

STAYING VERTICAL

A FILM BY ALAIN GUIRAUDIE



OFFICIAL SELECTION
COMPETITION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



INTERNATIONAL PR

ANYWAYS

FLORENCE ALEXANDRE

+33 6 31 87 17 54 / florence@anyways.fr

VANESSA FRÖCHEN

+33 6 07 98 52 47 / vanessa@anyways.fr

Cannes office

LES CITADINES

1 rue Le Poussin / +33 1 48 24 12 91

INTERNATIONAL SALES

WILD BUNCH

VINCENT MARAVAL & NOEMIE DEVIDE / ndevide@wildbunch.eu

CAROLE BARATON & OLIVIER BARBIER

cbaraton@wildbunch.eu / obarbier@wildbunch.eu

EMILIE SERRES / eserres@wildbunch.eu

SILVIA SIMONUTTI / ssimonutti@wildbunch.eu

LES FILMS DU WORSO PRESENTS



OFFICIAL SELECTION
COMPETITION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

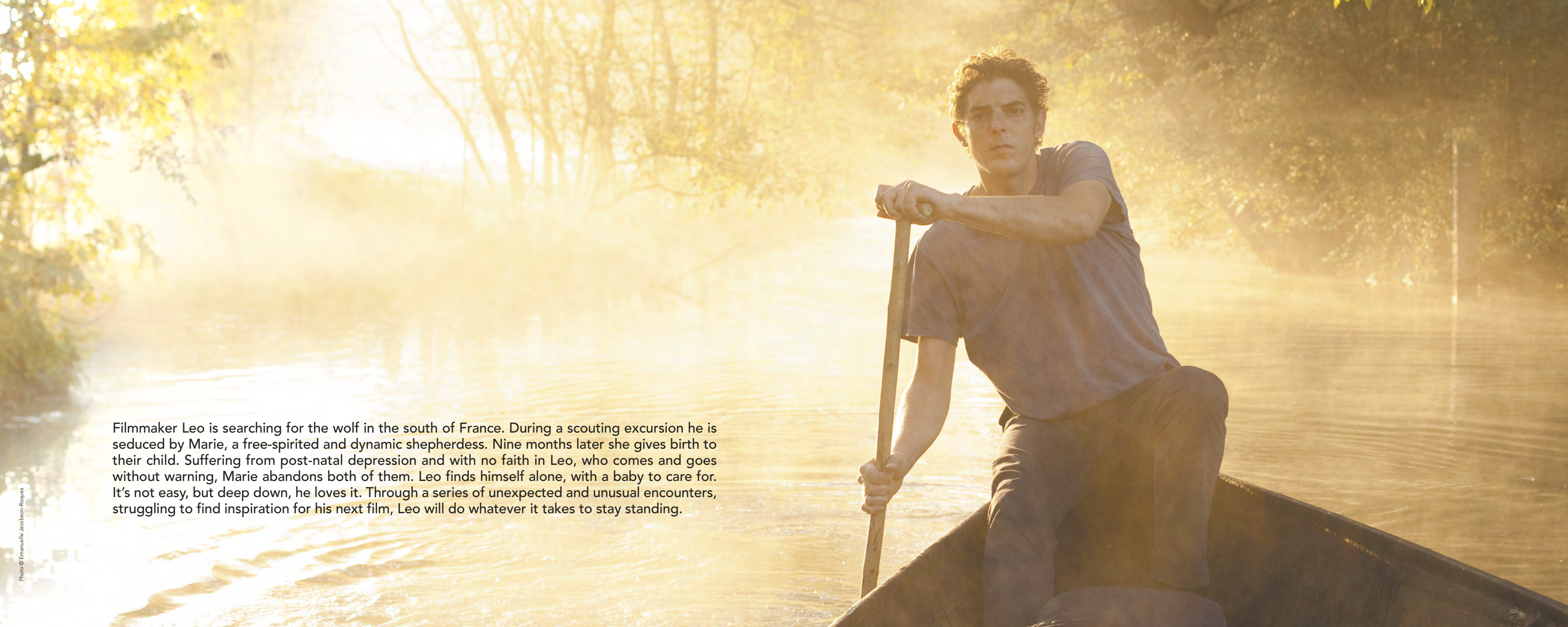
DAMIEN BONNARD

INDIA HAIR

RAPHÄEL THIÉRY

STAYING VERTICAL

FRANCE | 1H40 | SCOPE | COLOUR | 5.1

A young man with dark, curly hair is sitting in a small wooden boat on a river. He is wearing a dark t-shirt and dark pants. He is holding a long wooden pole or oar. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunset or sunrise, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the water and the trees on the banks. The man has a serious expression and is looking towards the camera.

