

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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7 Passage Pommeraye

A primordial and emblematic place

It was in this shopping arcade built in the 19th century that Jacques Demy bought his first camera, as recalled in that scene in *Jacquot de Nantes* where the teenager goes into the photographer's shop to trade in his Meccano set for this long-coveted object. It was also here that he discovered the world of film in the Ciné-Club that he attended frequently.

The covered passage with its eclectic and fanciful décor is remarkable for its highly evocative atmosphere. The light piercing the glass roof is reflected in the numerous mirrors and creates a stage-like setting. Classically inspired statues and columns also contribute to the magnificence and magic of the place.

In *Lola*, the Passage Pommeraye is where Jacques Demy locates the scene bathed in light in which Roland and Lola meet again. Whereas in *Une Chambre en ville* it becomes a disturbing and dark place: it is here on the first floor over the television shop of Edith's husband that a man commits suicide after a violent argument with his wife.

The Passage which has attracted so many artists is filled with contrasts of light and shadow. Like the Surrealists who used it as a setting for unexpected and accidental encounters, and the writer André Pieyre de Mandiargues who in his *Musée Noir* (Black Museum) transformed it into an alluring and disturbing place, the Passage Pommeraye holds a key place in the work of Jacques Demy.



Lola, A. Aimée - Passage Pommeraye

8 Place Graslin et la Cigale

Respectable and racy Nantes

It is not possible to talk about Jacques Demy without mentioning the music which is such an integral part of his films. Its inspiration came once again from his childhood, in the operettas of the Théâtre Graslin that he attended with his mother. The first American musicals he saw and the song-filled atmosphere of his childhood also probably fed this passion.

The Graslin district with its theatre, symbol of entertainment, is the right setting for *Lola*, a dancer at the Cigale, the city's celebrated brasserie transformed into the Eldorado Cabaret for the film. The Cigale is still a place for meeting people and relaxing that is appreciated by the people of Nantes.



Lola, A. Aimée, M. Michel - Place Graslin

9 Katorza

The film tradition of Nantes

Cinema in Nantes has a long tradition which began right after the invention of film in 1895 by the Lumière brothers. It was originally a travelling fairground attraction, and the city has kept the memory of Salomon Kétorza who arrived with fourteen wagons transporting the "greatest travelling cinematograph".

But with the development of cinema buildings showing films, the fairground cinema shows declined. In 1908, the first permanent cinema in Nantes, the American Cosmograph, now called the Cinematographe, opened to the public.

Salomon Kétorza also became sedentary and opened the Katorza during the First World War. Forty more cinemas were subsequently opened in Nantes, most of them in the Graslin district and nearby. Bombarded during World War II, the Katorza was rebuilt and remains one of the ten or so cinemas still in business in Nantes today.

10 Quai de la Fosse

The "Demy-monde"

"My idea is to make fifty films that will all be linked up to each other (...)" J.D.

Jacques Demy's typical style also appears in his frequent evocation of ports in his films. Cherbourg, Rochefort, Marseille and Nantes; the setting is always a port city with its transporter bridge. The one in Nantes was demolished in 1958, but it reappears in *Une chambre en ville* thanks to a glass shot by André Guérin. The scenes in *Lola* as well as in *Une Chambre en ville* show the activities of the bustling port and the shipyards. Places recur, and also characters. Demy's dream was to place each of his films in a wider universe: so Roland Cassard, hired to smuggle diamonds in *Lola*, reappears in *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (The Umbrellas



Lola, J. Harden in his Cadillac - Quai de la Fosse

Lola, a film by Jacques Demy, with Anouk Aimée, Marc Michel, Jacques Harden, music by Michel Legrand.

Shot from 7 June to 7 July 1960: Rue du Calvaire, Place de la Petite Hollande, Passage Pommeraye, the cafés along the Quai de la Fosse, Place Graslin and the Cigale restaurant, Place Royale, Rue de l'Abreuvoir (destroyed).

