



endangered species

LES FILMS DU LENDEMAIN AND LES FILMS DU FLEUVE PRESENT

endangered species

ESPÈCES MENACÉES

A FILM BY GILLES BOURDOS

BASED ON THE STORIES OF RICHARD BAUSCH
SCREENPLAY BY MICHEL SPINOSA AND GILLES BOURDOS

STARRING ALICE ISAAZ VINCENT ROTTIERS GRÉGORY GADEBOIS
ÉRIC ELMOSENINO DAMIEN CHAPELLE BRIGITTE CATILLON
ALICE DE LENCQUESAING CARLO BRANDT
AGATHE DRONNE PAULINE ÉTIENNE FRÉDÉRIC PIERROT
MICHA LESCOT AND CHRISTA THERET
WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF SUZANNE CLÉMENT

PRODUCED BY KRISTINA LARSEN
CO-PRODUCED BY JEAN-PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE, DELPHINE TOMSON

RUNNING TIME: 1H45

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synopsis

Three interlinked family stories. Josephine and Tomas are happy newlyweds, but Josephine's parent quickly discover a darker reality behind the couple's glowing matrimonial bliss. Meanwhile, Melanie announces to her parents that she is pregnant - and the father is far from the ideal son-in-law! And lastly Anthony, his head in the clouds and unlucky in love, who is faced with having to take charge of his suddenly uncontrollable mother.



Gilles Bourdos interview

What made you want to make a film adaptation of Richard Bausch's short stories?

I discovered Richard Bausch's work by accident and I fell in love with this author. In the great American tradition of short story writers, Bausch excels in the art of telling stories about complex family relationships and couples who tear each other apart. I gave Michel Spinosa some of Bausch's books without any precise cinematographic idea in mind. It was Michel Spinosa who had the idea of constructing a film like a Happy Families game, where the cards are constantly reshuffled and which functions through confrontation and clashes between a father and his daughter, a son and his mother, a husband and wife etc., where fathers are challenged by their daughters' choice of partners, where a son faces his parents' disastrous marriage...

What was your approach for this adaptation?

We always knew that we wanted to distance ourselves from the construction of a typical "ensemble film". There is always an inaugural (or final) event or situation in this type of film that brings all the characters together. Our main concern as we were writing was to create tension from the start and to maintain it until the denouement, without giving in to the temptation of creating this type of more or less artificial scene where all the characters react to the same situation. We simply allowed ourselves to be guided by the logic of the characters. Situations respond to one another, like in an echo chamber, resonating and creating linking points... Constructing a "mosaic film", that is to say "all in pieces", is also about composing a multi-faceted object that can then avoid any kind all-embracing conclusion in terms of meaning.

The film has an almost "pictorial" rhythm to it.

I know that certain filmmakers are inspired by musical processes to construct their stories. I tend to be inspired more by fine art. I thought a lot about Gaudí's mosaics or Mondrian's asymmetries to find the rhythm of the film. I also strongly believe in a heterogeneous aesthetic and tension which arises from disparate fragments which are then reassembled, as in Rauschenberg's combines. I wanted to make a film that broke away from the monotony of academic cinema where scenes with equal lengths are impeccably aligned like plane trees in a French garden. *ENDANGERED SPECIES* begins with two very distinctive and unrelated theatrical situations - a wedding night, a phone call from a daughter to her father - and this lasts more than thirty minutes! This is the kind of challenge that really motivates me as a filmmaker.

Submission quickly reveals itself as one of the central themes: Josephine's submission to her new husband, her father's submission to his wife, Anthony's to his mother... Shackles which are fated to break.

I prefer to talk of alienation. We are at the heart of what makes family ties so complex. A family forms the most fundamental, the most primitive cell of our society. Our three stories are diametrically opposed: a father goes mad, another reconciles with his daughter, a wife puts her neurosis aside by embracing her role as a mother once again... This is at the very heart of every family: some find refuge, while others sink. This is why I also wanted an ending that was open to different interpretations. In the final scene, some will find in Alice Isaaz's bright expression a real sense of hope, whereas others will think of the film's title and will find the end to be dark. Both interpretations are valid.

