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**WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS  
DREAM FACTORY  
LES FILMS DU LENDEMAIN  
ARTE FRANCE CINEMA  
PRESENT**

# LOVE AND BRUISES

花

**Directed by  
LOU YE**

**Starring  
TAHAR RAHIM CORINNE YAM**

**With the participation of  
JALIL LESPERT VINCENT ROTTIERS**

2010 · FRANCE/CHINA · 105 MIN · 1.85 · COLOUR

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## **SYNOPSIS**

*Hua, a young teacher from Beijing, is a recent arrival in Paris.*

*Exiled in an unknown city, she wanders between her tiny apartment and the university, drifting between former lovers and recent French acquaintances.*

*She meets Mathieu, a young worker who falls madly in love with her. Possessed by an insatiable desire for her body, he treats Hua like a dog.*

*An intense affair begins, marked by Mathieu's passionate embraces and harsh verbal abuse. When Hua determines to leave her lover, she discovers the strength of her addiction, and the vital role he has come to play in her life as a woman.*

## **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

*"I can understand Hua's feeling of being "in between". It's actually a feeling of being between different people, between different politics and cultures, between different races and territories, between sex and love, between violence and tenderness, between love and bruises, a true human feeling, but lonely as well."*

## **A DISCUSSION WITH LOU YE**

***How did you discover Jie Liu-Falin's novel?***

I was making "Spring Fever" when Jie Liu-Falin called me from Paris. She hoped that I could read her novel and asked whether I'd be interested. I read the book and I liked it a lot.

***What was its impact in China, despite being banned?***

It wasn't yet published, so I don't think it was banned. It is me who was banned at that time.

***It's an autobiographical novel written by a woman. Why did you choose to adapt it?***

The issue of love. Jie Liu-Falin presented the subject I've been always interested in, but from a woman's point of view. Her frank and sincere autobiography itself offers a more human point of view on our discussion of this issue.

***What specific topics interested you? Did the uprooting of the main character already exist?***

I don't have 'specific topics' but, for example, I like the issue of love very much, because I think it is a daily life problem for human beings. Of course for me, it's also an excellent symbol for certain political and social issues.

***This is your first adaptation of a novel. It's a very raw book, very hardcore, very personal, with a lot of explicit sexual scenes. How did you work on these and build the script?***

I read the novel and then the first adaptation by Jie Liu-Falin. They helped me a lot in understanding her and the reasons she wrote it, which was useful in my later adaptation. You need to know the writer to enter into her world.

***It's not a 'psychological' screenplay. The characters preserve the mystery of their motivations. Was it the same in the novel or was it a more personal option?***

There are many intuitive and mysterious elements in the novel. Jie Liu-Falin almost left them fully naked out front. This was the first thing that touched my heart. I was attracted by it. For me, mystery itself is the most interesting part of humanity.

***At first, the two characters are very different - opposite but complementary. Hua is dark, silent and serious. Mathieu speaks, acts and smiles a lot. But each hides secrets and prefers to live in the present. Can you tell us more about them?***

I hope they are more like everyday characters than 'special characters', which is to say I focus more on the 'ordinary' than the 'special'. There's nothing special about them. Hua and Mathieu are just like us. The most important point is they don't know the future and we don't either - exactly the same.

***The novel "Bitch" has a very 'sulfurous' reputation, but your movie is above all melancholic - sex separates people as much as it unites them. It's almost hopeless. Was that your intention?***

I don't think my characters are brought together just because I want to bring them together; neither are they separated just because I tear them apart. The same is true with 'hope'. Most of the time, most of us don't know whether the other is far away or close, whether there's hope or not. The moment someone says to himself: "I should live my life like this", he might have already lost the truth of his life, while before he says it, that's right where life and humanity lie. Maybe.

***In this new film, there is a theme that already existed in your previous work: the way sexuality reveals a person or an era.***

Sex is an indispensable part of a natural and free human being. If you want to reveal a

human being, it's very hard to avoid sex, just as it's very hard to avoid human beings when you're trying to reveal an era.

***Theirs is an impulsive love: total, all consuming, even destructive. How do you plan your work on such a story?***

There was no plan. If you love and believe in your characters, you just follow them. You're ready to let them lead you into a future you don't know at all; you adventure with your characters.

***Once again, you shot with hand-held camera, which gives the movie a documentary look. Why?***

I hope my characters can go beyond the control of the camera. The best films lie in the risky zone at the edge of the control of the director and cinematographer.

