

Faces Places



Documentary | France | 2017 | 94 mins | Cert 12A

Director: JR, Agnès Varda

Cinematography: Roberto De Angelis, Claire Duguet, Julia Fabry, Nicolas, Guicheteau, Romain Le Bonniec, Raphaël Minnesota, Valentin Vignet

Film Editing: Maxime Pozzi-Garcia, Agnès Varda

Original Music: Matthieu Chedid

Cast: JR, Agnès Varda, Locals

SYNOPSIS

Revelling in their 55-year age difference, veteran filmmaker Agnès Varda and guerilla photographer JR travel in a mobile studio to profile some of France's forgotten people. But, while they plaster backwater buildings with giant monochrome images, this poignant contrast between the past and present is anything but an arty stunt.

REVIEWS

Six decades after making her directorial debut with *La Pointe Courte* (1955), Agnès Varda returns to the highways and byways of France to capture the slowly disappearing landscapes and lifestyles of her past. But this is no nostalgic trip down memory lane, as Varda is accompanied by JR, a self-styled 'photographeur' in the mould of Banksy, who counts Varda's murals documentary, *Mur Murs* (1981), among his earliest inspirations. Sharing an impish wit and an insatiable curiosity, Varda and JR also have an affinity with the ordinary people whose stories are often drowned out by the everyday hubbub.

Fetching up where fate decrees, the dynamic duo invite folks into the photo booth in JR's van and paste their enlarged monochrome images on local landmarks. These include a row of miners' cottages condemned for demolition, a wooden barn, an acid factory wall and a toppled Nazi blockhouse. Yet, while JR and his crew create the art, Varda provides the picture's heart, as she coaxes subjects into sharing their stories about the changing role of the postman, the benefits of free-range goat herding and the duties of a docker's wife.

Varda also confides more details about herself, as she muses on her advancing years, blurring sight and unreliable memory. But it's her energy that drives the project, and her receptivity contrasts with JR's somewhat calculating elusiveness. Nevertheless, while he might hide behind his sunglasses, he provides the film's sweetest moment when he finds a way to cheer Varda up after she has been thoughtlessly let down by old friend Jean-Luc Godard.

Empire on-line David Parkinson. 21st Sep 2018



DID YOU KNOW?

- With her nomination for Best Documentary Feature at 89 years old, Agnès Varda becomes the oldest person nominated for any competitive Oscar.

Awards and Nominations

- Oscar nominee for Best Documentary Feature
- Alliance of Women Film Journalists 2018 winners: Best Documentary Feature Film and Actress Defying Age and Ageism. Nominee for Best Woman Director
- Cannes Film Festival 2017 winners: JR and Agnes Varda, *Golden Eye*. Mimi, *Palme de Whiskers*

COMING UP NEXT...

Friday 24th January 7:45pm

Edie

83 year old Edie believes that it is never too late - packing an old camping bag, leaving her life behind and embarking on an adventure she never got to have - climbing the imposing Mount Suilven in Scotland.

Cert 12A, 101 mins

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