

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Strand Releasing proudly releases on DVD on January 15, 2013

17 GIRLS

A film by Delphine and Muriel Coulin

Based on a headline-grabbing incident in the U.S., the film tells the story of a group of 17 teenage girls from the same high school who all decide to become pregnant at the same time. Their unexpected act is incomprehensible to the adults and the boys in their world.

Synopsis:

Inspired by events that took place in Massachusetts, Delphine and Muriel Coulin's provocative debut focuses on a group of bored teenage girls who all make an irrevocable pact. When Camille (Louise Grinberg, *The Class*) accidentally becomes pregnant, she encourages her friends and fellow high school classmates to follow suit. It's only a matter of time, before 17 girls in the high school are pregnant and the town is thrown into a world of chaos. Set in the writer/directors' small, seaside hometown of Lorient in Brittany, 17 GIRLS is a reflection on adolescence, body image, friendship and the perplexing realities of growing up.

Nominated: Best First Film, César Awards (French Oscars)

Official Selection

Critics' Week, Cannes Film Festival

City of Lights, City of Angels (Los Angeles French Film Festival)

San Francisco International Film Festival

Film Society of Lincoln Center's Rendez-Vous with French Cinema

"This French film, based on real events that took place in Gloucester, Mass., in 2008, has been relocated to Lorient, a shabby port city on the Brittany coast and the hometown of the filmmakers, who are sisters. The movie takes you inside the dreamy collective mentality of bored, mildly rebellious girls who look with horror at the lives of their mostly working-class parents. A core group makes a pact to have babies simultaneously and bring up their children together. The inner circle widens, and in short order 17 girls are pregnant." - Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*

Quotes:

"EXCEEDINGLY WELL-DONE... STRIKING... SMART... BELIEVABLE... RIVETING" - David Noh, *Film Journal International*

"ATMOSPHERIC... PROVOCATIVE... FASCINATING"
- Sheri Linden, *Los Angeles Times*

"TERRIFIC... REMARKABLE... STUNNING"
- Robin Clifford, *Reeling Reviews*

Country of Origin: France

Language: In French with English subtitles

Format: DVD

Stats: Color / Widescreen

Sound Format: 2.0 Stereo Sound

Running Time: 95 minutes

Genre: Drama

Product #: 3112-2

UPC: 7 12267 31122 4

Suggested Retail Price: \$27.99

Not Rated: This Film Contains Mature Subject Matter

DVD Street date: January 15th, 2013

Pre-book: December 18th, 2012

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DIRECTORS' NOTES

LORIENT

The moment we heard about this news item, we realized it was both intriguing and very telling about today's society. Indeed, this is something that could have happened in our hometown, Lorient: a working class city almost entirely destroyed during the Second World War, which in the fifties people believed would become a city of the future. Sixty years later, the port and the arsenal are in a crisis, and all hope has vanished. Lorient remains stuck in its past. Back when it was called L'Orient, the trading post, where ships left from its port to explore the globe; or later, the city of the resistance, praiseworthy during the last war, whose traces can still be found everywhere. The choices available for teenagers here for the future are few, who turn in circles before this horizon that is as much contemplated as a promise of what is possible, but offers little perspective - aside from dispelling boredom. Parents, teachers, none of society has found a way to offer another outlook on life to these girls whose future is already mapped out for them in advance: a high school diploma, a job, marriage, kids - in that order. But they are going to upset everything: they want it all, all at once.

FRIENDSHIP

They are going to rely upon one another to get what they want. Friendship is so strong at that age that it allows you to surmount obstacles and overcome your fears – even if it can also push you to make risky decisions, ones that you wouldn't normally have made if you had been alone. We grew up in Lorient, and we know by heart what life is about in this small town, where friendship and the desire for something and somewhere else are of major importance; this narrow existence faced with the Ocean's immensity, which is both a reassuring and worrisome presence: the promise of a horizon.

YOUTH

Camille and her friends are at an age when you are both too big and too little. An age when you have wonderful dreams, but you are still too young to do anything about them; and when you become an adult, when you should finally be able to make these dreams come true, you are often obliged to leave them behind, one after the other. Our girls are aware that the adults' lives in their little town aren't very enviable, and they don't see how

to make their own existences more thrilling. As a result, when one of them, their “leader” Camille, gets pregnant and all of a sudden has the impression that her life finally has meaning, she leads the others into doing the same. They share dreams both common and uncommon: they build a utopia. Nothing can stop these idealistic girls who decide to launch themselves into a great adventure, despite all opposition.

We decided to put the adults (parents, teachers, and even the school nurse, although she is right in the thick of what is happening) in the background: we wanted to have the film narrate the story through the teenager’s point of view. We didn’t want to explain, rather we wanted to observe these girls, watch them dream together, or doubt in the silence of their (actual) rooms.

