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Paul Verhoeven to Direct Lesbian Nun Drama

by Winnie McCroy
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Wednesday Apr 26, 2017

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Paul Verhoeven

Director Paul Verhoeven has announced that his next French-language film will chronicle the life of the controversial Italian nun Benedetta Carlini. Virginie Efira is set to star in the film, which will tackle themes of sex, sexuality, and religion.

According to [Hollywood Reporter](#), production has now begun on "Blessed Virgin" (Sainte Vierge), based on "Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy" by Judith C. Brown, with "Elle" star Virginie Efira in the lead role of Carlini, a real-life 17th century nun.

Verhoeven's producer on "Elle," Said Ben Said, announced the news via Twitter. Gerard Soeteman -- a regular collaborator of Verhoeven's dating back to 1971's "Business is Business" -- has adapted the work.

(Source:<http://screenanarchy.com/>)

Born in 1591, Carlini is a significant figure for historians of women's spirituality and lesbianism. At 30, she was made abbess of a convent in Pescia where she claimed she was experiencing visions of being murdered. It was later found that she had engaged in sexual relations with a fellow nun, whom she was accused of molesting.

SBS Distribution will launch sales of "Blessed Virgin" in Cannes.

In their report, [ScreenDaily](#) gives a synopsis of the academic work by Judith C. Brown:

"Having entered a convent in the Tuscan town of Pescia as a child, 17th century abbess Benedetta Carlini] rose-up the ranks, propelled by her claims of a series of lurid mystic visions and the appearance of stigmata on her body. But she was later ostracized by the church after an investigation discredited her claims as a sham and uncovered evidence of affairs with other nuns in the convent. There has been much academic debate over the true reasons for her downfall."

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Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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