



LES FILMS DU WORSO  
PRESENT

CATHERINE  
DENEUVE

EMMANUELLE  
BERCOT

VINCENT  
MACAIGNE

CÉDRIC  
KAHN

# Happy Birthday

A FILM BY  
CÉDRIC KAHN

WITH LUANA BAJRAMI LAETITIA COLOMBANI ISABEL AIMÉ GONZALEZ SOLA  
ALAIN ARTUR JOSHUA ROSINET MILAN HATALA SOLAL FERREIRA



LES FILMS DU WORSO  
PRESENT

CATHERINE  
DENEUVE

EMMANUELLE  
BERCOT

VINCENT  
MACAIGNE

CÉDRIC  
KAHN

# Happy Birthday

A FILM BY  
CÉDRIC KAHN

101 MIN - FRANCE - 2019 - 1.85 - 5.1

## INTERNATIONAL SALES

ELLE DRIVER  
66 rue de Miromesnil  
75008 Paris  
tél : 01 56 43 48 70  
[www.elledriver.fr](http://www.elledriver.fr)

## **SYNOPSIS**

« Today is my birthday and I would only like to talk about happy things. »

Andrea doesn't know it yet but the «surprise» arrival of her eldest daughter, Claire, who has disappeared for the past 3 years and is determined to take back what is due to her, will upset the program and trigger a family storm.



# INTERVIEW WITH CÉDRIC KAHN

Your eleventh feature film is part of what is almost a genre in itself: the family film. What was the origin of this project?

The origin, I don't know exactly, but what I can say is that I had this story inside me for a long time, maybe even forever, and it took me all this time and all these films to allow me to tell it. But from the moment it became obvious, everything went very fast. In the fall of 2017, when I had just finished *The Prayer*, I wrote a first treatment of about twenty pages which I had Sylvie Pialat, the producer, read. She immediately had the intuition that this project should come into being quickly, as if she had felt both an urgency and a risk of setback. And from then on, everything went very quickly: writing the script, looking for actors and funding, until the shooting which started shortly afterwards. For me, who am of a slow nature, it was a little vertiginous but I took it as a challenge.

Like most of the heroes of your previous films, Claire is a character «at the limit». But for the first time, this character is female.

Yes, that's true and, more generally, I would say it's a film in which women are at the centre. Powerful, comic, tragic women. And as far as I'm concerned, I'd say: finally! It was about time.... And I loved this work with all these actresses.

Did the film's directorial approach, which borrows from the theatre, quickly appear in the writing process?

There was no intention to do «theatre», but let's say that it was naturally imposed by the subject, since there is a unity of

place (the house), time (the film takes place in less than 24 hours) and action (everything is organized around the mother's birthday). The film is built in three acts and the dialogues are abundant. The theatricality also comes from the characters themselves since we have the feeling that they stage themselves, that they sometimes play a role that is imposed on them, with an almost vaudeville side at times. And as for the two productions that take place during the story (Romain's film and Emma's play), they function like Russian dolls, which give perspective to the story. They also offer a form of outlet, a little as if fiction became the last line of defence against madness.

These shows also bring good humour and lightness. More generally, tragedy and comedy coexist throughout the film.

I wanted to tell about a family that was a little crazy but also very happy, where everyone could express their fantasy and creativity. They have very hard relationships between them, very cash, sometimes throw terrible things at each other, but it's their way of loving each other. I wanted it to be very lively, very «gutsy», with children who don't stand up, drink wine, climb on the tables, adults who behave like children, a real freedom of tone. Everything about them is instinctive, spontaneous, the opposite of an educated or «psychoanalyzed» family.

The film has a «Familial Cluedo» dimension. Claire's arrival seems to energize the group, but as the story unfolds, revelations, manipulations and reversals of alliances constantly shake up the viewer's certainties.

