THE WOMAN UNAWARE SHE WAS DOING IT?

According to psychiatrists, memory plays tricks with traumatic events and it's very difficult for survivors to put things back together. This was something I was anxious to convey in the film. I wanted the memory flashes, the false memories, the amnesia to feel real... Mia herself thinks she remembers locking herself in the toilets. We worked a lot with sounds, which are fundamental to the processes of memory.

WHAT COMES OUT CLEARLY IN THE PART BEFORE THE ATTACK IS THE NUMBER OF CHANCE EVENTS WHICH LEAD SOMEONE TO FIND THEMSELVES IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME. LOGICALLY, MIA SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN IN THAT BRASSERIE...

Yes, it was a random stacking up of chance events and circumstances. It's through chance that Mia finds herself plunged into this horror, but it's also sheer chance that enables her to survive.

When I was making this film I thought a lot about CLÉO DE 5 À 7, and the woman lost amid the uproar of the city. Mia's aims are very concrete : she wants to understand, she wants to find the hand which saved her. That's what she's looking for in Paris. The victims say that sometimes a mere nothing can save you. A simple act is all it takes to bring you back to the human race. It was a hand holding hers that kept Mia in the world of the living.

At the end of *The Plague*, Camus writes that the plague is always there, hiding, ready to rise up again, but that there are also beautiful things to love about mankind.

IN THE GROUP OF VICTIMS, MIA MEETS THOMAS.

They're both alone, both damaged people, who heal themselves together. Love stories often begin this way, by the unconscious acknowledgement of shared wounds. I loved working with Virginie and Benoît : both actors provoke an almost immediate empathy. Benoît's character, who is physically damaged, has a lightness and humour that I find very attractive. As for Mia, she doesn't complain, she grits her teeth, she does what she has to do, like many of the female characters I create.

THE HAND THAT MIA IS LOOKING FOR BELONGS TO A BLACK COOK. WHY THIS CHOICE?

Paris is a cosmopolitan city. In the film we meet Spaniards, Australians, Germans, Japanese, Senegalese... There's a line in the film that says, "If the Senegalese, the Malians and the Sri-Lankans went on strike, there'd be nowhere to eat in Paris." You only have to look in the back kitchens of Parisian restaurants to see this is true. I wanted to show how people can live invisibly in Paris. Mia sees ghosts, but there are other ghosts in the film too. People without papers, living here illegally, street vendors at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. I wanted to film different sides of Paris : the world of tourist monuments, and the world of Stalingrad or the Porte de la Chapelle. The two worlds briefly intersect at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. Watching them cross paths without seeing each other can be quite a violent sensation. A lot of the Eiffel Tower vendors come from Senegal and are completely destitute. My character is played by Amadou Mbow, who appeared in *ATLANTIQUE* by Mati Diop. The character comes from another place, and I wanted him to be played by a Senegalese actor from Dakar, not just a French actor of Senegalese origin.



YOU OPTED TO FILM THE ATTACK SCENES SHOWING ONLY THE TERRORISTS' FEET, AND HEARING MAINLY THE SOUND OF THE MACHINE GUNS.

I decided to show everything from Mia's point of view, who is flat on her stomach and sees only the assailants' feet. That's all she remembers clearly. In any case, how do you film a terrorist attack? My brother says it can't be done. An attack is something beyond belief, it's impossible for the human mind to grasp. He advised me to go for a hallucinatory, phantasmic feel. Mia's memories are not coherent, but she's living with ghosts, and the victims are still there in her head.

REVOIR PARIS IS ALSO A MAGNIFICENT FILM ABOUT PARIS. HOW DID THE FILMING GO?

It was the first time I had worked in Paris. I wanted to shoot the real city, but I also wanted to integrate it into my fiction. I wanted something both raw and hypnotic. There's a high-angle shot of Paris where the boulevards seem like wounds on fire. Paris is also a character in the film because the city was wounded in the flesh, we all felt that. We began shooting just after the November 13th trial opened, and it was sometimes very weird. When we filmed scenes like the one with the flowers honouring the victims, the reactions of passers-by were so intense that we had to put up large signs saying "Filming," to avoid confusion. In my head, reality and fiction were deeply intertwined while I was shooting this movie.

IN CONTRAST TO THE SCENE OF THE ATTACK, THERE'S A SCENE AT THE ORANGERIE WITH MONET'S WATER-LILIES.

What I didn't know was that Monet had given this picture to France after the horrors of the First World War so people could meditate on a scene empty of human presence. He said that visitors should stand in silence before the painting, the better to contemplate the beauty of the world. Since it was sheer intuition that had led me to choose the museum, I was very touched to learn that.

