

ELZÉVIR FILMS PRÉSENTE



SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE
UN CERTAIN REGARD
FILM D'OUVERTURE
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

UN FILM ÉCRIT ET RÉALISÉ PAR
MARIE AMACHOUKELI CLAIRE BURGER SAMUEL THEIS

PARTY GIRL

ANGÉLIQUE LITZENBURGER

JOSEPH BOUR

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ANGÉLIQUE LITZENBURGER

JOSEPH BOUR

UN FILM ÉCRIT ET RÉALISÉ PAR
MARIE AMACHOUKELI CLAIRE BURGER SAMUEL THEIS

PARTY GIRL

D'APRÈS UNE IDÉE ORIGINALE DE SAMUEL THEIS

DURÉE : 1H35

SORTIE FRANCE LE 3 SEPTEMBRE



Synopsis

Angélique a soixante ans. Elle aime encore la fête, elle aime encore les hommes. La nuit, pour gagner sa vie, elle les fait boire dans un cabaret à la frontière allemande. Avec le temps, les clients se font plus rares. Mais Michel, son habitué, est toujours amoureux d'elle. Un jour, il lui propose de l'épouser.

Angelique is a 60-year-old bar hostess. She still likes to party, she still likes men. At night, she makes them drink, in a cabaret by the French-German border. As time goes by, clients become rare. But Michel, her regular client, is still in love with her. One day, he asks Angelique to marry him.

Tout est fait au montage, et notamment dans la gestion de la musique, pour que l'émotion ne s'installe jamais vraiment...

L'histoire d'Angélique contient beaucoup d'émotion mais nous avons tenté de ne jamais verser dans le sentimentalisme. Nous avons beaucoup d'amour pour les personnes et les lieux que nous avons filmés. Mais nous devons veiller à ne pas nous laisser aller à la fascination ou à la complaisance. Ce lien intime que nous entretenons avec les acteurs du film et la dimension personnelle de l'histoire que nous racontons nous ont obligés à nous montrer très vigilants à cet endroit. Le fait d'être trois a beaucoup aidé pour arriver à avancer le plus droit possible. Par ailleurs, il n'était pas nécessaire d'avoir recours à des effets de mise en scène trop appuyés pour révéler les liens entre les personnages et l'émotion qui s'en dégage. Et si nous avons choisi au montage de ne pas laisser le spectateur s'installer confortablement dans cette émotion, c'est que nous voulions qu'il reste surpris par notre proposition. Qu'il avance dans le film sans savoir où il met les pieds. C'est que ce qui nous intéresse aussi. Face à ces personnages et ces situations, que le spectateur soit toujours dans l'inconnu, à la limite de l'inconfort. Pas pour le brusquer ou le provoquer, mais on ne voulait certainement pas qu'il se sente trop à l'aise. Qu'il reconnaisse un cinéma codifié, où tout serait identifiable au premier coup d'œil.

***Party Girl*, en ce sens, est un film d'action qui implique de bout en bout le spectateur physiquement.**

C'est aussi une comédie romantique, un drame social, un film portrait, une fiction-documentaire, non ? On aimerait en tout cas que ce soit tout ça.



Interview with directors

Marie Amachoukeli, Claire Burger and Samuel Theis, speaking in one voice.

What brought you to this character and her entourage?

The film is a portrait of Angélique. She is Samuel's mother, and the film introduces her real family. All members play their own parts. And we have picked non-professional actors to play the other characters around them.

How did the three of you get together on this project?

Our relationship isn't merely professional, our close bond allowed us to take the plunge as co-directors. We are real friends in life, and we have known each other for a long time. Making such a film together required a great deal of trust. We have joined forces. Marie and Claire had already made several short films together, including *C'est gratuit pour les filles* (2010 César Award for Best short film). With Samuel, our trio had already co-written and co-directed a medium-length film, *Forbach* (2008 Cinéfondation 2nd place Prize), as part of our training at the FEMIS film school. Samuel's family already appeared in that film. When he decided he wanted to make a feature film about them, quite naturally, the three of us started working on this new project.

What triggered the writing of this feature film?

It all started with a real-life event: Angélique's atypical wedding a few years ago. At almost sixty years of age, her getting married raised some questions. It was like a conclusion to the journey of a woman who has only known night-life and who resolves to settle down late in the day. We thought that this situation really called for a film.

