

Bikini Moon



Directed by **Milcho Manchevski**

Screenplay by **Milcho Manchevski** and **W.P. Rosenthal**

(Based on a story by Milcho Manchevski)

Produced by **Anja Wedell** and **Muniré Armstrong**

Starring: **Condola Rashad, Sarah Goldberg, Will Janowitz, Sathya Sridharan**

Running time: **102 min**

Year of Production: **2017**

CONTACT:

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Bikini Moon

Cast

Bikini Moon Davis	Condola Rashad
Kate Skyler	Sarah Goldberg
Trevor Hood	Will Janowitz
Krishna P. Bhargava	Sathya Sridharan
Ashley	Mykal-Michelle Harris

Production Team

Directed by	Milcho Manchevski
Screenplay by	Milcho Manchevski W.P. Rosenthal
Based on a story by	Milcho Manchevski
Produced by	Anja Wedell Muniré Armstrong
Director of Photography	Joshua Z Weinstein
Edited by	Ann Husaini
Production Design by	David Munns
Casting by	Avy Kaufman
Costume Design by	Missy DiPiero
Music Composed by	Igor Vasilev Novogradska
Executive Producers	Thorne Mutert Jan Fincke Milcho Manchevski W.P. Rosenthal

Bikini Moon

Logline

A charismatic homeless woman captures the attention of a documentary film crew who are ready to exploit her story for their own shot at independent movie fame in this very modern, urban fairy tale set amidst a fractured ideal of family.

Synopsis

At a homeless drop-in center in New York City, a documentary crew finds Bikini Moon Davis, looking for help and a place to stay. With wide, lively eyes and a broad smile, Bikini is provocative, bold, and dynamic – and also clearly in a troubled mental state. Claiming she drove a forklift in the Iraq war and was trained as a carpenter – “just like Jesus, with tits” – she’s been on and off the streets, and hopes to stabilize her life and get back her young daughter from a foster home.

Something about Bikini grabs the attention of documentary producer Kate Skyler, who is seen convincing the project’s director (and her live-in boyfriend), Trevor Hood, that they should make the extra effort to help Bikini get back on her feet. It’s impossible for Trevor not to agree that Bikini is a fascinating subject, but warns Kate about the ethical problem of documentarians getting too involved in their subjects’ lives.

An attempt to find housing for Bikini leads the crew to realize just how deplorable and desperate her situation is. The stories she tells about her life are difficult to prove (if not outright lies), and Bikini’s lucidity waxes and wanes as she goes on and off her medication over the course of several weeks. She nevertheless persists in her struggle to regain custody of her daughter – even when it seems the daughter is a figment of her imagination. Eventually, Kate and Trevor cross the line and invite Bikini to live with them in a quiet suburb, where they measure her life in birthday parties, milestone moments, and increasingly awkward interactions, until Bikini’s indefinable and ultimately indomitable spirit grows beyond their understanding.

Presented as a documentary that unravels, reveals, and reimagines itself alongside its unpredictable subject, BIKINI MOON’s film-within-a-film structure unpacks and examines the way we look at the world through media that demands to be seen as reality while asking the uncomfortable questions about the often deplorable relationship between media and its subjects. Ultimately, documenting Bikini’s life means seeing the world from **her** point of view without judgment, no matter how impossible, frightening and fantastic that view might be.

Bikini Moon

About the Production

"The cinema is truth, twenty-four frames per second," claimed Jean-Luc Godard in his second produced film, "La Petit Soldat," over a half-century ago. That quote has inspired countless filmmakers to play with every viewer's assumption about the relationship between film and reality. Because live-action cinema is, in essence, a series of photographs (or today's digital equivalent), moviegoers have an understanding that what is happening on the screen "really happened," even if it was staged. And when the presumption of "documentary" status is added, the filmed image is supposed to become even more real, an almost sacred understanding between filmmaker and audience that the things playing out in front of the camera are real-life events that would have happened if the cameras had been rolling or not.

