

PARIS 05:59

THÉO ET HUGO DANS LE MÊME BATEAU

DIRECTED BY OLIVIER DUCASTEL & JACQUES MARTINEAU

WITH GEOFFREY COUET AND FRANÇOIS NAMBOT

EMMANUEL CHAUMET PRESENTS

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In a sex club, Théo and Hugo's bodies meet,
click together and merge in a passionate embrace.
After the headiness of desire and the ecstasy of their first
encounter, the two young men, in the empty streets of
Paris by night, are faced with their budding love.





Jacques Martineau

OPENING SCENE

Olivier Ducastel I guess we'll hear a lot about the film's opening scene. Yet it was pretty easy to film, wasn't it?

Jacques Martineau I think it's because we were telling a real story and we were all focused on that so it made filming the sex as natural as we'd imagined it when we conceived the project. It's not just a scene of sexual intercourse and the demands of the story meant that the "performance" of filming actors with erections faded into the background (even if it's not the same as filming a family meal!). We had to believe in these two people falling in love and the passionate surge of desire. The main thing, for all of us, was the way the characters looked at each other. But



Olivier Ducastel

this scene made producing the film more complicated, right?

PRODUCING THE FILM

OD Yes and no. As soon as we started writing it, we knew and Emmanuel Chaumet knew that we'd have to stay in what we call the pirate category of films, completely outside the usual circuits of financing for French films. That makes you consider your film differently from the outset. Not only did it give us great freedom, but it also pushed us to see our ideas through to their logical conclusion: there was no point working in the margins if we were only going to make sugar-coated images. Filming the

first scene was also an experiment. We wanted to make sure it was possible to film sex outside "moral" (and economic) restrictions. We also wanted to avoid the usual vocabulary of pornographic films that insert close-ups so they can substitute stand-ins.

THE ACTORS

JM The actors played a role in all that, don't you think?

OD Yes, of course. They were so determined and they seemed so right for the part that it dissipated our concerns and helped us move forward. Geoffrey Couët and François Nambot had the good luck to do their screen test together and right off, they seemed the obvious choice. We met them, talked with them about the film and the filming of the sex scenes and we chose them. We were smitten.

JM Just to clarify, our casting call was pretty conventional. It was an ad – a very explicit ad – that meant a lot of candidates gave up or were eliminated even before the usual screen tests with a scene written for the occasion.

OD Only after we offered the part to François and Geoffrey and them alone, did we do a screen test for the sex scene. We needed to check together that we were all comfortable. We did it with the cameraman, his assistant and the assistant director. It was like a mini shoot. We also did it to give the actors a chance to pull out.

JM It reassured us on everyone's ability to film sex the way we imagined it. But

I think what thrilled us most with Geoffrey and François was that on screen, there was love in the air. The whole point was to tell a love story. Isn't that what you told me to write?

A LOVE STORY

OD I wanted a film about the start of a love story. All our films are about love but I wanted to go back to the source. Maybe we were harking back to *Jeanne et le garçon formidable*, which was about the birth of an impossible love story. This time, we wanted a tale with a happy ending, even if the characters go through hard times that threaten their budding love story.

JM The start of love is also about taking risks. Love itself is a risk. We're not saying that fucking without a condom is proof of love. This is fiction that presents the moment we realize we're falling in love and we accept that love even if we know that sooner or later, the price to pay may be high. The risk is also there because nobody really knows what it means to "be in love". You feel something, you decide it's love but there is no way to know if it has solid foundations.

A GAY FILM

OD Since we also wanted a gay film, about love between two men, it seemed obvious to start with sex. Because that's often how it begins among gays and also because an amorous sexual encounter can soon engender conflict if one of the partners is HIV positive. It's a little like *Jeanne* but in a different era and with a happy ending – at least if we don't pay too much attention

to Hugo, who is already talking about a future break-up.

JM You say "gay film". We'll get another slap on the wrist!

OD It's never scared us before.

JM No and at our age, we're not about to start saying it's "divisive" to think that way. Nobody would believe us anyway.

OD I don't see why straight people couldn't see our film.

JM Yeah, love's universal!

OD That sounds like a platitude.

JM Then sex is universal!

OD Hmm! These days, I'm not so sure. Let's wait and see. We could just say it's a film and on top of that, it's a film in real time, which is interesting. It was your idea. Why?

A FILM IN REAL TIME

JM It seemed obvious to grab hold of a character and not let him go. I thought that if we're talking about the birth of love, it's better to not use the artifices of a story told in ellipses. But rather stay in the tension of the moment and try to provoke the viewer into asking the simple question of whether the two of them will end up telling each other they're in love. From that perspective, starting with a big sex scene also seemed necessary to the narrative. I think it gives the story momentum. That's what lets us get away

with the slight drift implied in real time, with its less intense moments. It allowed us, two-thirds into the story, to give up on constructing any other dramatic tension than following two characters and hoping that their love story continues. We move from the triviality of sex to something more sentimental: love!

OD There is also the desire to explore a new cinematic "genre". I've always liked films in real time (that give the *illusion* of real time). I had just seen *Locke* by Steven Knight, which really confirmed it.

JM It also explains the title in French, which is a reference to Rivette, a master of real time.

OD The name of the character, too! Théo refers to Cléo by Agnès Varda. But *Théo from 4 to 6* was too obvious. The name is enough as homage.

JM We don't like doing what we've already done. It's more fun dealing with new difficulties each time. It's not the same preparing, shooting and editing a real-time film. If we add in economic questions, it is definitely a film built around formal and technical constraints, which influenced the way it was directed. This was beneficial, particularly as it allowed us to film Paris by night the way we wanted.

