

CHARLOTTE
GAINSBOURG

NIELS
SCHNEIDER

SUZANNA ANDLER

A FILM BY
BENOIT JACQUOT

Based on the play by MARGUERITE DURAS





LES FILMS DU LENDEMAIN
presents



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*Photos and press pack can be downloaded at
www.filmsdulosange.com*



Accompanied by her lover, Suzanna, 40, views a Riviera beach house for her family's summer vacation. This day, this break in her routine, in this new house, will mark a turning point in her life.

Based on the Marguerite Duras play of the same name, *Suzanna Andler* is the portrait of a woman trapped in her marriage to a wealthy, unfaithful businessman in the 1960s. She must choose between her conventional destiny as a wife and mother, and her freedom, embodied by her young lover. ■



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I owe Marguerite Duras an awful lot. The first time I rang her doorbell, in 1972, I was in my early twenties. I had decided long before that I would make films, «cinéma» as it was known. I spent all my time daydreaming of improbable movies while earning a living as an assistant to an array of directors. It was more or less interesting, and often amusing, and I know that it was useful mostly in distracting me from what I really wanted. At that time, M.D. was not writing, or rather she wrote scripts for films that she shot on small budgets, making one or two a year.

Only when the movie was in the can did she write the book, based on the film and published by Gallimard or Minuit. This intentional flipping of the usual book-film order troubled and appealed. She did not like the movies based on her books (*Barrage contre le Pacifique*, *Le Marin de Gibraltar*, *Dix Heures et demie du Soir en Été*, *Moderato Cantabile...*). Sometimes she liked *Hiroshima mon amour*, but not always. So she took her bull by the horns to direct *La Musica* (1967), then *Détruire, dit-elle* (1969) and *Jaune le Soleil* (1971). Someone told her I admired her films, their singular and refreshing power, and she was looking for someone to

help her undertake upcoming movies. A «right-hand person,» she said.

When she opened her door, she looked at me briefly, without a word, and burst out laughing. I joined in, as if recognizing a kindred spirit. She ushered me in. In the next two years, I helped her direct three films, *Nathalie Granger* (1972), *La Femme du Gange* (1973), and *India Song* (1974), and that was all I did. We saw or spoke to each other on the phone every day, the whole time in fact. There was a Duras gang brought together from one film to the next, a friendly circle around Marguerite and her films. I soon learned she loved cinema as a reason for being together, but that most films, with few exceptions, meant nothing to her, or worse. For me, it was the opposite, and endless discussions or disputes ensued. Which perhaps explains the gesture from her that was my stroke of luck: confiding to me, a believer, that which she attributed to the «cinema,» and of which she preferred to unburden herself, as long as there was a bond of trust.

And so, photos from her shoots show two long-haired young men close to the camera, myself and Bruno Nuytten (the lighting camera-



-man of my first film), and close by a shorthaired woman, Geneviève Dufour (who even now is script supervisor of my films). They are filming Jeanne Moreau or Delphine Seyrig, Gérard Depardieu or Michael Lonsdale, while a small, middle-aged woman, who seems to be there by coincidence, observes this spectacle, which seems to her as random as it is inevitable. And that's how, without enunciation, she painted me into my corner: immediately after we wrapped *India Song*, I withdrew to her house in Neauphle to write the script of my first film, produced by her producer and shot with a crew that was already hers.

Subsequently, I made my movies, which luckily were not hers, so we saw each other less constantly, but necessarily, I think. She made *Le Camion* (1977), then *Navire Night* (1978), which I believe to be one of her finest films, not only because it is a dialogue between her and me, a testimony to our friendship «through time,» as she wrote. I was the go-between through whom Claude Berri persuaded her to allow *L'Amant* to become a film. There was the suggestion, soon set aside, that I should direct. Later, a medical episode plunged her into a coma for several months. Her close friends, including myself, thought they would never see her alive again. So when she woke up, I stopped myself from calling her for several weeks.

One morning, she phoned me and we talked as if we had seen each other the night before. She asked me, as insistently as ever, to visit her in Trouville, where we walked and talked for hours without a break or weariness. I offered to make a film with her, about all that she was telling me and showing me. No sooner said than done: it was one last time, as we suspected, but it was a thrill. There were two films, *La Mort du Jeune Aviateur Anglais* and *Ecrire*. As usual, she turned them into books. And that was that.

