



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
CANNES PREMIÈRE
SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE 2021

DENIS **PODALYDÈS**

LÉA **SEYDOUX**

ANOUK **GRINBERG** EMMANUELLE **DEVOS** REBECCA **MARDER**

DECEPTION

FROM THE NOVEL BY PHILIP **ROTH**

A FILM BY
ARNAUD **DESPLECHIN**

WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS PRESENT



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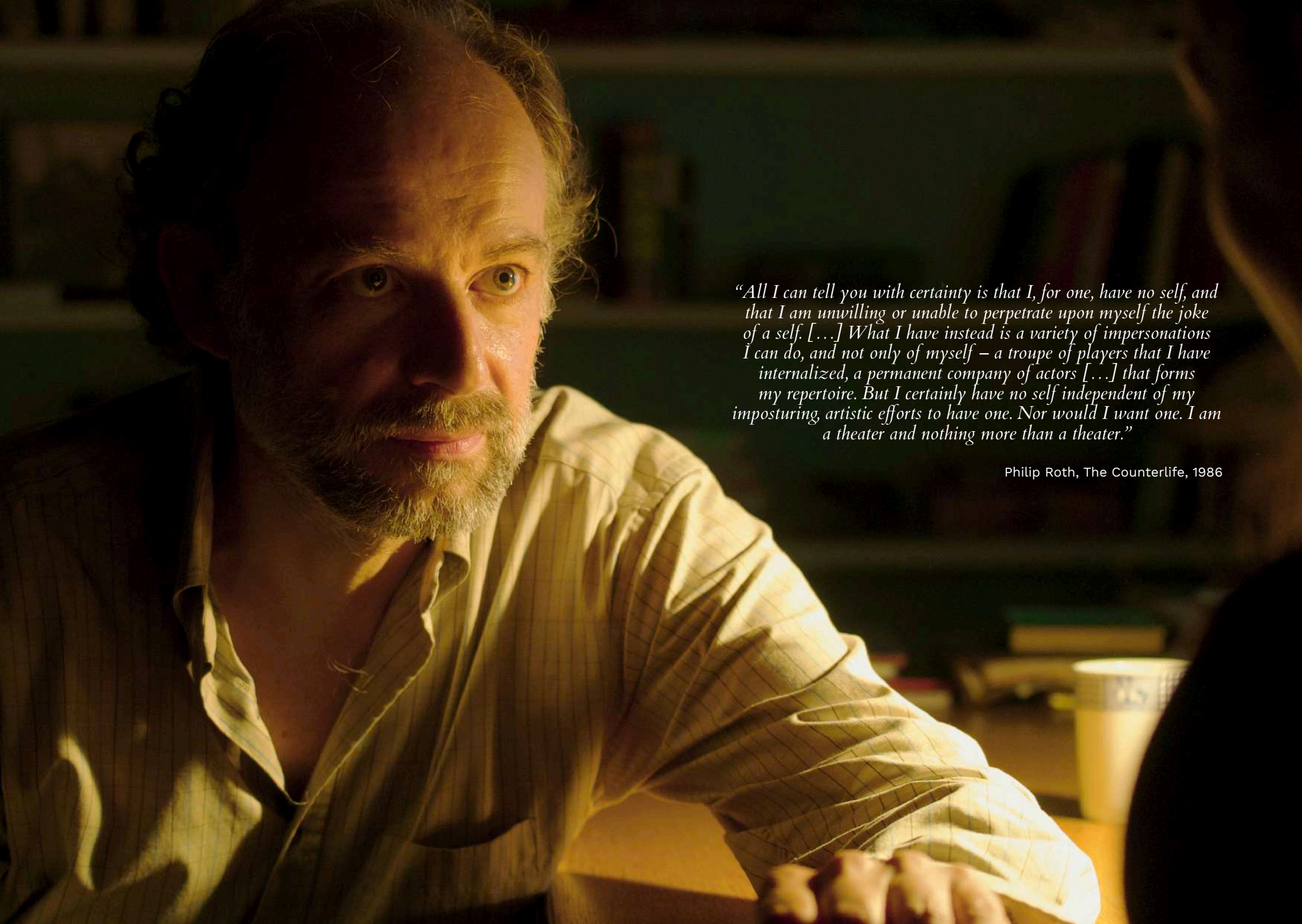
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"All I can tell you with certainty is that I, for one, have no self, and that I am unwilling or unable to perpetrate upon myself the joke of a self. [...] What I have instead is a variety of impersonations I can do, and not only of myself – a troupe of players that I have internalized, a permanent company of actors [...] that forms my repertoire. But I certainly have no self independent of my imposturing, artistic efforts to have one. Nor would I want one. I am a theater and nothing more than a theater."

Philip Roth, *The Counterlife*, 1986



SYNOPSIS

London — 1987.

Philip is a famous American writer living in exile in London. His mistress comes regularly to see him in his office, a refuge for the two lovers. They make love here, they argue, they reconcile and talk for hours — about the women who mark out his life, about sex, antisemitism, literature, and remaining true to oneself...

Interview with
ARNAUD DESPLECHIN

Behind its images, Deception seems to register a profession of faith in the powers of fiction in general and those of cinema in particular...

This film is, in fact, is a profession of faith. I believe in the weaving that is possible between art and life. I believe that art is worthless if doesn't contain raw life, and that life is worthless if there is no art in it to show us the relief. I also believe in the play of the writer who disappears behind his masks. As a spectator I have always had a conflictual relationship with "realist" cinema and everything that locks people into a social straitjacket. *Deception* is a concentrate of this position. In this idyll that is the writer's office, all the characters can claim their freedom: they refuse to be locked in a box. They choose freedom.

