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Francophone Women  
Film Directors



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# Francophone Women Film Directors

A Guide

Janis L. Pallister  
and  
Ruth A. Hottell



Madison • Teaneck  
Fairleigh Dickinson University Press

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Dedicated to Pascal and Ramona for their advice and patience  
and to the memory of Lucile Martineau, senior lecturer at Smith  
College, in Massachusetts, deceased 15 February, 2004

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“Well, I don’t know about ‘chick films,’ but I can quote Euzhan Palcy (*A Dry White Season*) who said she didn’t think that films by women were any better, just different.”

—Executive Director Debra Zimmerman, *Women Make Movies*

“I have reached this conclusion, or this inquiry: that women’s cinema—as much in the Third World as in the “Old World”—begins with the *desire for the word*. As if ‘to film’ means for women a mobility of voice and body, the body not gazed upon, but unsubmitive, retrieving its autonomy and innocence.”

—Assia Djebar (Tr. from *Un regard de femme*)

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## Introduction

SINCE THE PUBLICATION IN 1997 OF *FRENCH-SPEAKING WOMEN FILM Directors: A Guide*, by Janis L. Pallister, notable strides have been made in the production of first-rate and well-received films by women.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, one finds that more and more film studies are either devoted to this area of cinematic production, or, at the least, pay some attention to the matter. A case in point might be the magnificent new history of film by Robert Sklar.<sup>1</sup>

Sklar devotes two or three pages of his huge study to Agnès Varda (340–42); he makes multiple references to Alice Guy-Blaché (though these boil down ultimately to a handshake). Claire Denis figures in his discussions—and even merits a still from *Beau Travail*—, as does Chantal Akerman. And Agnès Jaoui's 1999 *Le Goût des autres* (*Taste of Others*) is mentioned in passing, though Sklar focuses on the fact that this outstanding film was written with her husband Jean-Pierre Bacri, and that both of them perform in this work. The great cinematographer Agnès Godard, Claire Denis's right-hand woman, is also mentioned briefly. To Sklar's credit, Safi Faye is mentioned (361), despite the fact that most scholars take little heed of the work of women when writing of African cinema.

Still the gaps in this voluminous, all-purpose history are notable and painful. For despite their undeniable notoriety, neither Catherine Breillat's films nor her name can be found here. And especially egregious for its omissions is the section on Québec: no Léa Pool, no Anne Claire Poirier, no Mireille Dansereau, no Sophie Bissonnette. Indeed, no woman at all. (It is perhaps incumbent upon us to say the whole section on Québec cinema is *seriously lacking*, with only three or four famous men directors under discussion.)

Of course, it is not the purpose of this introduction to present a review of any particular recent study of world film: Sklar's book is targeted here to serve as an example of the current state of affairs.

In the domain of popular critics, the subjects addressed are much the same. Thus, Roger Ebert writes a great deal about Claire Denis and Agnès Varda. Unlike Sklar, he is drawn to Breillat. (Perhaps for similar reasons, he has devoted a hefty review to *Romance*.) But like

Sklar his attention to women's films from Africa and Québec is limited: if he writes of Pool, it is largely because of her recent English-language film *Lost and Delirious* (*Rebelles*; 2000; 100 mins.). It must be admitted, however, that he has written a lengthy review as well on *Emporte-moi* (*Set Me Free*).<sup>2</sup>

Let us consider the state of attention given to these talented women by the general public. Many of their films will appear on TV5 and Canal+. (Though, even so, when speaking to the representation of women in film, Martine Aubry, former Ministre de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité, has stated: "Un chiffre, d'ailleurs, permet de rappeler que dans le domaine artistique, comme dans tant d'autres domaines, la parité n'est pas acquise: 10%; C'est la proportion de femmes parmi les réalisateurs français. Ce chiffre est en progression, bien supérieur à ceux d'autres pays européens, mais il reste insuffisant.")<sup>4</sup>