The locations where you film are often places of transit, places one passes through - an expressway, a hotel, a petrol station, a car park, a block of furnished apartments, hospital corridors - and seem only barely inhabited...

It's the Côte d'Azur filmed in winter, hence that slight feeling of desertification. Filming in these places of transit is something very natural for me and not very thought out, to be honest. I think I am simply, instinctively, trying to express the characters' feelings of solitude in these locations. And these places are somewhat neutral, almost unidentifiable from a sociological point of view. I didn't want to locate the film in a distinct social discourse.

Nice is a touristic city and border town: the epitome of the transit town.

Yes, and of course, like all Mediterraneans, I have a passionate relationship with my home town. I love the architectural patchwork in Nice. Rococo stands alongside Streamline Moderne, functionalist buildings of the seventies mix with Moorish style villas... And there is this expressway overlooking the whole city, which has always fascinated me.

How did you choose the actors?

I like working with actors like Grégory Gadebois from the Comédie Française as much as with an autodidact like Vincent Rottiers. This is perhaps another way for me to express my love of variety! Choosing an actor is a loving choice. It's very hard to justify it to others. It's a mysterious chemistry. Alice Isaaz for example, whom I had never seen act before, did some amazingly intense screen tests.





I was impressed by her surprising artistic maturity from the very start, and this was reinforced as we were filming. I was lucky to be able to make loving choices without the pressure of making “commercial” choices and having to worry about the actors’ celebrity status. I was able to make these choices freely thanks to the unconditional support of Kristina Larsen (Les Films du Lendemain) and Stéphane Célérier (Mars Films).

What sort of ‘actors’ director’ are you?

When I choose to work with an actor, I have only one request: that they learn their lines word for word. I don’t really believe in improvisations which generally tend to weaken the general stance of a film. The dialogues have been meticulously thought out by a screenwriter. You have to respect the score. However, I don’t have readings or rehearsals as I try not to confine the actors in a rigid psychological or theatrical plan. I’m always a bit frustrated if the unexpected doesn’t happen in a scene. I love it when the energy, the creativity of an actor “bursts out” of the original score. I like accidents. With actors as creative as Eric Elmosnino, Brigitte Catillon or Damien

Chapelle, it’s exhilarating. It’s essential for me that the people I work with claim ownership, take over and shake up my initial suggestions. But I always end up taking everything in... and making it my own! While filming, I love to develop a unique way of communicating with each actor. It’s like little secret threads that I pull on to create a bond. So it’s always a pleasure for me to work with the same actors again, such as Brigitte Catillon, Frédéric Pierrot or Carlo Brandt. Their loyalty, like that of my close artistic collaborators, is perhaps what is most precious in my work.



cast

Joséphine Kaufman

Tomasz

Joseph Kaufman

Edith Kaufman

Vincent Lamblin

Mélanie Lamblin

Yann Petersen

Marie Lamblin

Anthony Gardet

Nicole Gardet

Anna

Laurent Gardet

ALICE ISAAZ

VINCENT ROTTIERS

GRÉGORY GADEBOIS

SUZANNE CLÉMENT

ERIC ELMOSNINO

ALICE DE LENCQUESAING

CARLO BRANDT

AGATHE DRONNE

DAMIEN CHAPELLE

BRIGITTE CATILLON

PAULINE ETIENNE

FRÉDÉRIC PIERROT

crew

Directed by	GILLES BOURDOS
Screenplay	MICHEL SPINOSA GILLES BOURDOS
Based on	<i>"THE STORIES OF RICHARD BAUSCH"</i>
by	RICHARD BAUSCH
DP	MARK LEE PING-BING
Sound engineer	FRANÇOIS WALEDISCH
Sound editor	VALÉRIE DELOOF
Re-recording mixer	THOMAS GAUDER
Production designer	GUILLAUME DEVIERCY
Costume designer	VIRGINIE MONTEL
Property master	MICHEL CHARVAZ
Assistant director	RENAUD GAST
Unit manager	ERIC SIMILLE
Production manager	ALBERT BLASIUŠ
Produced by	KRISTINA LARSEN
Co-produced by	JEAN-PIERRE AND LUC DARDENNE DELPHINE TOMSON

