

**the story of
Richard O.**

D.O. Films
presents

the story of Richard O.

a film by **damien odoul**

with
mathieu amalric

ludmila ruoso
stéphane terperaud
tiara compte
rhizlaine el cohen

caroline demangel
alexandra sollogoub
mai anh le
valérie bert

www.richard-o.com
www.bacfilms.com
www.damienodoul.com

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SYNOPSIS

In the sultry summer month of August, Richard O. encounters a series of seductive women in Paris and willingly descends into the tortuous mysteries of eroticism.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film has three colours. Of course, the central theme of the film is sex, but sex intertwined with the burlesque and with poetry. There are scenes that simply show sex, but there are also sex scenes told in a poetic or burlesque fashion. Everything comes from these three words - sex, poetry and burlesque. They are the foundation upon which everything in the film is built, the nexus through which everything moves. It was vital that at least one of these colours was in every scene. At all times, the most important thing was ensuring that the film was deeply subversive without being empty provocation. Sex can reveal itself as very corporeal, sexual, loving, even as an evocation. But one must always be sure to show its fullest range. For me, this is what it means to explore desire.

Richard, the central character, invites us to take part in what seems to me to be an absolutely necessary "ritual", something that I had to show to the audience. And what the film reveals runs contrary to the values that society imposes on us today, because society never tells us that sex can be poetic or burlesque. And I affirm that it can be. I wanted to make this movie in order to find answers to questions that I ask myself. What interested me in these vivacious characters was that inside they had an exaggerated view of life, and this is how I wanted to portray everything that is living and in movement. Instead of settling for one of the themes in the film, I embraced all of them, mixing them together and subdividing them through the storytelling. This seems to me the reflection of a generation's point of view.

damien odoul (summer 2006)

INTERVIEW WITH DAMIEN ODOUL AND MATHIEU AMALRIC

Bernard Payen: *How did the idea for this film come about?*

D.O.: We met in early 2002, when Pierre-Louis Bonnetblanc, the actor in *LE SOUFFLE*, was awarded the Michel Simon prize. Mathieu made some very touching remarks to me regarding my film. Then we met again at the Venice Film Festival and at the Cinéma-thèque, during the screening of *MORASSEIX* in 2004. And each time we met, we talked.

M.A.: We wanted to make a film together...

D.O.: The spark that ignited the film happened on July 1st, 2006, around 2pm. I'd been sitting on the sidewalk for half an hour, watching garbage float by in the gutter, when I realized that it had been three years since I'd made a film. I knew that I had an upcoming project with Sylvie Pialat, but not for another two years... I worked out that meant five years without shooting - impossible! I got up, called Mathieu and asked him if he would be willing to follow me in the adventure of making of a film that we would just shoot, 'on the run'.

M.A.: When Damien called, I'd just decided to devote the month of August to writing a new film. My life as an actor had become more and more consuming, and I hadn't directed anything in 4 and a half years. But when Damien told me that his film would take no longer than three days, I thought it would be fine. Then we met to discuss it and he told me that the shoot would last two weeks! Clearly I wouldn't be doing any writing in August!

D.O.: All things considered, what's funny is that you told me it was the experience of this 'skin of our teeth' shoot that actually motivated you to do your next film. In *RICHARD O.*, Mathieu's character is largely based on me. When I wrote the screenplay in July, I knew that I wanted to make a film centered on a character played by Mathieu, to use my 'acteur fétiche', Stéphane Terpereau, again, and to create a number of important female roles. Of the 14 women I met during the casting, I chose 13!

The theme of doubles is always present in your work, Damien. Here, it seems to play out through the strange bond between Richard and Richard's friend Le Grand, or in the relationship of trust established with Mathieu.

M.A.: I remember one shot where I'm being filmed from behind, walking with a bicycle at St. Sulpice. Watching the film, I thought: I really look like Damien in that scene. It's strange!

D.O.: We worked together like the two hands of a single body... With an animal understanding as well as an intellectual connection.

M.A.: With Damien, it really felt as if we had to make this movie right away, and that it corresponded to something in our lives and our relationships with women. Today, it would already be impossible for us to make the film the same way.

Rarely does the filming of bodies go this far, to that meeting point between sex and the burlesque...

D.O.: Everyone who sees the film will discover that Mathieu does indeed have a body!

M.A.: When I saw the film, I realized that there was a real discrepancy between the movement of the body and my character's impassive face. For the first time, my elastic face, so used to grimacing in the majority of my films, remained set in stone... I don't think I'll ever speak again!

D.O.: I really wanted to age you, with a beard, greased hair... to get rid of your juvenile side.

M.A.: Every time we were about to shoot, you would touch my shoulders. You'd make me get a grip; we'd do balancing exercises. It was intensely physical. And then, of course, there was the character, based on the idea of expressing everything that men of my generation no longer dare express. Our animal response when confronted by women...

