

# R E A L L I F E

ANNA MOUGLALIS      NIKOS KOURIS  
MARINA KALOGIROU   THEMIS BAZAKA

A FILM BY PANOS KOUTRAS

PRODUCERS PANOS PAPAHDZIS   ATHENA SAKELLARIOU  
FABRICE COAT   EXECUTIVE PRODUCER TAKIS VEREMIS

TORONTO  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
OFFICIAL SELECTION  
2004

# **REAL LIFE**

**(ALITHINI ZOI)**

A FILM BY **PANOS KOUTRAS**

*We are what our families and lives make us. This is the subject of 'Real Life': no one escapes destiny. One way or another, the past always recaptures those who have tried to escape it.*

- Panos Koutras

Aris Kalliga is 27. He has returned to Athens after a long stretch in detox, to the decadent, superficial world he left behind. His mother - ethereal, eccentric, manipulative, and a doyenne of Athens society – lives with Christos, her devoted gardener, in an opulent villa which mirrors her spirit. Imposing, magnificent, yet shadowy, alive with dark secrets.

Aris attempts to rebuild himself, to understand and control his self-destructive compulsions. Faces from his past reappear: Nikos, his one-time dealer, a young homosexual who loves him violently. And Joy, his old girlfriend: wealthy, beautiful, addicted to cocaine. Afraid, Aris avoids them.

He falls passionately for Alexandra, a designer whose natural simplicity contrasts radically with anything he has ever known. But his neurotic, possessive mother objects. With her help, Joy resolves to get back with Aris.

Tormented by the mystery of his father's death years before, and encouraged by Joy, Aris succumbs to narcotic temptation. His decline is rapid. Mme. Kalliga offers to set Alexandra up in Paris if she agrees never to see Aris again. Persuaded that she is to blame for his relapse, Alexandra accepts.

Aris begins his relationship with Joy exactly where they broke off: theirs is a destructive love, mired in shallow luxury. When Christos commits suicide, Mme. Kalliga, devastated by the loss of her lover, reveals a terrible family secret.

## CAST

**Nikos KOURIS** AS ARIS  
**Themis BAZAKA** AS KALLIGA  
**Marina KALOGIROU** AS ALEXANDRA  
**Anna MOUGLALIS** AS JOY  
**Maria PANOURGIA** AS SYLVIA  
**Yiannis DIAMANTIS** AS CHRISTOS  
**Odysseas PAPANILIOPOULOS** AS NIKOS

## CREW

DIRECTOR **Panos KOUTRAS**  
SCREENPLAY **Panos KOUTRAS / Panos EVANGELIDIS**  
DP **Ilias KONSTANTAKOPOULOS**  
ART DIRECTOR **Panayiotis HADJISTEFANOU**  
SOUND **Nikos PAPANILIOPOULOS**  
COMPOSER **Mikael DELTA**  
PRODUCTION MANAGER **Giorgos PAPANILIOPOULOS**  
EDITOR **Elissavate CHRONOPOULOU**  
PRODUCED BY **Panos PAPANILIOPOULOS / Athena SAKELLARIOU / Fabrice COAT**  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **Takis VEREMIS**  
PRODUCTION **PROGRAM33 / ARGONAUTS / STRADA**

## PANOS KOUTRAS

Born in Athens.

### EDUCATION

London International Film School - (Diploma & distinction)  
Sorbonne, Paris 1 (Thesis: 'American Melodrama of the 50s')

### FEATURE FILM (WRITER-DIRECTOR)

**THE ATTACK OF THE GIANT MOUSSAKA** VIDEO-35MM, COLOUR, 103MIN, GREECE (2000)

### SHORT FILMS (WRITER-DIRECTOR)

**AFTERNOON STARS N°2** 16MM, COLOUR, 28MIN, GREECE (1994)

**THE FALL AND RISE OF LYDIA VON BURER** 16MM, COLOUR, 13MIN, FRANCE (1991)

**STRANGE RELATIONSHIP** 16MM, COLOUR, 4MIN, FRANCE (1988)

**AFTERNOON STARS** 16MM, COLOUR, 11MIN, GREECE (1987)

**MISTY DAYS OF SPRING** 35MM, COLOUR, 11MIN (1984)

**THE BELCH OF LYDIA VON BURER** 16MM, COLOUR, 3MIN (1983)

### THEATRE (DIRECTOR)

**LES TACTICS DU COEUR** BY DAVID ROCHELYN AND PASCALE LAFAY (1992)

The play ran for two seasons at the 'Théâtre du Tambour Royale' and at the 'Hotel Lutetia' in Paris.

### PRODUCTION

Founded with Ion Konstas the production house '**100% SYNTHETIC FILMS**' in Greece, 1995.

The company has produced "**The Attack of the Giant Moussaka**" and numerous commercials for Greek television.

