

SUNSET

Een film van László Nemes

De nieuwe film van Oscarwinnaar László Nemes (SON OF SAUL), waarin een jonge vrouw terugkeert naar haar geboorteplaats, op zoek naar antwoorden over haar familie en verleden. Een mysterieuze zoektocht aan de vooravond van de Eerste Wereldoorlog, waarin droom en werkelijkheid door elkaar heen lopen.

Er heerst onrust en chaos in Boedapest wanneer de 20-jarige Írisz (Juli Jakab) vanuit Wenen terugkeert naar de Hongaarse hoofdstad, haar geboorteplaats. Ze solliciteert naar een baan in een elegante hoedenwinkel, ooit eigendom van haar ouders, wie ze op 2-jarige leeftijd verloor in een tragisch ongeval. Wanneer ze erachter komt dat ze een broer heeft, zet ze alles op alles om hem te vinden. Ondanks de gevaren die op de loer liggen, is Írisz vastberaden om haar zoektocht naar antwoorden voort te zetten, zelfs wanneer er donkere geheimen uit het verleden naar boven komen.

Net als bij zijn Oscarwinnaar SON OF SAUL werkte de Hongaarse regisseur László Nemes samen met cameraman Mátyás Erdély. Zijn lange, droomachtige 35mm-shots werden na de première op het Filmfestival van Venetië geprezen door de internationale pers: "Hoe meer we door Mátyás Erdély's prachtige cinematografie in Írisz haar wereld worden getrokken, des te meer je daar wilt blijven rondhangen, ondanks het dreigende gevaar," aldus IndieWire.



Speelduur: 142 min. - Land: Hongarije - Jaar: 2018 - Genre: Drama
Releasedatum bioscoop: 14 maart 2019

Meer over de film: <https://www.cineart.nl/films/sunset>
Persmaterialen: <https://www.cineart.nl/pers/sunset>

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LÁSZLÓ NEMES - DIRECTOR

László Nemes was born in February 18, 1977 in Budapest, Hungary. After studying History, International Relations and Screenwriting in Paris, he worked as an assistant director in France and Hungary on short and feature films. He assisted Béla Tarr on *The Man From London*, and subsequently studied film directing at New York University. His shorts have been awarded thirty prizes in more than 100 international filmfestivals. His first feature, *Son of Saul*, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2015, was awarded the Grand Prix, and later received both the Golden Globe and the Academy Award for Best foreign language film in 2016. *Sunset* is his second feature film.



Filmography

2018	SUNSET
2015	SON OF SAUL
2010	THE GENTLEMAN TAKES HIS LEAVE
2008	THE COUNTERPART
2007	WITH A LITTLE PATIENCE

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The monarchy of Austria-Hungary, in the very center of Europe, before the outbreak of World War I, is at the crossroads of all the accumulated European tensions, where coexist modernity and obsolescence on many levels. Politically, the old Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, rules from Vienna, over vast territories, a dozen nations, many cultures and religions. All forms of vigorous political and ideological aspirations that have spread during the 19th century are present or rampant, sometimes mixed: socialism, anarchism, nationalism. Modern antisemitism reaches its maturity in Vienna. New scientific approaches blossom, the first forms of psychological studies and psychoanalysis thrive, whereas many pseudo-scientific and intellectual groups, cult-like movements, occult sects following illuminated leaders seem to crave for a special place in society, or on the edge of society. Thus, many fundamentally marginal, albeit enthusiastic movements co-exist in Austria-Hungary, where all art forms, including architecture, literature and motion pictures, flourish. The identity crisis resulting from the fragmentation of aspirations and the decay of the central royal order, coupled with a disenchantment of the world and a crisis of masculinity, give rise to a vibrating world that could lead to ecstatic prosperity or to downfall.

In a way, beyond the love for technology within society and its boundless optimism, there is a deep malaise – a floating sentiment that something ominous, possibly apocalyptic is about to happen. This is the age of an almost biblical expectation.

