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EDEN – Éden

a film by **Ágnes KOCSIS**

2020, Hungary-Romania-Belgium, Fiction drama, 153 min., HD, Color, 1: 2:39

International premiere: IFF Rotterdam– VOICES 2020



LOGLINE

A film about humankind having nowhere to escape from itself.

SYNOPSIS

Éva is allergic to all kinds of chemical substances, air pollution, radio waves and electronic fields. She needs to live in total isolation and can have no contact with her environment. The slightest mistake may cause her death. Her only relations are with her brother and the doctors continuously experimenting on her. One day a psychiatrist comes to investigate if her illness is real or exists only in Éva's mind. Will love be enough to save her?

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Format (shooting):	35 mm Digital Sensor (ARRI RAW 2,7 K)
Format (screening):	DCP
Duration:	153 min
Genre:	Fiction drama
Shooting location:	Hungary
Directed by	Ágnes KOCSIS
Written by	Ágnes KOCSIS
Co-writers	Ivo BRIEDIS, Gábor NÉMETH, Andrea ROBERTI
DoP:	Máté Tóth WIDAMON
Edited by	Áron MEZEI
Production designer	Petra VINNAI
Re-recording mixer	Herman PIEËTE
Sound designer	François DUMONT
Casting director	Gréti FELLNER
Costume designer	Mónika KISS-MATYI
Produced by	József BERGER, Els VANDEVORST, Ági PATAKI, Oana Bujgoi GIURGIU, Alain BERLINER

MYTHBERG FILMS - LIBRA FILMS - CREATIVE HOURS

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MAIN CAST

Lana Barić
Daan Stuyven
Lóránt Bocskor-Salló
Maja Roberti
Zalán Makranczi
Róbert Kardos



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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"Eden is firstly a metaphor of human solitude. I was interested in how people are affected by the complete isolation and the lack of real love. How important are human relationships in our lives, and how all of this is interconnected with the world around us, with the nature we live in, how one affects the other and whether the changes in nature change our relationships. The film also has some irony and humor."



ÁGNES KOCSIS

Ágnes Kocsis was born in Budapest. She majored at Eötvös Lóránd University in Polish Language and Literature, Aesthetics, and Film Theory, then received a degree in Film Direction from the Academy of Drama and Film in Budapest. In 2019 she obtained her DLA (Doctor of Liberal Art) degree at the Academy of Drama and Film in Budapest.

Her three short films have been screened at numerous festivals; *A vírus (The Virus)* shared third prize at the 59th Cannes Film Festival in the "Cinéfondation" section. Her first feature film *Friss levegő (Fresh Air)* was screened at the same edition of the Cannes Film Festival in "Semaine de la

Critique", and was among the 4 films nominated for the Discovery Award of the European Film Academy in 2006. *Fresh Air* has played at more than 80 international film festivals to date, winning 14 prizes. *Pál Adrienn (Adrienn Pál)*, her second feature film, won the FIPRESCI award at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival, in the section "Un Certain Regard". She received the Béla Balázs national award in 2011 for her work in film.

FILMOGRAPHY

ÉDEN (*Eden*)

2020; fiction, 153 min, color, Mythberg Films, Libra Films, Creative Hours
director, scriptwriter, associate producer

Awards:

- Rome Film Festival – MIA Market -Arte Prize for the best project

EGY NAP - MAGYARORSZÁG 2011 (*A Day - Hungary 2011*)

2012; omnibus film; 2nd episode, 11 min; color; digital; TT.Filmműhely
director, scriptwriter

62nd Berlinale – Out of Competition

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PÁL ADRIENN (*Adrienn Pál*)

2010; fiction, 136 min; color, 35 mm; KMH Film-Isabella Films, FreibeuterFilm –
Cinema Defacto-Attila Árpá-Oblomova Film
director, scriptwriter, co-producer

63rd Cannes Film Festival – Un Certain Regard

Awards:

