

Persmap



MIJN NAAM IS COURGETTE

(MA VIE DE COURGETTE)

Een film van Claude Barras

Courgette is de bijnaam van een 9-jarige jongen. Na de plotselinge dood van zijn moeder wordt Courgette opgevangen door politieman Raymond. Raymond brengt hem naar zijn nieuwe huis. Het is een opvanghuis met andere kinderen van zijn leeftijd die niet meer bij hun ouders kunnen wonen.

Het kost Courgette moeite zich op zijn gemak te voelen en de andere kinderen moeten erg aan hem wennen. Na de komst van een nieuw meisje, Camille, begint hij zich thuis te voelen. Dankzij Raymond en zijn nieuwe vrienden in het huis vindt Courgette liefde en een nieuwe familie.

MA VIE DE COURGETTE / MIJN NAAM IS COURGETTE werd geselecteerd voor de Quinzaine des Réalisateurs in Cannes en zeer enthousiast ontvangen. Deze unieke en hartverwarmende film zal zowel in de originele als Nederlandse versie te zien zijn.



Speelduur: 66 min. - Land: Frankrijk - Jaar: 2016 – Genre: Animatie
Release datum bioscoop: 12 oktober 2016
Distributie: Cinéart

Meer informatie over de film:

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Persmap en foto's staan op: www.cinéart.nl/pers - inlog: cinéart / wachtwoord: film

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Cast

Nederlandse stemmencast:

Courgette/Icarus	Matteo Heyrman
Camille	Myrthe Hendrix
Simon	Remi de Smet
Raymond	Frank Hoelen
Ahmed	Willem de Groot
Alice	Echica Florijn
Antoine	Moos Parser
Beatrice	Tove Schröder
Jujube	Tom Böhmer
Kermis vrouw	Hildegard van Nijlen
Meisje skibril	Mylene Waalewijn
Meneer Paul	Rutger Le Poole
Mevrouw Papineau	Ann De Winne
Moeder	Marleen Maes
Rechter	Sander de Heer
Rosy	Nine Meijer
Ski jongen	Bauke van Boheemen
Ski jongen moeder	Renée van Wegberg
Skibril moeder	Melise de Winter
Tante Ida	Cystine Carreon
Tv stem man 1	Ruben Lürsen
Tv stem man 2	Rutger Le Poole
Tv stem vrouw	Barbara Sloesen

Fransse stemmencast:

Courgette	Gaspard Schlatter (voice)
Camille	Sixtine Murat (voice)
Simon	Paulin Jaccoud (voice)
Raymond	Michel Vuillermoz (voice)
Ahmed	Raul Ribera (voice)

Crew

Regisseur	Claude Barras
Scriptschrijver	Celine Sciamma
Producent	Marc Bonny
Animatie	Direction d'animation
DoP	David Toutevoix
Editing	Valentin Rotelli
Kostuum design	Christel Grandchamp
	Vanessa Riera
Coproducent	Eric Jacquot
Muziek	Sophie Hunger
Naar een boek van	Gilles Paris
Casting	Marie-Eve Hildbrand

Productie	Rita Productions Blue Spirit Productions
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Regisseur Claude Barras

Barras is geboren in 1973 in het in Zwitserland gelegen Sierre. Na zijn studie illustratie en infografie aan École Emile Cohl in Lyon, behaalde Barras tevens een diploma in antropologie en digitale beelden en studeerde hij computer graphics aan het École Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne. Daarna ging hij aan de slag als freelance illustrator in Geneve.

Selectie uit filmografie

2016	MA VIE DE COURGETTE
2012	CHAMBRE 69
2007	ANIMATOU
2006	LE GÉNIE DE LA BOITE DE RAVIOLIS
2005	BANQUISE
1999	CASTING QUEEN
1996	LA VACHE

The characters

The children

Courgette His given name is Icare, but everyone calls him Courgette. His mother gave him this nickname, which he is very attached to. Having become an orphan, he will learn about friendship in the Fontaines Foster Care Center, surrounded by children who are all like him, although each one of them is very different. With Raymond, the good-natured police officer who takes him under his wing, he will learn that you can trust adults. And he will discover love with Camille.

Camille She isn't like other little girls, and that's perhaps the reason why everyone is in love with her... Dolls? Not so much, but football and a quick retort are right up her alley. She is the ray of sunshine that lights up the foster home, but she may have to leave them behind, since her Aunt has filed for custody in order to get her hands on the food and board allowance...

