

LES FILMS DU MORSO AND VERSIS PRODUCTION PRESENT

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BÉRÉNICE BEJO CÉDRIC KAHN



# AFTER LOVE

A FILM BY  
JOACHIM LAFOSSE

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present



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WITH  
BÉRÉNICE **BEJO** AND CÉDRIC **KAHN**

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## SYNOPSIS

After 15 years of living together, Marie and Boris decide to get a divorce. Marie had bought the house in which they live with their two daughters, but it was Boris who had completely renovated it. Since he cannot afford to find another place to live, they must continue to share it.

When all is said and done, neither of the two is willing to give up.

# INTERVIEW WITH JOACHIM LAFOSSE

## **What triggered the idea of the film? How did you write it?**

It was the meeting with Mazarine Pingeot and our common wish to film the couple. We both wanted to show the very strong emotions behind the conflicts in couples and of which money is often the symptom. Mazarine is used to writing in pairs with another screenwriter, Fanny Burdino. As for me, I am used to working with Thomas Van Zuylen. They made a version and sent it to us. We worked on it and sent it back to them. And we continued like that until we started the actual preparations for the shooting. From that point on, I only worked with Thomas and the actors. As far as I'm concerned, the writing is only finished once the film has been shot. To be accurate, one must constantly seek and try, and most of all manage to get rid of ideas in order to allow for embodiment to happen. The script must belong to the actors so that they can take possession of the role fully and accurately. The film wouldn't be what it is without their contribution.

## **Is money the symptom or the cause of their conflicts? Boris, who has a less privileged background, does not have money. Marie does.**

In a couple, money represents one of the things we can quarrel about, it's not the deep cause of the dispute. Money isn't the reason why Boris and Marie can't love each other anymore. Money is the apple of discord, but behind that there is always the way in which one gets acknowledgement or not, the way in which one seeks recognition for what one has or has not done. Investment is never only economical or financial. Boris and Marie cannot agree upon how they should measure what they've given each other, because they haven't been clear from the beginning about each one's investment in the couple. Short reckonings also make great love stories.

## **So there is no political reading behind the title L'ÉCONOMIE DU COUPLE (original title, literally meaning "the economy of the couple" in French)?**

That's one possible reading. The director is there to make his film as plural as possible, with as many ways to relate to it and identify with it as he can. Personally, I don't want to look at the film from that angle. My starting point was the simple idea that, a priori, when you have children with somebody, it's never because you imagined it wasn't going to last. You can always notice a feeling of sadness in any separation... because you had not planned for it or imagined it.

## **This couple's situation gets even harder to bear since Boris does not have the means to find another place to stay, forcing the couple to go on living together.**

It was impossible not to take this economic reality into account: the price of rents in the big cities is at such a level it takes a lot of time for many people to get separated because they cannot afford to pay a rent on their own. We used to stay together for moral reasons; today it's for financial reasons. It says something about our era...

## **Why did you want to oppose an adult couple and a pair of twins?**

I've been wanting to stage a separating couple facing a pair of twin children for years: from the moment they're born, and despite the fantasy we all have when we're in love to be able to create a twin couple, the parents of twins have to face what they'll never be themselves. Being a twin myself and half-brother of twins, I've experienced that through what we were told by my father and mother, then by my father alone as he fathered twins again with a woman who herself was a twin. This is one of the things I hope I've managed to film in the scene where they are all dancing.

**We sense that the two girls are quite disrupted by the situation. At the same time, they give the impression that they are quite comprehensive regarding the very strict rules imposed by Marie on Boris, just like they're comprehensive regarding the father's transgressions: "It's not his day", Jade will tell Margaux, so as to explain the embarrassment which follows Boris's presence in the house on a Wednesday afternoon.**

Marie seems to set all the rules. She's in charge. Boris does not have a say, but in a way this situation allows him to set his own rule. Neither of them manages to find a common ground. But there's also something childish in their quarrels. Winnicot says: "The catastrophe has always taken place beforehand". It's interesting to study adults based on the children they've been and the quarrels they've had when young. But I want to avoid talking about the one or the other. It's up to the spectator and the journalists to take sides. The film allows that.