The writer's office encourages listening and free speech, like that of a psychoanalyst...

The office lies the heart of the film. There was a difficulty: how to stage Roth's fragments of dialogue without boring the spectator? How to ensure that this text, which seems circular, becomes a novel, ignites, and that each word finds its weight? It required staging and the effort it took delighted me. As the young Czech exile says, none of the characters in *Deception* are in their place. Neither the Czech exiles, nor the English lover trapped in a grim marriage, nor Rosalie in her hospital...The only one who has found his place is the writer, in his office, when he writes or listens... But this place has its price: loneliness and a certain austerity. *Deception* tells the story of people who feel out of place; this man listens to them and transcribes their words.

Your film is set in the 1980s, in England, and shot in French. It starts in a theatre, then moves to natural settings in different countries. As if by its very mechanism we are invited to cross borders...

The text is a eulogy to exile. In it I found again my fascination for Eastern Europe. I grew up in a Europe divided in two, and I don't want to forget it. We all live in very different and separate worlds. But sometimes we can run away and move from one world to another! Today's world is still divided into a two, into thousand – men and women, rich and poor, Jews and non-Jews, dictatorships and the liberal world...The writer's office is the utopia of psychoanalysis: to be able to capture oneself wherever one lives. Philip chose this exile. He praises it, while the other characters, who are either in exile from their homeland or in exile from themselves, experience it painfully. I love this idea that it's fun to dissemble. Because to be able to talk to each other, we must dissemble. What's enchanting and erotic is that the speech is built on a joyfully irreducible difference. And what's interesting is the movement we make between the two worlds, the one where we live and the one we aspire to.

Women are queens in Deception. Without them, no desire or creation...

What I love about this story is that the author effaces himself before his heroine. This too is a profession of faith. I once had the vague desire to create the CLF, or Characters' Liberation Front, to extoll those films where the characters take charge – in disorder: *Marnie*, *Manhattan*, all of Tarantino's films. Suddenly, a character knows something about himself! What struck me when I discovered Philip Roth's novel was the writer's acute attention to the voice of each woman. An attention that would be neglected by a lesser writer. Where others would have asked for the woman to demonstrate her excellence, Philip welcomes his lover's every word as a treasure. An unfaithful husband, money problems, a lump on her cervix... This modest attention to the intimate, to the faintest wound, moved me profoundly.

Philip Roth's novel has been following you for thirty years. Do you know why you are finally adapting it today?

I first read *Deception* in French, then in English. I remember giving it as a gift to my female collaborators when we were preparing *My Sex Life...or How I Got Into An Argument*. Much later I used this text in a DVD bonus of *Kings & Queen*, where I acted the final scene with Emmanuelle Devos. Philip Roth saw the bonus and called me one evening. I was petrified to hear the great man himself! I told him how it seemed impossible to me to make a cinematic adaptation of *Deception*. Roth was smiling on the phone and kept repeating: “*But you only have to do what you did in the bonus!*” It’s taken me decades to figure out what Roth had seen. I made several attempts but was never happy with the result. I thought of adapting it as a play for Denis Podalydès and failed yet again! During lockdown, something in me unlocked. I was shut away in my office just like Philip’s character. I was very happy to work in this way, and the characters’ yearning for freedom took on a completely different resonance.

How did you work with Julie Peyr to structure and break down this text which looks like a continuous flow, and finds here a very musical form?

Julie and I reorganised the whole story. A very simple example: in the novel, it isn’t clear when the writer and the lover separate... So we worked to structure the narrative in such a way that these vagaries of the heart could be told and turned into a plot. The chapters of the film appeared during the editing. It comes from the way I have of working on the script with very specific shots: when I met Yorick Le Saux, the DP, I told him we were going to tell the story of the love affair over a period of a year, from autumn to summer. And the more we move towards the break-up, the closer we get to the sun. This is what quite naturally became the writing on the cards that structure the story.

The emotional weather of the film sometimes varies within a single sequence. We feel that Yorick Le Saux and you must have had fun finding staging tricks, privileging close-ups...

The film is also an elegy to Cinema, from the beginning in the Bouffes du Nord Theatre to the London hotel. Yorick and I took a childlike pleasure in inventing something each day. I am amazed by his work. For example, the shot following an elegiac moment where we see Léa

putting her clothes back on and the whole room becomes dark around her, and she tells Denis “*I feel an urgent need for solitude*”. She has just spent a wonderful afternoon with her lover, grief overwhelms her and it’s heartbreaking. This film was great fun to stage. There were all these moments we turned into a show. We had to take care of the sets, the costumes, the light and of course the acting to ensure that each moment became an enchanted moment – a collection of epiphanies. As for the close-ups, when the face becomes a screen, that really moves me. I won’t pretend not to love Bergman, some of whose shots I’ll never forget. That’s what cinema is for to me. When the face fills the whole screen, skin becomes celluloid capturing feelings, words, light. Léa Seydoux’s skin, just like that of Emmanuelle Devos – each playing a lover of Philip’s years apart – is a screen on which the plot is projected. It’s miraculous and can’t be explained. Léa has the gift of being able to allow tears rise slowly in her eyes just like a toddler, and it’s a blessing.

Your actors also seem possessed of a childlike joy: they play, serious and jubilant, in the present as children know how to.