We filmed exterior scenes as if we were making a documentary, that is, without blocking streets or traffic. It was stressful for the film unit, but for me it was essential. I wanted to show all the colour and chaos of Paris, its vitality, its haunting qualities, everything the terrorists were trying to destroy.

ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF'S MUSIC CONTRIBUTES TO THE UNEASY, HAUNTING ATMOSPHERE OF THE FILM.

Dark romanticism is the world I live in. Literature, cinema, music, it's all the same. I discovered this Swedish musician thanks to my film editor, who gave me *Dead Magic*, one of her albums, to listen to. She plays in churches, organ music accompanied by a drone and powerful basses. Her music is a mix of Gothic ballads, post-metal, and punk, but it also has a luminous, sacred side. It went well with the idea of communicating with the world of the dead. Anna von Hausswolff's work isn't church music, it's very convoluted, very contemporary. When I asked for a title, she would have to book a church, and it wasn't always easy! It was a long process, but it was what the film needed.

VIRGINIE EFIRA IS FLAWLESS, AS ALWAYS ...

Virginie is an actor I've admired for a long time and I found in her what I wanted for the character of Mia : freedom. She isn't constrained by her suffering, she's on a quest, she's open to other people. Virginie is a free spirit, and that fitted the idea I had of the character. We worked hard to get the expression of her eyes right. I showed her films like *DEAD ZONE*, where Christopher Walken seems to be the spectator of his own memory. Virginie had to alternate between moments of connection and disconnection, which is what happens to people in a post-traumatic state. They become depersonalized, they feel detached from their bodies. Mia is someone who is coming out of limbo and returning gradually to life.

WAS BENOÎT MAGIMEL AN OBVIOUS CHOICE FOR THE ROLE OF A SEDUCTIVE BUT DAMAGED MAN?

I like this kind of character, like Matt Dillon in *PROXIMA*, Vincent Lindon in *AUGUSTINE*, or Matthias Schoenaerts in *DISORDER*. I like filming fragility hidden behind physical, even animal, virility. It's very seductive. You can sense both depth and humanity in Benoît.

GRÉGOIRE COLIN IS ANOTHER ATTRACTIVE MAN, BUT COLDER AND MORE MYSTERIOUS.

I'd already worked with him, and I wanted to take it further. In the film, he's a slightly disturbing character. He would like to get back together with Mia, but feels deeply guilty about leaving her alone on the night of the attack. I thought it was natural that he would be angry, especially at himself. He's full of contradictions, and that's very affecting.



AMADOU MBOW DOESN'T APPEAR IN MANY SCENES BUT HIS ROLE IS ESSENTIAL AND UNFORGETTABLE.

For the closing scene, I thought of the last scene of CITY LIGHTS. It's inspiring when different worlds come together. Everyone is a prisoner of their class, and it's rare to get the chance to escape. Traumatic experiences flatten the barriers of social class and make us realize that we belong to something bigger than ourselves. Faced with death, we are all equal. Amadou's character says he didn't want to die in that cupboard. It's marvellous to avoid a rendez-vous with death.

WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT NASTIA GOLUBEVA, WHO PLAYS FÉLICIA ?

Félicia is trying to find out how her parents died during the attack. For this character I drew on testimony I read. It's important for those close to the victims to know what happened to them. Mia has not had a child herself, and she forms a semi-maternal bond with Félicia. Félicia channels a touching purity and innocence.

TO WRAP UP, I'D LIKE TO RETURN TO YOUR CLOSING SCENE, WHICH EVOKES THE END OF CITY LIGHTS, AND HAS TREMENDOUS EMOTIONAL FORCE. WHERE DID YOU GET THE IDEA FOR THIS?

Holding hands was something I did myself. When my brother was hidden in the Bataclan, he asked me to stop calling him so I wouldn't give him away. So my friend and I turned off the television and the radio, lit a candle, and held hands. My editor, who lives near the Bataclan, and who could hear the shots and the cries, lay down with his girlfriend and they held hands too. On survivor forums, a great many messages refer to hand- holding. A psychiatrist explained to me that holding someone's hand releases oxytocin, a comfort hormone which is similar what a baby feels at his mother's breast. Holding hands is connection and comfort. It's a sort of social reflex in situations of extreme distress. That's why I filmed hands a lot, and why I end on that image.



