

URSULA

A film by Marta Savina



ostlicht
filmproduktion

Isola di Ventotene e S. Stefano vista dal Semaforo

In the darkest days of World War 2, an island of political confinement in the Mediterranean Sea encloses the destiny of a united Europe. A group of detained visionary antifascists secretly fight the fascist regime, overcoming personal and political hurdles, until a new burning desire will challenge their unbreakable friendship.

Synopsys

1941. We land on the island of Ventotene, a stretch of land in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, just few miles off the Italian coast.

From the outside, Ventotene is an island of exile, a still, quiet place full of rules and constraints, where many political dissidents have been imprisoned by the Mussolini's regime for their provocative free thoughts and actions. However, from the inside, the island conceals a buzzing and intense political fierceness, full of passion and bravery. A group of young intellectuals is secretly joining forces to fight for a better Europe. Among them, Eugenio Colorni and Altiero Spinelli, two inseparable friends who manage to rejoin in adversity, and Eugenio's wife, Ursula Hirschmann, there to collaborate in clandestine anti-fascist activities.

She arrives to Ventotene with her child to visit her confined husband. It will be during her stay on the island that Ursula discovers the new burning passion for Altiero, Eugenio's best friend and comrade-in-arms. Ursula finds herself standing at a crossroad, torn both due to the dramatic political challenges they are all facing and her conflicting emotions.

On the one hand, there is her dear Eugenio to whom she practically owes her life (it was Eugenio indeed to smuggle the Jew Ursula from Nazi Germany) and who happens to be in a difficult moment of his life: the weight of the political confinement on the island is triggering a growing personal crisis.

And the marriage with Ursula seems to have come to an end, although he still truly loves her.

The friendship that binds him to Spinelli has grown in these years of common detention, their bond is strengthened by political militancy and even the growing feeling between Ursula and Altiero doesn't weaken it.

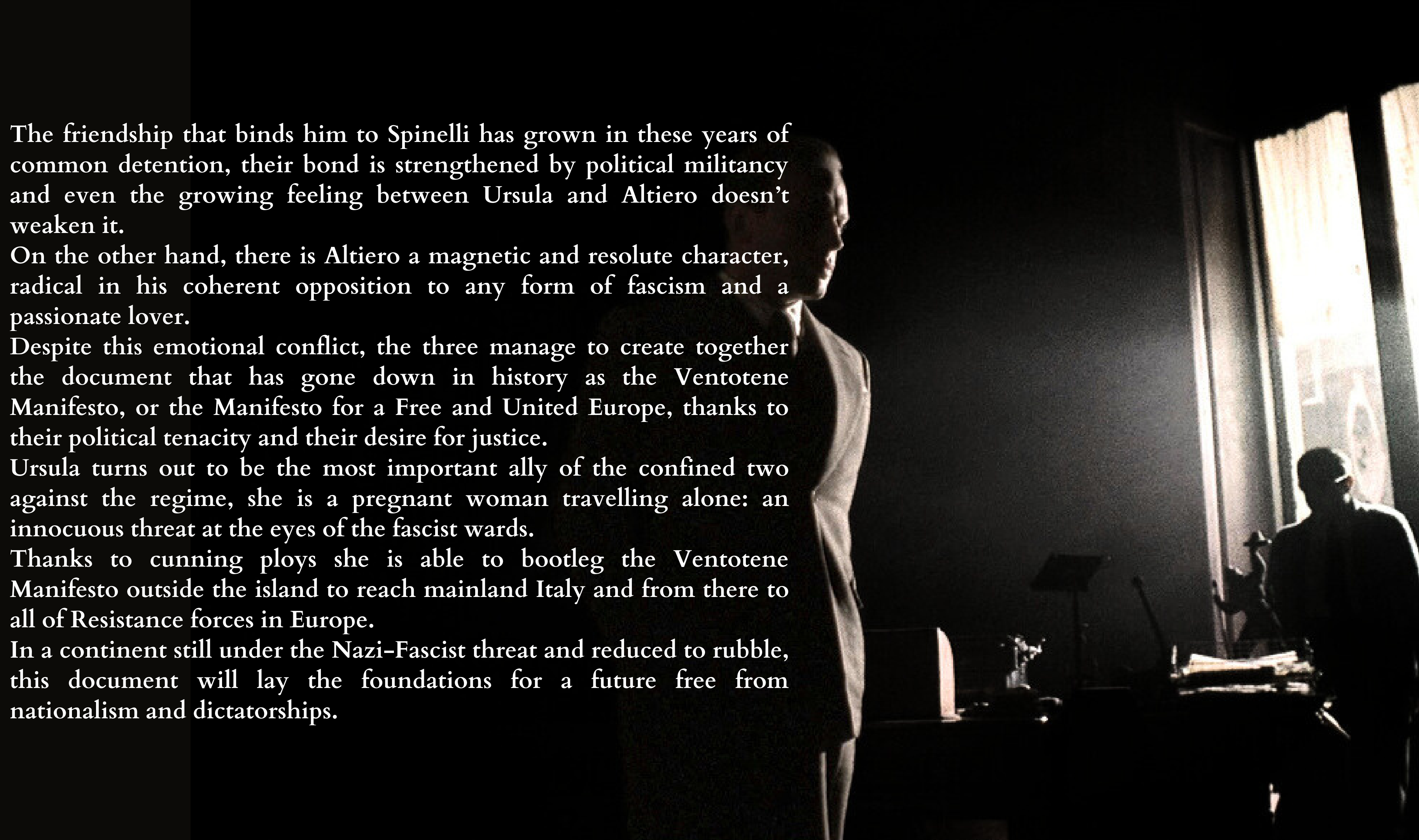
On the other hand, there is Altiero a magnetic and resolute character, radical in his coherent opposition to any form of fascism and a passionate lover.

