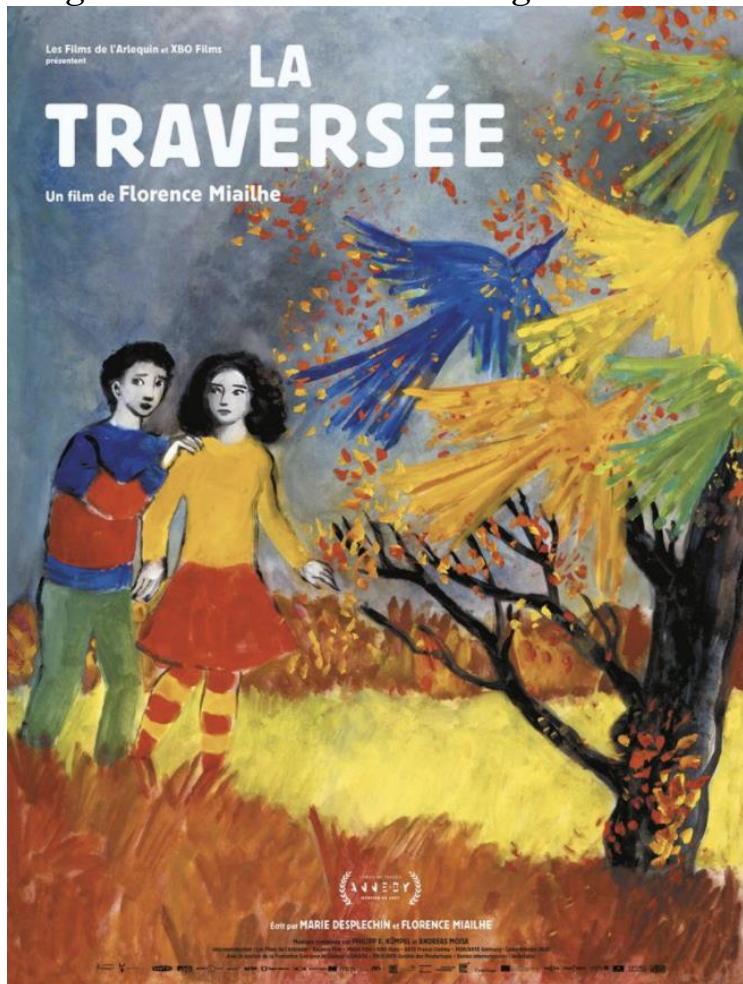


THE CROSSING – *LA TRAVERSÉE*

Original version: French / English subtitles



Director: *Florence Mialhe*

Release date (France): *September 29, 2021*

Genre: *Animation/Drama*

Countries of origin: *France, Germany, Czech Republic*

Length: *82 minutes*

CLASSIFICATION VIEWS



Tous publics

<https://www.filmstouspublics.fr/drame/la-traversee/>

A journey of initiation that will move all audiences

<https://nouveaucinema.ca/fr/films/la-traversee>

FNC -Québec

For 12 years of age and older

SYNOPSIS

A small village looted in darkness, a family forced to flee...

The two oldest children, Kyona and Adriel are quickly separated from their parents facing the road of exile alone. They embark on a heroic journey which takes them from childhood to adolescence in search of shelter, peace and the hope of finding refuge and their family. Crossing a continent torn apart by war and migrant persecution, these courageous siblings survive incredible challenges, before reaching a new world, free at last.

<https://en.unifrance.org/movie/43818/the-crossing>

FILM REVIEWS

Wonderfully staged with its shifting colour palette and a multitude of subtle ideas gracefully put into images, *The Crossing* is a simple and profound, sophisticated, and clear film, combining a **humanist spirit** with a look that does not turn away from the darker sides of beings. A first feature film with high artistic added value **not to be missed (and to be shown to children)** that Florence Mialhe has dedicated to her "grandmother who, one day in 1905, left Odessa with her ten children, to flee the pogroms" and to "all those who one day or another leave their country hoping to find a better future elsewhere."

Fabien Lemercier - *Cineuropa*

In short, this magnificent piece of work holds the attention from start to finish, pushes the boundaries of what's technically possible in an animated feature tells a rattling good yarn and addresses deep seated social and political issues into the bargain.