Still a popular guide for American movie buffs, and one boasting more than 19,000 entries, Maltin's 2002 edition reveals strong biases against women directors, if a cursory study of the book from this perspective tells us anything at all.<sup>5</sup> While *Beau Travail*, a masterpiece by Claire Denis, is to be found there, it is given only 3 stars. We did not find any other works of hers in the guide. *La Bûche* by Danièle Thompson—hardly on a par with *Beau Travail*—also receives 3 stars. A similar fate awaits Euzhan Palcy's *Rue Cases-Nègres* (*Sugar Cane Alley*), which is however allotted 3½ stars. Noticeably, Palcy's *Dry White Season* receives 2½ stars while her *Siméon* is not even listed. *Dirty Dishes*, a very charming film by Joyce Buñuel (daughter-in-law of Luis Buñuel), weighs in at only 2½ stars. Somewhat surprisingly the films of Jeanne Moreau—*L'Adolescente* and *Lumière*—are also allotted 2½ stars. Chantal Akerman's *Couch in New York* gets a very low 1½, while *Je tu il elle*, which could be regarded as a masterpiece, is entirely absent.

Agnès Varda, one of the greatest and most senior of French-speaking women directors, is accorded 3½ stars, not 4, for *Sans toit, ni loi* (*Vagabond*) while we did not find *Le Bonheur*, nor *Cléo de 5 à 7* (*Cleo from 5 to 7*), nor *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* (*The Gleaners and I*). To Maltin's credit we find listed her 1977 breakthrough feminist film *L'Une chante, l'autre pas* (under "One Sings, the Other Doesn't") . . . but it is rated as a 2 star film!

Egregiously, we have not found mention of a single French Canadian woman director: not Anne Claire Poirier (whose 1979 *Mourir à tue-tête* [*Scream from Silence*] is a must in the study of women's film.) Not Marquise Lepage, whose 1999 *Des marelles et des petites filles* took prize after prize. Not Sylvie Groulx, not Micheline Lanctôt, whose *Sonatine* has received considerable attention from the film

scholar Joseph Donohoe.<sup>6</sup> Not Léa Pool, though *Emporte-moi* was so widely received and covered. (It is true that Ebert covers her films and awards *Lost and Delirious*, Pool's only film in English, 3½ stars).

Is it significant in view of all this that the “racy” films of Catherine Breillat, though not well thought of, are nonetheless to be found? Her *36 Fillette* receives 2½ stars while *Romance* receives 1½ stars. (They are better than that!) Films by Diane Kurys, which have been very popular in the U.S., are listed and are given good marks. (*Diabolo menthe* [*Peppermint Soda*] receives 3½ stars, for example.)

Cursory examination of this guide shows, then, that almost invariably the films of Duvivier, Resnais, Godard, Luis Buñuel—many of which would not be preferred to the above by some viewers—are given 3½ to 4 stars. (We found no “4-star film” by a French-speaking woman director.) Dare one assert, then, that it is the big names of all these male directors that command stars no more deserved in reality than certain of the ones named above or studied in our guide? The question is rhetorical, of course. But a recent article in the *New Yorker* shows a similar direction in critiquing the body of films we are discussing here: Judith Thurman, in her review article of “The Sexual Life of Catherine M.,” refers in passing to the “dreary films” of Breillat and labels *Baise-moi* as “repulsively cynical.”<sup>7</sup> Incidentally, Thurman is no more impressed with the *book* she is reviewing, to which she compares these films. This kind of treatment hardly increases viewership, even though serious film scholars are busy studying these very films.

On the other hand, one may frequently view francophone women's films on TV5, if in France, or if in America one is equipped with the right dish. (This can cost up to \$2000.00 and involve cutting down a tree or so for another thousand.) But even in France some of the more explicit of these films have run into trouble.<sup>8</sup>

In any case, and despite the “visibility” cited above, one must attribute the lack of attention to women's films not only to what might be a blatant case of sexism but also to problems of distribution. Because they are underfinanced, and certainly because of distribution problems (related of course to under financing), the *majority* of the films cited in our guide are not treated in mainstream journals nor available in video shops.<sup>9</sup>

