

Florence MULLER  
RIDAN

Denis PODALYDÈS

Samir GUESMI

Bruno PODALYDÈS

Olivier GOURMET

Patrick LIGARDES

Laure CALAMY

Chantal LAUBY

Emeline BAYART

Hippolyte GIRARDOT

Michel VUILLERMOZ

Josiane BALASKO

Thierry LHERMITTE

Micheline DAX

Bernard CAMPAN

Julie DEPARDIEU

Pierre ARDITI

Claude RICH

Michel AUMONT

Didier BOURDON

Nicole GARCIA

Vincent ELBAZ

Mathieu AMALRIC

Elie SEMOUN

Jean-Noël BROUTÉ

Emmanuelle DEVOS

Chiara MASTROIANNI

Eric ELMOSNINO

Isabelle CANDELIER

Philippe UCHAN

Pascal LÉGITIMUS

Guilaine LONDEZ

Amira CASAR

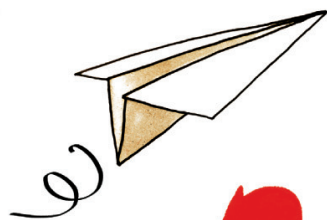
Michael LONSDALE

Catherine DENEUVE

Bruno SOLO

Benoît POELVOORDE

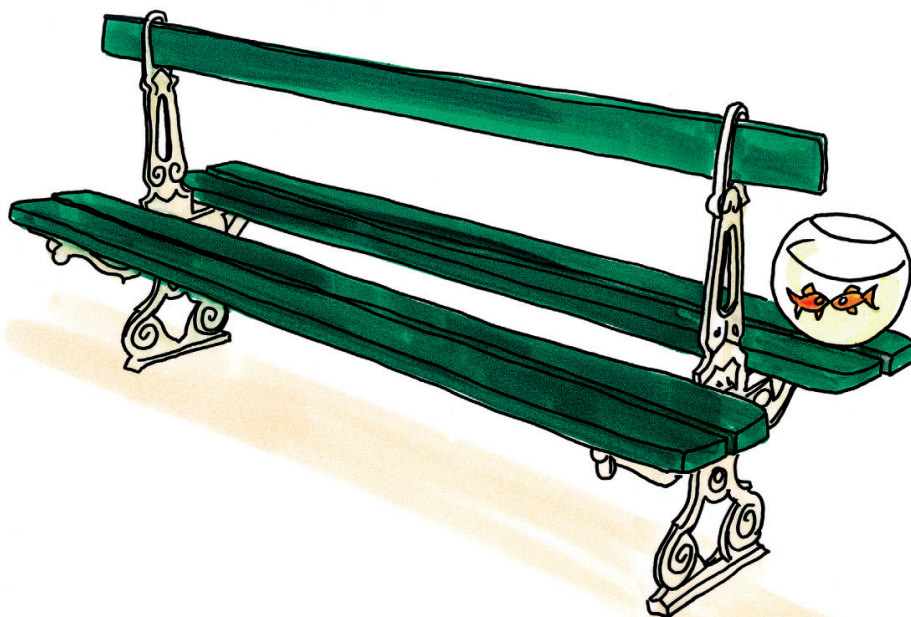
WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS présente



# BANCS PUBLICS

(VERSAILLES RIVE DROITE)

un film de  
Bruno PODALYDÈS



scénario BRUNO PODALYDÈS avec la collaboration de OLIVIA BASSET image YVES CAPE etc. son LAURENT POIRIER  
décors MARIE CHEMINAL costumes DOROTHÉE GUIRAUD 1<sup>er</sup> assistant réalisateur GUILLAUME BONNIER  
musique originale DAVID LAFORE - EZECHIEL PAILHES montage EMMANUELLE CASTRO montage son NICOLAS MOREAU  
mixage CYRIL HOLTZ - PHILIPPE AMOUREUX production exécutive MARTINE CASSINELLI  
UNE COPRODUCTION WHYNOT PRODUCTIONS - FRANCE 2 CINÉMA - UGC IMAGES  
avec la participation de TPS STAR de CANAL+ du CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINÉMATOGRAPHIE  
avec le soutien de la RÉGION ÎLE-DE-FRANCE [www.bancspublics.lefilm.com](http://www.bancspublics.lefilm.com)  
en association avec la Sofica UGC 1







**WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS**  
PRESENTS

# PARK BENCHES

A FILM BY  
**BRUNO PODALYDÈS**

A  
**WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS - FRANCE 2 CINÉMA - UGC IMAGES**  
CO-PRODUCTION

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF  
**TPS STAR - CANAL+ - CNC - REGION ILE DE FRANCE - SOFICA UGC 1**

FRANCE • 2009 • 110' • SCOPE • DOLBY STEREO SR • COLOUR

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PLEASE NOTE: High definition images can be downloaded from the 'press' section of <http://www.wildbunch.biz>

## SYNOPSIS

Just an ordinary day in Versailles...

