

Full look: Didit Hediprasetyo  
Jewellery: Bulgari



Shot at Hotel Balmoral Paris

# SVEVA

*Call it karma, Sveva Alviti believes it. It cannot be a coincidence, to say, if the Roman actress has made her debut as a supermodel between Europe and New York before being dazzled by the cinema and crowned godmother of the Venice Biennale in 2019, to celebrate her birthday on July 14, national holiday of the country that adopted her and offered her opportunities and recognition: among all, the candidacy at the César Award as Best Actress in 2018 for Dalida. "By now in Paris I feel at home, I found it here my professional and emotional dimension, France is the country that discovered and recognized my capacity as an actress", the actress who gave face and torments to Dalida, an magnetic and restless icon of French music, confesses to French Fries.*

255

# ALVITI

INTERVIEW

BY ILARIA SOLARI

Photographer Thomas Valtin

FRENCH FRIES

*It's a role that has stayed with you for a long time.*

When they called me to play it, I was, as they say, a beardless, immature actress, perhaps not by birth date, but my career in cinema started relatively late. It was my first big film and I was ignoring many things about this profession, starting with the fact that, when you step into the shoes of a character, you have to learn to keep things for yourself, to protect yourself from its shadows, from its neuroses: in Dalida's case, it was a real black hole: her depression, her fragility have conducted her to suicide. However, I threw myself into her body and soul and somehow this was twisted against me.

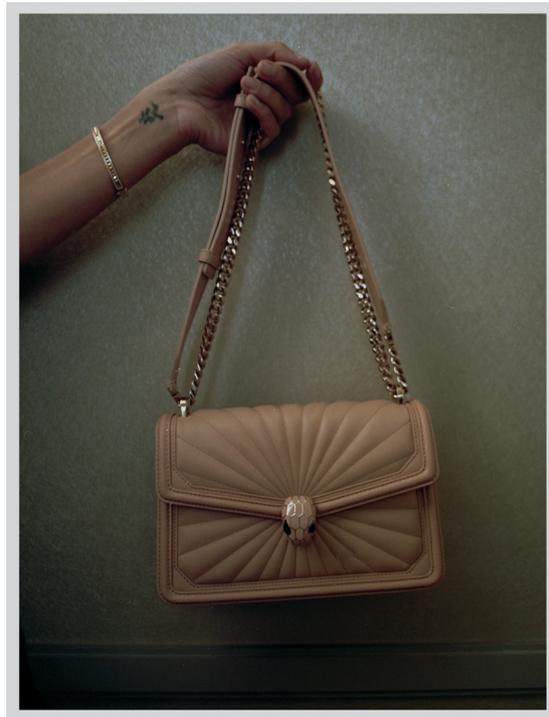
*How?*

At a certain point, when I finished filming, I didn't know who I was anymore. You know those legends about great actors Americans, on certain capital interpretations that transform you into a living character? Here, me, very modestly, I went through the same alienating experience. And it took me a long time to understand that if I wanted to continue doing this job without giving up having a normal life and a man, I had to be able to measure the involvement; learn to play with emotions, because this is what we actors do, without hurting me.

*Did you learn it in the end?*

Yes, but it wasn't easy, I had to dig deep to discover the origins of that malaise: Dalida had evoked unresolved aspects of my past, and awakened my dark side.

Putting the ghosts on the run, have you finally found yourself?



Bag: Bulgari  
Jewellery: Bulgari

Yes and thanks to the many opportunities I had here I was able to find my path, to interpret with greater balance other committed films, which manage to give a voice to women who do not have it.

*And, between one busy film and another, you managed to act alongside a legend like Jean-Claude Van Damme, in Lukas*

It is one of the few films of his in which there are not only blows and punches, let's say an auteur action: he plays a father whose daughter is kidnapped and I am a counterfeiter who works for the Belgian mafia but would like to get out of it. Working with Jean-Claude was fun: he is, unexpectedly, a funny, sweet and kind man: not scary, as you might imagine seeing his films. He is just a little "material", full of energy: one day, before shooting a dramatic scene, while I was standing in a corner practicing to cry, he thought it was best to let off steam with a series of push-ups to "charge" Earth.

In a few months, *Entre les vagues* will be released in France, a film in which you are the protagonist, recently presented at the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes. It comes out on March 18th, to be precise, but in the meantime it collects success and prizes in many other small festivals. It's a movie I am particularly proud, a first feature directed by a woman, Anaïs Volpé, who gave life to a different character from those I have played so far: in the story I am a

director of success, very fond of the theater in which she works, so much so that she protected him with all her strength: an important implication in a time when Covid has long held armored stages. But "Entre les vagues" is above all the story of a friendship between two artists who come from the Parisian suburbs and share the dream of becoming actors. My character enlists them both for a show, not knowing about their friendship: this will start a story that alternates between drama and comedy.

Not the usual story of female competition, it seems to me

How many stories like this have we had to watch, which invariably represent the relationships between the women in the form of conflict? What do they tell of quarrels, fights and jealousies? It's the usual counter-information, a cliché: we are not like that, we are perfectly capable of supporting each other, of cooperating and network. And when competition emerges between us, it often manifests itself in its purest form and constructive: in all the women I have met, in the directors I have worked with, I have always found one grand opening; a race to overcome, perhaps, but only to create something beautiful together. In short, a very sporty feeling. *Words of a former tennis player: What did the youthful experience of competition leave you?*

The determination. The certainty that up to the last point, up to the last ball, if we talk about tennis, the situation is it can overturn, for better or for worse. That's my motto: never give up: you can always recover, even when all seems lost. Destiny and luck help you, as long as you are willing to fight to the last game.