Despite this emotional conflict, the three manage to create together the document that has gone down in history as the Ventotene Manifesto, or the Manifesto for a Free and United Europe, thanks to their political tenacity and their desire for justice.

Ursula turns out to be the most important ally of the confined two against the regime, she is a pregnant woman travelling alone: an innocuous threat at the eyes of the fascist wards.

Thanks to cunning ploys she is able to bootleg the Ventotene Manifesto outside the island to reach mainland Italy and from there to all of Resistance forces in Europe.

In a continent still under the Nazi-Fascist threat and reduced to rubble, this document will lay the foundations for a future free from nationalism and dictatorships.



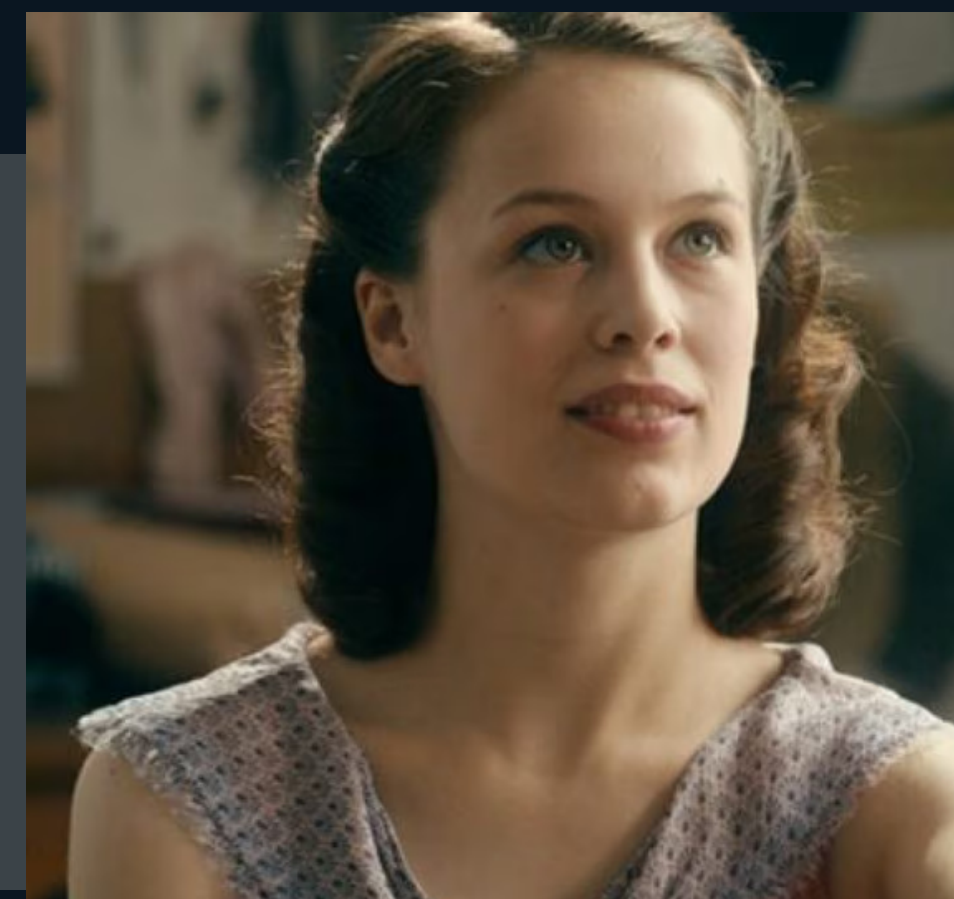
Cast

PAULA BEER

as Ursula Hirschmann

Paula Beer is a German actress. She first became known as a teenager for her main role in Chris Kraus' 2010 film *Poll*.