That pursuit of mediated imagery as absolute truth is at the heart of Milcho Manchevski's BIKINI MOON, which, from the audience's perspective, is a heart-breaking documentary about a homeless veteran who struggles to survive and fend for herself despite internal and external obstacles. BIKINI MOON is most effective because it challenges viewers on an intellectual level while still maintaining a visceral emotional grip. While cineastes might delight in the film's ability to mask itself as a documentary, all viewers are likely to be drawn in to the very real, human drama that is playing out in front of the cameras. And what the camera reveals is not pretty or easy. The focus of the film is the homeless military vet Bikini Moon Davis, who manages to resonate with joy and optimism long past the point that most people would have given up. Her life is being filmed – and altered – by two documentary filmmakers, Kate and Trevor. They are trying to be good people, making the best use of their lives, talents, and passions. They don't always succeed.

The drama that unfolds as these three unbalance, undermine, and disappoint each other, provides the perfect counterpoint to the more cerebral discourse engaged by the film's meta-reflexive style.

Initially discovered when the documentary filmmakers happen upon her at a homeless center, the lively and charismatic Bikini, brought to life in a whirlwind performance by Condola Rashad (of Showtime's "Billions"), soon becomes entrenched in the lives of the crew as they struggle to simultaneously help Bikini stay on her feet and complete their project. A self-

described “Jesus with tits,” Bikini yearns to use her master carpentry skills to build a new life for herself and the daughter that was taken away by the foster care system.

But BIKINI MOON is not a documentary, even though it ruggedly adheres to the aesthetic of “direct cinema” that characterized the work of legendary documentarians such as Barbara Koppel, D.A. Pennebaker, and the Maysles Brothers. Working in that format allowed Manchevski to go beyond the mere story of Bikini, as he explains. “I’m trying to explore the nature of truth as seen in the media today. When we watch a documentary, is it true? Is reality TV true? Or what if we just see a little snippet of something on YouTube – how much is a matter of context? On the one hand, we may be getting more finicky about the truth in terms of asking for context; but on the other hand, we are more cavalier, because now people say we are living in ‘post-truth’ and ‘fake news’ has become ubiquitous. Still, all of this matters only when there is a real human story at the heart of it all.”

That might seem like an idea more suited to a doctoral dissertation or philosophy seminar, but in BIKINI MOON the investigation towards truth is deftly told through the weaving of many by-now familiar mechanisms that read as “authentic.” Certainly, the “fly on the wall” documentary style championed by Trevor, the director (played by Will Janowitz) and Kate, the producer (Sarah Goldberg), is something that film audiences would understand as “real.” But Kate and Trevor (and Manchevski) have other mediated resources to tell their story – surveillance footage, cell phone recordings, nanny cams, and the other now-incidental forms of mediation that populate our contemporary existence.

BIKINI MOON is a film that is dominated by its rigorous documentary style. This is something Manchevski believes all viewers have a keen critical instinct for: “Reality TV is a perfect example of how easy ‘truth’ is to manipulate – as are documentaries, for that matter. And in the last several years, we are all living inside our own mediated bubbles, we see people being immersed in their own various aspects of telling the truth. Every single one of us walks around with a camera in their pocket and can make ‘what really happened’ accessible in seconds – but we have less real truth, less wisdom.

“That’s why we were meticulous in making sure that everything you see was filmed by the characters – there was always an excuse for the camera to be there. We never see Bikini breaking down or in her moments alone, unless it is Trevor spying on her, or the nanny cam, or the surveillance cam in the driveway.”

