

AFTER «A SUMMER NIGHT RENDEZ-VOUS»
french national award «César» for short films 2002



Urban tale

an animation film of 15 mn

by Florence Miailhe

selected for the official competition in Cannes 2006

A coproduction by «Films de l'Arlequin», l'ONF and ARTE France»

THE STORY ... LIKE A PIECE OF PAPER STUCK TO A FINGER

The seven main characters go through an eventful day in a neighbourhood which is being built and demolished at the same time, on the banks of the river. The neighbourhood is a mix of old buildings, ultra-modern avenues and a plot of waste ground with a building site, a circus, an industrial wasteland and blocks of flats in the course of being demolished. This is a bold space which is pervaded with uncertainty, transience, marginality ...

Posters and billboards everywhere impose the depraved situations they depict upon the onlookers.

The story moves on from one character to the other, like a piece of paper stuck to a finger.

Here they first pass each other without seeing each other, a doll is handed over... The true encounters take place later, when an accident provides them with an occasion to gather. The characters are then thrown into a farandole as they all strive towards different goals. But their ways will meet and eventually intertwine...

Rooted in the utmost daily routine, the narrative moves towards drama and takes on a fantastic dimension.

DIRECTION

Florence Miailhe

STORY BY

**Florence Miailhe
Marie Desplechin**

MUSIC

Denis Colin

ANIMATION

**Florence Miailhe
Francis Desharnais
Catherine Ginapé
Olivier Lavenant**

BACKGROUNDS

Violaine Lecuyer

SOUND DESIGN

Olivier Calvert

EDITING

Fabrice Gérardi

FOWLEYS

Olivier Calvert

Anita Glodek

PRODUCTION

Marcel Jean

Dora Benousilio



AT THE BEGINNING A DESIRE AND A COLLABORATION

The desire to realize *Urban tale* goes back long before the project was carried out. I remember Florence's attraction for the urban world, and her wish to represent it through a story set in its background. Her desire, however, became embodied in an amazing building site on the left bank, the ZAC Rive Gauche.

As she worked in a production unit in the Frigos, a former industrial wasteland located in the ZAC, she could see, day after day, how the redeveloped area was being built up and filled with people in the utmost disorder. The swallowing up of a town, the shooting up of another and the ceaseless human motion all blended with the desire to deal with the trivial event and its urban character. The film was born.



«As I watched the amazing process of transformation in the area where I've been working for about ten years, I wanted to collect, in a film, all the emotions and fits of rage the process had awakened in me. Marie Desplechin immediately subscribed to the project. We tried to imagine a story which would account for the behaviour and the passions of human groups, where smiles and wonders are placed side by side with violence and trivial things ...»



**FLORENCE MIALTHE
MARIE DESPLECHIN
DENIS COLIN**

More than a film set, the neighbourhood is the film's main character: appealing, threatening, fantastic and ambivalent; greedy.

With its huge dimension, its temporary nature and the amazing variety of places and situations it offers, the building site best defines what cities are, a network of sensible daily routine and extraordinary situations, of images both kind and violent, of nostalgia and excitement.

Florence Mialthe was born in Paris in 1956. In 1980 she graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs with a specialization in engraving. Besides her work as a painter, she started working as a dummy maker and an illustrator in the press and the publishing business. After a series of exhibitions about hammams, she took up animation, which has since played a major part in her artistic research. *Urban tale* is her sixth film.

A CIRCUS, AN OLD LADY WALKING DOGS, A TRAMP...

The Paris depicted in *Urban tale* has the soul of those cities which keep changing, like living organisms, as they mix all sorts of people with different motivations, as they bring together places which are unfamiliar to one another, worlds which live next to each other and interpenetrate before changing once again.

I needed a story which could represent the way the town, viewed as a global entity, makes use of the unexpected closeness it generates. Which could represent the fascination, the fear, the speed, the uncanny and the supernatural.

Even before I started writing, it was understood that there was to be a circus, a tiger, an old lady walking dogs, a tramp, boys roller-skating, as well as haunting obscene adverts ... I should have known that there would be a giant fish too ... and that if the noises of the town were to appear in the soundtrack, Denis Colin would create the music. For the real town is the town one dreams up, of course! It is a maze of desires and promises, of threat and violence, of straight lines and curves, among which daily routine develops.



