

**Short synopsis (one paragraph):****Status:**

approved

Everyone has their own Chimera, something they try to achieve but never manage to find. For the band of tombaroli, thieves of ancient grave goods and archaeological wonders, the Chimera means redemption from work and the dream of easy wealth. For Arthur, the Chimera looks like the woman he lost, Beniamina. To find her, Arthur challenges the invisible, searches everywhere, goes inside the earth – in search of the door to the afterlife of which myths speak. In an adventurous journey between the living and the dead, between forests and cities, between celebrations and solitudes, the intertwined destinies of these characters unfold, all in search of the Chimera.

**Comments of the director:****Status:**

approved

**an underground world**

Where I grew up it was common to hear stories of secret finds, clandestine digs and mysterious adventures. You only had to stay at the bar until late at night or stop at a country inn to hear about so-and-so who'd uncovered a Villanovan tomb with his tractor, or someone else who, digging by the necropolis one night, had discovered a gold necklace so long it could go all the way round a house. Or someone else still who'd got rich in Switzerland with the sale of an Etruscan vase he'd found in his garden.

stories of skeletons and ghosts, of getaways and darkness.

Life around me was made up of different parts: one solar and contemporary and busy, another nocturnal and mysterious and secret. There were many layers and we all experienced them: you only had to dig up a few centimetres of soil and the fragment of an artefact made by someone else's hands would appear among the pebbles. What era was it looking at me from? You only had to go into the barns and wine cellars round about to realise that they had once been something else: Etruscan tombs, maybe, or shelters from bygone ages, or holy sites. The proximity of sacred and profane, of death and life, that characterised the years in which I was growing up has always fascinated me and given a measure to my way of seeing. This is why I decided at last to make a film that tells this layered story, this relationship between two worlds, the last part in a triptych about a local area whose attention is focused on one central question: what should it do with its past? As some grave-robbers say, down our way it's the dead that give life.

**poor grave-robbers**

The Chimera is the story of the ups and downs of a gang of tombaroli, or grave-robbers, violators of Etruscan tombs and peddlers of antiques to local fences. It is set in the 1980s when anyone who decided to become a tombarolo – crossing the tacit dividing line between the sacred and the violable – did so to turn the past around, to become new, something else. The tombaroli were, unquestionably, strong, youthful – and damned.

They didn't belong to the past and they weren't the sons of their fathers, men who had grown up beside those ancient tombs without ever violating them. They were the sons of themselves. The world belonged to them: they could enter what were regarded as taboo places, smash vases and steal votive offerings, and sell them on. They considered them as nothing but museum pieces, old junk. No longer sacred objects.

The naivety of the people who had buried the stuff made them laugh.

Indeed, they wondered how it was actually possible for a people to leave all that wealth underground for souls... But never mind souls – they wanted to enjoy the gold themselves, and how!

The Etruscans dedicated their art, their craftsmanship and their resources to the invisible.

For the grave-robbers, the invisible simply didn't exist.

**art dealers or cogs in a wheel?**

According to the cantastorie, or ballad-singer, we meet in the film, "The tombarolo is a drop in the ocean". And it happens to be true.

The Chimera addresses one of the broadest questions to affect Italy and the many other countries that are cradles of ancient civilisations in the 20th century – especially since the war. Namely the ancient art market and the illicit trading of archaeological treasures in particular.

This traffic caught on in Etruria in particular, laying down roots among members of a young generation driven by an urge to avenge a series of social wrongs. They wanted to earn money a different way, without working for bosses. They felt they were virtually entitled to the finds, simply because they belonged to the area. It's likely that this unwritten right derived from the memory of large privately funded archaeological enterprises – such as the digs promoted by Lucien Bonaparte and the King of Sweden – that had left their mark on the inhabitants of Etruria.

Local grave-robbers were proud to go around destroying ancient archaeological sites and tombs. But they were actually mere "cogs in the wheel", pawns and victims of a system that was much larger than they were. They thought they had the power to decide, but they were really acting in the interest of an art market that, at least in the 1980s and 1990s, was totally removed from the local area.

It was a traffic whose turnover was higher than that of the drugs market in Italy and for decades, insofar as it entailed fewer risks, represented a much better business proposition. Any legal proceedings were perfunctory and, far from being summary, trials were, as the tombaroli liked to joke, grindingly slow.

In short, these predators were in actual fact the prey of the vaster art market that incorporated them. And Spartaco, the ambiguous fence with his/her golden yellow boat suspended on the lake, is one of its symbols.