Simon The orphanage's tender-hearted bad boy. After at first rough-handling Courgette during a hazing process, he becomes his loyal friend.

Ahmed Naïve, with his head in the clouds, he's the life and soul of the party, despite himself. He loves to get dressed up in disguise: a dinosaur, a robot, or a dinosaur disguised as a robot.

Jujube A glutton and hypochondriac, he is Ahmed's inseparable sidekick. Jujube even eats toothpaste because "it's good for your health."

Alice Hiding her face behind a lock of hair, she speaks very little. Camille will slowly manage to coax her out of her shell.

Béatrice She is gentle and always ready to defend others.



Courgette



Camille



Simon



Ahmed



Jujube



Alice



Béatrice

The adults

Raymond A rather stout and nice policeman, whom Courgette immediately trusts. He also becomes very attached to the boy, to the point where he realizes that “family” makes sense, especially the family you choose.

Aunt Ida Camille’s Aunt is an opportunist who wants the allowance money she would receive if she had custody of her niece. But Camille is ready to do anything in order to not live with her.

Mrs. Papineau the foster home director, she is fair but strict, an indisputable authority figure for the young in her charge.

Mr. Paul A kindly and dedicated professor, he teaches the children in the orphanage and even takes them on a ski trip!

Rosy A dynamic and good-humored youth worker, Rosy is generous and protective of her kids. Bedtime kisses are her specialty! The children will find out that she has a sweetheart and she’s going to be a mom.



Directors' statement

“HAVE FRIENDS YOU CAN COUNT ON, FALL IN LOVE, AND MAYBE EVEN BE HAPPY...”

THE REASON WHY

I fell in love with Gilles Paris' book, *Autobiography of a Courgette*, a tender and poetic coming of age story. The story and its tone brought me back to my childhood and reminded me of my first emotional flutters as a moviegoer watching films such as *The 400 Blows*, *Nobody's Boy: Remi, Belle and Sebastian*, *Heidi*, and even *Bambi*. With this animated film adaptation, I wanted to share with today's public a bit of these wondrous and formative emotions that have nurtured and shaped my experience. But this film is also, and above all, an homage to neglected and mistreated children who do the best they can to survive and live with their wounds. Courgette, our hero, has been through many difficult times and, after having lost his mother, he believes he is alone in the world. That was without counting on the people he would meet in his new life in the foster care center: having a group of friends you can rely on, falling in love, and why not even being happy one day? He still has many things to learn in life. It is this message, at once simple and profound, that seemed essential to convey to our children. And the wish to share this message was what guided me during the course of directing the film.

THE THEME

I wanted to adapt Gilles Paris' book because I wanted to make a film about children that addresses ill-treatment of children and remedies for abuse in today's world; an entertaining film that makes you laugh and cry, but especially a firmly committed film that happens in the here and now and tells you about the strength of resilience amongst a group of friends, advocating empathy, comradery, sharing and tolerance. In contemporary cinema, orphanages are classically depicted as places of abuse, and the outside world as that of freedom (*The 400 Blows*, *the Chorus*). In *My Life as a Courgette*, the pattern has been reversed: abuse is suffered in the outside world and the orphanage is a place fostering appeasement and reconstruction. This is what makes this narrative at once classic and modern. After some time immersed in a foster care center, I realized the importance of treating the theme of adoption with great care, because it is at the heart of the relationship that these children, lacking in affection, maintain with the adult world. I presented adoption in two of its modern manifestations: the foster family and custody by a family member. Depending upon the child's age and the motivation of the adults, adoption in this instance represents either the risk of returning to the destructive cycle of abuse or as the possibility of reconciling themselves with the world. It also seemed particularly important to enhance the image of the blended family in our society, where today the basic structure of the family is present in multiple forms.

THE SCREENPLAY

Due to its at times explicit descriptions of the violence that the children are subjected to, the book, *Autobiography of a Courgette*, is for the most part targeted for young adults and parents. In adapting the story for an animated film, I wanted to expand the audience to include younger Children. After an initial, rather long stage of writing and paring down the story, my producers proposed that I work with Céline Sciamma. I was, naturally, very enthusiastic straight away. I had seen *Tomboy* a few months before and loved the film. So we met on a regular basis to exchange our ideas and very quickly, avoiding the pitfall of relating the story in diary form that seemed at first obvious for an adaptation, Céline knew how to give the screenplay a truly classic and strictly set structure, as well as how to strike the right balance between humor and emotion, adventure and social realism. The screenplay's success is also due to the very delicate handling of its characters, which subtly evokes dark, tragic past incidents to better exorcise them in light of budding friendships in the present.