How did you move from reality to fiction?

We started with the autobiographical context: Angélique's children, her cabaret life, her wedding, her daughter Cynthia placed in a foster home, etc. Then we had to fictionalize the events and organize them to make it a cinematic story. So, regarding her children, we started from their real relationships. In that respect, we didn't make anything up. This is strong enough, this is our basis. We decided that the wedding would be the common thread to be unwound all through the film. Starting from these real elements, we had to give Angélique's character

a strong trajectory, and therefore make out scenes, situations, stakes, while remaining true to what the characters were at heart. So it was a tough balance act: we were walking a tightrope between fiction and reality. All three of us were responsible for this delicate balance, since fiction always requires strong acts, while using reality compelled us to be careful.

Angélique is bigger than life!

Definitely. She is unconventional, she exceeds any known frame of reference. With her kids, for instance, she isn't only a mother, she is also the bar hostess, the seductress. Angélique goes around with everything she is in every sequence. That is what is always so unsettling about this character. At the same time, we had to contain this aspect of her personality so that everyone could see through it and relate to her. Generally speaking, we had to create cinematic characters, so that any member of the audience could identify with a situation or a protagonist in the film. We had to leave some things unaltered, while stylising others. In our portrayal of Angélique, we started with what she really is. Many things are really hers, like the jewellery, we didn't have to make many things up. We like her exuberance, that often had to be contained, sometimes even levelled down! We had to make a real character out of her, without betraying her. Through her, we wanted to question love, family, freedom, margins. Is Angélique free or is she selfish? Is she spontaneous or thoughtless? Generous or irresponsible?

The whole film is interspersed with doors open onto fantastic, novelistic horizons. It gives away a thirst for romance...

To draw Angélique's portrait, we could have made a documentary, but we really had a longing for fiction. Her journey inspired us, stirred our imagination. We wanted to tell a story. Reality and ordinary people's lives are fraught with fantasy. So is Angélique's life. It is fascinating to search for romance where it is secretly hidden. Our job was to find and show it. At the same time, reality was our guide, and we wanted it to feed and support fiction whenever possible. We created the conditions for reality to show up in the writing, the shooting, or the editing.

Did you feel like explorers in Lorraine, an area neglected by the cinema?

Claire and Samuel were born and raised in Lorraine. Therefore, they have an intimate connection with the subject, the region, the people and the local dialect. Marie had a fresh outlook on this location. Her perspective was precious. Through Angélique's portrait, her intimate story, we also told the story of a whole region and social class. By talking about her, we could show what the life of a bar hostess is like, and the consequences it has on family life. We could also talk about the men from the area, former miners. What do these people do, who are they, what do they have to say? We wanted to bring cinema to Lorraine, to this family, these hostesses, to places it seldom visits. Then, we needed to broaden the scope, to embrace and sometimes trigger fiction, novelistic or cinematographic elements. This was a major stake for us, an exciting if sometimes scary challenge. We composed a versatile crew, eager to follow us in this adventure. We meant to make a different film, outside the established production system, but aimed at the widest possible audience.

What method did you use to direct the actors? Was it all about improvisation?

The actors knew the story, but we didn't give them lines to learn. They would just show up on set and we would explain the sequence to them right before shooting. We started from written scenes, from Angélique's story, so that they could improvise and capture real-life moments on the fly. We gave them the context, the situation, the conflict they had to play. We would let them perform, then we would adjust it as we went along. This is why the script was crucial, we had to be well-prepared. We had to be able to rely on it and to go back to it regularly, so that we wouldn't get lost in their propositions. We worked in such a way that the three of us would always agree. We all had monitors. We made all the decisions together, at every stage of filmmaking, which could be difficult for our collaborators, because it took time. As for the acting, we also directed the actors together. On set, we would first play the scene we had written ourselves, then the actors would make the words their own. But there was no definite recipe. Each person was different. Some needed to rely on the dialogues we had written. But

the text was too restrictive for others and would only make them bad, so it was better just to give them their characters' intentions. Those who played their own story based their performance on their own experience and knowledge of the situations. But we were always on the lookout for a mishap, sometimes we even brought one about, we found it very exciting. We had to set them in motion and embrace the unexpected. They aren't actors, they needed to feel safe and free, to completely forget about the camera. In this regard, the film crew had to adapt to them, not the other way around. We adapted the framework to the situation, but it was no mere video recording. The actors would play the same sequences several times, until we got what we wanted. Sometimes we also let ourselves be surprised, when discovering a location or hearing a spontaneous exchange between the actors, then we would imagine new scenes. The idea was never to constrain reality, but to remain open to what it had to offer, all around us.

