

zarafa





Synopsis

Under a baobab tree, an old man tells a story to the children around him:

The story of the everlasting friendship between Kaki, a little boy aged 10, and Zarafa, an orphaned giraffe, a gift from the Pasha of Egypt to the King of France, Charles X.

Hassan, Prince of the Desert, is instructed by the Pasha to deliver Zarafa to France. But Kaki has made up his mind to do everything in his power to stop Hassan from fulfilling his mission and to bring the giraffe back to its native land – even if it means risking his own life – because he must fulfill his promise to Zarafa's late mother.

During an epic journey that takes them from Sudan to Paris, passing on the way through Alexandria, Marseille and the snow-capped Alps, they have many adventures, crossing paths with the aviator Malaterre, a pair of unusual twin cows called Kounk and Pounk, and the pirate queen Bouboulina.

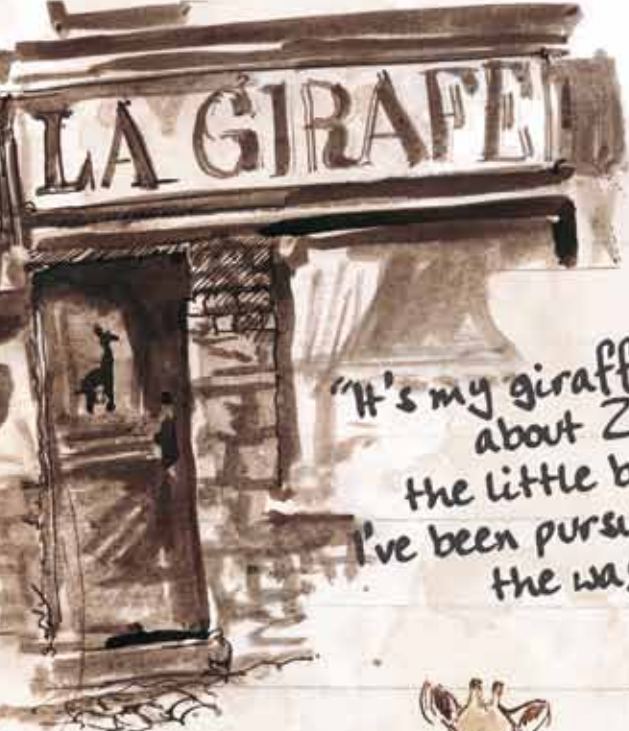


Director's Note

Jean-Christophe Lie

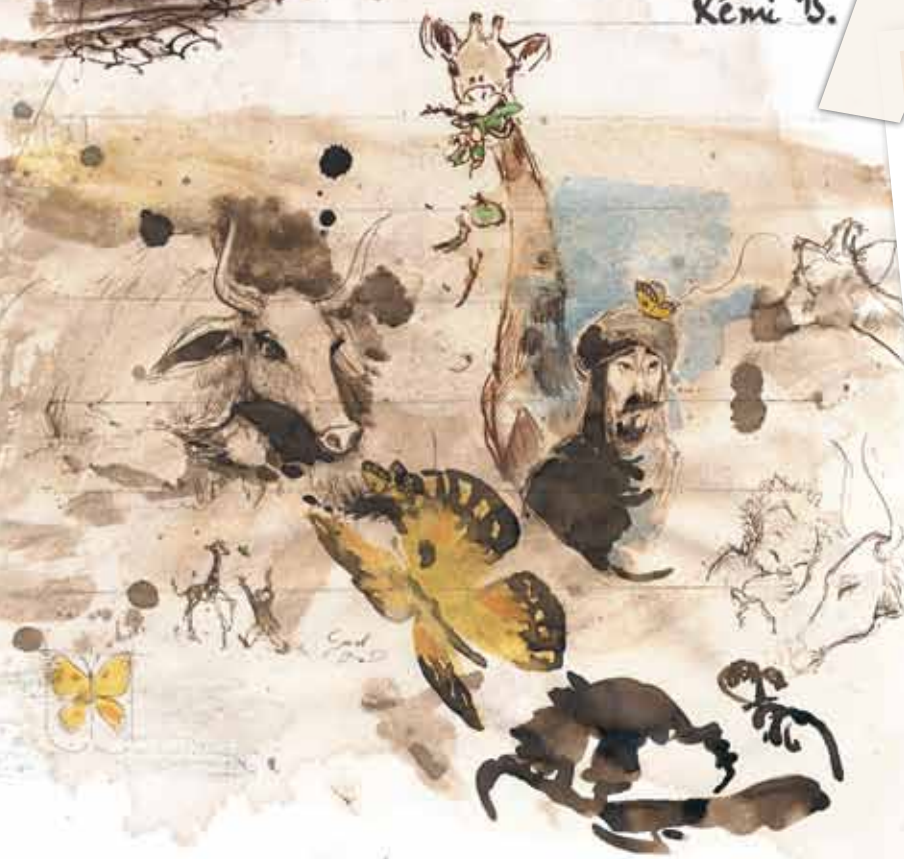
From the first time I read the synopsis of Zarafa, I wanted to be a part of the project. I was totally won over by this fascinating story that has philosophical elements and yet is based on real historical events.

