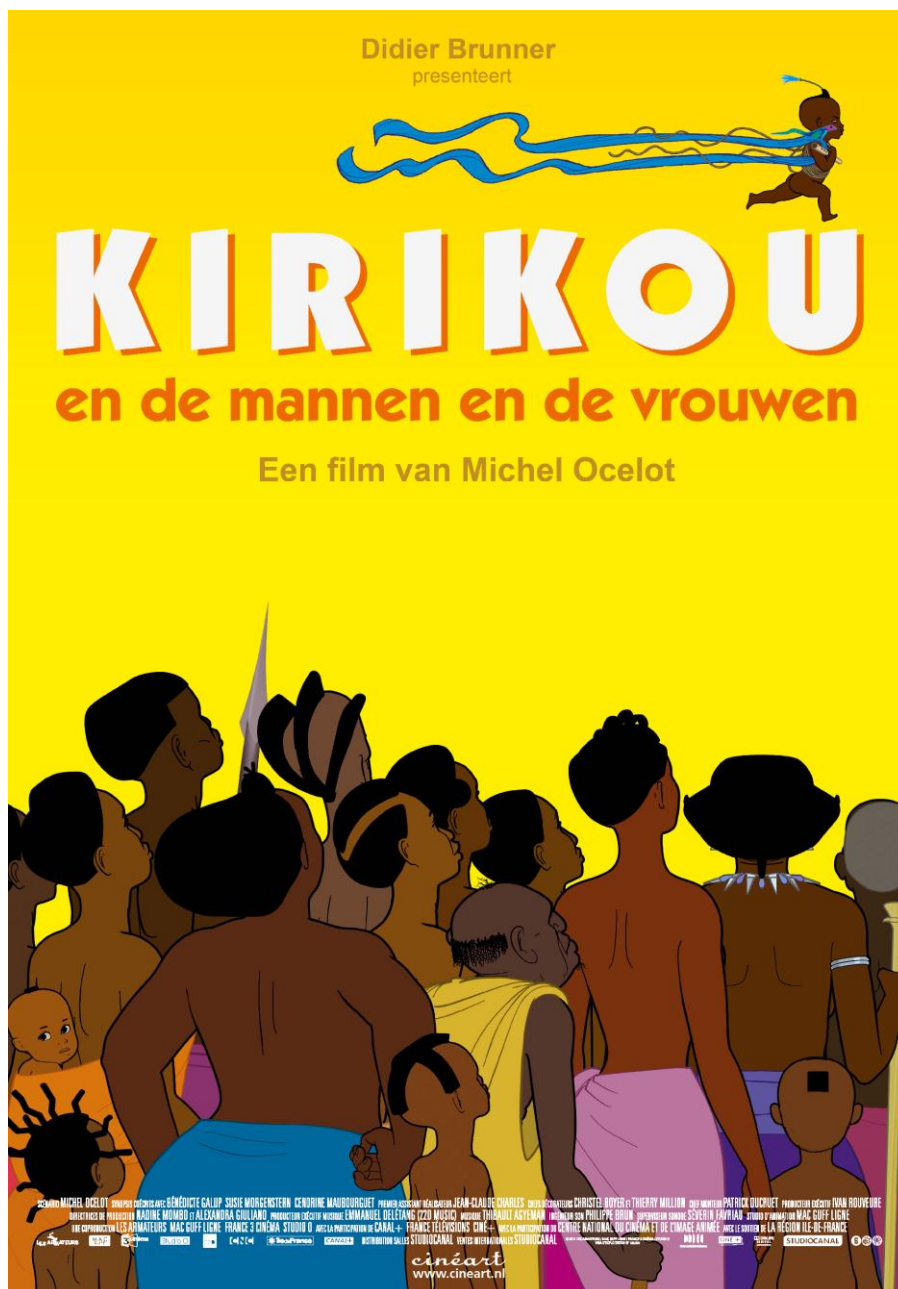


Persmap



KIRIKOU

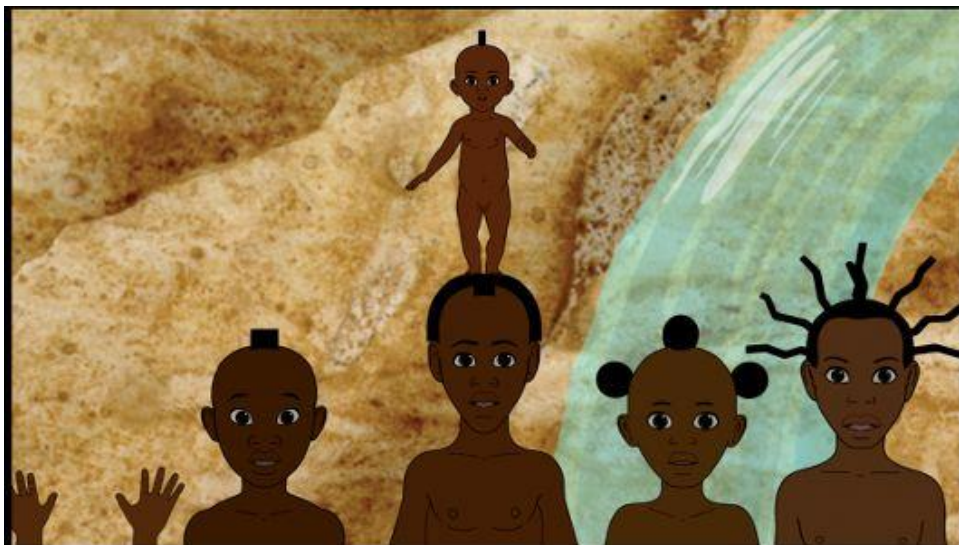
En de mannen en de vrouwen

Een film van Michel Ocelot

In een dorpje in Afrika vertelt eengrootvader in zijn blauwe grot een reeks nieuwe verhalen over de kleine maar slimme held Kirikou.