- **63rd Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard – FIPRESCI Award**
- Sarajevo Film Festival – Cinelink: Magic Box Award for the screenplay (2007)
- Jameson Cinefest International Film Festival, Miskolc, Hungary - Film Critics Award
- Arsenals Int. Film Festival, Riga, Latvia - Condamnation of the Interfilm Jury
- Zürich International Film Festival – Critics Choice Award
- Cinepécs - Hungary - Film New Europe Visegrád Award
- 2in1 Festival, Moscow – “Prize for the Best Hero(ine)” for the best performance to Éva Gábor
- Manaki Brothers International Cinematographers' Film Festival, Bitola - Award for exceptional artistic achievement in the art of cinematography
- Cottbus Film Festival – Prize for the Best Director
- Cottbus Film Festival –Prize for an Outstanding actress to Éva Gábor
- Cottbus Film Festival – Prize of the Ecumenical Jury
- The Hungarian Film Critics’ Award for the best director of the year
- The Hungarian Film Critics’ Award for the best cinematography of the year
- Crossing Europe Film Festival, Linz – Audience Award
- 42nd Hungarian Film Week –Golden Reel for the Best Film
- 42nd Hungarian Film Week- Audience Award
- 42nd Hungarian Film Week- Producer Award
- 42nd Hungarian Film Week- Best Sound
- Golden Carpathian Film Festival, Ploesti – Grand Prix
- CinEast Festival du Film, Luxembourg – Special Jury Award

FRISS LEVEGŐ (*Fresh Air*)

2006; fiction; 109 min; color; 35 mm; KMH Film – SzFE
director, scriptwriter

59th Cannes Film Festival - Semaine de la Critique

Awards:

- 36th Hungarian Film Week – Best First Film – Sándor Simó Award
- 36th Hungarian Film Week – special prize of the student jury for the best first film
- Festival du Film Européen, Brussels – Main Prize - Iris Award for Best Film
- Reykjavik International Film Festival - Honorable Mention
- Pécs International Film Celebration - Main Prize – Golden Benjamin Award
- European Film Academy - Nominated for European Discovery Award
- Warsaw International Film Festival - FIPRESCI Award
- Barcelona l'Alternativa - Special Mention

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- Bratislava International Film Festival - Student Jury's Prize for the Best Film
- Delhi IIWFF - Best Director
- Hungarian Film Critics Award - Best First Feature Film
- Hungarian Film Critics Award - Best Actress Award for Júlia Nyakó
- Hong Kong International Film Festival - Special Mention
- San Jose Cinequest Film Festival - Global Vision Award

A VÍRUS (*The Virus*)

2005; short fiction; 27 min; color; 35 mm; SzFE – Filmservice
director, scriptwriter

59th Cannes Film Festival - Cinefondation

Awards:

- Golden Eye Film Festival of the Hungarian Society of Cinematographers – Best Cinematography from the Academy of Drama and Film
- **59th Cannes Film Festival, Cinefondation – Third prize**

18 KÉP EGY KONZERVGYÁRI LÁNY ÉLETÉBŐL (*18 Pictures from the Life of a Conserve Factory Girl*)

2003; short fiction; 22 min; color; 35 mm; SzFE
director, scriptwriter

Awards:

- Siena International Short Film Festival - Special prize for the best fiction
- Golden Lion Film Festival – Taipei, Taiwan – Special Mention of the Jury
- achalo Film Festival – St. Petersburg, Russia – Award of the Russian Union of Filmmakers
- Crakow – Etiuda Film Festival – Honorable Mention of the Jury

UGYANÚGY VOLNA, MINT SANDOKAN ... (*It would be like Sandokan...*)

2001; documentary; 36 min; colour; Beta; SzFE
director, scriptwriter

SZORTÍROZOTT LEVELEK (*Assorted Letters*)

2000; short fiction; 33 min; colour; 35 mm; Studio Béla Balázs – Filmplus
director, scriptwriter

Awards:

- München Film-Festival - Special Mention of the Jury
- The Hungarian Film Critics' Award for the best cinematography
- 32nd Hungarian Film Week – The diploma of the Jury
- 32nd Hungarian Film Week - Award for the best cinematography

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PRESS

Agnes Kocsis shooting *Eden*

01/2018

by Fabien Lemercier / Cineuropa.org

Croatia's Lana Baric and Belgium's Daan Stuyven topline the film, which is being produced by Mythberg Films and sold by the Hungarian Film Fund.

