

GUILLAUME
CANET

ALBA
ROHRWACHER

Hors-Saison

een film van STÉPHANE BRIZÉ



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2023
Sélection Officielle



cinéart

PERSMAP



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Cinéart Nederland
Herengracht 328-III
1016 CE Amsterdam

Contact

Julia van Berlo
M: +31 6 83785238
julia@cineart.nl

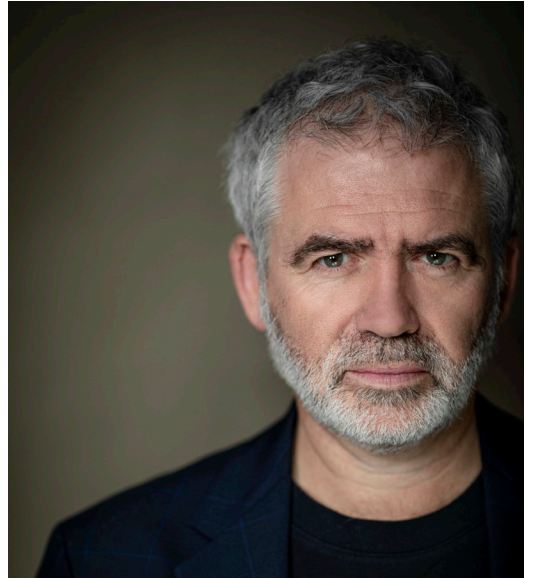
Synopsis

HORS-SAISON is de betoverende nieuwe film van Stéphane Brizé (UN AUTRE MONDE). Na zijn trilogie over de perikelen op de arbeidsmarkt, gooit de regisseur het over een andere boeg in deze tedere film die zich afspeelt aan de ruige Bretonse kust.

Mathieu (Guillaume Canet) woont in Parijs, Alice (Alba Rohrwacher) woont in een kleine badplaats in het westen van Frankrijk. Hij is in de vijftig en een bekende acteur, zij is in de veertig en pianolerares. Vijftien jaar geleden werden ze verliefd. Maar ze gingen ieder hun eigen weg, de tijd verstreek en wonden zijn beetje bij beetje geheeld. Wanneer Mathieu zijn leven ontvlucht in een kuuroord, vindt hij Alice bij toeval terug.

HORS-SAISON ging in wereldpremière op het Filmfestival van Venetië. De chemie tussen acteurs Alba Rohrwacher en Guillaume Canet spat van het scherm. *'Lovely, sorrowful reflection on missed chances and regained connections'* (Variety).





Director: Stéphane Brizé

Interview

THIS IS YOUR TENTH FEATURE FILM... WE NEVER THOUGHT WE'D SEE YOU IN THIS UNIVERSE.

They said the same thing when I made *THE MEASURE OF A MAN* after several films about love and family affairs. All of us are made up of several layers. Over the years we have various feelings, emotions and thoughts. My films are the exact reflection of those many currents and I like to remain free to explore all those various inner spaces.

IN THIS SPECIFIC CASE, WHAT WAS YOUR DOMINANT FEELING WHEN YOU THOUGHT UP THIS FILM?

A feeling common to all my main characters from *THE MEASURE OF A MAN* to *ANOTHER WORLD*, as well as the female character Jeanne in *A WOMAN'S LIFE*: disillusionment. All those characters believed in something, they all had a certain idea of mankind and the world. And then their point of view changed after a betrayal or abandonment. Whether by a corporation or their family. That meant accompanying my characters over the years and symbolically suffering the same blows as they do. I suppose I write and make films to acquire greater clairvoyance. But no advantages come without disadvantages, and clairvoyance weakens you. And so, I needed to explore the moment that I became exhausted by the anger on which those films were built.

BUT YOU COULD HAVE PROJECTED THAT SOUL SEARCHING ONTO THE WORLD OF BUSINESS THAT YOU BEGAN TO EXPLORE SOME TIME AGO.

