

WORLD SALES : FUNNY BALLOONS

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The pictures and press kit of the film can be downloaded at

<http://www.funny-balloons.com> (downloads section)

http://www.berlinale.de/en/presse/filmstills/filmstills_wettbewerb/index.html

Berlinale
60^e Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition

Mammuth

a film by Benoît Delépine & Gustave Kervern



FUNNY BALLOONS

SYNOPSIS

As he turns 60, a working-class man takes his retirement. Hard at work since the age of 16, he has never missed a day, never gone sick.

When he tries to claim his well-deserved retirement pension, he runs into the implacable wall of bureaucracy. It turns out that several of his former employers have “forgotten” to declare his earnings. To receive full benefits, his only solution is to go back to them and gather the missing affidavits.

Encouraged by his wife, our hero mounts his old motorcycle from the 70s, a Mammuth which gave him his nickname. He returns to the places of his youth, a journey that brings him back into company with former employers, friends, and long-lost family members.

On the road, he comes to realize that people have always considered him an uncultivated imbecile. Submerged in doubt, haunted by ghostly appearances of Yasmine, his first love lost in a dramatic motorcycle accident, his quest to recuperate the missing papers, little by little, becomes futile.

Salvation comes to him from his young niece, who awakens the happy poet that lies dormant inside him. Instead of aging slowly towards death, Mammuth decides to embrace life with a new beginning.



A STATEMENT BY THE AUTHORS

We wanted a film that is funny and moving.

Funny because we're confronting a "socially disabled" man with a modern society that is beyond his reach. Moving for the same reason.

A bit like a mammoth in a world of foxes. Who flails away in the face of a multitude much sharper and livelier than he.

But the emotion arises also from his devoted affection for the three women in his life. His wife Catherine (Yolande Moreau) who has to put up with his daily inadequacies, but who loves him deeply nonetheless. Yasmine (Isabelle Adjani), the first love of his youth, ghost-guardian angel who comes to his side during his moments of heartfelt depression. And his niece (Miss Ming), whose freshness and imagination open up horizons for him which he never suspected to exist.

As for the humor, while is it less black and acidic than our previous films, it is nevertheless omnipresent, denouncing, without seeming to, the labor conditions in our aging country and the little hope that is left for our youth. As everybody knows, only laughter can dismantle fear...

We wanted a main character who is both strong and lost, impressive and endearing. This film was written for Gérard Depardieu. While there is nothing left to prove of his genius, we wanted to confront him with a way of shooting, more modest and freer, and with less predictable non-professional actors, not to mention real emotions to push him to give us his best.

Stylistically, we wanted a simple film in its editing and framing, favoring still shots and long takes or sequence shots. As in our previous films, the most important thing for us is to use the size of the theater screen to recite the scene, often with several layers of reading, without having to emphasize this or that detail. It's left up to the viewer to focus on what they want. On the other hand, in our choices of framing, we always include a dissonant element that adds a bit of trouble or mystery, sometimes barely perceptible, so as to never fall prey to banality or gratuitous aestheticism.



From our last two films we also wanted to keep the omnipresence of direct sound, spare but significant dialogue, and realism from our actors. Again we have placed our trust in Gaetan Roussel (Louise Attaque, Bashung...) for the music. Regarding the principal photography, we have made innovations with reversible Super16, the saturated colors of which are close to those of Super 8, a way to see Depardieu in another light.

We wanted to shoot with a small and adaptable crew to capture at any moment those moments of rare intensity that reality sometimes brings out in people. No storyboard, then, so that each shot tells its own story.

We also wanted a film rooted in the French regions it traverses. Everything was shot in Charente and Charente Maritime... From Royan to Angoulême, from Saint Palais to Montembœuf, most of the locations having been scouted by Benoît who has adopted Charente and has lived there for twelve years now.

Finally, we wanted you to laugh and be moved. That you leave the theater with tears and a huge grin on your face. We want to make a film that is noticed. All for the better if it works !