As she does every morning, Lucie joins her colleagues at the office. Between games of solitaire and adverts on the Internet, it's a working day just like any other. Then all activity in the office stops. All attention is turned towards the window of the building opposite and a banner reading: Man Alone. A hoax? A cry for help? What lies behind this mysterious message?

Later that day, during the lunch hour, the Square becomes the place where everyone meets. A retired English teacher is disturbed by a jogger who turns out to be a former pupil. Two young lovers are on the verge of splitting up. Children play love games and war games as their anxious mothers look on. A philosophical tramp, a clumsy ladies' man, zealous cops - and Lucie, who is unknowingly photographed by a mysterious stranger...

Afternoon at the Brico-Dream store and the boss is trying to motivate his staff. The customer's always right, and you have to smile, no matter what. It's not easy when each customer is crazier than the last. A stellar cast brings Podalydès' sparkling comedy to vibrant life. Beautifully crafted, endlessly playful and very, very funny.

## CREW

DIRECTED BY	Bruno Podalydès
SCREENPLAY	Bruno Podalydès
IN COLLABORATION WITH	Olivia Basset
DP	Yves Cape AFC
SOUND	Laurent Poirier
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	Marie Cheminal
COSTUME DESIGNER	Dorothée Guiraud
1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	Guillaume Bonnier
ORIGINAL SCORE	David Lafore Ezechiël Pailhes
EDITOR	Emmanuelle Castro
SOUND EDITOR	Nicolas Moreau
MIX	Cyril Holtz
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Philippe Amouroux Martine Cassinelli

A WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS, FRANCE 2 CINÉMA, UGC  
IMAGES CO-PRODUCTION WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF TPS STAR,  
CANAL+, CNC, RÉGION ILE-DE-FRANCE, SOFICA UGC 1