Bikini’s story always moves forward in time, but the gaps in what happens to her are another indication of the film’s constructed status. Kate and Trevor’s cameras sometimes follow Bikini to important places where the fate of her life may change, such as when they believe they find her daughter living in a posh suburb; other times, after presumably months of

little happening, the cameras are brought out for more mundane events like birthday parties, as if the couple are struggling to “find” Bikini’s “story,” a story which does not seem to conform to any easy narrative arc. For Manchevski, those gaps in some cases were deliberately written into the script: “We understand that documentaries don’t cover everything,” he explains, “they often miss things, by their nature. So in the writing, we left out a lot of things on purpose, we syncopated the narrative. But that also makes it more fun for the viewer when they are putting the story together in our head,” he adds, noting that some potentially key scenes, such as an unexpected wedding, actually were filmed, only to be left on the cutting room floor to further highlight the hit-and-miss aspect of the documentary-style narrative. “I’ve always admired innovative films like that, where the story has moved on, and you’re always a step behind,” he says.

But all of the complicated, self-reflexive, and rigorously applied narrative theory would be nothing for a filmmaker without the right creative tools – in the case of BIKINI MOON, the biggest creative presence is not the story, but the characters. The screen is dominated by Bikini, Kate, and Trevor for the first part of the film, with another documentary crew member, Krishna (Sathya Sridharan) slowly playing a more prominent role as tensions build between the filmmakers and their subject, and the documentary project (and Bikini’s newly found harmony) teeter on the verge of collapse. With unexpected situations and a trajectory towards emotional and narrative chaos, the characters as written were already a challenge to play: adding the layer of documentary-like realism meant that casting would require an eye for some very special talent.

To the great benefit of BIKINI MOON and Manchevski, veteran casting director Avy Kaufman was up to the task. “I am ecstatic over the cast,” says Manchevski, “and this is NOT ‘Hollywood talk’. I always enjoy working with actors, and in this case, the actors were a dream. I like people who have craft, and knowledge, and I don’t care what they look like – do they have the craft to do it? Are you the Rembrandt of your part?”

As Trevor and Kate, Kaufman and Manchevski landed on Will Janowitz, a veteran actor (“The Sopranos,” “Boardwalk Empire”) with a background in writing and veteran of Upright Citizens Brigade; and Sarah Goldberg, an acclaimed young actress (the original production of “Clybourne Park,” VH1’s “Hindsight”) making her feature lead debut. Both fall into their parts, tracking the personal and professional collisions between Trevor and Kate over the course of a couple of years, their own creative sensibilities and instincts about life magnified by the presence of their subject.

“They came in and took over the characters, made them richer, more complex,” Manchevski says. “I was just observing, and I would sometimes suggest that they go in the

opposite direction, go against type. When Kate might want to be motherly – as is Kate’s default mode – I’d say, ‘what if you’re not – what if you’re bitchy instead,’ to further open up the characters and perhaps discover a new dimension in the same character.” Manchevski also admits that he sees a bit of himself in the filmmakers. “Everything you put in an art film is a reflection of who you are and how you think, I guess. Perhaps it wasn’t conscious, but it was fun making a bit of fun of Trevor, and the whole genre. He’s probably good at what he does, he’s got moments when he’s really giving – but Trevor is otherwise a jerk, and this industry is fueled by ego, so Will’s performance as a director was perfect in bringing it all together – the selfish, the funny, and the good.”

The center of the film, obviously, is Bikini, a character that Manchevski and co-writer W.P. Rosenthal spent a great deal of time crafting. “We did lots of background research on who this woman could have been – when she was in Iraq, what might have happened to her, her entire backstory.” Even though many of the details about what the director calls her “rough ride” are not revealed in the film, Bikini’s life still rings as authentic as a result of that careful research. “My writing partner ran a shelter in Hell’s Kitchen for ten years,” says Manchevski of Rosenthal. “So everything you see about her ups and downs, her medications, it’s all very documented, as is her story in Iraq. We had to know what kind of a life someone in that position would really be living, what they must have to do just to survive the day.” He emphasizes that his partnership with Rosenthal went beyond the research and the writing. “We spent years constructing Bikini’s, Kate’s and Trevor’s world and the big picture.”