Companies fascinate me, and I wrote a screenplay that takes place in an important corporation in the service industry. Conclusion: I said nothing more than what I had already said in my three previous films. Whether in terms of tone or form. I needed to take a break (and return to the subject later), in order to stay in tune with the emotions

and interrogations that marked that period of my life. As I said, I was feeling confused and disillusioned. I wanted to make this new film sustained by that. I wanted something less brutal than my previous films. Like my characters, I needed to let down my guard. Also, what some call my “social trilogy” came to an end during the period of COVID confinement. That experience of isolation obliged us all to ‘press pause’ on our own activities. For the individuals we are, who exist largely via our social function, it was a very destabilizing experience. We probably all felt deeply the unbelievably precarious nature of our existence. My characters mirror that moment of vertigo. A man and a woman reach the logical conclusion of decisions they made when they separated fifteen years earlier. A morbidly calm hotel, a seaside town off season whose streets are practically empty, become the privileged setting for our characters’ internal remembering. I wanted to linger on that moment when we ruminate on choices we never made, or made badly, encounters we missed or misused, doors we never pushed open, meetings we missed, moments in life when we decided to take one road instead of another. I wanted to explore those haunting, secret ruminations.

WHAT IS IMMEDIATELY STRIKING IN THIS FILM IS ITS TONE, THE WIT OF THE CHARACTER PLAYED BY GUILLAUME CANET.

We needed to entertain audiences, because it would have been indecent in our world today to show the torments of two characters who are spared any social sufferings without taking the slightest distance. That is the distance my co-writer Marie Drucker and I immediately imagined and wanted. Mathieu (a name never mentioned in the film), the character played by Guillaume, is entertaining, at times he even makes us laugh, but he himself is not funny. We enjoyed playing on the discrepancy between his state of mind and the aseptic spa where he is staying. And also the fact that, as a famous actor, he must always look happy.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO MAKE HIM AN ACTOR?

I’ve often wondered about that. I even struggled with the idea. I was leery of comfortably curling up in our own little world of cinema, which can justifiably be considered privileged. Especially given the main character’s degree of notoriety. With one nagging question: “Who will care about the inner feelings of a movie star?” But the answer is very simple: his profession and notoriety are not the subjects of the film. The character questions himself, doubts himself, has the same worries and sense of vertigo as anyone else. On the other hand, the fact that others are so convinced that he is happy because of his success – an idea that he himself is obliged to promote – adds another layer of irony to his malaise. As Louis Jouvet used to say: “There is nothing more futile and pointless, and nothing more necessary than theater”. I needed that self-questioning to come from someone I consider sublime, necessary and useless. There is something both derisory and heroic in the work of an actor. An exacerbation of what is derisory and heroic in our own existence. The sublime and the futile are closely related. Sublime because the actor projects the collective unconscious through the roles that he/she plays. And completely futile because if a film is never made, no one will ever know, and no one could care less. If a garbage man stops picking up garbage, people care, there is immediate chaos in town. An actor is like a singer, film director, writer or painter... The actor serves no concrete or useful purpose. And still, actors are wonderful and indispensable because they tell stories about the world and its inhabitants. The actor

performs a poetic and political function. That is exactly what I needed to combine the vortex of emotions that assail my characters and the tragic banality of the moment.

DID YOU IMMEDIATELY THINK OF GUILLAUME CANET TO PLAY THIS HERO PLAGUED BY DOUBT?

I think of fiction as a documentary about the actors I am working with. I cannot and don't want to do anything unrelated to who they are. At the same time, I need to project myself into each of my characters. And so, each actor must in some way be a part of myself. And what resonates in me is Guillaume Canet's boundless melancholy. I've always thought of him as someone profoundly sad, with the talent to dissimulate it. And that touches me a lot. Guillaume is much more complex than he may seem. And he is the right age for the role. Time has been kind to him, and he has an enormous capacity for self-derision. He had to be willing to spend a third of the film wrapped in a bathrobe wandering between whirlpool baths and algae wraps. He is quite simply a consummate actor –serious, committed, and profound. He is not afraid of dangerous discomfort zones. And had a partner who is also exceptional.