Hij vertelt hoe Kirikou moedig een vrouw te hulp schoot wiens dak volledig vernietigd was door de boze heks Karaba; of over hoe Kirikou de mopperende dorpsoudste terugvond die verdwaald was op de savanne.

Zo zijn er nog tal van mooie herinneringen hoe Kirikou de mensen van zijn dorp te hulp schoot.



Speelduur: 88 min. – Land: Frankrijk – Jaar: 2012 – Genre: Animatie

Releasedatum: 24 Januari 2013

Distributie: Cinéart

Publiciteit & Marketing: Cinéart – Janneke de Jong
 Herengracht 328 III
 1016 CE Amsterdam
 Tel: +31 (0)20 5308840
 Email: janneke@cinéart.nl

Persmap en foto's staan op: www.cineart.nl

DE STEMMENCAST (NL/BE)

Kirikou	Pablo Peeters
Karaba	Simone Milsdochter
Moeder	Marieke Dilles
Grootvader	Vic De Wachter
Forse Vrouw	Alice Reys
De Oude	Warre Borgmans
Fetisj Op Het Dak	Chiel Van Berkel
Oom	Maarten Goffin
Vertelster	Marilou Mermans
Anigourra	Rissa Wanaghli
Grot meisje	Laura Hofmans
Grote Jongen	Andres Vercoutere
Magere Vrouw	Christel Van Schoonwinkel
Blokje	Len Neefs
Pompom	Kamile Cuypers
Gewoon meisje	Renée Langenus
Oude/Gewonevrouw	Peggy De Landtsheer
Kleine Jongen	Arend Tant

CREW

Screenplay, dialog, graphics and directed by
Synopsis co-written

Original music
Coproduced by

Line producer
Production supervisors

Voice casting
With the voices of

First assistant director
Background supervisors

Head of editing
Animation studio
Video post production
Executive music producer
Sound engineer
Supervising sound editor
Voice recording studio
Sound recording and mixing studio
Communication

In Nederland

Vertaling en adaptatie origineel script
Stemmeregie
Opnamefaciliteit & mix
Stemopname

Mixage
Planning en coordinatie

MICHEL OCELOT
BÉNÉDICTE GALUP
SUSIE MORGENSTERN
CENDRINE MAUBOURGUET
THIBAUT AGYEMAN
LES ARMATEURS
MAC GUFF LIGNE
FRANCE 3 CINÉMA
STUDIO O
IVAN ROUVEURE
NADINE MOMBO
ALEXANDRA GIULIANO
GIGI AKOKA
ROMANN BERRUX (KIRIKOU)
AWA SENE SARR (KARABA)
JEAN-CLAUDE CHARLES
CHRISTEL BOYER
THIERRY MILLION
PATRICK DUCRUET
MAC GUFF LIGNE
B-MAC
EMMANUEL DELÉTANG
PHILIPPE BRUN
SÉVERIN FAVRIAU
PISTE ROUGE – PARIS 17
STUDIO BOIS ET CHARBONS
JEAN-PAUL COMMIN

Peggy De Landtsheer
Peggy De Landtsheer
Sonicville
Tom Daniels,
Jean-Louis Viroux,
Raf Ferlin
Patrick Hubart
Ivy Vermeylen
Regina De Martlaere

INTERVIEW WITH MICHEL OCELOT DIRECTOR

KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN is your third outing with this little boy who has been a huge hit around the world. Is he like a permanent traveling companion to you?

No! I wrote KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS with a great deal of intensity and said everything I wanted to say in it. My ideas aren't necessarily ideas for Kirikou, but Kirikou doesn't let himself be easily forgotten. Many journalists at the time asked me if I'd been surprised by Kirikou's success, and I told them I wasn't at all. Subsequently, though, I ended up being amazed at the extent of his popularity, with constant messages of admiration and affection from all around the world and from men and women of all ages. I didn't intend to make any more films with him but when people all around you are saying, "You did a great thing for us, you have to keep going, you're not allowed to stop!", then you end up shooting another. Wherever I go, people keep saying things that are very touching, and never seem to stop. For example, I was in Brazil for AZUR & ASMAR, and in the front row of the cinema was an Amerindian man. He stood up at the end of the screening to say lots of wonderful things about KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS and to say that in my film, I'd provided an exact description of his tribe that lives on the banks of the Amazon. It demonstrated that I had offered dignity to those people, who were able to see naked or semi-naked people on screen that the audience respected. And they wanted more.

In KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN, the way you handle computer-generated images differs to what you did in AZUR & ASMAR and TALES OF THE NIGHT: the characters are represented with contour lines, as a continuation of their cartoon style. Can you tell us about that choice?

I am aware of the advantages offered by 3D animation, which you don't get from 2D. With 3D animation, you can create some amazing "sculptures." Then you can develop them in every possible way, slowly and without any major difficulties and without losing the beauty of the character. It is hard to do the same with the thousands of drawings needed for traditional animation. Special points of view and slow movements sometimes present insurmountable difficulties. Moreover, digital technology offers the perfect environment for simple and constant reviewing and correcting. In this new film about Kirikou, there aren't many 3D shapes because I wanted to stick with Kirikou's traditional image. This "trickery" was a bit of a problem for me. In AZUR & ASMAR – my first 100% digital film – I never sought to hide the fact that it was a computer-animated film. There was no reason to. But this new Kirikou had to be a "real" Kirikou. I had to stick to the original image, a solid line drawing and flat color. The tracing, which was mainly automatic, was the result of lengthy teamwork by Mac Guff's crew of artist-technicians. We went over it again and again until we found the tracing I wanted, and there were three stages to the process. Firstly, we used a computer to do automatic tracing, generated by the volumes of the 3D model. This tracing evolved according to the position of the character, subtly appearing and disappearing. Secondly, we added some drawings to the character, for those shapes we wanted that were too subtle to generate automatic tracing, such as the delicate shape of a lip, for example. Lastly, we carried out an in-depth review, and retouched by hand where we found details that needed improvement. In addition, we played with the differences between different shapes – thin, thick, full, loose, slender extremities, etc. To me, the result is so good that it's less manipulation and more a new technique.