## **As for Marie's mother, played by Marthe Keller, she's militantly in favour of the couple's reconciliation.**

She's following the logic of her generation. She stands for a form of compromise which means turning love into friendship. I would like to think that love is something else: we live with someone because we desire them. Yet, desire is, by definition, the most complex, risky and uncomfortable thing there is. The character played by Bérénice Bejo believes she's capable of leading a life different from that of her parents. She's emancipating herself.

## **Let's go back to the children. During the scene of the dance, then the bedtime scene, we feel that they take an immense pleasure in saying "Daddy, Mummy" at the same time.**

I've been a divorce-child but I'm also a divorce-father. It's an asset when you consider what's possible but it's also a disadvantage because you cannot ignore the sadness this situation represents. A separation is always a failure. But, for me, the film says there's still something possible in it.

## **Despite the conflicts the couple is having, there are indeed a lot of feelings circulating between the two characters.**

Yes, the film is not a tragedy. For a long time tragedy was for me a way to defend myself when facing life and I'm happy to reveal that tenderness which is in both of the characters; they tear each other apart, and despite it all, they still have something to do together. If people come out from the film asking themselves how it's possible to unknot a situation like this in a way that takes care of the other, then I have accomplished my goal.

## **Tell us about the choice of actors.**

The casting is a very complicated moment for me – I go through a lot of doubts and can often backtrack; it's only really finished once the actors are on the set and we are shooting the film. Once we're there, I've never regretted my choices. Bérénice Bejo is an amazing accomplice: she's really on the writer's side. Is it because both her father and husband are film directors? She's a great actress - touching and very impressive. Bérénice is not really a star: she's real and that's why she's so accurate in the film. Cédric Kahn has brought all his subtlety and his intelligence to the character of Boris - not only by his playing, but also by his reflections on the couple. We didn't always agree, we sometimes had fights, but these fights elevated the film. I'll say it again: I always write my films with my actors.

## **How does that translate on set?**

To me, the director is like a sponge: he's not there to make the characters look like him but he's there to make the film as complex as possible. In order to reach that complexity and make it come alive, my work consists in listening to people, recognising their different points of view on a story and pushing them to be as close as possible to themselves, as subjective as possible. Then it's up to me to try to make my own cooking with all those ingredients.

For AFTER LOVE, I constructed and deconstructed many scenes to finally come to a result which is very

close to what I had initially imagined, but which sounds more realistic maybe. On set, I told the actors about my doubts. I did not hesitate to tell them I'm looking for something and ask them to come with suggestions. It was a complicated exercise for them because at first they thought they were free and afterwards they realised I was not going to give them the responsibility of making the choice... That is frustrating, and it took a lot of generosity on their part to accept it. I hope they know and feel what they have brought to the film. We're never inspired alone...

### **Did you ask the actors to watch any films in particular?**

Only one - WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? by Mike Nichols. I told them: "We're in a single, confined space which forces us to find the cinematography in it. My dream would be that you were as free as Mike Nichols managed to make Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton". To me that film is a magnificent reference.

### **How did you find Jade and Margaux, the two little girls?**

My casting director had seen about fifty children, among which was one of the twins. When I saw her coming, I asked the mother straight away if the sister wouldn't like to play as well. I didn't make them go through a test. To me, it was clear the twins would be great, that they would first and foremost play together and then with Bérénice and Cédric. It turned out they both had an enormous talent. I sometimes did forty or fifty consecutive takes with them. They followed through, like real little pros.

### **And the house is really a character in itself...**

It's a tremendous dramatic tool: it's the incarnation of what this couple wanted to build together and the involvement of both, a tangible proof of what used to be desired once, but is no more.

### **A sort of a mirror...**

And it was exciting to be able to discuss with Olivier Radot, the production designer, with whom I had already worked on THE WHITE KNIGHTS, about how a film set could represent the love, a love that is so hard to live for the characters in the film. What does a house in which we've been so happy look like? To me, it has to symbolise otherness. It's not a place we fill by buying all the objects together, but on the contrary a place into which each one of us brings what is important for him or her, making all these objects coexist. I hope that's what the set is telling. The house was an obvious choice for me, just as one actor becomes an obvious choice for a film. It was important that the house had a yard. We were filming in a confined space, and we needed some air.