**Arthur, the foreigner**

The main character in The Chimera is Arthur, the foreigner. He lives not inside or outside the town walls, but on them. He comes from a country that is never established exactly: it could be England, it could be Ireland... But maybe it doesn't really matter, maybe it's Arthur himself who doesn't want to reveal it. The gang may leave him out of their everyday comings and goings, but it's he they have chosen as their leader and their chief. Arthur is someone who is talked about a lot.

Arthur is different from all the others because he belongs neither to the local area nor to the gang. What he is searching for is not profit and money and adventure but something else, something hard to share. But he does enjoy hanging out with the gang and is fascinated by the town, with its festas and lights and fireworks. Not to mention a sense of community that he has never had before. His is a fascination that has a long history, dating from the times of the Grand Tour when Italy cast a spell on the many young North Europeans like himself who used to travel here. But none of this is enough for him.

Just as Orpheus goes in search of Eurydice, so Arthur senses that by digging he can find something he has lost, as if through the famous and much celebrated "gate to the afterlife". In the afterlife is Beniamina, the woman he lost years earlier, his "root". On his journey, Arthur is accompanied by two women: on the one hand Beniamina, who is no longer with him but attracts him like a magnet, on the other Italia, cheerful and lively, superstitious and comical, a woman Arthur could love... if only he would let the past go.

Damnation or salvation? Ecstasy or a lie?

**visually**

We worked with three formats of photographic film: 35 mm, which lends itself to frescoes, to iconography, to large-scale illustrations in books of fairy tales; Super16 mm, with its matchless capacity for storytelling and synthesis, which, as if by magic, takes us straight to the heart of the action; and 16mm, stolen from a small amateur film camera, whose effect is reminiscent of notes pencilled into the margins of a book.

In *The Chimera* I've attempted to weave very disparate threads, as if in an oriental tapestry. I have tried to play with the subject-matter of the film, slowing down, accelerating, singing, proclaiming, listening. And observing birds in flight, which for the Etruscans represent our destiny.

What is most important is – as in a kaleidoscope – to find in the story of one man the story of men, and to gather together round a film to ask ourselves just how unlucky and comical, how moving and violent, humanity really is.

#### Essential Reading

Guerrieri di polvere (Warriors of Dust) / Sergio Paglieri

I predatori dell'arte perduta (Raiders of the Lost Art) / Fabio Isman

Tombaroli si nasce (Born to be Tombaroli) / Gismondo Tagliaferrì

Etnografia dei tombaroli della Tuscia (Ethnography of the Tombaroli of the Tuscia Area) / Mirko Luniddi

Etruscan Places / D. H. Lawrence

Canti Orfici (Orphic Songs) / Dino Campana

Orpheus Eurydice Hermes / R. M. Rilke

#### Director's biography:

Status: approved

Alice Rohrwacher was born in Fiesole and studied in Turin and Lisbon.

She wrote and played music for the theatre before being drawn to cinema, where she began working as a documentary film editor. In 2011 she directed her first full-length film, *Corpo Celeste* (Heavenly Body) which was premiered at Cannes in the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, or Directors' Fortnight, and screened at the Sundance, New York, London, Rio and Tokyo festivals. Her second film, *Le Meraviglie* (The Wonders) won the Grand Prix at Cannes in 2014, while her third *Lazzaro Felice* (Happy As Lazarus, 2018), received the Best Screenplay award in Cannes, as well as great international acclaim. In 2015 she directed *De Djess*, a short in the *Miu Miu Women's Tale* series. In 2016 she directed *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi at the Teatro Valli in Reggio Emilia. In 2020 she directed the third and fourth episodes in the acclaimed Rai-HBO TV series *My Brilliant Friend – The Story of a New Name*, adapted from the novels by Elena Ferrante. In 2021 she presented the documentary *Futura*, co-directed with Pietro Marcello and Francesco Munzi, at Cannes (Quinzaine). In 2023 she was nominated for an Oscar in the Best Live Action Shorts category for *Le Pupille* (The Pupils) co-produced by Alfonso Cuarón for Disney.

#### Selected director's filmography:

Status: approved

Year:	International title:	Original Title:
2023		La Chimera
2022	Le Pupille	Le Pupille (short)
2021		Futura (Documentary)
2020		Quattro Strade (short)
2020		Omelia Contadina (short)
2020	My Brilliant Friend (2 season)	L'amica geniale - Storia del nuovo cognome (TV)
2018	Happy as Lazzaro	Lazzaro Felice
2015	The Djess	The Djess
2014	The Wonders	Le Meraviglie
2011	Heavenly Body	Corpo Celeste
2006		La fiamara

#### Main Cast Biography:

Name and Surname

Josh O'Connor

Status: approved

Biography

Josh O'Connor trained with the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and has garnered critical acclaim for his roles across film, television and theatre. He is also an accomplished and exhibited artist and photographer. O'Connor was named a Screen International Star of Tomorrow in 2016 and has gone on to receive an Emmy Award, a Critics' Choice Award, two British Independent Film Awards, a Golden Globe award, and BAFTA and SAG nominations.

