

## An Absolute Diva at TIFF 2018: Fanny Ardant

**Fanny Ardant** returns to Romania as a **special guest** of the **Transilvania International Film Festival** (May 25-June 3, Cluj-Napoca). The 17th edition of Romania's largest and most important film event features a section dedicated to the great French artist, **Close-up Fanny Ardant**, which consists of two exceptional roles selected from among the over 100 played by her, alongside two films directed by Ardant herself. At the TIFF **closing gala** held on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, at the National Theater in Cluj, Fanny Ardant will receive the **Transilvania Lifetime Achievement Trophy**.

Born on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1949, Fanny Ardant grew up in Monaco until the age of 17, after which she moved to Aix-en-Provence to study political sciences. Nothing seemed to foretell the turn to acting—much less the success of her stage debut in 1974. Ardant's beauty, exuberance, versatility, and extraordinary talent propelled her among the most beloved French actresses. In her 40 -odd years of work, Ardant conquered the world beyond France, working in Spain, Italy, England, Israel, Germany, Switzerland, and last but not least, Hollywood. She worked with important directors like Claude Lelouch, Alain Resnais, Costa Gavras, Volker Schlöndorff, Michelangelo Antonioni, Sydney Pollack, Franco Zeffirelli, or Ettore Scola, and played alongside Gérard Depardieu, Vittorio Gassman, Jean Rochefort, Danielle Darrieux, Catherine Deneuve, Harrison Ford, Cate Blanchett, Penelope Cruz, and Jean-Louis Trintignant, among many others.

One of the most important collaborations for Ardant was working with legendary French New Wave director Francois Truffaut, who also became her life partner. After noticing Ardant in the TV series *Les dames de la côte*, Truffaut cast her opposite Depardieu in *La femme d'à côté / The Woman Next Door* (1981), which brought Ardant her first César nomination. Only two years later, she found herself among the César nominees once more, this time for her role as a detective secretary in Truffaut's last film *Vivement Dimanche / Confidentially Yours*. This noir comedy was nominated for Best Foreign Film at the BAFTAs and will be screened at TIFF this year.

Following a series of César nominations in auteur films, Fanny Ardant finally wins Best Actress for playing a gay bar owner in the cult comedy *Pédale douce* (dir. Gabriel Aghion, 1997), whose four million entries increase her popularity exponentially. Another impressive box office success is *Ridicule* (dir. Patrice Laconte), which brings her a Lumiere Award. Among her other acting

accomplishments, Ardant received a Silver Bear at the Berlinale for *8 femmes / 8 Women* (dir. François Ozon, 2002), shared with the other seven leads in the film.

In 2009, Ardant makes her directorial debut with *Cendres et sang / Ashes and Blood*, which is included in the official selection at Cannes. Ardant adapted the screenplay from an Ismail Kadare short story about a woman forced to bring up her three children by herself, following the assassination of her husband. Exiled from her native country, the woman returns to see her family after a long absence, only to spark new violence between rival clans whose feud has already ruined her life. Co-produced with Libra Film, the film was shot primarily in Romania, with an international cast that includes Romanian actors like Adrian Păduraru, Ion Besoiu, Răzvan Vasilescu, Tudor Istodor, and the late Olga Tudorache—to whom the TIFF screening is dedicated.

The second film directed by Fanny Ardant and presented at TIFF is *Le divan de Stalin / Stalin's Couch* (2016), an adaptation of the eponymous novel by Jean-Daniel Baltassant, which looks at the last days of the Soviet leader through the story of a young artist commissioned to make a monument dedicated to Stalin. Gerard Depardieu excels as Stalin, perfectly rendering the mixture of cynicism, sadism, and loneliness that marked the dictator's last years. Ardant subtly recreates the feeling for constant threat that permeated Stalin's entourage.

Finally, one of Ardant's most recent and daring appearances on the silver screen is 2017 Locarno premiere *Lola Pater* (dir. Nadir Moknèche, 2017), in which she plays a transsexual woman who makes peace with the son she abandoned during the transition. As early as the script development stage, the director's mother told him: "Do not waste your time looking for anyone. There is only one actress who can play this role. Not two, not three Just Fanny Ardant." Moknèche added: "That is when I remembered a masculine silhouette scurrying along a dark street in a rain coat: Fanny Ardant in *Vivement Dimanche*."

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