## **ANNA MOUGLALIS SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY**

**EN ATTENDANT LE DELUGE** aka **AFTER WE'RE GONE** DAMIEN ODOUL (2003)

**UN AN** LAURENT BOULANGER (2003)

**EN JOUANT "DANS LA COMPAGNIE DES HOMMES"**  
aka **IN THE COMPANY OF MEN** ARNAUD DESPLECHIN (2003)

**LA VIE NOUVELLE** aka **A NEW LIFE** PHILIPPE GRANDRIEUX (2002)

**NOVO** JEAN-PIERRE LIMOUSIN (2002)

**LE LOUP DE LA CÔTE OUEST** HUGO SANTIAGO (2001)

**DE L'HISTOIRE ANCIENNE** ORSO MIRET (2001)

**MERCI POUR LE CHOCOLAT** aka **NIGHTCAP** CLAUDE CHABROL (2000)

**LA CAPTIVE** aka **THE CAPTIVE** CHANTAL ACKERMANN (2000)

**TERMINALE** FRANCIS GIROD (1998)

## **THEMIS BAZAKA SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY**

**O PARADEISOS EINAI PROSOPIKI YPOTHESI**  
aka **PARADISE IS A PERSONAL MATTER** DIMITRA ARAPOGLOU (2002)

**OI AKROVATES TOU KIPOU** aka **THE CISTERN** CHRISTOS DIMAS (2001)

**THE ATTACK OF THE GIANT MOUSSAKA** PANOS KOUTRAS (2000)

**SIGNS & WONDERS** JONATHAN NOSSITER (2000)

**ACROPOL** PANTELIS VOULGARIS (1995)

**KOUARTETO SE 4 KINISEIS** aka **QUARTET IN 4 MOVEMENTS** LUCIA PIKAKI (1994)

**ISICHES MERES TOU AVGOUSTOU** aka **QUIET DAYS OF AUGUST** PANTELIS VOULGARIS (1991)

**XENIA** PATRICE VIVANCOS (1989)

**I FANELLA ME TO 9** PANTELIS VOULGARIS (1988)

**APOUSIES** aka **ABSENCES** YORGOS KATAKOUZINOS (1987)

**PETRINA CHRONIA** PANTELIS VOULGARIS (1985)

**OSTRIA** ANDREAS THOMOPOULOS (1984)

**REMBETIKO** COSTAS FERRIS (1983)

**TO ERGOSTASIO** TASSOS PSARRAS (1981)

## **MARINA KALOGIROU SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY**

**POLITIKI KOUZINA** aka **A TOUCH OF SPICE** TASSOS BOULMETIS (2003)

## **NIKOS KOURIS SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY**

**OLO TO VAROS TOU KOSMOU** THANOS ANASTOPOULOS (2004)

**RAIN** SYLLAS TZOUMERKAS (2002)

**BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE** NIKOS PANAYOTOPOULOS (2001)

**AFTI I NIHTA MENI** NIKOS PANAYOTOPOULOS (2000)

## **ODYSSEAS PAPASPILIOPOULOS SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY**

**POLITIKI KOUZINA** aka **A TOUCH OF SPICE** TASSOS BOULMETIS (2003)

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

My first feature film, "**The Attack of the Giant Moussaka**" was a low budget film that borrowed the codes of B movies' to parody modern Greek society. By adopting elements of the absurd and the fantastic, it attempted to create its own aesthetics.

In a way, "**Real Life**" observes the same principle. Again it is a film which explores Athenian society, but this time it uses different means and aims at a more complex result. It too borrows forms and elements from popular culture like the melodrama and the soap opera, and attempts to situate itself on the border between their stereotypes and the archetypes of tragedy.

Aris, the son of a wealthy Athenian family, returns to Athens after an absence of several months. He encounters again the world he left behind, his luxurious home, his eccentric mother, and his former girlfriend. Determined to make a new start, he embarks on an inner journey in search of his identity, but also of his family's past. Along the way, he meets Alexandra; a young woman from a different world. They fall madly in love and, through this love, Aris comes to believe that he can change his life. But everything else in his life is an obstacle: especially his mother. Aris realizes that, in order to save his love, he will have to take his search and inner quest to the bitter end, whatever the cost.

The film's plot is a series of surprises and upsets. The music is continuous and follows the drama, alternately underscoring and commenting on it. The film's photography also refers us to that of classical melodramatic cinema (dramatic lighting, colour codes, and so forth), while at the same time overthrowing it through a modern point of view. Its purpose is to carry away the viewer into this strangely beautiful universe and reveal to him a hidden aspect of his world.

"**Real Life**" is exaggerated, full of extreme emotions, irony, events of no obvious significance, games of fate, important unexpected turns. It walks a tightrope between the dramatic and the comical; the majestic and the base; the real and the artificial.

The film portrays a world on the brink; undermined by the past, hypnotized by an artificial idea of the present. A wealthy, arrogant family is being devoured by its secrets, while at the same time it is lulled by its neuroses.

Our heroes live with the intensity and passion of guilt and pleasure. Some of them have a life which they organize, construct and direct. Others have a life which is directed and organized regardless of their wishes. And yet, strong or weak, rich or poor, all of them live fragmented among secrets, dependencies, caught up in the search for truth or its systematic concealment. This family is Greek but it could have its home anywhere in the Western world: trapped in the vertigo of decline, it tries to escape by moving forward.

"**Real Life**" attempts to respond to the demands of a postmodern society and to function as a distorting mirror which transforms illusion into a subjective truth, by presenting the viewer with the following question, which, ideally, the viewer will then pose to himself:

"What if real life was cinema?"

- Panos Koutras

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