BENOÎT DELÉPINE & GUSTAVE KERVERN

Benoît Delépine and Gustave Kervern acquired their skills and knowledge by working in television for 15 years, both writing and performing sketches. Ben worked on popular satire shows -- *Guignols de l'Info* and *Groland* -- and Gus on the French rock-n-roll program, *Le plein de Super*.

They met 11 years ago while working together on the show *Grolandsat*, a liberal production team that allowed them to test new narrative techniques, while at the same time allowing them to produce more elaborate short stories.

They worked together on *Toc Toc Toc*, a comedy series which gave them the opportunity to meet Maurice Pialat, who encouraged them to move into cinema, and *Don Quichotte de La Revolucion*, a road movie about an anarchist biker who is accompanied by a pizza-delivery boy on a scooter.

For their first feature film as directors, *Aaltra* (presented at numerous international film festivals), they wanted to show a side of life which is often missing in the movies today, teaming up professional actors with everyday people. They wanted to combine both visible and invisible camera styles, scripted and improvised dialogue, always exploiting locations and characters encountered during production. In this sense, meeting Aki Kaurismaki was a seminal moment in their lives.

Aaltra was critically acclaimed and well received by audiences, which encouraged them to continue their collaboration on *Avida*, a metaphysical, absurd, and surrealistic comedy presented at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival, in the Official Selection, out-of-competition.

In 2008, their dark comedy *Louise-Michel* premiered, in the Official Competition, at the Donostia-San Sebastian International Film Festival where it was awarded the Jury Prize for Best Screenplay. A Special Jury Prize for Originality was also awarded to the film at the Sundance Film Festival. Audiences and critics have praised the film all around the world.

Mammuth is their fourth feature-film collaboration.

Benoît Delépine, born 1958. Gustave Kervern, born 1962.



from left : Gustave Kervern, Isabelle Adjani, Benoît Delépine

BENOÎT DELÉPINE

Cinema :

- 2010 **MAMMUTH** official selection in competition
at the Berlin International Film Festival
writer, director, producer
- 2008 **LOUISE-MICHEL** official selection in competition
at the San Sebastian Film Festival
writer, director, producer
- 2006 **AVIDA** official selection out-of-competition
at the Cannes Film Festival
writer, director, actor
- 2004 **AALTRA** official selection in competition
at the Rotterdam Film Festival
writer, director, actor
- 1998 **MICHAEL KAEI** writer, actor
- 1996 **A L'ARRACHÉ** short film prized at Gérardmer Film Festival
writer, director, actor

Television :

- 1992-2010 **GROLAND** Canal+ satirical program, writer, actor
- 1990-1996 **LES GUIGNOLS DE L'INFO** Canal+, writer
- 1989 **DYNAMO La Sept**, cultural program, producer
- 1988 **Canal+** writer of various short programs

Benoît Delépine was editor of the CREATION magazine and has written the scripts of the comic books L'imposteur (2000), La Bombe (2002) and God Killer (2003).

GUSTAVE KERVERN

Cinema :

- 2010 **YA BASTA!** short film, codirector, writer
- 2010 **MAMMUTH** official selection in competition
at the Berlin International Film Festival
writer, director, producer, actor
- 2008 **LOUISE-MICHEL** official selection in competition
at the San Sebastian Film Festival
writer, director, producer
- 2006 **AVIDA** official selection out-of-competition
at the Cannes Film Festival
writer, director, actor
- 2006 **ENFERMÉS DEHORS** by Albert Dupontel, actor
- 2004 **AALTRA** official selection in competition
at the Rotterdam Film Festival
writer, director, actor
- 1996 **DELPHINE : 1. YVAN : O** by Dominique Farrugia, actor

Television :

- 2000-2010 **GROLAND** Canal+ satirical program, writer, actor
- 2003 **CAMÉRA CAFÉ** M6, actor
- 1999 **« H »** Canal+ series, actor
- 1994-1995 **LE PLEIN DE SUPER** Canal+ musical program
with Yvan Le Bolloc'h and Bruno Solo , writer, actor
- 1995 **AUDIARD EN TOUTES LETTRES** documentary, writer

Gustave Kervern is the author of 50 PROPOSITIONS POUR SAUVER VOTRE POUVOIR D'ACHAT (2008), a book illustrated by Lefred Thouro and published by "Danger Public".