D.O.: You can't classify this character. We don't know what he does for a living or what he really represents. This social ambiguity was very important for me.

The film allows the actors to improvise somewhat...

D.O.: Even if everything was worked out and structured beforehand.

M.A.: I told you on the phone that I didn't know how to improvise... You wrote a lot and when I saw the film, the editing knocked me out. It's a remarkably dense movie on that front. You could have made a "crazier" film by incorporating more extreme scenes that you shot but ended up not keeping.

D.O.: Well, I needed to shoot them as well...

M.A.: It could have been a real catalogue of sexual practices, but you didn't need that. I really like the film's melancholy... the result of a radical change from the narrative we shot, which I discovered when I saw the film for the first time...

The fact that the character dies...

D.O.: I didn't want anyone to tell Mathieu, I wanted it to be a surprise. The first cut was really bad. It took me three days to find a solution, thinking all the while that Richard's character, in essence, had died beneath his mistress's fists. It's strange because when we shot that scene, I intuitively asked Mathieu to stop breathing. I hadn't planned it, it wasn't in the script, and I don't really know what prompted me to ask him. Certainly, there are no coincidences.

M.A.: I like the way that, in the film's new structure, feelings of love seem to break free to inhabit some other body. The character of Richard's friend Le Grand experiences a kind of physical transmission of love when he sees what Richard had to go through... It's very strange. The story of these two characters is overwhelming, the moments where they tell each other intimate things about their lives, sitting beside a tree or on the sofa with a glass of wine.

D.O.: There's this notion that Le Grand protects Richard. It comes across in the emotive, burlesque scenes, when, for instance, one shelters beneath the other's jacket when the storm starts. And if you decide that one of the characters must die, then you need the idea of a new beginning. Le Grand discovers love. Before, he was an asexual being, and also a guide.

M.A.: It's a bit like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza...

D.O.: I think this kind of "Don Quixotism" is already very present in my short film LES BARBOTS and in EN ATTENDANT LE DÉLUGE (AFTER WE'RE GONE)...

The two characters act a bit like communicating vessels....

M.A.: Thanks to the quality of the writing and editing! This discipline was very present as soon as we started shooting.

You are always looking for what will work best, in the rhythm in the rhythm of a shot, and in the framing... Damien, how did you decide between what female characters to use during the editing?

D.O.: In the end, there were only two or three women who were removed from the final cut... But they are more or less all there.

M.A.: ***You also took out a few of the more extreme scenes...***

D.O.: I should say that I worked for four years on an adaptation of Bataille's "Story of the Eye" which was never

shot. Finally, to quote Jean Labadie, the film's distributor, I was able to film my "Story of the Eye". I did in fact take out a scene that was a direct reference to Simone in that book, where she urinates. It was clear to me that we had to shoot this scene and Mathieu didn't feel uncomfortable filming it. But during the editing, I felt that the scene had lost its place in the world of the film.

M.A.: At the beginning, I thought the film would address female fantasy, that I would be like a puppet, dragged through a series of feminine fantasies, one after another. Obviously, Fellini's CITY OF WOMEN, where man is the sexual object of women, came to mind. And I thought that would be fun! Now, I see that the film is something else entirely, which is fascinating! Damien had the instinct to shoot several versions of each encounter, from every possible angle...

Could you be more specific?

M.A.: He would make us do different things in a single scene so that the film would have greater narrative possibilities. To all of a sudden say "I'm tired of prostitutes!" when we hadn't planned that for the film allowed us to direct the arc of the character in different ways. There were also long monologues that were never included, that he didn't need. As a result, Richard speaks very little, but when he does, it counts! I think back to the scene where my character is looking for some music with his girlfriend in bed. We didn't know if something was going to happen or not and Damien whispered the words to us at the last second, something that he often did during the shoot...

D.O.: All through the afternoon that we were shooting this sequence, I gave him false information, told him that things wouldn't work out with the woman at the end of the scene when he had assumed the contrary... He was always caught between two stools! I kept him constantly destabilized, and sometimes even "cheated" him, whether he was aware of it or not. We shared an unspoken bond of trust.

Watching the film, we get the feeling of urgency and a real love of filmmaking, as well as a kind of innocence...

D.O.: We were very 'easy'... All six of us saw each other every day, we got around with two scooters and an old truck. It felt like I was making my first film, with no money, but with a little more experience and discipline. This is my fifth feature, and I hope I'll carry on in the same fashion!

M.A.: It's extraordinarily well filmed, it's really impressive. There are so many beautiful shots! And always with this incredible attention to detail, like the condom on the sheets, something that allows the spectator to understand that two lovers who have found freedom have also found one another...