Her breakthrough was in 2016, when she starred in François Ozon's *Frantz* (2016), for which she won the Marcello Mastroianni Award for best young performer at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival. She won the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the 70th Berlin International Film Festival for her performance as Undine Wibeau in Christian Petzold's *Undine*.



ALESSANDRO BORGHI

as Eugenio Colorni

Alessandro Borghi is an Italian actor. He has appeared in more than twenty films since 2006.

He is part of the main cast of *Suburra* and *Suburra: Blood on Rome*. He won the David di Donatello for Best Actor in 2019 for his portrayal of building surveyor Stefano Cucchi, a victim of police brutality, in the film *On My Skin*.



LUCA MARINELLI

as Altiero Spinelli

Luca Marinelli is an Italian actor.

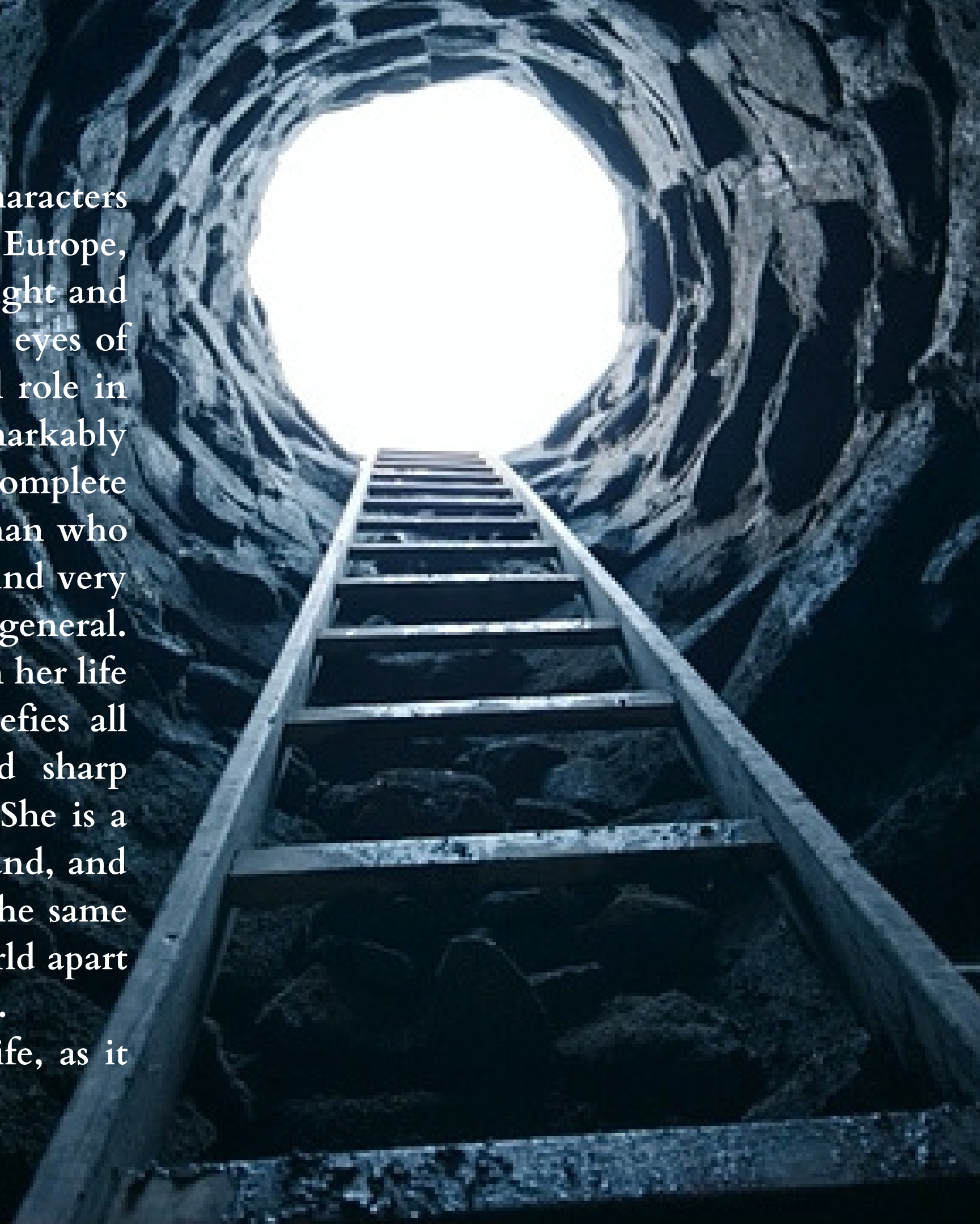
He is best known for the roles of Andrea in *The Great Beauty* (2013), Cesare in *Don't Be Bad* (2015), The Gipsy in *They Call Me Jeeg* (2016), the title character of *Martin Eden* (2019), Nicky in *The Old Guard* (2020), and the title character of *Diabolik* (2021).