## CAST

<i>Lucie (Secretary)</i>	Florence Muller	<i>Young Grandmother</i>	Catherine Rich
<i>Singer On The Métro</i>	Ridan	<i>Bastien</i>	Jules Trouillard
<i>Guitarist Jérôme</i>	Paret	<i>Bastien's Sister</i>	Andreane Brezillon
<i>Aimé</i>	Denis Podalydès	<i>Sleeper</i>	Eric Elmosnino
<i>Romain</i>	Samir Guesmi	<i>Blueberry Woman</i>	Christine De Neves Da Rocha
<i>Bretelle</i>	Bruno Podalydès	<i>Arthur</i>	Nino Podalydès
<i>Opportune</i>	Laure Calamy	<i>Marianne</i>	Louise Caucheteux
<i>DIY Fairy (Video)</i>	Estelle Chailloux	<i>Marianne's Mother / Toilet Seat Customer</i>	Chiara Mastroianni
<i>Video Presenter</i>	Robin Londinsky	<i>Arthur's Mother</i>	Emmanuelle Devos
<i>Maurice Begeard</i>	Olivier Gourmet	<i>Paul (Child)</i>	Pierre Lupone
<i>Paul (Shop Assistant)</i>	Patrick Ligardes	<i>Serious Teen Girl</i>	Lucile Aimard
<i>Mixing Valve Customer</i>	Pierre Guinot Déléry	<i>Serious Teen Boy</i>	Marc Averseng
<i>Pascale</i>	Chantal Lauby	<i>Ladies' Man 1 / Wheelbarrow Man</i>	Jean-Noël Brouté
<i>Amandine</i>	Emeline Bayart	<i>Ladies' Man 2</i>	Elie Semoun
<i>Executive 1</i>	Hippolyte Girardot	<i>Dumped Young Woman</i>	Isabelle Candelier
<i>Colleague</i>	Blandine Lenoir	<i>Policeman</i>	Didier Tronchet
<i>Messenger</i>	Manuel Le Lièvre	<i>Policewoman</i>	Cécile Bouillot
<i>Executive 2</i>	Michel Vuillermoz	<i>Child With Airplane</i>	Pierre Vander-Meiren
<i>Solange Renivelle</i>	Josiane Balasko	<i>Sweeper</i>	Babacar Seck
<i>Strict Employee</i>	Pierre Diot	<i>Little Girl With Book</i>	Eva Redon
<i>Young Employee</i>	Ange Ruzé	<i>Woman With Newspaper</i>	Anne-Françoise Brillot
<i>Resident</i>	Eric Prat	<i>Firmin</i>	Jules Aimard
<i>Doctor</i>	Thierry Lhermitte	<i>Papa Firmin</i>	Stéphane Batut
<i>Philosophical Neighbour</i>	Micheline Dax	<i>Drill Customer</i>	Philippe Uchan
<i>Suspicious Neighbour</i>	Bernard Campan	<i>Wallpaper Customer's Daughter</i>	Elodie Huber
<i>Suspicious Neighbour's Child</i>	Auguste Yvan	<i>Wallpaper Customer's Mother</i>	Guilaine Londez
<i>Suspicious Neighbour's Wife</i>	Julie Depardieu	<i>Rawplug Customer</i>	Ariane Pirié
<i>Pressure Cooker Neighbour</i>	Agathe Natanson	<i>Beuck Dca Customer</i>	Pascal Légitimus
<i>M. Borelly</i>	Pierre Arditi	<i>Pink Notebook Customer</i>	Dominique Parent
<i>Colleague 2</i>	Olivia Machon	<i>Light Socket Customer</i>	Amira Casar
<i>Colleague 3</i>	Olivier Deparis	<i>Doormat Customer</i>	Michael Londsdales
<i>Colleague 4</i>	Sylvain Solustri	<i>Sporgex Customer</i>	Christophe Beaucarne
<i>Colleague 5</i>	Aude Chrétien	<i>Wardrobe Customer</i>	Catherine Deneuve
<i>Backgammon Player 1</i>	Claude Rich	<i>Wood Screw Customer</i>	Bruno Solo
<i>Backgammon Player 2</i>	Michel Aumont	<i>Pink Notebook Customer's Child</i>	Gabin Lefebvre
<i>Captain 1</i>	Didier Bourdon	<i>Hook Customer</i>	Benoît Poelvoorde
<i>Captain 2</i>	Marcel Loshouarn	<i>Hook Customer's Wife</i>	Géraldine Fréry
<i>Radio Lady</i>	Nicole Garcia	<i>Saw Customer</i>	Georges Labbouz
<i>Jogger</i>	Vincent Elbaz	<i>Gary</i>	Georges Aguilar
<i>Convalescent</i>	Simon Bakhouche	<i>Cleaner</i>	Roger Roka
<i>Ipod Man</i>	Lou-Nil Font		
<i>Ipod Woman</i>	Agathe Lebourdonnec		
<i>Father With Pram</i>	Mathieu Amalric		
<i>Mother With Pram</i>	Stéphanie Cléau		
<i>Pinpin</i>	Lola Jęderowicz		
<i>Pinpin's Mother</i>	Françoise Gillard		

## THE STORYTELLER OF VERSAILLES

At 48, Bruno Podalydès has decided he's through with adolescence. In *PARK BENCHES*, the final episode of his *RAILWAY STATIONS TRILOGY*, he leaves behind the student world of casual jobs and long holidays to delve into the work place: the real one. Far from the campus, his characters retain their innocence, their predicaments, their comedy, their dialogue, their charm. An encounter with a director of human comedies.

Neither on the margins nor in the centre - or rather, both at the same time - for some twenty years now, this funny kid has led a funny career, balancing on a tightrope of fertile contradictions. Ever since his *A NIGHT IN VERSAILLES* screened to great acclaim at the Cannes Film Festival in 1992, Bruno Podalydès has enjoyed the support of critics and audiences alike.

From original screenplays (*ONLY GOD SEES ME*, *LIBERTÉ-OLÉRON*) to adaptations of Gaston Leroux (*THE MYSTERY OF THE YELLOW ROOM*, *THE PERFUME OF THE LADY IN BLACK*) the director from Versailles has presented his own wildly comic imaginary world, irreparably marked by children's stories, characters from the past and a timeless city, "set apart from the world's march".