Nantes, 1960. *Lola*, a cabaret singer, is raising a little boy whose father, Michel, left seven years before. She waits for his return, sings and dances and has affairs with sailors passing through. Roland Cassard, a childhood friend she meets again by chance, falls in love with her. But she still waits for Michel. The characters meet, lose sight of each other, reunite, pass each other and disappear in the streets of Nantes.

Une chambre en ville, a film by Jacques Demy, with Dominique Sanda, Richard Berry, Danielle Darrieux, Michel Piccoli, music by Michel Colombier.

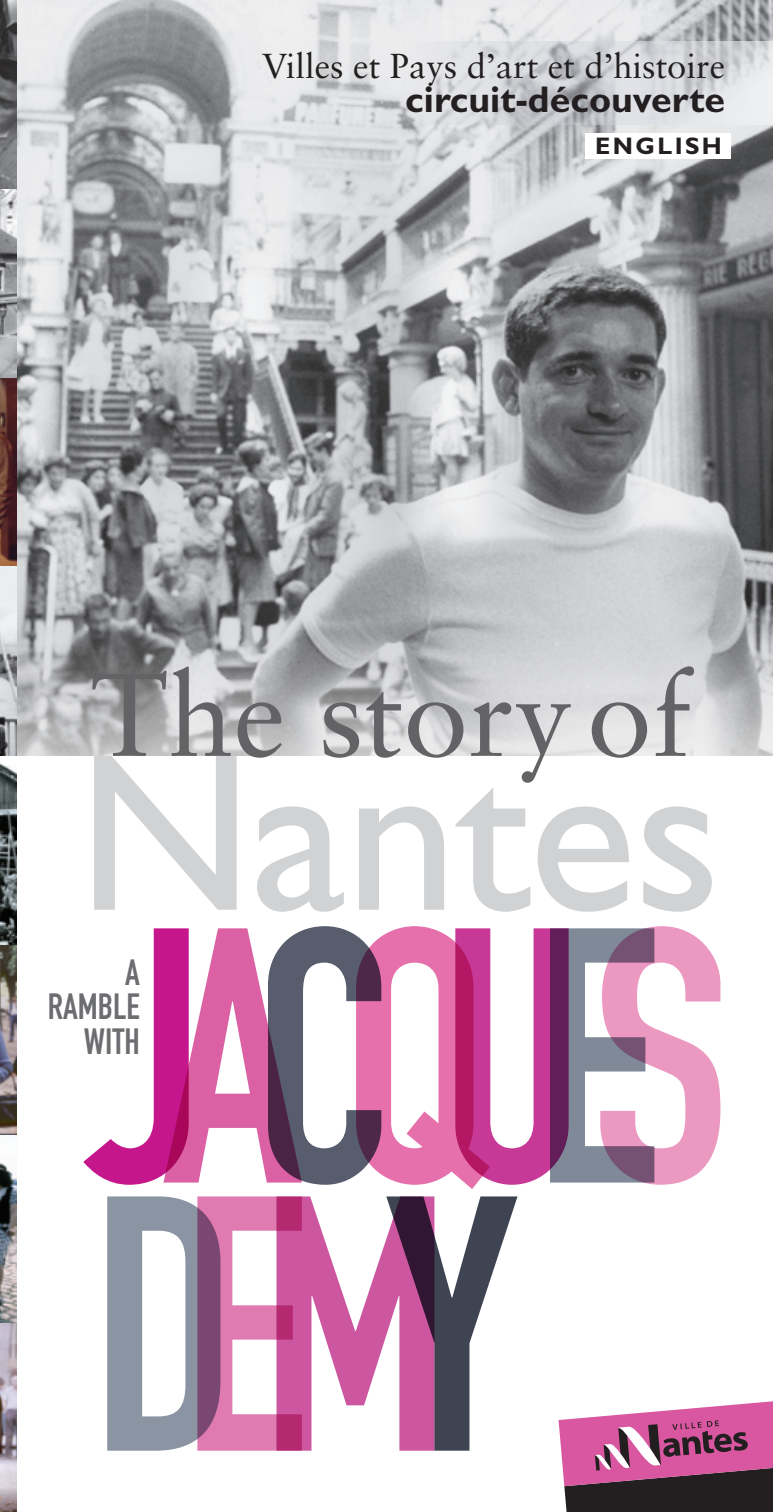
Shot from 13 April to 3 June 1982: Boulogne-Billancourt studios. Nantes, Rue du Roi-Albert, Passage Pommeraye, Cours Saint-Pierre, Place du Bouffay, Rue Lanoué-Bras-de-Fer.