Now, it is because of such lacunas as these, widespread in the case of film literature, that a followup volume of Pallister's *French-Speaking Women Film Directors* seems necessary. Necessary because of the films themselves, which are not only “needed” but about which information is often lacking. We are concerned, then, with bringing references together in a readily usable format. For, although occasionally

a woman director eschews that very tag, most accept such categorization, and most are intent upon telling their story—usually a story about women’s experiences—*from a woman’s point of view*. If this were not true, would there be such a thing as the annual Festival International de Films de Femmes at Créteil? And cannot the same be said for the splendid special showing of women directors’ films presented by the Sundance Channel in April, 2002? This not to mention frequent presentation on the Independent Film Channel of women’s films not usually seen on the big screen in America, not even for rent in most video stores. And, too, one might cite the Rocky Mountain Women’s Film Festival dedicated to the “drive, spirit and diversity of women.” The fifteenth annual event took place in Colorado Springs, Colorado on November 1–3, 2002. (For further information, visit: <http://www.rmwfilmfest.org>.)

Within this framework, why concentrate especially on *French-speaking* women directors? Firstly, as a service to (French) teachers and professors who now incorporate film—and women’s art—into many of their courses. Next, because in spite of the problems etched above, one cannot deny that a number of the women filmmakers of France, Québec and Belgium have become virtually as well known as many male directors: Chantal Akerman is quite famous; her film *Couch in New York* has frequently aired on television; Léa Pool, too, is known in many circles, and can be considered as almost on a level with Atom Egoyam. But especially famous are Claire Denis, Catherine Breillat, and Agnès Varda, the latter’s recent film, *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* (*The Gleaners and I*), having received widespread recognition, and having been, for example, the fifth of the top ten sales made by Facets in the spring of 2002, while Breillat’s *Une vraie jeune fille* (*A Real Young Girl*) came in sixth. This is from all sexes and countries. Virginie Despentes’s sensational and controversial *Baise-moi* was ninth in the top ten rentals (from all countries) and figured as ninth of twenty-five top-selling foreign films.<sup>10</sup>

This compact volume seeks, then, to answer questions not only about the works of renowned artists, including the remarkable success of such works as Breillat’s and Despentes’s, but about those of lesser-known artists as well. Striving to complete the picture through 2002, it is compiled from many sources, and presents information in English, but with reference to French copy, in order to increase the guide’s versatility.

\* \* \*

Style: We punctuate French titles according to the rules set forth by *The French Review*, not *PMLA*. Among other things, this facilitates indexing.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

In the preparation of this volume—as with the first—we have found the presentations and catalogs of the Créteil Festival of Women's Films to be of particular value. On the web, there are sites devoted to women's films and women in films, many of which are cited in our bibliography. Catalogs and Web sites of the NFB (ONF) are also a rich source of information, and we are especially grateful to this entity for its kind permission to borrow generously from its copy.

We have excerpted material from all of these references, and from others besides—whether in English or in French—, for the convenience of those who wish to use this guide book. Wherever this has been done, the source of the information has been given. It should be noted that dates and run times vary considerably from one source to the other; in most cases we have made no effort to adjudicate these matters, but have given sliding dates and *durées*. These variations in date occur for a number of reasons among which one might suggest that: 1) the film was planned for one year, but in fact, was held up for some reason or another; 2) sometimes a new copyright date has been put on the USA version, both on the film and on the video; 3) sometimes, even, a new date was put on the video when it came out. For similar reasons the running time can vary from film to video, etc.

Many Shorts of a few minutes are to be found in Créteil catalogs. The information regarding them has been only partially reproduced here. Similarly, virtually all documentaries have been excluded here; they and their directors will be treated in a separate guide to French-speaking women documentarians.

One more note is in order here. Those referring to this guide should be aware that its use is maximized when it is consulted in tandem with the 1997 guide (see note 1 below) *French-Speaking Women Film Directors*; for it has been our intention to include here, by and large, only such filmmakers, films and critiques as did not figure in that volume. One should consult as well the Internet Movie Database Site (<http://us.imdb.com/>); some but not all of the information on certain directors has come from this site, and from other internet sites as indicated in the body of the guide.

