



**8<sup>e</sup> FESTIVAL  
INTERNATIONAL  
DU FILM**  
DE LA ROCHE-SUR-YON

**ABORDER LE FILM  
EN ANGLAIS**

## **MANIFESTO**

### **Julian Rosefeldt**



### **Interview of Julian Rosefeldt, director of Manifesto**

#### **What made you originally want to create Manifesto?**

Two things. One was my meeting with Cate years before. We met in an exhibition of mine in Berlin, in 2010, and we had this idea to do something together. But I didn't know what that could be.

The only thing I knew was that I wanted was for her to be many people at once, in one project. So I had that idea in the back of my mind.

Then I was working on another project of mine called Deep Gold. It's an homage to Luis Buñuel's *The Golden Age*, his second film, the Surrealist masterpiece. I found two manifestos from a French futurist, a woman and artist called Valentine de Saint-Point, and that was basically the starting point with *Manifesto*.

I started reading hundreds of manifestos, and not only artists and filmmaker manifestos, but also architects and theater-maker manifestos, political and socio-political manifestos. And I thought that could be something worth doing with Cate.

#### **How did you go about marrying the characters with the manifesto? There seems to be some purposeful juxtaposition.**

Sometimes with the analogy of the original thought of the text. For example, the Futurists, as you know, have an inclination for speed and technology, but there's also this uncontrollable element in them. I was looking for something that expresses this fascination of speed, but also present danger at the same time. So I came up with the idea for the stock exchange world, where people deal with a lot of accountability, and they're all coke addicts or on drugs like speed. But they're also fascinated with this incredible, invisible velocity of the whole thing.

In other scenes, it was the opposite world that I depicted, so something that had nothing to do with the original text. But exactly because it had nothing to do with it, it was the perfect background to unfold the original ideas of the manifesto.

For instance, the pop art scene where the conservative family is saying grace at the Sunday lunch. Because it is so contradictive, the viewer can really enjoy the text.

And sometimes it was very intuitive, where I can't really tell you why it had to be like that, but for me it had to be like that.

Different methods with the same idea behind it: You're freeing all of these texts from the "dust of art history", and then coming back to the pure aspects of the poetic components of the text, so you can forget about the visual work that these artists are now famous for. Just reading the text as pure thought and pure poetry.

**When you're watching the film, it's almost like a lesson on acting. There's certain pacing and rhetoric from news anchors, the teacher's guidance, the family prayer—did you work on these characters with Cate Blanchett?**

First there were the manifesto collages, and then I started collecting ideas for scenes where somebody delivers a monologue. Maybe a woman, but sometimes a man, and there is one homeless man in the project.

In that process, I collaborated with Cate. So in that phase, she also contributed ideas and we discussed it, as far as what could be interesting as scenes for monologues.

Then it was all about merging texts and characters. Again, Cate was very important because they're not only characters, they're messengers of certain thoughts, like archetypes. They're vessels for ideas. They're exaggerated, almost clichés of characters.

Some are believable, I would say, like the teacher or the single mother. But others are very exaggerated, like the choreographer, who is a cliché of many, many Russian choreographers that you have seen in different movies. When we started production, we worked with a choreographer in Berlin who did Vegas-style shows, and she was exactly the same! Just like the one we had imagined.

**What was the time frame like on the script and the film?**

Absurd, because we had twelve shooting days on the entire project, which was eleven with Cate and one without her.

On the other hand, it was very, very long time working alone on the collages of these manifestos.

So a very long period working on the text, far too short a period for shooting, and then a very long, post-production process.

**If you were to write your own manifesto, what would you write about?**

When I was twenty-something, I actually wrote a manifesto [laughs], but that's all rubbish of course. As I said, you write a manifesto when you're young and insecure! I wouldn't want that to be read by anybody now, but it was probably relevant at that time for me.