Nantes 1955. The shipyard workers are on strike. François Guilbaud, metalworker and fiancé of Violette, meets Edith. They fall in love passionately but he does not know that she is the daughter of the colonel's wife who rents him a room in town. Edith has a jealous husband. Edith and François, overcome by passion, realise that they are nothing without each other. The strike spreads and the demonstrations become violent.

Jacquot de Nantes, a film by Agnès Varda, with Philippe Maron, Edouard Joubeaud, Laurent Monnier, Brigitte de Villepoix, Daniel Dublet.

Shooting: 9 April to 12 May 1990, 1 August to 21 September 1990, 3 to 18 October 1990, 3 to 6 January 1991: Mauves-sur-Loire, la Chapelle-Basse-Mer, Pontchâteau, Couëron, Chantenay, Nantes (Allée des Tanneurs, Cours Saint-Pierre, Passage Pommeraye, L'Olympic).

Agnès Varda, Jacques Demy's companion, takes us back to the enchanted musical childhood of the film-maker, the source of inspiration for all his work. We follow the early years of the future director in Nantes with his pals and his family. From the allée des Tanneurs, where the family's garage was located, to the passage Pommeraye and the Graslin district with its many cinemas, the film traces the emergence of the precocious vocation of the determined young dreamer, marked by the puppet shows and operettas of his childhood.



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Texts: Marine Charbonneau, Marion Briand, Irène Gillardot, Nantes municipality

Photographic credits:

- *Lola* : ©Agnès Varda, Raymond Cauchetier ©2000-Mathieu Demy / Ciné-Tamaris
- *Une Chambre en ville* : Moune Jamet ©2008-Ciné-Tamaris / Pont transbordeur.
J.P. Berthomé

- *Jacquot de Nantes* : ©1990-Ciné-Tamaris

Our special thanks to Ciné-Tamaris for having loaned us the documents needed for producing this leaflet.

