

MILLE
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FILMS

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FRIEDA TV



EIN FILM VON LÉA LANOË MIT JANETT GRÖGER

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LES FILMS DE LA CARAVANE

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SYNOPSIS

A skin-deep portrait of Gerda Frieda Janett Gröger, with her high-spirited, punkish way with words, and her poetry that is wielded against all odds.

FESTIVALS



FIDMarseille in French and First Films Competition
Grand Prix of the French Competition

Watch a film clip

Download the stills



Frieda TV by Léa Lanoë is a portrait: that of Frieda or Gerda Frieda Janett Gröger, or sometimes Matthias, who lives somewhere in Berlin and whom the filmmaker, in a frenetic first film, follows through the storms and mental, physical, musical and linguistic adventures her character goes through, uncontrollably. In contact with madness, this form of psyche so open to the four winds, gentle or violent, the film intends to both hold out and give in. Hold out to remain a film and to not dissolve and risk dissolving us with it, and also give in to have a chance, by entering the delirium, to accompany it, stroll with it, give it shape: a schizo film, *Frieda TV*, full of risks and triumphs.

« Au FID Marseille 2024, politique des hauteurs », Luc Chessel, July the 2nd 2024, Libération
https://www.liberation.fr/culture/cinema/au-fid-marseille-2024-politique-des-hauteurs-20240702_Z7E5XWRZVFHHBP2MJWZG2RRJPY/

Gerda Frieda Janett Gröger, “born in 1972; star sign: Libra; egg scrounger” lives life on the edge. She ploughs her way through reality with poetic, punk punchlines, leaving no stone unturned (the public space, psychiatric classifications, us). Léa Lanoë’s first feature film is a luminous and poignant documentary portrait. [...] *Frieda TV* stands at a radiant crossroads that examines with rare finesse our normopathic ways, both individual and collective, of accompanying those we call mad.

Claire Lasolle for the FIDMarseille 2024

The film is a character as much as the character is a film, a film made up of games, crises, parentheses, exclamations, questions... and a great deal of pleasure too, that of analog film and its plastic magic. We are in Berlin, in a world that is both frozen and changed. We are in a deregulated world where, for the duration of a film, they arrange the rules as if to ward off something imminent.

« ‘GERDA, FRIEDA, JANETT’ : puzzled and sprayed », Frank Vialle, May the 13th 2024, Films en Bretagne
<https://filmsenbretagne.org/gerda-frieda-janett-puzzled-and-sprayed/>



DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

How did you meet Frieda Gerda Janett Gröger and how did the film come about? What stages did it go through?

Frieda was my neighbour in *Karl-Kunger Strasse* in Berlin. I was living in an old butcher's shop on the ground floor and Frieda had set up her office in the bus shelter on the other side of the road. Concerts were organised every Wednesday, and Frieda came each time. She became a regular. Sometimes we'd invite her to perform her Frieda's *Schlafzimmer Theater*, her chamber theatre, burlesque one-woman shows inspired by her life, which we improvised in my living room, making sets out of cardboard and opening it to the public. Then we began filming short sketches without thinking they'd turn into a movie, like little moments for us. We used to meet up once a week and film something, like a kind of journal. It was also a chance to hang out, to create something together that did her good and we got to know each other while we did it. I showed her the camera's possibilities and she told me about the twists and turns of her life, her failures, her concerns about her illness, her soul-searching.

And then she disappeared. While I was trying to find her, I discovered she'd bonded with lots of people in the neighbourhood. Six months later, she was back. I suggested we make a film. She agreed and immediately incorporated the idea of the film into her approach, as a way of taking stock and reflecting. The filming then took five years.

First, we filmed episodes of *Frieda TV*, a very "staged" show. Gradually, we realised it was too stressful for her when it was too organised. We almost called a halt to the film at that moment; I realised I shouldn't plan too much with Frieda.

So I suggested filming one three-minute 16mm reel every day, which put less distance between us. It turned into a game. Frieda sometimes took the camera too. The filming was more fluid than when the camera was filming continuously. You didn't turn your life upside down for the film. The moments we spent shooting were calmer, letting us rediscover our relationship, leaving more room for life.

Then I left Berlin, which changed the process. We didn't share our daily lives anymore. But despite that, we grew closer. We called each other a lot and, each time I went to see her, I spent a lot of time at her place. We took our time differently. She also showed me her other, harsher, more caustic faces. The slightly naive admiration I had for her when we first met became more complex.

What rules of the game did you set with Frieda to develop the film?

The rules used to change all the time, I had to adapt, to go with Frieda's flow, living from day to day, improvising. Frieda had this desire to tell the world about herself, and to pass on her vision. It was what she did every day as a *Provokationskünstlerin*, a provocative artist, as she described herself. She was used to producing images of herself and I dramatised them – there was trust and complicity. She shaped how she appeared and presented herself, and I filmed. The frame was our playground. We'd discuss the movie; I'd ask her what she thought about it. I'd show her what we were filming and we'd talk about it. And gradually, we incorporated the issues of her mental illness and alcoholism into the film. The more the film progressed, the more she wanted to talk about her situation and the suffering it caused.

You combine Digital Videotape with 16mm film format. Why? What did each format allow or involve?