Filmmaker Leo is searching for the wolf in the south of France. During a scouting excursion he is seduced by Marie, a free-spirited and dynamic shepherdess. Nine months later she gives birth to their child. Suffering from post-natal depression and with no faith in Leo, who comes and goes without warning, Marie abandons both of them. Leo finds himself alone, with a baby to care for. It's not easy, but deep down, he loves it. Through a series of unexpected and unusual encounters, struggling to find inspiration for his next film, Leo will do whatever it takes to stay standing.



Photo © Thierry Valletoux

INTERVIEW WITH ALAIN GUIRAUDIE

Your filmmaking is unique in its treatment of nature... and in its powerful representations of sex. You are no doubt one of the most explicit filmmakers in France.

The question of sex is one I've been tiptoeing around for ages, and like for many of us, it's one I find both fascinating and frightening. That's even what makes it so interesting!

My approach has come a long way, maybe even from a point of view that was so repressed it was sometimes hard to detect. But once I got over my initial fears, I wanted to overcome the next ones, and the ones after that. Which may explain an impression of sexual explicitness, but it's not intentional. What's important to me is that it shouldn't be over-serious or solemn.

The beginning of *Staying Vertical* is actually pretty tame. We enter your film as if a children's fairytale was unfolding before our eyes: an old ogre, a young man, the edge of a forest and a noble knight riding in...

I think it's always been important for me to establish bridges between the life I led yesterday and my life today through tales, legends and myth. It's an avenue that's important for me to explore. It's been an essential question since time immemorial. It magnifies our lives, puts them into perspective, and puts us in touch with the thing that eludes us most: the great adventure of humanity and the universe. With his unusual body and face, the Jean-Louis character is, in this sense, totally mythological. Many of the film's elements recall the imaginativeness of a fairytale: the town of Séverac with the castle towering over it, the mysterious areas of the Poitevin marshland and, of course, the wolf...



Photo © Emmanuelle Jacobson-Roques

Some scenes go beyond the realm of fairytale to enter a dream world, if not a nightmare...

There's always a dialectic in my work between dreams and reality that allows me to see more clearly, lets me clear the horizon, and plumb the depths. While I've always done it, I don't draw as much attention to it. Now I'm able to do it without posting signs that say "Caution: dream scene ahead!"

The filmmaking process itself closely resembles that of dreams, it's an invitation to take greater liberties. One part of the film is a sort of dreamed life, sometimes a nightmare, and this part communicates with the other, more realistic, part.

Remaining open to this dreamlike dimension may be a pretense for holding onto my childhood dreams. This impulse I have to go and plant my camera in the middle of a field no doubt has something to do with that. As a boy I loved nature and spending time building little dams in streams. Now I live in the city, but one way or another, I always need to get back to nature with my films.

Its air of childhood, myth and dreams doesn't stop *Staying Vertical* from posing a number of pressing questions relating to contemporary society. But your intentions never seem intellectualized. They maintain a very real sort of spontaneity.

I don't film things to force issues, only to put them on the table, to broach questions in a way that approximates the way I actually pose them to myself. Forcing issues gets me nowhere. I prefer the idea of reinventing what's real, introducing a little wiggle-room, a little slack. It's a way to avoid the idea of fatalism, of destiny.

I don't see myself as an intellectual, even if writing takes up most of my time. I'm very preoccupied with issues like gender, procreation, surrogacy and euthanasia, but it's true that I don't theorize them, and anyway, I don't have a clear-cut opinion about any of it. My writing and filmmaking are inspired by reality and current events, which I often find the cinema treats in too dogmatic or illustrative a manner.



Photo © Emmanuelle Jacobson-Reques

Staying Vertical also touches on the highly controversial subject of assisted suicide, which you deal with in a rather spectacular manner...