The arrival of Claire, the older sister, immediately raises many questions. She has been missing for several years, arrives with all her things, was not invited to her mother's birthday, her daughter lives here with her grandparents... Nothing is really normal and yet everyone acts as if everything was normal, and that is perhaps the strangest thing. The questions pile up and the film becomes a kind of investigation into this character. And as the answers come, the mystery thickens, we no longer really know who is telling the truth and who is lying, who is the executioner, who is the victim. There is a constant play of mirrors, so in the end everyone seems contaminated by Claire's sickness.

With its old wallpapers and its quirky feel, the house is also a real character.

We were looking for a large house, a relic of a bygone era, surrounded by a beautiful garden, but above all a house that was a little «crazy». With the head decorator, Guillaume Deviercy, we even accentuated this feeling of «fading». We had to be able to tell ourselves that this family was living beyond its means, in the fantasy of a glorious past, the idea of a world adrift. I also cared a lot about the «cloister» side, an impregnable citadel, as if this family lived in the anguish of the outside world, of the invasion. In the end, it has an almost unreal side, as if these characters were evolving in an illusion.

With its colourful characters and chiselled dialogues, *Fête de famille* is a great film of actors. How did you compose this family?

Very methodically. Starting with the mother, the cornerstone of the family building, Catherine Deneuve was an obvious choice. Her status, her aura,

her fantasy, her humanity: everything resonated with the character. And since she quickly gave us her consent, we built the family around her. In a kind of semi-pleasure, I told Sylvie Pialat that the role of the older brother as a pain in the ass, a righter of wrongs, would suit me like a glove and she was immediately convinced by the idea. I decided to trust her, even if my reluctance to act and direct at the same time was very great. Then we started with Antoine Carrard (my long time casting partner) long script reading sessions with different actors. I needed to see this family, to «smell» it, I couldn't be satisfied with a theoretical construction. It was an assembly exercise until the painting was as perfect as possible, with a set of similarities and dissimilarities by duos (Andréa and Claire, Vincent and Romain, Claire and her daughter, the wife of the older brother and the fiancée of the younger brother, and so on...). The day we gathered all the actors around a table to read the script, I had the feeling that each instrument was in its place and this feeling never left me during the shooting.

It was your first time directing Catherine Deneuve.

Yes, before I started, I was quite impressed, but from the moment I started working, everything seemed very simple, simpler than with a lot of actors. She has an ability to live the present moment, the shooting, her character and the situations of the film that makes things a lot lighter. She also has a great interest in the direction, so I could open myself up to everything with her.

And it was also the first time you acted in one of your films.

It's a little bit the same. I was making a big deal out of it and in the heat of

the moment, everything seemed easier. I felt like I could bring the tone and energy from the inside. I was also served by high-level actors, very virtuosic, very autonomous. With the chief operator, assistant and production manager, we had rehearsed the whole scenario in the set before the shooting, since we knew each camera position before we started. With Yves Cape, we had decided on very clear staging options and we have hardly deviated from them. The film is composed mainly of sequence shots, with few axes. The camera doesn't move, the movement comes from the characters. And when the film is set up, for meal scenes for example, it's the opposite: the cutting up takes over, creates the movement. There are also two or three shots that I would call «mental», especially during dinner, when everything gets blurry: it's as if we were inside Claire's brain, which at the time seems totally isolated from the rest of the family.

Emmanuelle Bercot and Vincent Macaigne have in common a sense of excess. And like you, they are two directors...

I didn't deliberately choose two actors who are also directors, but maybe that's what makes our siblings credible... More seriously, it's true that I also called on them for their baroque side, I wanted powerful, comic, free actors, at the service of unreasonable characters. Their duo is the framework of the film, they are the animators of the story, bringing in turn fantasy, manipulation and tragedy.

How did you work with Emmanuelle Bercot on the character of Claire who, because of her extreme character, can be difficult to grasp?

When you see Emmanuelle on the screen, you get an impression of spontaneity, of ease, whereas she prepares a lot, she is very hard working. What I was telling her was that she should not act madness, but on the contrary defend the convictions and

logic of her character. I didn't talk to her about references to films with borderline characters, but during the preparation, with the team, we saw a lot of them again: *Melancholia*, *A woman under the influence*, *A streetcar named desire*....

