

as thrillingly and irregularly as a purposefully miscalibrated drum machine.

The beat resides in Marina's question: "How do people do it?" If Tsangari is vague about what that "it" really is—French kissing; sex; connecting with a stranger; accepting the death of a loved one; reconciling civilization and our baser urges—her representation of the "how" is never less than arresting. Taking a cue from its excitable British namesake, *ATTENBERG* displays a keen but finally humble fascination in the mysteries of the human organism. ♦

Coming soon to Acropolis:

- *Trigonometry* (Dir. Athina Rachel Tsangari, 2020)—May 16 at Vidiots
- Short Films by Athina Rachel Tsangari (1993-2013)—May 17 at Vidiots
- *Two Seasons, Two Strangers* (Dir. Sho Miyake, 2025)—Los Angeles premiere, May 28 at 2220 Arts + Archives

Acropolis Cinema presents:



May 6, 2026 – Los Feliz 3

ABOUT THE FILM

In its irreverent use of (new) Nouvelle Vague, musical, melodrama, and nature documentary, *Attenberg* symbolically visualizes a change in generation and perspective as a father and daughter gently negotiate their individual rites of passage. The film follows a visionary architect who has come home to die in the vanishing industrial town that is his legacy to his daughter. Meanwhile, his daughter (played by Ariane Labeled, in a performance that won her the Best Actress award at the Venice Film Festival) is exploring the mysteries of kissing with her girlfriend, and the beyond with a visiting engineer. Tsangari's film—with a soundtrack featuring Françoise Hardy and Suicide—is poised between sincerity and hilarity, tradition and experimentation. *Co-presented by MUBI.*

Screening to be followed by a Q&A moderated by Carson Lund

TRT: 97 min

In person: Athina Rachel Tsangari and Carson Lund

Suicide Girl by Adam Nayman

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“How do people do it?” This is the question posed by Marina (Ariane Labeled) to her best (and only) friend Bella (Evangelina Randou) in the opening scene of *ATTENBERG*. Marina is asking about French kissing, which she's never tried before—nor anything else of that nature. Though still about two decades shy of becoming her depressed industrial seaside town's equivalent of the 40-year-old virgin, Marina seems headed willfully in that direction. Bella proves a patient if surly tutor, and the pair's sustained bout of educational tongue-wrestling, shot comic-book-panel style against a stark white wall, gives Athina Rachel Tsangari's second feature a show-stopping cold open. Marina's sincere query resonates long after the session has ended, however. One might say it announces *ATTENBERG* as a kind of anthropological drama.

These concerns become more explicit as the film continues. When she's not tending to the two-woman band of outsiders she's formed with Bella—they're glimpsed in interstitial sequences silly-walking their way around town, out of either boredom, Monty Python fandom, or both—Marina tends to her terminally ill father Spyros (Vangelis Mourikis), a former architect whose decrepitude reflects that of the crumbling factory town he helped to design. Spyros is philosophical about dying: “The 20th century is overrated,” he growls, welcoming oblivion. His preferred method of distraction is to watch Sir David Attenborough documentaries with Marina and then imitate the animals in a shared and revivifying ritual of physical and mental regression.

In more lucid moments, Spyros isn't shy about broaching the issues of his impending mortality with his daughter: he wants to be cremated, which is a major procedural hassle in Greece, where 95% of the population is Orthodox and the process has only been legal since

2006. In turn, Marina confides in him about her lack of interest in sex and men. These conversations, combined with the shrieking, chest-beating play sessions, indicate a familiarity that transcends, and is perhaps distinct from, simple familial affection. The boundaries between suitable and unsuitable topics for father-daughter discussion don't seem to have ever been mapped out: when Marina asks Spyros if he's ever imagined her naked, he doesn't take the bait, but he doesn't admonish her either. (“There's a reason why we mammals have taboos.”) The only cue we get that there's something inappropriate about the exchange comes via Tsangari's framing, which places them at either end of a symmetrical hospital interior, quietly insisting on the space between.

The implication that Marina's ornery, odd-duck personality has been inherited, and maybe even cultivated, by her father has led some critics to compare *ATTENBERG* to fellow Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos' caustic *Dogtooth* (2009). Not only was Tsangari one of *Dogtooth's* producers, but Lanthimos also appears in *ATTENBERG* as a pivotal character, a young engineer who arrives on the scene and piques Marina's interest by defeating her at foosball. Lanthimos' film was about a trio of siblings in naive thrall to parents who have systematically limited their understanding of the outside world, until the incursion of rogue VHS tapes bursts the bubble. When we spoke last year, Lanthimos denied any intentions of political allegory but the film, which suggests a Haneke-like sitcom (it's all funny games until someone loses a canine), seems clearly intended as an authoritarian critique.

ATTENBERG isn't so easily pegged. Tsangari has described the subsequent not-quite-live triangle between Marina and the two men—one representing the known world on its last legs, the other the terrifying possibility of something new—as being evocative of classical American Westerns. For me, though, the film that came to mind while watching *ATTENBERG* was Claire Denis' *35 Rhums* (2008), which also sketched the difficult yet necessary adjustment of an intimate and problematic father-daughter bond. Tsangari's precise images are antithetical to Denis' sensual cinema, but what she shares is a knack for physical casting and for wringing revelations from bodies, especially Labeled's. The actress' performance, which happily won the Copa Volpe for Best Actress at Venice, would be opaque but for the loquaciousness of her movements, from the furtive way she eats a sandwich, to a bizarre bit of business with her bare shoulder blades to her wild gesticulations in the throes of her baser urges. (And there's a great slapstick moment where she face-plants onto the bed next to her lover).

Denis might also appreciate the careful curation of *ATTENBERG's* soundtrack, which balances songs by Jacques Dutronc and Françoise Hardy (whose “Tous les garçons et les filles” underlays a lovely sequence of tennis courts at night) against a number of tracks by the seminal American post-punk band Suicide. The anti-hit-parade culminates in a reading of the lyrics to Mariana's favourite song, “Be Bop Kid” in a darkened hospital room (“it's a song about life/real life”) that's as unexpectedly and unfathomably affecting as the deployment of The Commodores' “Night Shift” at a critical juncture in *35 Rhums*.

The prevalence of Suicide in *ATTENBERG* speaks to more than the quality of Tsangari's record collection, however. Alan Vega's deceptively minimalist musical aesthetic, dissonant squalls laid over sprung, propulsive rhythms, finds a mirror in the director's m.o. Texturally, *ATTENBERG* is as hard and blank as the wall in its first scene, with dim muted interiors and mostly empty streets, but it has a furious, racing pulse, which spikes