

It Makes the Dead Sing

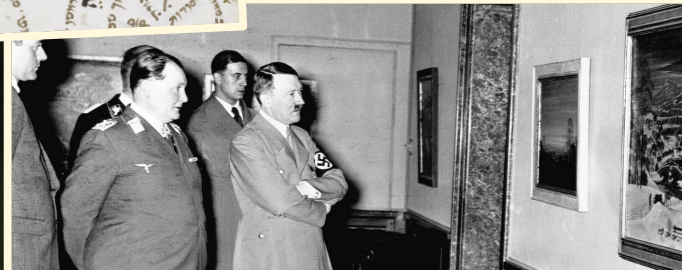
A short film by Matthew Hardy

ימח שמו וזכרו | *Yimakb Shemo* | *May his name and memory be obliterated*

Genre	Psychological Drama, Suspense, Mystery
Budget	€40,000
Runtime	< 20 minutes
Language	French
Writer-Director	Matthew Hardy
Production Schedule	5 weeks prep 8 days shoot 6 weeks post



Löwy Fassler (b. 1889 d. after 1942)
It Makes The Dead Sing, 1942
Oil on Canvas
A Loan from the Fassler Estate™



A close-up, profile view of a woman's face, looking downwards. She is wearing glasses with thin, reddish-brown frames. The lighting is warm and dramatic, highlighting the texture of her skin and the contours of her face. The background is dark and out of focus.

LOGLINE

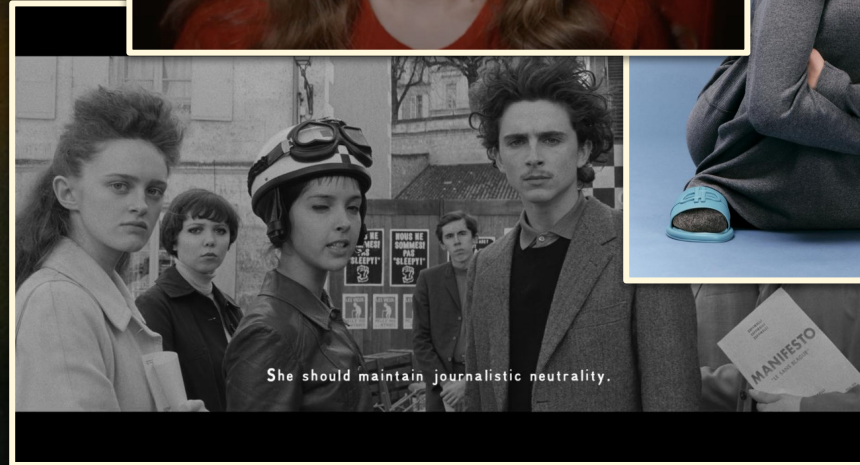
A cursed painting turns a young woman's world upside down, forcing her to confront the sins of her familial and national past.

Lily Taïeb

French actress Lily Taïeb is attached to the project, to play the film's lead role, Sylvie Hondier.

A rising star, Lily has most recently appeared in *The French Dispatch* (Wes Anderson, 2021) and *Bergman Island* (Mia Hansen-Løve, 2021). She has worked with French auteur Arnaud Desplechin, and collaborated with Canal+ and Arte.

Lily has the presence and versatility to match the emotional range and depth of the story, bringing a thrilling star-quality to the film's central role.



SYNOPSIS

Paris, 2023.

Sylvie Hondier - a promising young actress - goes on to an exhibition showcasing pre-war artists.

There she sees the fictional “Ça Fait Chanter Les Morts” (1942) by the mercurial Löwy Fassler. Little does she know that this painting will in turn fascinate her, obsess her, and finally threaten to destroy her...

Follow Sylvie as she is propelled into one of the darkest chapters in France’s history, bridging the gap between the past and present as she uncovers the complex tapestry that connects the crimes of her forefather, a lethal Hebrew curse called the *Yimakh Shemo*, and the art thefts of the Second World War...

Haunted by the past, Sylvie must commit an unthinkable act of destruction to save herself in the present, and then must reckon with the living descendants of the mythic Löwy Fassler...

At once supernatural and realist, *Ça Fait Chanter Les Morts* summons together the corporate modernity of contemporary Paris with the seemingly alien shadows of the Occupation.

And finally, the film is interested in the ghosts of very particular kind of hatred, at a time when those ghosts seem to be re-emerging...



CHARACTERS

Sylvie Hondier

Early 20s. French. Actress.

Open and talented, Sylvie has the kind of intelligence required of an actor: the visceral kind. She grew up with European cinema, likes British guitar music, and keeps a book on the go. In her voice and demeanour she's confident, but lying beneath is a deep well of emotion, from which she draws the elixir of her acting talent. Her clothes are London → Paris, a touch of street and class.

It Makes the Dead Sing is Sylvie's story. The film's narrative, structure, and aesthetic are designed to serve her. The role demands a real emotional range, from innocent gallery-goer to violent possession.



Laure and Augustine Fassler

Mid-late 60s. Parisian. Heirs to Fassler estate.

Laure and Augustine are sisters. Laure is acute but rarely unkind, and carries a touch of bohemian eccentricity, not unlike her grandmother Löwy. Augustine has some of Laure's open spirit, but carries an air of propriety.

Being the descendants of the family that Sylvie's tried to destroy, their confrontation with her raise a fundamental theme: the intersection of two heritages and two histories.