Manchevski also points out that Bikini was not written with any actress in mind – or any particular ethnic identity, as Manchevski was only interested in finding the right actor, rather than the “right-looking” one. “It took us a long time to find Bikini,” he says, “but Condola was the best.” He describes Rashad’s performance as “fearless – she bungee jumps without a cord. Her craft and nuance are spectacular.” Underscoring Bikini’s ups and downs with a broad smile, wide, open eyes, and a disturbing edge of manic energy (the character is almost always moving), Rashad manages to convey both the charismatic “fallen soldier” that Trevor and Kate want to document into a better life, and the chaotic and reckless pursuit of control that fosters constant conflict. “Condola does her homework,” Manchevski says. “She does her research but then she comes in and really crafts the moment. It was craft, knowledge, and courage that created the depth and the emotion.”

“My goal was to play this person with integrity and honesty,” says Condola Rashad. Burying herself in Manchevski and Rosenthal’s backstory lead her to find even more layers of Bikini on her own. Most audiences are familiar with the general diagnosis of PTSD for military veterans, but Bikini also shows signs of MST (Military Sexual Trauma) and bipolar disorder. Through a veteran friend, she contacted ex-military women who were willing to talk about their

experiences from a psychological perspective, a first-person point of view that helped Rashad feel strong about her choices. “A lot of what is written about MST and PTSD is from the perspective of people treating them,” she notes. Talking to women, or watching the video diaries of someone who suffers from conditions like Bikini’s, ensured that the actor was also getting a more intimate perspective that could help her craft her fictional creation. “It’s one thing to hear from someone what it looks like,” she explains. “It’s another to see and hear what it feels like as they are going through it. That was going to be my way in, even if I could only really scratch the surface.”

Director Milcho Manchevski notes that by casting an African-American performer as Bikini, the story took on another dimension that had not been initially intended, but still supported – and even emphasized – the overall subject matter and approach. “You can’t ignore the fact once Condola is playing the part,” he says. “So we got to ask ourselves the question, ‘what happens to this character now that she is black?’ And all kinds of new layers opened up, though we chose not to be heavy-handed about it. On paper, Bikini could still be a white person – but there are glances exchanged, silent moments that the cameras capture, awkward situations amplified, that indicate something else is going on. Those are the best films – the ones about race and class that don’t hit you over the head, but still talk poignantly and precisely about heartbreaking injustices and lives ruined by prejudice and racism.”

Putting the cast together early afforded the team some time to rehearse together before the cameras rolled. “We planned to rehearse for about three weeks – we ended up finishing sooner because it went so well,” says Manchevski. “It was like old-fashioned theatre rehearsal – read the whole script, go scene by scene, talk a little bit, try again. The moment is about 80% there, then you put it in a jar and save it for a month later when the cameras are rolling. If they are good actors, they can do it.”

“The process was like a weird dream,” adds Condola Rashad. “Milcho allowed us the space to have rehearsal and that made all the difference. Some actors don’t like rehearsal – I love it, I’m not going to lose anything, I’m just going to gain more knowledge. Because we rehearsed a month before, we had a feel for each other’s energy – we didn’t have to lock stuff in, but we knew the colors we could play with. Then, on the day we shot, because we had a synergy, we could shift very easily if we needed to.” For Manchevski, the result on screen was more than he could have expected. “There was a real maturity to all of them,” he says of his cast. “They had such an understanding of relationship – little glances, little moments. Once good actors take over the part, at some point they know more about the character than you do.” Rashad is equally effusive about the chemistry with her castmates: “You cannot leave that process without becoming real close. These people are friends for life – they’re coming to my wedding!”

Although the director wanted the set for BIKINI MOON to be as documentary-like as possible, the demands of keeping a relatively short production schedule, shooting with multiple cameras in dozens of locations in New York City and the suburbs, meant working with more than just a standard doc-sized crew. “We had about a month, all on location,” says Manchevski. I wanted the crew to be slim, but we got greedy – can we make the light more dramatic, can we have a different costume to show time passage – so it grew a bit. Even though we shot outside a lot, we almost never closed a street. It’s still close to the smallest thing I’ve ever done in terms of crew size, but bigger than a documentary crew. No trailers, though.”