Deception owes a great deal to Léa Seydoux’s wholehearted commitment to her character, with whom she speaks about herself. She conjugated her role in the present tense and pulled Denis and the whole team towards this state of pure presence. Her presence in the moment was unpredictable, she inhabited each second in which she was. The only character deprived of this childlike play is that of the wife, played by Anouk Grinberg. During her argument with Philip her grief also came from the fact that she wasn’t allowed to have her share of childhood. Philip doesn’t listen to her childhood, and she protests like a wounded little girl. I wanted to film actors in America, England, Czechoslovakia, without it becoming abstract. These characters play, but they live, also, and they suffer... I wouldn’t have been able to film them in a studio that was too cold. So we filmed everything on location. The characters are playing, but with all their soul and bodies. I didn’t want to make a “brain film”, but a “flesh film”.

Isn’t this film also a love song to actors?

Again, it’s a profession of faith. I think back to Jean Douchet, who said that there were a lot of tools used to direct a film, but that the most precious was the direction of actors. For each film, I wanted to disappear, so we only see them. With each one I have experienced this miraculous moment where you can no longer tell who is directing and who is acting...



For several of them, it's a reunion: Léa Seydoux, Emmanuelle Devos, Denis Podalydès, Miglen Mirtchev...

Usually, I don't have specific actors in mind when I write, so as not to limit my characters. I want them bigger than life. Here, for the first time, I wrote the film for Léa Seydoux. She accompanied us throughout the writing. I'd had Denis Podalydès in mind since the aborted theatre adaptation. As for Emmanuelle Devos, I couldn't imagine making the film without her. When I offered her the part of Rosalie, she replied absolutely elegantly: *"I almost had to wait"*. Then after reading the script she told me: *"I love Rosalie, she's the only one to whom something happens, since she's about to die."* From there we were set to go to the ends of the world. And on set, after each scene, I'd turn around and see that the whole crew was deeply moved. What Emmanuelle does is not only heartrending, it's funny as well! When I met Anouk Grinberg, whose work in the theatre and on television I followed, I had the odd feeling of finally meeting her again. I had missed her so much. With Miglen Mirtchev who played a nurse in *Kings and Queen*, it was a reunion. Madalina Constantin, who is Romanian and who studied at the National Dramatic Art Conservatoire in Paris, learned Czech for the film. She is terrific. Saadia Bentaïeb had blown me away in *120 BPM* and on stage for his work with Joël Pommerat. Rebecca Marder was a find. The day she came to do some tests with Denis Podalydès, with whom she had worked at the Comédie Française, there were serious sparks flying between the two of them, it made me want to film them.

We've rarely seen Denis Podalydès in such a sexual role...

I find, having seen him so much in the theatre, that Denis is a huge man, boundless. I believe in his excess. Philip had to be crazy, erotic, dangerous and all this of course scared Denis. But from the first day of filming, he was ready. I'm full of admiration for Denis' books. He is a writer – he is not Jewish, but what defines Philip is his books. There was a proximity between the part and Denis' life that attracted me. Because he is that writer, that reader, and this actor, Denis is a

wonderful listener. When he listens, he fades, and he reappears! It is the miracle of the actor. I only asked him to be as cutting as Philip can be. Looking at photos of Roth, I had the idea of adding dark bushy eyebrows, which intensifies his gaze. That's the only trick we allowed ourselves. Thus, each morning Denis disguised himself discreetly... as an American genius.

How did you work with your actors?

I didn't want to work with Léa and Denis together before we started shooting. They read a few scenes together and that's it. I read all the scenes with Léa, then with Denis, but separately. Julie Peyr and I respected each word of the novel. But Denis pointed out to me that in the bonus recorded in the past with Emmanuelle Devos, I "floated" in the text. This verb I kept, and asked each one to say the text in their own way, to feel free in order to let it vibrate. On set, Léa always managed to surprise us, Denis and me. With each scene she was telling another side of her character. Denis followed her as a writer follows his character, never walking ahead. Each day of shooting I told him a funny little story. And among others, an unforgettable moment I experienced with the Jewish American writer and philosopher Stanley Cavell. As I was smoking, he observed me insistently, he who had quit. Then he confessed to me that he was nostalgic for the period during which he smoked, and regretted having quit. *"Why?"* I asked him. *"Because it's the only time in my life I have done something Christian: I quit smoking for my wife and my son, not for myself."* This sentence exerted an absolutely magnificent and scandalous power over me. He, a genius of the Talmud, an attentive, tender and caring man, was telling me that a good Jew acted for himself, and not for others! I relish each day this scandalous sentence, which was for me a major education. The sharpest and most singular ethic requires that one acts, always with love for others, but for oneself first. And Denis was able to use this scandal in his incarnation of Philip.

The sequence of the trial is a jubilant moment where the film takes on very topical emphasis...

Philip Roth's text was published in 1990. It talks about a world before the fall of the Wall and yet speaks in the present tense. Julie Peyr and I had worked on the script when the #Metoo movement had fortunately already changed our lives. So, Roth's character Philip, is he feminist or is he not? Misogynist? Surely a little, when the film says an opposing. These are paradoxes that Philip Roth embraces. In this scene he wrote his own trial. And when we watch it, it seems to have been written today. I told Saadia Bentaïeb, who plays the prosecutor, that she was right, but that Philip wasn't wrong either. She advocates for women in general, while Philip is interested in each woman in particular. Everyone stands in an opposing political perspective. This sequence needed to be burlesque! We shot in a real courthouse, which we slightly Americanised. The lawyer Frédérique Giffard, for whom I have immense admiration, plays the judge. I was adamant she should be in the film, because she is the author of texts that marked me. Denis was surrounded by women only, and in front of him, this immense actress that is Saadia Bentaïeb. The card that introduces the scene, reads *The Trial*. And here we are, pure Kafka, Roth's master! His portrait hangs on the wall of the office by the desk.