And then you look for moments of pure, brutal truth, if possible in a single image. Your shots are as beautiful and powerful as some of Nan Goldin's work... A level of beauty for images that are usually excluded from the category of "beautiful"...

Mathieu, you are terribly prolific, and yet we have the impression that we are rediscovering your talent when we watch this film.

M.A.: The audience will discover who I am in the same way that certain women have. It's very unsettling. I know who I am in similar situations but they remain very precious and specific moments in my private life.

Damien, I felt that you filmed Paris or love scenes as if it was the first time that these classic subjects had ever been filmed. There is this notion of "washing the spectator's eyes clean".

D.O.: I feel like I've barely started filming... The same feeling that's behind the line in the film when one of the characters says to his companion: "I'd like to be in your shoes to know what a moment feels like". I imagine all filmmakers feel this at some point in their careers. In any case, the filmmakers I love. Mizoguchi, for example, said exactly that: that you have to wash the spectator's eyes clean.

During the love scenes, there were only three of us... Mathieu had just met the woman who was going to play his partner that same morning. It had to be that way. It all played out in the span of two hours. I knew that he couldn't meet her three hours before and that I couldn't leave them alone for too long.

Otherwise, to answer your question, I think that filmmaking is still very «green» and that maybe it's time to do things in a different way and with more "joy". I think I am profoundly hedonist. What saves me is a certain melancholy that inhibits me from diving into extreme action... Melancholy and an insatiable appetite for life that becomes a form of resistance.

Excerpts from an interview conducted by Bernard Payen on April 8th 2007

FILMOGRAPHY DAMIEN ODOUL

FEATURE FILMS

2006

L'HISTOIRE DE RICHARD O. / THE STORY OF RICHARD O.
With Mathieu Amalric, Ludmila Ruoso and Stéphane Terperaud

2003

EN ATTENDANT LE DELUGE / AFTER WE'RE GONE
With Pierre Richard, Anna Mouglalis and Damien Odoul
Cannes - Directors' Fortnight - 2004

2002

ERRANCE
With Benoît Magimel, Laetitia Casta and Yann Goven
Toronto, Stockholm, 2003 - Dublin, 2004

2000

LE SOUFFLE
Grand Jury Prize and Fipresci Prize, Venice, 2001
Best Director Prize, Bratislava, 2001
Toronto, Montreal, New York, Thessaloniki, Moscow,
Hong Kong South Korea, 2001
Vienna, Saragossa, Brasilia, Stockholm,
Midnight Sun Film Festival, 2002
Michel Simon Prize (Best Actor), 2002

1992

MORASSEIX
With Damien Odoul, Valérie Allain and Dora Doll
Venice Days, Edinburgh, Tübingen, 2004

SHORT FILMS

1995 / 2003

LES BARBOTS

2002

LE JOUG
Cannes festival 2002
RÉMINISCENCES

2000

SANS MONDE
MAGIK

1995

ELEGEIA (Chant de deuil)

1991/1994

TOB (Tête d'Oeuf Bouilli)

1990

A L'OUEST DE L'ORIENT
Special Jury Prize, Clermond-Ferrand, 1991

1988

LA DOUCE

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY MATHIEU AMALRIC

AS ACTOR

2007

UN CONTE DE NOËL (A CHRISTMAS STORY) Arnaud Desplechin

2006

L'HISTOIRE DE RICHARD O. / THE STORY OF RICHARD O. Damien Odoul
LE SCAPHANDRE ET LE PAPILLON / THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY Julian Schnabel
ACTRICE / ACTRESSES Valéria Bruni Tedeschi
LA QUESTION HUMAINE Nicolas Klotz

2005

LE GRAND APPARTEMENT Pascal Thomas
MICHOU D'AUBER Thomas Gilou
MUNICH Steven Spielberg
QUAND J'ÉTAIS CHANTEUR Xavier Giannoli
MARIE ANTOINETTE Sofia Coppola
J'AI VU TUER BEN BARKA / I SAW BEN BARKA GET KILLED Serge Le Peron

2004

LA MOUSTACHE Emmanuel Carrère

2003

AU LARGE Fr-Christophe Marzal
ROIS ET REINE / KINGS & QUEEN Arnaud Desplechin
Cesar 2005, Best Actor
Lumière Award 2005, Best Actor
Critics Award 2005, Best Actor

2002

UN HOMME, UN VRAI Arnaud and J-Marie Larrieu
MES ENFANTS NE SONT PAS COMME LES AUTRES D. Dercourt

2001

C'EST LE BOUQUET ! / SPECIAL DELIVERY Jeanne Labrune
LES NAUFRAGES DE LA D17 / SHIPWRECKED ON ROUTE D 17 Luc Moullet