*Have you ever found yourself in life in a situation where everything seemed lost?*

The pandemic was complicated for everyone, it was a time when many people saw it jump, one after the other, each point of reference, into which the superstructures that are there have suddenly fallen, we were built around, coming face to face with our ghosts. For an actress like me, used to it, to be in contact with people, to find myself blocked, without any certainty of the future, it was unsettling. Work gives me nourishment, it feeds my passion, it is never enough for me. I spent months in fear of great anxiety. *How did you manage it?*

By practicing mindfulness, meditation with eyes closed, working on breathing to find my center, harmony with the body: slowly retracing my history, I realized that basically that anxiety kept me company since I was a child. It was a kind of tiring awakening.

We thought we would come out better, certainly we came out different

Absolutely yes, I found myself transformed, full of vigor and determination. I do not want any more waiting for things to fall from above, for someone to propose me the right role: it is a condition

which takes away a lot of energy from me. I only want to play projects that I like and make sense to me. And if no one proposes them to me, then I will be the one to create them.

## How?

I asked myself: 'What can I do in life?' I answered that I know how to get in touch with being human; ultimately, I can tell stories. Why then, instead of embodying characters imagined by others, don't I try to create something that really belongs to me? So I

started writing.

## What are you writing?

My first film as a director: I'm working with a very good Italian screenwriter and in the meantime I'm trying to put together a production, between Italy and France. It is a story that I like and it satisfies me a lot. It's about a strong social issue, which I have personally experienced. For now I can only anticipate this.

*But can you talk about the film you just presented at the Bari Film Festival and that curiously bears the same title as your other French film, Entre les vagues, but this time in Italian, Tra le onde?*

And isn't that karma? This time karma brings me back to Italy, to work with director Marco Amenta in a film that reflects the path I have taken so far. It's a noir love story, a road movie of which I am the protagonist together with Vincenzo Amato: I play Lea, a woman who believes in love, she wanted to be a singer, but she is unable to assert herself; she then moves to Sicily, where she falls in love with a fisherman, Salvo. My Lea lives like in the limbo, but in the end something will make all the knots that keep her suspended dissolve.

*It is a film that also talks about migrants*

That's a story within a story: Salvo finds the body of a migrant and asks Lea to help him bring it back to his wife, so that he has a dignified burial. The journey reveals Lea's genuine and simple nature, a character who looks a lot like me.

*In which way?*

We have the same truthfulness, a sort of irreducible honesty, a hard and pure core that does not leave scratch from what is happening around us, and to which I personally want to remain faithful. I feel the need to be, as they say, "a good person", to keep my empathic attitude alive, to be generous and never stop communicating and sharing the things I feel and do. This for me has become a kind of urgency, it gives me joy and meaning.

*Is there still room for the irresistible lightness of the world of fashion and catwalks?*

With fashion I have grown and continue to work. But that is a world that is anything but frivolous: it is a huge business, it has to do with creativity, with communication. It helps me look at things through different lenses and I still like it a lot to be dressed up and participate in fashion shows.

*How do you like to dress, when you want to feel beautiful?*

I like outfits that are a bit masculine, androgynous, oversized jackets and trousers, I like to look strong and I don't feel the need to show off. I can't understand women who make sensuality a bargaining chip: I don't judge them, but I don't really find myself there.

*This issue of French Fries is about mushrooms, in relation to art, nature, sustainability. Does it tell you something?*

A very vivid and close memory: I just attended a Stella McCartney show in Paris inspired by mushrooms, with sustainable material obtained from their skin. We found ourselves catapulted into a dreamlike and wonderful world, in a pavilion a little outside the center of Paris, an extraordinary experience. Mushrooms are indeed a great source of inspiration, some even use them for widen,

as they say, "the doors of perception": personally, the power of acting is enough for me to travel with the mind.

What is the place where you feel most comfortable, the space where you take refuge when you need to dedicate yourself to yourself?

My house is certainly the most comfortable place. I don't know if it can be defined as a "place", but another territory where I like to take refuge is writing: let's call it a place of the soul, a solitude that I like

attend, where my imagination travels a lot. Scenes, characters, emotions come to me, I love to live among them, in these private and intimate rooms. I can't help it: in fact I find myself writing every day.

In fact, writing, usually fantasizing, is an extraordinary mean of improving the quality of life, to change what you can't

So extraordinary that sometimes it takes my hand and I can't get out of the house. I was once with a friend of mine in Paris and I found myself imagining dialogues and meetings while she stood in front of me and

she talked to me.

*And if your life were really a book, how would you title the chapter you are living?*

Good question: I would like to say: vie privée, "private life", which is perhaps also the working title of my movie. I live completely absorbed by this creative path, which is so intimate and lonely. And it's also a moment in which I am intensely rediscovering the sense of family and the values that give meaning to existence.

*Is there also room for love in this "private life"?*

*Surely there is space, love is an integral part of it. I have reached a stage in life where I have no more desire to waste time in returnable relationships, which lead nowhere. I want to build a project, a family, and to start from very solid foundations.*



Coat: BESFXXK  
Bag: Bulgari  
Jewellery: Bulgari

FRENCH FRIES



Full look: Didit Hediprasetyo  
Jewellery: Bulgari

STYLING: SELFINA, HAIR: PAULINE BRUNEL, MAKEUP: LAURA MERLE

Full look:  
Didit Hediprasetyo  
Bag: Bulgari  
Jewellery: Bulgari  
Shoes: Jheiro