

Thank you Guillaume, Pierre Emmanuelle, Fabienne and Phillipe D'Orano, thank you Sisley, and Les Arcs for making women rise. This year I was in anticipation – of delivering my film to the world, the labour of four long years – and of giving birth to my son.

I was nine months pregnant when I went to the Cannes Film Festival. Two days after my premiere, I went into labour and had to leave Cannes in the middle of the night. We drove back to Croatia for 13 hours, and from the customs office straight to the hospital. After my son was born, I received a call from Cannes, asking me to come back to accept the Camera d'Or for *Murina*.

I remember that moment. I'm lying in bed at the hospital, with my son on my chest, feeding him. I'm watching Mélanie Thierry on my computer as she gives a beautiful speech introducing my award. I wished I was there with her, at the Lumière Hall, celebrating the laborious work behind me. But I also couldn't wish to be anywhere else other than where I was – holding my child after having given birth to him.

For me, that image embodies the experience of being both a woman and a filmmaker.

I felt empowered, that moment – that was absolute creation. Only women have the ability to truly create: stories, films and life itself. Yet we should *not* have to choose, because opportunities should be many.

And today, here in Les Arcs, this is another proof and another moment to celebrate film, life and women.

With *Murina*, I wanted to speak to young women who need to realize their power, create their opportunities, and need to know that the power and freedom belong to them. I also wanted to speak to 16-year-old girls who live in all of us, including me, who can still change.

When you decide to take your freedom, many people will feel threatened by this; the truth you speak will be received with fear, resentment and anger. This is exactly what happened with *Murina* in my own country. I found it easier to be accepted and my work to be recognized abroad, than in the country that is my home, Croatia. I have always felt very welcome in France and I have met many strong and empowered women here; here the film industry is indeed protected.