MARIE DESPLECHIN was born in 1959 is a woman writer. She is the author of children's books, which are mainly published by L'école des loisirs, and of literary works such as novels, stories and short stories. Her most recent books include *Jamais contente* - L'école des loisirs *L'album vert* - Nicolas Chaudun, *Bobigny Centre Ville* (in collaboration with Denis Darzac) - Actes Sud.

She collaborated with Florence Mialhe on the screenplays/scripts for *Shéhérazade* and *Histoire du prince devenu borgne et mendiant*, which are adaptations of *The Arabian Nights*.



...AND A GIANT FISH TOO...

Seven characters - seven figures in the community life hand over a toy to each other, as relay runners hand over to their team-mates. Who is in control: the human beings or the little toy which shelters a gleaming treasure? It is the toy, naturally, the little doll pregnant with dream dust.

It drives the seven characters in the midst of a storm which rages all of a sudden and then abates, as a black god operating a crane watches from the top of the sky.

A DOLL PREGNANT WITH DREAM DUST

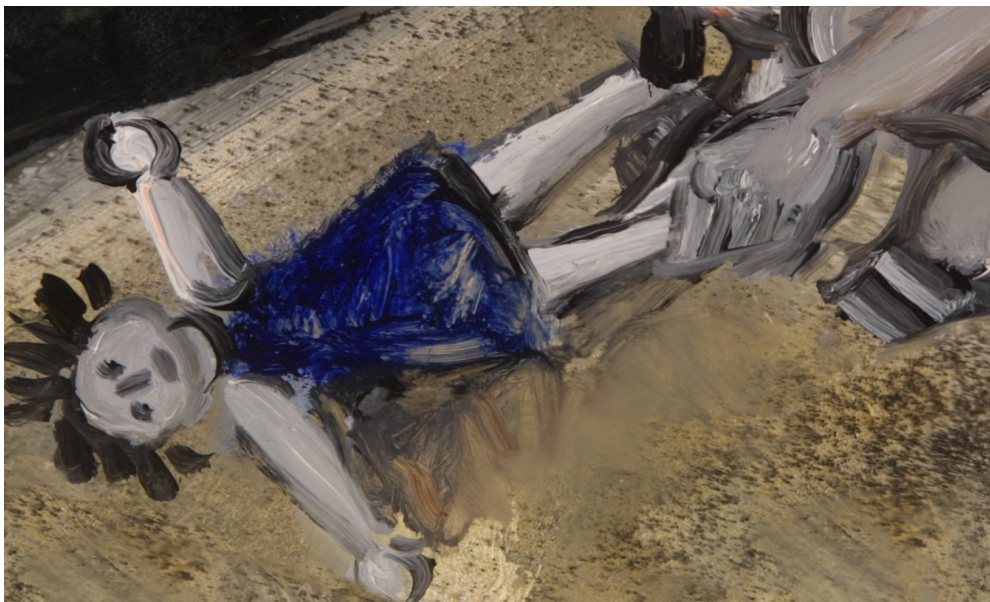
It all happened in one day. When the night finally comes, it carries away the ghosts of the day.

Three years ago, we worked on creating the story which would convey the way we saw the town, the way we perceived it and what we loved about it. I had known Florence for quite a long time, I had worked with her before, I loved her universe and was aware of what I shared with it.

In the next three years, as I happened to be at the production unit, I had the opportunity to see a few minutes of her work, only a few scraps on the computer. Needless to say, I had no idea what the whole work would be like.

Then, last January, I finally could view a big-screen projection. I was astounded. There it was, there it really was: what she had had on her mind three years before, and which had remained unaltered in spite of the years that had passed, of the technical constraints and the eroding power of work itself. It was both Paris, the city, and Florence's very particular way of looking at things around her in a loyal, timid, loving, wonderstruck manner.

Marie Desplechin



DENIS COLIN was born in Vanves in 1956. He is a bass clarinetist, a composer and an improviser. Since 1976 he has been playing with a variety of musical groups, ranging from the duet to the large orchestra, who allowed him to take part in today's music and to meet many musicians. As a composer, he has written, among others, a large part of the repertoire of his own musical groups : Denis Colin Trio, Quintette des Arpenteurs.

He has composed the music of Florence Mialhe's last five movies.