Then came the immersion in the screenplay. The interaction between the characters took shape before my eyes, becoming increasingly clear as the story progressed and their journey continued. It's an extremely rich universe for a graphic storyteller. Especially thanks to the solid construction of the screenplay certain distinct memories of my childhood reading resurfaced: Saint-Exupéry, Noah's Ark, Jules Verne, and especially Victor Hugo, due to the historical, social and philosophical dimension of his work. When I met Rémi and we started work together on the direction and the



"It's my giraffe." That's how I talk about Zarafa. And like Maki, the little boy who's the hero of the film, I've been pursuing this mythical giraffe the way one pursues a dream. A childhood dream.

Rémi B.

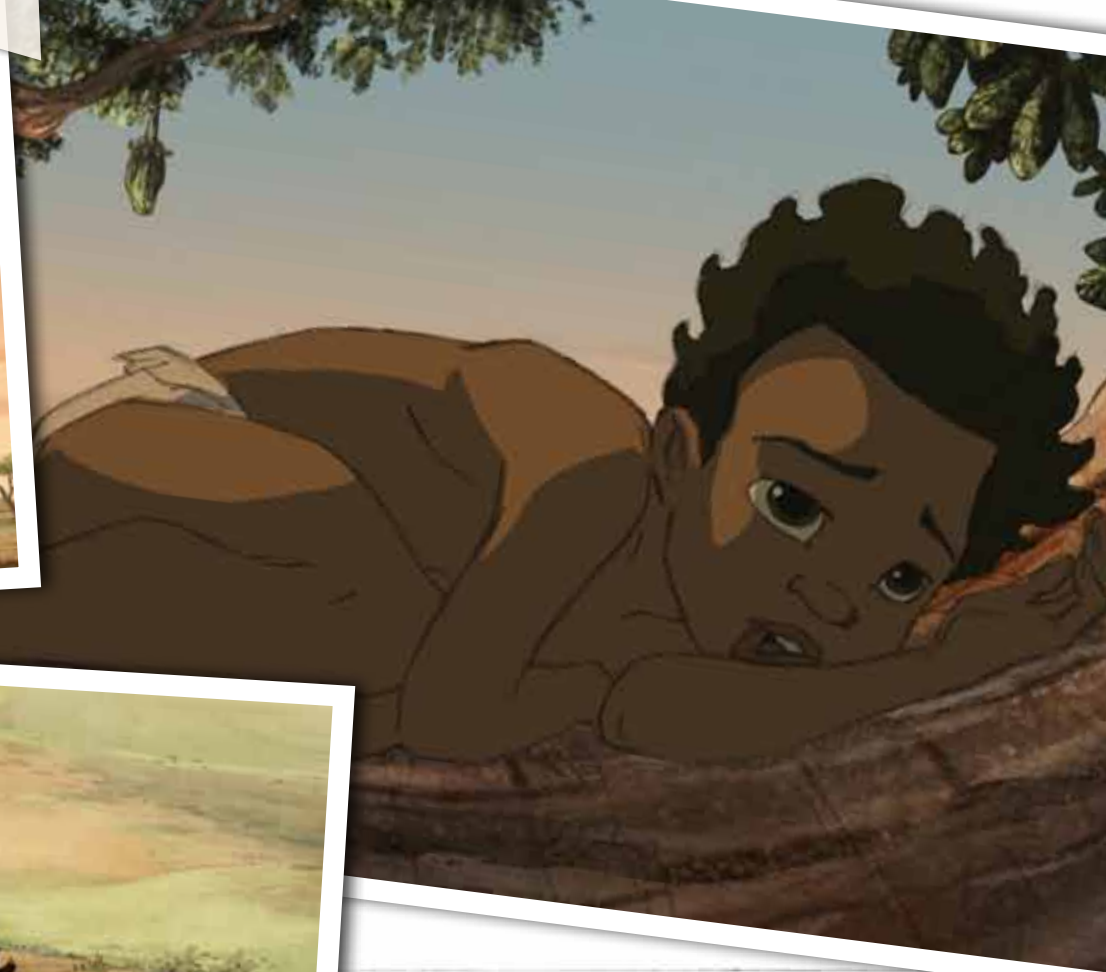


storyboard, I could sense his interest in drawing and his enthusiasm as the characters took shape. We shared a desire to use all the advantages of animated film in order to find a freedom that can't be obtained in liveaction cinema.

As far as I'm concerned, as a graphic storyteller, anchoring the story in the real world was paramount. Names like Gustave Daumier and romantic artists of the period such as Géricault and Delacroix came to mind, and were a starting point for creating the graphic universe.

I chose 2D as a technique, since it's more raw, textured look and is better suited to the period. It's also my preferred medium, allowing a rapprochement between the illustrated book and the movies.

I was delighted that B  mi chose to film in cinemascope. It gave us the opportunity to get the most out of the wide open spaces and the journey in general.



*The directing decisions were simple:
Few camera movements or special
effects, which could take away from the
narrative. The film's palette employs
the naturally warm colors of Africa,
