



**Monday, September 10, 7:30 pm**

*Reviewed by Kenneth Turan / LA Times Not Rated 134 Mins.*

"The Guardians" is an intimate French epic, elegantly made and quietly emotional, a family story filled with characters whose lives we sink into, feeling the hope, the sadness, the sorrow and the joy right along with those on the screen.

The rare wartime story in which women's lives take center stage, it stars the usually urbane and sophisticated Nathalie Baye as a farm matriarch. The setting is World War I, from 1915 to 1920 in an area of rural France where all able-bodied men have gone to the front, leaving their wives to hold this traditional world together.

Key players, aside from Baye, are veteran director Xavier Beauvois and, in her screen debut, a riveting actress named Iris Bry who was planning on a career in library science until a chance meeting with the film's casting director changed everything.

Beauvois, whose previous films include the Baye-starring "Le Petit Lieutenant" and the superlative Cesar-winning "Of Gods and Men," is a quiet visionary who thinks stories of subdued emotional conflict are as good as it gets.

Here, working for the first time from a novel (published in 1924 by Ernest Pérochon, a veteran of the war), Beauvois and his co-writers Frédérique Moreau and Marie-Julie Maille slowly reveal what war, the eternal "sower of chaos," did to one family and its world.

It's not just the things that change that are compelling, the way women are able to take charge and get it done on their own, but the things that don't, the way that not even tragedy can erase clannish narrow-mindedness. Yet, above all, there is still hope.

Beautifully shot by Caroline Champetier in the picturesque Limousin area — a part of France that has apparently not changed much in the last century — "The Guardians" uses the grace of the landscape as a constant.

That and the backbreaking, unceasing nature of farm work — the rituals of the rural year from planting seeds to milking cows and harvesting wheat. Capturing these agricultural rhythms is something "The Guardians" turns out to be very good at.

Beauvois, who says in the press notes that he considers "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" to be "a genuine war film, not showing the war itself but its effects on those who participate indirectly," is not quite so oblique here.

Rather, he starts his film with its one and only military shot: a view of piles of combat casualties, a reminder of what is consuming the world's energy and attention and causing the domestic dramas that play out at home.

The first shot of the Paridier farm shows a grey-haired woman determinedly plowing a field, not a usual shot in prewar France. But

these are new times, and Madame Hortense (Baye — all but unrecognizable, and spectacular) is going to help.

Besides the agricultural year, "The Guardians" is organized around consecutive on-leave visits from the three men who are crucial to the lives of Madame Hortense and her daughter Solange (Laura Smet, Baye's real-life daughter).

First to arrive is Hortense's oldest son Constant (Nicholas Giraud), a former schoolteacher with a gentle demeanor who talks of "two years of hell, some people went mad" and how "after the war, it will be different."

Encouraged by Constant, Hortense decides to hire another person to help around the farm, and ends up, rather reluctantly, with red-haired 20-year-old orphan Francine.

As persuasively played by Bry, who seems to have stepped right out of history into the role, Francine is shy but formidable, someone who doesn't fear hard work and wants desperately to belong.

Next to arrive is Clovis (Olivier Rabourdin), Solange's husband, disturbed enough by what he's seen to be drinking more heavily than usual.

Finally, and most disturbing to the careful equilibrium the women have constructed on their own, is Hortense's next son Georges (Cyril Descours), young and handsome and with some of the entitlement that goes with being a mother's favorite.



How all these people and others — including clueless and disruptive American troops and Marguerite (Mathilde Viseux-Ely), Clovis's daughter from his first marriage — interact with each other within a framework that is centuries old but already changing is the heart of what "The Guardians" is about. If you let it weave its spell, it won't let you go.

In French with English subtitles.

## TIVOLI THEATRE

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# Summer 1993

A film by Carla Simón

**Monday, September 24, 7:30 pm**

Reviewed by Gary Goldstein / LA Times Not Rated 98 Mins.