How has this shift to digital changed the artistic part of your work in terms of creating characters and sets? For example, how do you draw your new characters like the Storyteller and the Tuareg child, and how are they then digitally transposed?

At the beginning of every production I've ever heard of, everybody starts with pencil and paper. I do the same, from the first sketches to the final drawing. I bought myself a paintbox on which I can draw directly, but in terms of creating characters, I prefer a pencil and paper – it's more controlled and more "sensual." When we used to draw Kirikou, I'd tell the artists that they mustn't draw Kirikou, Karaba or the Mother, etc., but rather they should caress them. Once my character models are ready (front, three-quarters, profile, rear), I give them to the modelers in the team. Using their computers, they slowly create a model that corresponds exactly to mine. "Exactly" maybe isn't the right word, because there are changes to be done: I do a model rotation without any perspective – the nose has the same dimensions in profile and face-on, but the computer modeling takes perspective into account. And noses face-on are bigger than noses in profile, whilst ears are smaller. So there's a process of trial and error that takes place between the instinctive drawing and "reality." We are always trying to make improvements.

What kinds of liberties or extra opportunities do you get as a director from using digital animation?

As I said before, the amazing opportunity to be able to constantly review and correct as much as you like. You can also re-use things – something that animators really like! When you reuse stuff in 2D, the opportunities are limited and you can spot where things are reused. In 3D, by changing the position of the camera, you can have a multitude of new effects with the same animation. For example, Kirikou makes a series of holes in a squash stem and a reed. There is only one animation there, but you can't tell it's being re-used because the camera angles are very different. You can do that kind of recycling with an infinite number of actions, walking or running in particular. Multiple characters are also very simple, when creating a crowd for example. Digital 3D also offers some amazing special effects like the yellow Harmattan trade wind, the rain from the tornado or the shower of rose petals that sends the village to sleep. To create these effects, the research was simple because it's digital. In the shower of petals, each petal has its own trajectory, its own movement, its own light and shadow – something that would be unthinkable in hand-drawn images. You can also add multiple layers of effects. There was no limit to the number of petals we could use!

How did you come up with the ideas for this new Kirikou?

In principle, a sequel was impossible because the character who touched people so much was the little naked boy Kirikou and not the tall young man at the end of the first film. I couldn't see any other option than to recount his childhood memories back home, whilst respecting some strict rules: no magic for Kirikou, just activity, cunning, and generosity, and all that taking place in the same village and in the same bush country. Feeling as if I'd said it all already, I needed help to start again. I established a slightly unusual process right from KIRIKOU AND THE WILD BEASTS: the producer asked some writers for ideas for adventures for the boy Kirikou, telling them that once I'd chosen, I alone would write the screenplay and dialog. It was about triggering something in my head, as I do with traditional fairytales from which I only use certain elements. From 50 proposals, I selected five that I reconstructed and developed in my own style. Bénédicte Galup, who was very active on the first Kirikou film and who co-directed the second, was so inspired that three out of these five came from her. The other person to inspire me was a friend, Susie Morgenstern, who writes wonderful

children's books. It was lovely that this storyteller gave her storyteller friend the idea to make a film about a storyteller. The final idea came from Cendrine Maubourguet, who I didn't know. Her idea involved Kirikou playing music on his whistle and Karaba's automatons arrive, not to destroy the instrument but to order Kirikou to play louder because Karaba wants to hear it better. I tried to take it even further and give people a little frisson at the end of the tale.

What inspired you to tell five separate stories rather than one single tale linking them all together?

The fact that we couldn't! The epic tale of KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS had been told, and we couldn't add another big story to that. Nor could we introduce a sequel to KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS, because it finished with Kirikou as a magnificent warrior who, despite his beauty, interests no-one. The character we love is the newborn, the tiny, naked boy. If he's not tiny and naked, he's not Kirikou. Indeed, at the end of KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS, his age is 70 minutes!

What starting points did you give those people who helped you come up with the ideas for the different tales?

In the presentation of the task, I imposed all kinds of limits on the one hand, and on the other, suggested different story possibilities such as a Strong Woman, a powerful character such as the Old Grouch under his baobab tree, whom we'd never highlighted before. I also talked about music, amongst other arts. I also listed all the African animals I'd not used before. In the end, I only kept the human relationships, which is what interests me most.



Tell us about the first tale, about the Strong Woman?

This first story is both a “curtain raiser,” to remind people of the village and its characters, as well as being a tale of trickery to cheat Karaba. Sometimes there are details that I don’t like at all but which trigger an idea. In her wonderful story about the Strong Woman’s problems, Bénédicte Galup imagined that the village folk summoned the children to go home because of the rain. I turned that around – when it rains, you don’t go inside, you go out. That’s a memory of my childhood in Guinea: it was hot, there would be a big storm and everyone would be happy, the littlest children would be naked and the older ones dressed but they’d take off their clothes so they didn’t get wet.

