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Momento Film

In Association with Hard Working Movies

PRESENT

DREAMING WALLS: INSIDE THE CHELSEA HOTEL

A film by Amélie van Elmbt & Maya Duverdier

Executive Producers Martin Scorsese and Lori Cheatle

80 mins | Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Sweden, USA | 2022

Official Selection

2022 Berlinale – World Premiere

2022 Tribeca Film Festival – North American Premiere

FINAL PRESS NOTES

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SYNOPSIS

The legendary Chelsea Hotel, an icon of 1960s counterculture and a haven for famous artists and intellectuals including Patti Smith, Janis Joplin and the superstars of Warhol's Factory, is under renovation. Soon it will reopen to the public as one of New York's most fashionable luxury hotels.

Dozens of long-term residents, most in their later years, have lived amidst the scaffolding and constant construction for close to a decade. Against this chaotic backdrop, DREAMING WALLS takes us through the hotel's storied halls, exploring its living body and the bohemian origins that contributed to its mythical stature. Its residents and the walls themselves now face a turning point in their common history.



DIRECTORS' STATEMENT - AMÉLIE VAN ELMBT & MAYA DUVERDIER

The adventure of DREAMING WALLS: INSIDE THE CHELSEA HOTEL began four years ago when we first walked along 23rd Street in New York City and discovered, hidden by a huge scaffolding, the famous façade of the Chelsea Hotel. The neon sign was still hanging there as Patti Smith had described it in "Just Kids," a book that means a lot to both of us.

As young filmmakers we idealized the artist's life in the '70s in New York, and the room of one's own the Chelsea offered for penniless creators of all kinds, like Leonard Cohen, Janis Joplin, Milos Forman, and so many others.

When we entered this massive red brick building for the first time we had to negotiate going further as doormen were standing there to push back all curious people. The Chelsea was closed to the public because of major renovations. The plaster was falling off the walls. What we discovered was so far away from the ideal image of this mythical building we had in our minds.

We first met Merle Lister, one of the residents, who immediately invited us into her room. She told us about her past and the difficult times she was having during the transformation of the Chelsea into a luxury hotel.

Over two years we met and filmed other residents who still live and create among the chaos of construction. Like Merle, they are the Chelsea holdouts and have been living in the shadow of the more notable people who once lived there. Today they constitute the living memory of the hotel. They also remind us that the hotel, which might seem like a kind of punk hospice, is home for many people and not just a marketable vision of utopia.

DREAMING WALLS will open the back door of the Chelsea Hotel for you. We hope you will enjoy your stay!



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

AMÉLIE VAN ELMBT - Director

After studying film at the Belgian Film School IAD, Amélie van Elmbt worked as a casting director and assistant director with French director Jacques Doillon. In 2011 she directed and self-produced her first feature, HEADFIRST, which screened in Cannes' ACID section and won the main award at the New York First Time Festival. There she met Martin Scorsese, who executive produced her second feature, THE ELEPHANT & THE BUTTERFLY (2017), which premiered at the Tribeca Festival and won the Grand Prize at the Heartland International Film Festival. Amélie co-directed DREAMING WALLS with Maya Duverdier and is currently working on a new fiction feature, to be produced by Les films du Fleuve.

MAYA DUVERDIER - Director

After receiving a bachelor's in arts in France, Maya Duverdier obtained her Master's degree in cinema at the Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne with her documentary JEANNE SANS ARC (2014). Along with her work as a director and writer for narrative and documentary projects, she's also active within various positions of film, television and advertising production. DREAMING WALLS is Maya's first feature documentary.

HANNE PHLYPO - Producer

Hanne Phlypo is a Belgian producer. Her latest productions, BY THE NAME OF TANIA (2019), OVERSEAS (2019) and GODS OF MOLENBEEK (2019), premiered at leading festivals and won multiple awards worldwide. Hanne was trained as director at the film school INSAS. In 2010 Hanne founded Clin d'oeil films and has produced over 20 films. The company focuses on creative documentaries and author-driven films with a clear preference for films with a social or political statement by innovative filmmakers. Today, Clin d'oeil films is one of Belgium's most prominent documentary production companies, famous for cinematic films, local stories with a global impact. Hanne is an alumna of Eurodoc, EAVE and a member of the EFA Academy.



LORI CHEATLE - Executive Producer

Lori Cheatle is a New York based producer and the founder of Hard Working Movies, a director-driven production company with an appetite for bold, creative, high-profile narratives, with stories as diverse as the filmmakers behind them. The award-winning films she's produced have screened at all the top international film festivals, in cinemas and on TV and major streaming platforms around the world. Titles include *Us KIDS* (dir. Kim Snyder); *MATANGI/MAYA/M.I.A.*, about the pop star and activist M.I.A.; *I AM ANOTHER YOU* by Nanfu Wang; *KIKI* (dir. Sara Jordeno, winner of the Berlin Teddy Award); *CAPTIVATED: THE TRIALS OF PAMELA SMART* (directed by Jeremiah Zagar); *51 BIRCH STREET* (by Doug Block); *EDGE OF DREAMING*; *HAIL, SATAN?* and many others. She received the Sundance Amazon Producers Award for her work in non-fiction.

