



MAGNOLIA PICTURES and SK GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT
A SK GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH BLOOMFISH PRODUCTIONS AND THE ONLY EMPEROR

Present

CATCHING FIRE: THE STORY OF ANITA PALLEMBERG

Directed by Alexis Bloom and Svetlana Zill
The words of Anita Pallenberg read by Scarlett Johansson

2024 | U.S. | 110 minutes

Official Selection
2023 Cannes Film Festival – World Premiere

FINAL PRESS NOTES

Distributor Contact:

George Nicholis
Rebecca Fisher
Magnolia Pictures
(212) 924-6701 phone
publicity@magpictures.com

Press Contact National:

Tiffany Malloy
Betsy Rudnick-Fernand
Tiffical
malloy@tiffical.com
betsy.rudnickpr@gmail.com

SYNOPSIS

CATCHING FIRE: THE STORY OF ANITA PALLEMBERG is about a woman who was at many points in her life a newspaper headline: Anita Pallenberg was a “rock n’ roll goddess,” a “voodoo priestess,” and an “evil seductress.” She was accused of trying to break up the Rolling Stones, among other things. But those who loved her considered her an exciting cultural force, and a loving mother – and innocent of the accusations. Never-seen-before home movies and family photographs explore life with the Rolling Stones and tell a bittersweet tale of both triumph and heartbreak. From Barbarella to the Swiss Alps, and the Lower East Side to London, Anita Pallenberg was a creative force ahead of her time.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

CATCHING FIRE is a truly hand-made film by two directors motivated by the desire to create something lasting, and personal.

It's a film about family, made by family: Alexis and Svetlana were brought the idea in 2020 by Marlon Richards, the son of Anita Pallenberg and Keith Richards, who wanted his mother's story to be told in all its complexity. The directors have worked closely with Anita's inner circle over the course of three years, and the result is a private view of a life that was often lived in public.

The Super 8mm home movies woven throughout the documentary are the purest expression of this intimacy.

CATCHING FIRE is very much an expression of the honesty and love in Anita's family, but it's no hagiography. Anita was famous for her biting sense of humor and her contempt of false praise.

This film bucks the trend of "branded content" and "celebrity bios" by embracing both the bitter and the sweet, the heartbreak as well as the triumph. Anita Pallenberg is a true anti-hero, an antidote to corporate messaging.

The directors approached the film as an act of historical reclamation: putting the female perspective back in the official narrative of rock 'n' roll, making Anita visible again.

For Alexis and Svetlana, CATCHING FIRE was a deliberate recalibrating of history, and a celebration of an unapologetic leader.

Anita was doubtless a muse to many, and she continues to be an inspiration to the directors. In the words of one of Anita's grandchildren: "Anita was the original gangster; she was 'girl power' to the end."

Alexis and Svetlana developed the film with the conviction that something this personal can become universal. Anita struggled to balance her own professional life with the needs of her partner, motherhood with a desire for freedom – her themes are absolutely contemporary.

The directors hope that Anita's humor – and theirs - shine through a story that's unsparring at times. Anita took risks, and so did the directors: this is an immersive documentary with a style and rhythm all of its own.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ALEXIS BLOOM – Director

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Alexis now lives in New York. In her early career, she produced widely for the National Geographic Channel, and for BBC World. She also produced extensively for PBS Frontline and NOVA.

In 2014, Alexis won the Producers Guild of America Award for *We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks*, a feature documentary for Universal Pictures, also nominated for a BAFTA Award. In 2017, she was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Directing for Nonfiction Programming, and an Emmy for Exceptional Merit in Documentary Filmmaking (*Bright Lights: Starring Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds*, for HBO.) Alexis directed, *Divide and Conquer: The Story of Roger Ailes* and was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2019. Alexis' films have shown in film festivals around the world: the Cannes Film Festival, Telluride, Toronto, and the New York Film Festival to name a few.

SVETLANA ZILL – Director

Svetlana Zill is a filmmaker born and raised in New York City. She has worked as a producer for some of the most renowned documentarians of our time including Alex Gibney, Errol Morris, and Morgan Spurlock. She began her career as an archival researcher on Michael Moore's *Capitalism: A Love Story* and Mike Mills' *Beginners* and worked as a consulting producer for the Academy Award nominated *Cutie and the Boxer*, which also won an Emmy.

Her work explores an impressive range of subjects that include vast CIA conspiracies, eccentric sports fans, pop culture icons and fine artists, and has been presented by HBO, Showtime, Netflix, PBS and The New York Times. *CATCHING FIRE* is Svetlana's directorial debut.

CREDITS

DIRECTED BY ALEXIS BLOOM & SVETLANA ZILL

PRODUCED BY CHARLIE CORWIN, ALEXIS BLOOM, SVETLANA ZILL

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARLON RICHARDS, SIDNEY KIMMEL, JO
HENRIQUEZ, BRIAN KORNREICH, FISHER STEVENS**

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER CHARU RAMAN

CO-PRODUCER MARK KUSWETZ

POST PRODUCER JONAS BENDER-NASH

ARCHIVAL PRODUCER CASSIE SAGNESS

EDITORS ADAM EVANS, HANNAH VANDERLAN

MUSIC SUPERVISOR LIZ GALLACHER

MUSIC BY WILL BATES

VOICE OF ANITA BY SCARLETT JOHANSSON