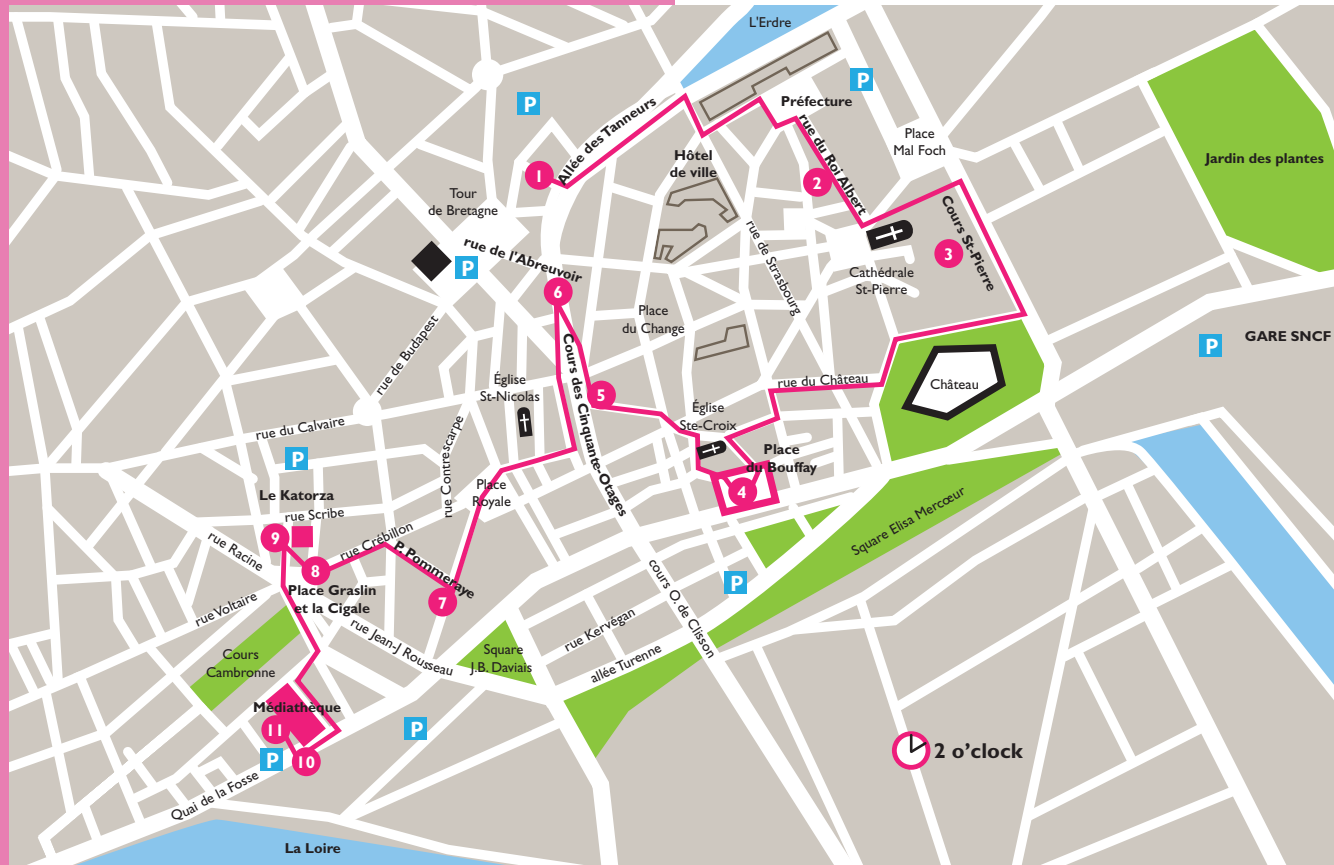
FOR MORE INFORMATION

BOOKS

- J.P. Berthomé, *Jacques Demy et les racines du rêve*, L'Atalante, Nantes, 1996
- C. Taboulay, *Le cinéma enchanté de Jacques Demy*, ed. les cahiers du cinéma, 1996
- O. Père, M. Colmant, *Jacques Demy*, ed. de la Martinière, Paris, 2010
- Magazine: *Place Publique*, no. 23, Sept-Oct 2010

ALL HIS FILMS

- *L'intégrale de Jacques Demy* en vidéo, Ciné-Tamaris Vidéo and Arte Editions, 2008,
- 5 films in DVD republished separately and 1 blu-ray, 2010



I experienced great upheavals in Nantes. The war, for example... Then, later on, I discovered love at the age of 16 in Nantes. I also discovered the cinema here. I have had great shocks here so that **I love this city** and I'd like to film here”

J.D.



Une chambre en ville, D. Darrieux, J. Demy et M. Piccoli sur le tournage



A. Varda, J. Demy, and the three actors playing Jacques at different ages - Allée des Tanneurs

1 9 allée des Tanneurs

The childhood of Jacques Demy

“I am completely loyal to my childhood... and I can't manage to get away from it.” J.D.

Born on 5 June 1931 in Pontchâteau, he spent his childhood and adolescence at this address of the Demy garage. **Jacquot de Nantes** shows the atmosphere that prevailed here with the garage run by his father and his mother hairdressing for neighbours and customers. The family house was also very close to the lively city centre, and his mother took him at an early stage to watch the Punch & Judy shows in the cours Saint-Pierre, operettas at the Grasin theatre, as well as films in the Nantes cinemas.