When I began my screenplay, I knew Marcel would die and that Leo would somehow be involved, but I didn't have any preconceived notion as to how. It was while writing that I realized it had quite organically become a key sequence in the film. When I first came up with it, I didn't think of it as "assisted suicide". But as I wrote the following scene, in which the cops discover the death, the term sprang out of the logic of the characters.

As for the spectacular side, that's not so new either. Sex and death were already there in the caves at Lascaux. Fundamentally, in this film, just as in life, the things that come to us by intuition end up finding their own *raison d'être*, their own meaning and necessity after the fact... and that makes a film a delight to put together.

The film seems to develop a form of nostalgia without regret for a bygone era.

"Nostalgia without regret" is an expression I like a lot. And even if it's a cliché that there was more togetherness, solidarity and collective consciousness in the 1970s and 80s than there is now, I can't help myself. I don't know if it's a reality or a subjective point of view. In general, when we're young, we spend more time in groups, looking for a form of closeness. Maybe I'm more nostalgic for my youth (not that it was so great) than the 70s. I felt very attached to a certain region and way of life, like Larzac which was a world apart for me growing up, a different political, geographical and emotional landscape. But that's not the world I'm filming in *Staying Vertical*, unless it's to judge how far we've strayed from that era and that world, which I feel could disappear.

I carry around that flavor of the seventies with me, I even cultivate it. There's something eternal in me that stays rooted in my teenage boarding school years, the joyrides on mopeds and the Saturday night dances.





Photo © Emmanuelle Jacobson-Roque

A little nostalgia is inevitable. There was something more exhilarating about discovering Pink Floyd at fifteen than Wooden Shjips today, but I know that's subjective. With age, discoveries come with less intensity.

For that matter, this film is no doubt less overtly political than your previous ones.

I sense there's something fundamentally political about this film but I can't say what it is. Political questions are no longer posed in the same way. Like a lot of people, the further I go, the more I stumble around, and the more lost I become. Naturally I've stabilized a thing or two, forged a few principles, kept a few certainties, but overall, I'm in doubt. Things are getting more and more complex, aren't they?

The most direct political issue in the film is about the wolf. It's a divisive question, and in all likelihood, insoluble. What do we do about this animal that some would protect, and what do we do about the shepherds? If we want to keep sheep out in the open, keep a form of traditional pastoralism, we have to get rid of the wolf. The film sums up my own confusion on a host of questions that arise from it. Is it so important to have wolves in France?

By digging into the question of the wolf, by discussing the issue with those concerned by it, I discovered the extent to which this concrete problem could be a metaphor, a political metaphor but also an existential one. It evokes ancestral, even biblical themes, and leads to very contemporary dilemmas.

It's also a film about men who are alone.

Men and women. I've never really filmed anything else; the stories of people who are alone together. And I wanted to invert the image of the "single parent", to show that there are cases where men raise a baby on their own—maybe because they want to—exactly like a woman, who no longer shocks anyone by having a baby on her own. In the final count, is that not what the film's hero was after? To have the child without the hassle of the mother? It also breaks with certain clichés: not all women have a maternal instinct or calling. I enjoyed toying with these societal issues.

The final scene with the wolves is flooded in a mythic light, there's a biblical air about it, like something straight out of an Italian Renaissance painting. It has a larger-than-life quality that adds a new dimension to your work.

I think I'm getting more and more attached to things that are "larger-than-life". We need that. To magnify our lives, to make more of them. The whole film tends toward that. They always say "all the stories have been told," but I disagree: *Staying Vertical*, at least, is typical of the kind of story you never see in cinema. I want to continue making films that have a dreamlike quality, but also, more and more, to conjugate it with the brutality of real life, to go looking for adversity, for things that are not always shiny and bright. The profound contradiction in which the hero finds himself lies in the final scene where he hopes to unite the wolf and the lamb. He's trying to create a utopia where they would co-exist without harm.

In a way, to solve the equation of the film, I allowed myself to get carried away with the emotion of it. There are cases where logic no longer suffices. *Staying Vertical* is the first film where I do this so clearly.

What about the title?

I read somewhere that for the wolf, man is a vertical animal, and that verticality inspires care, respect and wariness. In Lozère, I met people who had heard their grandparents tell them, should they come face to face with a wolf, to remain standing. I liked that notion. It too has a political, programmatic dimension that's important to me. As for the sexual connotation, I can't say it displeases me.