QUENTIN LAURENT - Producer

Quentin Laurent founded Les Films de l'œil sauvage with Frédéric Féraud in 2015. Based in Paris and Marseille, the company mainly produces art-house documentaries. Trained as a geographer, Quentin Laurent is particularly interested in non-Western narratives and viewpoints, in approaches that reveal spaces that have remained invisible or try to reconsider the perception of familiar places. Involved in the artistic process at an early stage, he has recently produced or co-produced *KINSHASA MAKAMBO* by Dieudo Hamadi (Berlinale 2018), *OVERSEAS* by Soa Yoon (Locarno 2019), *ASWANG* by Alyx Arumpac (IDFA awarded 2019), and *DOWNSTREAM TO KINSHASA* (Cannes 2020).

JOACHIM PHILIPPE - Cinematographer

Joachim Philippe is a Brussels-based director of photography. He was trained as a camera assistant, collaborating with many acclaimed directors as Ken Loach, Jaco Vandormael, David Mackenzie and assisting their cinematographers, Chris Menges, Robbie Ryan, Christophe Beaucarne, Barry Ackroyd. Inspired by their work, Joachim's first breakthrough as a DOP was in the Belgian/Romanian award-winning documentary *WAITING FOR AUGUST* directed by Teodora Mihai (EFA nomination for Best Documentary). Since 2014 Joachim worked on many acclaimed films of which Jonathan Littell's *WRONG ELEMENTS* filmed in Uganda, which world premiered in the official selection of the Cannes Film Festival (2016) and *THE MERCY OF THE JUNGLE* (TIFF selection), *MANU* (IDFA 2019). Today Joachim spends most of his time abroad, shooting both documentary and fiction films for Belgian and international directors.



ALAIN DESSAUVAGE - Editor

Alain Dessauvage graduated from the RITCS Film School in 1994. He began his career editing commercials, music videos and short films. The short films FAIT D'HIVER, TANGHI ARGENTINI and NA WEWE and the feature film BULLHEAD were all nominated for an Oscar. He has won multiple editing awards for a.o. GIRL (Cannes Un Certain Regard 2016), BULLHEAD and LE FIDELE.

JULIE NAAS - Editor

Julie Naas studied at the Belgian film school IAD in Louvain-La-Neuve. Since 2005 she has edited short fiction films, documentaries and feature films. She was the chief editor for the feature films DEATH BY DEATH by Xavier Seron (Palm Springs Winner New Voices/New Visions Grand Jury Prize 2016, Magritte Awards Nominee Best Editing

2017), UN HOMME A LA MER, by Géraldine Doignon (2016), EVEN LOVERS GET THE BLUES (2016) by Laurent Micheli, ADAM by Maryam Touzani (Cannes Un Certain Regard 2019, Carthage Film Festival Winner Best Editing 2019), LOLA AND THE SEA by Laurent Micheli (Nominee, Cesar Best Foreign Film 2020, Magritte Awards Nominee Best Editing 2020), and DARK HEART OF THE FOREST by Serge Mirzabekiantz (PÖFF Tallin 2021). Recently, she edited the first feature film by Cédric Bourgeois Krump, Christophe Cotteret's documentary, AUTOPSY OF AN INSTRUCTION and Xavier Seron's new feature film, CHIENNES DE VIE.

MICHAEL ANDREWS - Composer

Michael Andrews is an American film score composer, multi-instrumental songwriter, and producer. Best known for his cover of "Mad World" with Gary Jules, Andrews's music spans widely from his early indie work for DONNIE DARKO and ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW Me to his more comedy film scores for film hits such as BRIDESMAIDS and NEIGHBORS. His more recent scores include ROADRUNNER: A FILM ABOUT ANTHONY BOURDAIN and the soon to be released Judd Apatow film THE BUBBLE. Michael is also a founding member of the San Diego soul-jazz band The Greyboy Allstars, where he goes by the moniker Elgin Park.



CREDITS

Directors

Amélie van Elmbt, Maya Duverdier

Producers

Hanne Phlypo, Quentin Laurent

Co-Producers

Frédéric de Goldschmidt, Simone van den Broek, David Herdies

Executive Producers

Martin Scorsese

Lori Cheatle

Cinematographers

Joachim Philippe, Virginie Surdej

Editors

Alain Dessauvage, Julie Naas

Composer

Michael Andrews

A production of

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