I learned to film with this movie. I often had a different camera depending on what people could lend me. And during the shoot, I began to understand the different possibilities that each camera and each shoot-situation offered; it changed Frieda's delivery, it changed my role, it made it possible to see the different states Frieda was going through, or the different facets of her portrait. When I film her in 16mm with a maximum shot length of 30 seconds (because of the camera spring) and with asynchronous sound, it produces the effect of being inside her head, following her thoughts. And when I film her in mini-dv, with a really small camera that lets me get very close and doesn't take up any space between us, I accompany her, I'm more present. And when the digital camera was on a stand, a larger device, she had control of the frame, which allowed for more intense moments of speech while giving more space to the viewer. These different types of images move the story forward by breaking up states, deliveries and emotions.

You choose a fragmented construction for your portrait. Why? What challenges did you face during the editing?

I wanted the film's fragmented form to match Frieda's way of being in the world. Her words come in snatches, pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of her disjointed life. Her thinking is uneven, abundant, convoluted, ultra-lucid, mixing the real and the imaginary. She always has a thousand different thoughts in her head at the same time. She veers from one emotion to another: it was a way of transcribing this sensation. I wanted the splintered portrait not to try to reconcile her contradictions, but to give access to Frieda's lust for life. In the film, there's no real beginning or end, and this fragmentary form allowed us to stay close to the sensations and emotional states, without seeking a linear, chronological narrative.

The editing was built around the sensitivity and emotions of each shot, trying to navigate Frieda's mental states with her. We wanted to set up cycles infused with emotions so that Frieda's power and fragility could be welcomed by viewer, not rejected, so they could discover this difficult character, while showing her contradictions. We constructed the film by following the progression of her relationship with herself, her relationship with me and her relationship with the viewer. We looked for an emotional path that could bring the viewer with me as close as possible to Frieda, to the very edge of the fire.

Frieda, Gerda, Janett takes a very subtle look at the issues surrounding mental illness and treatment by creating a path to meet Frieda that's also shaped by your own relationship with her. Tell us about this path – what influenced you?

During her time in and out of specialised prisons and psychiatric hospitals, Frieda had to deal with institutions that judged, diagnosed, validated or invalidated her. She's always fighting all sorts of systems that are imposed on her: gender, justice, police, the margins, madness. I wanted to let Frieda tell us her story, to put it in her own words so that we could meet her without any external judgement. I'm not a psychiatrist or a social worker. I filmed Frieda through the lens of friendship, blurring the lines and asking questions, trying to distance myself from preconceptions. The challenge of the film was to listen, to stop and talk to her, not to cross to the other side of the road or look away from an otherness that was too complicated, look away from the local crazy woman who took up too much space, because we're not in the mood or don't have time. Frieda often oversteps the boundaries of morality and propriety, and in doing so, highlights them: it's easier to stay within the norms and not expose yourself. When you're on the outside, you're exposed to loneliness and violence. Spending time with Frieda makes you realise that it's mainly the world that's sick.

Interview by Claire Lasolle

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Léa Lanoë is born in 1989 and lives in Marseille, France. She has studied art history and literature in Paris and Berlin, then got into Bourges' *École nationale d'art*. At this school she made sound installations and collages. She has lived in Berlin from 2013 to 2017, where she performed with the Vermulst's group and directed her firsts experimental and self-produced documentaries. In 2017 she joined Lussas' *Master de documentaire de création* and directed *Nul N'est Censé*, which was screened at the *États Généraux du film documentaire* in Lussas as well as at the *Festival de courts-métrages in Clermont-Ferrand*. Since 2018, she lives in Marseille where she has created the *Labo L'Argent*, an analog film laboratory, and grows her work with 16mm films.

CHAMBRE PRIVILÈGE

by Dino Julia Secco and Léa Lanoë 26' / 16mm BW / 2022

Les écrans documentaires, Arcueil / Les Inattendus, Lyon / Cinéma Brut, Marseille

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SPOON

by Pierre Borel and Léa Lanoë
with Tristan Honsinger

Vision du réel / Jihlava IDFF / Riga IFF / Prisme, Nantes / Festival Obskura, Rennes / La Déviation, Marseille / Rome IFF / Polygone étoilé, week end frénétique, Marseille

NUL N'EST CENSÉ

23' / 16mm BW / 2018 / Ardèche Images Production

Etats Généraux du film documentaire, Lussas / Festival du court métrage de Clermont Ferrand / Semaine Asymétrique, polygone étoilé, Marseille Météorites, Lyon

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Running time **81'**
Shooting formats **HD, 16mm, 8mm**
Exhibition formats **DCP, ProRes 422, H264**
Copyright **2024**

FILM CREW

Direction, image and sound **Léa Lanoë**
Editing **Adrien Faucheux**
Sound editing and mix **Pablo Salaün**
Color-grading **Damien Pelletier**

BROADCASTER

Tënk

PARTICIPATIONS AND SUPPORTS

CNC
Région Bretagne
Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
Région Sud
Procirop-Angoa
Rencontres Premiers Films Lussas 2018
Bourse brouillon d'un rêve de la SCAM
Résidence d'écriture Ty Films
Résidence de montage Périphérie
Bonus SCAM-Velasquez du film d'art

SHOOTING LOCATION(S)

Berlin

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