

ENTRE CHIEN ET LOUP, SAMS FILM, ARCHIPEL 35, PALLAS FILM PRÉSENTENT

"JE NE ME DOUTAIS PAS
DE L'ÉTRANGE AVENTURE QUI M'ATTENDAIT..."

QUARTIER LOINTAIN

D'APRÈS LE MANGA CULTE
DE JIRÔ TANIGUCHI



ALICE
NELLA
CITTÀ 



INTERNATIONAL
ROME FILM FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 28 | NOVEMBER 5 2010

PASCAL GREGGORY JONATHAN ZACCAÏ
ALEXANDRA MARIA LARA LÉO LEGRAND

MUSIQUE ORIGINALE AIR

PRODUCTION ENTRE CHIEN ET LOUP, SAMS FILM, ARCHIPEL 35, PALLAS FILM PRÉSENTENT
UN FILM DE SAM GARBARSKI
SCÉNARIO ADAPTATION ET DIALOGUES
JÉRÔME TONNERRE SAM GARBARSKI PHILIPPE BLASBAND
D'APRÈS HARUKAHA MACHÛE DE JIRÔ TANIGUCHI
AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DE CANAL+ - ZDF/ARTE - TELECOM ITALIA TELEVISION - TELEVISION CANADA
MEMBERBOARD BEULIN BRANDENBURG - LA REGION WALLONNE - EL ASSOCIATION AVEC BANQUE POPULAIRE
MAGES 10 AVEC LE SOUTIEN DU PROGRAMME MEDIA DE LA COMMUNAUTE EUROPEENNE ET DE L'AUSTRALIA
DE LA PROCEP ET DE L'ANGLO-ARABIA - DU TAX SHELTER DU GOUVERNEMENT FEDERAL DE LA
DE L'ORFÈVRE TOUCHÉ DE CASA KAPPA PICTURES ET DE TAX SHELTER DE VENTES INTERNATIONALES MULTIMEDIA
UN CENTRE DU CINEMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA COMMUNAUTE FRANCAISE DE BELGIQUE ET DES TELEDISTRIBUTEURS WALLONS DE EUROIMAGES

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**ENTRE CHIEN ET LOUP, SAMSA FILM,
ARCHIPEL 35, PALLAS FILM**

PRESENT

PASCAL GREGGORY JONATHAN ZACCAÏ ALEXANDRA MARIA LARA LÉO LEGRAND

in

A DISTANT NEIGHBORHOOD

A film by SAM GARBARSKI

Screenplay by

JÉRÔME TONNERRE, SAM GARBARSKI, PHILIPPE BLASBAND

Adapted from "HARUKANA MACHI'E" by JIRÔ TANIGUCHI

© Jirô Taniguchi /Shogakukan Inc.

Published by Shogakukan, Inc. Tokyo.

French Edition "Quartier Lointain" published by Casterman

Original Music by AIR

2010 · FRANCE · RUNNING TIME 1H38 MINS · 35 MM · 1.85 · DOLBY SR-SRD · COLOUR

PLEASE NOTE: Photos and press kit can be downloaded from www.wildbunch.biz
French official website: www.quartierlointain.com

SYNOPSIS

Thomas, a father in his fifties, returns by chance to the town where he grew up. He collapses and wakes up forty years earlier in the body of his teenage self. Thrown back into his past, Thomas will not only have to re-live his first love, but also try to understand the reasons for his father's mysterious departure. Can you change the past by living it again?

CAST

<i>Thomas (as an adult)</i>	PASCAL GREGGORY
<i>Bruno</i>	JONATHAN ZACCAÏ
<i>Anna</i>	ALEXANDRA MARIA LARA
<i>Thomas (as a teenager)</i>	LÉO LEGRAND
<i>Sylvie</i>	LAURA MARTIN
<i>Corinne</i>	LAURA MOISSON
<i>Rousseau</i>	PIERRE-LOUIS BELLET
<i>Nelly</i>	TANIA GARBARSKI
<i>Rachel</i>	LAURENCE LIPSKI
<i>Godin (as a teenager)</i>	LOUIS BIANCHI
<i>Anna</i>	ALEXANDRA MARIA LARA
<i>Chabrot</i>	THÉO DARDENNE
<i>Jules</i>	AUGUSTIN LEPINAY
<i>Emma</i>	PAULINE CHAPPEY
<i>Alice</i>	JULIETTE LEMBROUK
<i>Supervisor</i>	JEAN-FRANÇOIS WOLFF
<i>Controller</i>	CHARLIE DUPONT
<i>Latin teacher</i>	JACQUES BERENBAUM
<i>Maths teacher</i>	ODILE MATHIEU
<i>Teenager at Comic Convention</i>	CLÉMENT CHEBLI
<i>Dr Dumontel</i>	PATRICK ZIMMERMANN

SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCES:

<i>Mémé Yvette</i>	EVELYNE DIDI
<i>Catherine</i>	SOPHIE DUEZ
<i>Godin (as an adult)</i>	LIONEL ABELANSKI

CREW

Directed by
SAM GARBARSKI

Screenplay
JÉRÔME TONNERRE, SAM GARBARSKI and PHILIPPE BLASBAND.
Adapted from "HARUKANA MACHI'E"
by **JIRÔ TANIGUCHI © JIRÔ TANIGUCHI / SHOGAKUKAN INC.**
Published by **SHOGAKUKAN, INC. TOKYO.**
French Edition **QUARTIER LOINTAIN** published by **CASTERMAN**

Original Music
AIR (JEAN-BENOÎT DUNCKEL and NICOLAS GODIN)

DP
JEANNE LAPOIRIE A.F.C.

Sound
CARLO THOSS

Production Designer
VÉRONIQUE SACREZ

Costume Designer
ANAÏS ROMAND

Hair and Make-up
KATJA REINERT

Editor
LUDO TROCH

Sound Editor
PIA DUMONT

Sound Designer
THOMAS DESJONQUERES

Mix
THOMAS GAUDER

Colour Grader
PETER BERNAERS

Production
BRIGITTE KERGER-SANTOS

Casting
NATHANIÈLE ESTHER

Thomas' drawings
FRANK PÉ

Producers
DIANA ELBAUM
DENIS FREYD
JANI THILTGES
THANASSIS KARATHANOS
KARL BAUMGARTNER
SÉBASTIEN DELLOYE

Production Companies
ENTRE CHIEN ET LOUP (Belgium)
ARCHIPEL 35 (France)
SAMSA FILM (Luxembourg)
PALLAS FILM (Germany)

In coproduction with
LES ATELIERS DE BAERE
RTBF (TÉLÉVISION BELGE)
RHÔNE-ALPES CINÉMA

In association with
WILD BUNCH

With the support of
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CENTRE DU CINÉMA ET DEL'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ FRANÇAISE DE BELGIQUE
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A conversation with JIRÔ TANIGUCHI and SAM GARBARSKI

Jirô Taniguchi, how did you get the idea for *A Distant Neighborhood*?

Jirô Taniguchi: It all started with a strange dream, in which I went back to my childhood and succeeded in declaring my feelings to the young girl I was in love with in college. I developed that idea: the possibility of returning to your childhood in your childhood body while keeping your adult mind. With, of course, all the consequences that implied but mostly one nagging question: if I went back in time would I be able to use what I know now to change the future?

Since it was published in 2002 your book has enjoyed enormous success in France and throughout Europe. How do you explain this widespread enthusiasm from a western audience?

J.T.: Frankly, I have no idea. I've asked myself this question many times but it remains a marvellous mystery. In Japan, *A Distant Neighborhood* was awarded a prize by the Ministry of Culture but has not enjoyed such public success. What's even more amazing to me is that it is set at the beginning of the sixties in a very Japanese context. I imagined my typical reader similar to Hiroshi, the main character: a middle-ranking executive in his forties like so many in Tokyo. The fact that Belgians, French or Italians can understand and appreciate a world so different to their own was both a great joy and a revelation.

Sam Garbarski, why did you want to adapt this story for the big screen?

Sam Garbarski: It is not my story yet it is very much my story! Even though *A Distant Neighborhood* is set in a world so remote from ours, this manga conveys universal values and feelings. Everyone can identify with Hiroshi's character, and let themselves be transported with him on his journey. All the more so as Taniguchi has succeeded in creating a strange, poetic climate. The formal aspect is crucial here: the production, the

perfect framing, the sets, all bring a true depth, and of course there is the "mâ", the suspended moment where everything is said without a word. The real challenge was not to transpose the story to France but to render the aesthetics as well as possible in the film. Decency, emotion and restraint were the key words I imposed upon myself in the telling of this story.