How did you work on the music with Grégoire Hetzel?

I always start the editing with a collection of recordings of music that accompanied me throughout the writing. This gives a direction to Grégoire Hetzel, it is an inspiration but also a straitjacket he must get rid of. In this case, for the first time, I came to Grégoire with a montage of music he had already composed. This time, he was the reference! The soundtrack of *Deception* is therefore a kind of encounter with what we had created together since *Kings and Queen*.

Deception is probably your most serene and tender film...

Probably because it is a utopia. Like all utopias, in a sense, it fails, because the American writer and his lover finally break up. But they find each other again later and recognize that they were glorious. Thus utopia eventually triumphs: this man and this woman have managed to talk to each other and listen to each other in an infinitely free way. They have *known* each other. *Deception* is the portrait of two heroes. A woman who is on the edge of the precipice at the beginning of the film, a woman in tears. Léa played throughout the whole film like a tightrope walker. And she talks to an older man who, like me, thinks only about his death to come. Yet together they manage to create outbursts of joy. Of course, we are mortal, and that is terrifying. But our mortality offers us an infinite gift: desire. *Deception* is a film haunted by death and yet this is a utopia shot through with desire.



Interview with **LÉA SEYDOUX**

The softness of your voice in Deception is striking, almost hypnotic, from the opening scene where you are facing the camera. Was it a given from the start?

I have had few such a talkative roles in my career, moreover with such demanding text. Here the words had to be expressed incisively and quickly. We surely all have several voices according to different periods and situations in life. My voice in *Oh Mercy!* was clearly different from the one I have in *Deception*. In this film it is closer to mine in life.

You all seem to have an erotic relationship with the text in this film...

This comes from Arnaud, who has a very close relationship with literature. I think that words, language, literature are essentially erotic. I am convinced that creation in general has a close relationship with eros. It's a libidinal transformation. And this is the case in *Deception*. Throughout his films Arnaud narrates feelings supported by the text.

It is also a sensual film, as close as possible to faces and bodies. Did you feel enveloped by the camera and the light?

I wasn't exactly aware of the work the camera was doing while I was acting, but I loved working with the DP, Yorick Le Saux, who brought so much energy. There was such a special energy on this shoot. When you work with Arnaud, you want to espouse his cause. The actors he directs are thrilled on set. At his side, we feel transcended. He manages, with great youthfulness, to infuse a childlike excitement on set. His enthusiasm is contagious. He has fire in him and manages to communicate it to you. It's as if he was handing us the torch. Then it's up to us to seize it and make it blaze. Under his gaze we want to give the best. Arnaud inspires me enormously. In addition, he has the gift of choosing subjects that fascinate me.

Can you say more?

I like the way he talks about feelings. I especially like his viewpoint, his subjectivity. At his side, I feel I'm learning as much about cinema as about life, one not being distinct from the other. Thanks to him I

have understood that one thing always goes with its opposite. That is why he doesn't blame his characters, even those whose behaviour is reprehensible. He is always looking for their humanity. This was at the very heart of *Oh Mercy!* And it's also the case in *Deception*. We can discuss the fact that adultery is immoral, but Arnaud films the love between my character and Philip. He always manages to make humanity triumph. His films never moralize; feelings always prevail, which gives dignity to the characters. I think that's wonderful.

What was your feeling when you read Arnaud Desplechin and Julie Peyr's screenplay?

I had the feeling of understanding the film immediately. And it was the same thing on set: when Arnaud gave me directions, I knew instantly what he wanted, it was evident... Sometimes it only takes one sentence in a screenplay for you to understand the whole film, a sentence around which the film revolves. In this case, it's the final sentence, when my character says to Philip: "*Because it was so tender... unless I was mistaken.*" He tells her no, she wasn't mistaken. The whole film is in these two sentences, there's no misunderstanding, tenderness did exist between the two of them. This sentence is related to the beginning of the film, where she asks him if he feels the same way she does. There are often misunderstandings in love. Here, both of them agree at the end: they did understand each other. By the end of the script, I was in tears! And I was in the same state when I played that scene. Our world cruelly lacks tenderness. Yet tenderness has to do with giving, with generosity. It's overwhelming. And there are many such scenes in the film.

Were you familiar with Philip Roth's world before shooting this adaptation?

I discovered it thanks to Arnaud. Roth is both vulgar and poetic. It seems to me that paradox runs through his oeuvre. This is probably why he is so fascinating to so many.

Did you work differently with Arnaud Desplechin on this film than on the one before?

I was almost more intimidated on *Deception* than on *Oh Mercy!* It seems to me that it was the opposite for Arnaud. I thought he was more confident on this one.

We perceive you as a tightrope walker in this film, constantly between two states, often overwhelmed by emotion...

I played this woman as if she was on the edge of a precipice and that's how I felt on set. I was very shy during this shoot. I was so exposed... My character offers herself: this woman is in love. You feel very vulnerable when you're in love. Because you want to be loved in return, you expect something. So I felt very fragile. My smiles are a way of masking my distress and emotion. Playing a lover is daunting.

What did you tell yourself about your character, who has no first name? Did you secretly give her a name?

In the screenplay she's referred to as "The Lover". It's as if the characters were conscious of being characters... Because apart from Philip and Rosalie, no one is named in the story. Philip is like a sun around which everyone orbits. My character is neglected by her husband. We sense a great loneliness in her. She is a woman who doesn't work, she's financially dependent on her husband and therefore not free. "*Without income you don't have dignity*," she says. This sentence summarizes her situation, her state. I see her as an imprisoned woman. Her lover is her escape.