Last Monday saw the start of the shoot for *Eden*, the eagerly awaited third feature film by talented Hungarian filmmaker Agnes Kocsis, who rose to fame with *Fresh Air* (in competition in Cannes Critics' Week in 2006 and nominated for the European Film Award for European Discovery the same year) and who also made a huge splash on the Croisette with *Adrienn Pál* (FIPRESCI Prize in Un Certain Regard selection in 2010).



For the cast of her new opus, the director has secured the services of Croatia's Lana Baric (who gave a fine performance in 2015's *You Carry Me*, won Best Supporting Actress at Pula in 2013 for *Hush*, and was also superb in *The Reaper* and *Night Boats*), Belgium's Daan Stuyven (best known as a musician and singer, be it in a group or as a solo artist, under the name Daan; also a composer for film; he has made the odd appearance on the big screen to boot, most notably in *How Camels Become Lions*), Romania's Lóránt Bocskor-Salló (*Children of Glory*) and Hungary's Maya Roberti.

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Written by the director, who wishes to reveal as few plot details as possible, *Eden* is a special love story. It is about a woman in her late thirties who is allergic to everything; therefore, she lives in total isolation.

Produced by József Berger for Mythberg Films, *Eden* is being co-produced by Oana Giurgiu for Romanian outfit Libra Film, with the involvement of Alain Berliner for Belgian firm WFE. The feature, which is being backed by the Hungarian Film Fund, the Hungarian tax incentive scheme and the MEDIA Programme's development support, is being filmed until late February, with five additional days scheduled for May.

Principal photography is taking place in Mafilm Studios, in Budapest and at various locations in the Hungarian countryside. The DoP is Máté Tóth Widamon (who was awarded at the Hungarian Film Week in 2009 for his work on Pater Sparrow's *1* and who turned heads in 2014 thanks to his efforts on *What Ever Happened to Timi*).

<https://cineuropa.org/en/newsdetail/345478>

Eden (review)

01/2020

by Fabien Lemercier / Cineuropa.org

Hungarian filmmaker Ágnes Kocsis returns with a unique, extremely ambitious and formally accomplished film about the tough topic of loneliness in the modern world.

Art and commerce do not always go together well, even less so in times where filmmakers use speed, big effects of narrative and impactful sounds or images in the hopes of keeping their most volatile viewers interested. With *Eden*, which had its international premiere in the Voices programme and in the Big Screen competition of the 48th International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), Hungarian filmmaker Ágnes Kocsis clearly marks herself in the category of those opposed to the "entertainment" steamroller, in the same vein as her two previous films discovered in Cannes (*Fresh Air* in Critics' Week 2006 and *Adrienn Pál* in *Un Certain Regard* in 2010). That is for the best, even if what is a demanding position for the filmmaker is just as challenging for the audience.

The director does not simply tackle a difficult topic: extremely allergic to chemicals, air pollution, radio waves and electromagnetic fields, a woman lives as a recluse, a guinea pig for science who is also evaluated by a psychiatrist. She also treats it with the exact length of time necessary to its inherently slow development — the links that forms and break during intense psychotherapy would not be very believable if shown in a sped-up rhythm. A very strange

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scientific/ecological/romantic film thus progressively takes shape against the background of omnipresent loneliness and broken communication.

“The entire world seems so far away, it gives me vertigo. Everything hurts, all the time.” In her ascetic apartment, in contact with the outside world only through her devoted and tense brother Gyuri (Romanian actor Lóránt Bocskor-Salló), Eva (Croatian actress Lana Baric) meets for the first time András (Belgian actor Daan Stuyven), the psychiatrist charged with writing up a report about (and against) her for a trial. Profoundly ill for seven years, Eva only goes outside (protected from the atmosphere by a spacesuit) to do violent tests at the clinic (“like a guinea pig. Maybe they’ll display me in a window”).

Cruelly lacking physical contact and human interaction, she suffers from depression, severe anxiety and panic attacks which may be the cause of those allergy crises that put her life in danger. Throughout his visits and with a trip to a research centre in the desert (supposedly free of allergens), András tries to make up his mind. Leading the solitary life of a divorced man (father of a little girl he struggles to reconnect to), he progressively grows fond of Eva, who slowly regains a taste for life...