What did you have to change from the original story to adapt it to film?

S.G.: The danger was remaining a slave to the original work, being afraid of touching it. But a comic is not a storyboard. Even if the storytelling is perfect on paper it cannot simply be transposed to the screen. I made the story mine little by little by changing certain details but mostly by re-centring its dramatic impulse on the father's leaving. I intentionally inserted a few "madeleines": scenes that I'd lived myself, objects that I hold dear. There's my father's watch, his car, the kind of polo shirts he used to wear, the way he used to hold a glass... He's dead now but I love him so much it suffocates me sometimes. I dedicated this film to him. I would like the audience to leave the theatre uncertain whether the story has taken place or not. Has Thomas travelled in time or did he imagine it all? Without indulging in cheap psychobabble, you could see *A Distant Neighborhood* as analytical work to some degree, not with the couch but with a pen.

Jirô Taniguchi, what surprised you most in the screenplay?

J.T.: The fact that the main character became a mangaka. I was concerned that such a specific profession could create difficulties in the unfolding of the story. But after I saw the film I even forgot it wasn't in the original story! The young girl he's in love with is quite different as well. In the screenplay she's more assertive, wittier, not at all passive, and I have to admit that it works very well. The original manga is marked by the post-War context in Japan and I really love the fact that the screenplay has taken that into account and succeeded in transposing it to France.

What impressions have you kept from the film? What touched you most?

J.T.: The film has transcribed my work in a more aesthetic manner than in the original manga. The story unfolds with appropriate suspense, there's a real tension from beginning to end. The role of the soundtrack gave me a lot to think about. The original score by Air accentuated each character's feelings, adding a truly artistic dimension. I was stunned by the strength of the scenery. Nantua Lake and the foothills of the Alps were magnificent and play an important role. It's the kind of landscape that accentuates feelings and allows storytelling to unfold without too many words. The whole film is outstanding but one scene stands out for me: the reunion of father and son. There's also the poignant scene - not in my manga - where Thomas, wrapped up in a white sheet, throws himself into his mother's arms.

If like Thomas you could re-live the year you turned fourteen, what would you do?

J.T.: I think I'd gather the courage to approach that girl and finally declare my love for her (laughs). I think I'd also study more and improve my culture. I would still be a mangaka, but I'd allow myself more time before I entered the job market. I also realize that at that age there were a lot of things I would have liked to tell my parents but that was beyond my capabilities at the time. And in the end, it's fine this way! It could be the lesson of this story. It is by discovering that he cannot change the course of life that Hiroshi makes progress.

S.G.: I would probably not change anything; that's what gives the story its beauty. Or perhaps some small details, but I wouldn't touch the essence. Fourteen is when you become aware of many things, when they are felt differently because you're in the process of becoming an adult. In fact, I would like to re-live it all.

SAM GARBARSKI

Filmography

- 1998** LA DINDE (*short*)
- 2000** LA VIE, LA MORT, LE FOOT (*short*)
- 2001** MERRY CHRISTMAS, RACHID (*short*)
- 2003** THE RASHEVSKI TANGO
- 2007** IRINA PALM
- 2010** A DISTANT NEIGHBORHOOD

JIRÔ TANIGUCHI

Biography

Jirô Taniguchi was born August 14, 1947 in Tottori. He made his manga debut in 1971 with *A Dessicated Summer*. From 1976 to 1996, with scenarist Natsuo Sekikawa, he published *City Without Defence*, *The Wind of the West* and *Lindo 3*. The five volumes of *Bocchan no jidai* followed. From 1991, Jirô Taniguchi created a number of solo albums, including *The Walking Man*, *The Almanac of my Father* and *A Distant Neighborhood*. In 2004, *Keyaki no Ki*, a collection of novels adapted from the works of Ryuchiro Utsumi, appeared, and was followed in 2006 by *The Ice Wanderer*.

Jirô Taniguchi is the recipient of numerous major awards worldwide.