CAST

MIA	VIRGINIE EFIRA
THOMAS	BENOÎT MAGIMEL
VINCENT	GRÉGOIRE COLIN
SARA	MAYA SANSA
ASSANE	AMADOU MBOW
FÉLICIA	NASTYA GOLUBEVA CARAX

Filmography

VIRGINIE EFIRA SELECT FILMOGRAPHY

- 2022 OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN (d. Rebecca Zlotowski)
- 2022 REVOIR PARIS (d. Alice Winocour)
- 2021 WAITING FOR BOJANGLES (d. Régis Roinsard)
- 2021 BENEDETTA (d. Paul Verhoeven)
- 2020 BYE BYE MORONS (d. Albert Dupontel)
- 2020 NIGHT SHIFT (d. Anne Fontaine)
- 2019 SIBYL (d. Justine Triet)
- 2018 KEEP GOING (d. Joachim Lafosse)
- 2018 AN IMPOSSIBLE LOVE (d. Catherine Corsini)
- 2018 SINK OR SWIM (d. Gilles Lellouche)
- 2017 NOT ON MY WATCH (d. Emmanuelle Cuau)
- 2016 ELLE (d. Paul Verhoeven)
- 2016 VICTORIA (d. Justine Triet)
- 2016 UP FOR LOVE (d. Laurent Tirad)
- 2015 THE SENSE OF WONDER (d. Éric Besnard)
- 2015 CAPRICE (d. Emmanuel Mouret)
- 2013 TURNING TIDE (d. Christophe Offenstein)
- 2013 COOKIE (d. Léa Fazer)
- 2013 IT BOY (d. David Moreau)
- 2012 DEAD MAN TALKING (d. Patrick Ridremont)
- 2011 MY WORST NIGHTMARE (d. Anne Fontaine)
- 2010 ECOND CHANCE (d. Nicolas Cuche)
- 2010 KILL ME PLEASE (d. Olias Barco)
- 2009 LES BARONS (d. Nabil Ben Yadir)

Filmography

BENOÎT MAGIMEL SELECT FILMOGRAPHY

- 2022 PACIFICATION (d. Albert Serra)
- 2022 REVOIR PARIS (d. Alice Winocour)
- 2022 INCREDIBLE BUT TRUE (d. Quentin Dupieux)
- 2021 PEACEFUL (d. Emmanuelle Bercot)
- 2020 LOVERS (d. Nicole Garcia)
- 2019 LOLA (d. Laurent Micheli)
- 2019 AN EASY GIRL (d. Rebecca Zlotowski)
- 2019 LITTLE WHITE LIES 2 (d. Guillaume Canet)
- 2017 MEMOIR OF WAR (d. Emmanuel Finkiel)
- 2016 150 MILLIGRAMS (d. Emmanuelle Bercot)
- 2015 STANDING TALL (d. Emmanuelle Bercot)
- 2014 THE CONNECTION (d. Cédric Jimenez)
- 2013 FOR A WOMAN (d. Diane Kurys)
- 2012 MY WAY (CLOCLO) (d. Florent-Emilio Siri)
- 2011 HEADWINDS (d. Jalil Lespert)
- 2010 LITTLE WHITE LIES (d. Guillaume Canet)
- 2008 INJU, LA BÊTE DANS L'OMBRE (d. Barbet Schroeder)
- 2007 INTIMATE ENEMIES (d. Floren-Emilio Siri)
- 2007 A GIRL CUT IN TWO (d. Claude Chabrol)
- 2006 FAIR PLAY (d. Lionel Balliu)
- 2004 THE BRIDESMAID (d. Claude Chabrol)
- 2003 STRANGE GARDENS (d. Jean Becker)
- 2003 THE FLOWER OF EVIL (d. Claude Chabrol)
- 2002 THE NEST (d. Florent-Emilio Siri)
- 2001 THE PIANO TEACHER (d. Michael Haneke)
- 2000 LE ROI DANSE (d. Gérard Corbiau)
- 2000 SELON MATTHIEU (d. Xavier Beauvois)
- 1999 CHILDREN OF THE CENTURY (d. Diane Kurys)
- 1996 THIEVES (d. André Téchiné)
- 1995 A SINGLE GIRL (d. Benoît Jacquot)
- 1995 LA HAINE (d. Mathieu Kassovitz)
- 1992 THE STOLEN DIARY (d. Christine Lipinska)



CREW

DIRECTOR	ALICE WINOCOUR
SCREENPLAY	ALICE WINOCOUR
IN COLLABORATION WITH	MARCIA ROMANO JEAN-STÉPHANE BRON
PRODUCTION	DHARAMSALA - ISABELLE MADELAINE DARIUS FILMS - EMILIE TISNÉ
CINEMATOGRAPHY	STÉPHANE FONTAINE
EDITING	JULIEN LACHERAY
SOUND	JEAN-PIERRE DURET PASCAL VILLARD MARC DOISNE
ORIGINAL MUSIC	ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF
PRODUCTION DESIGN	FLORIAN SANSON
ART DIRECTOR	MARGAUX REMAURY
COSTUME DESIGNER	PASCALINE CHAVANNE
COSTUME SUPERVISOR	CAROLINE SPIETH
CASTING	ANAÏS DURAN

