

## Laura Jou about LIFE WITHOUT SARA AMAT

### “A silence that was completely new to us”

13 year old Pep has a crush on Sara, a girl from his grandfather's village. One summer night, Sara disappears but, after a few hours, Pep finds her hidden in his bedroom. The girl of his dreams explains that she has run away from home and asks if she can stay for a while. While the whole town is looking for her, Pep becomes her protector, which will mark this summer forever.

Under the burning sun, the first feature by Spanish director Laura Jou captures precisely the moment when a child becomes a young man. LIFE WITHOUT SARA AMAT was this year's revelation at the Zlin Film Festival and won the ECFA Award at BUFF in September. Watching this film is like throwing a pebble into the pond, and hours later the rings on the water are still growing. One of the elements defining this tender and sensitive story, is its beautiful setting in a small village community.

Laura Jou: The film was shot in a town named Tal-ladell, 90 minutes from Barcelona. Not to lose too much time, the entire crew lived there during the production.

**You found a remarkable way to integrate the streets and corridors in the film's visual vocabulary.**

Jou: Integrating small village life in an almost lyrical way was my passion. When we were kids, we spent the summer with our grandparents in the countryside, far away from the city. Life was very different and there were many new things we learned to appreciate: the birds, cats, roosters, the chatting with older people, and especially the silence, that was completely new to us. The atmosphere from those summers I tried to recall in LIFE WITHOUT SARA AMAT.

**Special compliments to your costume department that collected an**



**unforgettable series of polo shirts.**

Jou: Yes, also they are a part of our childhood memories!

**Part of the scenery is created by the use of sound. There is a big difference between indoors, where voices are always to be heard, and outdoors.**

Jou: We gave great importance to the sound design and editing. We even used subliminal sound. In the scene with Sara's mother and Pep, there is a subliminal layer of what we called 'witch sound': wind blowing, breaking glass etc.

**In matters of love Sara seems very much in control.**

Jou: She has to be! Sara is very determined about her goals in life. Falling

in love with Pep is impossible for her, as that would collide with her dream. She has to stand strong, though in the end her soul kind of explodes, and we all understand where these feelings come from.

**When it comes to love, different generations can learn from each other,**

Jou: Love is love, but there are many ways to express it. That is why we did a lot of rehearsing, for instance to find the right poetry and delicacy in the scenes that explore the physical undertone in their relationship. When casting our main actors Maria Morera (Sara) and Biel Rossell (Pep), from the very first moment we realized there could be this chemistry between them.

**You have a background in coaching young actors?**

Jou: That helped me a lot to work faster. We also had an acting coach. When there is little time for shooting, you need to be well prepared.

—

Gert Hermans  
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