

ARCHIPEL 35 & VEGA FILM PRESENT

 **62^e** Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition

LÉA SEYDOUX

KACEY MOTTET KLEIN

SISTER

L'ENFANT D'EN HAUT

A FILM BY **URSULA MEIER**



VANAF 8 NOVEMBER IN DE BIOSCOOP

Zilveren Beer Filmfestival Berlijn

Officiële inzending Zwitserland Oscar®



SYNOPSIS

Simon (Kacey Mottet Klein) woont alleen met zijn aantrekkelijke zus Louise (Léa Seydoux, *Inglourious Basterds*, *Midnight in Paris*, *Les Adieux à la reine*). Omdat Louise geen baantje vast kan houden en voornamelijk geïnteresseerd is in mannen, komt er weinig geld binnen. Om te overleven, steelt Simon skispullen van rijke toeristen die hij vervolgens verkoopt aan kleine kinderen.

Een kleine, maar winstgevende bijverdienste. Als Louise weer eens werkloos wordt, profiteert ze mee van het handeltje van Simon dat steeds beter begint te draaien. Zo wordt zij steeds afhankelijker van hem...

SISTER (L'Enfant d'en Haut) is de nieuwste film van de veelgeprezen regisseur Ursula Meier (HOME, 2008) en won de Zilveren Beer op het Filmfestival van Berlijn 2012. Het is de Zwitserse inzending voor de Oscar voor Beste Buitenlandse Film. De jury prees de film voor zijn 'intelligente en originele scenario, de ongecompliceerde regie en de twee jonge, charismatische acteurs.'

Agnès Godard, die eerder werkte met Wim Wenders, Peter Greenaway, Erick Zonca en Claire Denis, is verantwoordelijke voor het camerawerk.



Sister / 97 minuten/ Frankrijk, Zwitserland/ 2012/ Frans, Engels gesproken

Sister wordt in Nederland gedistribueerd door ABC - Cinemien. Voor meer informatie:
ABC - Cinemien, Gideon Querido van Frank, gideon@cinemien.nl

Beeldmateriaal kan gedownload worden vanaf: www.cinemien.nl/pers

CAST & CREW

Louise	Léa Seydoux
Simon	Kacey Mottet Klein
Mike	Martin Compston
De Engelse vrouw	Gillian Anderson
De chef	Jean-François Stévenin
Bruno	Yann Trégouët
Marcus	Gabin Lefebvre
Dilon	Dilon Ademi
Regie	Ursula Meier
Scenario	Antoine Jaccoud & Ursula Meier
Camera	Agnès Godard
Muziek	John Parish
Montage	Nelly Quettier
Geluid	Henri Maïkoff
Decor	Anna van Brée
Kostuums	Danièle Vuarin



Kacey Mottet Klein, Ursula Meier, Léa Seydoux op het Filmfestival Berlijn.

URSULA MEIER



De Frans-Zwitserse regisseuse Ursula Meier (1971) won meerdere prijzen voor haar speelfilmdebuut HOME uit 2008. Ursula studeerde aan het Belgische Instituut voor Visuele Kunsten. Na een aantal korte films maakte zij in 2008 haar debuutfilm. Haar tweede speelfilm, SISTER (L'Enfant d'en Haut), werd geselecteerd voor het Internationale Filmfestival van Berlijn waar het de Zilveren Beer won. Het is tevens de Zwitserse Oscar-inzending voor Beste Buitenlandse Film.

Filmografie

2012	Sister (L'Enfant d'en Haut)
2008	Home
2002	Strong Shoulders (Des Épaules Solides)
2001	Not The Cops, Not the Blacks, Not the Whites (Pas des Flics, Pas les Noirs, Pas les Blancs) <i>documentaire</i>
2001	Table Manners (Tous à Table) <i>korte film</i>
2000	About Pinget (Autour de Pinget) <i>documentaire</i>
1998	Sleepless (Des Heures Sans Sommeil) <i>korte film</i>
1994	Isaac's Dream (Le Songe D'Isaac) <i>korte film</i>

LÉA SEYDOUX

Filmografie

2012	Sister (L'Enfant d'en Haut)
2011	Les Adieux De La Reine
2010	Midnight in Paris Mission Impossible 4 Roses à Crédit
2009	Robin Hood Le Roman de Ma Femme Belle Epine Sans Laisser de Traces
2008	Inglourious Basterds Lourdes Plein Sud
2007	La Belle Personne De La Guerre Des Poupées et des Anges Talents 13 French Street
2006	Une Vieille Maitresse
2005	Mes Copines



Léa Seydoux werd op 1 juli 1985 in Parijs geboren. Na haar doorbraak in de film LA BELLE PERSONNE (2007), waarvoor ze een César-nominatie voor Meest Belovende Actrice ontving, speelde ze in meerdere internationale films. Zo werd ze o.a. gecast voor INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS (2008), ROBIN HOOD (2009), MIDNIGHT IN PARIS (2010) en LES ADIEUX A LA REINE (2011). Naast actrice is ze ook model en de kleindochter van Jérôme Seydoux, voorzitter van Pathé.

