



AFTER
'SNOWS OF KILIMANJARO'

AGAT FILMS & CIE PRESENTS

ARIANE ASCARIDE

JACQUES BOUDET - JEAN-PIERRE DARROUSSIN
GÉRARD MEYLAN

Ariane's thread

A FILM BY
ROBERT GUÉDIGUIAN

AGAT Films & Cie presents

ARIANE'S THREAD

A film by **Robert Guédiguian**

with

Ariane ASCARIDE

Jacques BOUDET, Jean-Pierre DARROUSSIN, Anaïs DEMOUSTIER
Youssef DJAORO, Adrien JOLIVET, Gérard MEYLAN and Lola NAYMARK

92min – 1.85 – 5.1 – DCP

International Sales

FILMS DISTRIBUTION

34, rue du Louvre – 75001 Paris, France

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SYNOPSIS

Ariane, a middle-aged woman, is lonelier than ever in her pretty house. It's her birthday. The candles on the birthday cake are lit. But all of her loved ones have sent their apologies - they're not coming.

So she takes her pretty car and leaves her pretty suburban neighborhood to get lost in the big sunny city of Marseille.

CAST

Ariane ASCARIDE

Jacques BOUDET

Jean-Pierre DARROUSSIN

Anaïs DEMOUSTIER

Youssef DJAORO

Adrien JOLIVET

Gérard MEYLAN

Lola NAYMARK

Judith MAGRE, doing the voice of the turtle

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT GUÉDIGUIAN

Where did you get the idea for *Ariane's Thread*?

I wanted to make a film just for the pleasure of making it, in a completely free style, like a theatrical "impromptu" or improvisation - a little, fast-paced poetic piece, that would be exhilarating and pure fun. I also had a strong desire to let go, to simply perform for the sake of it. The screenplay needed to be a "performance vessel" for the actors, the technicians and of course, for myself.

With the exception of *Le Promeneur du Champ-de-Mars [The Last Mitterand]*, in which she wasn't cast, you have written 16 films for Ariane Ascaride. What is there in this film that she has never done before?

Let's just say that in this film I gave Ariane the possibility to "show her inner clown" through the story of a woman who runs away on her birthday and ends up in "Wonderland," meeting people and exploring different worlds; she even meets a turtle... She is completely free. She mouths off to everybody and then a moment later turns into an angel, repeatedly offering: "may I help you?" She fully embraces overacting, using grimaces and gestures in the spirit of a circus act. At the dog pound, she cries like a clown and you get the feeling that a fountain of clown tears could squirt right out of her eyes at any moment...She overdoes and exaggerates, in a way we've already seen in some scenes of certain films, but here she is like that all of the time, because the film allows for it. The same thing goes for all the other actors. It's a film where everything is done in exaggeration, where everyone and everything is "over-the-top."

A newcomer has been welcomed to your team for the screenplay: the playwright Serge Valetti.

Serge Valetti is from Marseille. He started out as an actor, and then he wrote dozens and dozens of plays. I think among all the living authors, his plays are the most produced in France today. He wrote a wonderful adaptation of *King Lear* that stages Jean-Marie Le Pen (*historical leader of the French National Front party*) and his three daughters. Ariane was cast in that play in Malakoff in 1992. That's how he and I met. We've been friends ever since. He's seen my films; I've read his writings and seen his plays. Serge is somewhat of a nut, there's something "baroque" about him. He is very Mediterranean, excessive, with a lot of fantasy and absurdity mixed in. And a great deal of humor...

The movie is also a lot like you...

What's bred in the bone comes out in the flesh...the more quickly I write, the more it resembles me: the material that emerges spontaneously is mine. *Ariane's thread* is also MY Ariane's thread. Together with Valetti, we unrolled the spindle of thread through the maze of what I call my motifs, as we say when talking about painting.

Here, once again, your main backdrop is the seaside restaurant in Ponteau that was where most of the action took place in *A la vie, à la mort* [*Til Death do us part*], and you set up things on the island of Frioul, which was already featured in *Marie-Jo et ses deux amours* [*Marie-Jo and her Two Lovers*].

They were the film's two main stages. Ponteau combines all that I love in a setting: a bar, the sea, boats and operating factories. We hadn't yet taken advantage of Frioul's "ancient theater" with its surprising Greek columns. And then, we shot for the first time at Longchamp Palace, a Mecca of Marseilles, formerly a zoological garden, in the Natural History museum. The museum was closed for repairs, making it possible for us to shoot there.

You talk about freedom, yet this film is by far the most complicated you've ever made in terms of constraints (technical effects, extras, costumes, etc.) since *L'Armée du crime* [*Army of Crime*].

I had set out to direct a lighthearted movie from every point of view, but then I realized that in order to build a "performance vessel" you need a lot of scaffolding, cranes, joints, hinges, pipes, ramps; in short - machinery. We wrote it telling ourselves that nothing was impossible. Very quickly, it became a game about inventing moments when we could have fun doing things we had never done before. To be truthful, I should add that all of this was possible because I have greater resources today than I had in the past. There are things that I've always loved, but that I couldn't do before, that have to do with putting on a show. In fact, I love big productions I mean outright "super productions"! It is such a joy to work together to hatch up a plan for a shipwreck, a storm that is somewhere between a natural storm and a theatrical storm, in other words *our* storm, or to shoot a music-hall scene like the one at the end for which we asked Gotan Project to adapt Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's *Comme on fait son lit, on se couche* [*For as you make your bed, so you must lie in it...*].

You often change the screenplay's chronology during the editing process, but not this time...