## A FINAL WORD

We wish to close this preface by establishing what this book is, and what it is not. It is not intended to be a critique of films by women directors, but rather a compendium of their films and selected criti-

cism of them, including an effort wherever possible to give places in which the films are discussed in French, thus making for a bilingual reference work. And indeed the establishment of this text has been an arduous job: As we suggested above, the internet was used extensively, along with many other guides, journals, catalogs, library resources—consulted *in situ*—and so forth. In many cases, the information contained herein has not been easily established, even when found—after extensive searches—on the internet. Thus it is our hope that this guide, when used in conjunction with Pallister’s *French-Speaking Women Film Directors*, will be an important and handy tool, a point of departure, a quick source of information; for that was our intention in preparing it. We have refrained for the most part from entering into controversies or displaying our own likes and dislikes. Similarly, for the sake of remaining objective, we have chosen not to include our own analyses. Our views may be found in our other published writings on the subject at hand.

### NOTES

1. Janis L. Pallister. *French-Speaking Women Film Directors* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997). Supported by a subvention from Women in French. All subsequent references to this work will be indicated by author (“Pallister Guide”) and page number.

2. Robert Sklar. *A World History of Film* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2002).

3. It is noteworthy, too, that despite the advances made by women filmmakers at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, the jury of the 2002 Cannes Film Festival—with David Lynch as president of the jury— included only men filmmakers, though actresses did participate. Source: *Screen Africa News Bulletin*. Editor: Angela van Schalkwyk. <mailto:editor@screenafrica.com>. The situation for 2004 is somewhat improved.

4. Introduction of the 2000 Créteil Women’s Film Festival catalogue (14).

One might nonetheless single out such events as Le grand prix du meilleur scénariste that (from 1986 to 1995) went to such directors as Sandrine Veysset (in 1995) for *Y aura-t-il de la neige à Noël?* (Finalist; Prix Louis Delluc ’96; César ’97 de la 1ère Œuvre). In 1992 it went to Eve Deboise for *Les Gens de la rizière* (Lauréat ex-aequo Primé Cannes 94); in 1992 to Martine Dugowson for *Mina Tannenbaum* (Lauréat ex-aequo, Nommé César ’93); in 1991 to Anne Fontaine for *Les Histoires d’amour finissent mal en général*; in 1990 to Agnès Merlet for *Le Fils du requin* (Lauréat Ex-aequo Festival de Venise ’93); in 1989 to Philomène Esposito for *Mima* (Finalist); in 1988 to Patricia Mazuy for *Peau de Vaches* (finalist); and in 1988 to Claire Denis for *Chocolat* (Finalist Sélection Cannes 88).

Note also that Cinemalia in 1999 held an important festival of films by women directors, including: Musidora’s *Soleil et ombre* (1922, recently restored by Cinéma-thèque Française); Dana Rotberg’s *L’Autre côté*; Claire Denis’s *Le Beau Travail*; Danièle Thompson’s *La Bûche*; Maria de Medeiros’s *Capitaines d’avril*; Pacale Bailly’s

*Dieu est grand, je suis toute petite*; Diane Kurys's *Les Enfants du siècle*; Valérie Lemercier's *Fri Fri*; Marie Vermillard's *Lila Lili*; Charlotte De Turkheim's *Mon Père, ma mère, mes frères et mes sœurs*; Dominique Cabrera's *Nadia et les hippopotames*; Catherine Corsini's *La Nouvelle Eve*; Philomène Esposito's *Toni*; Brigitte Coscas's *Une Saison [Mamirolle]*; Tonie Marshall's *Vénus Beauté* and Noémie Lvovsky's *La Vie ne me fait pas peur*.

Interestingly enough, in reviewing *Toni*, Gönül Dönmez-Colin takes Esposito for a man: "Philomene Esposito comes up with an ambitious as well as personal work after his [sic!] failure with *Toxic Affair*. But once again, he loses his grip on his film halfway through . . ." (<http://www.allmovie.com>).

5. Leonard Maltin, *2002 Movie & Video Guide* (New York: Signet, 2001), 1621.

6. Joseph L. Donohoe, Jr., "Sonatine in Context, a Neglected Film of Micheline Lanctôt," in *Essays on Quebec Cinema*, ed. Joseph I. Donohoe, Jr. 157–67. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1991).