### **In this confined space of the house, the camera moves with remarkable fluidity...**

What I find interesting and love to stage is the link: the possibility of going from one character to the other without brutality. The steadycam allows this suppleness and I had been dreaming about shooting an entire film with this tool for a long time. But it demands a skill, which allows only a few people to use it. François Hensgens, my director of photography, who's also my cameraman, happened to tell me about a new device, the Stab-One, which is faster to use and allows for more movement in cramped set configurations. He had used it on his previous film, showed me some footage that amazed me and we decided to shoot AFTER LOVE entirely with this new device. Iñárritu worked with it in his two latest films, BIRDMAN and THE REVENANT, by using short focal lengths. We have only used lenses with long focal length, more difficult to handle and which asked for a really precise directing. This allowed us to shoot the sequence shots with more fluidity and made it possible to render the bond between all these characters with a grace that suited me. Formally, this film has given me great pleasure.

### **After THE WHITE KNIGHTS, this film takes you back to a more intimate register...**

The couple is without doubt the big subject of my life. I've always been two. As a twin I had to come out of the twin fusion, which didn't prevent me as an adult from creating a couple with the woman I love. I am forty now and I feel a need to express how much the couple means to me and to show its potentiality. I stage this through a story which is sad but which also tells how much a couple is an emotion, a space where affection is possible. As a child, my father who was a photographer used to tell me: "A photographer is someone who shares his view of the world with others and assumes its distinctiveness". With this film, I've had the pleasure of working with actors who have allowed me to watch them and to show the public, through their work, a piece of that worldview that I carried inside me but couldn't reveal.

## FILMOGRAPHY

- 2016 **AFTER LOVE**  
*with Bérénice Bejo and Cédric Kahn*
- 2015 **THE WHITE KNIGHTS**  
*with Vincent Lindon, Louise Bourgoïn, Valérie Donzelli and Reda Kateb*
- 2012 **OUR CHILDREN**  
*with Émilie Dequenne, Tahar Rahim and Niels Arestrup*
- 2010 **AVANT LES MOTS**  
*documentaire*
- 2008 **PRIVATE LESSONS**  
*with Jonas Bloquet, Jonathan Zaccari and Yannick Renier*
- 2006 **PRIVATE PROPERTY**  
*with Isabelle Huppert, Jérémie Renier and Yannick Renier*
- 2006 **ÇA REND HEUREUX**  
*with Fabrizio Rongione, Kris Cuppens and Catherine Salée*
- 2004 **FOLIE PRIVÉE**  
*with Kris Cuppens, Catherine Salée and Mathias Wertz*

# INTERVIEW WITH BÉRÉNICE BEJO

## **Three years after THE PAST by Asghar Farhadi, you play once again a woman on the verge of divorce...**

Indeed, the problematic was familiar to me. This actually made me wonder if I should accept the part. But the situations of the two Marie – the name of the character in THE PAST is also Marie – are different and the theme is quite distant from Farhadi's movie.

## **Asghar Farhadi has a very particular way of working. Which is the one of Joachim Lafosse?**

"I want you to take possession of the script. Tell me what you want to do, he said to me during our first talk. I can be quite confusing. Sometimes I don't know, so I'm searching". Joachim expects a lot from his actors. Actually, he expects a lot from everybody: comedians, interns, sound engineers... Everything that people from his team tell him interests him. He likes to provoke confusion and see how you cope with the chaos. He's also someone who has difficulty giving and receiving. That can sometimes make you feel really lonely.

## **Can you tell us more about this idea of taking possession of the script?**

We spent two months working on it, Joachim and I, and then Cédric Kahn, Joachim and I, keeping always in mind that we should defend our roles while maintaining a balance in the couple's relationship. At that stage, you get really involved...

## **Marie, your character, is obsessed with money.**

I know that anxiety, even if I don't experience it anymore. As a child, I've seen my parents struggling with financial hardship. They went to bed and woke up every day thinking about it. I could draw on this experience.

## **Unlike Boris, Marie comes from a rich family, and she works. Do you think their social differences are fundamental in explaining the end of their relationship?**

When a woman makes more money than her husband, it's never well perceived. She can't bear it and neither can the man. They need to find compensations to make it work. Marie probably found some for a while: maybe Boris made her feel very special, or maybe he was an excellent lover... They really loved each other but things fell apart; she doesn't receive anything in exchange anymore – neither money nor security nor virility. He no longer fascinates her, she doesn't love him anymore.