A heavy but wonderful rain falls on them, and they dance with joy in the storm. Back then, as the well-dressed little white boy, I wasn’t allowed to do the same. One of the mothers in the film says with a sigh, “Oh, to be a child again and dance naked in the rain!” That’s me sighing, too.

Then there is the story of the Old Grouch...

I created that character so I could despise him, just like the child known as “the little one” who is always ready to crush anyone smaller than he is, i.e. Kirikou. The Old Grouch represents a loser whom life has taught nothing, and who shares very little with others, despite his age. He is the opposite of the wise old man who shares what he knows and, instead of being a know-it-all, says that he knows very little – the noble grandfather. I liked the idea of bringing together two very different characters who would irritate each other. And as their strange night continued, I began to grow fond of this exasperating old man, and Kirikou does, too. As soon as the old man disappears, Kirikou misses him. Later on, they tell each other clearly how much they like one another. With this film, I forgive everyone. And I forced the comedic relationship between the Old Grouch and the cheeky newborn by getting the old man drunk, which isn’t very politically correct!

Do those fruits that make him become inebriated really exist?

What I show is a half-truth, because although marula fruit really do exist, they don’t make you drunk if they’re fresh. They need to fall to earth and ferment in order to produce that effect. There are documentaries with footage of completely drunken animals that have eaten these windfalls. In the beginning, it’s really funny. But afterwards, it’s disturbing to see them as grotesque as human beings.

How did the tale of the Blue Monster come about?

That was Bénédicte’s third idea. I didn’t want to have any white characters in Kirikou. It is set in African Africa, and we wanted to keep things natural with brown skin. I hesitated a little with the Tuareg, but then I decided it would be interesting to deal with racism in that way. And it’s a little autobiographical too. Nobody pushed me around but I remember very well that when we came back from Africa to spend our summer holidays in France, I found it strange to see all these colorless people everywhere. It’s very easy to feel that foreignness. As such, I was able to demonstrate the natural arrival of “racism” and its equally natural disappearance. It’s true, if you saw someone heading for you with green skin with red spots, you’d be suspicious, but that goes away as soon as you realize they are a human being who feels the same things you feel, and who can bring something positive to you as you can to them. Racism disappears very quickly between individuals – but it takes on a different form when it involves organized groups. For the name of the young Tuareg, I did some research and chose the name Anigournn a little by chance. The young Tuareg musician who does the

voice for that character said I'd gotten it all right. Anigourann's name fitted perfectly with this adventure for Kirikou, giving an idea of freedom and generosity. The character drawing on the ground with the end of his sword was amazing. That's how you learn to read and write in the Sahara, by writing in the sand. And there's nothing more Tuareg than being brave and uncomplaining in the face of suffering. But I would have preferred not to see the rejection I have imagined here on the edges of the Sahara to happen in real life.

One feels the storyteller that you are has a particular fondness for the character of the Storyteller...

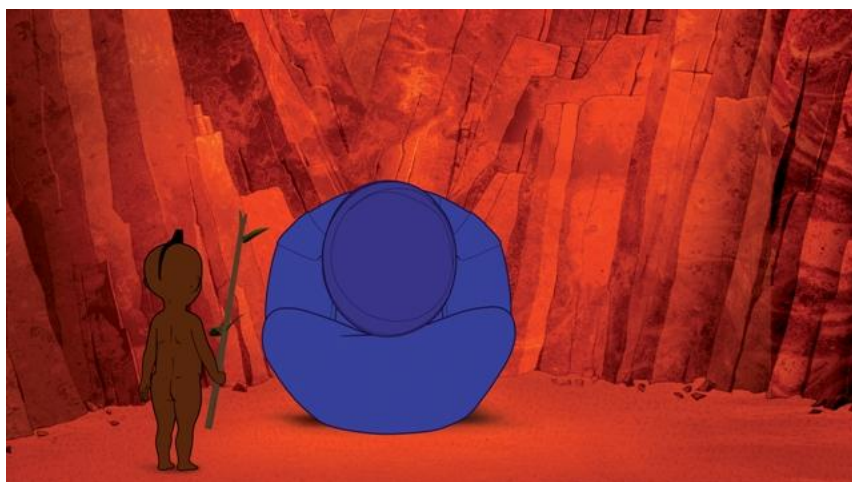
Yes, I identify closely with the storytelling character. I made her a woman because in my stories, I like to highlight the strengths of women that men don't really recognize. Moreover, there really are female storytellers in Africa. I made this character an old woman in order to show all ages in life, even those we don't show so often in the West. In the first sketches I did, the storyteller was wearing a boubou like the village elder. But then I was faced with denying how people are so at ease with their bodies in Africa, right down to the classroom, the rejection of a kind of civilization. So I decided the character wouldn't wear anything on her top half, like the women I knew when I was a boy living in Conakry. A woman, an old person, a bare-breasted woman, who is noble and magnificent.

There is also an important notion of transmission in your stories...

The fact of her being old justifies that she can hand on many ancient stories. I found it touching that this old lady and the little Kirikou get along so well, that the little boy is so good at continuing her tales, with his own character. There again, it's autobiographical: I think of myself as a storyteller but not a historian. With stories, I can do what I like.

...yet always involving values such as kindness, generosity and a rejection of injustice...

And while we're at it, forgiveness, too, because it's a good technique for getting by! Otherwise, you're a slave to the baddies and manipulated by them.



The story about the flute reminds us that music, like Karaba, possesses some magical powers such as bringing people together.

That's true. It is not as universal as they say. There are areas of incomprehension but it is one of those arts that move people most around the world. Music and dance can bring people together. Being unashamed to dance is very African and is something Westerners have lost.

Did you like watching 3D as a spectator before you used it on your previous film, TALES OF THE NIGHT? How did you use it to make KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN?