The “mockumentary” format was a challenge that Rashad was eager to take on, and that she believes helped deepen her craft. “I feel like I’m a different actress than I was before Bikini. Theatre is my foundation – I was not a ‘camera person’ in school. Before Bikini, I would become nervous about being overly expressive on camera, and then I’d become too flat. I had to learn how to maintain that intensity in a smaller lens. I’ve never been the lead like this, on set every day; so as the part went on, the camera became my friend, and I became more and more natural – naturalism to the 10th degree in that documentary style. I was able to take certain elements of that forward, and it’s become part of the way I work now.”

Working with a director like Manchevski – one who sees the filmmaking art as an extension of so many other cultural forms and modes of representation – was also a benefit for the actor. “He has an incredible eye for energy and an eye for the physical world,” continues Rashad. “He has a very unique approach to capturing stories and images, and that is something that was very exciting to work with. He allows you the space to create – it is a collaboration, and that’s not something you can always say.”

By the end of the film, the documentary footage shot by Kate, Trevor and Krishna actually manages to do what it intended: reveal the truth. But the truth it reveals is an often brutal one that is impossible to image, predict, or control. The film’s final moments are difficult to describe, even though their narrative impact is consistent and organic with the rest of the story. As Krishna becomes a more important part of the filmmaking team, the documentary project literally gains a new perspective on Bikini’s life that breaks the impasse between subject and object, and points the story towards a destination that some might have considered impossible. The ending is, according to the director, “quite optimistic,” as Krishna endeavors and succeeds in documenting Bikini in a way that is perhaps as authentic as one could imagine a film being. But he also acknowledges that this was the big challenge of the project – “to make a fake documentary, that becomes fantastic.” Ultimately, both Manchevski and the film-within-the-film become, in the director’s words, “unreliable narrators inviting people to talk about the nature of truth, to be a little confused, to find open moments and some open

endings and enjoy them. The question isn't 'what is it,'" he says in regards to the film-within-the-film. "The question is what is its nature – what makes the truth, 'truth.'"

"It's not the idea that Bikini's world 'exists,'" adds Condola Rashad about the ending, "but this is her world as she experiences it, and it's real for her, it's a part of who she is. There's great poetry in what she sees, and at the end, when Krishna documents her, it's the first time in the film that she has invited the other characters into her world. It's a bittersweet moment – it's hard to say that Bikini is 'better,' but no matter what your judgment on it is, to accept someone fully is to accept their experience as real, and that's what is needed to complete her journey."

Bikini Moon

About the Cast

CONDOLA RASHAD (Bikini)

Currently seen weekly on Showtime's hit drama "Billions" alongside Paul Giamatti and Damian Lewis, Condola Rashad was seen this past summer costarring in Joshua Marston's "Complete Unknown" opposite Michael Shannon and Rachel Weisz, and last year with George Clooney and Julia Roberts in "Money Monster," directed by Jodie Foster.

A veteran stage performer, Rashad made a sensational debut off-Broadway at the Manhattan Theatre Club playing a young girl in a brothel in Lynn Nottage's 2009 Pulitzer Prize winning play "Ruined." She was nominated for Tony Awards for her roles in Lydia Diamond's "Stick Fly" and the late Horton Foote's "The Trip to Bountiful" opposite Cicely Tyson. In 2013, Rashad played "Juliet" to critical acclaim on Broadway, opposite Orlando Bloom's "Romeo." Rashad is preparing for her return to the Broadway stage next Spring in Lucas Hnath's new play "A Doll's House, Part 2," which she will co-star in opposite Emmy-Award winner Laurie Metcalf, Academy-Award winner Chris Cooper, and Tony-Award winner Jayne Houdyshell. Produced by Scott Rudin, the play will open at the John Golden Theatre on April 27.