THE BODY

Their illusions and disillusion allowed us to develop themes upon which we have worked for the short films we directed together: the body, femininity, age, time. Camille and her friends are at an age when life seems natural and infinite, an age when you start to think about the future, an age when also a certain relationship with the body starts to emerge... Their bodies are doubly altered: by time, and by pregnancy. They are not at ease with their bodies, which have begun to resemble adult bodies. At the same time they are prevented from entering adulthood, so they accelerate time and jump into the deep end of the pool: they take the step that will make grownups out of them. Their bodies give them power faced with adults and faced with boys. Their bodies are what allow them to attract attention, be noticed, grow up, define themselves, and even sometimes to belong to one clan or another. Camille discovers her identity, her otherness, and equally experiences separation: from others, from another. For pregnancy is also this: learning about fusion, and then separation. Inventing a new connection with others. But there is also the risk that their bodies, their only weapon, may turn against them in the end. The film is somewhat organic, in that it films the skin very closely, while showing an intuitive and necessarily abstract idea of life. Something escapes them: the ocean’s presence, or that of the sky, haunting and mysterious, is sometimes there to remind them. These girls, in this landscape, are caught right in the middle of minutiae and immensity.

THE CAST

We were present for each and every casting call, and we saw close to six hundred girls in order to choose seventeen of them. Louise Grinberg had a few lines of dialogue in *The Class* by Laurent Cantet, Roxane Duran a memorable role in *The White Ribbon* by Michael Haneke, and Esther Garrel has a role in Bertrand Bonello’s *House of Tolerance* in official competition at Cannes this year. But the majority of the girls had never set foot on a movie set. Yara Pilartz and Juliette Darche had never acted before. Their freshness, their will to grow suddenly, their confidence and the bond they built during the course of the film are perceptible. The film was shot in chronological order: we watch them

grow.

THE LINK BETWEEN COMEDY AND DRAMA

We wanted to tell this story of friendship and femininity in a tone that was both serious (for the way we look at these girls and their dreams, which are greater than they are, remains melancholy) and funny, because the adolescent years are also like that: going from desperation to bursting out in laughter in just a few seconds, as long as one of your friends is by your side.

THE CREW

Jean-Louis Vialard, the cinematographer (who worked, among others, with Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Baltasar Kormakur and Christophe Honoré) lit our 17 girls in such a way that we pass from a dull and gray universe at the beginning of the film to a more contrasted image, with clear-cut colors, bringing us closer to a fairytale-like universe. The light equipment (shot in Canon 1D camera) allowed us, among other things, to be discreet around the girls, and to use a second camera, operated by Muriel.

Sound, which was recorded by Olivier Mauvezin (who has also worked on films by Laurent Cantet, Mathieu Amalric, Cédric Kahn...) and mixed by Jean-Pierre Laforce (Michael Haneke, Bruno Dumont, Laurent Cantet...) ended up being essential, although difficult at times to handle: recording seventeen teenagers, making do with the ocean (often noisy in Brittany, and which rises between takes...) The sea's haunting presence, these feminine atmospheres, the silence of recesses, or their singing at the top of their lungs, define every moment of their teenage universe. The music was also chosen as very specific to their world: we wanted the soundtrack to be more rock (Blood Red Shoes, Tricky), close to the girls (Izia, Keren Elson) and to be varied according to their moods (DJ Chloé, Devendra Banhart).

Finally, all of this was made possible by our producer, Denis Freyd, who has produced the new films of Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, the film of Pierre Schoeller in Cannes this year and also films by Ursula Meier, Mariana Otero, Patricia Mazuy.

THE DIRECTORS

Delphine and Muriel Coulin have directed five short films, including “Sisyphé” (Best Drama award Los Angeles Film Festival), “Souffle” (Critics prize, selected for Cannes Critic’s Week). Delphine also writes novels while Muriel directs documentaries.

CAST

LOUISE GRINBERG
JULIETTE DARCHE
ROXANE DURAN
ESTHER GARREL
YARA PILARTZ
SOLENE RIGOT
NOEMIE LVOVSKY
FLORENCE THOMASSIN
CARLO BRANDT
FREDERIC NOAILLE
ARTHUR VERRET

Camille
Julia
Florence
Flavie
Clémentine
Mathilde
School Nurse
Camille's mother
Head of the School
Florian
Tom

CREW

Written and Directed by
Cinematography
Sound Design
Set Design
Edited by
Sound Editing

Sound Mix
Costumes
Make-up
Hair

DELPHINE & MURIEL COULIN
JEAN-LOUIS VIALARD (A.F.C.)
OLIVIER MAUVEZIN
BENOÎT PFAUWADEL
GUY LECORNE
VINCENT MONTROBERT,
JULEN BOURDEAU
JEAN-PIERRE LAFORCE
DOROTHÉE GUIRAUD
SYLVIE AÏD-DENISOT
FOUZIA HARLEMAN

Casting ALEXANDRE NAZARIAN,
AGATHE HASSENFORDER (A.R.D.A.)
First Assistant Director GUILLAUME HUIN
Continuity ÉLODI VAN BEUREN
Location Manager MICHAËL ERMOGENI
Line Producer ANDRÉ BOUVARD
Produced by DENIS FREYD
Production Company ARCHIPEL 35
Co-produced by ARTE FRANCE CINÉMA
With the participation of CANAL+, CINÉCINÉMA &
ARTE FRANCE
With the support of CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE &
RÉGION BRETAGNE IN PARTICIPATION
WITH CNC
In association with BANQUE POPULAIRE IMAGES 11, CINÉMAGE 5, UNI ÉTOILE 8
& SOFICINÉMA 7
Developed with the support of MEDIA PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION &
SOFICA COFINOVA

**If you'd like more information about this film please call Samantha Klinger at
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