PARIS BY NIGHT

OD Absolutely. For example, we opted for long sequence shots for the acting but also for technical and economic reasons (breaking up a shot takes forever). In the street at night, unless

you have phenomenal means, you can't control the light. Color temperatures change so much in Paris. In some shots, there are "anomalies" in the light: we move from yellow to white; the traffic lights have strange effects on the actors, etc. In a traditionally edited film, all that would create huge continuity problems. In a sequence shot, viewers accept these variations because they're comprehensible.

JM And with such limited means, we can't control traffic or passers-by either. In sequence shots, accidents occupy the frame naturally. During editing, we can choose one shot over another, not just for the acting but also for the outside events. There were passing cars, trucks, ambulances and motorbikes that we wouldn't have thought of including, even with greater means. Behind the actors, we tried to capture Paris by night as empty, mysterious and inhabited by vague presences, crossed by headlights from cars and trucks and lit up by street lights or signs that stay on all night.

OD The film is a declaration of love for the east of Paris, where we live. We like it a lot and we had already filmed it 18 years ago in *Jeanne*. It so happens that the characters' path crosses that of the November 13 terrorists so the footage has taken on a new weight. In a disturbing coincidence, Théo's nightmare images occur when he passes in front of the two cafés where the shootings began. The film was edited before November 13. It was pure chance.

THE MUSIC

JM While we're talking about Paris, it's a good time to mention the music. It's important because after the scene in the sex club, I think the music contributes not only to highlighting the psychological color of certain scenes but also giving the viewer a better perception of space. Sometimes, I feel it helps you to see the settings better, to get a sense of their mysterious depth. Some shots, like the long scene by the canal, were filmed to make room for the music. It was essential for us, wasn't it?

OD Yes, starting with the opening scene without dialogue. We needed music that sounded like music from a sex club with numbers that follow on from each other, like in a playlist. Yet they were partly composed for the footage to highlight certain inflections in the story. We wanted it to be very energetic, wild and yet lyrical. This scene has to be an experience in sound and image for the viewer to mirror the existential experience for the characters. I think viewers can come out of it exhausted, almost needing the fresh air of the streets as much as the characters themselves who find themselves alone together in the strange intimacy of a deserted city.

JM There is a title by Asaf Avidan in the film's sound track – because we like it but also because it makes the rest of the score credible as sex club music.

OD All the rest of the music was composed by a collective of young people that included the guy who did the sound mixing. We liked the music they played for us and

we thought it would be good to have faith in young people with taste in music that really reflects their era. Something very contemporary.

JM Working with young people who had never worked on a feature film before ended up being the film's watchword. We did it so we wouldn't fall into a routine and also to extend the teaching work we do: you at the Fémis, and me at Nanterre University. It was a good experience.

OUR COLLABORATION

OD What about our collaboration? People always ask how our collaboration has changed.

JM We don't live together anymore. It's not a secret and I don't feel it's changed the way we work much. You've always been pretty interventionist in the writing process but in leaving me totally free. I'm the same with your directing. With the actors, the editing and sound mixing, I think we shared everything as usual, with our different skills. Do you see anything different?

OD One minor detail: I feel freer to talk about sex with you.

JM That's so private. Do you think we can print that?

OD Pfft! After everything we filmed...

They laugh.

BIOGRAPHY

Olivier Ducastel was born in Lyon on 2/23/1962. After attending the Paris film school, IDHEC, he worked as an editor and then a director. Head of the direction department at FÉMIS since September 2013.

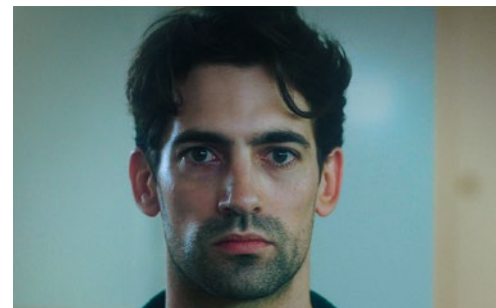
Jacques Martineau was born in Montpellier on 7/8/1963. He studied literature, graduating with a PhD on Honoré de Balzac. A lecturer in literature and script writing at the Université Paris-Ouest.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 1998** *Jeanne and the perfect guy (Jeanne et le garçon formidable)*
Berlinale 1998, Official Competition
- 2000** *Adventures of Felix (Drôle de Félix)*
Berlinale 2000, Panorama, Special Teddy Award
- 2003** *My life on ice (Ma vraie vie à Raven)*
Locarno and Toronto 2002, Official Competition
- 2005** *Côte d'Azur (Crustacés et coquillages)*
Berlinale 2005, Panorama, Label Europa Cinéma
- 2008** *Born in 68 (Nés en 68)*
- 2010** *Family Tree (L'Arbre et la forêt)*
Jean Vigo Award 2009. Berlinale 2010, Panorama
- 2011** *Just the end of the word (Juste la fin du monde)*
TV Film adapted from the play by Jean-Luc Lagarce

CAST AND CREW

- Screenplay and direction** Olivier Ducastel & Jacques Martineau
- Assistant director** Maxence Germain
- Production** ECCE FILMS
Emmanuel Chaumet
- Production manager** Diane Weber
- DOP** Manuel Marmier
- Sound** Tristan Pontécaille, Clément Badin, Victor Praud
- Editing** Pierre Deschamps
- Coproduction** Épicerie Films
Daniel Chabannes, Corentin Sénéchal
- With** Geoffrey Couët (Théo)
François Nambot (Hugo)



A photograph of two men in a romantic embrace, nearly kissing. The man on the left has dark hair and is wearing a denim jacket over a green hoodie. The man on the right has curly brown hair and is wearing a green and black zip-up jacket. They are standing in what appears to be a shopping cart aisle in a store, with a metal shopping cart visible in the foreground. The background is softly blurred, showing store shelves and warm lighting.

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