## **She is very tough on him.**

The film talks very little about Marie's father but, at the very beginning, the script indicated that he was a powerful man. I worked on this idea of legacy. This woman tried to break away from her social background by standing on her own two feet and by choosing a partner from another social class; she tried to build something with him – the beautiful house in which they live, their children are proofs of that. He should have fought harder, he shouldn't have accepted money from her family. He didn't find his place. Or they didn't allow him to find it. If Marie is so mean and hard on him, if she imposes such terrible rules on him, it's because she is terribly angry with him: she can't stand anything about him anymore – the way he talks or moves, his schemes, his lies. Everything that seduced her now exasperates her. Besides, having to live with someone you no longer love and who doesn't want to leave is awful. She fights back the best she can.

## **She also has to fight with her mother...**

Her mother is intrusive. She's clumsy and she shouldn't offer Boris to house him. She often crosses the line and doesn't share her daughter's views on life. Given the situation, Marie would want her mother to stand fully by her side. But these two women talk, and they love each other.

## **While her mother preaches forgiveness – and a sort of financial ecumenism -, Marie renews ties with her social background, and with her legacy...**

Let's say she accepts them.

## **You seem to defend her...**

She pursues her own logic. For example, it's not easy for her to see Boris talking with their children about wealth and defending values that she shares. But Marie knows very well that you can't live on love alone. And above all, she's tired of working for everybody else. She wants him to leave, to accept that she no longer loves him. She reacts with her own "tools".

## **Political tools?**

There's always something political when it comes to the gap between social classes. But I didn't think about the film in this way.

## **You said that you tried to rebalance the character of Boris as you were rewriting the scenario with Cédric Kahn and Joachim Lafosse...**

What I suggested wasn't supposed to be little him even further. He's angry too, and for several reasons: he has no money, he failed to climb the social ladder when others manage to, and he's the one that gets broken up with – or at least that's what he believes. Boris, like every other man, is a bit of a coward: he prefers to stay in order to keep his family with him. He doesn't want to face their failure either: he focuses exclusively on the money issue on which they tear each other apart, except when he proposes a couples therapy. Both of them lie to each other but he has a longer way to go before accepting the idea of their separation. But I liked that Marie respects him and doesn't try to deny his role as a father.

## **Yet, even on this matter, she still wants to control everything and comes back the minute something happens to the girls.**

Because, just like we have trouble accepting that a woman can earn more than a man, children remain, even today, the domain of the mother. It is a common flaw among women and I'm no exception: we don't know how to leave room for the father, we always try to control everything.

## **The hospital scene, when Marie tells Boris that she'll never leave the children with him again, is incredibly violent.**

She crosses the line – it was really important to me – and she realizes it. But from this moment on, the tension decreases. They both understand they should make concessions. And when we meet them again in the café, just before the divorce sentence, we can tell that peace has returned. She's less rigid, he's relaxed; they're going to build something with their children. They'll do it well, even if not together. I like this end.

## **After all this preparatory work, what was your state of mind when you first arrived on the set?**

At this stage, my work can't be intellectual anymore, otherwise I lose the pleasure of acting. I felt good about myself, I wanted to play. I needed to become an actress again.

## **You mentioned the "Lafosse method". What were the first days on set like?**

Hard. I didn't understand what Joachim wanted from me nor how he wanted it and I felt unable to give him anything at all in that context. I ended up talking about it with him. I asked him to look at me, to direct me, to protect me

– I asked him to be the boss. I think it's the first time an actor made him such a declaration of love. From then on, we had a beautiful relation. His outbursts of anger made me laugh – I could defuse it in five minutes... We enjoyed working together.

**Joachim Lafosse insists on the fact that as long as his film isn't finished, the script is in permanent evolution.**

It was the case with Cédric. During these moments, I stepped aside a little. I stuck to my lines and to what we had decided together, even if I had to improvise on certain scenes. I don't like to improvise but Joachim loved to ask me to do it and I ended up enjoying it somewhat – he actually kept very few of these scenes.

**Among these scenes, which improvisations had a deeper impact on you?**

It's often little things but they show how Cédric and I had really turned into our characters. There's this scene with the twins that made me really angry. In front of the girls, Cédric made his character say that Boris and Marie might stay together. It was obviously not written that way and I can still see myself boiling inside. I wanted to reply with a violent line and, finally, I chose to remain silent. I closed myself off. There's also the way I tell him: "It's not that I don't want you to stay for diner, it's because it's not your day!" when he shows up unannounced to see the girls. During these moments, I felt things getting out of control: I didn't think anymore, I became Marie.