KACEY MOTTET KLEIN

Voor de in 1998 geboren Kacey Mottet Klein is *SISTER* de tweede samenwerking met Ursula Meier. Eerder speelde hij in haar debuutfilm *HOME*. De samenwerking beviel Ursula zo goed dat zij graag nogmaals met hem wilde werken. Ter voorbereiding van zijn rol werkt Kacey in een skiwinkel.

Filmografie

2012	Sister (L'Enfant d'en Haut)
2010	Gainsbourg, Heroic Life
2008	Home





INTERVIEW WITH URSULA MEIER

A Memory

Long after I had started on the story of *SISTER*, the memory of a young boy suddenly came back to me. I grew up in the shadow of the Jura mountains, where going up to a winter resort to ski was a very ordinary thing to do and part of our everyday life. There was a boy who often used to come skiing on his own, whilst we were always in a group. He skied very poorly, yet blasted flat-out down the pistes, as if he was getting high from the speed and risk. He seemed to derive such pleasure from being “up there”. This boy intrigued me, and then I found out that he was banned from the mountain restaurants because he was suspected of stealing from customers. The people who worked in the resort advised us to keep an eye on our things and to keep away from him. But this little thief continued to fascinate me, perhaps because he didn’t really belong in such a setting, not coming from the social class that has the money to pay for ski equipment and lift passes. His stealing carried on and he ended up being permanently banned from riding up to the resort in the cable car.

This young thief – without any friends, skiing like a madman on the snow-covered pistes of the Jura – remained an anonymous mystery for me. At the time I was barely twelve years old, the same age as Simon in the film, and I still remember him.



A vertical film

After directing a horizontal film – HOME, set along a highway in a parallel world which rolls past a few yards from a family's windows – I wanted to direct a vertical film built around the continual movement between “down below” and “up top”, between an industrial plain and a ski resort in the mountains. The link between these two worlds is a cable car that glides through the void from one to the other, climbing towards the light then dropping back down into the layer of clouds. Up top is the domain of rich tourists who've come from around the world to have fun in the sun in a snowy wonderland. Down below, the industrial plain is perpetually in shade. The snow has melted, its chimneys will soon no longer belch out their smoke, its housing blocks isolated at the foot of the mountains.

Just as in HOME, the story of SISTER is inseparable from its location, which is not simple a setting but which serves to carry the narrative. It was key for me at the early stages of the project to find the film's form and its energy; what makes it tick, its core. It's not a case of content on the one hand and form on the other, but an alchemy between the two, which comes into play from the beginning of the project and the first lines of writing.

Between up top and down below

SISTER tells the story of a child who wants to go up in the world, in every sense of the term, he's seeking psychical, social and financial elevation. While the world below is nothing but desolation, mud and fog – both literally and symbolically – up top is a garden of delights. Sun, immaculate snow, money, flashiness. Simon feels important up there, whilst remaining anonymous behind his stolen ski goggles. It's as if he is on stage in a theatre: he has a role, inventing a life for himself with rich parents, in the limelight, wearing a costume. Down below, Simon has a minor role, which he accepts without complaint, understanding that it's better to have to small role alongside Louise than no role at all.

Throughout the film, Simon is torn between up top and down below. His many comings and goings in the local cable car which links the plain with the ski resort punctuate the film and give it its heartbeart.

While Simon wants to elevate himself and succeed, Louise is drawn downwards. Disappointed with life and angry at the world of work and me, life doesn't seem to have given her many breaks. Instead of fighting back and struggling through, Louise has chosen to opt out, to just let the things happen and to live from day to day. She doesn't try to sort het life out, but instead is continually fleeing towards the horizon, taking the highway that runs along the mountainside. It is down this highway that she returns after a long absence. The meeting point between up top and down below, between the cable car station and the highway (the vertical and the horizontal), is Simon's locker located at the foot of the cable car. This locker is Simon's dressing room: it is here that he changes, transforms himself to resume

his identity as the boy from below, or to become a child from up top, with a middle-class appearance, polite, obliging, but a little thief...