Writer-director Carla Simón, whose gentle, poetic drama "Summer 1993" reflects on the time she went to live with her uncle's family after the death of her mother, offers a relatable array of candid emotions and observations that feel distinctly culled from real life.

This verisimilitude, amplified by the film's unhurried pace and naturalistic shooting and acting styles, slowly draws us into the journey of Simón's proxy, 6-year-old Frida (Laia Artigas), as she leaves her Barcelona home — and loving circle of aunts and grandparents — for the scenic Catalonia farm where her mother's brother, Esteve (David Verdaguer), lives with wife Marga (Bruna Cusí) and their 4-year-old daughter, Anna (Paula Robles). (The movie was shot in the actual place where Simón was sent when she was 6.)



The wary and aching Frida, mystified by her rural surroundings and replacement family — as well as by the hushed circumstances of her mother's AIDS-related demise — at first feels like the "odd girl out" despite Esteve and the more circumspect Marga's efforts to treat her like their own child.

Marga, sympathetic to Frida and Esteve's loss but primarily protective of Anna, can't help keeping her niece somewhat at arm's length, not entirely convinced that Frida isn't a budding bad seed — that is, her mother's daughter.

Meanwhile, Frida, in her own low-key way, can be something of a brat, acting out and creating bits of perhaps unintended havoc, particularly around Anna, who's become a sister and new best friend. A dubious accident that lands Anna's arm in a cast does little to burnish Frida's reputation, though Anna still seems happier than not for her playful company.

The 1993-set film, whose sentiments, if not cultural specifics, are relatively timeless, unfolds as if in a series of mind's-eye snapshots as Simón moves us through Frida's pivotal summer.

Whether beholding chickens and livestock, learning to distinguish her leafy greens, listening in on adult conversation, or viewing the vibrant costume festival of Gegants i Capgrossos (giants and big heads) in the village square, Frida maintains both a cool reserve

and a wide-eyed interest as she searches for her place amid all she sees and hears.

It all makes for a uniquely vivid and evocative kind of storytelling reminiscent of such other child-centric European portraits as the highly praised 1973 drama "The Spirit of the Beehive" and 1996's award-winning "Ponette." As in those inward films, "Summer" lives, breathes and succeeds on the expressive, instinctive work of its young lead actress. Artiga, reportedly chosen out of nearly 1,000 auditioning children, is indeed a find.

Ultimately, this is a memorable look at our desire to love and feel safe, to connect and belong — and the unexpected ways in which families can reshape and grow.

In Catalan, with English subtitles.

# anim8

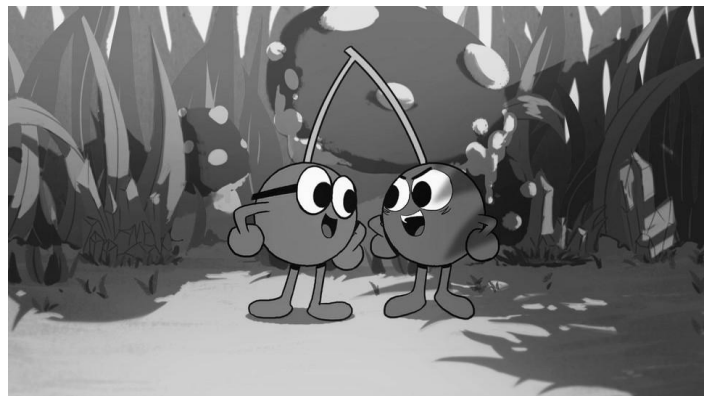
## Student Film Festival



**Monday, October 15, 5:30 pm**

Please join us as we feature the winning entries from the 16th Annual Student Film Festival. Participants were required to submit an animated film with a running time of 8 minutes or less. Over 50 submissions from 10 countries around the world were received and evaluated by our panel of accomplished judges, Bob Fritz, John Mostacci, and Tony Venezia. These individuals were selected based on their solid background in the world of film. Between them, they possess over 150 years of experience working in film production and education.

The festival's top selections will be screened and awards will be distributed at this special program.