On television, Rashad had a recurring role on NBC's "Smash" and starred in the Lifetime remake of "Steel Magnolias," opposite Queen Latifah. Rashad's film and TV credits include "30 Beats," opposite Justin Kirk and Lee Pace, "Sex and The City 2," "Law And Order: Criminal Intent," "Georgetown," and "The Good Wife." A graduate of California Institute of the Arts, Condola currently resides in New York.

In May 2017 Rashad was nominated for the Tony Award for her performance on Broadway in "A Doll's House, Part 2" and was lauded by The New York Times: "...stunningly subtle and controlled performance" and The New Yorker: "Condola Rashad is perfect in every way."

WILL JANOWITZ (Trevor)

Will Janowitz is a producer, writer and actor. Most recently, he was the star of the 2015 Sundance Festival Film, "H." He has recurred on the HBO series "Boardwalk Empire," "The Sopranos," and more. Janowitz attended the North Carolina School of the Arts conservatory where he worked along the likes of David Gordon Green, Jeff Nichols and Danny McBride. He got his start writing by interning at the esteemed Naked Angels theater, working under

playwright/screenwriter, Kenneth Lonergan. Janowitz's first written play was performed in New York City at age 19 at the Zipper Theater. After premiering a pilot at the New York Theatre Festival, he landed a development deal with Fox Television Studios and later sold his show to Spike.

He is currently co-producing a film (with Kamala Films) based on the Pulitzer nominated novella by Denis Johnson, with Casey Affleck directing. "Train Dreams" is an elegiac telling of a man's complicated life on the railroad. Additionally, he is developing a TV series based on the cult classic "Bad Lieutenant" with Michael Imperioli and Pressman Films. Janowitz's latest screenplay "Bishop" was accepted into the 2017 Rotterdam Lab, with Aya Cash ("You're the Worst") attached to co-star.

SARAH GOLDBERG (Kate)

Sarah Goldberg earned an Olivier Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of "Betsy/Lindsey" in The Royal Court's production of the Pulitzer Prize winning play, "Clybourne Park." She went on to play the role in both the West End and on Broadway. Her other London stage credits include "Six Degrees of Separation," "Member of the Wedding," and "Apologia."

In New York she played Alison Porter in The Roundabout's revival of "Look Back In Anger." Other New York stage work includes "The Unavoidable Disappearance of Tom Durnin," "The Great God Pan," and "The Qualms." She co-starred on the TV series "Hindsight," and other film and TV credits include "Elementary," "The Dark Knight Rises," "Drifters," "Crown Heights," and "Lucia: Before and After," which won the Goldberg is currently playing the female lead in Bill Hader's HBO series "Barry," which will air in 2018.

SATHYA SRIDHARAN (Krishna)

Sathya Sridharan has guest starred in television series such as "Madam Secretary," "Younger," and "The Blacklist," as well as in the TV movie "Foursome" and the independent film "Cohab." An alumni of Washington University and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, his many stage roles include "Romeo and Juliet" (Romeo), "Macbeth" (Macbeth) and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (Lysander/Flute) at Shakespeare Now! in Boston; and in Tom Stoppard's "Hapgood" at Williamstown Theatre Festival.

Bikini Moon

About the Filmmakers

MILCHO MANCHEVSKI (Writer/Director)

Many consider Milcho Manchevski to be one of the most original and innovative artists of our time for his unique blend of experimentation, poetry, emotion and a demand for the active participation of the viewer in the construction of meaning (Conor McGrady). His acclaimed "Before the Rain" is considered one of the greatest debut feature films in the history of cinema (Annette Insdorf) and one of the most important films of the decade (Ann Kibbey). The New York Times included it on its "Best 1,000 Films Ever Made" list, and it won the Golden Lion in Venice and an Academy Award nomination. Manchevski's work – which also includes award-winning films "Dust", "Shadows", "Mothers", as well as award-winning short forms "Thursday," "Macedonia Timeless," "Tennessee" and "1.73" – stands out in world cinema for its unique way of playing with space, time and emotion (Keith Brown). Roger Ebert said about it, "Work like this keeps me going. A reminder of the nobility that film can attain." and Rene Rodriguez said, "Director Manchevski has made a debut so astonishingly assured in writing and technique he is guaranteed a footnote in movie history even if he never makes another movie. 'Before the Rain' is stunning. It is the sort of remarkable debut that reinstalls faith in the movies as genuine art."