Behind the scenes

The narrative unfolds during a whole ski season from Christmas to Easter, and goes behind the scenes of this tourist industry built on what is known in all seriousness as the 'white gold' of the mountains. The life of the seasonal workers seen through Simon's eyes allows us to discover the other side of the coin. In this sense, SISTER brings a unique glimpse into the world of ski resorts, which is almost always shown on screen through comedy or else through 'imaginery' of the mountain (beautiful landscapes with snowy mountaintops, the prowess of the skiers and surfers and so on).

In that world, Simon is like a little ant at work, stealing, fetching and carrying, scraping the snow, hiding the skis, taking them down to the plain by strapping them up and dragging them on his sled, which he doesn't use for play like most children, but for work like an adult. In his own way, Simon becomes one of the seasonal workers.

During the winter before we filmed, I had the opportunity to shadow the police in a ski resort over a long period. So I was able to immerse myself totally in the workings of a resort, at times joined by my co-writers.

The director of photography, Agnes Godard, also joined me on several occasions, both down on the plain and in the ski resort. We were able to gradually soak up this rather unusual world so we could find aesthetic approaches appropriate to the story.

Money

Money is at the heart of the exchanges between the characters. Bank notes and coins go from hand to hand, from the children of the plain and the seasonal workers to Simon, from Simon to Louise, then back from Louise to Simon.

Although at the start of the film, Simon and Louise are in an extremely precarious financial situation, SISTER is not a social film.

Simon is a boy who is fundamentally haunted by the fear of lacking something, and who soothes this anxiety by frenetic activity. His traffic in stolen goods gives him a certain recognition.

Terribly lacking in affection, Simon uses money as a defense mechanism. It has replaced everything for him. He escapes from this penniless existence down below by buying himself the illusion of another life up top. When he tags on to a rich family of English tourists, it is to savor the illusion of family bliss for a few hours.

But this money which comforts him also makes him arrogant and contemptuous. He uses the power it affords him and becomes toxic for Louise, who he controls with a few bank notes. Whilst he thought that money was going to bring him closer to Louise, in fact it just drives them farther apart.

The actors

After making HOME, I really wanted to work with Kacey Mottet Klein again, to go even further with what I'd started with him on that film. One of the particularities of this young 'actor' (he'd never acted before HOME) is his physique, which suggests something very gentle, frail and fragile that runs counter to the cliché of the filthy little brat, but which can lead to something extremely hard, stubborn and violent. I also wanted to film Kacey at that special age, around twelve years old, when one is just starting to leave childhood behind without yet being in adolescence. It's a fragile, untelling moment, which doesn't last long, and it was absolutely key to capture this in all its complexity to tell this story.

I worked with Kacey from very early on for this film, as I did with HOME. It wasn't a question of rehearsing scenes, but more of deep background work on the character, his relationship to Louise, his rapport with money and theft, but also on his body language, his diction, his way of looking. The idea was the he wouldn't act the role of Simon, but totally embody him. In order to familiarize himself with the skiing world, Kacey spent some time working in a ski store, learning skills such as waxing. All this preparatory work allowed Kacey to get inside the role day after day to become the young Simon.



By way of contrast, the choice of Léa Seydoux for the role of Louise came about late in the day. As we were putting the finishing touches to the writing, Antoine Jaccoud and I wanted to purge the film of any explanation about the characters' pasts and the reasons which led them to their current situation. Besides Louise's lovers, there are effectively no other adult characters on the plain, just children. This choice allows us to leave a whole chunk of Louise's life out of the picture. Though Léa Seydoux's singular presence, Louise withdraws herself from us. Behind her often elusive look, there is an element of mystery hidden in Louise, a shadowy side, a secret garden which allows the viewer to sense the flaws in the character and to project their own imagination onto her, inventing a past for her and a back-story.

While Simon is often filmed busy at work, Louise, who cannot manage to stick at anything, is often filmed running away. There's a lot of work on her body language that evokes someone always on the verge of departing, and on her rapid pace of walking, as though it's a means of physically detaching herself from Simon and subconsciously abandoning him.

In working with Léa and Kacey, I realized just how alike they are, and to what extent they are both touched by that same grace, so beautiful and subtle, that is relevant through the camera's lens.



The New York Times

The Image as Obsession, No Matter the Method: Cinematographer Agnès Godard on Sister



Ursula Meier's *Sister*, shot by the cinematographer Agnès Godard is Ms. Godard's first foray into shooting digital.

By KRISTIN HOHENADEL

THE French cinematographer Agnès Godard has shot visually arresting films including Wim Wenders's *"Wings of Desire,"* Peter Greenaway's *"Belly of an Architect"* and Erick Zonca's *"Dreamlife of Angels,"* and is best known for her nearly 25-year collaboration with the French director Claire Denis. But Ms. Godard's work on Ursula Meier's *"Sister,"* which opens on Friday, was a turning point in her long career: the first time she used a digital camera.