My life post-Kirikou has been lovely. After the huge frustration of not having access to the right tools, now I have them all at my fingertips. I saw 3D emerge on the horizon and I told myself I was going to play with it in TALES OF THE NIGHT. I had fun and I like to see that film in 3D because it never takes those effects too seriously. It's "flat" 3D, and I like that very much.

When you say "flat" 3D, do you mean a multiplane camera effect, like a series of layers of flat backgrounds that gives a feeling of great depth?

Yes, I use a space beyond the screen that you can sense really well, but each of the objects piled in that space is flat, with no depth, and sits at the edges of the screen, like in theater. 3D imagery gives a physical existence around the screen, a solid black frame. That fits well with my theater of fairytales. The 3D imagery of KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN has a little more volume than those in TALES OF THE NIGHT, but it is still outlined and colored, nonetheless. That means that the work doesn't end up being a faded realism, but it keeps a pleasingly "artificial" feel, something poetic with a certain charm. I wasn't looking for things to come jumping out of the screen at you – with a few exceptions – like very heavy rain or the shower of rose petals. I recognize that 3D give a special readability to the image.

You once said that Kirikou had taken on his own life and he almost imposed his comeback on you, like at that start of his very first adventure when he asks his mother to give birth to him...

These Kirikou films have a special place in my career. With all my films, it was me who wanted to make them and who decided. There are only two exceptions to that: these films of Kirikou's memories. With them, it was the public who decided, not me. But after KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN, I must move on to something else.

Like Hergé and Tintin, are you are opposed to other people bringing Kirikou to life in the future, after you?

I did wonder about that. I think that my system of fairytales in a shadow theater with three friends preparing a show could continue without me. Right from the start, I wanted to invite other authors to participate, but it proved too complicated. They are welcome to climb aboard that convenient vehicle. But for Kirikou, I have thoroughly checked that I am the only person who can tell Kirikou's stories because I am Kirikou. If I can no longer make Kirikou stories, then Kirikou stops and I suggest other writers write their own stories.

INTERVIEW WITH DIDIER BRUNNER PRODUCER

Producing new adventures with Kirikou means both returning to a familiar universe that the public love, whilst offering them something new. How did you approach this?

Producing a sequel was always going to be a little complicated with Kirikou, because the first film had a real ending – Kirikou removed the thorn from the witch’s back and his greatest wish was granted: he grew up and became a man. In KIRIKOU AND THE WILD BEASTS, Michel had already imagined that these new adventures would take place before the witch was relieved of her pain. KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN uses a similar principle. The film is made up from “slices of life” that hadn’t yet been told within the framework of the first film. What makes it different is that these stories aren’t entirely dedicated to the relationship between Kirikou and the witch. They feature characters from the village like the Strong Woman and the Old Grouch, or newcomers like the Storyteller or the Tuareg child. The characters haven’t changed: Kirikou is still the boy who is tiny in physical size but big through his courage. His mother is still his confidante, his protector, and the person who encourages him to grow up. And our hero still knows how to deal with problems with intelligence and shrewdness. The trick was to come up with five tales that express the key values that motivate and underpin Kirikou’s humanity: mutual aid, tolerance, generosity, energy and curiosity.

Did Michel Ocelot immediately think about using computer-generated images or 3D?

Michel suggested using computer-generated images and we suggested 3D, which he agreed to with caution. He absolutely didn’t want things bursting out from the screen. He wanted the depth on the screen to evoke the depth of a magical theater. I should mention that the film will be screened in both 2D and 3D.

In terms of production, how has making the Kirikou films changed since the first one? How has this changed your working methods?

Raising the finance for the first film was extremely difficult. Our budget wasn’t big enough, which forced us to spread the production out right across Europe and Hungary. Michel spent all his time in planes and on the phone. It was an extremely physical task for him.

When we came to make KIRIKOU AND THE WILD BEASTS, because we had more money, we decided that we had to bring all the storyboard, layout, set design and new character teams together with Michel in Angoulême, France. We only outsourced the animation, which was done in Vietnam.

With KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN, we went further, and had the animation done by Mac Guff in Paris. This time, the characters were modeled on computers, with contour lines to give them the same look as in the previous films, and the backgrounds were done in 2D. Some accessories were also done on computers because if Kirikou or any other character picks them up, they had to be able to move in space. I think when they see the film, the audience will feel that the characters have been animated traditionally because Michel wanted the lines to still look drawn. Michel had his entire team around him, because everyone was working in Paris. He was able to intervene in real time to ask for improvements and make corrections. The animation studio is located not far from where Michel lives, which meant he could go home to work in peace on his storyboard.

Why do you think Kirikou has such appeal for all generations and not just for children?

Kirikou is a curious child who constantly wants to develop and grow. He looks at the world, asks himself questions and looks for answers. He is very responsible, never hesitating to be brave and take risks. He is a tiny baby, he's delicate and adorable, but he has an extremely assured, willing and strong character. This dichotomy between a tiny, fragile individual and his strength of character, his charisma and his determination when faced with any challenge is appealing to young and old alike, because everyone recognizes themselves in his strength.

How do you work with Michel Ocelot during the writing phase? Do you give him any ideas?

Michel sends us his screenplays and storyboards, more to keep us informed of his progress than to obtain reactions from us. We give him feedback and he takes on board what he thinks is wise in our comments and he keeps on working. Michel is a solitary author who manages the creative task from A to Z: writing, drawing the characters, directing, directing the voices and graphic conception. We are simply there to guarantee that Michel can make his film in complete freedom, and to help him deal with it when people say, "It would be better if the people were dressed!" Kirikou is a whole, whether you accept it or not. Even if he is stark naked and his adventures aren't always politically correct. In terms of the relationship we have established with Michel, we guarantee the integrity he has in terms of his writing and directing.