Did her sophisticated look, her meticulous outfits, her stylish hair help you find the core of her character?

I blended with this character quite naturally. I could dress like her in life. I wear some of my clothes in the film and bought some of the costumes after the shoot! The costume designer, Jürgen Doering, who has worked for Saint-Laurent, has beautiful taste. I loved wearing the clothes in the film, I felt very at ease in them. They are both chic and comfortable.

What kind of acting partner is Denis Podalydès?

He is firstly a man with whom I absolutely love to have conversations in between takes. We got on very well. He is as inspiring as Arnaud can be, and like him knows how to open up new perspectives. He's also attentive, caring, strong. He is a theatre actor, his feet on the ground, he's earthy. This was precious to me, as I was playing a febrile character.

Did Arnaud Desplechin direct you together?

He gave each of us different indications. Arnaud is great actor's director, the greatest perhaps. Being directed by him is an immense pleasure. He is as intelligent as he is sensitive.

Denis Podalydès says he had the feeling that you were always one step ahead of him...

Is it because I never know what I'm going to do before the camera starts rolling? It can be destabilizing for my partners. I can go through peaks and abysses, which no one is aware of but me. I feel like a wild animal, one that hasn't allowed itself to be tamed and which, emotionally speaking, has no reference point. Like many actors, I have a lot of instinct, but I'm also scared, even if I often feel comfortable on a set... although sometimes not. So I too am one thing and its opposite!

Were you inspired by the sets, the 80s accessories?

The sets are sensual and vibrant. I liked their "French charm", while the action is set in England. Arnaud embodies French elegance!

Did this experience trigger some inner change in you?

I feel as if this was my first role as a woman and that I am in synch with my age, with my own life. I wouldn't have been able to play this part five years ago. My experience in life nourished me for this film.



Interview with
DENIS PODALYDÈS

What draws attention, from the first moment you appear is the brilliance of your smile and your gaze, radiating desire...

Arnaud, as we know, is a master at directing actors. He has the gift of inviting you into his world and, in this case, into that of Philip Roth. I find that, moreover, their worlds converge in this film, to the point that we feel that the initial text was written by Arnaud. Thus, when he brings you into his world, you are diverted from yourself and made different. His way of shooting too, both fast and light, makes us a little unaware of what we're doing. This does not prevent us from being in a lucid relationship with him and our partners. Arnaud and Léa took me to areas little known to me. The question of desire is central to Roth's work as much as to Arnaud's. There's something very improper about Roth, and I really like that acting can go to the point of inappropriateness with Arnaud; he seeks to awaken actors, to put them in a state of desire and a certain moral subversion. Everything was written down, and yet we were confined in a state of pleasure specific to improvisation. It is a particular physical pleasure connected to the sensation of creating and experiencing a situation once and once only. On this shoot we felt great freedom of expression, in harmony with our own bodies. It's a very rare sensation, especially in such a defined setting, with such a rigorous text. A feeling of pure present, of great intensity.

Did the sets, so "embodied", like your character's office, help you get into a state of desire?

Probably, yes. We spent so much time there. This office is like a psychoanalyst's office. We were in a vacuum, in a state of great attentiveness to each other. No doubt the lockdown, the world outside, helped us. The set was a haven of peace. That is where we started shooting, and where the film had its laboratory. I loved this set so much that I bought some of the furniture for my office in my country house. Arnaud knows that my first dream was to be a writer. I have always revered writing, especially the place where the writer works. I played with each element of this set, and it sparked a deep attachment to my role.

What do you like about Philip Roth's world? And what are the common points with Arnaud's in your view?

Like many readers, I first loved the sexual realism, which simultaneously made me laugh and moved me. I love his love stories, his everpresent humour. Often his dialogues, even the most banal, possess an incredible intensity. I love autobiographical writing, the idea that he "incriminating himself" himself in his novels, as he said himself. I loved playing the scene with Anouk Grinberg where he talks about this compromise. It is an admission that is beautiful to play. When a writer is a sociologist as well as a poet, it's fantastic. There is in him a merciless perception of life and a great humanity at the same time. On a par with Flaubert. Arnaud, too, is compromising himself, I think. His cinema is made of this writing of the self. With him too characters defy our expectations. His films contain living at high intensity, as does Roth's work.

What did he tell you about your character before filming?

Two things: Philip is not kind, and Philip is terse. These two things went against my nature. First consequence: I had to follow a little regime, allowing myself to be perceived as more desirable. Like you, when I saw the film, I found myself physically different.

Philip is a very attentive writer, both a listener and thirsty for the story of the women around him. How do you perceive this "verbal fetishist"?

The eroticism in the film lies in the use and after listening of words. Philip transcribes the fruit of this listening. He speaks only according to what he has heard, and according to what he seeks to awaken in the words of the other. This office, this chamber of language, houses this eroticism of words. Which isn't to say that Philip privileges the spirit over the flesh. Not at all. Words and the body are the same thing to him. His lover no doubt comes looking for his non-judgemental listening, which offers her the tangible feeling of freedom. Philip doesn't manipulate her. They both bring as much to one another. There were times when I felt that my whole being was converging towards this aspiration towards freedom, lightness, a non-binary vision of society, of man and woman. As if this film placed us in a pure sharing of desire, with added lucidity, because it happens with words, without the weight of the unsaid things or a too-skilfully maintained equivocation.

As if some form of alchemy between all the elements of the film had taken place?

There was in fact something like alchemy. It required a lot of work. And great acuity, especially on the part of Arnaud, his DP, Yorick Le Saux, and of all the crew, who I felt attentive to the slightest word. There was such generosity of listening on this set that we felt carried aloft, and opened ourselves like ripe fruit. Like desiring bodies. There was a sort of sexuality in that, but also something childlike, something light.