DISCOGRAPHY

SONGS FOR SWANS Denis Colin Trio, présente Gwen Matthews 2006

SOMETHING IN COMMON Denis Colin Trio, 2002

ETUDE DE TERRAIN Denis Colin & Les Arpenteurs, 2000

FLUIDE Denis Colin Trio, 1998

IN SITU À BANLIEUES BLEUES Denis Colin Trio, 1995

TROIS Denis Colin Trio, 1993

SEUL Denis Colin, bass clarinet, 1991

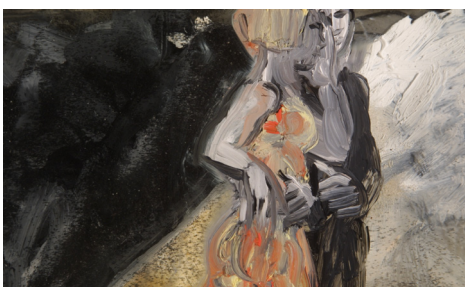
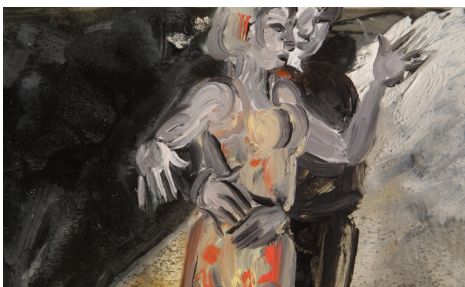
MUSIC AND SOUND IN TUNE WITH AN ANIMATED PAINTING

«Like in my previous films, I have used a technique in which animation is shot directly under the camera. The oil-paint drawings are gradually altered.

A new image is shot every time there is a change. Every new drawing erases and replaces the previous drawing. All that remains of this work is the trace which has been recorded and which conveys the transience of motion and the magic of the material.

The distinctive feature of the latest film lies in its being shot with a digital camera, which makes it possible to re-process the image on the computer and to compose it layer by layer.

I needed to conjure up an in-depth evocation of the town, with its setting, the building site, the adverts, the cars, the pedestrians, as well as the main characters. I wanted each layer to have a character of its own. The computer thus enabled me to blend painted



Urban tale is the fifth collaboration between Florence Mialhe and Denis Colin.

To compose the music of the film, Denis has made use of the whole range of musical creation: synthetic sounds for the town, acoustic instruments to go with the main characters and, above all, electro-acoustic sounds, made from real building-site noises, to distort the reality of sounds.

The music has been conceived in close collaboration with Olivier Calvert, sound designer in Montreal. The melodies creep into the noises of the town, the actual sounds fade away and give way to the building site's electro-acoustic score when the movie plunge into the fantastic.

This film probably ranks among Denis Colin's most beautiful challenges.

"I wished the music would emphasize the amazing variety and the richness of the visual material, of the situations and the characters, without losing its fluidity and unity for all that."

The wish has been fulfilled. Once again, the music blends intimately with the images and it guides the narration.

ALL THAT
REMAINS IS THE
RECORDED TRACE

settings with adverts which had been reprocessed from actual pictures, and with sand or oil-paint animated characters.

«DES BEAUX FILMS PEINTS DE FLORENCE MIAILHE...»



Hammam *Sensuel, poétique mais aussi vif et plein d'humour : Hammam brosse l'univers alangui de ce lieu hors du temps. Les corps moites enduits de boues et d'onguents, les visages masqués d'argile ont inspiré à Florence Miailhe un court-métrage superbe, petit bijou d'animation directe.*
B.A.T.



Schéhérazaïde... *Ce qui compte, avec le Schéhérazade de Florence Miailhe, c'est l'espèce de vertige qui naît du mouvement incessant des formes et des couleurs qui explosent et se transforment en grenades, de la musique jazzy, rapide, de Denis Colin, où le violoncelle et le zarb mettent de l'ivresse (...) Sur ce conte rouge d'une sensualité et même d'un érotisme cru, les personnages évoluent entre humour et poésie.*

Catherine Humblot

LE MONDE



Schéhérazaïde... *Mais l'évènement de cette soirée est ailleurs. Il est dans les deux films d'animation peints et réalisés par Florence Miailhe : Schéhérazade, à 20h45 et L'histoire d'un prince devenu borgne et mendiant, à 22h35.*