And then of course there's the dance scene. I cry very little in the film – my character is too angry for that. We had already shot a dozen takes and, suddenly, I felt overwhelmed with emotion. Tears began to flow. Marie let go: my character had taken control of me. We've improvised with these tears, it was beautiful and sad at the same time: we see all the things that will no longer exist.

**Did Joachim Lafosse ask you to get involved in the stage direction?**

He authorized us to write it with him, for example through the way we used the space, the way we went from a room to another. We had the opportunity to experiment for a week, during rehearsals, with all these details we could bring. For example, it was me who decided what my character was going to cook – pasta Bolognese, green peas with eggs; I went shopping, I knew exactly what I would prepare, how, with which utensils, which gestures I would make. I wanted to be as close as possible to reality. The experience of THE PAST helped me a lot. Asghar Farhadi explained us that the human being is constantly doing something: you walk in the street, your scarf is on your face and you take it off, your hair bothers you, you play with your keys. Marie keeps herself busy all the time.

**How was your relation with Cédric Kahn?**

The filming was even harder for him than it was for me: I stuck to my preparatory work. He kept defending new ideas, which sometimes brought on heated discussions with Joachim. Since we were both involved in stage direction, I sometimes feared that the director in him might take over the actor. It did get very tense at times.

**What impressed you the most during this filming?**

The long sequence shots that could last six minutes and for which we didn't stop shooting. On the first day, we shot forty-two takes of a scene that we played again forty-two times on the next day. It was disturbing but I liked it – it amused me. And the girls liked it a lot. They were incredible, they never complained; since nothing was written for them, they were always improvising. They suggested some great things.

**How would you describe this experience?**

It's difficult to gather on a set personalities that different – almost contradictory – such as Joachim, Cédric and I. It creates tension. You have to deal with it. But in the end, I think that Joachim made the film he wanted to make: a film that looks like him, direct, reserved and moving. You can feel that the two heroes were once in love.

## FILMOGRAPHY

- 2016 **AFTER LOVE** by Joachim Lafosse
- 2015 **FAI BEI SOGNI** by Marco Bellocchio
- ETERNITY** by Tran Anh Hung
- THE CHILDHOOD OF A LEADER** by Brady Corbet
- 2013 **THE SEARCH** by Michel Hazanavicius
- LE DERNIER DIAMANT** by Éric Barbier
- 2012 **THE PAST** by Asghar Farhadi
- THE SCAPEGOAT** by Nicolas Bary
- 2011 **POPULAIRE** by Régis Roinsard
- 2010 **THE ARTIST** by Michel Hazanavicius
- PREY** by Antoine Blossier
- 2007 **FINAL ARRANGEMENTS** by Michel Delgado
- MODERN LOVE** by Stéphane Kazandjian
- 2006 **LA MAISON** by Manuel Poirier
- 13M<sup>2</sup>** by Barthélémy Grossman
- 2005 **OSS 117: CAIRO, NEST OF SPIES** by Michel Hazanavicius
- CAVALCADE** by Steve Suissa
- SEM ELA** by Anna de Palma
- 2004 **THE GRAND ROLE** by Steve Suissa
- 2001 **24 HOURS IN THE LIFE OF A WOMAN** by Laurent Bouhnik
- COMME UN AVION** by Marie-France Pisier
- 2000 **A KNIGHT'S TALE** by Brian Helgeland
- 1999 **MOST PROMISING YOUNG ACTRESS** by Gérard Jugnot
- 1998 **PASSIONNÉMENT** by Bruno Nuytten
- 1995 **LES SŒURS HAMLET** by Abdelkrim Bahloul

# INTERVIEW WITH CÉDRIC KAHN

## **AFTER LOVE by Joachim Lafosse is your sixth movie as an actor. What made you accept so many roles in the last four years?**

Circumstances. I guess curiosity pushed me to do it: instinctively, I thought I would learn things as a director. And I realized I could enjoy acting. It's like jumping in a pool: you don't have a choice, it's frightening and yet you have fun. I'm learning to be flexible, which isn't my main quality. It is not easy for me to put myself in the hands of someone else – to accept his doubts, his inflexibility – but it changes my perspective on things and it's fascinating. It's a luxury to be able to move inside a world you're familiar with.