Are there some countries that were reticent about the nudity of the characters but which finally agreed to screen the Kirikou trilogy? Have you felt people's sensitivities have matured somewhat?

Very little. Kirikou has no access to places where religious faith forbids nudity such as the US, where puritanism forces every last breast to be covered up. I think that Kirikou will remain a marginal work for US audiences for a long time yet. And he's also excluded from the Middle East. The Kirikou films aren't easy to export. But we have, nonetheless, been able to share him with audiences in places including Latin America, some parts of Europe, Korea and Japan. In all, that represents 40 territories.

What is your opinion as a producer of the finished film?

I think it's wonderful, thanks to its rigor and its direction. Even though 15 years have passed since the first film, you immediately have the same empathy for that little character and are immediately charmed by Michel's stories. The thing I find most fascinating is what a genius storyteller he is – that is the most fundamental quality of Michel's talent.

INTERVIEW WITH JACQUES BLED CEO OF MAC GUFF LIGNE

KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN is your third collaboration with Michel Ocelot, after AZUR & ASMAR and TALES OF THE NIGHT, on which you were only involved with the 3D effects. What does he view as the particular advantages of 3D animation?

I think what Michel firstly likes about 3D is how you can respect the character models. The second advantage of using a computer is that you can memorize things and then create different versions of a shot, a camera movement or a lighting effect, for example. There is a flexibility that he really likes. The thing he doesn't like is that computers distance you from the materials and texture of paper and pencil lines. Despite that, I think that the advantages of 3D outweigh that inconvenience for him because for a total author like Michel, it is very important to be able to easily work on the lighting and assembly of the different elements of the image. Furthermore, the way he uses 3D has changed since AZUR & ASMAR, TALES OF THE NIGHT and KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN. Michel is more involved in these techniques and he has seen the benefits he can get from it, mainly in terms of textures, whilst sticking to his own strategy and staying within his own style framework.

The teams from Mac Guff Ligne have done a remarkable job transposing the hand-drawn designs for the various characters into computer-generated images. Could you tell us a little about the process and how Michel Ocelot worked with you on the graphic style?

We used the two previous films about Kirikou's adventures as guides. Michel clearly told us the image he wanted and how the treatment of the characters' lines had to be the same. Our job involves using the 3D to produce what the author wants and to make it easy to use, ensuring it is never an obstacle. So we worked on rendering the characters with a development team, which initially explored in several different directions to establish what we wanted. Then we selected a method and developed it by creating specific tools dedicated to the use of cell shading in KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN. Our aim was to produce an outline, the development of which would be linked to the way it appears on screen and which would behave in a logical way as the character moves or changes.

Indeed, because at certain times, some outlines have to disappear to make way for others in order to recreate the volume of the characters.

That's right. And there were also moments when Michel pointed out to us that some lines seemed too thick, even if their position on the character was logical. We had to ignore physical logic in order to obtain a result that was completely satisfactory in graphic terms.

Did it take a long time to develop?

Yes, because it's vitally important to the film. Although we had no doubt about our ability to create digital characters thanks to over 25 years of experience, it was nonetheless a big aesthetic challenge to create satisfactory outlines and we immediately mobilized our development teams for a long series of tests.

How many people made up the Mac Guff Ligne team that worked on KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN?

I should point out that the teams from Les Armateurs handled the 2D backgrounds, whilst we took care of reintegrating these environments into the image and animating the characters. I think that at the peak of production, there were around 50 of our staff working on the film. The production itself lasted 14 months.

How were the film's 2D backgrounds handled in order to respect the aesthetic of the first two films, whilst being in harmony with the 3D characters?

To use the example of the village, we handled the background drawings like frames, sometimes placing them on 3D shapes, and by reworking the textures. The backgrounds taken from the previous films were thus both adapted to 3D and to relief. Some of them were redrawn to add details and precision where necessary, for framing reasons and not just because of the 3D and the relief. A team of three or four people worked on recovering these backgrounds and reintegrating them into the film.

Each film presents an opportunity for you and your teams to discover new things. What did you learn artistically and technically working on KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN?

The challenge of this project was to manage to develop Kirikou's image from 2D to 3D and relief, whilst keeping it the same. I think we managed to breathe new life into Kirikou and his world whilst remaining faithful to the fundamental design. That is what I will take away from this job, and the value added to the film's graphic narrative, as the audience and children in particular will see. I think it also gives a kind of modern take that could also have an impact in terms of the audience.



INTERVIEW WITH THIBAUT AGYEMAN COMPOSER

What is your background and your main sources of musical inspiration?

I was born in Pithiviers from a French mother and a Ghanaian father. My father was a drummer and I was surrounded by music from a very young age. I started playing piano at the age of three. My influences are very diverse and vary from classical to jazz, soul to rock and hip-hop.

How did a young composer like you find himself chosen to compose the music for KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN?

I presented some of the music I'd done for short films and personal projects to Philippe Brun, the sound engineer on the first two Kirikou films. A month later, he called me to say that a casting for composers had been organized for the new Kirikou film. The test involved the final scene of the film when Kirikou has a little, high-pitched flute on which he can only play four notes, while his mother has a traditional one with a normal register. Composing a little tune with only four notes was quite a challenge. I sent in my proposition and then one day, the producers called me back. That was when I met Michel Ocelot.

What did you say to him that day?

