

JOSEPHINE DE LA BAUME selects

# ROXANE MESQUIDA

Model, actress and singer Joséphine de La Baume: "Roxane is sometimes a gorgeous woman and sometimes the cutest little girl. She is sometimes discreet and shy and sometimes the most charismatic, outgoing woman in the room. She is, in fact, the most charming contradiction. She is, more than anything, a serious and brilliant actress."

Beguiling French beauty Roxane Mesquida possesses an engaging depth of appreciation for film, so it is somewhat surprising when she says, "I was only interested in art when I was a kid. I never wanted to be an actress. I feel like when you're from a small town (Le Pradet in the south of France), that's not something you really think about." But when she was 11, director Manuel Pradal spotted her in the street for his movie *Marie Baie de Anges* (*Mary from the Bay of Angels*, 1998). "He said, 'I want you to be in my film.' And then I never stopped."

Now Mesquida watches a lot of movies. "If you're an actor and you don't watch movies, how can you know who you want to work with? That's what decides your career, and I want to work with directors that I admire." She credits working with director Catherine Breillat in 2001 on *À ma sœur!* (*Fat Girl*, 2001) for really igniting her passion for cinema. "She changed everything. She opened my eyes to all these very artistic movies. Foreign cinema is truly an art. I realised there was this world of movies that are so amazing, and can change your life and your vision of so many things."

At the core of Mesquida's passion for film is her respect for

filmmakers. "I never dreamed of having the same career as another actor. I only loved directors - they make me want to be a part of their world and their creation. Being an actor is almost like being an object; you help the director to create what they want to create. To be an actor is masochistic."

Mesquida co-stars alongside fellow French actress and model Joséphine de la Baume in *Kiss of the Damned*, the feature debut of Xan Cassavetes, daughter of indie-film legend John Cassavetes. The film, which is premiering at this year's Venice and London film festivals, tells the story of two vampire sisters, one good, one bad, and a scriptwriter in love with the good sister. Mesquida plays the evil sister, of course. "I loved Mimi so much!" she exclaims. "It's like she hates 'moral', she hates everything about 'moral' and wants to destroy. She's like an animal, almost like a cat. She's not going to think that something is bad; she doesn't move against her nature. She's a real vampire."

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