This society, whose codes and sophistication are embodied by the way people dress and behave - the hats they design and wear, preserves a facade of tranquility. But under the veneer of civilization, many forces cannot be controlled. They are about to take all the people, unsuspecting and believing in progress, into a quagmire and destruction of hitherto unseen, industrial proportions.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Irisz and SUNSET

Even before starting my first feature *Son of Saul*, I had in my mind the idea of making a film about a woman, alone, lost in her world, a world she tries but ultimately fails to understand. Probably under the influence of a certain literary and cinematographic tradition of Central Europe, I've been drawn to a main character that is partly surrounded by mystery and whose actions the audience has to assess and re-assess continuously, even becoming at some point a figure of an unexpected dimension, like a strange Joan of Arc of Middle Europe.

Unlike *Son of Saul*, which had a meticulous documentary-style approach, *Sunset* resembles a tale, a mystery in itself where the viewer is invited on this journey to find, along with the main character, a possible way through this maze of facades and layers. From the outset, I imagined this movie as a way to plunge the viewer into a personal labyrinth, along Irisz's quest to find her brother and ultimately the meaning of the world she wants to discover. Behind every clue she seems to find, there exists contradictory information. Behind every layer, a new one is revealed and the main character herself might very well be unaware of the process taking place deep within her. Irisz is a character caught between light and darkness, beauty and menace, incapable of dealing with the grey zones. In this sense, *Sunset* is also a story of a girl, the blooming of a strange flower.

Sunset, from the outset, intended to follow from close range its main character, Irisz, allowing a highly intimate approach in an unusual period movie, trying to break with the predictable codes of postcardperceptions of times past. Hopefully, the viewer is submerged into an unknown world, where people speak different languages – sound is a cornerstone of a strategy of immersion – forcing the viewer to give up some defenses. This seems necessary to me. To reach the viewer differently is my ultimate goal, after making the audience feel and think.



SUNSET, our times and Europe

Sunset is a film about a civilization at its crossroads. In the heart of Europe, at the height of progress and technology, without being written in history, the personal story of a young woman becomes the reflection of a process that is in itself, the birth of the 20th century.

A century ago, from the height of its zenith, Europe committed suicide. This suicide remains a mystery until this very day. It is, as if a civilization, at its pinnacle, was already producing the poison that would bring it down. At the core of this movie lies this personal preoccupation.

Sunset is set before World War I in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a seemingly prosperous, multi-national state of a dozen languages and many peoples, with its blooming capitals Vienna and Budapest, the cultural center of the world. And yet, against this flowering backdrop is the reality of the hidden forces about to tear it apart.

As a child, I would listen to the stories of my grandmother who was born in 1914. Her life spanned the century, taken by the turmoil of the European continent, through all totalitarian regimes, genocides, failed revolutions and wars. She was, in a way, Europe herself.

My deep European roots have pushed me to wonder about the age we live in now and the ages of our forefathers, how thin the veneer of civilization can be, and what lies beyond. In our modern, post-nation state world, we seem to forget the deep dynamics of history, and in our boundless love for technology and science, we seem to forget how close to the brink of destruction they can bring us. I believe we live in a world that is not that far from the one before the Great War of 1914. A world utterly blind to the forces of destruction it feeds at its core. We are not far from the processes that took place in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. For us, history is now, and in Central Europe.

Subjectivity, civilization and cinema

As a filmmaker, I am drawn to discovering how the human soul (subjectivity), and the collective soul of civilization can meet. In imagining *Sunset*, I tried to find the junction between the story of an individual and the state of the world in which the heroine exists. Today's filmmaking practice is to orient viewers and reassure them continuously – but I've always wanted to find new ways to present audiences with a subjective experience of uncertainty and fragility, the underlying current of our very human condition. As in *Son of Saul*, I do not want to present the audience with a conventional period piece. I thought we could achieve more by giving a glimpse of a world up close and not try to fully uncover it. The imagination of the viewer would do the rest.

I find the standardization of current cinema and television suspicious and I remain resolved to find new ways of representing images and stories, not relying on already over-demonstrating and over-contextualizing methods. This means that one has to take risks.

I feel the experience audiences have while watching today's movies is increasingly unsatisfactory, reduced to an industrialized language for easier understanding, ignoring the viewer's journey. Movies, today, refuse to trust the audience. I directed *Sunset* in a manner that may seem strange to someone who fully embraces today's filmmaking practices. I wanted to reconnect the audience with the adventurous essence of motion pictures.

"Less is more" - our visual approach relied on an organic spatial strategy thanks to an ever-moving camera. As we dive into the world of a seemingly naive and innocent character, hopefully, we discover everything with her in an organic way. A volatile subjective flow of information turns the story of a young girl into a darker tale of decay.