I mostly listened! He told me the exact context of the scene in question so that I could come up with something a little more polished. He wanted the tune played by Kirikou to be joyful and melodious but at the same time, still childlike. In terms of percussion we also had a very strict list of specifications, because all we were allowed to use was a comb, a manioc grater, a gourd, some necklaces, a bow and handclaps, and then Karaba's voice right at the end, which could only sing "ahhh" or "eyyy," in order to remain neutral and universal. We talked it over a lot, he liked what I did, and then I got to do the rest of the music for the film.

What inspired you for each of the stories?

Many different things because the mandinguo music used for Kirikou was new to me. When I tackled the first tale, the one about the damaged roof on the house of the Strong Woman, I watched the two first films to get my head back into what had previously been done in terms of the music. Then I tried to bring my own color to it, whilst keeping a similar feel. For example, in the first tale, I realized that the movements of the Strong Woman had a specific tempo. And the music for that segment was born out of that tempo.

In the second one, there's that moment when the Old Grouch is drunk, and I immediately thought of using unsteady sounds and dissonance to illustrate that. Then there is the more affectionate relationship that emerges between him and Kirikou, and I adapted to that change of tone in the narrative with warmer, more affectionate melodies.

For the end of the third tale, the one about the Blue Monster, Michel wanted to use traditional Tuareg music. I realized that that scene was one of the only points in the film where the music would be able to develop freely so I threw myself into something very cinematographic with choirs, suggesting the wide open spaces in the desert. Initially, I thought that Michel would reject my non-traditional use of Tuareg music but he agreed and it even ended up becoming one of his favorite musical moments from the film.

Did you always agree with Michel Ocelot regarding the moments in the film when there isn't any music? Did some passages have different approaches with music and without?

Of course. My role was to serve the director. I was there to listen to Michel's wishes. There are moments when I would spontaneously have added more music. Nonetheless, when Michel pulled a musical passage fairly late in the production of the film, from the second tale, I realized during the screening that he was right. It is the moment when Kirikou is going to Karaba's hut. He hides and imitates the witch to order her automaton on the roof to take a look around and to tell him where the Old Grouch is. The silence and the background sound of the nighttime bring something more disturbing and richer than music could, which would take something from the suspense of the scene.

On the other hand, for the third story, just after the Tuareg child kills a panther that is threatening his new friends, there is a moment where he exchanges longing looks with the young girl from Kirikou's village who was supposed to pass by in silence. I thought it was a shame that we weren't profiting in musical terms from this moment of intimacy between these two characters, so I made a suggestion and it was accepted.

Which traditional instruments and which modern ones did you use?

We stuck to Kirikou's musical universe, using instruments like the kora, the balafon, a Peul flute, acoustic guitar, percussion, and from time to time, we added computer samples and choirs that were a slight change from what we had before. We also had a violinist who played a *viola d'amore* to imitate the sound of the imzad, the single-stringed bowed Tuareg instrument for the third tale.

Who are the main musicians and singers who participated in recording the music?

Among others, there was the famous percussionist Steve Shehan, Kandia Kora who played the balafon and kora parts, as well as David Aubaile, an excellent Peul flute player. Angélique Kidjo was the voice of Karaba.

The music plays a very special role in the last tale and helps create a very powerful moment...

The musicians who participated in the creation of that moment invested a lot of passion and desire into it. I arrived with just a rough idea composed on the computer, and everything was magnified and had life breathed into it during that great session where the real instruments and the voice of Kidjo, who came to the studio, came together. It was one of the most intense moments I experienced during this first venture into feature-length productions. And of course, Michel Ocelot's satisfaction was very gratifying for me.

How was it working with Angélique Kidjo?

It was a great pleasure. I have a lot of respect for her. She is very talented and charismatic. I was a little nervous before meeting her but as soon as she walked through the door to the studio and we started talking, I felt like I'd known her for 10 years! That made it easier to guide her towards what Michel wanted.

Did she already know of Kirikou and his adventures?

Yes, of course! She'd seen and loved the two first films. That little boy really left a big impression on many people!

MICHEL OCELOT
AUTHOR, DIRECTOR, ANIMATOR AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER

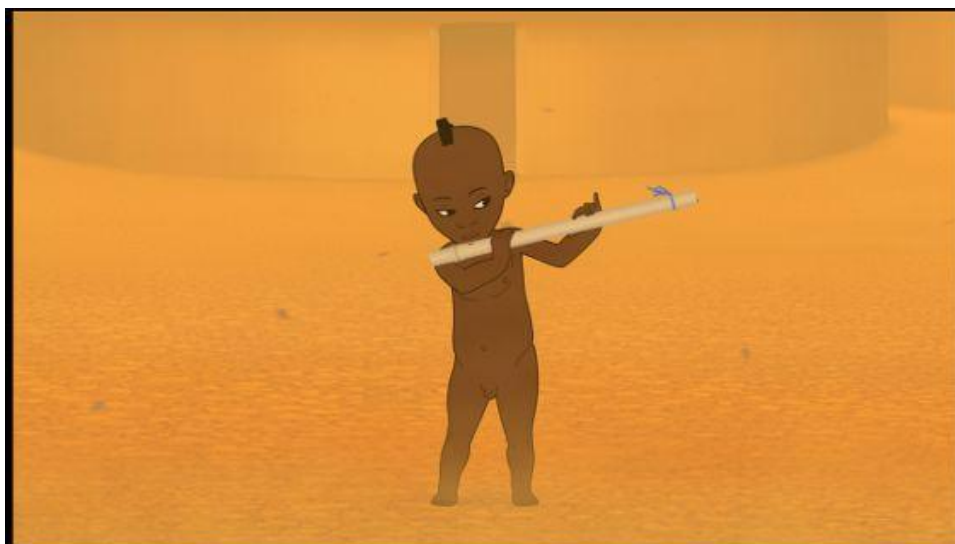
BIOGRAPHY

Born on the French Riviera, Michel Ocelot spent his childhood in Guinea and his teenage years in Anjou before settling in Paris. Michel Ocelot has spent his whole career working in animation movies. His short films include THE THREE INVENTORS, which won a BAFTA in 1980 for Best Animation Film. That was followed by THE LEGEND OF THE POOR HUNCHBACK, which garnered a César in 1983 for Best Short Animated Movie.

