



Cannes 2026 review: Everytime (Sandra Wollner)

Cédric Succivalli
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“This is cinema at its most necessary: unresolved, uncompromising, and fully alive.”




After three shorts and a first feature, Sandra Wollner announced herself to the world with *The Trouble with Being Born* – awarded at the Berlinale and celebrated at San Sebastián. Five years on, with anticipation that has quietly curdled into hunger, she returns with her third feature, *Everytime*. It arrives with all the force of something that could only have been made by her, and only now.

There are films that you watch, and films that happen to you. *Everytime* belongs unequivocally to the second kind. It opens on two teenagers and the fall of a girl from a building – sudden, fragmented, arriving through a point of view that takes time to locate. The staging between the buildings is extraordinary: the image precise and controlled, yet the confusion of the moment rendered with devastating accuracy. Shot with a field inversion that tears a hole in cinematic grammar and pulls us through it, from this first scene the contract is clear. We are not here to understand. We are here to feel.

A moment before, she was laughing with her boyfriend. They had taken something; the accident followed. A year passes. The mother and younger sister move through their days like figures in a dream – life resumed on the surface, grief still churning underneath. Then the boyfriend returns, carrying his share of guilt and loss, equally unable to move forward. They all embark on a spiritual journey and an actual trip to Tenerife in the Canary Islands. What emerges among these three is something rare in cinema: a portrait of mourning so precise it becomes physical. The images slow and hold. The sun forgets its own rules. Time becomes something you feel in the body rather than measure on a clock.

With *Everytime*, Wollner establishes herself as one of the most essential filmmakers working in Europe today. Her cinema has always dwelled in the space where grief, memory, and identity dissolve into one another – but here that dissolution feels total, achieved with a confidence and lyricism that take the breath away. The film owes debts to *Aftersun*’s aching family intimacy (it shares the same DOP!), to the temporal vertigo of *All of Us Strangers*, to the quiet catastrophe of Moretti’s *The Son’s Room* – and yet it belongs entirely to itself, to its own atmosphere, its own frequency. You don’t so much watch it as absorb it.

The performances are beyond praise. Birgit Minichmayr as the mother is a force of nature held under extraordinary compression – every glance, every silence, a world. The three actors together achieve something that cannot be directed, only coaxed into being: a living, breathing intimacy that makes the grief on screen feel genuinely shared. And the film’s final passages are among the most beautiful Wollner has ever shot. The discovery of baby Jessie in

the corridor is devastating in the quietest possible way. The transformation of the setting sun – somewhere between Rohmer's *The Green Ray* and *Tacita Dean*, and yet fully neither – is  the kind of image that stays lodged behind the eyes for days.

This is cinema at its most necessary: unresolved, uncompromising, and fully alive. *Everytime* does not offer answers. It offers something rarer – the feeling of having been, for two hours, completely inside another life, another loss, another way of moving through time. See it, and surrender to it entirely.

And yet one question lingers, long after the film ends – the one Wollner refuses to answer, and perhaps the most important of all: did she fall, or did she choose to? The ambiguity is not a gap in the storytelling. It is the wound at its centre. Whether it was accident or suicide, we will never know – and that not-knowing is exactly where the film lives, and where it refuses to let us go.

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