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# Sophie Richez

Director of *Cécilia*

Honorable Mention: Best French Film 2023



**Sophie Richez** is a French actress and director born in Paris. After completing degrees in law, theater and sports studies, she obtained her first opportunity to act in a professional theater play at the age of 19. She profoundly enjoyed acting and this experience reinforced her desire to pursue this path. She started her acting career in numerous theater plays ranging from comedies and tragedies to musicals. She also did readings of contemporary theater plays on the radio, and starred in several short films and television. In recent years she has been moving on to the screen. Nourished by her experience as an actress and attracted to cinema, she wanted to try her hand at directing by making her first short film “Cécilia”, which won the “honorable mention of the best French film” in the 2023 edition of the Cannes Film Awards Festival.

Learn more about Sophie at [IMDB](#) or [LinkedIN](#)

**Your project has entered in our festival. What is your project about?**

The film is about an opera singer who, at the peak of her career, experiences a moment of doubt. I wanted to capture the intimacy of a reflection around self-image, desires and the passage of time, revealed in a conversation between two women. They are generational and universal mirrors that both reflect each other. In addition, they are not at the same stage in their lives and have neither the same aspirations nor the same fears and apprehension in facing life events. Yet they need each other, and dialogue must be established to carry on.

**What are your ambitions with your project?**

This is my very first film in which I put all my heart and soul. Now my wish is that it is shown as widely as possible. This experience gives me hope, strength and impetus to continue with new projects.

**Tell us something about your shooting? What pleasantly surprised you?**

I'm an actress prior to being a director and I had yet no experience in film directing. Moreover, this is a self-produced film with a very low budget and difficulties that it entails. Nevertheless, the commitment, motivation and trust of the team was a huge satisfaction. We had only one day to shoot. We got a huge fright when the cameraman stumbled with the camera that then fell to the ground. We stood there, astounded for several minutes, but quickly found a solution to continue shooting. It was intense but we had a good dynamic and a great atmosphere. The only moment of rest was the lunch break with a big pasta salad!

**For what group of spectators is your film targeted?**

The film is not aimed at a particular group of viewers because I think that its purpose is universal. I did not want it to be limited. I preferred to let everyone see it from their own perspective, according to their sensibility and experience.

**Why should distributors buy your film?**

Because we all have some Cecilia in us.



**How would you specify your work? What characterizes your film?**

It is an intimate film at a blistering pace due to the urgency of the decision-making process. The film centers on the past, present and future.

**Why did you decided to become a filmmaker?**

I have been writing since I was a little girl. I used to keep a diary that I carried with me everywhere, in which I romanticized every experience I had.

When I used to walk my father to work, I would sit in a corner for hours and write down everything I saw, the people who walked by, their behaviour, trying to figure out what their lives were like. This need for writing came up again two years ago and lead me to create my own project.

**Who is your role model?**

It is not possible for me to mention one single figure. Many people inspire me, whether it is in literature, painting or music... If you're inspired and nourished as an artist, it will transpire in your work. Louis de Funès is the main figure that made me want to do this job. As a child, I used to spend all my summers at my grandparents', and my grandfather had a whole shelf of films by De Funès, Bourvil and Fernandel, in particular. In the evening, we would watch them together as a family, like a ritual. These are wonderful memories. I was amazed by the intensity, the energy and generosity of De Funès' acting and while watching "Le Grand Restaurant" I remember telling myself that if this job existed, it was the most beautiful in the world.

**Which movies are your favorites? Why?**

My first cinematographic revelation, if I may say so, was Stephen Daldry's movie "Billy Elliot". It is still one of my favourite films, and I consider it to be a masterpiece. It's a film filled with hope in which a young boy escapes from his social condition through dance. It is moving, funny, well-written, greatly directed, with a superb cast and both a social and philosophical background.

I can also mention Jean-Paul Rappeneau's "Cyrano de Bergerac" which is a masterful screen adaptation of Edmond Rostand's theater play. The original dialogue written in verse was preserved. Besides, Gérard Depardieu's interpretation of Cyrano is breathtaking. It is a dazzling and poetic film with rich dialogues, brilliant actors, an excellent film direction and magnificent sets and costumes.

I could also add "The Bridges of Madison County" by Clint Eastwood which is simply the most beautiful romance film I have ever seen.

**Where do you look for inspiration for your films?**

I find inspiration through different ways. This involves personal experiences, readings, encounters... if they move me deeply, I find myself willing to tell them. It's like love at first sight.

**Which topics interest you the most?**

Life paths, human relationships.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement in your career?**

The freedom to make my own choices and follow through with my projects.

**What do you consider most important about filming?**

Trust in your team. You can have a low budget, unforeseen events, difficult shooting conditions, but if the relationship with each member of the team is solid and the desire is shared, you can face anything. Everyone will invest oneself fully and give its best to bring the project to a successful outcome. Choosing the right partners for the job is therefore essential.

**Which film technique of shooting do you consider the best?**

I think that you must be prepared well beforehand so that things can go as smoothly as possible when you start shooting. Planning is of utmost importance. You also need to communicate well with the team as well as find a balance between what you want to accomplish and the freedom given to the people you work with.

**How would you rate/What is your opinion about current filmmaking?**

I am confident and optimistic because there is a lot of talent out there, waiting to develop new ideas. Moreover, I think that we are coming to the end of a period and I am sure that new cinematographic styles will soon emerge. The only remaining barrier is finances, and this new generation should be given the means to express themselves.

**What can disappoint you in a movie?**

Mainly the script or poor acting.

**Who supports you in your film career?**

My family, even if it was not so easy at the beginning. Today they are by my side. I am also lucky to have close friends who are always there for me.



## Cécilia

Directed by Sophie Richez

Chased by her demons catching up, Cécilia is willing to quit performing. In the intimacy of a conversation, an update occurs. It seems decisive.

Learn more about [Cécilia](#)



### Cécilia - Official Trailer

Cannes Film Awards



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