In addition to the Golden Lion and the Oscar nomination, "Before the Rain" won thirty awards, including Independent Spirit, FIPRESCI, UNESCO, best film of the year in Argentina, Italy, Sweden, Turkey, and other awards in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Poland, Puerto Rico, and Russia. "Dust" was the opening-night film of the Venice Film Festival. Both "Shadows" and "Mothers" were the Macedonian Academy Awards entries. "Shadows" screened in Toronto; "Mothers" screened in the Panorama section of Berlinale, was selected among the 40 European films of the year by the EFA committee and won seven festival awards. Manchevski won awards for best experimental film (for "1.73"), best MTV video (for "Tennessee," which Rolling Stone placed on the list of the 100 best videos ever), and best commercial (for "Macedonia Timeless"). He has also been a director on HBO's "The Wire."

His films are part of the curricula at numerous universities worldwide, and have been discoursed at a number of conferences. The University of Leipzig (Germany) and the European University Institute in Florence (Italy) hosted academic conferences dedicated to his films. Manchevski's work has screened at more than two hundred festivals, and has been distributed in close to 50 countries (theatrically, TV, cable and video).

He has published fiction, essays and op-ed pieces in *New American Writing*, *La Repubblica*, *Corriere Della Sera*, *Sineast*, *The Guardian*, *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, *Pravda*, and elsewhere. Manchevski has staged performance art with the group 1AM (which he founded) and by himself.

Manchevski authored a (very small) book of fiction, *The Ghost of My Mother*, a short book on art theory *Truth and Fiction: Notes on (Exceptional) Faith in Art* and two books of photographs, *Street* and *Five Drops of Dream* which accompany two photo exhibitions. He has lectured at a number of universities, cinematheques, art museums and art institutes, including – as Head of Directing Studies – at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts’ Graduate Film program. He is currently teaching at the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema at Brooklyn College.

He holds an honorary doctorate from VGIK in Moscow. He is a member of the Directors Guild of America, European Film Academy and the PEN Club.

ANJA WEDELL (Producer)

Anja Wedell has more than 20 years of experience in the film industry. She started out as an intern at the Hispanic Film Project in L.A. in 1994. After graduating from the University of the Arts in Berlin with an MA she launched her professional career at Studio Babelsberg in 1998. For the following ten years she worked as a Coordinator and Production Manager on numerous films, such as “*Enemy at the Gates*,” “*Taking Sides*,” “*The Bourne Supremacy*,” or “*V for Vendetta*.”

In 2009, she started working as a Line Producer for Herbstfilm Produktion GmbH, where she supervised several documentary projects for cinema and TV and also produced her first film, the award winning documentary “*We Are Not the Only Ones*,” directed by Christoph Röhl.

In 2012, she joined the production team at Tom Tykwer’s X Filme Creative Pool as a Production Executive and Producer, where she mainly worked on the company’s international productions such as “*A Hologram for the King*,” “*Alone in Berlin*” and “*Brimstone*”.

Since September 2015 she is heading the new fiction department of CZAR Film Germany. “*Bikini Moon*” was the first film she produced in that capacity, followed by “*New Money*”, a US-German Coproduction written and directed by Jason B. Kohl.

MUNIRE ARMSTRONG (Producer)

Muniré Armstrong has an MA in Cinema/Television and a BSc in Computer Engineering. After working in the telecommunications sector as an engineer and manager for a decade, she decided to work in the film industry and has produced feature films, many award-winning short

films and documentaries as well as many commercial videos.