# McQUEEN

**Monday, October 15, 7:30**

*Reviewed by Peter Travers / Rolling Stone*    **Rated R**    111 Mins.

Lee Alexander McQueen was just 40 when he hanged himself at his London home in 2010, on the eve of his mother's funeral. His suicide made headlines. But it was the revolution he started in fashion that is still being felt and fiercely debated – you don't escape censure when you tag your early 1990's collections with names like, "Jack the Ripper Stalks His Victims" and "Highland Rape." The designer insisted his work reflected the brutality of the world without colluding with it. The argument about that still rages.



In their unmissable documentary *McQueen*, directors Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettedgui don't just pay tribute to the groundbreaking couture rebel and his fervent desire to rip down old forms and create new ones; they also celebrate the damn-the-torpedos, full-speed-ahead ecstasy of the creative process. What made this man tick? How did an overweight, gay misfit from London's mean streets ever manage to kick his way into the posh ranks of the fashion establishment? And how did he so consistently leave its gatekeepers both revolted and riveted by the savage beauty of his work? It's a work with as many questions as answers.

McQueen believed it was his duty to shock audiences into consciousness, not just about fashion but the world it reflects. The documentary takes the same approach in their film, using archived footage of the maverick at work and play, along with interviews with those who knew him best. It seems odd that McQueen's longtime stylist Katy England isn't featured and nothing is said about George Forsyth, his deceased, "unofficial" husband. And yet a full portrait emerges, including the facts that the designer had been sexually abused as a child by his sister's husband and that cocaine helped squash his demons.

But as the man himself said, "If you want to know me, look at the work." The filmmakers took their subject at his word, filling their

documentary with shock sequences from runway shows that tell a story more thrillingly alive than any biographical detail. If you're new to McQueen's extraordinary conceptual collections and torn-up tartan outfits, prepare to be rocked. The film is divided into five chapters, called "tapes," using animation of the skull motif of the McQueen design house to suggest the jolting transformations happening inside.

The son of a Scottish cabby and a beloved mother, Joyce, who taught social science and encouraged ambition, Lee – the youngest of six siblings – dropped out of high school with a still unearned self confidence. Talking himself into an apprenticeship with Saville Row tailors, he quickly learned the rules of the rag trade, mostly so he could break them later – the kind of cheeky talent, say, who thought nothing of sewing indecent words into the lining of suit meant for Prince Charles. It was Isabella Blow, a style influencer, who took the youngster under her wing and suggested he use his middle name, Alexander, to take the edge off his reputation as "the hooligan of English fashion." McQueen did a stint working at upper levels with Givenchy – he labeled the fashion house "irrelevant" – and toned down his wild side. But that only fueled his flirtations with transgression in his non-work for hire, which led to a 1998 show featured Aimee Mullins, a double amputee model walking the runaway on wooden legs.

What the film does so movingly as a portrait is show the isolation that comes with creative success. There was strain on his relationship with Isabella, who killed herself by swallowing weedkiller in 2007. McQueen's shows grew more disturbingly creative: VOSS, his 2001 Spring/Summer collection, included a glass box which featured mirrors that reflected a stunned audience and inside a naked model wearing a gas mask as moths flitted about. He was an artist who didn't follow trends or sacrifice craft to commercialism, translating his own psyche into avant-garde forms of expression that took fashion to the next level. And McQueen is an empathetic, ravishing and scorchingly outspoken look at why, eight years after his death, he still leaves us transfixed.



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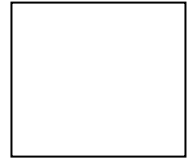
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*Manohla Dargis, The New York Times!*

Monday, September 10 at 7:30 pm

"A delicately crafted, moving filmic memoir. True and captivating."

*Jonathan Holland, The Hollywood Reporter*

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**anim8**  
Student Film Festival

16th Annual Student Film Festival

Monday, October 15 at 5:30 pm

"A brilliant yet tortured genius vividly comes through in this piercingly intimate documentary."

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