WORKING WITH THE ACTORS

Marie-Eve Hildbrand's casting and work with the actors was key to the directing process. We worked with non-professional actors for the children's characters. They were chosen for their voices and their ability to remain spontaneous in front of a microphone. Their personalities and their ages also played a decisive role, because we wanted to create a group that functioned as naturally as possible, made up of actors who would veritably experience the scenes as they were recorded. In order to accompany the children and provide them with a reassuring structure in which to act, we chose professional actors to play the adults. This option worked perfectly, as seen for example in Michel Vuillermoz' work: he brought a remarkable humanity, singularity and depth to Raymond, all the while forging real bonds of friendship and camaraderie with the children. The actors struck the right chord and gave the film an extraordinary emotional authenticity, scene after scene, sequence after sequence, during the course of the six weeks of recording. The dialogue, natural, short and efficient, interspersed with silences picks up from the action and sometimes even contradicts it, adding depth to the characters' psychology. The silences are filled with meaning and leave room for looks, glances and non-verbal exchanges. Put to the test by the children's natural language while recording, the dialogue was enriched and re-oriented towards a poetic naturalism which on an emotional level rang true to a rare degree.

THE DIRECTION

My Life as a Courgette is meant to be a film that focuses on the private world of its characters' inner lives. It was important to me to allow time for small gestures, facial expressions, eye-blinks, moments of waiting. A bird couple's turpitudes while they build their nest, urban landscapes, skies filled with clouds, thunderstorms and brighter horizons mirror commotions in the characters' souls. I often used long sequence shots on looks and emotions rather than the shots/counter-shots, typically used in animation. This gives the film a unique, dailly slow rhythm.

AESTHETIC CHOICES

The cartoonist Hergé argued that the more the graphic style of a face is pared down and simplified, the more the audience can project their own emotions onto and identify with the character. That is also my conviction and my practice in animating puppets, without the ambition of reproducing reality, but instead to give spectators a "shifted reality." Using the combination of natural, realistic voices with the characters' highly stylized aesthetic I have also attempted to inspire the film with Gilles Paris' particularly poetic writing style. The key to this universe is the characters' eyes. Their huge eyes, wide open to see the world, contribute a great deal to the emotion and empathy. An urban, contrasted, post-modern poetry emanates from the film. The scenery is rather sad and somber, symbolizing the sociological content of abuse, which isn't represented in the film. The most lively and bright colors reflect the characters' resilience and positive outlook. Faced with the difficulties handed to them by their destiny, they have entered into resistance.

THE MUSIC

The music ranges from scenes in restraint, with minimal sound effects, to emotional sequences that are more extraverted, accompanied by Sophie Hunger's soft and gentle music. The sensitivity of her musical compositions, her bewitching voice mixed with a guitar, bass and vibraphone, are the perfect match for the movie's childlike universe. One day, Sophie Hunger said about herself: "It was once difficult for me to be with myself. Today, it has become easier, I feel full of light. People change, and that's a good thing," as if echoing the path taken by our little hero.

PUPPETS AND ANIMATION

Stop-motion is a hand-crafted adventure, at the crossroads of fiction and animation, close to the values that the film wishes to convey. Above all, it involves sharing a know-how and defining goals common to every department in a spirit of cooperation that is at the heart of this type of undertaking. Sixty-or-so sets had to be created and painted as well as fifty-four puppets in three types of costumes. We then, over a period of eight months, shot seventy minutes of film, dispatched amongst fifteen film sets at the rhythm of three seconds per day and per animator. Eight additional months were needed to add the soundtrack to the film and assemble all the shots on a green background with the foreground shots, background shots, skies, clouds and other computer-generated background scenery. Although the creation and film shoot ended up being a two-year-long marathon of relentless effort involving more than fifty “craftsmen,” we were, thanks to our very efficient team, able to put into place and maintain a production system that was on a human scale the entire length of the film shoot.