Photo © Emmanuelle Jacobson-Roque





Photo © Emmanuelle Jacobson-Roques

CAST

Léo
Marie
Jean-Louis
Marcel
Yoan
Mirande
The producer

Damien Bonnard
India Hair
Raphaël Thiéry
Christian Bouillette
Basile Meilleurat
Laure Calamy
Sébastien Novac

CREW

Written & Directed by
Producers
Art Director
DP
Editor
Casting
Production Designer
Sound
Hair & Make-up
Costume Designers
1st Assistant director
Continuity
Production Manager
Location Manager
Post-production Supervisor
French Distributor
International Sales

Alain Guiraudie
Sylvie Pialat, Benoît Quainon
Roy Genty
Claire Mathon (AFC)
Jean-Christophe Hym
Stéphane Batut
Toma Baqueni
Philippe Grivel, Jeanne Delplancq, Nathalie Vidal
Caroline Philipponnat
Sabrina Violet, François Labarthe, Adelaïde Le Gras
Arnaud Estérez
Nicole Marie
Nicolas Leclere
Vincent Léonard
Toufik Ayadi
Les Films du Losange
Wild Bunch

FILMOGRAPHIES

DAMIEN BONNARD

Vendeur by Sylvain Desclous • **Voir du pays** by Delphine and Muriel Coulin • **L'Astragale** by Brigitte Sy • **Through the Air** by Fred Grivois • **Mercuriales** by Virgil Vernier • **La Pièce manquante** by Nicolas Birkenstock • **A Perfect Plan** by Pascal Chaumeil • **Augustine** by Alice Winocour • **Orléans** by Virgil Vernier • **The Clink of Ice** by Bertrand Blier

INDIA HAIR

Crash Test Aglaé by Eric Gravel • **Stan** by Magaly Richard-Serrano • **Parisienne** by Danielle Arbid • **Chic!** by Jérôme Cornuau • **L'Astragale** by Brigitte Sy • **Merry Christmess** by Olivier Doran • **Jacky in the Kingdom of Women** by Riad Sattouf • **Brèves de comptoir** by Jean-Michel Ribes • **High Society** by Julie Lopes Curval • **Camille Rewinds** by Noémie Lvovsky • **Avant l'aube** by Raphaël Jacoulot

CHRISTIAN BOUILLETTE

The Very Private Life of Mister Sim by Michel Leclerc • **Je te mangerais** by Sophie Laloy • **Faubourg 36** by Christophe Barratier • **Michou d'Auber** by Thomas Gilou • **L'Affaire Marcorelle** by Serge Le Péron • **Les Insaisissables** by Christian Gion • **One Hundred and One Nights of Simon Cinéma** d'Agnès Varda • **Netchaïev est de retour** by Jacques Deray • **Three Men and a Cradle** by Coline Serreau • **Graduate First** by Maurice Pialat • **The Question** by Laurent Heynemann

LAURE CALAMY

Primaire by Hélène Angel • **Cowboys** by Thomas Bidegain • **All About Them** by Jérôme Bonnell • **This Summer Feeling** by Mikhaël Hers • **French Women** by Audrey Dana • **Wild Life** by Cédric Kahn • **Week-Ends** de Anne Villacèque • **Bicycling With Molière** by Philippe Le Guay • **Fidelio, Alice's Journey** by Lucie Borleteau • **Zouzou** by Blandine Lenoir • **9 Month Strech** by Albert Dupontel • **A Perfect Plan** by Pascal Chaumeil • **La Fleur de l'âge** by Nick Quinn • **Park Benches** by Bruno Podalydès • **Passe-Passe** by Tonie Marshall • **Gentle pain** by Carsten Brandt • **Wild Innocence** by Philippe Garrel

RAPHAËL THIÉRY and BASILE MEILLEURAT

Staying Vertical by Alain Guiraudie

ALAIN GUIRAUDIE

FEATURE FILMS

2016 - **Staying Vertical**
2013 - **Stranger by the Lake**
2009 - **King of Escape**
2005 - **Time has Come**
2003 - **No Rest for the Brave**

MEDIUM-LENGTH FILMS

2001 - **That Old Dream that Moves**
2000 - **Sunshine for the Poor**

SHORT FILMS

1997 - **La Force des Choses**
1994 - **Tout droit jusqu'au matin**
1990 - **Les héros sont immortels**



