

YVAN ATTAL



VALERIA BRUNI TEDESCHI

# regrets

A FILM BY  
CÉDRIC KAHN

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# Synopsis



Learning that his mother was suddenly hospitalized, Mathieu Lievin, a 40-year-old architect who lives in Paris, sets out to drive to the town where he grew up. While walking down the street, he stumbles upon Maya, his first great love, whom he hasn't seen for 15 years. Accompanied by a man and a young girl, she doesn't speak to him.

Two hours later, the phone rings in Mathieu's childhood home: it's Maya and she invites him to come meet her at her place. He hesitates for a short moment, then accepts...

# Interviews



## A love story

**Cédric Kahn** \_ REGRETS started with the acknowledgement that I have always avoided emotions, even in L'ENNUI, which was above all a story about sexual obsession, cruelty and power struggles, not feelings. A love story is one of the basics of movie making, the equivalent of the little black dress for a fashion designer! When taking a look at the history of cinema, love stories are a classic theme that has been endlessly revisited. But when taking a look at my personal history, it was a huge challenge!

**Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** \_ REGRETS is a very romantic film, asking the following questions: “When have you really been in love in your life? Is it today, 20 years ago, 6 years ago? How many times can one really love? What is our ability to love? And if we’ve already met our great love, why are we no longer with him? What is the meaning of our life without this love? All these questions are ones that we don’t always dare ask ourselves because they might turn out to be too disturbing.

**Yvan Attal** \_ The love story between Maya and Mathieu is very believable. It is not simply imposed; we truly have the feeling that they have to be together.

**Arly Jover** \_ Is it really love that Mathieu feels for Maya? Isn’t it rather like an obsession, a sickness? Maybe I, when I was 15 or 16, also mistook this form of passionate feelings for love. Not anymore. Love is also about sharing everyday life, sometimes even work, the way Lisa and Mathieu do. I may be thinking about it this way because I play Lisa and I feel like defending her relationship!

**Cédric Kahn** \_ Accepting this film as entirely sentimental was in fact quite perilous for me! I didn’t want to hide behind a crime story, a styled approach, a performance or a directing challenge. I wanted to accept the fact that feelings were the film’s starting point and its conclusion. I had nothing really solid to begin with, just immodesty, sincerity and personal experience.



## A love story, 15 years later

**Cédric Kahn** \_ I wanted to confront feelings through the return of a past love, as a reference to *THE WOMAN NEXT DOOR*, a movie that I love. There are a few films like this, ones we have a special relationship with that can't necessarily be explained, films that influence us like love encounters and become a part of who we are. I absolutely did not want to film a remake of Truffaut's film but it was the source of my inspiration. Love is far more bewildering when taking up a story that left you heartbroken years before. You are returning to a minefield, the tension and the risk spring up instantly. *REGRETS* is based on a principle of obsession and repetition: what Maya and Mathieu are going through before our eyes is an exact copy of what they went through 15 years earlier. Maya and Mathieu are in an act of repetition. Each situation is haunted by a previous trauma.

**Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** \_ The narrative of a reunion with an old love follows a classic pattern. It's almost an archetype: regretting one's decisions, wanting to rewrite your life, to redo things... When you think of past loves, you think about the life you may have had today if you'd stayed with them.

**Cédric Kahn** \_ The two characters look at the past in very different ways. Maya worships the past and feels that she has scores to settle. She still loves Mathieu, but she is still angry with him for having left her. Fear and resentment pave her path; she wants him to suffer as she suffered. At first, she's the one who actively revives the desire between them. She wants to find out whether he still loves her. Even if it isn't conscious, she's spurred on by a need for revenge. Mathieu, on the other hand, is well-rooted in the present, in reality, and doesn't look back at all. The fear that Maya is experiencing today is the fear he experienced back then. He ran away from passionate love. He is now driven by love and the need to revive this love story that he had interrupted prematurely.

## An action film

**Cédric Kahn** \_ *REGRETS* is about sentimental and psychological things, treated, however, in a very concrete manner: filming the tensions of love, the impulses and the fear that the other is slipping away from you. I wanted the film to go at a fast pace, I wanted it to be elliptical, dense, edited like an action movie. When you are involved in a major love story, you are taken body and soul, reeled in by a suspense that won't let you go. The film keeps moving forward, rooted in the present. This comes from the male character, from whose point of view I am telling the story. Mathieu is projecting neither into the future nor into the past. He's pursued by his past and the direction follows the characters' inner motion.

**Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** \_ I felt the suspense when I saw the film. There are dramatic turns of events, plot twists and many other shifts that reminded me of action films. This movie is not a stroll but a race!

**Yvan Attal** \_ Love is not just about feelings but also about the pace at which you experience them. You don't experience things objectively when you are involved in a love story. You go through highs and lows, through thrilling moments followed by moments of expectation and solitude. Upon reading the scenario, I hadn't particularly grasped the weight of this tension, of the constant comings and goings, the many setbacks that give *REGRETS* its rhythm.

**Cédric Kahn** \_ I enjoy filming what is beyond the characters, the things they don't understand themselves. Maya and Mathieu's desires and intuitions precede their own thoughts. When at the train station, they had no intention of making love but they became so scared of missing out on each other that desire overwhelmed them. This is the film's true love scene; the moment of their reunion, when they could start off again together. I enjoy seeing people act. The way they behave tells so much more than words.

## Maya

**Cédric Kahn** \_ Maya is in love with love; her life is driven by her emotions. Unlike Mathieu's wife, she has no ambition. She only works for a living; she's lived here and there, at some point in Africa then she came back. She is a wanderer, she doesn't quite belong. She's living with a strange guy, some kind of hippie of today.

**Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** \_ Maya has the feeling that her life is slipping away from her, that the ground is giving way under her feet. Going to the other side of the world is her own way of making her life more real, of feeling alive. But it is obviously an illusion. Being elsewhere doesn't help her find what she hasn't found before. Each human being has to bear his or her own solitude. Maya, however, is trying to flee hers. She hops on planes, on trains, leaving behind entire chunks of her life.

**Cédric Kahn** \_ Maya is profoundly melancholy, almost manic-depressive. The notion of happiness makes her sad. When they drive away in the middle of the night and share a moment of pure ecstasy, she can't take it. The thought that this happiness isn't going to be perfect all the time, that she is going to have to face highs and lows with someone, is something insurmountable... She prefers to run away.

**Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** \_ A part of her just won't let her give herself in to happiness. I think it's happiness she's afraid of, not Mathieu.



## Mathieu

**Cédric Kahn** \_ Mathieu doesn't ask himself all kinds of questions about his life decisions; he's a builder, an architect. If he breaks a shelf, he just fixes it right away. He is deeply rooted in reality. He is a "normal" guy who doesn't have a particular point of view on this normality. When Maya asks him if he loves his wife, he doesn't reply: "yes" or "no" but "of course". As far as I'm concerned this reaction is almost the very definition of this character: he doesn't ask himself these kinds of questions – he loves the woman with whom he shares his life. Likewise, when Maya says: "Let's go away and live together", he instantly makes things concrete: the town they'll live in, the jobs they'll have... He isn't about to let his feelings overwhelm him. This affair is going to be a revelation, a new experience.

**Yvan Attal** \_ The fact that he is an architect implies that he is structured, he has an education, he has a social standing and has settled down. We easily imagine who this guy is: he took exams, built things, sees things in the long-term and has his set of references. This creates an opposition with Maya, who is an entirely free woman.



## Her and him

**Cédric Kahn** \_ Although Mathieu and Maya are apparently opposites, deep down they are alike. They followed very different life paths but they both have the same fear of love, the same fear of growing up. The child within is still a large part of who they are.

**Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** \_ Is it just because you're slipping away that I love you or is it really you that I love? I think there really is something in him that she loves, especially when she says: "you still have that boyish face of yours". Loving the child the other person was is always a sign of love.

## Regrets

**Cédric Kahn** \_ It is mostly Maya who lives with regret. And, at the end of the film, she is once again the one who has regrets. She, in turns, sublimates her memories or fantasizes about the future, but she's never truly in the present. As soon as the possibility of turning this love story into something real presents itself, she runs away from it. Maya is always out of step with reality. She's constantly examining herself, expressing her feelings and commenting on what she's going through. In a way she is unable to live her own life.

**Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** \_ I worked with the feeling of regret, with the difficulty of being in the present moment, the difficulty of giving in to happiness, of trusting. Maya is always ahead of or behind the moment she's actually in. She travels physically as well as within herself. Mathieu is far more able to be in the present.

## An endless story?

**Cédric Kahn** \_ There are love stories that are meant to become reality and there are those that are meant to remain lasting fantasies. Their story is both eternal and impossible. REGRETS could also have been called TOUJOURS OU JAMAIS (ALWAYS OR NEVER): there is no end to their story, it can always be seen as having a future, it's almost the definition of absolute love.

**Valeria Bruni Tedeschi** \_ Maya and Mathieu can't make it as a twosome but it may just be because of small misunderstandings. If they'd found a way to overcome a few moments of panic... If they'd known how to handle things better, if they'd known to remain a little calmer... Sometimes, it's only a matter of a few moments in life. They're so close to making it yet they're always a little off, they're only really together a few times, like when they're making love, maybe. Their love is like a toy that either one can break out of sheer panic. I still think, anyway, that she is the love of his life and that he is the love of her life. It's a shame they can't make it work.

**Arly Jover** \_ My feeling is that their story is really over. Mathieu is much more settled; we can feel that he's happy with his wife and his child. He has moved on. His story with Maya will always be a part of him but as all passionate affairs, it won't be rekindled.

**Yvan Attal** \_ When he sees Maya again, at the beginning of the film, Mathieu hasn't yet gone far enough into this love story. This is why he gets involved again. The fact that Maya comes back again at the very end implies the eternal repetition of the impossibility of living this love, yet now that he has explored this relationship more deeply, Mathieu may finally find the courage not to go there again...

**Cédric Kahn** \_ For those who dream about passion, the end of the film is full of hope, for the others, it's a real nightmare! Nina Simone's song, "Sinnerman", is present throughout the movie. It's the link between the two main characters. It is partly like a "devil's song", as though each of the characters was being pursued by their own demons.

Interview by Claire Vassé

# Cédric Kahn



## Cinema

- 2009 REGRETS
- 2005 L'AVION
- 2004 RED LIGHTS Official selection at the Berlin Film Festival
- 2001 ROBERTO SUCCO  
Official selection in competition at the Cannes Film Festival  
Official selection in competition at the Montreal Film Festival
- 1998 L'ENNUI  
Louis Delluc Prize Selection for the Venice Film Festival
- 1994 TOO MUCH HAPPINESS  
Jean Vigo Prize Award of the Youth, Cannes Film Festival
- 1992 RAILWAY BAR
- 1990 LES DERNIÈRES HEURES DU MILLÉNAIRE (short)

## Television

- 1996 ZERO GUILT Film TV made with TNS School students
- 1994 BONHEUR Série «Tous les garçons et les filles de leur âge»

## Writer

- 2007 AMBITIOUS by Catherine Corsini
- 1993 THERE'S NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT NORMAL PEOPLE  
by Laurence Ferreira Barbosa
- 1990 OVERSEAS by Brigitte Rouän  
LE SINGE QUI REGARDE DERRIÈRE LA PORTE  
by Yann Dedet





## Cast



Mathieu	Yvan Attal
Maya	Valeria Bruni Tedeschi
Lisa	Arly Jover
Franck	Philippe Katerine
Antoine	François Negret

# Crew

Director Cédric Kahn  
Scenario and dialogs Cédric Kahn  
Production Kristina Larsen Gilles Sandoz  
Cinematographer Céline Bozon  
Sound Olivier Mauvezin  
Sets François Abelanet  
Costumes Isabelle Pannetier  
Editing Yann Dedet  
Sound editing Nicolas Moreau  
Mixing Jean-Paul Hurier  
Set photographer Jean-Claude Moireau  
Production direction Sylvain Monod  
Music Philip Glass

A LES FILMS DU LENDEMAIN - MAÏA CINÉMA Production  
In co-production with Mars Films and Dragon 8  
With the participation of the Centre National de la Cinématographie,  
Canal+, TPS Star  
In collaboration with Région Ile-de-France  
Centre Images Région Centre, l'ANGOIA-AGICOA  
In association with Soficas La Banque Postale Image, Coficup2 - Back Up Films.  
Delegate producer Les Films du Lendemain.  
International sales Mercure International/Films Distribution