In 1998 Michel Ocelot made his breakthrough, thanks to the huge success and critical acclaim of his first feature, KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS.

This was followed by PRINCES AND PRINCESSES, a series of shadow puppet performances of traditional fairytales, and KIRIKOU AND THE WILD BEASTS, co-directed with Bénédicte Galup. AZUR & ASMAR (2006), his fourth feature, was another fairytale but this time hailing from the other side of the Mediterranean. It was selected for the Cannes Film Festival in 2006, where it screened in the Directors' Fortnight sidebar. In 2008, a DVD was released of all his short films, Michel Ocelot's hidden treasures from his life before Kirikou.

Using shadow puppetry and, for the first time, 3D, Michel Ocelot's feature TALES OF THE NIGHT was released in July 2011 and was the only French film selected to screen in competition at the 61st edition of the prestigious Berlin Film Festival. KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN is his sixth feature-length film.



FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTOR**FEATURES**

- 2012** KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN
- 2011** TALES OF THE NIGHT
- 2006** AZUR & ASMAR
- 2005** KIRIKOU AND THE WILD BEASTS
- 2000** PRINCES AND PRINCESSES
- 1998** KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS

SHORTS

- 2008** L'INVITÉ AUX NOCES
- 1987** LES 4 VŒUX DU VILAIN ET DE SA FEMME
- 1982** THE LEGEND OF THE POOR HUNCHBACK
- 1981** DAUGHTERS OF EQUALITY
- 1979** THE THREE INVENTORS

TELEVISION

- 2010** DRAGONS ET PRINCESSES
- 1992** LES CONTES DE LA NUIT
- 1989** CINÉ SI
- 1986** LA PRINCESSE INSENSIBLE

MUSIC VIDEOS

- 2007** EARTH INTRUDERS by Björk

LES ARMATEURS
DIDIER BRUNNER

After starting out as a director in the mid-1980s, Didier Brunner turned to production and created the Trans Europe Film company whose productions included DES CHATS, a series adapted from the work of the artist Steinlein; TELETOON, a series about animation; and in 1991, Michel Ocelot's LES CONTES DE LA NUIT.

In 1994, he founded Les Armateurs. The company found success in 1997 thanks to Sylvain Chomet's short movie, THE OLD LADY AND THE PIGEONS, and then Michel Ocelot's celebrated KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS, released in 1998 (1.5 million admissions in France to-date). They were followed by PRINCES AND PRINCESSES by Michel Ocelot (2000), THE BOY WHO WANTED TO BE A BEAR by Jannik Hastrup (2002), THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE by Sylvain Chomet (2003, Cannes Film Festival, official selection, out of competition), T'CHOUPI (2004), L'INVENTAIRE FANTÔME (2004), KIRIKOU AND THE WILD BEASTS (2005) directed by Michel Ocelot and Bénédicte Galup, VOS PAPIERS! (2006), THE SECRET OF KELLS (2008) which was nominated for the Oscars in 2010, KILL ME PLEASE (2009), and THE STORYTELLING SHOW! (2010).

After ERNEST & CELESTINE by Benjamin Renner (based on the books by Gabrielle Vincent with an original screenplay by Daniel Pennac), Didier Brunner is currently presenting KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN by Michel Ocelot.

MAC GUFF LIGNE
JACQUES BLED

Jacques Bled is one of the co-founders of Mac Guff Ligne, created in 1986, which specializes in 3D animation and digital visual effects for advertising and cinema, supported by a dedicated R&D department. Mac Guff Ligne has worked on movies including DRAGON HUNTERS, AZUR & ASMAR, IRREVERSIBLE, A PROPHET, WELCOME, SPLICE, KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN, and ASTERIX AND OBELIX: GOD SAVE BRITANNIA.

In August 2011, Jacques Bled became President of Illumination Mac Guff, a new company created by Universal Pictures. The Paris-based animation studio made DESPICABLE ME (2010), THE LORAX (2012) and is currently working on DESPICABLE ME 2, planned for release in July 2013.

Mac Guff is an independent company, controlled by its founders. Across its two sites in Paris, one on Rue de la Cavalerie and the other on Avenue de Wagram, the studio draws on a huge base of top-flight talent and supervises over 100 projects every year for advertising, TV and cinema.

Jacques Bled is a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters and recently took over the presidency of the Commission for Technical Industries at the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée (CNC).

THIBAUT AGYEMAN
COMPOSER

Thibault K. Agyemang was born in 1986 in Pithiviers, to a French antique dealer mother and a Ghanaian drummer father, an expert in High Life and Afrobeat rhythms in the tradition of Fela Kuti. From a young age, he was immersed in music. He began studying piano at the age of three, and demonstrated an exceptional musical talent. At the age of six, he started using computer programs for creating music. He began writing music at the age of 10. Being educated by correspondence allowed him to follow his father and his uncle to Amsterdam, where he appeared for the first time on stage aged 14 in a quintet. Upon his return to Paris, he dedicated himself to composition, influenced by classical, contemporary and African styles, and by artists including Claude Debussy, Danny Elfman, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald and Mark Isham.

After having composed music for several short films, for students at cinema schools like EICAR or ESRA, Thibault Agyeman recently embarked upon his professional career, creating the original soundtrack for KIRIKOU AND THE MEN AND WOMEN.

