



Review

Apolonia Apolonia review - artist and film-maker evolve together in artworld memoir



The hypocrisies of the art world are exposed in this epic undertaking that sees the development of both the film's subject and its director



📷 On a journey to recognition ... Apolonia Sokol in Apolonia Apolonia

Filmed over the course of 13 years, Lea Glob's dynamic and intimate portrait of figurative painter Apolonia Sokol also charts the twin evolution of two women: the one in front of the camera and the one behind it. Having grown up in a bohemian Parisian theatre founded by her parents, Sokol seems destined to make her name as an artist, though her journey to recognition is far from rosy.

Press Review

The Guardian, Phuong Le, October 2023

A graduate from the ultra prestigious École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, Sokol however carries a more underground sensibility. When threatened with eviction, she turned the run-down theatre - her childhood home - into a haven for performers and activists. Her large-scale paintings of friends and acquaintances show them in a state of repose, yet Sokol's energy is anything but placid. Forever sprinting from one adventure to another, she travels to America to be sponsored by collector Stefan Simchowitz, famously dubbed "[The Art World's Patron Satan](#)" by the New York Times. His assembly-line approach to artistic patronage, which requires Sokol to produce 10 paintings within one month, soon leaves her disillusioned.



This chapter of Sokol's life brilliantly exposes the capitalist hypocrisies of the art world, forever ravenous to devour fresh young talent. The tone of Glob's film, however, is far from cynical; it remains optimistic and inspirational as Sokol continues to forge her own path. As Sokol's style matures, Glob's direction also becomes visibly more assured. The meandering beginning in which the film-maker's narration does a lot of the heavy lifting soon becomes more stylistically coherent. Gradually, Glob's words cease to simply narrativise Sokol's life, and instead become philosophical ruminations on an unusual friendship, on womanhood, and the very difficult art of living itself.

● Apolonia Apolonia is released on 3 November at Bertha DocHouse, London.