The text of *Suzanna Andler* was published in May 1968. The play premiered in late 1969 in Paris, with Marguerite Duras displaying her indifference to this production.

From memory, this snippet of conversation between us, from 1994:

B.J. : *Why the shelving of Suzanna Andler? You don't want to discuss it...*

M.D. : *Not so. I can talk about it.*

B.J. : *Go on, tell me.*

M.D. : *There's no big mystery. The time wasn't right.*

B.J. : *Sure, but even so.*

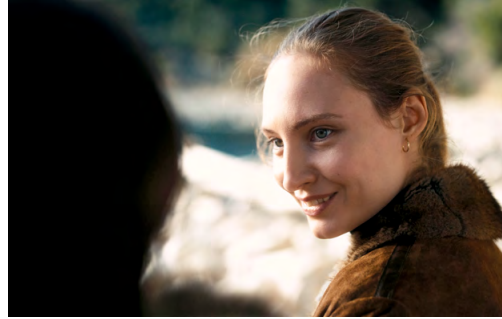
M.D. : *Why do you love that Suzanna then?*

B.J. : *It's very moving, more directly moving.*

M.D. : *There you go. And what else?*

B.J. : *It's vaudeville meets Racine.*

M.D. : *What in heaven's name does that mean?*



B.J. : Often, in French, what you read, hear or see is Racine meets vaudeville. In this case, it's the other way around, and that touches me deeply.

M.D. : So make it.

B.J. : Make what?

M.D. : Make a film. You make films based on books, never mine.

B.J. : We are good friends.

M.D. : Nonsense, that's no reason. Make a film of Suzanna Andler, so I'll see...

B.J. : You'll see what?

M.D. : If what you're saying is true.

B.J. : (without thinking) Okay, I will, Marguerite.

M.D. : You promise?

B.J. : Yes.

M.D. died shortly after. I didn't make *Suzanna Andler*, or any other film based on Duras. A mutual friend, to whom M.D. had recounted my promise, reminded me of it recently. Deep down, that is what drives me today.

More broadly, beyond the extension of the stage to real-life locations, I think the theatre (that snake in the grass) confronts the cinema with its very freedom: the show rolled out before a generally static audience is replaced by the free-ranging viewpoint, with a scope of 360° if one wants, of a camera that takes an equally static audience on an imaginary journey, going closer or wider, skirting or confronting, according to the inflections of what is played out, no longer on stage but on screen.

With the complicity of high-powered actors, I would like to find the successive figures of a mental and sentimental geometry—beach house, morning till night, steeped in tracking shots, wide shots and closeups, murmurs behind the words, on the lookout for Suzanna Andler.

And so, keep my promise. ■

BENOIT JACQUOT



CAST

Suzanna Andler CHARLOTTE GAINSBURG • Michel NIELS SCHNEIDER • Rivière
NATHAN WILLCOCKS • Monique JULIA ROY • Marie-Louise (*Voice*) SANDRINE RIVET

CREW

Directed by **BENOIT JACQUOT** Based on the play by **MARGUERITE DURAS** © Éditions Gallimard, 1968 • Produced by **KRISTINA LARSEN / LES FILMS DU LENDEMAIN** • Cinematography **CHRISTOPHE BEAUCARNE** AFC SBC • Sound **NICOLAS CANTIN** • Editing **JULIA GREGORY** • Mixing **OLIVIER GOINARD** • Costumes **ELSA CAPUS** • Set Design **PASCALE CONSIGNY** • Make Up **THI LOAN NGUYEN** • Script supervisor **GENEVIÈVE DUFOUR** • 1st Director's assistant **ANTOINE SANTANA** • Hairdressing **CHARLOTTE ARGUILLERE** • Studio Manager **SARAH BELOT** • Production Manager **AUDE CATHELIN** • Post-Production Manager **ANTONINE MEURET-GOSSELET** • With the participation of **CINÉ +** • In association with **COFINOVA 16** • Developed in association with **CINÉVENTURE DÉVELOPPEMENT 5, COFINOVA DÉVELOPPEMENT 3, MANON PRODUCTION 8** and **SOFICINÉMA 12 DÉVELOPPEMENT** • With the support of **RÉGION PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR**, in association with **CNC** • International Sales **LES FILMS DU LOSANGE**



" When I gave the script to Charlotte Gainsbourg, I didn't know she would be so hunted and touched by those words, by this situation, by this character.

