

LONDON CINEMA



BEAUTIFUL DYSLEXIC AND TALENTED

TEXT ROBERTO CROCI

Half Brazilian and half English, it is Kaya Scodelario, the actress everyone was crazy about at the latest sundance



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THE ADVANTAGE OF LIVING IN A GLOBAL ERA AND BE PART OF A JOURNALIST ASSOCIATION, AT TIMES LIE IN THE FACT OF BEING ABLE TO TAKE PART TO INTERVIEWS, Q&A's and press conferences comfortably sitting on one's sofa from – Festival Sundance '13 docet, followed by Tribeca NY, Los Angeles and even Tiff in Toronto. Despite the filtering screen, it is still easy to fall in love with the light-blue-green-Mediterranean-sea feel of Kaya Scodelario's eyes. English, 21 years old, cute little nose, clean cut yes sensual look at the same time, and a few films under her belt; *Clash of Titans*, the classic *Wuthering Heights* and last year's *Now is good* with Dakota Fanning, the big break that has made her stand out to Hollywood's agents. After that, several independent movie scripts came along, including *Emanuel and the Truth About Fishes*, written and directed by Francesca Gregorini – Italian writer, artist, and film director, the daughter of Barbara Bach and step daughter of Ringo Starr – which tells the story of Emanuel (Kaya), alone, with no mother or family, and her new neighbour, interpreted by Jessica Biel. For this movie, Kaya has been voted as the best emerging actress of the festival, 'one of the new faces of Sundance', palmares previously given to Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Greta Gerwig, Brit Marling, Felicity Jones and Elizabeth Olsen. Awaiting the release of this project in America, she currently has two films in pre-production; *Stay with me* and *Invisible*.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO WORK WITH FRANCESCA?

When I read the screenplay I never thought I would get the part because I felt the story was so interesting that I never thought I would get the part and I felt there would be a long queue of better qualified actresses that wanted it. In fact, Mara Rooney was supposed to play that part, but when they found the producer to make that film Mara was too 'old', so after meeting Francesca, we chatted for hours, and at one point she told me the part was mine. We spoke about everything but the film. She was very courageous, she is an extraordinary woman. She knows what she wants... let's hope so, otherwise it's all my fault.



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TELL US ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD.

I was brought up in a council flat in Holloway, north London. My mother is Brazilian, my father was English. He left us when I was one year old and he never showed up until he realised I was becoming well known. Before he died, we spoke on the phone. I was happy to resolve this chapter of my life. From the conversation we had, I understood that I've got his sense of humour, even though my mom has been a mother and a father for me. I've always been independent, my mother has struggled to control me, we always used to argue about the fact that she always wanted me to get back by 8pm. She was looking out for me, she didn't want me to turn up pregnant at 16 like many of my girl friends. We always discussed everything, sex, drugs, religion, politics... for both, how patient!

WHAT WERE YOU LIKE AT SCHOOL?

I've never been really good, I didn't like studying. I had to put up with a lot of situations, to the point that I changed a lot of schools because they used to take the mick out of me for the way I looked: super skinny, no breasts, no curves, I was flat as a wooden plate, with frizzy hair, so bad! Even though it was never physical bullying, it certainly influenced the development of my personality, the pursuit of ... non academic interests. I was brought up solidly because of my mother who taught me to speak properly and in a school like mine the code of conduct was certainly not to royal family's standards.

HOW DID YOU START ACTING?

At one point the constant abuse has forced me to change school. Around that time, I also discovered I was dyslexic, so I moved to Islington Arts & Media, where I begun to study acting. Thanks to my English teachers I discovered that acting is better than any drugs, the feeling you get when you are on stage or on a film set are the most intense rush you can ever experience. Acting helped me become confident, to become who I am.

THEN YOU GOT A ROLE IN THE POPULAR TV SERIES, SKINS.

Yes. I feel that there's an emerging new generation of actors who have not formally studied acting but that have the sensitivity and the life experiences ideal to transmit messages and feelings that work both on TV and at the cinema. You don't necessarily need to be rich or have the right contacts to get a part. It is not easy, but if you have a dream, it's fair to give it a go. You could get lucky, like me, sometimes you just need to be at the right place at the right time.



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MOON – A FILM BY DUNCAN JONES, THE SON OF DAVID BOWIE – HAS REPRESENTED YOUR CINEMA DEBUT.

I was 14, it was my very first real audition. I remember before I went I cried so much because for the part I was meant to have an American accent that I was not sure I could pull off. Before then, I doubted my abilities. I spoke about it with my mother, who convinced me after a few hours, corrupting me with a Big Mac at McDonald's! When I met Duncan I was overwhelmed by his passion. There were always budget issues, yet the atmosphere on set was truly extraordinary, the film is magic. I remember once, I was so emotional, I passed out on set and Sam Rockwell managed to catch me in time! It sounds like a fun story now, but when it happened I was panicking. After all, I need to thank my mother, always my rock.

TWO YEARS AFTER, YOU WERE INTERPRETING CATHY IN THE FILM WUTHERING HEIGHTS, FROM THE NOVEL BY EMILY BRONTË.

When they cast me, I was in shock. Before me, they considered Gemma Arterton and Natalie Portman for the same role. I've always thought that having not formally studied acting, I didn't deserve a part like that.



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ARE THERE ANY ACTORS YOU'D LIKE TO WORK WITH?

I love Tom Hardy. He is handsome, intense, spontaneous, sweet and violent at the same time. My mother would like to see me next to Antonio Banderas. She's always adored him.

YOU SPEAK PORTUGUESE FLUENTLY. CAN YOU ALSO COOK?

I've never spoken a word of English with my mother and I'm very proud of that. I love Brazilian culture, football, I am really good in the kitchen, I love spending hours preparing feijoada –Skewed meat with black beans – or any dish with pinhão, the gigantic Brazilian pine nuts that I use as snacks and in desserts.

WE KNOW YOU LOVE FASHION, WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE SHOPS IN LONDON?

After giving up smoking marijuana, my only drug is fashion, shoes, textiles! I love vintage stuff, Camden market. Any dress that has its 'own' history makes me feel happy when I wear it, it gives me a special role. There are no shops I frequent religiously. I like to explore, I am a curious person, I don't give myself many rules because I like being free to change, to do something unexpected. ●