GÉRARD DEPARDIEU

One of the most talented and accomplished actors of our time, Gérard Depardieu started his acting career at the small traveling theatre «Café de la Gare». His cinematic breakthrough came in 1974 with Bertrand Blier's *Les Valseuses*.

Alternating between prestigious films and popular comedies with incredible ease, he pursued his collaboration with Bertrand Blier, while also becoming the alter ego of several French masters : four films with Maurice Pialat, winning the 1985 Venice Film Festival's Best Actor award for *Police* and the 1987 Cannes Film Festival's Golden Palm for *Sous le soleil de Satan* ; two films with François Truffaut, who's *Le dernier métro* (1980, The Last Metro) got him his first Best Actor César; three films with Jean-Paul Rappeneau, with *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1990) earning him the Best Actor award at the Cannes Film Festival, his second Best Actor César, a Best Actor Oscar nomination and many awards at prestigious international film festivals.

He has worked with the greatest: Claude Berri, Bernardo Bertolucci, Marco Ferreri, Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Paul Rappeneau, Alain Resnais, Ridley Scott, Francis Veber, Peter Weir, to name just a few.

Recent highlights include the *Astérix* films (1999/2002/2008), *36 Quai des Orfèvres* (2004), *Quand j'étais chanteur* (2006), *La Môme* (2007), *Mesrine* (2008) and *Bellamy* (2009).

Benoît Delépine & Gustave Kervern's *Mammuth* is his fourth collaboration with Isabelle Adjani after *Barocco* (1976), *Camille Claudel* (1988) and *Bon Voyage* (2003).

ISABELLE ADJANI

Isabelle Adjani is one of the most talented and accomplished actresses of French and world cinema. She started acting before her teen years, appearing in her first movie at the age of 14 (in *Le Petit Bougnat*, Michel Bernard Toubanc). Her cinematic breakthrough came in 1974 with Claude Pinoteau's *La gifle* (The Slapping), for which she received the Prix Suzanne Bianchetti, her first in a long list of awards. Also that year, she played the title role in François Truffaut's *L'Histoire d'Adèle H.* (The Story of Adele H), a role that brought her her first Oscar and César nominations for Best Actress.

Working with some of the greatest French and international directors (Werner Herzog, Claude Miller, Roman Polanski, Jean-Paul Rappeneau, André Téchiné,...), Isabelle Adjani won the 1981 Cannes Film Festival Best Actress award for her English-language role in James Ivory's film *Quartet*. The following year, she won the first of her record four Césars for *Possession* (Andrzej Zulawski), followed by a second for her role in Jean Becker's *L'été meurtrier* (1983, One Deadly Summer) and her third for portraying French sculptor Camille Claudel in the eponymous film (1988). This role also got her a second Oscar nomination for Best Actress. The film was furthermore nominated in the Best Foreign Language Film category. She won her fourth César for Patrice Chéreau's *La reine Margot* (1994, Queen Margot).

Her most recent performance was in Jean-Paul Lilienfeld's *La journée de la jupe* (2008) for which she received a César nomination for Best Actress in 2010.

Benoît Delépine & Gustave Kervern's *Mammuth* is her fourth collaboration with Gérard Depardieu after *Barocco* (1976), *Camille Claudel* (1988) and *Bon Voyage* (2003).

YOLANDE MOREAU

Yolande Moreau is first noticed by director Agnes Varda in 1985, on stage at the Avignon Theatre Festival, who subsequently offered her her first film role in *Sans toit ni loi* (Vagabond).

Four years later she joined Jerome Deschamps's theatre group, with whom she created the cult characters of the Canal + television programme *Les Deschiens*. This opened the doors to the world of cinema to her, where, in 2001, she played Amelie Poulain's concierge in the international hit by Jean-Pierre Jeunet.