7. Judith Thurman, "Doing It in the Road," *New Yorker* (10 June 2002): 86–90.

8. Such is the case in particular of the film *Baise-moi*. The film *Romance*, too, is regarded by many as demonstrating that "sex is no longer faked" in cinema. See one German description found on the internet: <http://www.filmkrant.nl/av/org/filmkr>.

9. The problem of financing is apparently very acute in Québec. In 2000, when she received the Albert-Tessier prize, Micheline Lanctôt denounced in various interviews the difficulty (all) film directors—even the most experienced—have in finding financial backing. (*Séquences* 219 [May/June 2002]: 7). However, on the American front, some, if all too little, help is available. Still, on 10 July 2002, NewFilmmakers (New York) hosted Cinewomen, which supports and encourages women in the film and entertainment industry. See <http://www.NewFilmmakers.com/calendar/020710.html>

And note, too, the existence of the MadCat Women's International Film Festival (San Francisco.) Heralded as the most cutting-edge women's film festival, MadCat presents films and videos by women from around the globe. Please visit [www.somaglow.com/madcat](http://www.somaglow.com/madcat). Announcement edited by Brian Brooks/indieWIRE.

Additionally, from 30 October to 3 November 2002 Rochester, New York hosted the second annual High Falls Film Festival, which highlights work by female directors, producers, and screenwriters. Screenings included Julie Taymor's *Frida*, Coline Serreau's *Chaos*, etc. For details visit [www.highfallsfilmfestival.com](http://www.highfallsfilmfestival.com).

10. *Facets Features* (Spring 2002): 8–9.

11. The American scene is viewed as dismal by Michelle Goldberg: "Where are the women directors?" 27 August, 2002. Internet address: [http://www.salon.com/ent/movies/feature/200208/27/women\\_directors/index.html?x](http://www.salon.com/ent/movies/feature/200208/27/women_directors/index.html?x)



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# 1

## Directors and Their Films

### AFRICA

#### **Amari, Raja** (Tunisia)

*Satin rouge* (Franco-Tunisien, 2002, 1 hr. 40 mins.) In Arabic (with some French). [Stated in some places as made in 1997.] Directed and produced by two Tunisian women: Raja Amari et Dorra Bouchoucha-Fourati; music: Nawfel El Manaa. Cast: Hiam Abbass, Hend El Fahem, Maher Kamoun, Monia Hichri, Faouzia Badr, Nadra Lam-loun, Abou Moez El Fazaa, Salah Miled.

Synopsis: A widowed Tunisian seamstress takes an unlikely journey of self-discovery in Raja Amari's sumptuous and sensual *Satin Rouge*. While investigating a suspected liaison between her headstrong teen-aged daughter and a cabaret musician, young widow Lilia becomes drawn to an exotic nightclub netherworld of Rubenesque belly dancers and nocturnal pleasureseekers. She strikes up a friendship with one of the dancers, then eventually takes the stage herself, quickly becoming the favorite of both cabaret patrons and the club's hot-blooded drummer. As she gradually sheds her shapeless, matronly house dresses for the flamboyantly sequined bar-girl garb, she also begins to emerge from her cocoon of melancholy and loneliness. ("Director Raja Amira is a dancer herself; she trained for many years at the "Conservatoire de Tunis" and clearly knows what a belly dance fan wants to see in a movie. The cabaret dressing room scenes, in particular, are filled with all the sparkling sequined costumes and heavily made up performers fans might hope for," says Bobbie Giarratana.) Synopsis in French at: <http://gable.unicaen.fr/cindoc.web/www.cine3mondes.fr/indcine.html>

"*Satin Rouge* est un film de femmes: Production, réalisation, image, assistant, montage, que des femmes, ou presque!" "C'est l'histoire d'un fantasme au féminin": <http://www.tunisieinfo.com/realites/857/spnews.html>

+ INTERVIEW: Self-Empowerment by Way of the Midriff; Raja

Amari's "Satin Rouge" by Kate Schultz. Read the complete interview at indieWIRE.com: [http://www.indiewire.com/film/interviews/int\\_Amari\\_Raja\\_020820.html](http://www.indiewire.com/film/interviews/int_Amari_Raja_020820.html).