*PARK BENCHES* concludes his idiosyncratic *VERSAILLES RAILWAY STATION TRILOGY*. Three stations in Versailles? Really? "As a matter of fact, according to the City Hall there are five, one of which - the Sailors' station - is only used once a year to take pilgrims to Lourdes". That's a relief: a follow-up is possible. But no, this time, Bruno is done with the city that welcomed the Podalydès, French colonials from Algeria, of Greek origins, even integrated them in the upper echelons of high society. Versailles: its palace, its Catholics. "The Versailles clichés grow a bit boring in the end," says the director. "Even if they're true. You can still spot green loden coats and swarms of pristine boy scouts coming out of High Mass. It's fascinating and rather touching really: this aristocracy - often completely broke - clutching onto its last remaining sticks of furniture and cultivating the melancholy memory of former glories".

So is *PARK BENCHES*, subtitled *A NIGHT IN VERSAILLES*, a follow-up - a conclusion - to *ONLY GOD SEES ME*, (subtitled *VERSAILLES-CHANTIERS*)? As is often the case with Bruno Podalydès, the answer is a double-edged oxymoron. Firstly, no: none of the original characters remain, not even the dithering Albert Jean-Jean who was at the heart of the earlier film. Not even the three female characters who gave shape to his indecisiveness. But on the other hand, yes. Yes because once again the narrator returns to Versailles. Yes because the objects that pepper his films - like this "glaviole" into which the characters have been stumbling ever since *LIBERTÉ-OLÉRON* - are once again present. Also the same line, repeated since *ONLY GOD SEES ME* - "Isn't there any...?" "No, there isn't any." And recurring themes, like the anguish brought on by baldness, inherited from a pharmacist father who experimented in vain with all sorts of treatments supposed to conquer it. Finally, the same actors' names in the credits: Denis first, the younger brother even though he is a twin, but also Jean-Noël Brouté, Isabelle Candelier and the priceless Michel Vuillermoz. In *PARK BENCHES* they are surrounded by a good 50% of the cream of French cinema.

The first consequence of this stellar cast is that all the actors have smallish parts. To give life to a character in just a few scenes - sometimes only one - became a real challenge. "Casting-against-type was excluded, nobody having time to backpedal," explains Podalydès. "I tried to cast each actor in keeping - maybe not with their "true self" because often I didn't know them well if at all - but with the image I had of them". Catherine Deneuve for instance: he learned from her daughter Chiara that she was a DIY enthusiast, which made her an ideal customer of Brico-Dream, the hardware store that provides one of the film's three main settings. "Besides, I was impressed by her technical knowledge when it came to varnishes and tools". The scene featuring Chiara Mastroianni and her luminous toilet seat was inspired by the actress herself. "The idea came from her; she wanted to patent it a few years ago. I only had to have it made," he adds. The owner of Brico-Dream, Bretelle, it's him. Bruno likes to portray these brave shop keepers, distant evocations of an ancestral figure - his bookshop-owning



grandmother. Like her, Bretelle is a valiant sort, who knows the boat is leaking but still tries to motivate his staff, coming up with a commercial spiel integrating Anglo-Saxon vocabulary - flyers, Brico-Dream - to introduce marketing into his old structure. ““You mustn’t say we don’t have any, but that we’re getting some.” This is one of my grandmother’s quotes,” says Bruno.

Like his character, the director has had to put himself out to steer his enterprise to a good end. It was necessary to organise the schedule around the myriad actors’ availability, to juggle endlessly and completely abandon any thoughts of shooting in chronological order. Thankfully the audience feels none of this effort. *PARK BENCHES* reveals itself as an enchanting succession of scenes, often sweet, never bitter and always funny. “I think there is some kind of courtesy in keeping a funny tone. Even if I don’t always have ideas for comedy, the initial promise must be kept.” Come to think of it, Bruno isn’t even sure there ever was a chronological order to respect. “There isn’t really a thread as such. Scenes are only linked by a sort of proximity”.

