

# UNIFRANCÉ

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## — 10 to Watch

10 rising talents to watch

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10 rising talents to watch

**They have made a name for themselves in major international festivals during 2023 and will be on screens all over the world in 2024. They are the new faces of French cinema.**

Selected for the excellence of their work by international journalists Rebecca Leffler (*Screen International*), Fabien Lemerrier (*Cineuropa*), Elsa Keslassy (*Variety*), Christine Masson (*France Inter*), and Jordan Mintzer (*The Hollywood Reporter*), these 10 to Watch 2024 embody the reinvigoration of our cinema through the freedom and singularity of their artistic choices, their ambition, audacity, and openness to the world.

Unifrance is proud to honour this new generation of directors and actors who contribute so fully, in films and, for some of them, in TV productions, to the effervescence of French creation, and to enhance the distribution of their works worldwide.

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## Sofia Alaoui

French-Moroccan director and screenwriter Sofia Alaoui came to prominence with her short film *So What if the Goats Die*, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival in 2020 and the César for Best Short Fiction Film in 2021. Her debut feature, *Animalia*, a science-fiction film with a political slant, premiered at Sundance in 2023, where it was awarded the Special Jury Prize. Sofia Alaoui then moved into television series, and is currently working on a detective series, *Let the Earth Burn*, as well as a second project in development with a streaming platform. At the same time, she is preparing two feature film projects: *Tarfaya*, set in the Moroccan desert, and a first English-language film, adapted from a short story.





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## Suzy Bemba

Suzy Bemba made her name with the role of Flora, a young ballerina, alongside Ariane Labed, in the spellbinding drama *L'Opéra*, a series created by Cécile Ducrocq and Benjamin Adam. In 2023, she gave a remarkable performance as Toinette in Yorgos Lanthimos' critically acclaimed film *Poor Things*, which won the prestigious Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival. She played the lead role in Catherine Corsini's *Homecoming*, presented in Competition at Cannes in 2023, and starred, alongside Cynthia Erivo, in Anthony Chen's *Drift*, which had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in 2023. She will represent France in the European Shooting Stars at the Berlin Film Festival in 2024.





© JAMES WESTON

# Céleste Brunnquell

Céleste Brunnquell began acting at the age of 11. In 2018, Sarah Suco offered her the lead role in her debut feature, *The Dazzled*. Her deeply moving performance earned her an acting award at the Sarlat Film Festival and a nomination for the César for Most Promising Actress. She then appeared in the series *In Treatment*, by Éric Toledano and Olivier Nakache. In 2021, she acted in *The Origin of Evil*, directed by Sébastien Marnier, and in Jeanne Aslan and Paul Saintillan's debut feature, *Spare Keys*, selected at the San Sebastian Film Festival. In 2023, she starred in Erwan Le Duc's *No Love Lost*, presented at La Semaine de la Critique. She will soon be seen in Céline Rouzet's debut feature *For Night Will Come*, Antoine Rimbault's *Une affaire de principe*, and Jessica Palud's *Maria*.





© STEF BLOCH

## Stéphan Castang

Stéphan Castang has acted on the stage with Marion Guerrero, Benoît Lambert, Ivan Grinberg, and Thomas Poulard. He has also worked with the L'Artifice theater company, both as an actor and playwright (*Lettres d'amour de 0 à 10*, which received the Molière for Best Show for Young Audiences in 2005). He is the author of a number of plays: *Boule de gomme*, *Le Défilé de César*, *Une divine tragédie* (co-written with Sacha Wolff). He has also written and directed several short films, including *French Kids* (Berlin Film Festival 2012), *Pantheon Discount* (awarded at Clermont-Ferrand, Thessalonica, Tübingen/Stuttgart, etc.), and *Finale* (awarded at Clermont-Ferrand, Trouville, and Brussels). Recipient of the 2021 Gan Foundation for Cinema award, he presented his debut feature, *Vincent Must Die*, at La Semaine de la Critique in Cannes in 2023.





© ARNO LAM

## Stefan Crepon

Stefan Crepon trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique and made his first film appearance in 2018 in Cédric Kahn's *The Prayer*. But it was his role in Seasons 4 and 5 of *The Bureau*, created by Éric Rochant, that got his career off the ground. He went on to appear in Philippe Garrel's *The Salt of Tears*, Thomas Kruithof's *Promises*, and three episodes of the *Lupin* series, created by François Uzan and Georges Kay, with Omar Sy in the title role. In 2022, his role in François Ozon's *Peter Von Kant* earned him a César nomination for Most Promising Actor. He can also be seen in *Making Of* by Cédric Kahn, in which he stars alongside Souheila Yacoub, Jonathan Cohen, and Denis Podalydès, and will soon be in *À la hauteur*, by Delphine and Muriel Coulin, along with Benjamin Voisin and Vincent Lindon.