Philip is an American Jew exiled in London. How did you integrate this identity trait – knowing that Roth himself was anti-identity and that you play in French?

During filming I was reading Roth's *Good-bye, Columbus*, and this question of Jewishness intrigued me. This dimension is quite exotic for me. How does the fact that Philip Roth is a Jewish author affect my acting? Roth himself exists totally outside this identity box. The fact that he is a Jewish American writer living in London doesn't define him. With Roth everything invites you to avoid societal traps and cultural appropriation. The intimate relationship between Roth's and Arnaud's work is such that the fact that we acted in French worked very well. Also, the fact that the film begins on a stage, in this idyll that is the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, makes everything possible. Universalism nourishes the work of Roth, who is himself nourished by great authors like Kafka. So the question of America is an almost playful fact. As in the theatre, the show can work, while we perform a foreign play. In the theatre we are always in exile from everything since we are in an imaginary place. And for my part, the further the character is from me, the more I like to identify myself with him. I could play Mandela!

How did you find the right note for your character, at the "crossroads" of multiple tones?

Arnaud was keen on these variations in atmosphere. He wanted this shoot to be fun. Besides, he was on dazzling form, as happy as a lark, eager, touching in his cinematic yearning. And this cheerfulness was contagious. I have the feeling that everything was done easily, while requiring extreme concentration; I came home exhausted each evening. I loved all the sets. There was childlike pleasure to think that we were in a hospital in New York or a park in London. A thumbing of the nose at realism. This film breaks all boundaries. It puts itself in exile and enjoys the pleasures of the imagination. There is something insolent and light which encourages us to ignore a lot of a great deal of prejudice.

How did you work on your character's voice?

I didn't, but Arnaud was very conscious of my voice. He brought me to a greater softness. I am aware of theatre actor's tendencies in my work—the articulation and bass voice— and was vigilant. You have to watch out for that. It's very subtle, and the risk is a loss of simplicity. Arnaud helped me find rhythm in the dialogues, which inevitably affected my voice.

How would you describe the energy of your character, his inner rhythm?

Arnaud and I questioned each sentence of the text. We tried multiple variations, with the constant principle of letting ourselves be carried by the take we were shooting. We always kept the freedom to move away from what had been discussed. The take could carry us somewhere else. Léa Seydoux was in such a state of cheerfulness and ease that it gave me confidence. It also allowed me to free myself, which was Arnaud's answer to my question of why he didn't give the part to Mathieu: he told me that I was Philip, and Mathieu was, to him, Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's fictional alter ego. We also talked a lot about Michel Piccoli and his style of acting. To think about him also helped to free a space in me. Piccoli had a wonderful way of being with his partners, a grace and an absolute freedom, which allowed him to play even physical love with maximum intensity while remaining strictly in the acting and not straying into any grey areas. With Léa, we entered real intimacy in the acting with a total dramaturgic clarity.

You have the gift of allowing the focus to be drawn to your partners...

That's also related to a specific request from Arnaud. When a woman was speaking, like Madalina Constantin, Emmanuelle Devos, Anouk Grinberg or Rebecca Marder, my attention had to be constant, real, I had to be in a state of absolute receptivity. These actresses moved me deeply. I was stunned by how sublime they all were, by their generosity, their grace and beauty. Léa Seydoux is one of the freest actresses there is. She is free of prejudice. She crosses borders. She is sensitive and has total intellectual liberty. There is something supremely elegant in her that touches me profoundly. I felt as she was a step ahead of me and the result was quite sensational. I let myself be led. She managed to surprise me at each take. Sometimes she was bold, intuitive and did something other than what Arnaud had asked. I could tell he was ecstatic at this state of unpredictability. What was it, other than an invitation to break through ramparts? Rebecca Marder amazed me with the actress she has become. She is a revelation. Emmanuelle Devos

– with whom I have worked several times – and I enjoy an immediate complicity. We shot a scene sitting side by side in a hospital corridor. We were like an old couple and that created a particular emotion. It was as if I met her again even in her sleep. I was intimidated by Anouk Grinberg. She's a very great actress. The scene is very long, she had such a harrowing look, she looked so distraught. I felt like a perfectly despicable husband before her. At other times she would put me in a state of rage. She gave herself completely... With each actress every moment was singular, a film within a film. It was quite simply a tremendous human experience with each of them.

In Deception, everything seems to be in constant motion, instability hovers, emotions keep changing. The film seems penetrated with great energy.

Arnaud is always concerned about that. The great risk when you film a writer in his office is to be static, to pontificate. Our abiding concern was how to make life burst out. We were wary of literary phrases, "an authors' words". Arnaud ensured that emotional currents flowed. He was jubilant whenever he found a new approach to film Philip's office. He constantly had the pleasure of the viewer in mind... the sensuality. And we actors were launched into great playground slides, happy to let ourselves glide along!

The trial sequence is a real fireworks display!

First of all, having Saadia Bentaïeb as a partner was very stimulating. She is a marvellous actress. The judge, played by the lawyer Frédérique Giffard, and all these women facing me, and Arnaud pushing me to play as if I were on stage... I loved shooting that scene. Absolute inpropriety, total buffoonery! This was pure acting pleasure; there is something liberating in farce. Arnaud asked the extras to perform, to laugh in the audience, we were all spectators of each other.

In certain sequences, the camera is so close to the actors' faces that they seem to overflow the screen. Did you feel that during shooting?

