BRIT FILMS #7 – Accompanying material for media education

GINGER & ROSA
Great Britain, Denmark, Canada, Croatia 2012, 90 min.

German certification: minimum age 12, recommended for 16 years and older

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Sally Potter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Script</td>
<td>Sally Potter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinematography</td>
<td>Robbie Ryan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing</td>
<td>Anders Refn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Amy Ashworth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Featuring</td>
<td>Alice Englert, Elle Fanning, Alessandro Nivola, Christina Hendricks, Annette Bening, Timothy Spall, Oliver Platt and others</td>
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What GINGER & ROSA is about
London 1962. Like their mothers before them, Ginger and Rosa are best friends. But when the Cuban missile crisis begins, the differences between the two sixteen-year-old girls become more and more obvious. While Ginger wants to join the protests against the atomic bomb, Rosa seeks refuge in the church, and in a romantic idea of everlasting love. And the person she falls in love with is, of all people, Ginger’s father, an idealistic author who has already been to prison for his convictions. Ginger feels betrayed both by her friend and by her father, whom she has always looked up to.

Sally Potter’s film, set against the backdrop of the Cuban missile crisis, is primarily a personal coming-of-age narrative. Here the main focus is on the pensive Ginger, who has to deal with her plans for life and her ideals, and her relationship with her best friend and her parents, in order to find her place in life.

The following worksheets focus on
- the similarities and differences between the two protagonists, which are also underlined by the costume design and their body language
- the relationship between Ginger and her parents
- the parallels between contemporary history and the coming-of-age story, and the way Ginger’s personal crisis is also reflected in the Cuban missile crisis
- the way that image composition can be used to give visual form to the relationships between characters
- the way Ginger experiences the personal and political events of the year, and reflects on them in a poem

Publishing information
Publisher: AG Kino – Gilde deutscher Filmkunsttheater
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10789 Berlin

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Photo credits: Concorde Filmverleih
(All the stills are from the DVD GINGER & ROSA, released in Germany by Concorde. They serve as image quotations, to enable study of the film’s content, and not as illustrations.)
**Ginger and Rosa**

Characterize Ginger and Rosa. Identify similarities and differences. Use the following still from the film to discuss the costume design, the appearance of the two girls, and their posture.

---

**Ginger**

- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________

**Rosa**

- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________

**Ginger and her parents**

From the point of view of Ginger’s mother, describe what kind of behaviour she wants from her daughter.

- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________

From Ginger’s point of view, describe how she perceives her mother and father.

- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________

Personal story – contemporary history

GINGER & ROSA takes place against the backdrop of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Explain briefly what political conflict was being played out in this crisis.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

What fears did this crisis stir up worldwide?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

In GINGER & ROSA, historical events meet a story about growing up. Show what parallels there are between the political crisis and Ginger’s personal crisis.

First describe what it is that throws Ginger’s life off course, then discuss

- what significance this crisis has for Ginger
- what feelings this triggers in her
- how Ginger’s life is influenced by the crisis
- what situation the crisis leads to – and how Ginger emerges from it
Image composition and relationships

1. Disclosure
Ginger tells her mother that Rosa is sleeping with her father.

Ginger and her mother are not shown in the same shot. What effect does this have? Why does the decision to show this scene as a “shot reverse shot” montage match the relationship between these two characters?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

What do you learn from the composition of the image on the right about the relationship between Ginger’s parents? Discuss the direction in which the characters are looking, but also the significance of the wooden posts and the bannister.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Ending
After the suicide attempt of Ginger’s mother, Ginger and her father wait at the hospital.

Describe the way this image is constructed. What gives this a particularly dramatic effect?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

What do you learn about Ginger and her father’s relationship from the composition of the image?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
On the right-hand side, outline a different image construction which could achieve a similar effect.
We had a dream that we would always be best friends.
When we were born, for some it was the end.
Now it seems there may be no tomorrow.
But despite the horror and the sorrow I love our world.
I want us all to live.
Now Rosa, you’ve asked me to forgive.
One day, if Mum survives this bitter night, then we shall meet again.
And I will say: I loved you, Rosa. Don’t you see.
But we are different.
You dream of everlasting love. Not me.
Because what really matters is to live.
And if we do, there will be nothing to forgive.

But I’ll forgive you anyway.

Summarize in your own words how Ginger recapitulates her friendship with Rosa in this poem.

Highlight which sentences could refer both to the political events of the time and to the development of Ginger and Rosa’s friendship.

Identify scenes in the film which you think are a good expression of the mood of Ginger’s poem.

Interpret Ginger’s statement that this is “a poem about the future”.

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