It was also from a porch in this street that Demy watched the parade of the Germans entering the city and, before that, the exodus of Nantes civilians.

Lastly, not far from here he took refuge in an air-raid shelter on 16 September 1943 when Nantes was bombarded, an event that marked him for life, inspiring in him the dream of an ideal life.

2 Rue du Roi-Albert

The working class struggles of the period

It is impossible to walk along the Rue du Roi-Albert without evoking the scenes of demonstrations at the beginning and end of *Une chambre en ville* (A room in the City). Inspired by the story of his father and a real event (the death of a Nantes worker, Jean Rigollet, in confrontations with the riot police in 1955), the film highlights the violence of strikes and demonstrations in which the workers sing their revolt in unison. Songs heard by the young Jacques when he came across one of these demonstrations with his mother were to stay engraved in his memory and become key moments of his film. “I can see myself with my mother coming across this demo headed for the Prefecture of Police. These songs impressed me, touched me and left a very strong impression. Moreover, my uncle and my



Une chambre en ville, demonstration scene - Rue du Roi-Albert



Une chambre en ville, strike scene - Rue Lanoue-Bras-de-Fer

father had worked in the shipyards. That was all my childhood in Nantes, all my past.”

The Rue du Roi-Albert was where the demonstrators regrouped after returning from the Prefecture. This street is also symbolic of the opposition between the working class and the middle class, as the district between the Prefecture and the cathedral was mostly lived in by middle class people. This opposition can be seen in the dialogue between Madame Langlois, the landlady of the Rue du Roi-Albert and the worker François, her tenant.

3 Cours Saint-Pierre

A precocious vocation inspired by Punch & Judy shows

As well as being lulled to sleep for years by traditional fairytales, Jacques Demy discovered the world of puppet shows in the Cours Saint-Pierre. This popular park hosted puppet theatres and funfairs. As a child, Jacquot built his own theatre and puppets out of cardboard, dressed by his dressmaker grandmother, and presented performances to his family... Later on, using 9.5 mm film, he went on to draw animated films image by image, including *Attaque nocturne* (Night attack) in 1947-1948.



Une chambre en ville, F. Guyon - Place du Bouffay

4 Place du Bouffay

The importance of colour for Jacques Demy

The Place du Bouffay is one of the key streets in Nantes for its history and is also well known as a bustling shopping atmosphere. Jacques Demy has included it in his depiction of the city. Repainted blue for the shooting of *Une chambre en ville*, the Bouffay market also shows the special attention that Jacques Demy gives to colours in his films, thanks to his close collaboration with the decorator Bernard Evein, the faithful friend he first met at Beaux-Arts in Nantes.

