



WHO IS ODA JAUNE

?

a documentary
by Kamilla Pfeffer

GER 2016/ 75 min/ DCP – 25fps/16:9/ 5.1 sound/
German & French dialogues with German & English subtitles

Kunsthochschule
für Medien Köln
Academy of
Media Arts Cologne

gebrueder**beetz**
FILMPRODUKTION

Film und Medien
Stiftung NRW

WideHouse

german
●●● films



The German-Bulgarian painter Oda Jaune is not a woman of many words. But the way she says things sounds quite lovely and special. She speaks softly, but is loud in her paintings. To approach this process of finding words and images, Kamilla Pfeffer, student at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne (KHM), gives us a very intimate portrait of the artist in her graduation film 'Wer ist Oda Jaune?' ('Who is Oda Jaune?'; prod: Gebrüder Beetz Filmproduktion, co-prod: KHM, Cologne).

Quote:

Press Release PERSPEKTIVE DEUTSCHES KINO, 66th BERLINALE, Dec 21, 2015



SYNOPSIS

She paints bodies that are mutilated and disfigured, naked and sexless, faceless. Disturbing paintings, painful paintings. And she paints faces radiating happiness, people in paradise, people who can fly. Tender, touching paintings. Born in Bulgaria in 1979, Oda Jaune studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, becomes a master scholar of Jörg Immendorff. And she becomes his wife.

After Immendorff's death in 2007, she leaves Germany to start over somewhere else. She moves to Paris, finds a studio in the city – and she finds a gallerist: Daniel Templon, who already exhibited Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. And now: Oda Jaune.

The filmmaker Kamilla Pfeffer, fascinated by Jaune's paintings, wants to meet the artist, make her the center of her first feature documentary. But already getting in touch with Oda Jaune proves to be a challenge. Almost two years and several meetings pass before she agrees to being in the film. Finally, they settle on a seemingly simple plan: over the course of several weeks the director and her cinematographer will join Oda Jaune in the studio and capture the process of creating new paintings for an upcoming exhibition. But it soon becomes apparent that the nature of what is supposed to be captured makes it almost impossible not to destroy that very thing in the process...

The filmmaker's quest to find out who Oda Jaune is takes a turn, the new strategy involving inspiration from Marcel Proust's famous questionnaire as well as encounters with others reflecting on Jaune's paintings, including actor Lars Eidinger, director Thomas Ostermeier and fellow artist Jonathan Meese.

'Who is Oda Jaune?' is a film about an artist and her creations; a personal, increasingly intimate portrait of a young woman who had to leave her past behind in order to find her future.



Director's statement: Getting closer

It took me a long time to finally get closer to Oda Jaune. I had come across a book of her watercolors in a Cologne art bookstore in the fall of 2011. Pastel colors, beautiful, tender – at least at first glance. On further inspection there was more to the harmony, the seemingly idyllic scenes. Torn skin, open hearts, crying, disfigured, dying creatures. Strangely aesthetic. Images both irritating and touching that need you to look more closely to "unlock" them. Images that stick with me, fascinate me, move me, for days. Who is the artist painting these scenes? I want to meet her, maybe even make a film...

A few days later I send an email to her agent. She promptly replies: "Oda Jaune is not available for a film project at this time." I send letters to the gallery in Paris representing her – no answer. Then, months later, I hear that there's an exhibition in Belgium, in Namur. I get into the car and go. And I find her there – looking rather lost in between all the people that have come because of her. A petite person, dark hair, fair skin, no makeup. Holding on to her glass of Champaign, with both hands. She seems relieved when I go to talk to her. She's not very good at the usual small talk required at openings, she says. She's impressed that I've come all this way just to see her. Still, she's reserved when it comes to my idea of making a film. "I'm too young for that kind of thing." But she gives me her email address. I write to her. Several times. And I wait.

Five months have passed before we finally have a longer conversation, in a café in Paris in September 2012. She likes the fact that we're almost the same age, I am 30 and she is a little less than three years older. She asks if I've read Balzac's "The Woman of Thirty", tells me that it is set in Paris, a novel about a young woman demanding her right to happiness and love. What is happiness for her? "When my paintings manage to turn something that's considered ugly into beauty, when I manage to make people look at something with love instead of disgust." She wants to know if I am married. Yes, I tell her. What does my husband do for a living? – He's a filmmaker. – Older? – Yes. – Much older? – 38 years, I tell her. That makes her laugh.