If Marguerite Duras had known her, she would have loved her intimate dramaturgy. Just like the actresses Marguerite used to work with, Charlotte is a voice, a style, a way to move, to talk, to look, to come forward, which is directly in line with Marguerite's words, hoping that readers and actors would one day make it theirs."

BENOIT JACQUOT

CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG

2020 - **Suzanna Andler** by Benoit Jacquot • **Driftwood** by Michel Franco • 2019 - **My Stupid Dog** by Yvan Attal • 2016 - **Ismaël's Ghosts** by Arnaud Desplechin • 2014 - **Every thing will be fine** by Wim Wenders • **3 Hearts** by Benoit Jacquot (*Lumière Awards Nominee for Best Actress*) • 2013 - **Nymphomaniac - Part 1 and 2** by Lars Von Trier • 2010 - **Melancholia** by Lars Von Trier • 2008 - **Antichrist** by Lars Von Trier (*Best Actress Award at the Cannes Film Festival*) • 2007 - **Golden Door** by Emanuele Crialesi (*Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival*) • 2006 - **The Science of Sleep** by Michel Gondry • 2004 - **21 Grams** by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu • 2000 - **My Wife is an Actress** by Yvan Attal • 1999 - **La Bûche** by Danièle Thompson (*César Award for Best Supporting Actress*) • 1996 - **Love, etc** by Marion Vernoux • 1992 - **The Cement garden** by Andrew Birkin • 1990 - **Thank you, Life** by Bertrand Blier • 1988 - **The Little Thief** by Claude Miller • 1986 - **Charlotte for ever** by Serge Gainsbourg • 1985 - **L'Effrontée** by Claude Miller (*César Award for Best Promising Actress*)



NIELS SCHNEIDER

2020 - **Suzanna Andler** by Benoit Jacquot • 2019 - **Love Affair(s)** by Emmanuel Mouret
Futura by Lamberto Sanfelice • **Sympathy for the Devil** by Guillaume De Fontenay •
Back Home by Jessica Palud • **Sybil** by Justine Triet • **A Brother's Love** by Monia Chokri
• 2018 - **The Black Book** by Valeria Sarmiento • **Curiosa** by Lou Jeunet • 2017 - **One
Nation, One King** by Pierre Schoeller • **An Impossible Love** by Catherine Corsini •
Dalida by Lisa Azuelos • **Sleeping Beauty** by Adolpho Arrietta • 2016 - **Kokoro** by
Vanja D'alcantara • **Dark Diamond** by Arthur Harari (*César Award for Best Promising
Actor*) • **Polina** by Angelin Preljocaj, Valérie Müller • 2014 - **Une rencontre** by Lisa
Azuelos • **Gemma Boverly** by Anne Fontaine • 2013 - **The Art Dealer** by François
Margolin • **Chaos** by Etienne Faure • 2012 - **Atomic Age** by Helena Klotz • **You and
the Night** by Yann Gonzalez • 2011 - **The Howling** by Joe Nimziki • 2010 - **Heartbeats**
by Xavier Dolan • 2009 - **Fatal** by Michaël Youn • 2008 - **2 Frogs** by Dany Papineau • **I
killed my Mother** by Xavier Dolan • 2007 - **Everything is fine** by Yves Christian Fournier



BENOIT JACQUOT

2020 - Suzanna Andler • 2019 - Casanova, Last Love • 2018 - Eva • 2016 - Never Ever • 2015 - Diary of a Chambermaid • 2014 - 3 Hearts • 2012 - Farewell My Queen • 2010 - Deep in the Woods • 2009 - Villa Amalia • 2006 - The Untouchable • 2004 - Right Now • 2002 - Adolphe • 2001 - Tosca • 2000 - Sade • La Fausse suivante • 1999 - Pas de scandale • 1998 - Par cœur • The School of Flesh • Seventh Heaven • 1995 - A Single Girl • 1990 - The Disenchanted • 1988 - The Beggars • 1986 - Lost with All Hands • 1981 - The Wings of the Dove • 1977 - Closet Children • 1975 - The Musician Killer