Several more sites on the internet regarding Amari and especially *Satin Rouge*.

(indieWIRE: 11.21.02)—Venice may get the most international acclaim, but Italy's second-largest festival, the Torino Film Festival, offered plenty of cutting-edge international and domestic films during its twentieth event. The jury awarded its best feature film prize to French/Tunisian production *Satin Rouge*, directed by Raja Amari. The film claimed the 20,500 Euro prize at the event (November 7–15 [2002]).

**Bachir-Chouikh**, Yamina (Algeria) Born 20 March 1954, Algiers, Algeria.

*Rachida* (2002, 100 mins.) Algeria/France. Language: Arabic/French. Written by Yamina Bachir. Cast: Ibtissem Djouadi as Rachida; Bahia Rachedi; Hamid Remas. Shown at Cannes 2002. Took the prix TV5 des cinémas du sud at the Marrakech 2002 film festival. Took the prizes—Images de femmes and Images du public—at the 2003 Montréal film festival, Vues d'Afrique.

Synopsis: A look at fundamentalist terrorism in Algeria through the eyes of Rachida, a teacher in one of the school districts. (IMDb)

An important work, according to *France-Amérique* (1–7 juin 2002): 16.

See: "Un véritable cri de femme." Elie Castel, "Manifestations" (*Séquences* 226 [July-August 2002]: 8–9.)

**Benguigui**, Yamina (Algeria; France) *See* France

**Benlyazid**, Farida (Morocco) Born in 1948 in Tangiers. Studies in modern literature at the Univ. of Paris VIII Studied cinema at IDHEC in Paris. Producer of *Une brèche dans le mur* (d. Jilali Ferhati, 1978).

*Identités de femme* (1980) Fiction.

*Une porte sur le ciel* (1988)

*Sur la terrasse* (1995, 18 mins.?) Short in the collective: *Cinq films pour cent ans* (1995, 90 mins.)

Details in French at: <http://gable.unicaen.fr/cindoc.web/www.cine3mondes.fr/indcine.html>

*Keïd Ensa* (French title: *Ruses de femmes, ou le conte de la fille au basilic*) aka *Women's Wiles*; aka *L'Astuzia delle donne* (1998–99, 90 mins.) Morocco, Switzerland, Tunisia, France. Fiction. Written by

Benlyazid from the story “Le Conte de la fille au basilic.” Photography: Serge Palatsi; editing: Kahéna Attia; music: Mohamed Cherrafi sound: Fawzi Thabet. Cast: Samira Akariou, Rachid El Quali, Fatma Bensaidane, Abderrahim Bayga et al. Production: Tingitania Films (Morocco), Waka Films (Switzerland), Touza Productions (Tunisia), Céphéide Productions (France). Distribution: Brussels Ave, Rue des Visitantines 1/48, 1000 Bruxelles tel 0032 25119159 fax 0032 25118139. [brusselavenue@compuserve.com](mailto:brusselavenue@compuserve.com)

Synopsis: “An intriguing commentary on the power struggle between the sexes and the different classes in Morocco.” (Hottell, see bibliography.)

French résumé and bio. found at: <http://gable.unicaen.fr/cindoc.web/www.cine3mondes.fr/indcine.html>

<http://www.imarabe.org/temp/films/biennale5/selection/realisateurs/fictions—lm/benlyazid.html>

*Casablanca Casablanca* (2002)—docudrama

Synopsis: Adapted from the novel by Rida Lamrini, *Les Puissants de Casablanca*, this film studies several problems that stirred up Casablanca society at the time of the 1996 campaign for better sanitation.

Read full details in French at: <http://www.lematin.ma/rech/rsarticle.asp?tb=article&id=17908>.

### **Bertrand Tchakoua Pouma, Joséphine (Cameroon)**

*Un Mariage riche en couleur* (1996)

*Fanta* (2000, 90 mins.)