The next day she invites me over to her studio, tucked away in a central Paris courtyard. She opens the door wearing her work clothes: black pants with paint all over them, t-shirt, sneakers. A room with lots of natural light. A narrow wooden staircase next to the main door leads up to a small gallery overlooking the studio. Downstairs the white walls are covered in big, unfinished paintings: a gelatinous fairy-being, a pregnant man...

"My characters emerge while I work on them, they keep changing", Oda says, "I never know what they'll be in the end." No matter if using oil on canvas or watercolor on paper, she always works without models or sketches, following only her mood and vague ideas. It's important, she says, "not to get caught up in reality, to simply reproduce it, but to look past the appearance of things, to bring to light what lies beneath the surface." Once she's started, nothing gets thrown out or put aside, not one sheet of paper. "Every painting is a fight, a process, unpredictable..."

When I bring up again my film idea, she tells me that she just turned down a request from a TV program. Why? "Because they were going to portray me as the widow, yet again." I want to know if Jörg Immendorff, her late husband, is off-limits as a topic to her. "No, it's an important part of me", but she doesn't want to be reduced to it.

In March of 2013, almost 17 months after first trying to get in touch with her, she agrees: I will come and film her, she will take me along into the world of her paintings, and let me paint my own, intimate image of her on film. After a long phone conversation one night she sends me a text message: "I'm happy that we're making a film together:) good night, oda".

by Kamilla Pfeffer



The result of this collaboration – the documentary **'Who is Oda Jaune?'** – is being described almost three years later (February 2016) in the catalog of **the 66th BERLINALE** as follows:

... A film biography about a young artist as successful as she is shy? The painter would not have allowed that. Nor was it sought by the filmmaker. Instead, we are given an account of a complicated encounter. During their collaboration the protagonist repeatedly has qualms, withdraws and refuses to comply. For her part, the filmmaker deploys cautious manoeuvres in order to make visible something of Oda Jaune's fragile act of painting, without damaging it in the process nor resorting to trite illustration.

BIOGRAPHY (DIRECTOR)

KAMILLA PFEFFER was born in Wiesbaden (Germany) in 1982. She studied political science and Romance philology in Mainz and Strasbourg before beginning her studies in documentary filmmaking and photography at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne in 2009. 'Who is Oda Jaune?' is her graduation film.

Since 2009 she has also been working as a freelance journalist (publishing in Süddeutsche Zeitung and Chrismon, among others) and as a script consultant for documentary films.

FILMOGRAPHY

‚WHO IS ODA JAUNE?‘ (2016, documentary film, 75 min), director + sound
‚MENSCHEN, KEINE NUMMERN MEHR – SCHÜLER BESUCHEN AUSCHWITZ‘
(2012, report, WDR, 45 min), Co-director, with Felix Kuballa
‚DAS ARCHIV – WIE KÖLN SEIN GEDÄCHTNIS WIEDERFINDET‘ (2010, documentary, WDR, 45 min), co-director, with Werner Kubny

CREW

director	Kamilla Pfeffer
camera	Magdalena Hutter
editing	Rune Schweitzer, Stefanie Kosik
dramatic adviser	Felix Kuballa
music	Markus Aust
sound mixing	Ralf Schipke
color grading	Ewald Hentze
supervisors	Prof. Dietrich Leder Prof. Dr. Sabine Rollberg M.A. Andreas Altenhoff
executive producer	Christian Beetz
production	gebrueder beetz filmproduktion, Academy of Media Arts Cologne & Kamilla Pfeffer
funded by	Film- und Medienstiftung NRW

CONTACT

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Christian Beetz
gebrueder beetz filmproduktion Köln
Breite Straße 108
50667 Köln

E-mail: info@gebrueder-beetz.de
www.gebrueder-beetz.de

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln/
Academy of Media Arts Cologne
Peter-Welter-Platz 2
50676 Köln

contact via:

Press and Public Relations
Ute Dilger
E-mail: ute.dilger@khm.de
Telefon: +49 (0) 221 - 20189 - 330
Fax + 49 (0) 221 - 20189 - 17

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Kamilla Pfeffer
Maternusstr. 4
50678 Köln

E-mail: kamillapfeffer@yahoo.de
Telefon: +49 (0) 151 - 156 - 79 - 720

WORLD SALES

WIDE HOUSE

9, rue Bleue – Staircase A – 3rd Floor
75009 - Paris | FRANCE // door code 4580 B

Anais Clanet – General Manager - +33 6 83 22 18 06
Elise Cochin – International Sales - +33 6 70 00 56 46
Dounia Georgeon – Festivals Manager - +33 6 09 67 43 46