and the early light and somber, cold hues
in Paris.*

*This co-directing exercise, in which each
partner brought his talents and point
of view, his experience and expertise,
was a pleasure to undertake and very
enriching.*



hassan



moreno



Main characters:

Zarafa

The heroine of the film, Zarafa is a giraffe who is due to be presented to the King of France. She forms a fiercely loyal friendship with Maki.

Maki

A slave owned by the despicable Moreno, Maki escapes and is helped by Zarafa, a deed which seals their friendship. Nothing could make Maki leave the side of his giraffe friend.

Hassan

Instructed by the Pasha of Egypt to find a giraffe to take to France, Hassan is a solitary man with a big heart. He can't seem to get rid of Maki, so he reluctantly brings him on the long journey, keeping an eye out for this endearing companion who won't give up on his efforts to take Zarafa home.

Kalatterre

With his hot air balloon that hangs above the port of Alexandria and watches over the Turks, this likeable explorer takes Zarafa and his companions on board to carry them to France by air.

maki



Soula



Soula

Another of Moreno's slaves, she is not brave enough to follow Maki when he flees. But fate means the children's paths continually cross.

Bouboulina

The leader of a cut-throat gang of pirates, she develops a soft spot for Maki and decides to help him.

bouboulina

Moreno

A ruthless slave trader who makes it a point of honor to get his hands on the runaway Maki, Moreno is the sworn enemy of Hassan, who is protecting the boy.

Amrok

As mean as his master Moreno, Amrok is a formidable weapon against any threat of escape on the part of the slaves he is entrusted to guard.



Pounhand Mounk

Two sacred cows from Tibet, they are twin sisters who can be distinguished by their gold and silver dresses. They join Hassan's caravan to feed Zarafa with their milk.