"It was quite an experience," Ms. Godard said on a recent afternoon in her airy loft — a converted boiler-works factory — in the 11th Arrondissement here. Pale, lithe and silver-haired, she spoke in a thoughtful, hushed, Gauloise-induced rasp. "It's really a very big change to move from film to digital. The images don't have the same texture, the poetic charge is different, so you have to reinvent the images."

In the film, Simon (Kacey Mottet Klein) lives with his older sister (Léa Seydoux) in a housing complex at the foot of a luxury ski resort in the Swiss Alps. At 12, the boy is the family's scrappy breadwinner, hitching a ride on a chairlift each day to

pilfer ski equipment from the tourists before reselling it in the valley below, while his self-absorbed sister drifts in and out of view.

It's a worrying setup, but the film is more inspired by fables and Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales than gritty social realism, and Ms. Godard was determined to give it a look that would subtly reinforce that idea.

"Digital demands a very technical approach to the image," she said, "whereas before with film, even if there was a technical base, you could slide more easily toward a more intuitive approach. With digital, the camera sees more than us, and that's a gap to fill that's very technical and very strange and difficult to master."

Ms. Godard said she relied on maneuvers like adding blue light to the Christmas tree in Simon's apartment to subtly heighten the visual atmosphere of the film. "The idea of adding color was to try and make something different out of this new medium," she said, "not to try to recreate what we had with film, because that's a lost cause. Digital images have such precision that they are practically implacable. And what is implacable is violent, so I think it's almost opposed to the possibility of creating fiction."

The filmmakers created an imaginary topography composed of shots from disparate locations so that the setting became more universal than specific, although it reads like a single place. When Ms. Godard went to the resort location for the first time, she said she "looked at it with normal eyes in order to figure out how to film this imposing, gigantic, majestic half-circle of mountains piece by piece, like a puzzle, to create the impression that we have by looking at them as a whole."

Ms. Meier said in a phone interview that she and Ms. Godard had epic discussions about the characters. "She really needs to understand the characters as deeply as possible in order to film them," Ms. Meier said.

The challenge of filming the boy, Ms. Godard said, was "to film the enormous extent to which this child hid his immense solitude, to try and film his struggle against that lack of love." In filming Ms. Seydoux, she tried "to film her beauty but to try to show that the beauty was a mask," she said. "To try to film her absence despite such a physical presence."

"Sister," which Switzerland has chosen as its entry for the foreign-language Oscar, is the second film Ms. Godard has made with Ms. Meier ("Home," 2008), who lives in Brussels and is of French and Swiss origin. "What's great about Agnès is that we start from zero each time," Ms. Meier said. "Agnès has had an enormous career, but when we do a film she puts all her guts and passion for cinema into it as if it's the first film."

Ms. Godard studied journalism to appease her parents (back in the days when journalism seemed like a sensible career path), working as a publicist before enrolling in La Fémis, the renowned French film school.

Born in 1951, Ms. Godard said her fascination with images was inspired by her taciturn father, who took scores of family photos and home movies. "When he died I arranged all 5,000 of them and saw all that he said to us without words," she said.

Many cinematographers have gone on to direct, but Ms. Godard said that being a cinematographer was always her aspiration. "I thought that working on the images was sufficiently vast in and of itself that it fulfilled my desire and became my ambition to think that the image was an element of the direction."

Ms. Meier emphasized Ms. Godard's crucial role in the filmmaking process. "Cinematographers are not necessarily great talkers, but she's fascinating to listen to," Ms. Meier said. "And she really knows how to listen herself. Agnès is very cultivated, very intelligent, and she's also very intuitive. She's totally implicated in the film. For me, Agnès is a real artist."

Do some directors have a better sense of what the camera sees? "Claire has a very honed relationship with the images that has evolved over time," Ms. Godard said of her longtime collaborator Ms. Denis. "She has the faith and the belief that an association of ideas that's concise and that is based on pure cinematography — the choice of a frame, a focal point, the climate of the light — says something, and the idea that gluing those images together is going to create a sense."

Ms. Godard said that Ms. Meier takes a different approach. "Ursula writes very, very long scripts, and it's more a universe that you have to give form to on the set, to decide what will be shown and not shown and how to show it," she said.

Does someone who has devoted her life to making images ever feel limited by what an image can express? "If one feels limited by an image, it's an image that isn't successful," she said, then paused and conceded: "Sometimes. But finding the right image becomes a kind of obsession. There will certainly be a moment when I'm obliged to quit, but I want to continue as long as possible, to keep up the work of searching for images right to the end."