TALK TO US ABOUT YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH ALBA ROHRWACHER

Our casting director Coralie Amédéo mentioned her, although afraid that her accent might negatively affect my decision. It was a non-issue for me from the outset. We met, and the light of her mysterious face shone on me. In fact, that is probably what interests me most in an actor: not knowing everything, not guessing everything, being permanently inquisitive when watching the actor and making the film.

Alba has that unique capacity for implicitly revealing her character's strength. There was also her symbiosis with Guillaume. I absolutely believed that this woman and this man could fall in love. I also understand – by what they are, what they emanate, and what their silences tell me – that their love affair could not have existed fifteen years ago. But at the same time, I also believe that this latest encounter might profoundly



destabilize them. All of that is because of Alba and Guillaume.

THERE IS SOMETHING OF MADEMOISELLE CHAMBON IN ALBA'S ROLE.

Exactly. What unites them – other than music, Mademoiselle Chambon plays the violin, Alice plays the piano – is a kind of low self-esteem. And at the same time, even if Alice, Alba's character, was never able to achieve what she wanted most in her professional life, she has not turned sour or bitter. She harbors her secret within. That is her beauty and tragedy. She gave up her dreams, masking her distress behind a polite smile. She gave up her deepest feelings to take refuge in another life with a man who loves her. Who will never hurt her. She is protecting herself. That is all too human. But the bandage is wearing thin now. And because she is basically very audacious, she puts herself in danger. Like when we approach the edge of a cliff to feel the fragility of our existence. This is actually a film about brave women. Her friend Lucete at the retirement home is another portrait in courage. And so, we needed a grand actress, a powerful actress, to reveal the implicit strength and doubts of her character. While we were filming, I sometimes felt I was watching Romy Schneider or Meryl Streep. Powerful acting and emoting.

YOU USE A NEW STYLE OF DIRECTING IN THIS NEW FILM.

This is not a fighting movie. I felt the need to lower the camera from the photography director's shoulder – unlike in the 4 previous films – and place it on a tripod. No doubt to convey that sense of stasis felt by the characters. On the one hand, for Guillaume's character, it was a question of translating the idea of being crushed, of placing him at the center of internal and external geographies that were too big for him. The shots also suggest a shift in his grief and doubts, making them both tragic and derisory. Like Sempé's characters who look lost in a world too large for them.

For the character of Alba, it's a different matter, we had to work on isolating her, as if she were alone with her secret among the others. Alone even at festive moments, like her daughter's birthday party or when she and her husband invite people over for dinner. And when Alba and Guillaume get together, there's hardly ever a shot without the two of them together. It's like a solitude finally broken, and therefore the need to be together. The difficulty was to construct and stretch a story with two characters who are not in a fight, a little out of breath from the years that have just gone by, and who are not trying to seduce each other. Two people who haven't tried to find each other, who are happy to see each other again when the opportunity arises and who don't harbor any hatred for each other. There is not one who wants yellow and the other who wants blue. The threads become tauter, gradually bringing out the things that are left unsaid but not showing everything, sometimes filming from behind, revealing the subterranean pain and the lies we tell ourselves and others. Without ever being explanatory. The narrative is also tense because the viewer knows things about the pain of both without them showing it to each other. A film of evocations rather than explanations. At the same time, everything must always be clear between the characters, while leaving empty spaces for the viewer's imagination to project itself into. The texture of the image also evokes a space-time that is not that of an objective present but is not that of an outdated past.

THE HOTEL AND SEASIDE TOWN ARE ALSO CHARACTERS IN YOUR FILM.

In this film, the sets are not just interior or exterior locations where scenes play out, but also an expression of the characters' psyches. I never managed to do that before. The immense and aseptic grand hotel is a metaphor for Guillaume's character's perfect world in which he no longer feels happy. And the sleepy seaside town is a parenthesis in a cycle. Things have happened in its streets, more things will happen soon, but this is off season. Nothing. A quiet place with room for introspection. That may even impose it.