## **Acting as an observation field...**

Sort of. It's captivating to observe another director at work.

## **What is the most important to you? The role? The director that offers it to you?**

Both of them, and the project as well, everything plays into it. I need to understand the inner nature of the character, to be certain that I would bring something authentic to it. And straight away I need to know what the guy looks like: if he has short or long hair, a beard, how he's dressed. I need to see him... While as a director I try to keep on a coherent path, as an actor I do it as it comes, as I feel like.

## **Concretely, how do you prepare yourself for your roles?**

I don't actually prepare anything, I'm not an actor, I don't master the craft: all my fears come down to the lines. I can't feel at ease and enjoy acting if I don't master the lines perfectly. In the case of AFTER LOVE, there was a lot of dialogue. But each director has a different relation to the script. Some want you to respect it down to the last comma; with Joachim, it's different, you can reinvent it as you shoot. Somehow, I feel more comfortable with this way of directing.

## **Had you seen the work of Joachim Lafosse?**

Not really. I had seen PRIVATE PROPERTY, which I really liked. I caught up since then.

## **Tell us how you met him.**

I joined the project late, about six weeks before we started filming. Joachim gives you the script and tells you right away that it's only a narrative basis. He entrusts you with the character, tells you that it is yours, even if it obviously isn't. He and I had different views on Boris. He saw him more terrible and evil than me. Starting from the moment I agreed to play him, and even if I don't have the same social background, or the same attitude towards money, I defended him tooth and nail, as if I was him.

## **How do you analyze the conflict between Boris and his wife as they are about to break up?**

I have a quite Marxist view of the film. Their social differences - this "exoticism" which made them come together - are also the ones that lead to the destruction of their couple. Each one takes back what he brought and defends himself with his own weapons: for her, it's money and social status for her; for him, his hands and his labour force. The film is bound to have a political reading. I'm more inclined to defend the position of the poor, the dispossessed, but I know that my character can also be seen as

a free rider, a parasite hanging on to his partner's money.

## **The forced cohabitation of Boris and Marie gives rise to tragic-comic situations: he's got his days, she's got hers...**

It's a dominant/dominated relationship where all becomes mean-spirited. Boris' perimeter is defined by her: she has the money, she owns the house, so she lays down the rules. And it's driving him crazy, to the point where he almost hits her. There's a sort of class hatred in him. But he knows how to lead an argument. In this regard, he's stronger than his wife.

## **However, he can't afford to move out.**

It is extremely humiliating not to have the financial autonomy to make decisions in your own life – and I think it's even harder for a man. It is terrible for him to be called "poor" in front of his daughters. The only possible answer is aggressiveness. "You think I'm not entitled to stay, he says to his wife, well I'm telling you that I'm entitled and that, for this reason, I'll stay".

## **Let's talk about this scene where Boris shows up in the middle of a dinner Marie organized for her friends...**

That scene wasn't written, we improvised it. Joachim wanted me to play it like a victim. I pictured Boris as more rebellious, playing with the situation, trying to take advantage of it. It looks like he keeps a low profile, but he's actually fighting really hard – it is his way of responding to the humiliations he endures. He too wants to be the hero of the story.

## **He's very moving when he talks with his daughters about what it is to be rich.**

Joachim asked the question directly to the twins and they rephrased it to me. Spontaneously, I answered that he was born poor, that he'll probably die poor, and that it's not that big of a deal, that true richness is to be found elsewhere... It was a way of de-dramatizing the situation.

## **Don't you think that the amount of money he claims is sometimes just an excuse to stay close to his wife and daughters?**

Absolutely, I'm convinced. He hangs on to his home. He's still in love with his wife, he cares deeply about his daughters and about the idea of a family. For a man, even more than for a woman, the breakdown of the couple often also means the end of family life. The amount he's asking becomes a form of compensation. He tells her: "If you kick me out, then give me the resources to live well somewhere else".

## **In the end, despite the notary's opinion, his wife offers him almost what he claims...**

It is all about the almost. Each one tries to make the other give up, to dictate his own terms. Their relationship is more about power than money. And they both have their own reading of the story. When she says: "But I've paid for everything from the beginning!" and when he answers "it cost me my hands, my sweat, my love..." I believe they both honestly mean it.