Director Statement

As humans of the XXI Century, we struggle – I believe – to let go of our privileges and freedoms in order to defend a higher ideal, or belief. We have become comfortable in our relatively easy lives, and we rather compromise than upend our lifestyle to fight for a belief, or higher good. This is the first reason why I latched on to Ursula story, and was deeply excited by it: this is the story of a very young woman who lived during the most crucial time of recent history, and had the courage and the strength to risk everything for what she believed in. Ursula's story has the characteristics of great classics that have defined the history of cinema: ordinary people who, caught in the turmoil of history, do extraordinary things. It is a classic coming of age story, told through the eyes of a woman who finds herself at the very core of the World's greatest changes and political upheaval – while at the same time, facing a personal turning point in her journey towards womanhood. This is the substance of which great classics like Casablanca are made of. Both the personal stakes and the external ones are so high that is impossible not to fall for this story.

URSULA it is also the story of how a relationship between three characters shifts and changes forever against the backdrop of a changing Europe, which is transitioning from the horrors of WWII into an era of light and hope. What makes this story special, is that it is told through the eyes of the woman – Ursula Hirschmann – who will play a fundamental role in writing a new chapter for European history, and makes for a remarkably charismatic and enticing character. Ursula is a true and complete revolutionary: as an antifascist activist, as a mother, and as a woman who was gorgeous and knew it – which is something that I love and find very daring, not just for a woman of her time, but for any woman in general. Ursula loves her six daughters, but does not erase everything else in her life when she becomes a mother. As a character, she constantly defies all stereotypes and tropes, and is animated by a great wit and sharp intelligence, without this taking away from her emotional core. She is a woman that falls deeply in love with a man who is not her husband, and finds herself in the middle of a major personal conflict while at the same time dealing with a global political conflict that is ripping the world apart during WWII. It is impossible not to be captivated by her character. It would be for me an absolute privilege to bring this story to life, as it really has all the elements of great cinema.