Screenwriter’s statement

“YOU NEED TO BE BOLD”

It didn’t take much for me to commit to the adventure of *My Life as a Courgette*: just the outline of a character, sketched by Claude Barras. The sensitivity of his features, this unique visual signature, which not only reflected a love for a character, but made me fall in love with the character as well. After jumping into the project, I was completely caught up and moved by the problems and sincerity of these little characters. An animated film steadfastly committed to the realism and accuracy of the story it is telling, all the while striving for visual poetry, is singular enough to be irresistible. Writing the screenplay was a moment of freedom and trust. It is very rare to encounter a project which has the strength of the obvious. There’s a form of boldness and simplicity in *Courgette* that won me over. For simplicity is essential not to succumb to the sirens’ call of excess, or the temptation of playing god and creating one’s own little world. And it takes guts and daring to convince yourself that the story of a little boy who kills his alcoholic mother and so ends up in an orphanage is the perfect pitch for a children’s film. And yet, when you think of the children’s tales that have been handed down to us through the ages, they often have very dark premises, such as *Little Thumbling*, or *Hansel&Gretel*... Fairy tales are cruel, *My Life as a Courgette* isn’t. The project has the strength and tenderness of a coming of age story, committed to reflecting a world that already exists, our world, which is that of the children whom this film aims to speak to.

CLAUDE BARRAS
DIRECTOR

Before directing his first feature film, *My Life as Courgette*, Claude Barras directed several short films including *The Genie in a Ravioli Can*, which received numerous awards in film festivals around the world. Claude Barras’ unique connection with childhood transcends time and age differences; he has the rare gift of being able to make you laugh and cry at the same time. His stories are filled with realism and fantasy, humor and poetry. He was the impetus for adapting Gilles Paris’ *Autobiography of a Courgette* into a stop-motion animation film.

David Toutevoix – Director of photography

David Toutevoix has worked with Claude Barras on all of his short films including The Genie in a Ravioli Can. It was then natural that Claude Barras would entrust him with the position of director of photography for their first feature film, My Life as a Courgette.

Selectie uit Filmografie

2016	MY LIFE AS A COURGETTE
2014	IMPOSTER
2014	EN SORTANT DE L'ÉCOLE
2009	AU PAYS DES TÊTES
2007	SAINTE BARBE
2000	THE GENIE IS A RAVIOLI CAN

Kim Keukeleire – Animation director

A graduate of Belgium's La Cambre School in 1992, Kim Keukeleire has acquired a solid experience in animated films and advertisements in stop-motion in England and the United States (Passion Pictures, BB C Animations, Aardman, Cosgrove Hall, Will Vinton Studios). For her first experience as head animator, Kim Keukeleire gathered an international team made up of experienced animators as well as young talent (British, New-Zealanders, French, Spanish, Swiss, etc.) with whom she had already worked.

2016	MY LIFE AS A COURGETTE
2014	IMPOSER
2012	FRANKENWEENIE
2009	FANTASTIC MR. FOX
2007	MAX & CO Max & Co
2000	CHICKEN RUN

Rita Productions

Created by Pauline Gyax and Max Karli in 2003, RITA produces fiction and documentary films primarily through international coproductions. Over the past 13 years the two producers have accompanied Swiss and international authors and directors whose strong cinematographic flair casts a political and singular point of view on the world. Rita is proud of its eclecticism and the complementary nature of its choices, convinced that above all, Rita is about encounters and shared wishes for a certain kind of cinema. Rita productions has produced in particular, over the last few years, LONGWAVES by Lionel Baier (Valérie Donzelli, Michel Vuillermoz), SALVATION ARMY by Abdellah Taïa, with Les films de Pierre and Les Films Pelléas, THE PRICE OF FAME by Xavier Beauvois (Benoît Poelvoorde, Roschdy Zem) with Why Not Productions and Les Films du Fleuve. Released in 2015, DI RTY GOLD WAR by Daniel Schweizerest was nominated for Best Swiss Documentary in 2016. Claude Barras' long-awaited animation feature, MY LIFE AS A COURGETTE, written by Céline Sciamma, will be released in October 2016.

Blue Spirit Productions

Blue Spirit Productions is a production company specialized in animated films with its own studios (in Angoulême and Montreal) which allows for artistic and technical control of the projects it produces. After taking its first steps through the production of TV series, Blue Spirit was rewarded in 2008 with the PROCIREP prize for French Television production. In 2010, in addition to its TV series work, Blue Spirit initiated the production of its first feature film, *THE PAIN TIN G* by Jean-François Laguionie, theatrically released in 2011. *MY LIFE AS A COURGETTE*, by Claude Barras, follows the path thus paved to produce quality films by independent filmmakers.

Gebeka Films

Created in the fall of 2006 with the credo “quality films for a young public,” Gebeka Films is primarily involved in distribution and at times in coproduction. *My Life as a Courgette* is the first feature for which Gebeka films acted as co-executive producer.