... Un univers de huis clos, de luxuriance et de harem, fait de femmes voilées, de corps dévoilés, de forte sensualité, de drapés, de sang et de mort. Cru mais jamais violent. On n'a pas envie de parler que de l'orgie des ocres et des carmen, de l'extase des lignes qui glissent par degrés poétiques vers l'érotisme le plus ensorcelant. C'est beau, moderne, troublant. Les textes de Marie Desplechin sont légers et magiques. La musique envoûtante. De la belle ouvrage pour tous publics !
M.J. L'HUMANITÉ



Au premier dimanche d'août *Des beaux films peints de Florence Miailhe, on avait retenu la lumière éclatante d'un univers où la couleur est à l'origine du monde. On se rappelait l'atmosphère langoureuse de Hammam (tiède volupté du bain turc, intimité des femmes entre elles) et les splendeurs orientales de Schéhérazade – palais, jardins, gynécée, femmes sensuelles et rouées qui triomphent de la sottise des hommes. On connaissait ce goût pour tracer l'ondulation des courbes féminines, la grâce des formes traversées par la musique, leur fusion dans la soudaine proximité d'un massage, d'une danse ou d'une étreinte. Dans Au premier dimanche d'août, la veine orientale a disparu, mais les filles pulpeuses qui dominent la fête sont les dignes héritières des belles de harem, et l'érotisme naïf des films précédents se teinte de réalisme.*
Jacqueline Nacache

BREF



...Les oiseaux blancs et les oiseaux noirs

En 2001, pour un documentaire de Louis Decque consacré au sage malien Tierno Bokar, Florence Miailhe a réalisé avec des sables colorés ces quatre minutes somptueuses, époustouflantes de grâce et de poésie (...) Le ton est celui du conte, la voix du narrateur et la musique complètent admirablement le travail de l'animatrice.
S.B.

TELERAMA

FILMOGRAPHY AND AWARDS

HAMMAM : 1991 35mm 8'
Paris Plage Productions

Finaliste des cartoons d'Or 1992
Nominé aux Césars
Prix Procirep
Grand prix du Court Métrage : festival international du film Amiens
Prix du Public : Festival de Belfort
Prix du Public : Festival du premier Film Savigny le Temple
Prix Emile Raynaud : Festival du dessin animé Marly le roi
Mention Spéciale : Prix Jean Vigo
Premier Prix du film d'animation : Festival International du court métrage Ismaïlia

SCHÉHÉRAZADE : 1995 35mm 16'
Paris Plage Productions

Finaliste des Cartoons d'Or 1996
Premier Prix du film d'animation : Festival International du court métrage Ismaïlia
Mention spéciale du Jury : Festival International du court métrage Clermont Ferrand
Prix du Public : Festival International des films de femmes Créteil
Prix du Public : Rencontres Cinémaginaires Argeles

HISTOIRE D'UN PRINCE DEVENU BORGNE ET MENDIANT :
1996 Béta 16'
Paris Plage Productions, Ardèche

AU PREMIER DIMANCHE D'AOÛT : 2001 35mm 11'20"
Les Films de l'Arlequin, ARTÉ France, Canal+

César du meilleur court métrage 2002
Finaliste des Cartoons d'Or 2002
Prix spécial du jury : Festival du court-métrage de Villeurbanne 2001
Premier Prix : Europa Cinéma Rome 2001-
Premier Prix : Festival International du film d'animation Espinho Portugal 2001
Prix de l'animation : Festival international du court-métrage Clermont- Ferrand 2001
Premier Prix et Prix Emile Raynaud : Festival du film d'animation Auch 2001
Prix du Public et Prix du jury : Rencontres Cinémaginaires Argeles

LES OISEAUX BLANCS ET LES OISEAUX NOIRS 2001 Béta 4'
Les Films du Village, ARTE France

CONTE DE QUARTIER 2006
Les Films de l'Arlequin, ONF, ARTE France

C O N T A C T S

A CANNES

Florence Mialhe
06 26 35 42 13
Heather Wyer
représentante de l'ONF
06 99 35 10 30

A PARIS

Les Films de l'Arlequin
01 42 77 20 55
23, rue Meslay
75003 Paris
arlequin@wanadoo.fr
filmsdelarlequin.com

A MONTRÉAL

ventes internationales
Office National du Film
3155 Chemin de la Côte
de Liesse
Saint Laurent
Québec H4N 2N4
Nicole Cote
n.cote@onf.ca