When you say «Happy Birthday», you mean group scenes, it's quite new in your cinema. How did you approach this aspect of filming?

I had already experienced them on *Trop de bonheur* and *La Prière*. I love it, the energy multiplies itself! I like to create in disorder and, conversely, order makes me anxious. When there are people in the shot, something unexpected happens all the time, the writing is affected, the lines are bursting, we cut each other off... In the meal scenes, it is as if the camera became one of the guests. But in the end, the film is quite faithful to the script.

The film marks your reunion with editor Yann Dedet, ten years after *Les Regrets*.

I have an almost filial link with Yann Dedet. I've known him all my life, I was his intern, he trained me in editing, edited several of my films. I felt protected, especially about this story, in which I delivered many personal things. I needed that confidence, especially since I was also an actor. But beyond this relationship, Yann has an editing style that is totally adapted to this kind of film. He has a particular talent for integrating the shooting material into the script and making things terribly lively. The lunch scene has hardly been altered, it corresponds, with a few details, to its very first edit. I could say, about Sylvie Pialat and Yann Dedet, that I made a film about family, «with family».

The story is punctuated by two songs, *Mon amie la rose* by Françoise Hardy and *L'Amour, l'amour, l'amour, l'amour* by Mouloudji, and also a rap piece

Each generation has its own song. We can imagine that Mouloudji's has the status of a family mascot, it is a song that parents listened to and that now connects brothers and sisters. «Mon amie la rose» is Claire's song. I chose it mainly for the lyrics that resonate with the character, a kind of sweet melancholy. For rap, I wanted something sentimental, the song was found by Joshua, the young actor. The link between all these songs is that they all talk about love. I really like French songs in movies, they allow us to be sentimental, nostalgic. I dream of a movie where everything would be said in songs.



# CÉDRIC KAHN

## DIRECTOR

2019	.....	HAPPY BIRTHDAY
2018	.....	THE PRAYER
2014	.....	WILD LIFE
2011	.....	A BETTER LIFE
2009	.....	REGRETS
2005	.....	L'AVION
2004	.....	RED LIGHTS
2001	.....	ROBERTO SUCCO
1998	.....	L'ENNUI
1996	.....	ZERO GUILT (TV)
1994	.....	TOO MUCH HAPPINESS
	.....	HAPPINESS (TV)
1992	.....	BAR DES RAILS

## ACTOR

2019	.....	HAPPY BIRTHDAY
2018	.....	COLD WAR - Pawel PAWLIKOWSKI
	.....	HEAD ABOVE WATER - Margaux BONHOMME
2016	.....	AFTER LOVE- Joachim LAFOSSE
	.....	UP FOR LOVE - Laurent TIRARD
2015	.....	LES ANARCHISTES - Élie WAJEMAN
2013	.....	MISS AND THE DOCTORS- Axelle ROPERT
2012	.....	ALYAH - Élie WAJEMAN

# CATHERINE DENEUE

## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2019	HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Cédric KAHN
	THE TRUTH - Hirokazu KORE-EDA
	FAREWELL TO THE NIGHT - André TÉCHINÉ
	CLAIRE DARLING - Julie BERTUCELLI
2017	THE MIDWIFE - Martin PROVOST
2016	ALL THAT DIVIDES US - Thierry KLIFA
2015	STANDING TALL - Emmanuelle BERCOT
	THE BRAND NEW TESTAMENT - Jaco VAN DORMAEL
2014	FRENCH RIVIERA - André TÉCHINÉ
	IN THE COURTYARD - Pierre SALVADORI
2013	ON MY WAY - Emmanuelle BERCOT
2010	BELOVED - Christophe HONORÉ
	HIS MOTHER'S EYES - Thierry KLIFA
2009	POTICHE - François OZON
2007	A CHRISTMAS TALE - Arnaud DESPLECHIN
2005	THE STONE COUNCIL - Guillaume NICLOUX
	PALAIS ROYAL - Valérie LEMERCIER
2004	CHANGING TIMES - André TÉCHINÉ
	NEAREST TO HEAVEN - Tonie MARSHALL
2001	8 WOMEN - François OZON
	I'M GOING HOME - Manoel de OLIVEIRA
2000	DANCER IN THE DARK - Lars VON TRIER
1999	GENEALOGIES OF A CRIME - Raoul RUIZ
1998	PLACE VENDÔME - Nicole GARCIA
1996	THIEVES - André TÉCHINÉ
1995	THE CONVENT - Manoel de OLIVEIRA