How did Angélique enter this character, based on her life, but rewritten for the screen?

Angélique was brave enough to fully embrace her character. Right from the writing process, she had no wish to cast a veil on the sometimes complex subjects to be tackled in the film: her unconventional life, her relationship with her children, with men. She has had a life of night-clubbing, partying, alcohol but also mystery. We tried to capture something of this mystery with her. She agreed to open up and give us full access to her inner, private self.

Do you feel close to the cinéma vérité movement?

We're aware that our filmmaking isn't ground-breaking. We weren't the first to use reality and non-professional actors. But our work doesn't fit, in some theoretical way, into a cinema genre that would have fascinated us and that we'd want to recreate. We may find cinéma vérité or neorealism evocative, interesting or even inspiring, but we don't claim to be followers. Cassavetes, Pasolini or Pialat, to name a few, are also major references for us. To make *Party Girl*, we watched again and again *Mamma Roma*, *A Woman Under the Influence*, *Wanda*, in other words, films portraying free, atypical women.

Editing - especially regarding music treatment - is dealt with in such a way that emotion never really sets in...

Angélique's story conveys many emotions, yet we tried never to indulge in sentimentalism. We are really fond of the people and places we have filmed. But we made sure never to lapse into fascination or complacency. Our intimate connection with the actors and the personal nature of the story we were to tell compelled us to be extra careful in this regard. The fact that we were three to direct the film really helped us stay on course. Besides, it wasn't necessary to resort to emphatic filmmaking effects to reveal the bonds between the characters and the emotion they convey. For instance, in the editing process, we chose not to let the viewers make themselves comfortable with the emotion, because we wanted them to remain startled by what we had to offer. They had to keep going without knowing what was ahead. That was also one of our goals. We were interested in keeping the viewers guessing, in putting them on the brink of discomfort when faced with these characters and situations. Not to push them around or provoke them, but just because we didn't want them to feel too comfortable, to recognize a familiar, codified form of filmmaking where everything might be identified at a glance.

In this sense, Party Girl is an action film which gets the audience physically involved from the beginning to the end.

It is also a romantic comedy, a social drama, a portrait, a fictional documentary, isn't it? At least, we'd like it to be.





Les réalisateurs

MARIE AMACHOUKELI

La Fémis - Département Scénario
La Sorbonne - DEA d'histoire des religions

Réalisation

PARTY GIRL

En coréalisation avec Claire Burger et Samuel Theis
LM produit par Elzévir Films 2014

DEMOLITION PARTY

En coréalisation avec Claire Burger
CM produit par Dharamsala 2013

C'EST GRATUIT POUR LES FILLES

En coréalisation avec Claire Burger
CM produit par Dharamsala 2009
CÉSAR DU MEILLEUR COURT-MÉTRAGE 2010
GRAND PRIX FRANCE-TÉLÉVISION 2010
SEMAINE DE LA CRITIQUE 2009

FORBACH de Claire Burger

Ecriture et collaboration à la mise en scène avec Samuel Theis
CM produit par La Fémis 2008

GRAND PRIX NATIONAL DU FESTIVAL DE CLERMONT-FERRAND 2009
2^{ÈME} PRIX AU FESTIVAL DE CANNES SÉLECTION CINÉFONDATION 2008

L'ARBRE D'HUGO de Yohan de Montgrand

Ecriture et collaboration à la mise en scène
CM produit par La Fémis 2007

GRAND PRIX DU FESTIVAL DE RICHMOND-USA 2008

Scénario

REPARER LES VIVANTS de Guillaume Gouix

LM en développement chez Dharamsala
Collaboration à l'écriture avec le concours de Céline Sciamma

BEBE TIGRE de Cyprien Vial

LM produit par Dharamsala 2014
Collaboration à l'écriture avec le concours de Céline Sciamma