She starred and co-directed her first feature film, *Quand la mer monte* (2004, When the sea rises) with her friend, cinematographer Gilles Porte, winning a Cesar for Best Actress for her role. The French Film Academy also awarded the film another Cesar as best first feature film, which she shared with Gilles Porte. In 2008, her talent and humanity in portraying the long forgotten painter Séraphine in Martin Provost eponymous film won her a second Cesar for Best Actress. After this highly acclaimed performance, she became the working-class killer in Benoît Delépine & Gustave Kervern's dark comedy *Louise-Michel*, followed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *Micmacs* and Joann Sfar's *Serge Gainsbourg (vie héroïque)*.

MISS MING

Miss Ming belongs in a category of "raw" artists who share a taste for a world less polished. She has been called "simply a love declaration to the human being in what is most irrational, fragile and beautiful".

Her refreshing and spontaneous writing style, her rough and creative animated shorts on YouTube (she believes she rivals Pixar!), her mischievous and childish songs (which she signs as Candy Rainbow) and her intimacy blend poetically with the music of her friends of Credo Quia Absurdum and the cinematographic world of directors Benoît Delépine & Gustave Kervern. Collaborating with her on *Louise-Michel* and *Mammuth*, they met the poet while shooting their second feature, *Avida*: "She has a strong screen presence, even if she appears only for ten minutes without saying a word".



CAST

Gérard DEPARDIEU	<i>Mammuth</i>
Yolande MOREAU	<i>Catherine</i>
Isabelle ADJANI	<i>The Lost Lover</i>
Benoît POELVOORDE	<i>the competitor</i>
MISS MING	<i>Miss Ming</i>
BLUTCH	<i>pension fund employee</i>
Philippe NAHON	<i>director of the retirement home</i>
Bouli LANNERS	<i>recruiting agent</i>
Anna MOUGLALIS	<i>fake crippled</i>
Albert DELPY	<i>the cousin</i>
Bruno LOCHET	<i>restaurant guest 1</i>
Rémy ROUBAKHA	<i>restaurant guest 2</i>
Joseph DAHAN	<i>restaurant guest 3</i>
Gustave KERVERN	<i>delicatessen employee</i>
Stéphanie PILLONCA	<i>restaurant waitress</i>
Jawad ENEJJAZ	<i>judge of faces</i>
Rémy KOLPA KOPOUL	<i>roundabout boss</i>
SINÉ	<i>wine grower</i>
Paulo ANARKAO	<i>Big Bertha</i>
Céline RICHEBOEUF	<i>Miss Ming's friend</i>
Aurélie BRIN	<i>Miss Ming's other friend</i>
Sophie SEUGÉ	<i>Miss Ming's accomplice</i>
Bernard GEOFFREY	<i>slaughterhouse director</i>
Dick ANNEGARN	<i>the cemetary navvy</i>
Marie-Claude PLUVIAUD	<i>fish-shop customer</i>
Catherine HOSMALIN	<i>Catherine's friend</i>
Eric MONFOURNY	<i>the priest</i>
Noël GODIN	<i>le Tartobole</i>
David PUGNAUD-BARILLON	<i>supervisor</i>
Serge NUQUES	<i>the crazy biker</i>
Zoé WEBER	<i>the little girl on the phone</i>
Cédric GEOFFROY	<i>slaughterhouse assistant-director</i>

TECHNICAL SHEET

Directors	Benoît DELÉPINE, Gustave KERVERN
Screenplay	Benoît DELÉPINE, Gustave KERVERN
Producers	Jean-Pierre GUERIN, No MONEY
Exective producer	Christophe VALETTE
Cinematographer	Hugues POULAIN
Art director	Paul CHAPELLE
Costume designer	Florence LAFORGE
Editor	Stéphane ELMADJIAN
Sound designer	Guillaume LE BRAZ
Original music	Gaëtan ROUSSEL
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