Her productions include emerging Bosnian/Canadian director Igor Drljaca's second feature film "The Waiting Room" (2015) premiered at Locarno Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival; a documentary directed by Gelareh Kiazand, "In the Family," Turkish director Selim Gunes' first feature film "White as Snow" which premiered at the Chicago Film Festival, 2010 and was shown/awarded at many national and international festivals.

Armstrong is one of the twelve Canadian participants selected for the Producers Lab Toronto, 2011 as part of the Toronto International Film Festival. She was selected for the Telefilm Producer Trainee Mentorship Program in 2010 and the OMDC-Doc Toronto Mentorship Program at HotDocs, 2011. She was also one of the Canadian participants at the Transatlantic Partners Program (initiative of the Atlantic Film Festival and Eric Pommer Institute) in 2010. She also helped to establish a successful corporate video production company in Turkey and has produced numerous projects for a broad range of customers including multinational corporations (including Coca-Cola, Efes, Pfizer, Novartis, Isuzu, and KIA) between 2003-2006.

JOSHUA Z WEINSTEIN (Director of Photography)

Joshua Z Weinstein is a cinematographer and director whose work has shown at Sundance, Berlin, and Tribeca. He recently was the director/cinematographer for the film "Menashe" which will be released theatrically by A24 in the summer of 2017. Recent DP credits include "Elaine Stritch: Shoot Me" (Tribeca/Sundance Selects), "Code of the West" (SXSW / PBS), and "Give Up Tomorrow" (Emmy Nomination / Tribeca Special Jury Prize). Weinstein also directed the documentaries "Drivers Wanted" (PBS), "Flying on One Engine" (SXSW) and "I Beat Mike Tyson" (Hot Docs). Weinstein has been nominated for a Cannes Lion for his advertising work and won a first place POY award for his work with The New York Times.

ANN HUSAINI (Editor)

Ann Husaini's editing credits include several MTV and VH1 programs such as "Made" (Emmy nominee), "Ice Queens," "Made," "Teen Mom 2," "Choose or Lose," and "I Want to Work for Diddy," as well as "History Detectives SI" (PBS), "Startup U" (ABC Family), "House of DVF" (E!), and "Original Sin: Sex" (NatGeo). Feature credits include festival hits like the documentary "Danland," "Welcome to the Machine," "Gayby," and "Bare," as well as working on the upcoming James Franco-directed "Zeroville."

DAVID MUNNS (Production Designer)

David Munns first worked with Milcho Manchevski on "Before the Rain," and has subsequently teamed with the director for "Dust," "Shadows," and "Mothers." Other credits include Vadim Jean's "Clockwork Mice," "Simon Schama's Power of Art," and as art director on the "Great Performances" production of the musical "Cats."

MISSY DiPIERO (Costume Designer)

Missy DiPiero is a New York based costumer whose credits include Mike Birbiglia's "Don't Think Twice" and the Connecticut Public Television series "Cobblestone Corner." Her many upcoming projects include indie productions like "Obsidiana," "First We Take Brooklyn," "Middleground," and "Dara Ju."

W. P. ROSENTHAL (Co-Writer)

William Rosenthal has a B.A degree in Film Production from Southern Illinois University and an M.A. degree in Social Work (MSW) from New York University. He has worked in the film industry and is also a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. He worked for over ten years as a clinical director in mental health programs and is currently a psychotherapist in private practice in New York City.

AVY KAUFMAN (Casting Director)

Avy Kaufman has worked in casting on more than 200 film and television productions since 1987. Based in New York City, Kaufman has worked with directors including Steven Spielberg, Ang Lee and Wes Craven. Her casting credits include "The Sixth Sense," "Life of Pi," "Lincoln," "Capote," "Brokeback Mountain," "The Bourne Ultimatum," etc.

Kaufman received the 2005 Hollywood Casting Director of the Year award given by the Hollywood Film Festival. She also received a 2008 Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Casting for a Drama Series for her work on "Damages." She had earlier been nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Casting for a Miniseries, Movie, or a Special for her work on the miniseries "Empire Falls." Kaufman has been nominated for eighteen Artios Awards, and has won three.

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