Probably because he films in the same way as he writes. He takes notes all the time, everywhere, always has done. Recorded, worked, refined, the note becomes a scene. Then it needs to be attributed to a film, an indispensable step as he’s always writing several films at the same time. Films he always wants different from one another: Podalydès confesses to a dread of repeating himself. He is petrified to find the same themes recurring through his films. “All the same, I realize it’s impossible for me to steer away from them.” Admittedly, there are links between his films but he says he doesn’t trust them. Sometimes they are voluntary, as when he reuses an object or a line from a preceding film. Sometimes it’s totally unconscious. Thus Bruno is astonished to discover that one of his preferred actors, Philippe Uchan, has exactly the same accessory as in the first two parts of the trilogy. “I remember that he was associated with a drill in *A NIGHT IN VERSAILLES*, but I didn’t remember the scene in *ONLY GOD SEES ME*, though it was a long one, where he threatens his rival with it”.

He says there is no special place where he likes to write: in the country sometimes, in cafés often. Isn’t he concerned that by appearing on screen, being photographed, fame will force him to hide himself away in order to work peacefully? No. He has a trick: “When someone takes a photo of me I take my glasses off and become another person. Not out of vanity, but because I need to be able to listen to people without being recognized. I need to take strange conversations by surprise, like some guy in a suit holding forth about a variety of frogs.”

Of his current projects, none is yet ready. “I don’t know which one will be ready first. Obsessions follow one another, bump into each other, until one prevails.” In their finished form, the elder Polydales’ scripts are completely written. But nothing is set in stone. “This isn’t Molière. The words need to be able to be adapted to whoever will say them.” During the casting, he displays photos on a wall and lives with them. Unchanging, the actors he has directed from the very beginning seduce him. “I admire them, I know they’re going to surprise me. I don’t understand why some are under-used, like Jean-Noël Brouté, a marvellous comedian - a rarity in France - who is so good at physical comedy and is always available. Or Isabelle Candelier, magnificent, so moving in *PARK BENCHES*.” And Denis. For a long time he couldn’t even imagine making a film without his brother. “Today, even if he continues to astonish me, I think I could.” Maybe because Bruno finds himself more and more in front of his own camera? “Maybe. Maybe also to stop me from being nostalgic about the previous film. Each time, I am told my preceding film was better. And this time, I know it’s going to happen again”.

Yet again, this dread of repetition. Could his desire for renewal lead him to abandon comedy? Bruno doesn’t know, says that “Comedy is an honourable demand,” and that he has already experimented with the limits of the genre - a panic scene in *LIBERTÉ-OLÉRON* where the character became unpleasant. ““Grotesque but also tragic. As in family scenes where tragedy rubs shoulders with the absurd. You have a fit of the giggles at funerals, feel depressed at weddings...” It would be difficult to give up these likable characters, captured in their

peaceful turmoil, followed lovingly by a benevolent camera. "The pace in my films is hardly "24". More like a week, or a month!". No showy tricks or special effects for Bruno Podalydès. This is deeply original cinema, without forerunner - Tati aside, perhaps - without follower. A unique body of work. Out of time, like his childhood city, this Versailles about which he so often talks. Removed from fashion, like its inhabitants who meant a lot to him. "I will always be out of fashion he says, because I am very slow". Not out of fashion. Not in fashion. Modern.

- Michel Palmiéri, *Première* (July 2009)

## **BRUNO PODALYDÈS FILMOGRAPHY**

### **WRITER - DIRECTOR**

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2008 | VIOLENCES CONJUGALES:<br>10 FILMS POUR EN PARLER (short)  |
| 2007 | PARIS JE T'AIME : MONTMARTRE (short)<br>(aka PARIS, I LOVE YOU)   |
| 2005 | LE PARFUM DE LA DAME EN NOIR<br>(aka THE PERFUME OF THE LADY<br>IN BLACK)                                       |
| 2002 | LE MYSTERE DE LA CHAMBRE JAUNE<br>(aka THE MYSTERY OF THE<br>YELLOW ROOM)                                       |
| 1999 | LIBERTE-OLERON<br>(aka FREEDOM-OLERON)  |
| 1996 | DIEU SEUL ME VOIT<br>(VERSAILLES-CHANTIERS)<br>(aka ONLY GOD SEES ME)<br><i>César 1999 - Best First Feature</i> |
| 1994 | VOILA<br><i>Venice 1994 - Official Selection</i>  |
| 1992 | VERSAILLES RIVE-GAUCHE<br>(aka A NIGHT IN VERSAILLES)<br><i>César 1993 - Best Short Film</i>                    |