

## **Sabrina Sarabi • Director of *No One's with the Calves*** by Teresa Vena, 09/08/2021

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German director **Sabrina Sarabi** premiered her film *No One's with the Calves* [+] at the Locarno Film Festival in the section dedicated to a young generation of filmmakers, Cineasti del Presente. She drew inspiration from a novel by **Alina Herbing** and found her own approach to tell this story of a young woman who needs to surmount her fears of rejection and to stand alone in order to find her way in life. We talked to the director about her research for the film and the concept for the main character.

**Cineuropa: Your film is inspired by the novel by Alina Herbing. What fascinated you the most about it?**

**Sabrina Sarabi:** I like the protagonist very much. She has something clumsy and out of place. She does stupid things to get out of the village she lives in, sabotaging her environment. I wanted her to move inside an anarchic men's world, to be a woman all alone on a piece of land surrounded by men.

**How did you conduct your research?**

In order to get a personal feeling for the rural landscape, I drove around Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Brandenburg for about a month. I wanted to experience being alone in the countryside, as is the protagonist of the film. Moreover, the novel was published in 2017 and I wanted to see how the rural environment looks and feels like today.

**How did you develop the main character?**

First, I had to find a personal approach to the novel, for example by living out the childhood and youth memories of the protagonist. Moreover, I asked the actress, **Saskia Rosendahl**, not to read the novel and to instead find a bond with the character through the things I told her. Moreover, the other people working with me on the film didn't get much background information, because I wanted to avoid overloading them with details. I had to emancipate myself from the novel and I managed to do it while I was writing the script, and forgot about certain things automatically.

**How did you find your actress?**

I had already worked with Saskia on my first film. She spent only two days on set then, but I was fascinated by her and her way of being. I knew she would be the perfect choice for the role.

**Christine is attracted to Klaus, although he does not respect her either. He behaves as if she were his possession. How do you interpret this bond?**

Christine can't be free and strong when it comes to relationships. There is always someone

who dominates her. She just doesn't know that it could be different. She is too used to it and, at the beginning, doesn't have the strength to fight back. But I didn't want someone great to come along and save her. She had to get there by herself.

**She has a strange understanding of what should be worn in the city.**

Together with my costume designer, we wanted her to always be a bit out of place. She never nails it, concerning fashion. Still, we wanted her to look good and didn't want to make a fool of her. We were inspired by fashion we saw and imagined to be en vogue in a village.

**How did you develop the film's visual concept? Why did you choose the handheld camera aesthetic?**

I wanted to use the handheld camera to be closer to the protagonists and to be able to react spontaneously to the acting. In my opinion, this technique has something direct, immediate and lively.

**The story suggests an environmental commentary. How did you proceed there?**

The wind turbines symbolise the evil that comes from the city. They produce the electricity that is used by the people in the city. They produce noise, take away space, they are the personified enemy of the rural population.