Adrien

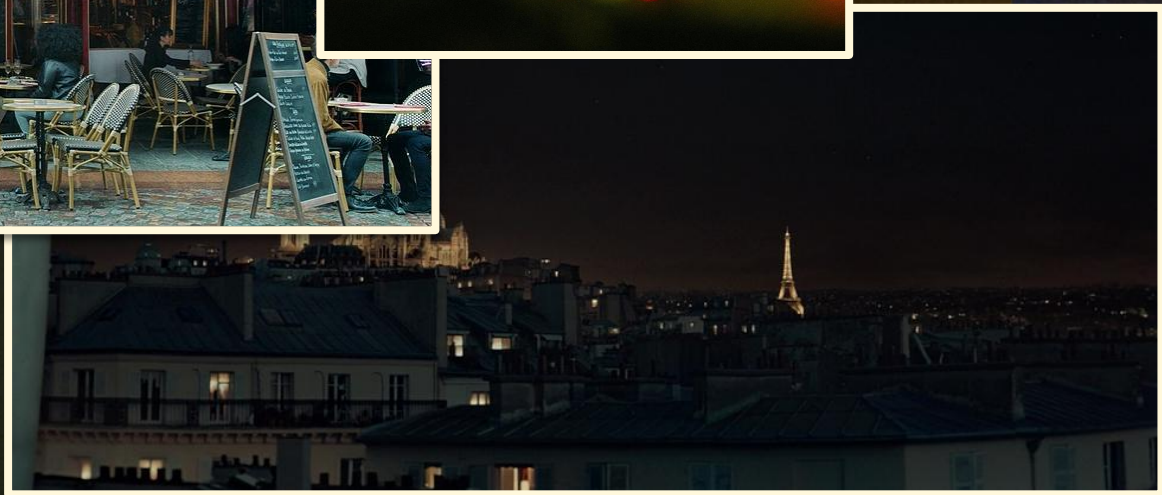
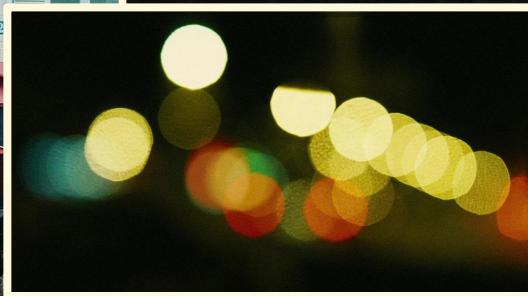
Mid 20s. Preppy. Sylvie's boyfriend.

A young journalist writing an article on Löwy Fassler, for the exhibition where "It Makes the Dead Sing" is on show. It is he who encourages Sylvie to go and see it.

His knowledge of Löwy Fassler and her work, the mystery surrounding the painting, and the *Yimakh Shemo*, allow for a natural exposition of the film's historical foundations.



LOCATION: Paris

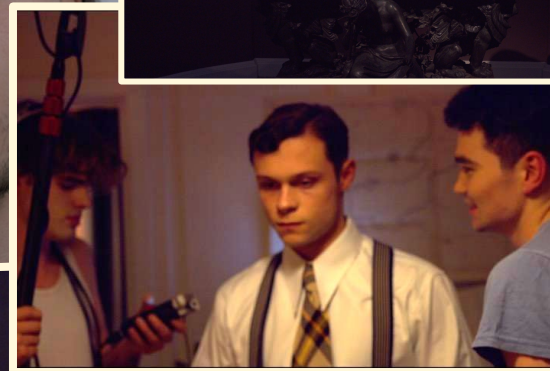


About the Director

Matthew Hardy is a filmmaker from West London. His first film, a short documentary called *Under the Shadow of Rhodes*, featured David Olusoga OBE and was published by writer and journalist Owen Jones.

His last screenplay was selected for workshops with Oscar-winning director Kenneth Lonergan (*Gangs of New York*, *Manchester by the Sea*). It was funded by Damon Albarn of *Blur* and *Gorillaz*, and featured Martha West.

In television, he has worked with the BBC and Sky.



Director's Vision

In *It Makes the Dead Sing*, the veneer of a suspense narrative is underpinned by an even greater drama of human survival, and the remarkable intersection of race and art during the Second World War.

At the very beginning of the project, I mapped out the entirety of Sylvie's story as a feature film, building the narrative, characters, and world of the film.

From there I worked backwards, crafting a compelling twenty-minute structure that would satisfy the economy of a short film while maintaining the macrocosm from which it emerged.

The film's multiple flashbacks for example, operate as Sylvie's supernatural recall and as an entry into that wider story. Her journey into the archive, too, is at once suspenseful and historically informative.

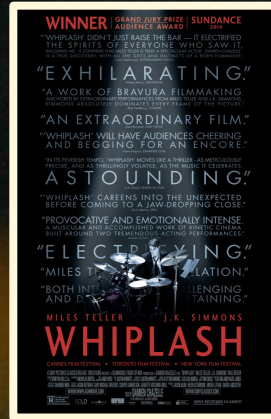
Nonetheless, I wanted the film to be self-sustaining: the mystery is resolved by the end of the twenty minutes, providing an immediate satisfaction and encouraging the audience to watch the film again with a newfound understanding.



Distribution and Comparatives

It Makes the Dead Sing will compete at top international film festivals.

Acting as a proof-of-concept, we will use the film's feature-length potential to attract larger-scale investment, transforming our 20 minute short into an artistic and financial success.



FESTIVAL DE CANNES



tiff.

Whiplash, Damien Chazelle

18 Minute Short → Feature

Feature Budget: \$3.3 million

Gross: \$50 million

Les Misérables, Ladj Ly

16 Minute Short → Feature

Feature Budget: €2 million

Gross: €19.2 million

Son of Saul, László Nemes

13 minute short → Feature

Feature Budget: €1.5 million

Gross: €9.7 million

Contact Information

Matthew Hardy, writer-director

+44 7720834558

matthew@hardyfilm.com

London