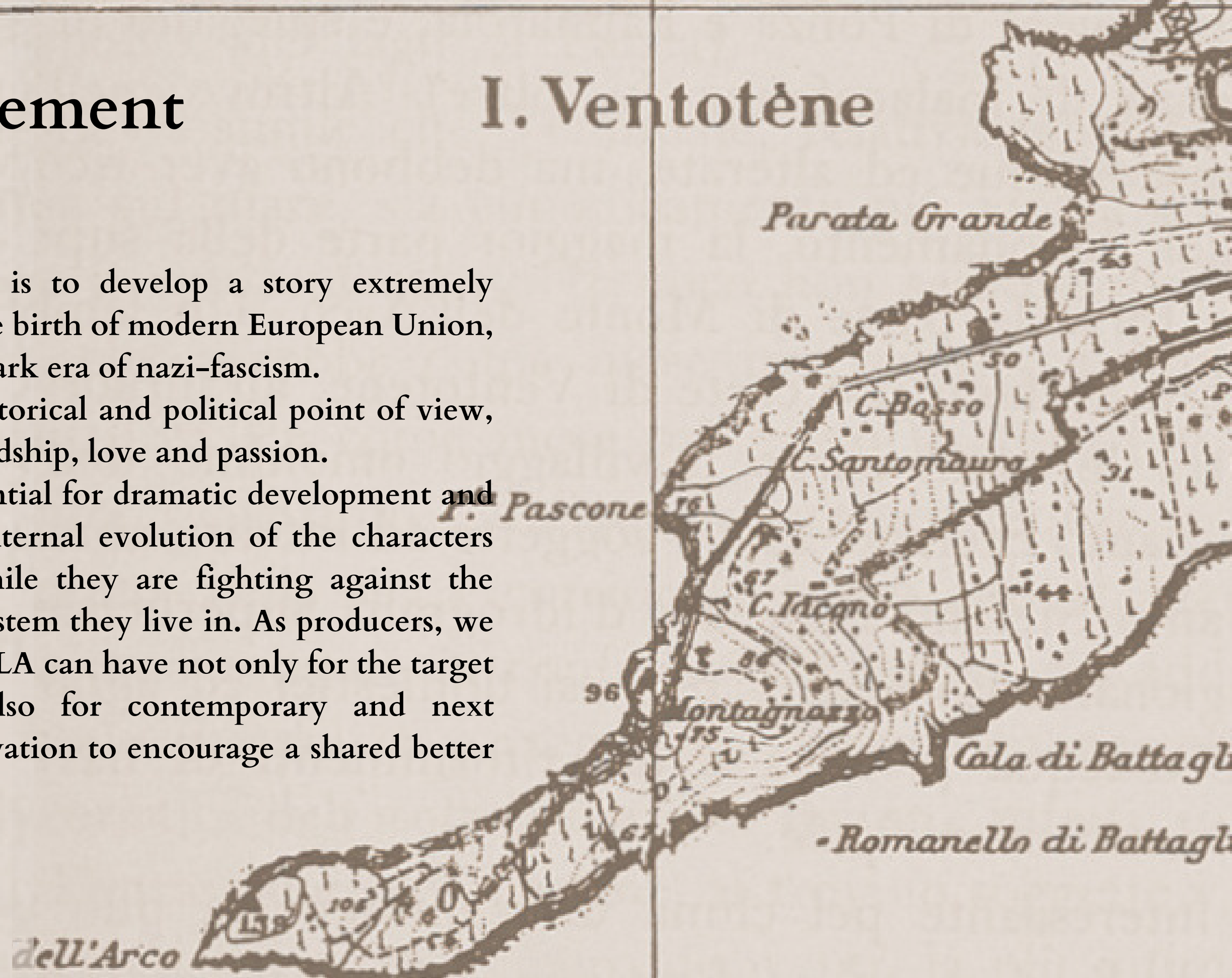
Producer statement

The idea behind the project URSULA is to develop a story extremely contemporary which is able to open to the birth of modern European Union, deeply rooted in the liberation from the dark era of nazi-fascism.

Despite being a relevant story from a historical and political point of view, URSULA consists also in a feature of friendship, love and passion.

A deeply humane tale with a strong potential for dramatic development and cultural impact, revolving around the internal evolution of the characters that deals with their own emotions while they are fighting against the harshly oppressive totalitarian political system they live in. As producers, we believe in the inspiring power that URSULA can have not only for the target audience this story will reach but also for contemporary and next generations. Let this film become a motivation to encourage a shared better future.