MELANCHOLY AND HUMOR, WAS IT YOU WHO DECIDED TO USE VINCENT DELERM FOR THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK?

Exactly. And very early on. Long before we actually shot the film. I always do that anyway. I have the music for my films composed while I am still writing the screenplay. Because I don't think of music as an illustration of what is being said or seen, but as a layer of writing per se. I called Vincent Delerm and gave him the guidelines: "A man and a woman who had been in love separated fifteen years ago. They meet again by chance in the off season in a seaside resort and can now say the words they were unable to pronounce back then. The ghosts of emotions may be slowly resurrecting, like the sea rising without our truly being aware of it". Vincent Delerm went his own way while I wrote the screenplay with Marie Drucker. He regularly sent us snippets of music. The music was in exact correspondence to where I wanted to situate the film: a landscape of melancholic smiles. There is something of that in Delerm's music, something immensely elegant, echoes of the past, while at the same time telling us that all that is not so bad. His music determined images, situations and dialogues. I might almost credit Vincent Delerm as a co-writer. Everything that we wrote and filmed was in constant dialogue with Vincent's music. With his humility and uncomplicated ego, everything was unproblematic during the work process.

IF YOU HAD TO USE ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE WHAT PERMEATES YOUR CHARACTERS, WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

I would use two. Audacity and fear. The fear of failure, the fear of appearing fragile, the fear of not being up to a challenge. That is Guillaume's character's current problem. A permanent problem for Alba's character. At the same time, these few days are an occasion to be audacious. Saying - to the other and to oneself - what they never wanted to say, were able or knew how to say. Without settling scores, without hysteria or violence. Ultimately, this is a film about a story that is coming to an end, not about a story starting up again at a moment in life when we can finally let down our guard. A moment when we would prefer to risk remorse than to prevent ourselves from saying or doing something. A moment in life when a man and a woman who have lived long enough to no longer believe in Santa Claus have to make room for what is essential. I find that beautiful: two beings finally telling each other the truth. In order to stay the same... but a little better too.

Cast

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Mathieu | GUILLAUME CANET |
| Alice | ALBA ROHRWACHER |
| Wife of Mathieu | MARIE DRUCKER |
| Xavier | SHARIF ANDOURA |
| Emmy | EMMY BOISSARD |
| Lucete | PAUMELLE LUCETE BEUDIN |
| Gilberte | GILBERTE BELLUS |
| Gym teacher | HUGO DILLON |
| Bird singer 1 | JOHNNY RASSE |
| Bird singer 2 | JEAN BOUCAULT |



Crew

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| A film by | STÉPHANE BRIZÉ |
| Screenplay by | STÉPHANE BRIZÉ ET MARIE DRUCKER |
| Original score | VINCENT DELERM |
| Director of photography | ANTOINE HÉBERLÉ A.F.C |
| Editor | ANNE KLOTZ |
| Director of casting and artistic advisor | CORALIE AMÉDÉO A.R.D.A |
| Sound engineer | EMMANUELLE VILLARD A.F.S.I |
| Sound editing and mixing | GUYADER A.F.S.I |
| 1st assistant | EMILE LOUIS |
| Script | MARION PIN |
| Set decorator | MATHIEU MENUT |
| Costumes | CAROLINE SPIETH |
| Makeup | CHRISTOPHE OLIVEIRA |
| Hair | ANTOINE MANCINI |
| Head of production | CHRISTOPHE DESENCLOS |
| Location manager | ROBIN LUDIG |
| Director of postproduction | AURÉLIEN ADJEDJ |
| Produced by | SIDONIE DUMAS |
| Executive producer | MARC VADÉ |
| Film production manager | MARINE FORDE |
| Director of development | FRANCK WEBER |
| Produced by | GAUMONT |
| In co-production with | FRANCE 3 CINEMA |
| | CANEO FILMS |
| With the support of | CANAL+ |
| With the participation of | CINE+ |
| With the participation of | FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS |
| With the support of | L'ANGO A ET DE LA PROCIREP |