***Does it mean more freedom for you? A greater proximity to your characters?***

I hope I present the reality within the frame of the camera while at the same time implying that which is uncontrolled beyond the camera. For me, why something is not in the shot, or not edited as a part of the finished film, that's something of great importance. And it has nothing to do with technical questions.

***You very often shoot faces, looks, hands... There's something very intimate in your approach and at the same time almost 'stolen' or 'clandestine'... The editing brings a constant tension and acts like a revealing of the characters' internal confusion: their loneliness, their distress... It says a lot about their psychology, contrary to the screenplay. How did you work on the editing?***

I hope in front of my characters, the camera doesn't exist. For me, editing is the continuation of scriptwriting. My way of working is to strictly follow the spirit and requirements of the script and forget about the editing during the shoot. And afterwards, during the editing, to forget about everything, including the script; to watch carefully each foot of film, each frame, pick what you need and drop what you don't. It requires you to watch all the rushes, to get familiar with the performance of the actors on each take. Every detailed change will influence the whole film. So being my editor is a very tough job and I'd like to thank her.

***As is often the case in your work, the urban environment is very important. You shoot the city as a real character with its noises, its colour, its intensity. What interested you in Paris?***

Daily life.

***How did you choose your locations?***

Normally I follow the characters when choosing the locations, because they

are actually also a part of the characters' composition. Not only their faces and bodies; sometimes the space itself is also the expression of the character.

***How did you meet Tahar Rahim and why did you choose to work with him?***

The first I saw of him was a small photo in a magazine. I thought he was quite close to my idea of Mathieu, so I asked to meet him. We met in Paris, right after the wrap of "A Prophet". He was very tired and a little bit impatient while talking - he didn't care at all whether I could understand him. I liked him very much. He was amazing. And I thought he was just so close to Mathieu. A few months later, in the summer of 2009, we met again at a party in Cannes. We were like good friends who hadn't seen each other for a long time. Both of us were very happy. I saw the other side of the Mathieu in my heart, and that was wonderful.

***What kind of actor is he?***

He's a wonderful, charming actor. He doesn't present the character, he is the character, and he lives like that. This is exactly the greatest challenge for many excellent actors: the better they are, the more likely they will show some kind of 'self-consciousness' unconsciously while acting... the 'knowledge' of their own excellence. We can feel that excellent actors sometimes know that they're excellent, and that will allow them to drift them away from the characters they're playing. Many actors are unable to overcome this. But there's no such limitation for Tahar.

### ***And Corinne Yam?***

Hua is a teacher of sociology and French. So we looked for a Chinese girl who could speak very good French, in Shanghai, Beijing, Paris, America and Canada. We interviewed hundreds of actresses. It was very hard. Finally, we were watching a film with another actress and I happened to see Corinne. She was in very few sequences, but she was amazing. We're very lucky to have found her.

### ***You don't speak French. How did you work with the cast?***

During the shoot, I listened to the actors' French dialogues on headphones and to a simultaneous translation. Though I've had similar experiences working in German (the Berlin shoot of "Summer Palace") and Japanese ("Purple Butterfly"), this was my first time directing a French-speaking film. I sincerely appreciate the cooperation of everyone on the production and I'd like to thank my two French translators.

### ***How did you build together their characters?***

Normally I put my characters back into their original life and watch them quietly from the sidelines, experiencing happiness and disappointment together with them.

### ***Was not speaking the language of the movie a hindrance or did it give you more freedom?***

Generally speaking, if a director directs a film in something other than his mother tongue, it's a challenge to his experience and sensitivity. More specifically, because you don't understand the language, you naturally shift your attention to other aspects when an actor speaks: mood, intonation, tone, rhythm, gestures, etc... Expressions beyond words. It makes the director's decisions lean toward some kind of visual and bodily expression.

### ***The music is superb, and the way you use it is very interesting. It's almost like a breath. You only use it in rare moments. How did you work with the composer?***

I'm very happy that you mentioned breath. This is also the word my cinematographer Yu Lik Wai and I always used. We even reached an agreement that as long as a change of natural light occurred during the shoot, we wouldn't stop the camera, in order to be able to record these 'breaths of the image'. It's the same with the music. This is my third film with Peyman Yazdanian. Just like the others, during the editing, the editor and I would select reference music, put it in and send it to the composer as a suggestion. Then we'd talk, Peyman and I alone, to discuss the temperament of each piece and other possibilities.

