MADAME

A FILM BY **STEPHANE RIETHAUSER**

MADAME

a film by Stéphane Riethauser

production Lambda Prod, coproduction SSR SRG/RTS

Documentary, 93 min., CH, 2019

Pitch

A grandmother and her grandson engage in an intimate conversation, exploring gender, sexuality and transmission of identity.

www.madamefilm.com

Synopsis

MADAME takes us onto an intimate journey where Caroline, a flamboyant 90-year-old grandmother and her filmmaker grandson Stéphane explore the development and transmission of gender identity in a patriarchal environment. Promised to a domestic life in the 1920s, Caroline manages to free herself from the clutches of a forced marriage and becomes a successful businesswoman, defying the social rules of her time. In parallel, Stéphane struggles to play the role everyone expects in his Swiss bourgeois family, until the day he comes out of the closet and sets off on a crusade against homophobia and sexism. A family saga based on private archive footage, MADAME offers a dialog between this extravagant matriarch and her gay grandson, challenging the taboos of gender and sexuality.

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Director's note by Stéphane Riethauser

"One is not born, but rather becomes a man." It took me a long time to understand this quote of Simone de Beauvoir and to realize the battle my grandmother had to fight in order to exist. It took me a long time to realize that the same goes for the male species: I was not born a man, I became one. According to precepts skillfully maintained by our Judeo-Christian laws and customs, like the vast majority of boys, I was formatted heterosexual, I integrated the homophobic rhetoric and the mandatory macho behavior to be able to play my part as a representative of the "strong sex." Until I realized I was homosexual and I finally could live with it. I suddenly lost the attributes of my so-called "virility" and fell into the category of the weak sex, and by extension into the category of the faggots. And I had to question the value system that shapes us, boys and girls.

Beyond biological differences, what cultural components, what social obligations are assigned to our gender? What compulsory behavior, what codes govern our appearances and our manners? What idea lies behind gender segregation? How does this segregation influence our relationship with the other sex? And what consequences if we don't play by the rules?

A double autobiographical portrait of an eccentric woman and her gay grandson, MADAME is a tragicomic study challenging our ideas about woman's condition, patriarchy, gender identity construction and transmission.

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Biography

Stéphane Riethauser was born in 1972 in Geneva, Switzerland. He holds a law degree from the University of Geneva. Over the years, he has been working as a teacher, gay activist, photographer, editor, journalist and translator. He is the author of "A visage découvert", a photography book about coming out (Ed. Slatkine, 2000). Between 2003 and 2008, he worked for Swiss Radio Television RTS as a journalist and director. In 2007 he launched his production company Lambda Prod and started working as an independent filmmaker. He lives in Berlin.

Filmography

THE GIANTS IN GENEVA, TIME FOR A DREAM, TV doc., 53 min.,
prod. Point Prod / Radio Télévision Suisse, 2017

GARDEN OF STARS, doc., HD, 61 min., prod. Lambda Prod, 2016
(cordirector Pasquale Plastino)
Best documentary Berlin Film Award 2017 / Best picture Florence Queer
Festival 2017

PRORA, short fiction, HD, 23 min., prod. Lambda Prod, 2012
15 awards, 125 festivals worldwide

FROZEN IN TIME, The Life of Marius Borgeaud, doc., DV, 62 min., 2007
(codirector Marie-Catherine Theiler)
Production Lambda Prod/AAMB

For more details:

http://www.riethauser.com

http://www.lambda-prod.ch

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Artistic and technical sheet

Title	Madame
Genre	Documentaire
Duration	93 min.
Format	HD ProRes/DCP couleur 16:9
Language	French w/ English ST
Script	Stéphane Riethauser
Director	Stéphane Riethauser
Producer	Stéphane Riethauser/Lambda Prod
1. Assistant director	Marie-Catherine Theiler
2. Assistant director	Adrienne Bovet
Image and sound	Stéphane Riethauser, Luc Riethauser
Script consultant	Anas Sareen
Editor	Natali Barrey
Collaboration editing	Yves Beloniak, Sophie Watzlawick
Editing teaser	Yves Beloniak
Original music	David Perrenoud
Original music mix	Benoît Mayer
Music credits	Michelle Gurevich
Additional music tracks	Patrick Juvet, Jean-Michel Jarre, Vladimir Cosma, Richard Sanderson, Toy Dolls, Guiseppe Verdi, Charles Aznavour
Sound editing and mix	Martin Stricker
Music supervisor	Flore Commandeur
Head of postproduction	Stefan Epmeier, Ayassi Entertainment
Postproduction assistant	Harald Werner
Color grading	Horst Riediger,
Special effects	Anja Klein
Graphic design	Stéphane Hugel
Marketing consultant	Mathias Noschis, Alphapanda

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