I didn't want the film to lose its narrative thread— no pun intended.

I'm always afraid of losing the audience's attention; so I had to have other threads besides Ariane's. Starting with the first screenings, even if very quickly the spectator understands that it is a dream, I liked the fact that the audience watches the film like a "normal" one, with a beginning, middle and end. There were moments during the editing process when Bernard Sasia and I were tempted to slightly upend the narrative. We even gave it a try. But we realized that the film resisted that type of storytelling, it needed a sort of continuity...

***Ariane's Thread* also contains many more references than your other films...**

Yes, they are more like a tribute to other people's work, or in other words, an acknowledgement of "IOUs." We are shaped by everything we've read in books and seen in the movies, on stage, in museums, everywhere. I'm paying homage to all those who have ever counted for me: to Pier Paolo Pasolini with the first text read by Jack (Jacques Boudet), which evokes the need for myths and rituals; to Anton Chekhov with the second text that speaks about the world's eternal beauty, which has existed long before us and will exist long after us. I pay homage to Brecht with the song *Comme on fait son lit, on se couche* [*For as you make your bed, so you must lie in it...*]. I pay homage to Aragon and Jean Ferrat. *Que serais-je sans toi* [*What would I be without you*] is a song that deeply moved me when I was very young, only ten, and to this day still moves me... and when I mention *The Victors*, I am thinking about Jean-Paul Sartre, naturally.

There are also purely cinematographic tributes.

I wanted to pay homage to a style of free and offbeat filmmaking that I haven't necessarily had the opportunity to speak about before: I'm thinking of Carné and Prévert's *Drôle de drame* for example... And then there are tributes to Jean-Luc Godard's *Vivre sa vie* [*My life to live*] in which Jean Ferrat sang *Ma Môme* [*My kid*], and Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* through Anaïs Demoustier's costume when they are rehearsing at the theater. Frederico Fellini, naturally, and his *La Dolce vita* with the fountain scene; Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* with the "pilgrims" who arrive in Frioul and *The Hawks and the Sparrows*, where there was a talking crow, while in my film it's a turtle...

Why a talking turtle?

May he who has never spoken to an animal cast the first stone...

To add an element of the unreal, a necessary anomaly so that the viewer understands very quickly that we are in a strange universe. The turtle only speaks to Ariane, leading one to think that it's possibly all in her head, that it's her voice, her conscience, like Jiminy Cricket...Indeed, the viewer can interpret it as he or she wishes: I give credit to all interpretations (except malevolent and perverted ones...)! And it was fun to ask Judith Magre to record her voice, which has such a particular resonance and then bring it with us on set. I'd like to make it clear that there were three turtles, and none of them was tortured: indeed, they were all quite gifted actors.

You have directed three "Fables" - *L'Argent fait le Bonheur* [*Money brings Happiness*], *Marius et Jeannette* [*Marius and Jeannette*], and *A l'attaque !* [*Charge!*] - how do they differ from this film, which from the opening credits you proclaim to be a "flight of fancy"?

Fables are built on a "moral" or a "watchword" that was at the origin of those screenplays...Everything had to come together leading towards the same resolution; everything had to go in the same direction so that these movies could be illustrations of this moral. Whereas this film is built on the nonsensical aspect of dreaming. Yet in the end, I notice that today, this dream is actually an invitation to reinvent a truly universal brotherhood. Brotherhoods that exist today are not universal, or are not any more. They are religious, geographical and cultural, or built on specific communities. I continue to feel that in order for there to be a new world, we have to dream it up first.

ROBERT GUÉDIGUIAN

Is one of the founding producers of **AGAT FILMS & CIE – EX NIHILO**, the company that has produced films by:

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He is the writer, director and producer of:

1981 Dernier été (Last Summer)

1984 Rouge midi

1985 Ki lo sa ?

1990 Dieu vomit les tièdes

1993 L'argent fait le bonheur

1995 À la vie à la mort ! ('Til Death do us part)

1997 Marius et Jeannette (Maris and Jeannette)

1998 À la place du cœur

2000 À l'attaque ! (Charge!)

2001 La ville est tranquille (The Town is Quiet)

2002 Marie-Jo et ses deux amours (Marie-Jo and Her Two Lovers)

2004 Mon père est ingénieur (My father is an Engineer)

2005 Le promeneur du Champs de Mars (The Last Mitterrand)

2006 Le voyage en Arménie (Journey to Armenia)

2008 Lady Jane

2009 L'armée du crime (The Army of Crime)

2011 Les neiges du Kilimandjaro (Snows of Kilimanjaro)

2014 Au fil d'Ariane (Ariane's Thread)

CREW

Director	Robert GUÉDIGUIAN
Screenwriters	Robert GUÉDIGUIAN and Serge VALLETTI
Director of Photography	Pierre MILON (AFC)
Sound Engineer	Laurent LAFRAN
Production Designer	Michel VANDESTIEN
Editor	Bernard SASIA
Line Producer	Malek HAMZAOU
1 st Assistant Director	Ferdinand VERHAEGHE
Location Manager	Bruno GHARIANI
Costume Designer	Juliette CHANAUD
Wardrobe Master	Anne-Marie GIACALONE
Make-up Artist	Mayté ALONSO-PEDRON
Sound Mixer	Armelle MAHE
Producers	Robert GUÉDIGUIAN and Marc BORDURE

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with the support of

La Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

in association with

Le Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée

with the participation of

Marseille – Provence 2013

Capitale européenne de la culture

French Distribution

Diaphana Distribution

International Sales

Films Distribution