1994 ..... MY FAVORITE SEASON- André TÉCHINÉ  
 1992 ..... INDOCHINE – Régis WAGNIER  
 1991 ..... STRANGE PLACE FOR AN ENCOUNTER - François DUPEYRON  
 1988 ..... SCENE OF THE CRIME- André TÉCHINÉ  
 1986 ..... LE BON PLAISIR - Francis GIROD  
 1983 ..... HOTEL AMERICA - André TÉCHINÉ  
 1981 ..... JE VOUS AIME - Claude BERRI  
 1980 ..... LAST METRO- François TRUFFAUT  
 ..... OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY- Christian de CHALONGE  
 1977 ..... SECOND CHANCE- Claude LELOUCH  
 1976 ..... ANIMA PERSA - Dino RISI  
 ..... LE SAUVAGE - Jean-Paul RAPPENEAU  
 1975 ..... LA FEMME AUX BOTTES ROUGES – Luis BUÑUEL  
 1974 ..... UN FLIC – Jean-Pierre MELVILLE  
 1972 ..... IT ONLY HAPPENS TO OTHERS – Nadine TRINTIGNANT  
 1971 ..... DONKEY SKIN - Jacques DEMY  
 1970 ..... MISSISSIPPI MERMAID - François TRUFFAUT  
 1969 ..... TRISTANA – Luis BUÑUEL  
 ..... HEARTBEAT- Alain CAVALIER  
 1968 ..... BELLE DE JOUR - Louis BUÑUEL  
 1967 ..... THE YOUNG GIRLS OF ROCHEFORT - Jacques DEMY  
 1966 ..... THE CREATURES - Agnès VARDA  
 1965 ..... A MATTER OF RESISTANCE- Jean-Paul RAPPENEAU  
 ..... REPULSION - Roman POLANSKI  
 1963 ..... THE UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG - Jacques DEMY

# EMMANUELLE BERCOT

## ACTRESS

2019	.....	HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Cédric KAHN
	.....	JUMBO - Zoé WITTOCK
	.....	SCHOOL'S OUT - Sébastien MARNIER
2018	.....	GIRLS OF THE SUN - Eva HUSSON
2014	.....	MY KING- MAÏWENN
2012	.....	TURNING TIDE - Christophe OFFENSTEIN
	.....	RUE MANDAR - Idit CEBULA
2010	.....	POLISSE - MAÏWENN
2009	.....	LITTLE WHITE LIES- Guillaume CANET
2004	.....	WILD CAMP – Christophe ALI & Nicolas BONILAUD
2003	.....	À TOUT DE SUITE - Benoît JACQUOT
2001	.....	CLÉMENT – Emmanuelle BERCOT
1999	.....	UNE POUR TOUTES...TOUTES POUR UNE - Claude LELOUCH
1998	.....	IT ALL STARTS TODAY - Bertrand TAVERNIER
1997	.....	CLASS TRIP- Claude MILLER
1996	.....	LA DIVINE POURSUITE – Michel DEVILLE
1993	.....	INNER CITY – Jean-François RICHEL
1990	.....	RAGAZZI - Mama KEÏTA

## DIRECTOR

2016	.....	150 MILLIGRAMS
2014	.....	STANDING TALL
2012	.....	ON MY WAY
2011	.....	THE PLAYERS
2009	.....	STUDENT SERVICES (TV)
2008	.....	TIREZ SUR LE CAVISTE (TV)
2005	.....	BACKSTAGE
2001	.....	CLÉMENT
1998	.....	LA PUCE (medium length)
	.....	LE CHOIX D'ÉLODIE (TV)
1997	.....	LES VACANCES (short)