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## Jean-Baptiste Durand

A former student of the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Montpellier, from which he graduated with honors, Jean-Baptiste Durand first became interested in painting and drawing, before moving into filmmaking. After graduating, he worked as a film technician, then directed a number of music videos and documentaries, as well as several short films selected and awarded at film festivals. Warmly received by audiences and critics alike, his debut feature, *Junkyard Dogs*, won the Audience Award at the Premiers Plans festival. It also earned its director the very first Pierre Chevalier Award, presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 2023. Jean-Baptiste Durand is currently working on a new feature *L'Homme qui avait peur des femmes*. He will also star in Alain Guiraudie's next film.





© DR

## Iris Kaltenbäck

Iris Kaltenbäck grew up in France, with a French mother, Austrian father and American half-brother. After studying law and philosophy, she joined the screenplay department at the Fémis film school and assisted director Declan Donnellan at Théâtre Les Gémeaux (Scène nationale). In 2015, she directed her first short, *A Visit from the Stork*, winner of the Next Generation International Audience Award at the Brussels Short Film Festival. Her first feature, *The Rapture*, was selected for La Semaine de la Critique in 2023, where it received the SACD Prize. Presented at numerous international festivals (Zürich, Ghent, Morelia, São Paulo, Hamburg, among others), it won several awards, including the Special Jury Prize in Turin. In France, where it was very well received, *The Rapture* won the Louis-Delluc Prize for Best First Feature.



© THOMAS CHÉNÉ

## Raphaël Quenard

After starting out in theater and short films, Raphaël Quenard made his mark in 2018 in the *HP* series, created by Angela Soupe. He then went on to act in feature films, notably in Quentin Dupieux's *Mandibles*. But it was thanks to Igor Gotesman's series *Family Business* that he came to the attention of the general public. He went on to collaborate with Emma Benestan (*Hard Shell*, *Soft Shell*) and Michel Hazanavicius (*Final Cut*), among others. In 2023, he appeared in no fewer than 11 productions, and moved into lead actor roles, notably in *Junkyard Dogs*, by Jean-Baptiste Durand, *Yannick*, by Quentin Dupieux, *Gold Brick*, by Jérémie Rozan, and *Sentinelle*, by Hugo Benamozig and David Caviglioli. Moviegoers will next see him in *Pourquoi tu souris ?* by Christine Paillard and Chad Chenouga, *The Fantastic Three* by Michaël Dichter, and *L'Amour ouf* by Gilles Lellouche.





© NICHOLAS BOCHATAY

## Souheila Yacoub

Swiss-born Souheila Yacoub made her name as an Olympic gymnast before embarking on an acting career. She has worked with Rebecca Zlotowski (*Savages*), Philippe Garrel (*The Salt of Tears*), Alice Zeniter and Benoît Volnais (*Before We Collapse*), Cédric Klapisch (*Rise*), and Cédric Kahn (*Making Of*). Her outstanding performances in *Climax*, by Gaspar Noé, and *The Braves*, by Anaïs Volpé, earned her a nomination for the César Academy's Revelations list. In early 2024, she will be seen in Denis Villeneuve's *Dune: Part Two*, alongside Timothée Chalamet and Zendaya. She will also soon appear in the feature films *Planète B*, by Aude Léa Rapin, starring Adèle Exarchopoulos, and *The Balconettes*, by Noémie Merlant. She also performs in season 2 of the mini-series *No Man's Land*.



© DAVID DELAPLACE

## Sofiane Zermani

Sofiane Zermani began his musical career in 2007, in the rap scene, where he quickly met with great success. A versatile artist, he took his first steps in theater in 2018 in *The Great Gatsby*, initially adapted for radio, then on stage. The same year, he appeared in David Oelhoffen's *Close Enemies*, then, in 2019, in the series *Savages*, created by Rebecca Zlotowski and Sabri Louatah. He has pursued his career on the small screen in the series *Algiers Confidential*, by Frédéric Jardin, and *Off Season*, by Pierre Monnard, alongside Marina Hands. In 2023, he starred in the feature films *Spirit of Ecstasy*, by Hélène Klotz, and *After the Fire*, by Mehdi Fikri. He will next be seen in Hassan Guerrar's *Barbès d'or* and Manele Labidi's *Queen Mom*.