Benur

A one-eyed dromedary and Hassan's traveling companion.

moreno



amrok



hassan



Director's Note

Rémi Besançon

*In parallel to the contemporary portraits in my other films – a man in his thirties with Peter Pan syndrome in *Love Is in the Air*; a family seen through five exceptional days in *The First Day of the Best of Your Life*; and the young woman who, on becoming a mother, breaks the taboos of maternity with her tragi-comic diary in my upcoming film *A Happy Event* – this animation project has been close to my heart for a long time. The story of *Larafa*, the first giraffe in France, has always fascinated me, given that it touches on all the themes that are dear to me: Handing things on, friendship, and the passage of time. Today, I'm delighted to see this universal tale take shape through the deft and powerful artwork of Jean-Christophe Lie, with whom I am co-directing the film*



mahmoud sounh mounh



Cast

***Directors:** B mi Bexan on
and Jean-Christophe Lie*

***Producers:** Val rie Schermann
and Christophe Jankovic*

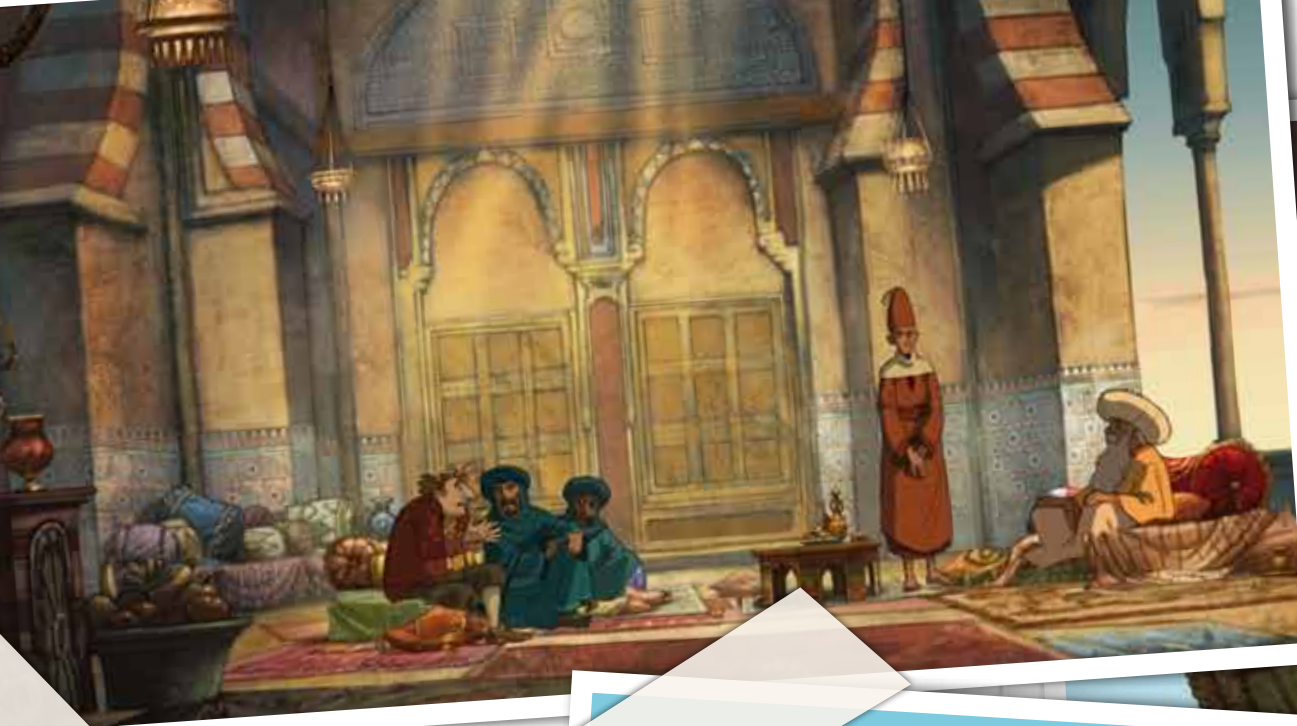
***Produced by:** Prima Linea Productions
In coproduction with: Path  Production,
France 3 Cin ma, Chaocorp,
Scope Pictures*

***Original screenplay:** Alexander Abela
and B mi Bexan on. Loosely inspired
by the true story of the giraffe given
by the Pasha of Egypt to the King of
France in 1827.*