I. Ventotène



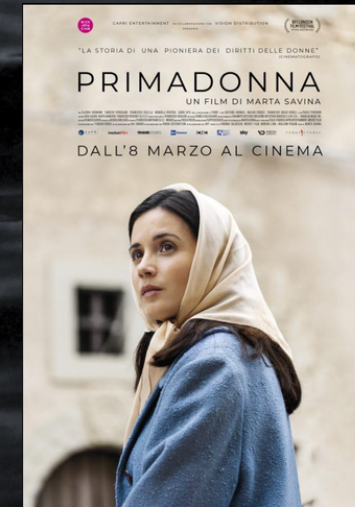
Director/ writer



Marta Savina is interested in complex contemporary women's issues. She lived and worked in London, later moving to the United States where she graduated from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) with an MFA in directing.

Marta Savina is interested in complex contemporary women's issues. She lived and worked in London, later moving to the United States where she graduated from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) with an MFA in directing. Her short film Viola, Franca (2017), which has already won numerous awards including an Emmy for best dramatic film, was nominated for a David di Donatello and premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, then continued its journey with major stops such as the Venice Film Festival and the Raindance Film Festival. Primadonna is her first feature film.

Filmography



2022 - Primadonna



BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL 2022



2022 - Summertime -
Final season



2017 - Short Viola, Franca

TRIBECA
FILM
FESTIVAL

RAIN DANCE
PROUD FOUNDERS OF BIFA

Producer statement

The idea behind the project URSULA is to develop a story extremely contemporary which is able to open to the birth of modern European Union, deeply rooted in the liberation from the dark era of nazi-fascism.

Despite being a relevant story from a historical and political point of view, URSULA consists also in a feature of friendship, love and passion. A deeply humane tale with a strong potential for dramatic development and cultural impact, revolving around the internal evolution of the characters that deals with their own emotions while they are fighting against the harshly oppressive totalitarian political system they live in. As producers, we believe in the inspiring power that URSULA can have not only for the target audience this story will reach but also for contemporary and next generations. Let this film become a motivation to encourage a shared better future.

Company Profile

MIR Cinematografica

MIR Cinematografica is an independent film production company established in Milan in 2005. Since then, MIR produced many fiction feature films and creative documentaries in association with main national and foreign partners, with the most important TV networks and with the support of national and international film funds.

For its activity, the company got many awards in Italy and abroad : most recently, **A GENERATION IN DANGER**, creative documentary by Marco Turco, won the “Nastro D’Argento” for best Documentary film, prestigious achievement awarded by the syndicate of Italian journalists. In recent years our productions have also been awarded The Golden Camera at the Rome Int’l Film Festival and the Jury Grand Prix at Torino Film Festival, and have been selected at the most important international film festivals (IDFA, TFF, Venice, Locarno) and among the finalists for the “David di Donatello”. Moreover, MIR is the first italian company awarded with Focal Award in 2008, the prestigious british award for documentaries theatrically released.

Ostlicht Film

Ostlicht Filmproduktion GmbH is a film production based in Weimar (Thuringia), Germany, founded by producers and executive partners Marcel Lenz and Guido Schwab.

Ostlicht has a long-standing track record of producing international co-productions, with main focus on European co-productions, that is an essential element of the companies’ activity. These films not only succeed at film festivals around the globe – they were awarded and premiered at Sundance, Berlin, Locarno, Venice, Mar del Plata and many others. These films also generate revenues through world sales, becoming an increasingly important share for the company. Most recent projects include **MY EXTRAORDINARY SUMMER WITH TESS**, **INVISIBLE SUE**, **THE REPORT** or **THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT**.

Ostlicht has recently opened its field of expertise by producing documentaries – **WHO OWNS MY VILLAGE?** by director Christoph Eder still has a very satisfying cinematic career – and a first mini-series in cooperation with ZDF and 3sat: **THE PLAGUE** by Bert Zander.

Since 2019 the producers are members of the European Producers Club, which connects European production companies to strengthen the European film market towards the Mainstream Cinema of the United States.

MIR Cinematografica
info@mircinema.com
<http://www.mircinema.it/it/>

Ostlicht Filmproduktion
info@ostlicht.de
<https://www.ostlicht.de/en/home/>