# VINCENT MACAIGNE

## ACTOR

2019	.....	HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Cédric KAHN
	.....	WHITE AS SNOW – Anne FONTAINE
	.....	NON FICTION– Olivier ASSAYAS
2018	.....	DOG– Samuel BENCHETRIT
2017	.....	REINVENTING MARVIN– Anne FONTAINE
2016	.....	C’EST LA VIE!– Éric TOLEDANO et Olivier NAKACHE
	.....	DES PLANS SUR LA COMÈTE – Guilhem AMESLAND
2015	.....	STRUGGLE FOR LIFE – Antonin PERETJATKO
	.....	TWO FRIENDS– Louis GARREL
	.....	NEWS FROM PLANET MARS – Dominik MOLL
	.....	THE INNOCENTS – Anne FONTAINE
	.....	STUBBORN– Armel HOSTIOU
2014	.....	EDEN – Mia HANSEN-LØVE
2013	.....	FOOL CIRCLE – Vincent MARIETTE
	.....	TONNERRE – Guillaume BRAC
	.....	2 AUTUMNS, 3 WINTERS – Sébastien BETBEDER
	.....	AGE OF PANIC – Justine TRIET
	.....	LA FILLE DU 14 JUILLET – Antonin PERETJATKO
2012	.....	LE MONDE À L’ENVERS – Sylvain DESCLOUS
2011	.....	MOONLIGHT LOVER – Guilhem AMESLAND
	.....	A WORLD WITHOUT WOMEN – Guillaume BRAC
	.....	A BURNING HOT SUMMER – Philippe GARREL
	.....	STRANDED– Guillaume BRAC
2009	.....	ON WAR– Bertrand BONELLO
2008	.....	24 BARS – Jalil LESPert
2007	.....	QUAND JE SERAI STAR – Patrick MIMOUNI
2005	.....	MAN’S GENTLE LOVE – Jean-Paul CIVEYRAC
2001	.....	LA RÉPÉTITION – Catherine CORSINI

## DIRECTOR

2017	.....	COMFORT AND CONSOLATION IN FRANCE
2015	.....	DON JUAN & SGANARELLE (TV)
2012	.....	WHAT WE’LL LEAVE BEHIND (short)

# ARTISTIC SHEET

Andréa	.....	Catherine DENEUVE
Claire	.....	Emmanuelle BERCOT
Romain	.....	Vincent MACAIGNE
Vincent	.....	Cédric KAHN
Emma	.....	Luana BAJRAMI
Marie	.....	Laetitia COLOMBANI
Rosita	.....	Isabel Aimé GONZÁLEZ-SOLA
Jean	.....	Alain ARTUR
Julien	.....	Joshua ROSINET
Milan	.....	Milan HATALA
Solal	.....	Solal FERREIRA DAYAN



# TECHNICAL SHEET

Director	.....	Cédric Kahn
Screenplay	.....	Cédric Kahn
with the participation of	.....	Fanny Burdino et Samuel Doux
Cinematography	.....	Yves CAPE
Film Editing	.....	Yann DEDET
Sound	.....	Jean-Pierre DURET
	.....	Sylvain MALBRANT
	.....	Thomas GAUDER
Set decoration	.....	Guillaume DEVIERY
Costume Design	.....	Alice CAMBOURNAC
Casting	.....	Antoine CARRARD
Produced by	.....	Sylvie Pialat
	.....	Benoît Quainon
	.....	Aude Cathelin
Production company	.....	Les films du Worso
In co-production with	.....	France 2 Cinéma
	.....	Tropdebonheur Productions
	.....	Scope Pictures
With the participation of	.....	France Télévisions
	.....	Canal +
	.....	Ciné +
	.....	Le Pacte
In association with	.....	Cofinova 15
	.....	Cinéventure 4
	.....	Cofimage 30
	.....	Cinémage 13
	.....	Cinécap 2
With the support of	.....	La région Nouvelle-Aquitaine
	.....	Conseil département Lot-et-Garonne
In partnership with	.....	le CNC
Distribution France	.....	Le Pacte
International Sales	.....	Elle Driver