This was the blessing of the harmony between Yorick and Arnaud. Normally I don't like close-ups. I feel I can express myself better with the camera at a distance. Because I had a playful rapport with Yorick, I had fun. In fact it was a revelation. Some shots surprised me because of their length. I was off centre regarding what I'm used to, my tastes and my disinclinations. It was very stimulating.

This is the fourth time you've worked with Arnaud Desplechin. The first was twenty five years ago in My Sex Life or....How I Got into an Argument...

Arnaud was part of my training as an actor. He is one of the first directors who made demands of me. Rightly or wrongly, I had the feeling I didn't fully meet his expectations at the time and made a big deal out of it to myself. I've always admired him and waited for a long time to work with him again. I had recorded the voice of the narrator for *Esther Kahn* in its French version. It was fascinating work, and I consider the film to be a masterpiece about the theatrical vocation. Then, another miraculous moment was the TV film *The Forest*, adapted from Alexandre Ostrovski's work, that Arnaud directed with the Comédie Française troupe. When he called me in the middle of lockdown to offer me the role of Philip, as I was feeling anxious because of the creative drought, it was a gift that provoked absolute joy. Never has a proposal awakened so much the actor-child in me, the actor hunger in me. It was like going back to the source.



ARNAUD DESPLECHIN,
Director

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2021** DECEPTION
2019 OH MERCY!
2017 ISMAEL'S GHOSTS
2015 MY GOLDEN DAYS
César Award Best Director
Jacques Prévert Award Best Screenplay
Best Director Prix Lumière Award
2014 LA FORÊT (TV film Arte)
2012 JIMMY P.
2008 A CHRISTMAS TALE
César Award Best Supporting Actor - Jean-Paul Roussillon
2007 THE BELOVED
Golden Lion Award Best Documentary, Venice
2004 KINGS AND QUEEN
César Award Best Actor Mathieu Amalric, Winner Prix Louis Delluc
2003 PLAYING 'IN THE COMPANY OF MEN'
2000 ESTHER KAHN
1996 MY SEX LIFE... OR HOW I GOT INTO AN ARGUMENT
César Award Most Promising Actor - Mathieu Amalric
1992 THE SENTINEL
César Award Most Promising Actor - Emmanuel Salinger
1991 LA VIE DES MORTS (short)
Jean Vigo Award Angers Film Festival

DENIS PODALYDÈS

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2021** LA GRANDE MAGIE by Noémie LVOVSKY
DECEPTION by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
FRENCH TECH by Bruno PODALYDES
BLOOD ORANGES by Jean-Christophe MEURISSE
LES AMOURS D'ANAÏS by Charline BOURGEOIS-TACQUET
2020 DELETE HISTORY by Gustave KERVERN and Benoît DELEPINE
2019 LA BELLE EPOQUE by Nicolas BEDOS
2018 SORRY ANGEL by Christophe HONORE
2017 SCRIBE by Thomas KRUTHOF
MONSIEUR ET MADAME ADELMAN by Nicolas BEDOS and Doria TILLIER
TOMORROW AND THEREAFTER by Noémie LVOVSKY
GREAT MINDS by Olivier AYACHE-VIDAL
2016 CHOCOLAT by Roschdy ZEM
THEY ARE EVERYWHERE by Yvan ATTAL
THE SWEET ESCAPE BY Bruno PODALYDES
DU VENT DANS MES MOLLETS de Carine TARDIEU
2013 LOVE IS THE PERFECT CRIME by Arnaud and Jean-Marie LARRIEU
2012 IN A RUSH by Louis-Do de LENCQUESAING
CAMILLE REWINDS by Noémie LVOVSKY
THE DANDELIONS by Carine TARDIEU
YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET by Alain RESNAIS
2011 THE CONQUEST by Xavier DURRINGER
OMAR KILLED ME by Roschdy ZEM
2006 A YEAR IN MY LIFE by Daniel DUVAL
2005 LE PARFUM DE LA DAME EN NOIR by Bruno PODALYDES
2003 THE MYSTERY OF THE YELLOW ROOM by Bruno PODALYDES
2002 SAFE CONDUCT by Bertrand TAVERNIER
SUMMER THINGS by Michel BLANC
2001 THE OFFICERS' WARD by François DUPEYRON
1996 MY SEX LIFE...OR HOW I GOT INTO AN ARGUMENT by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
1992 VERSAILLES RIVE-GAUCHE BY Bruno PODALYDES



LÉA SEYDOUX

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2021** DECEPTION by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
NO TIME TO DIE by Cary JOJI FUKUNAGA
ON A HALF CLEAR MORNING by Bruno DUMONT
THE STORY OF MY WIFE by Ildikó ENYEDI
THE FRENCH DISPATCH by Wes ANDERSON
2019 OH MERCY! by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
2016 IT'S ONLY THE END OF THE WORD by Xavier DOLAN
2015 SPECTRE by Sam MENDES
DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID by Benoît JACQUOT
2014 BEAUTY AND THE BEAST by Christophe GANS
SAINT LAURENT by Bertrand BONELLO
THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL by Wes ANDERSON
2013 GRAND CENTRAL by Rebecca ZLOTOWSKI
BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOUR by Abdellatif KECHICHE
2012 SISTER by Ursula MEIER
2011 MIDNIGHT IN PARIS by Woody ALLEN
MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – GHOST PROTOCOL by Brad BIRD
MY WIFE'S ROMANCE by Djmashed USMANOV
2010 DEAR PRUDENCE by Rebecca ZLOTOWSKI
LITTLE TAYLOR by Louis GARREL
2009 LOURDES by Jessica HAUSNER
INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS by Quentin TARANTINO
GOING SOUTH by Sébastien LIFSHITZ
2008 THE BEAUTIFUL PERSON by Christophe HONORE
2007 13TH FRENCH STREET by Jean-Pierre MOCKY