Synopsis: Fanta lives with her husband in Paris. They are having quarrels over money; and she wants to stop her acting lessons because they are so expensive.

*La Princesse Mushika* (in preparation)

**Bornaz, Kalthoum (Tunisia)** Born in Tunis in 1945. Studied cinema at the IDHEC and filmed Shorts before making *Keswa*, her first full-length film.

*Keswa* (aka *The Lost Thread*, or *Le Fil perdu*) (1997, 96 or 100 mins.) Original version in Arab, subtitled in French. Cast: Rim Turki (Nozha), Mouna Noureddine (la mère), Lotfi Achour (Lotfi). Also: Ali Mosbah and Ahmed El Hafian.

Synopsis: A young woman returns to Tunis for her brother’s wedding.

French synopsis at <http://www.canalhorizons.com/cineaf/film/kes/kes.html>

**Chirabi**, Saad (Morocco)

*Femmes . . . Femmes* (1999)

Synopsis: This film explores the lives of four modern Moroccan women as they intersect and reflect the social issues and conflicts experienced by North African women.

**Coulibaly**, Fatoumata (Mali) Fatoumata Coulibaly first was noticed with her *N'Golo dit Papa*. She is also a producer at the Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision du Mali.

*N'Golo dit Papa* (not "Papi") (1997, 39 mins.) Fiction. Prix de la Coopération Française (Fespaco)

Synopsis: The initiates who hold the caste system in honor disturb young Nyamanton (Idrissa Samaké), a rebel who dares to disobey the rule in order to enter into marriage with Koudédia (played by Fatoumata Coulibaly).

See: <http://gable.unicaen.fr/cindoc.web/www.cine3mondes.fr/indcine.html>

*Talibés ou la quête violée* (1998; in process)

*Sekenbouyou* (in preparation)

**Deliba**, Fejria (Algeria)—See France

**Djebar, Assia** This director introduces us to the daily life of Algerian women of all generations. Her films are discussed in Pallister, *French-Speaking Women Film Directors, A Guide*, 16, but the following supplementary information regarding her may prove useful as a quick reference.

Born 4 August 1936 as Fatima-Zohra Imalayen in Cherchell, Algeria, Djebar publishes her first novel, *La Soif* (Paris: Julliard) in 1957 and her second novel, *Les Impatients* (Paris: Julliard) in 1958. In 1962 she published the novel *Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde*; (Paris: Julliard). In 1977 she directed her first film, *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* and in 1979 directed her second film, *La Zerda ou les chants de l'oubli*, a documentary juxtaposing French newsreels of World Wars I and II with Algerian women singing traditional songs (Pallister Guide, 16). In 1991 she wrote *Loin de Médine* (Paris: Albin Michel), and in 1995 *Vaste est la prison* (Paris: Albin Michel 1995). Djebar meditates on cinema in *Un Regard de femme* (French edition, 174): "This image . . . this scandal that for me as a child was considered normal, here she is at the start of my quest; woman's unique silhouette, gathering in the folds of her drapery-shroud the five hundred million segregated women of the Islamic world; suddenly she is staring at us, *but from behind the camera*, and through a free hole in a

masked face, she is devouring the world.”—Internet (portrait of Djebbar on film).

*Entre ombre et soleil* (1994; 52 mins.; color; 16 mm.) Director: Kamal Dehane; Shot in Algeria. Production company: CBA. 18, rue Joseph 2 1040 Bruxelles, Belgium. The story of Assia Djebbar’s experience, her questioning about presentday Algeria and the future of its society.

*Femmes d’Alger* (French/Algerien, 1992, 53–55 mins.). Film by Kamal Dehane: About five Algerian women, including Djebbar.

**Ekoumou, Yolande** (Cameroon)

*L’Héritage* (1999; 136 mins.)

Synopsis: A criminal, coming out of prison and having lost his reputation, thinks he’ll show the young people how to pull off a job.