Selected Bibliography (works translated into English)

A DISTANT NEIGHBORHOOD

ICARO PART 1 BOOK 1 (with MOEBIUS)

SAMURAI LEGEND

SKYHAWK

SUMMIT OF THE GODS

THE ICE WANDERER

THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

THE TIMES OF BOTCHAN

THE WALKING MAN

ZOO IN WINTER

PHILIPPE BLASBAND (Co-writer)

I bought *A Distant Neighborhood* the day it was published in Belgium, and as soon as I finished reading it I immediately thought of Sam. Even though it was set in Japan in the sixties I knew this was a story for him: the era and most of all the emotions were very close to those he experienced. In fact I remembered an old photograph I saw at his house, taken when he was a teenager: he's surrounded by a bunch of friends, they're all looking at the camera, he's looking at a girl who is blushing... In my screenplays I always try to strike an autobiographical chord.

Why locate the film in France? Because it would have been simply impossible in Belgium! First of all it's set in the sixties and at that time - every sound archive proves it - the Belgian accent as spoken by the average Belgian, or even by a university professor, was really very strong, so not easy to export! Our landscapes do not allow for mountains to use as background whereas Nantua is completely surrounded by peaks, you can never see the horizon there and that creates a very particular atmosphere. There is also the fact that Belgium is so small, it's impossible to find yourself stuck somewhere like Thomas - you can always call a cab!

Because Taniguchi uses film techniques a lot I thought that *A Distant Neighborhood* would be easy to adapt, a little like a Simenon novel. I was wrong! Causality is different in comics, there are a lot of conventions, ellipses between panels that the reader accepts but that cannot be conveyed on the big screen. It took us three years of work before we were able to find the right screenplay. And the support of Jérôme Tonnerre to get through it.

JÉRÔME TONNERRE (Co-writer)

Sam and Philippe were confronted with a real puzzle. In the manga, the return to the past takes place over a few years. Then, in the middle of the narrative, the hero realizes that he has come back the same year his father mysteriously disappeared. That's fine in a comic strip but completely out of the question in a film! It's not a twist, it's a 180 degree turn, another story. I suggested that Thomas should remember from the start the event that is going to mark his whole life. It seemed more plausible to me. As soon as he's back in his past he is haunted by this thought; his character becomes more introverted, more contemplative. By the same token we didn't dwell on his life in college: our ambition was not to Americanize the Japanese manga in a bad remake of *Back to the Future* or *Peggy Sue Got Married*. We also fleshed out the character of the father. In the original story he's a somewhat uncouth man, who disappears almost without any explanation. He had to become more complex, more human. In Japan, *A Distant Neighborhood* was pre-published as a serial. Each chapter is a complete story in its own right. The great difficulty was to give unity to the whole project, to stay faithful to these small miracles of freshness and simplicity while discreetly weaving an invisible thread.

CAST - Selected Filmographies

PASCAL GREGGORY

- 2005** GABRIELLE - Patrice Chéreau
2006 THE PAGE TURNER - Denis Dercourt
PARDONNEZ-MOI - Maiwenn
2007 LA VIE EN ROSE - Olivier Dahan
LA FRANCE - Serge Bozon
2009 REBECCA H - Lodge Kerrigan
THIS NIGHT - Werner Schroeter
THE ACTRESS' BALL - Maiwenn
CLARA - Helma Sanders-Brahms
THE ORDINARY PEOPLE - Mathias Gokalp
2010 LE MARIAGE À TROIS - Jacques Doillon
SWEET EVIL - Olivier Coussemacq
A DISTANT NEIGHBORHOOD
- Sam Garbarski

JONATHAN ZACCAÏ

- 2005** THE BEAT THAT MY HEART SKIPPED
- Jacques Audiard
ENTRE SES MAINS - Anne Fontaine
2006 TOI ET MOI - Julie Lopes-Curval
2007 ILL WIND - Stéphane Allagnon
ROOM OF DEATH - Alfred Lot
2008 LES YEUX BANDÉS - Thomas Lilti
2009 PRIVATE LESSONS - Joachim Lafosse
SIMON KONIANSKI - Micha Wald
2010 WHITE SNOW - Christophe Blanc
ROBIN HOOD - Ridley Scott
L'ÂGE DE RAISON - Yann Samuell
A DISTANT NEIGHBORHOOD
- Sam Garbarski
SI TU MEURS, JE TE TUE - Hiner Salem