2000

AMOUR D'ENFANCE Yves Caumon
LA BRÈCHE DE ROLAND / ROLAND'S PASS Arnaud and J-Marie Larrieu

1999

MARCORELLE N'EST PAS COUPABLE / THE MARCORELLE AFFAIR Serge Le Peron

1998

LA FAUSSE SUIVANTE / FALSE SERVANT Benoit Jacquot
TROIS PONTS SUR LA RIVIÈRE Jean-Claude Biette
FIN AOÛT, DÉBUT SEPTEMBRE / LATE AUGUST, EARLY SEPTEMBER Olivier Assayas

1997

ALICE ET MARTIN / ALICE AND MARTIN André Techiné
ON A TRÈS PEU D'AMIS Sylvain Monod

1996

GÉNÉALOGIES D'UN CRIME / GENEALOGIES OF A CRIME Raoul Ruiz

1995

LE JOURNAL D'UN SÉDUCTEUR / DIARY OF A SEDUCER Danièle Dubroux

1994

COMMENT JE ME SUIS DISPUTÉ... (MA VIE SEXUELLE) / MY SEX LIFE...
A. Desplechin
Cesar 1996, Most promising Actor

1993

LETTRE POUR L... / LETTER FOR L... Romain Goupil

1991

LA SENTINELLE / THE SENTINEL Arnaud Desplechin

1984

LES FAVORIS DE LA LUNE / FAVOURITES OF THE MOON Otar Iosseliani

BIOGRAPHY BUCK 65

Richard Terfry, better known as Buck 65, is a Canadian hip hop artist, born in 1972 and raised in Mount Uniacke, Nova Scotia, a rural community outside Halifax. Despite recent moves towards exploring blues, country, rock, folk and avant-garde genres, his music retains a fundamental hip hop foundation.

Terfry's musical influences range from MC Shan to David Lynch, taking in Vincent Gallo, Gitche Manitou, JVC Force and Kool Keith along the way. Fascinated by hip hop, Richard taught himself to rap, DJ, and, later, to produce. As DJ Critical, he hosted hip-hop show "The Bassment" on Radio CKDU for several years, at the same time beginning to release his own recordings.

In 1993, he released "Chin Music", his first hip hop album (on cassette), under the alias Stinkin' Rich, on the local No Records label. The release caught the attention of Halifax alternative rock band Sloan, who signed him to their independent label Murdereords, and released the album "Game Tight".

After a short break, Terfry reappeared as Buck 65, with several releases, among them "Wildlife Trilogy" and "Vertex", which featured his first hit, "The Centaur." Varied commissions for Canada's entertainment industry soon followed, including soundtracks, TV commercials and even a track for evergreen children's programme "Sesame Street".

A real turning point in his career came with the release of the "Man Overboard" album. The record marked the beginning of Terfry's involvement with the anticon. collective, recognized as the heralds of a new underground hip hop. At this time, he also met Cincinnati DJ Mr. Dibbs, who inducted him into the 1200 Hobos, a hip-hop collective named (and famed) for their proficiency in manipulating the Technics 1200 turntable.

He has since released albums on Warner Music Canada and V2 USA. Music from his album "Secret House Against the World" is used in the Canadian show, "Trailer Park Boys".

MUSIC

BUCK 65

Dirty work / Death of me / Days on end / Heather nights
Album Dirty work (c) Buck 65 - 2006

The suffering machine / Drunk without drinking / Le 65 isme / The floor
Album Secret house against the world (c) Warner Music Canada - 2005

Additional Music

"Pathétique Sonata" (Op. 13 in C minor) - Ludwig Van Beethoven
Performed by Christine Genereau
"La java de la postière" - Patrick Levy

CAST

Richard O. Mathieu Amalric
Richard's friend Stéphane Terperaud

With Ludmila Ruoso
 Tiara Comte
 Mai Anh Le
 Rhizlaine El Cohen
 Alexandra Sollogoub
 Caroline Demangel
 Valérie Bert
 Élise Receveur
 Marianne Costa
 Lucie Borleteau
 Anissa Feriani

CREW

Written and directed Damien Odoul
 DP Patrick Ghiringhelli
 Camera assistant Sylvain Rodriguez
 Sound Frédéric Dabo
Camera operator, Production designer, Wardrobe Damien Odoul
 Assistant director Myrtille Saint-Martin
 Editor Sophie Delecourt
 Grading Carine Suquet, Jean-Marc Gréjois
 Sound editor Nicolas Moreau
 Mix Vincent Arnardi
 Foley Bruno Langiano
 Original music Buck 65
 Insurance SGAC Bellan
 Lab GTC
 Studio Cinéphase
International sales Wild Bunch
 Press Francois Hassan Guerrar, Julie Tardit

NOTES