## **LOU YE BIOGRAPHY**

Director, writer and producer Lou Ye was born 1965 in Shanghai and studied at the Shanghai Fine Arts School and the Beijing Film Academy. His debut, "Weekend Lover", won the Fassbinder Prize for Best Director at the 1996 Mannheim-Heidelberg Film Festival. Well-received internationally, "Suzhou River" earned Lou Ye a 2-year filmmaking ban after it screened in Rotterdam without official permission.

"Purple Butterfly" screened In Competition at the Cannes Film Festival, as did "Summer Palace". Again, conflict with the Chinese authorities resulted in a five-year ban. "Spring Fever", shot secretly in Nanjing, screened In Competition at Cannes (2009) where it won the Best Screenplay award. Having been banned from filmmaking, Lou Ye was forbidden to seek financing in China. He then recalled having been deeply touched by Jie Liu-Falin's novel and thought that an adaptation of it might interest a French producer.

## **LOU YE SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY**

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 2011 | <b>LOVE AND BRUISES</b>  |
| 2009 | <b>SPRING FEVER</b><br><i>Cannes FF - In Competition - Best Screenplay</i>   |
| 2006 | <b>SUMMER PALACE</b><br><i>Cannes FF - In Competition</i><br><i>Pusan FF - PPP script award winner</i>                           |
| 2003 | <b>PURPLE BUTTERFLY</b><br><i>Cannes FF - In Competition</i>   |
| 2000 | <b>SUZHOU RIVER</b><br><i>Rotterdam FF -</i><br><i>VPRO Tiger Award winner</i><br><i>Viennale - Winner of the FIPRESCI prize</i> |
| 1994 | <b>WEEKEND LOVER</b>   |

## **TAHAR RAHIM SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY**

- 2011 **LES HOMMES LIBRES**  
Ismaël Ferroukhi
- 2011 **NOS ENFANTS**  
Joachim Lafosse
- 2011 **THE EAGLE**  
Kevin Macdonald
- 2010 **BLACK GOLD**  
Jean-Jacques Annaud
- 2010 **LOVE AND BRUISES**  
Lou Ye
- 2008 **A PROPHET**  
Jacques Audiard  
*Cannes FF - Grand Jury Prize*  
*Césars – 9 awards including*  
*Best Actor & Most Promising Actor*  
*Academy Awards® – Nominated*  
*Best Foreign Language Film*  
*Golden Globes - Nominated*  
*Best Foreign Language Film*
- 2006 **A L'INTERIEUR**  
Alexandre Bustillo and  
Julien Maury

## **CORINNE YAM BIOGRAPHY**

Born near Paris in 1981, Corinne Yam began her modelling career by chance. By the age of 23 she had already worked for the top fashion houses and appeared in publicity campaigns for Vuitton, Dior (directed by Wong Kar-wai) and Yves Saint Laurent. In 2009, she appeared in the Canal+ trilogy **LA FILLE AU FOND DU VERRE A SAKE** in which she came to the attention of Lou Ye who sought her out to play the heroine in **LOVE AND BRUISES**.

## **CAST**

<i>Hua</i>	<b>CORINNE YAM</b>
<i>Mathieu</i>	<b>TAHAR RAHIM</b>
<i>Giovanni</i>	<b>JALIL LESPERT</b>
<i>Eric</i>	<b>VINCENT ROTTIERS</b>
<i>Liang Bin</i>	<b>SIFAN SHAO</b>
<i>Ding Yi</i>	<b>ZHANG SONGWEN</b>
<i>Thierry</i>	<b>PATRICK MILLE</b>
<i>Mathieu's wife</i>	<b>ADELE ADO</b>

## **CREW**

Directed by

**LOU YE**

Screenplay

**JIE LIU-FALIN**

**LOU YE**

DP

**YU LIK WAI**

Gaffer

**WONG CHI MING**

Editor

**JULIETTE WELFLING**

Original Score

**PEYMAN YAZDANIAN**

Sound

**DANA FARZANEHPOUR**

Sound Editor

**STEPHANE BRUNCLAIR**

**SOPHIE DURAND**

Mix

**OLIVIER DO HUU**

Production Manager

**ISABELLE TILLOU**

Art Director

**GUILLAUME DEVIERCY**

Costume Designer

**VIRGINIE MONTEL**

Storyboard

**WANG PU**

**LIU ZHAO**

Assistant Directors

**LUC CATANIA**

**LUCIE BORLETEAU**

**XU LE**

Coproduction

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