***Adaptation:** B mi Bexan on, with
the participation of Jean-Fran ois Halin
and Vanessa Portal*

***Graphic creation:** Jean-Christophe Lie*

***Original music:** Laurent Perex del Mar*



Cast

*Storyboard: Jean-Christophe Lie
and Rémi Bexançon*

Head of production: François Bernard

*Development, preparation and key
animation: Bohlem Bouchiba,
Laurent Kircher, Eric Omond*

Head of layout: Jean-Luc Perrano

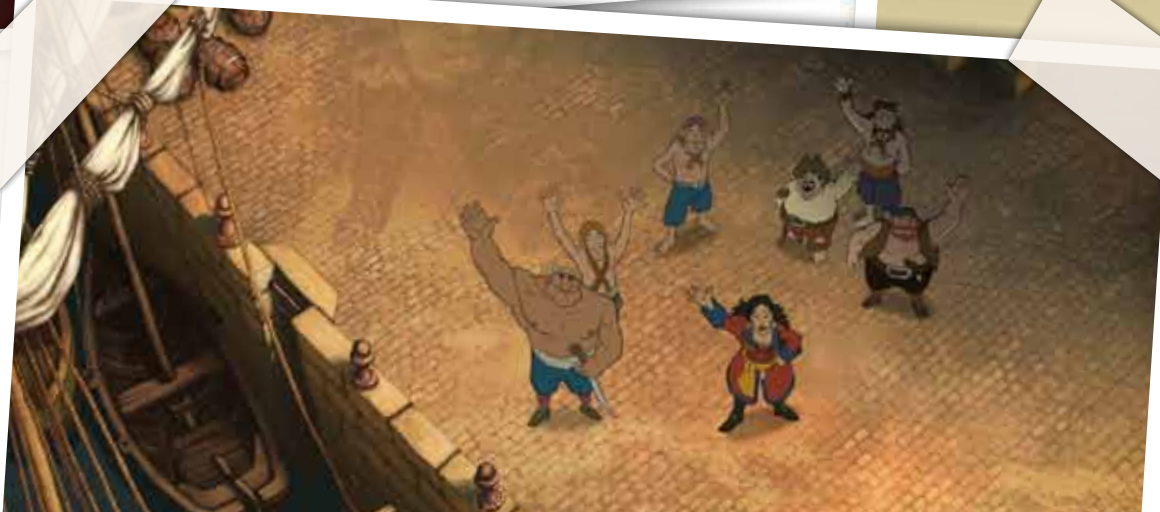
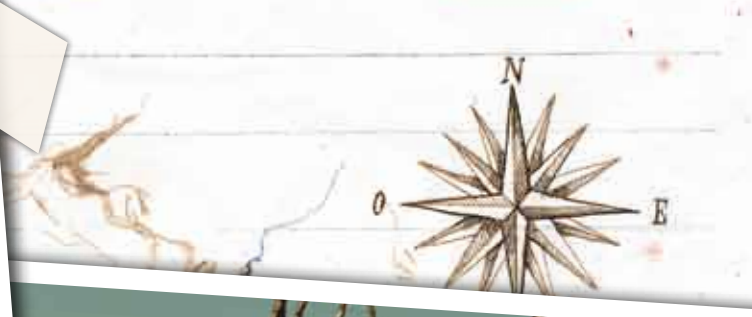
Pet designer: Igor David

Head of animation: Yoshimichi Tamura

Chef compositing: Jean-Pierre Bouchet

Editor: Sophie Reine

*Sound design & mix: Riste Rouge,
direction Bruno Texnec, mixer Fabien
Devillers*



Crew

*With the voices of
(in alphabetical order):*

Simon Abbkarian (Hassan),
François-Carrier Demaison (Malaterre),
Vernon Dobtcheff (wise old man),
Roger Dumas (Charles G),
Ronit Elkabetz (Bouboulina),
Fellag (Mahmoud),
Deborah François (adult Larafa),
Thierry Frémont (Kerenc),
Philippe Morier-Gencoud (Saint-Hilaire),
Mostefa Piti (Basha)
Max Renaudin (Kaki)
Clara Quilichini (Soula)





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