Jeremy Clarke – *Jeremy C. Processing*

Some paintings are also particularly beautiful, when happy moments set in despite everything, as at the beginning in the orchards, before the village is looted and the children forced to flee, or when a circus wakes them up. The scenario is cleverly built around a book of sketches, mainly portraits made by the young heroine, which she flips through, evoking these known or crossed and missing people. A device that ultimately generates **real emotion**.

Christy for News24 -*Annecy Festival 2021: "La Traversée", painting to show the unacceptable*

DETAILS

LANGUAGE

The animation uses voice-over to narrate the adventures of Adriel and Kyona, brother and sister on the run, separated from their family.

This narration style is expressed in good French. Concepts of hatred, violence and pain are often conveyed by the main character: "my heart had become a sieve" (Kyona)

In contrast to the good standing French of the narration, the language varies according to the situations and places of the plot.

When the village of Novi Varna is set on fire by masked men, insults are addressed to the Yelzids: vermin, family of rats, pigs...

They use slang to address their victims:

Tu crois que tu vas te foutre de nous encore longtemps ? / Tu crois que tu vas te moquer de nous encore longtemps ?

on s'tire / on s'en va

tes gosses / tes enfants

As the masked men go on their incendiary rampage, people are yelling.

Kyona is called "*Mademoiselle l'emmerdeuse*" for example: Miss pain in the ass
Erdewan calls Iskender a "snitch" (*un mouchard*)

Madam is called "fat" by Jon but she calls Jon a hypocrite as a mild translation for "faux-cul".

The soldiers whistling as Madame and her circus caravan pass through the border add a note of discomfort to the suspenseful scene.

Kyona and Adriel's father will rely on "smugglers" not even fathoming that his children will fall into the hands of evil Jon, a children trafficker

VIOLENCE

The central theme of the film is Kyona and Adriel's journey full of hardship.

The scene of fire, looting and violence at the beginning

Masked men, like ghostly shadows, armed with sticks and guns, beat, kick and shoot at the villagers of Novi Varna. Adriel is caught by one of these men, who hits him hard.

The violence is not graphic as Adriel is out of the camera frame.

The acts of violence are seen at a distance, far enough away from the camera which prevents us from victims seeing any marks of injuries : no blood, no bruises.

However, the violence is amplified by sound effects of the blows, shots and screams.

The smoke allows to hide the violence, but it reminds us of the fire crime committed by these masked men.

From the train station to the Iskender's slum

Kyona's belongings are stolen by street children led by the young Iskender. For a while, Adriel and Kyona, forced to survive in this cruel world, are compelled to obey him.

The rough sea journey with smugglers by stormy weather
The young rafters are risking their lives threatened by a raging sea.

The stay of Adriel and Kyona at the Della Chiusa family
Florabelle Della Chiusa uses Kyona and Adriel as her toys without any respect for what they are or what they need.

The forest: snowstorm and bitter cold
Kyona flees to the threatening forest to escape the whims of Florabella and Maxime, her husband. She is buried in the snow and is saved only thanks to Babayaga's dog.
The soldiers knock on the door of Babayaga's hut in an aggressive manner in search of Kyona and Adriel

The internment camp: harsh living conditions
Kyona, Adriel, Erdewan, Iskender lose their freedom and for one of the characters his life. The meeting with the young Issawa is a good thing in the middle of this miserable environment.
There is nothing to eat. One of the characters suggests that the people in the camp eat puppies, which we see in a basket held by a young man.
When some of the "prisoners" try to escape, an explosion occurs. The soldiers threaten and shoot them.
The final journey to freedom ends with Jon's death at the hands of Iskender, who drives a special pin into his neck. Very little blood is spilled. Scene without precise graphic details.

The presence of soldiers in a few scenes with their barking dogs creates a suspenseful atmosphere

NUDITY

A mother is breastfeeding her baby.
At the arrival of spring, Kyona bathes: there is a full rear and frontal nudity devoid of any sexual inuendo.
Madam slips photos of naked women between her official papers for the soldiers to let her drive through the border with her caravan and her circus performers.

SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Iskender and Erdewan are in love with Kyona.
Iskender and Kyona embrace.
Erdewan and Kyona, lying next to each other, kiss tenderly on the mouth.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT/ MESSAGES

"We have built the narrative on "chapters" that correspond to each area of the tale and simultaneously to a current situation of exile paths. Thus, the street children are evoked as "raven brothers", the old woman who takes in Kyona in the forest as a Baba Yaga, the couple of child buyers as ogres..."