This spring, O'Connor will attend the 76th Annual Cannes Film Festival with his film, *LA CHIMERA*, directed by the Alice Rohrwacher (*Happy as Lazarus*). Neon is distributing the film and will put it out later this year. This fall, he will star alongside Zendaya and Mike Faist in Luca Guadagnino's much-anticipated film for MGM, *CHALLENGERS*.

Other upcoming films include the Oliver Hermanus directed *THE HISTORY OF SOUND*, a World War I love story adapted from Ben Shattuck's Pushcart Prize-winning short story, in which O'Connor will star alongside Paul Mescal; and the Ellen Kuras directed biographical drama, *LEE*, with Kate Winslet and Marion Cotillard.

In 2021, O'Connor starred alongside Jessie Buckley in a stage-to-film, present-day adaptation of *ROMEO & JULIET*, directed by Simon Godwin. Originally meant for the stage at the National Theatre in London, the filmed performance premiered on PBS in the US on Sky Arts in the UK during the pandemic.

In 2020, O'Connor starred in season four of Peter Morgan's *THE CROWN*, in which he played Prince Charles. His performance in this season garnered him SAG and BAFTA nominations, and Critics' Choice and Emmy wins in the Lead Actor category. He was Introduced in season three to rave reviews, a SAG ensemble award, and a BAFTA nomination for Supporting Actor. Both seasons are available on Netflix.

In 2017, O'Connor starred in Francis Lee's hugely successful, BAFTA nominated and BIFA winning directorial debut, *GOD'S OWN COUNTRY*. O'Connor's performance earned him a BIFA award for Best Actor, a BAFTA award for Breakthrough Brit, an Empire award for Best Male Newcomer, and nominations for BAFTA's EE Rising Star award and London Critics Circle's British / Irish Actor of the Year award.

Other film and television credits include *AISHA*, *MOTHERING SUNDAY*, Autumn de Wilde's critically acclaimed film adaptation of Jane Austen's *EMMA*, *HOPE GAP* with Annette Bening and Bill Nighy, directed by William Nicholson; Harry Wootliff's BAFTA nominated film, *ONLY YOU* (for which he won the British Independent Film Award for Best Actor). ITV's hit television show, *THE DURRELLS*; the role of Marius in BBC One's mini-series adaptation of *LES MISERABLES*; Lone Scherfig's *THE RIOT CLUB*, *THE PROGRAM*, *FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS*, alongside Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant; and the BAFTA-winning series *PEAKY BLINDERS*.

Other theatre credits include Philip Breen and RSC's *THE SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY*, Angus Jackson and RSC's *OPPENHEIMER*, Angus Jackson's *VERSAILLES* for Donmar Warehouse, and Guy Unsworth's *FARRAHUT NORTH* for the Southwark Playhouse.

Name and Surname	Carol Duarte	Status:	approved
Biography	<p>Carol Duarte is a 31-year-old Brazilian actress.</p> <p>Born in São Paulo, as a teenager he started acting in public workshops in his city, in addition to studying at the Fundação das Artes in São Caetano do Sul, later joining the Humor course at SP - Escola de Teatro. Then he entered the School of Dramatic Art at the University of São Paulo (USP).</p> <p>Since the age of 15, Carol has dedicated herself entirely to the performing arts, with that, she has already worked in more than 20 plays. She acted in plays such as "A Visita da Velha Senhora", directed by Celso Frateschi (2015), and "O Alvo", by Pedro Garrafa (2015). In 2016, she was on display as one of the creators and protagonists of the show "As Siamesas - Maybe I Desmaie no Front", directed by Fernanda Camargo, Carolina Bianchi and Felipe Rocha.</p> <p>In 2017, she was cast in the soap opera "A Força do Querer", where she played Ivana/Ivan Garcia, a young man who discovers he is transsexual, an absolute success with the public. In 2019, Carol ended up being chosen by director Rogério Gomes for the soap opera "O Sétimo Guardião" where she plays the prostitute Stefania. Carol was in the series "Mal Secreto", while she was showing the play As Siamesas in SP in 2020.</p> <p>Carol made her film debut with Karim Ainoüz's "A Vida Invisível", a film that won the Un Certain Regard award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2019, where Carol plays Euridice, one of the protagonists of the film. She then made the film "Chão de Fábrica", by Nina Kopko, which had its premiere in 2021, and the film Missão Perséfone (2020), by Karim Ainoüz.</p> <p>Her last role on television was in the drama series in a production in partnership with Globo and Globoplay called "Segunda Chamada", where she played the role of a single mother who faced socioeconomic difficulties in raising her son to the point of dropping out of school.</p> <p>Currently, Carol Duarte is present in the Italian feature film "La Chimera" which still does not have a release date in Brazil.</p>		