## **Can you tell us about the couple you form with Bérénice Béjo?**

Bérénice and I have quite different personalities and Joachim was clever to make us come together – as he was clever to confront us to these really extraordinary little twins. For Bérénice and I, the challenge was to make people believe that our characters used to be in love. Conflict isn't interesting unless it's convincing. And it's the scene where they all dance that allows for that. They lay down their guns... Suddenly, there's a little tenderness in the middle of chaos.



### **There's also this scene where your characters can't sleep and come face to face in silence in the study room Boris had moved in...**

It's one of the scenes in the film that moved me the most. Their bodies are searching for each other, but avoid each other; they would like to talk but they are not able to. They would like to ask real questions – intimate, painful things – but it isn't possible anymore. That is why they tear each other apart about money or schedules...

### **Once the divorce is finalized and Boris' rights recognized by justice, it seems like the couple and its children are finally starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel...**

The law saves them. It's the only way out. To me, this film defends above all the idea of home and family, with family rising above the couple.

### **How is it like to work with Joachim Lafosse?**

I would say that Joachim is constantly seeking for paradox, non-obviousness: he welcomes contradictions with open arms. When he entrusts us with his characters, he automatically involves us: we're always confronting points of view. We've discussed the script a lot – we, the actors, have re-written scenes during the preparation - and there's been a lot of improvisation during the filming. And then comes the point when no one is willing to give up and the conflict escalates. Joachim likes to shoot these moments more than anything. His film becomes almost the documentary of its own shooting. He has enough self-confidence to set up things that can spin of his control.

### **Precisely, what kind of director is he?**

Joachim isn't the type of director who simply illustrates a scenario. His choices are judicious – the confined space, which he turns into the central issues of the film, the subject he treats, the use of long sequence shots, which show his trust in the camera, the time, the actors... and in spite of all, he agrees to unsettle all of this during filming. He clearly wants to go out of his comfort zone.

It is hard to make a good film in such a minimalist setting. He does it with nuance, but directly, without fearing to hurt; he never avoids things. And even if his method might have shocked me from time to time, I've always respected his approach. When I'm an actor, I'm fundamentally siding with the director.

## FILMOGRAPHY

### ACTOR

- 2016 **AFTER LOVE** by Joachim Lafosse
- UP FOR LOVE** by Laurent Tirard
- 2015 **THE ANARCHISTS** by Elie Wajeman
- 2013 **MISS AND THE DOCTORS** by Axelle Ropert
- 2012 **ALYAH** by Elie Wajeman

### DIRECTOR

- 2014 **WILD LIFE**
- 2012 **A BETTER LIFE**
- 2009 **REGRETS**
- 2005 **THE PLANE**
- 2004 **RED LIGHTS**
- 2001 **ROBERTO SUCCO**
- 1998 **L'ENNUI**
- 1994 **TROP DE BONHEUR**
- 1992 **BAR DES RAILS**

# CREW

DIRECTED BY **Joachim LAFOSSE**  
SCREENPLAY AND DIALOGUES **Mazarine PINGEOT, Fanny BURDINO  
& Joachim LAFOSSE**  
IN COLLABORATION WITH **Thomas VAN ZUYLEN**  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **Jean-François HENSGENS - A.F.C - S.B.C**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **Olivier RADOT**  
COSTUMES **Pascaline CHAVANNE**  
SOUND **Marc ENGELS  
Ingrid SIMON  
Valérie LE DOCTE  
Thomas GAUDER**  
EDITING **Yann DEDET**  
PRODUCTION MANAGER **Sophie CASSE**  
POST-PRODUCTION **Nicolas SACRÉ  
Toufik AYADI**  
PRODUCTION **LES FILMS DU WORSO  
Sylvie PIALAT & Benoit QUAINON (FR)  
VERSUS PRODUCTION  
Jacques-Henri & Olivier BRONCKART (BE)**  
LINE PRODUCER **Gwennaëlle LIBERT**  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS **Gilles SITBON  
Arlette ZYLBERBERG  
Philippe LOGIE  
Antonino LOMBARDO**  
INTERNATIONAL SALES **LE PACTE**

# CAST

MARIE **Bérénice BEJO**  
BORIS **Cédric KAHN**  
CHRISTINE **Marthe KELLER**  
JADE **Jade SOENTJENS**  
MARGAUX **Margaux SOENTJENS**

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*Le Pacte*