ALEXANDRA MARIA LARA

- 2005** DOWNFALL - Oliver Hirschbiegel
2007 CONTROL - Anton Corbijn
YOUTH WITHOUT YOUTH
- Francis Ford Coppola
2008 THE BAADER MEINHOF COMPLEX
- Uli Edel
2009 THE READER - Stephen Daldry
FAREWELL - Christian Carion
2010 A DISTANT NEIGHBORHOOD
- Sam Garbarski

LÉO LEGRAND

- 2007** JACQUOU LE CROQUANT
- Laurent Boutonnat
2008 LES YEUX BANDÉS - Thomas Lilti
LES ENFANTS DE TIMPELBACH
- Nicolas Bary
2010 A DISTANT NEIGHBORHOOD
- Sam Garbarski

AROUND A *DISTANT NEIGHBORHOOD*

FRÉDÉRIC BOILET (comic strip writer and designer, author of the French adaptation of *A Distant Neighborhood* manga)

I knew *A Distant Neighborhood* since its pre-publication in Japan from the "Big Comic" magazine in 1998. I found the magnificent story universal, and thought it could touch a wider audience than just manga fans. To me a true translation is a creation. It is the unique opportunity to try to go beyond the original work, to enrich and to complete it. Whenever we could, Kaoru Sekizumi, the translator, and I never hesitated: that is what differentiates our work from a more classical approach. I was able to make *A Distant Neighborhood* mine because Taniguchi and I are friends, we are familiar with - and fond of - each other's work. I did all the touching up of his drawings myself on computer. I submitted each panel to him personally and he validated them. I knew that if my adaptation was going to be successful, you shouldn't notice it. Lines, story, drawings, all had to be as natural as if they had been conceived in French, in the west. This meant a mountain of work. More than one and a half years for both volumes! I think I can safely say that I spent as much time adapting *A Distant Neighborhood* as Taniguchi took to draw it. Perhaps even more!

JIRÔ TANIGUCHI AND CINEMA

Cinema

Japanese comics are highly influenced by cinematic language. I am myself an avid consumer of DVDs, I rent a huge number every week, and they nourish me. I watch many different genres but the last films to have transported me are now five or six years old: *The Lives of Others* by German director Florian Henckle von Donnersmarck and more importantly *The Return* by Russian director Andreï Zvyagintsev. It is somehow the reverse of *A Distant Neighborhood*: the story of two brothers destabilised by the return of their father - this man, long-disappeared, of whom they knew only one photograph. The Great Northern scenery and the tangible discomfort between the father and his sons have something magical about them.

Ozu

A direct influence. I saw his films when I was a child, without appreciating their full impact. I became really interested in them in my thirties. Today I tend to mix them all up, with the exception of *Tokyo Story*, which belongs in my personal pantheon. One day my publisher suggested that I drew a manga like a stroll as you'd see it in an Ozu film. I tried and realized it worked well. I told myself I had something, a tone I hadn't suspected I possessed. That's how *The Walking Man* was born, and I started writing stories about everyday life. That said, Ozu's style, his very particular way with fixed shots, cannot be transcribed into manga. Comics can't be static, they require close ups, movement. I was more influenced by his world, the timeless atmosphere of his films, his way of playing with silences. Ozu knew how to capture the "mâ", those suspended instants where nothing happens but where everything makes sense. It's a way of directing I have never forgotten, I think of it each time I draw.

Manga versus cinema

When it comes to realism you can't beat cinema. The sheer presence of the actors is hard to equal in a manga. I would call this "real rhythm". It is this realism that allows the audience to identify with the characters.

And of course there's the music, an extraordinary means of expressing the characters' feelings with more intensity and complexity. When I draw a manga I always have the sound dimension in my mind. I try to set up sounds, even music, to be able to induce feelings in my readers... but it can't have the same impact. They are two completely different arts. Their only common grounds are the production. The creation is a collective one for both, achieved in teams and with challenging deadlines.

A manga with a film for subject ?

I've been thinking about it for some time. I would like to tell the story of the creation of a film. My main character would be the director and through his story we would witness the birth of the screenplay, we would have access to the questions he asks himself, his doubts, his problems with the producer... in fact, all the stages before the shoot itself. I would like to draw it in a realistic style. So far I haven't found a publisher willing to embark on the project. It would be a difficult subject for a manga.

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