Name and Surname	Isabella Rossellini	Status:	approved
Biography	<p>Isabella Rossellini grew up in Paris and Rome. She is the daughter of actress Ingrid Bergman and director Roberto Rossellini</p> <p>She started her career as a model where she graced the cover of over 500 magazines, including 24 covers of Vogue, one of the most prestigious fashion publications.</p> <p>She appears in the advertisement of cosmetic company Lancôme for whom she worked for over 40 years.</p> <p>Isabella made her cinematic debut as an actress in 1979 in the Taviani brothers' film Il Prato (The Meadow) but most of her career has been in America where she resides.</p> <p>She worked with a wide-range of directors including Robert Zemeckis, David O. Russell, Robert Wilson, Taylor Hackford, Petr Weir, David Lynch and Guy Maddin.</p> <p>The most known films are Blue Velvet, Wild at Heart, White Nights, Rodger Dodger, Cousins, Death Becomes Her, Fearless, The Saddest Music in the World, Big Night and Joy.</p> <p>Isabella has a recurring role in the HBO-MAX series Julia, she is currently touring her theatrical monologue she has written Darwin's Smile directed by Muriel Mayette and has completed shooting for the film Conclave directed by Edward Berger and La Chimera directed by Alice Rohrwacher. Both films are expected to be released in 2023.</p> <p>She lent her voice to several animations including this year's Academy Award Nominee Marcel the Shell, the Disney-Pixar The Incredibles, and Julio Torres' film Problemista.</p> <p>Isabella has a master's degree in Animal Behavior and Conservation and has received a PhD Honoris Causa from the Science Faculty at UQAM (University of Quebec at Montreal). She won several Webby awards for her the short film series she wrote and directed Green Porno, Seduce Me, and Mammals that offer comical and scientifically insightful studies of animal behavior. She toured extensively in US, Canada, Europe and Australia with her theatrical monologues that include, beside Darwin's Smile also Green Porno and Link Link Circus.</p> <p>Isabella is the founder of Mama Farm <a href="https://www.mamafarm.us">https://www.mamafarm.us</a> an organic farm in Brookhaven NY where she resides. She is a mother of two and a grandmother.</p>		

Main Cast:	Name and Surname	Character's name in the film	Status:
1	Josh O'Connor	- Arthur	approved
2	Isabella Rossellini	- Flora	
3	Alba Rohrwacher	-	
4	Carol Duarte	- Italia	
5	Vincenzo Nemolato	- Pirro	
6		-	

Main Crew:	Position	Name(s) and Surname(s) - separated by commas	Status:
1	writer and director	ALICE ROHRWACHER	approved
2	DOP	HÉLÈNE LOUVART	
3	editing	NELLY QUETTIER	
4	set design	EMITA FRIGATO	
5	costumes	LOREDANA BUSCEMI	
6	sound design	XAVIER LAVOREL	
7	hair styling	DANIELA TARTARI	
8	make up	ESMÉ SCIARONI	
9	casting director	CHIARA POLIZZI	
10	acting coach	TATIANA LEPORE	
11	line producer	GIORGIO GASPARINI	
12	international casting	FIONA WEIR	
13	production manager	ALESSANDRO STELLA	
14	boom operator	JULIEN D'ESPOSITO	
15	sound mix	MARTA BILLINGSLEY	
16	mix engineer	MAXENCE CIEKAWY	
17	assistant director	NICOLA SCORZA	
18	artistic assistant directos	TIZIANA POLI	

19	script supervisor	SARA CAVANI
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

**Billingblock + Logos:** [please send separately](#)

**Status:** approved

**Technical details:**

approved

Original title: *La Chimera*  
 International title: *La Chimera*  
 Duration (min.): *APPROVED 130 (min)*  
 Aspect Ratio: *1.85:1*  
 Format: *DCP*  
 Sound: *5. 1*  
 Year: *2023*  
 Original language: *Italian, English*  
 Country(ies) of production: *Italy, France, Switzerland*  
 Production Companies: *Tempesta*  
 Co-production Companies: *AD VITAM PRODUCTION SARL , AMKA FILMS PRODUCTIONS SA, RAI CINEMA S.p.A.*  
 With the support of: *Ufficio Federale della Cultura , Ministero della cultura (MiC), AIDE AUX CINEMAS DU MONDE – CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINEMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMEE – INSTITUT FRANÇAIS*

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