Interview by Véronique Cauhapé for *Le Monde*

Translation of this text :

*« Nous avons construit la narration sur des "chapitres" qui correspondent chacun à un domaine du **conte** et simultanément à **une situation actuelle** des chemins d'exil. Ainsi, les enfants des rues sont évoqués comme des "frères corbeaux", la vieille femme qui recueille Kyona dans la forêt comme une Baba Yaga, le couple des acheteurs d'enfants comme des ogres... »*

Propos recueillis par Véronique Cauhapé pour *Le Monde*

Kyona and Adriel are reminiscent of the **Hansen and Gretel** fairy tale, however their setting is inscribed into the reality of migrants seeking a better life elsewhere.

This **timeless odyssey** is sewn **with ordeals that could frighten and impress young children**: the persecution of the families of Novi Varna, the miserable life at the orphans' shantytown, the sea trip with the smugglers, the stay with the Della Chiusa family, the experience of the circus and the kidnapping, the internment camp and the constant presence of evil symbolized by Jon.

But, as Mathieu Macheret from *Le Monde* wrote:

Can a film aimed at children tackle serious subjects without resorting to watering it down or simplifying it, could still fit the bill?

He concluded:

*If the film can afford to confront realities such as **injustice, discrimination, human trafficking, misery, internment camps, and even death**, it is thanks to its **visual texture**: a rough line, supported by a formidable waltz of colors, which **cushion without distorting the harshness** of these subjects. The beauty of the film lies in its marked and artisanal "touch", oscillating between fauvism and abstraction, **generating poetic blurs and astonishing transitions**: the passage of the seasons, the crossing of places, the metamorphosis of the setting and the characters - like the superb passage where the heroine discovers herself one morning as a nubile woman in a birch tree forest*

Translation of this text:

*Si le film peut se permettre d'affronter des réalités telles que **l'injustice, la discrimination, la traite d'humains, la misère, les camps d'internement, et même la mort**, c'est grâce à la texture visuelle qui en découle : un trait sommaire, secondé par une formidable valse de couleurs, qui **amortissent sans la dénaturer la dureté de ces sujets**. C'est dans sa « touche » marquée et artisanale que réside toute la beauté du film, oscillant entre fauvisme et abstraction, **générant des brouillages poétiques et des transitions étonnantes** : passage des saisons, franchissement des lieux, métamorphoses du décor et des personnages – comme ce passage superbe où l'héroïne se découvre un beau matin nubile dans une forêt de bouleaux*

https://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2021/09/29/la-traversee-l-epopee-de-deux-orphelins_6096400_3246.html

Many directors have chosen to tell harsh and difficult stories through animation, which in fact cushions the brutality of the facts, such as Denis Do with FUNAN or Simon Rouby with ADAMA.

If the plot of the film is **harsh**, it is treated **without manichaeism**. In this parade of adults exploiting the distress of little migrants, a few solid and benevolent characters always **give a glimpse of hope**. And the finale lets glimpse a corner of blue sky...

<https://tantalumforce.com/la-traversee-de-florence-mialhe-or-the-magnificent-odyssey-of-two-children-lost-on-the-roads-of-exile>

FILM PHOTOS



Kyona is passionate about drawing. Her notebook contains all her memories of the people she knew and met.



“ C’est comme ça qu’on est partis.
Mon frère trainait. Ma mère pleurait. Mon père criait. Et moi j’étais survoltée.
C’était la première fois que je quittais Novi Varna. Et j’allais prendre le train...” Kyona

That's how we left.

My brother was hanging out. My mother was crying. My father was screaming. And I was excited. It was the first time I left Novi Varna. And I was going to take the train...



Kyona Adriel and Kyona are running away from the Della Chiusa family. A blizzard separates them.



Kyona is welcomed by Babayaga who offers her a shelter for the winter.



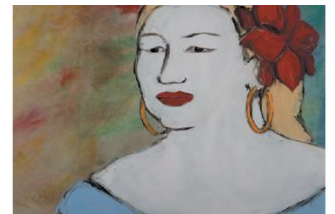
ISKENDER.
The gang leader of
the street kids



JON
represents evil.



FAMILYDELLA CHIUSA
rich family wanting children



MADAME
circus
mistress