

# **Fidelio: Alice's Journey**

(Fidelio : l'odyssée d'Alice)

**A film by Lucie Borleteau**



Best Actress, Locarno Film Festival  
Winner, Europa Cinemas Label, Locarno Film Festival 2014  
Best Actress, Palm Springs Film Festival 2015  
55th Thessaloniki International Film Festival  
Jameson Dublin International Film Festival

France 2014 / 95 minutes / Scope / French with English subtitles / cert. tbc

**Opens Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015**

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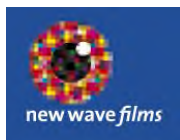
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## **SYNOPSIS**

Alice is a 30 year-old sailor, in love with Félix who waits for her ashore as she unexpectedly sets off as second mechanic on the Fidelio, an old freighter. On board, she discovers not only that she replaces a recently deceased mechanic, but also that the Captain is none other than her first great love, Gaël. In her cabin Alice comes across the diary of the former mechanic, and by reading its content –accounts of technical problems, sexual conquests and lovelorn emotions – she finds, oddly, that they echo her own journey. As the ship calls at various ports, Alice deals with life aboard with an all-male crew, the notion of desire in such an environment and the swings of her romantic feelings, while trying to stay the course.



More details and downloads at [newwavefilms.co.uk](http://newwavefilms.co.uk)

Photos at <http://www.newwavefilms.co.uk/press.html>

## CAST

<b>Alice</b>	<b>Ariane Labed</b>
<b>Gaël</b>	<b>Melvil Poupaud</b>
<b>Felix</b>	<b>Anders Danielsen Lie</b>
<b>Antoine</b>	<b>Pascal Tagnati</b>
<b>Constantin</b>	<b>Corneliu Dragomirescu</b>
<b>Barbereau</b>	<b>Jean-Louis Coulloc'h</b>
<b>Vali</b>	<b>Bogdan Zamfir</b>
<b>Frédéric</b>	<b>Nathanaël Maïni</b>
<b>Felizardo</b>	<b>Manuel Ramirez</b>

## CREW

<b>Directed by</b>	Lucie Borleteau
<b>Screenplay</b>	Lucie Borleteau, Clara Bourreau
<b>Cinematography</b>	Simon Beaufils
<b>Music</b>	Thomas de Pourquery
<b>Costumes</b>	Sophie Begon
<b>Set Design</b>	Sidney Dubois
<b>Sound</b>	Marie-Clotilde Chéry, Edouard Morin, Mélissa Petitjean
<b>Editing</b>	Guy Lecorne
<b>Produced by</b>	Apsara Films & Why Not Productions
<b>Co-producer</b>	ARTE France Cinéma

France 2014 / 95 minutes / Scope / French with English subtitles / cert. tbc



## Lucie Borleteau

Born in 1980, Lucie Borleteau studied film at the University Paris 8 - Saint Denis. She then worked as an assistant director for Lou Ye and Arnaud Desplechin, and contributed to the script of *White Material* by Claire Denis (2009). She then directed three medium-length films, *Nievaliachka, la poupée qui ne tombe pas* (2003), *Les Voeux* (2008) and *La Grève des ventres* (2012).

*Fidelio: Alice's Journey* is her first feature film.

### Filmography

Medium-length films

*Nievaliachka, la poupée qui ne tombe pas* (2003)

*Les Voeux* (2008)

*La Grève des ventres* (2012)

Feature film

*Fidelio: Alice's Journey (Fidelio : l'odyssée d'Alice)* (2014)



## Interview with Lucie Borleteau by Mallory Andrews.

### Why did you choose *Fidelio* as the title?

It just so happened that I heard about a navy fleet named after operas—*Fidelio*, *Carmen*. And I thought *Fidelio* was funny, because a big theme [in my film] is fidelity. The ship is a character for me. I thought it was cool to have both “*Fidelio*” and “*Alice’s Odyssey*” in the title, because this is obviously a portrait of Alice as a sailor. I had the wish to do this particular film when my best friend went to Merchant Marine school. At first I was thinking about a documentary, but I realized it was too big! So I thought, let’s do something better, with romance, with love, with sex. I’m very, very happy it became my first movie.