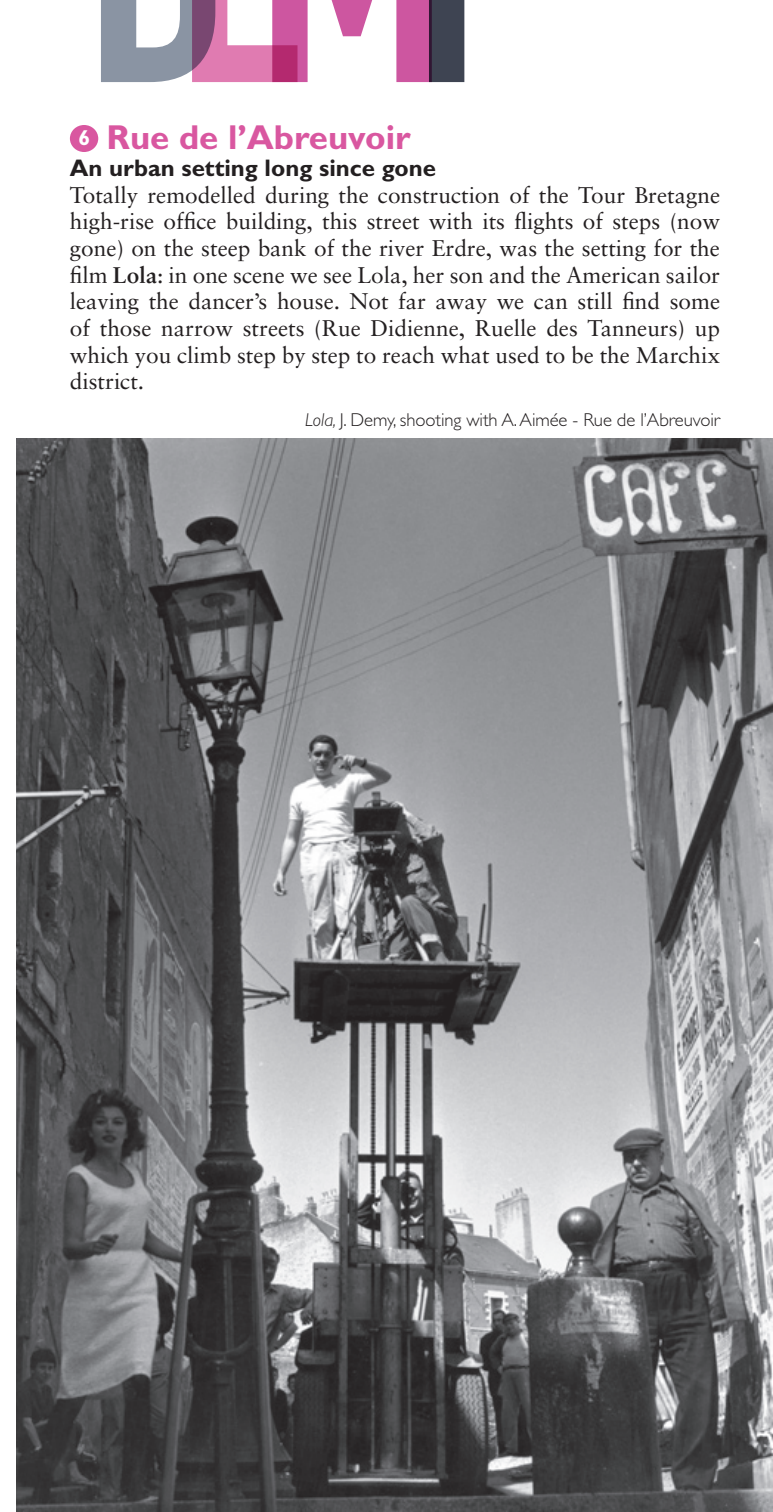
The indoor scenes were shot in a studio, so in order to give the film a harmonious visual tone, touches of colour were added in the real outdoor locations and in this way Jacques Demy and his team succeeded in giving unity to the film.

5 Cours des Cinquante-Otages

The urban changes

Jacques Demy grew up in a city in movement, marked by the filling in of the rivers Loire and Erdre and then the bombardments. In his childhood, the old bed of the Erdre was filled in and the new avenue looked more like a sandy beach than a street. It became a vast playground for Jacquot and the children of the district. During the filming of *Jacquot de Nantes* in 1990, several tonnes of sand were spread to recreate the atmosphere of the period.

In his films, Jacques Demy is keen to show the urban and social contrasts of the city. *Une chambre en ville*, shot in colour in 1982 with the Prefecture and the shipyards as background, focuses on the working-class city of the 1950s in a state of siege. Whereas *Lola*, shot in black and white in 1961 in the Grasin district, gives us the image of a superb and dazzling city open to its port



6 Rue de l'Abreuvoir

An urban setting long since gone

Totally remodelled during the construction of the Tour Bretagne high-rise office building, this street with its flights of steps (now gone) on the steep bank of the river Erdre, was the setting for the film *Lola*: in one scene we see Lola, her son and the American sailor leaving the dancer's house. Not far away we can still find some of those narrow streets (Rue Didienne, Ruelle des Tanneurs) up which you climb step by step to reach what used to be the Marchix district.

Lola, J. Demy, shooting with A. Aimée - Rue de l'Abreuvoir