EMMANUELLE DEVOS

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2021** DECEPTION by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
I WANT TO TALK ABOUT DURAS by Claire SIMON
HEAR ME OUT by Pascal ELBE
2019 PERFUMES by Grégory MAGNE
MY DAYS OF GLORY by Antoine DE BARY
2018 AMIN by Philippe FAUCON
2017 NUMBER ONE by Tonie MARSHALL
2016 SWEET DREAMS by Marco BELLOCCHIO
MOKA by Frédéric MERMOUD
2014 IF YOU DON'T, I WILL by Sophie FILLIERES
2013 VIOLETTE by Martin PROVOST
DOMESTIC LIFE by Isabelle CZAJKA
JUST A SIGH by Jérôme BONNELL
2011 THE MOON CHILD by Delphine GLEIZE
BACHELOR DAYS ARE OVER by Katia LEWKOWICZ
2010 ACCOMPLICES by Frédéric MERMOUD
2009 WILD GRASS by Alain RESNAIS
IN THE BEGINNING by Xavier GIANNOLLI
2008 A CHRISTMAS TALE by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
2007 THOSE WHO REMAIN by Anne LE NY
WAITING FOR SOMEONE by Jérôme BONNELL
2005 THE BEAT THAT MY HEART SKIPPED by Jacques AUDIARD
2004 GILLES' WIFE by Frédéric FONTEYNE
KINGS AND QUEEN by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
2003 SMALL CUTS by Pascal BONITZER
2002 THE ADVERSARY by Nicole GARCIA
2001 READ MY LIPS by Jacques AUDIARD
1996 MY SEX LIFE... OR HOW I GOT INTO AN ARGUMENT
by Arnaud DESPLECHIN

ANOUK GRINBERG

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2021** DECEPTION by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
2020 L'AUTRE by Charlotte DAUPHIN
2017 MONEY by GELA BABLUANI
2011 JOSEPH L'INSOUMIS by Caroline GLORION
2010 CAMUS by Laurent JAOUÏ (for TV)
2006 LE PROCÈS DE BOBIGNY by François LUCIANI (TV)
FRAGMENTS OF ANTONIN by Gabriel LE BOMIN
2004 UNE VIE À T'ATTENDRE by Thierry KLIFA
2003 UNE PREUVE D'AMOUR by Bernard STORA (TV)
2002 LES PETITES COULEURS by Patricia PLATTNER
1998 DISPARUS by Gilles BOURDOS
1996 MON HOMME by Bertrand BLIER
A SELF-MADE HERO by Jacques AUDIARD
1995 JULES ET JIM by Jeanne LABRUNE (TV)
1993 1, 2, 3, FREEZ by Bertrand BLIER
1992 LE TEMPS ET LA CHAMBRE by Patrice CHÉREAU (TV)
1991 AOÛT by Henri HERRÉ
MERCI LA VIE by Bertrand BLIER
I CAN NO LONGER HEAR THE GUITAR by Philippe GARREL
1990 LA FILLE DU MAGICIEN by Claudine BORIES
LES MATINS CHAGRINS de Jean-Pierre GALLEPE
1989 WINTER'S CHILD by Olivier ASSAYAS
1977 MON CŒUR EST ROUGE by Michèle ROSIER

REBECCA MARDER

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2021** DECEPTION by Arnaud DESPLECHIN
SIMONE, LE VOYAGE DU SIÈCLE by Olivier DAHAN
UNE JEUNE FILLE QUI VA BIEN by Sandrine KIBERLAIN
2020 SPRING BLOSSOM by Suzanne LINDON
MAMA WEED by Jean-Paul SALOMÉ
IRRADIES by Rithy PANH
2019 SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE by Cédric KLAPISCH
ESCAPE FROM RAQQA by Emmanuel HAMON
2018 A MAN IN A HURRY by Hervé MIMRAN
2012 EMMA by Alain TASMA (TV)
2010 THE ROUND-UP by Rose BOSCH
2007 KID POWER by Éric CIVANYAN
2001 THIS IS MY BODY by Rodolphe MARCONI



CAST

Philip, The American Writer	Denis PODALYDÈS
The English Lover	Léa SEYDOUX
The Wife	Anouk GRINBERG
Rosalie	Emmanuelle DEVOS
The Student	Rebecca MARDER
The Czech Woman	Madalina CONSTANTIN
Ivan	Miglen MIRTCEV
Prosecutor	Saadia BENTAIEB
Philip's Father	André OUMANSKY



CREW

Directed by	Arnaud DESPLECHIN
Screenplay	Arnaud DESPLECHIN Julie PEYR Adapted from the novel DECEPTION by Philip ROTH French translation by Maurice RAMBAUD © Editions Gallimard, 1994
DP	Yorick LE SAUX
Editor	Laurence BRIAUD
Original Music	Grégoire HETZEL
Production Designer	Toma BAQUENI
Costume Designer	Jürgen DOERING
Casting	Alexandre NAZARIAN
Sound	Daniel SOBRINO Sylvain MALBRANT Emmanuel CROSET
First Assistant Director	Gabrièle ROUX
Script	Marion DEHAENE
Line Producer	Martine CASSINELLI
Production Manager	Laziz BELKAÏ
Post-production Supervisor	Béatrice MAUDUIT
Production	Why Not Productions
With the participation of	Canal+ Ciné+
With the support of	la Région Île-de-France la Sacem
French Distribution	Le Pacte
International Sales	Wild Bunch International