LA FEMME A CORDES de Vladimir Mavounia

CM produit par Caïmans 2011
MENTION SPÉCIALE DU JURY DU PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL SHORTFEST 2012

MADAME de Cyprien Vial

CM produit par Dharamsala 2009
GRAND PRIX D'INTERPRÉTATION POUR JOHAN LIBÉREAU AU FESTIVAL JEAN CARMET 2010

LA TRAVERSEE de Maeva Poli

CM produit par la Fémis 2007
GRAND PRIX DE LA BIENNALE INTERNATIONALE DES FILMS D'ÉCOLE, TUNISIE 2008
GRAND PRIX DU FESTIVAL DE GRASSE 2008

CLAIRE BURGER

La Fémis - Département Montage

Réalisation

PARTY GIRL

En coréalisation avec Marie Amachoukeli et Samuel Theis
LM produit par Elzévir Films 2014

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GRAND PRIX FRANCE-TÉLÉVISION 2010
SEMAINE DE LA CRITIQUE 2009

TOUTE MA VIE J'AI RÊVE

Fiction 35' - La Fémis

FORBACH

En collaboration avec Marie Amachoukeli et Samuel Theis
CM produit par La Fémis 2008
GRAND PRIX NATIONAL DU FESTIVAL DE CLERMONT-FERRAND 2009
2^{ÈME} PRIX AU FESTIVAL DE CANNES SÉLECTION CINÉFONDATION 2008

SAMUEL THEIS

La Fémis - Atelier Scénario
E.N.S.A.T.T.

Réalisation

PARTY GIRL

En coréalisation avec Marie Amachoukeli et Claire Burger
LM produit par Elzévir Films 2014

FORBACH de Claire Burger

Ecriture et collaboration à la mise en scène avec Marie Amachoukeli
CM produit par La Fémis 2008
GRAND PRIX NATIONAL DU FESTIVAL DE CLERMONT-FERRAND 2009
2^{ÈME} PRIX AU FESTIVAL DE CANNES SÉLECTION CINÉFONDATION 2008

Mise en Scène

JUSTE LA FIN DU MONDE de Jean-Luc Lagarce

PRIX SACD 2011
PRIX THÉÂTRE 13 - JEUNES METTEURS EN SCÈNE 2011

Acteur

UNE NUIT

LM réalisé par Philippe Lefebvre 2012

LA PRINCESSE DE MONTPENSIER

LM réalisé par Bertrand Tavernier 2011

MUSEE HAUT, MUSEE BAS

LM réalisé par Jean-Michel Ribes 2009

L'AVENIR DE L'HOMME

CM réalisé par Arnaud Bertrand 2010

BELLE SALOPE

CM ARTE réalisé Philippe Roger 2009



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OUI, PEUT-ÊTRE

CM réalisé par Maryline Canto
TALENT CANNES 2007

DERNIERS REMORDS AVANT L'OUBLI de Jean-Luc

Lagarce
TNS Strasbourg / mise en scène Julie Brochen 2010

HOP LA, NOUS VIVONS ! d'Ernst Toller

Théâtre de la Ville Paris / mise en scène Christophe Perton
2009

CORIOLAN de William Shakespeare

TNP Villeurbanne / mise en scène Christian Schiaretti 2007

Cast

Angélique **Angélique Litzenburger**
Michel **Joseph Bour**
Mario **Mario Theis**
Samuel **Samuel Theis**
Séverine **Séverine Litzenburger**
Cynthia **Cynthia Litzenburger**

Crew

Written and directed by

Marie Amachoukeli

Claire Burger

Samuel Theis

Based on an original idea by **Samuel Theis**
First directors' assistant **Antoine Chevrollier**
Cinematography **Julien Poupard**
Editing **Frédéric Baillehaiche**
Sound **Mathieu Villien, Pierre Bariaud, Mélissa Petitjean**
Set design **Nicolas Migot**
Costumes **Laurence Forgue Lockhart**
General Manager **Didier Abot**
Production Manager **Claire Trinquet**
Post-production Manager **Pauline Gilbert**
Original Music **Nicolas Weil, Sylvain Ohrel, Alexandre Lier**
Produced by **Elzévir Films, Marie Masmonteil & Denis Carot**

With the participation of Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée
And of CANAL+

With the support of Région Lorraine
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