Formally brilliant (elegant direction, perfect cinematography, set and sound design), punctuated with a few particularly striking sequences (the desert, the walks through the city in the spacesuit) and rich in discrete details, *Eden* is a gem that nevertheless remains rather dry, with a script (written by Ágnes Kocsis together with Ivo Briedis, Gábor Németh and Andrea Roberti) purposefully moving at a snail’s pace. A rhythm which might throw some in a near state of catalepsy, but which nevertheless deserves all the respect of aficionados fond of real artists.

Produced by Mythberg Films and co-produced by Libra Film (Romania), Creative Hours (Belgium) and Isabella Films (Netherlands), *Eden* is sold internationally by HNFF World Sales.

<https://cineuropa.org/en/newsdetail/384287>

Eden *** (review)**

01/2020

by Meredith Taylor / Filmuforia.co.uk

Ágnes Kocsis is now a formidable figure in European arthouse film. Her 2006 debut *Fresh Air* won a FIPRESCI prize and her second *Adrienn Pál* (2010) went on to win awards across the board. *Eden* is her formally austere and thematically rich character driven third feature that explores the main preoccupations of our modern world: loneliness and immune hyper-sensitivity.

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Éva suffers from both. And she's allergic to just about everything, so living in a bubble becomes a fact of life to avoid toxic shock, breathing difficulties and possibly even death. To venture outside her starkly decorated high-rise apartment in Budapest she must don a space suit. Éva's days are spent in a local clinic with doctors experimenting on her, and these scenes are gruelling and quite upsetting to watch. Mate Toth Widemon's luminous camerawork also captures the silent stillness of the desert where Éva undergoes light therapy in an isolated glass igloo.

Ágnes Kocsis sets out to explore the complexities of mind over matter and the ambiguities of contemporary living, suspended between sustainability and emptiness. Essentially a three hander – with support from a range of convincing minor characters – the plot revolves around Eva, her brother and András. The illness started after she collapsed on a bus, and now middle-aged Eva is dangerously ill, her immune system in total collapse. Her sole contact with the world is her brother Gyuri, who brings her food and keeps her company. But he has his own issues. This situation changes when András enters her life – a specialised psychiatrist, he will represent her in a court case about whether her condition is caused by pollution, or whether her mental state is so fragile that she herself is the cause of her allergies. Is she sick, or is the world making her ill? Or is her loneliness the root cause of her malaise.

Eden often echoes the bracing quality and otherworldliness of Tarkovsky, Lucile Hadzihalilovic and Bela Tarr (who was also involved in the film's production). And although it is often difficult to engage with and requires a certain perseverance with its obtuse characters and hard-edged, blue-tinged interiors, what gradually dawns through Kocsis' textured characterisation is that Andras and Eva are forming a meaningful bond that could potentially be the start of love.

Lana Balic plays Eva as a poignantly troubled soul who is suffering, lonely and alienated. She collects baby turtles and her pastime of twisting bits of wire to make angular sculptures is one that inevitably leads to further pain, and even draws blood from her delicate fingers. Baric has the soulful eyes and tortured, pointed face of a medieval martyr, or even a saint from a painting by Carlo Crivelli. Yet she imbues Eva with quiet dignity, and we feel for her. This is a film full of anguish: apart from the awful scenes in the clinic, birds often collide into the glass windows of Eva's home, dropping to certain death below. But there are also beautiful light-filled images as spring arrives in Budapest to soften the sorrowful scenario.

The relationship between Éva and András becomes more intimate, and her condition seems to improve. He encourages her neighbour upstairs to play his piano: Chopin of course. But the romantic tones of Lucio Dalla's 'Il Cielo' are what really sets the night on fire in this mournful piece, and the ballad plays

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out through the bittersweet, heart-breaking finale. The final scene is one of the most extraordinary you'll see this year. And watch out for the post credit 'sting'.
<http://filmuforia.co.uk/eden-2020-rotterdam-film-festival-2020>

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