In a cinematic world relying less and less on real sets, and more and more on computers and visual effects, I wanted to take a stance that cinema has everything to do with the magic of physics, optics and chemicals. It is a trick of perception, of light and darkness. We therefore relied on built sets in a real city – Budapest, the use of photochemically exposed and developed film and real effects on set. We used complicated, choreographed long scenes to bring *Sunset* into the physical world, one that the audience can believe in.

This film is my personal testimony to the love of cinema, almost a century after the hopefulness of *Sunrise* by Murnau – a movie to which we pay homage. I hope that *Sunset* carries in itself something of the interrogations embodied by Murnau's film.

It seems to me that we are again at the dawn of a new cinematic era, but one that is less passionate. We might be now, again, at crossroads, and the temptation could take us down a path on which the grammar of filmmaking is more unquestionable and rigid than ever, with an unconditional love for digital technologies and clear-cut dramaturgy, at the risk of losing the magic and the unrelenting inventiveness of cinema.

CAST

Irisz Leiter	JULI JAKAB
Oszkár Brill	VLAD IVANOV
Zelma	EVELINE DOBOS
Sándor	MARCIN CZARNIK
Szeréna	JUDIT BÁRDOS
Andor	BENJAMIN DINO
Nulla	BALÁZS CZUKOR
Otto von Koenig	CHRISTIAN HARTING
Gáspár	LEVENTE MOLNÁR
Countess Rédey	JULIA JAKUBOWSKA
Lili	DOROTTYA MOLDOVÁN
Dr. Herz	SÁNDOR ZSÓTÉR
Mrs. Müller	MÓNI BALSAI
Szilágyi	ZSOLT NAGY
Róbert	PÉTER FANCSIKAI
Man with monocle	ENRIQUE KEIL
Prince	TOM PILATH
Princess	SUSANNE WUEST

CREW

Directed by	LÁSZLO NEMES
Screenplay	LÁSZLO NEMES; CLARA ROYER; MATTHIEU TAPONIER
Cinematographer	MÁTYÁS ERDÉLY
Set Designer	LÁSZLO RAIK
Film Editor	MATTHIEU TAPONIE
Sound	TAMÁS ZÁNYI
Music	LÁSZLO MELIS
Production	LAOKOON FILMGROUP
Co-production	PLAYTIME PRODUCTION
Producers	GÁBOR SIPOS; GÁBOR RAJNA
Co-producers	FRANÇOIS YON; NICOLAS BRIGAUD-ROBERT; VALÉRY GUIBAL
With the support of	HUNGARIAN NATIONAL FILM FUNDS HUNGARIAN FILM INCENTIVE EURIMAGES AIDE AUX CINÉMAS DU MONDE CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE INSTITUT FRANÇAIS INDÉFILMS 6 TORINOFILMLAB CREATIVE EUROPE MEDIA

JULI JAKAB

Juli Jakab was born in 1988. Graduated in scriptwriting at the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest (Hungary) in 2013. Started acting during her studies and has played in short and feature films ever since.

Filmography

2018	SUNSET
2015	SON OF SAUL
2014	FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON



VLAD IVANOV

Before playing Oszkar Brill in *Sunset*, the Romanian Vlad Ivanov starred in Balint Kenyeres' Hungarian film *Hier*. In 2016, he featured in three films selected in Cannes: *Toni Erdmann* by Maren Ade, *Graduation (Bacalaureat)* by Cristi Mungiu and *Dogs (Câini)* by Bogdan Mirica. Winner of the LA Critics Award for his brilliant portrayal of abortionist Dr. Bebe in *4 Months, 3 Weeks & 2 Days (4 luni, 3 saptamâni si 2 zile)*, Vlad Ivanov's versatility has established him as one of Europe's great character actors. As well as his film work, Vlad Ivanov is an accomplished stage actor and has received many domestic awards in Romania for his work in both stage and screen.

Filmography

2018	SUNSET
2017	ONE STEP BEHIND THE SERAPHIM
2016	DOGS
2015	ONE FLOOR BELOW
2013	CHILD'S POSE
2010	PRINCIPLES OF LIFE
2009	POLICE, ADJECTIVE
2007	4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS & 2 DAYS