

CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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Wednesday 13th March: [Love According To Dalva](#)

France/Belgium 75 mins 2022

Director: Emmanuelle Nicot

Writers: Jacques Akchoti; Bulle Decarpentries; Emmanuelle Nicot

Cast:

Zelda Samson (*Dalva Keller*); Alexis Manenti (*Jayden Dorkel*); Fanta Guirassy (*Samia*); Marie Denarnaud (*Zora*); Jean-Louis Coulloc'h (*Jaques Keller*); Sandrine Blancke (*Marina, Dalva's Mother*)

Dalva Keller is 12, but dresses and lives like an adult (or, rather, her father's idealised image of one – lace and cocktail dresses, pearl earrings, heavy make-up, and her hair drawn into a neat chignon). Kept hidden from society by her father (who she calls by his first name) from the age of 5 until rescued by social services, Dalva at first refuses to accept that her father's actions were abusive and struggles to reconnect with the mother she had been told had abandoned her; whilst also having to learn how to be a child in order to be accepted by others in the emergency children's shelter and the school she is assigned to. In the shelter, she is placed with a roommate named Samia who has an equally jaundiced (though rather different) view of adult human relationships. (Samia's mother is a sex-worker who had tried to put her daughter on the game).

In interviews, director Emmanuelle Nicot has described how she researched the screenplay of this, her directorial debut, by spending time in French emergency reception centres dealing with abused children. She also talked to a friend's father, a teacher who realised that a six-year-old pupil in his class, living alone with her father, had become highly sexualised.

At times an uncomfortable watch, Nicot however treats the subject matter with sensitivity and honesty, without ever resorting to cheap emotional manipulation. By remaining solely within Dalva's perspective, Nicot circumvents the conventional abuse narrative, giving the character autonomy instead of victimhood. The child actors, including Zelda Samson herself, are non-professionals – Nicot's direction never attempts to exploit them, and from them she has drawn some exceptional performances.

Our next presentation:

[Plan 75](#) will be shown on Thursday, 28 March, starting at 8:00pm.

2024 Discussion Evening, Wednesday 3 April:

We will be holding a Discussion session in the Café area of the theatre following the screening of our penultimate film, **Under The Fig Trees**.