**Fares, Nadia** (Tunisia) Born in Switzerland, 1962.

*Miel et Cendres* (Switzerland/Tunisia, 1996, 80 mins.) Prix Tolérance at the Journées Africaines et Créoles (1996?) Filmed in Tunisia. Cast: Nozha Khouadra, Amel Ledhili, Naji Najeh, et al. Producer: Karin Koch, Lotfi Layouni; screenwriter: Nadia Fares, editor: Kahna Attia Riveille; camera: Ismael Ramirez. A first feature from Swiss-Tunisian Fares.

Synopsis of one of the three stories: When she learns that her mother opposes her relationship with her lover, Leila decides to become a prostitute. In negotiating her body, she is only transgressing the final taboos of a society that denies the most fundamental signs of expression. (Elie Castel, *Séquences* 191 [July/Aug. 1997]: 9)

Compare Louise Carré’s *Mon cœur est témoin*.

Internet: “Follows the stories of three North African women. . . . Despite its tragic moments, the film delivers a message of hope. A compelling examination of female desire in male-dominated society, *Honey and Ashes* speaks to all cultures and genders.”—Reviewer: Lissanne Skyler.

**Faye, Safi** (Senegal) Born 1943, in Dakar. Ethnologue. Studied at the Ecole Louis Lumière in Paris. Supplement to Pallister Guide, 17.

*La Passante* (1972)

*Goob na nu* (*La Récolte est finie*) (1979, 30 mins.)

*Fad’jal* (*Grand-père raconte*) 1979, 108 mins.

*Lettre paysanne* (*Peasant Letter; Kadou Beykat*) (available from Mypheduh) (1975)

*Moi, ta mère* (*Man sa yay*) (1980)

*As Women See It?* (1980)

*Les Ames au soleil* (1981; 27 mins.)

*Selbé* (1983)

*Racines noires* (1985, 11 mins.)

*Elsie Haas, Femme peintre, cinéaste d'Haïti* (1985, 8 mins.)

*Tesito* (1989, 27 mins.)—Femmes de pêcheurs; leur contribution à l'économie.

*La Toile d'araignée*, (1990—)

*Mossane* (1995, 105 mins.) (Spelled *Mossen*, 1992 in Schmidt.)

Synopsis: Fourteen years old and possessed of natural, timeless beauty, Mossane excites by her mere presence. In this Wolof village between the sea and the savanna, such beauty proves tragic. Safi Faye's gorgeous, powerful film begins from a detailed observation of contemporary village life, but unfolds with the mounting force of ancient drama. Mossane tempts fate when she refuses the man to whom she had been promised at birth; it's a desperate act, with desperate consequences.

*Astou* (2001)

For information on Safi Faye and her film *Mossane* see: <http://www.fespaco.bf/mossane.htm>. Also see *List for African Literature and Cinema* (Ken Harrow's report on Créteil Festival des Femmes; April 1998).

Also see from the internet: an interview with Cameron Bailey [Press Conferences].

Safi Faye appears in *Caméra d'Afrique* (d. Férid Boughedir) where she gives testimony on the problems of criticizing the Senegalese society.

Additional information from the internet: Safi Faye: Filmmaker, ethnographer and mother. "She is one of the pioneers of the African cinema. She made her first steps in film direction in 1972. . . . [In] *La passante* [1972], . . . her first 16 mm film, . . . she herself played the main role, an African girl in Paris."

Note: (1) Films (USA) distribution unit [www.sankofa.com](http://www.sankofa.com) has in the past distributed *Kaddu Beykat*. (2) Women Make Movies (USA) ([www.wmm.com](http://www.wmm.com)) distributes *Selbe* in the series "As Women See It."

Additional information at: <http://gable.unicaen.fr/cindoc.web/www.cine3mondes.fr/indcine.html>

**Folly** (FOLLEY) Anne-Laure (Togo) This important documentarian was born in 1954. She is a *juriste*. She will be studied in the forthcoming Guide to francophone women documentarians.

Correction: The Créteil catalogue for 1995 gives *La Gardienne des forces* (1992); cf. the title of the film listed in Pallister Guide, 18 as *Le Gardien des forces* (1991) (Curiously, in Schmidt (*ALA Bulletin*, fall

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