### What was it like to film on the ship? You were at sea?

Yes, absolutely. Not for all the shooting, but for me it was really important to shoot on a real ship. I never thought we could do that in studio. That would have been impossible—we didn’t have the budget for it. And for me it was very important that the actors could experience what it was like to be in this labyrinth—to feel the heat, to smell the strong scent of fuel, to feel the movement of the sea. It was also a challenge for the technical crew. It was really exciting for everybody. We started with being on the ship twice. We travelled for three days at a time between Marseilles and Tunis. It was very good for the energy of the movie, and it was also very nice as a way of shooting. It wasn’t easy: some of the spaces were very small. So you have to be very smart and very concentrated. Those kinds of difficulties are very good for the film.

### The limitations force you see and understand scenes in a different way.

Exactly!

### Was everyone in the film an actor, or did you have any sailors onboard while filming?

One Filipino member of the film crew was a sailor, and he was so happy because he was really in his element. He would even correct Ariane Labed when she was working on something in a scene: “No, that’s not the way to do it!” What was nice, too, was that he could speak directly to the sailors onboard, with very precise gestures and vocabulary. And my friend the mechanic, she was also always there with us as a consultant. We had a nice mix between the film crew and the ship’s crew, and they were able to meet and mix together. It was wonderful.

### How did you come to cast Ariane?

I started to think about Ariane when I saw *Attenberg*. She is extraordinary in that film. And it was quite late in the process of producing this film. When I was writing, I always thought of my friend, so I had no description for the character in the script. When I met Ariane, it was crazy for me because they look a little bit like each other! So it was a gift for me when I met her. It was also important for me to have a natural actress who is not yet identifiable, at least by the French audience. So you don’t have the feeling that you’re seeing a known actress.

**Ariane has described the filmmaking as a collaborative process between the two of you.**

It came easily for us. We come from the same social background. She hasn't made very many films, so her approach is very unpretentious. Everything with her was very easy. I remember, one of the first things we shot was the opening scene in the movie, on the beach. When we shot it, I was also in a bathing suit and in the water with her to show her the movements. Everything was in solidarity with her. I think the presence of my friend was also very important to her. Ariane was training a week beforehand on the ship to prepare herself. She was wonderful. Also, you see in the film Alice has a little spot on her face? Ariane has it for real. In the script it was a scar based on the one I have near my lip. When we read through the script together for the first time, she read Alice's part and I read everything else, and we were making notes. And we discovered her wonderful birthmark, like a "spot of fuel." That was beautiful. It was a reminder of what actors can bring to the role, not just Ariane but everyone. Some of them gave me gifts of improvisation. It's the way I like to work, with the reality of the people I am filming.

**Speaking of working with the reality of people and situations, the way Alice has to constantly navigate the everyday sexism that comes with existing in a world of men was so familiar. There's no climactic moment of overcoming anything specifically, it's just a lived experience.**

Absolutely, I did not want it to be as if it's a fight. She's not a young mechanic, she's 30 years old, she has experience, and nobody can say she's not qualified. But of course, you have sex photos all over the ship, in cabins, and when they go for a port-of-call party, there are girls and all that. But that's from what my friend told me about. In every situation, sometimes there are harder examples of sexism, and sometimes it can be quite casual. It's good also to make films that are close to real life today. To me, films with a big climax where the character overcomes sexism are now old-fashioned.

**Alice makes a clear distinction between love and monogamy. But the film is non-judgmental.**

Absolutely.

**We see the emotional fallout of two people with different definitions of monogamy, but in the end it doesn't come down on one side or the other.**

No, I didn't want any judgment. I absolutely did not want Alice to be punished. That would have been my nightmare. But I think a happy ending would have been a little bit ridiculous. I made it kind of open-ended so that optimistic people like me can think that she will go back with Felix and their love will be stronger after what happened to them. Because I really believe that it's better to cope with desire, and it can really improve relationships between people. But on the other side, pessimistic people will think that maybe she will be alone and sad and she will end up like the dead sailor whose job she takes over at the beginning of the film. And some people will think she is going to go with another lover.

**I think in a more conventional film about fidelity, the unfaithful partner would be cast as the villain.**

There is no real villain. Even the chief engineer who tries to come into her bedroom at night when he's drunk, he's not an evil man, he's just a person. Of course I'm very happy that he is

punished and has to go. But that's all. I believe very strongly in human beings and I think life is beautiful, but we are absolutely not perfect.

*Film Comment*, November 10, 2014

