BLIND SPOT

A FILM BY
PIERRE TRIVIDIC & PATRICK MARIO BERNARD

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE FOLLY
GOLSHIFTEH FARAHANI
ISABELLE CARRÉ
SAMİ ĀMEZIANE

EX NIHILO PRESENTS
Dominick Brassan has the power to turn invisible, but rarely uses it. Instead he has kept it a shameful secret, hidden even from Viveka, his fiancée. But when his ability to control his gift gets out of hand, his life, friendships and relationships will be forever turned inside out.
WITH BLIND SPOT, DID YOU WANT TO OFFER YOUR OWN VERSION OF THE MYTH OF THE INVISIBLE MAN?

PIERRE TRIVIDIC In 2006, I was approached by Emmanuel Carrère. He had read one of my screenplays and had liked it. He suggested that we work together on a story of an invisible man who loses his power of invisibility. We met three or four times, and then Emmanuel told me that he was abandoning the project, that he no longer believed in it enough. However, I had begun working and I believed in it more and more. So I told Emmanuel that if he confirmed that he was abandoning the project, I would resume it with Patrick Mario. And that’s what happened. We adopted the abandoned project.

WHY DO YOU GIVE NO EXPLANATION FOR THE GIFT OF INVISIBILITY OR THE GRADUAL LOSS OF THIS GIFT?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Our subject is loss, among other things. The easiest way was to make invisibility a natural gift, without any explanation. A living thing that goes out of control, like all living things. Dominick didn’t choose to be an invisible man.

YOU PREFER TO ANCHOR THE FANTASTIC IN EVERYDAY LIFE?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD The whole story takes place today and in an everyday world. Dominick has to make a living. He has a job. He rents an apartment in a tower block. He is closer to Peter Parker/Spiderman, who sells pizzas to make a living, than to Bruce Wayne/Batman, who lives in a mansion. Dominick has a very ordinary or universal appearance, without being a superhero. He doesn’t know what to do with his power. Is it that intoxicating to be able to make yourself invisible? He suffers because of his gift as much as he exploits it. And he suffers all the more because it is going haywire.
IS THIS PROSAIC APPROACH A WAY TO BETTER INSPIRE AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD It was first of all a way for us to explore the phenomenon by asking ourselves concrete questions. How exactly does it feel to be invisible? When you are invisible, your clothes are not. We’re only really invisible when we’re completely naked. Invisibility therefore concerns the body. And the body is vulnerable. Invisibility is therefore a vulnerability.

WE USUALLY IMAGINE INVISIBILITY AS A GREAT POWER, BUT YOU IN FACT TREAT IT AS A HANDICAP?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Yes, it’s useful for only one thing, “watching”, as Dominick says. It allows us to be there, secretly, when things are seen and heard that we are not supposed to see or hear. But other characters manage to use it differently. Like the magician, who uses it as a way to make his living. And who, in doing so, sells an amazing reality as a mere stage trick. The gift forces you to deal with how you use it. What have you done with your talent?

PIERRE TRIVIDIC It is also a form of imprisonment. Dominick says so at one point to Richard: “We have this gift, so what? What does it force us to do? If I’m two and a half
meters tall, do I have to play basketball?” Do I want to do what I can do, just because I can? The gift of invisibility, do I own it, or does it own me?

**SOCIETY’S MISFITS ARE OFTEN CONSIDERED THE “INVISIBLE” OF OUR TIMES. ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT FORMULATE ANY MESSAGE, DOES BLIND SPOT HAVE AN UNDERGROUND POLITICAL DIMENSION?**

**PATRICK MARIO BERNARD** That idea probably runs through the whole film, but we didn’t aim to make it the focus.

**PIERRE TRIVIDIC** Invisibility in the film is a developing metaphor, which exposes a variety of issues. It is a question of what we see, what we do not see, how we are seen. And, of all these things, invisibility is also a social metaphor, yes. Invisibility is a metaphor that has become a commonplace in the social field. Everyone knows who these invisible people are. These are people who suffer from their invisibility.

**RATHER THAN A SPECIFIC MESSAGE, BLIND SPOT CREATES A COLD, NOCTURNAL AND SLIGHTLY WORRYING URBAN CLIMATE. IS THE WAY YOU FILM THE CITY AND ITS SETTING PART OF A DESIRE TO DEPICT THESE ANXIETY-PROVOKING TIMES?**

**PIERRE TRIVIDIC** Yes, it’s cold in the film. But, at first, we were more interested in going from summer to winter, from a heatwave to the silence of a snowy day. Nevertheless, there is still something of that left in the prologue, whose atmosphere is rather saturated and suffocating. And in the ending which takes place in the silence of a snowy day.

**PATRICK MARIO BERNARD** This does not mean that we go from the heat of life to the cold of death. The silence of the snowy day is that of tranquillity, which makes music and speech possible. It is not an ending but a beginning. It is this silence that allows Dominick to start singing. His destiny is not unrelated to that of the hero of *The Incredible Shrinking Man*: he is constantly shrinking and weakening, but however small and weak he may be, there is always a part of the world that is on his scale, habitable for him, however tiny it may seem to be.

**PIERRE TRIVIDIC** Nevertheless, the world described is rather anxiety-provoking, as you say. Even if it is not the end of the world that the Asian grocer jokingly predicts at the beginning, we hear a lot of sirens. All this reflects the mental meteorology of a Dominick struggling with the disappearance of his power.
Patrick Mario Bernard

We look for sets that are like small theatres. This is particularly true in *Blind Spot*. Architecture has its role in the title and in the film’s action. We were looking for boxes, boxes within boxes, all kinds of interlocking, small machines that guide, build the gaze and limit it at the same time. These housing blocks are like a set of cubes. They are simple and pure spaces and forms, without illumination. This troubled world also has its beauties.

**How do you work together?**

Patrick Mario Bernard

We have an intuitive way of working, there is no clearly established distribution of roles. So much so that we don’t really know in the end who did what.

Pierre Trividic

We exchange continuously. Development evolves through this dialogue. A line in the screenplay is the balanced sum of these exchanges. At the end of the day, *Blind Spot* follows a very straight path. A single line leads from beginning to end, without any superfluities.
**Patrick Mario Bernard** We each have our own preferences. Pierre is the meticulous guardian of the screenplay while I am rather inclined to cross the line.

**Pierre Trividic** I’m not a cop. But, if things veer off, I feel it can be interesting to question the reasons for that. Including, if necessary, how to integrate them. It’s the meaning that counts.

**Patrick Mario Bernard** Finally, the work, the film, is done by a third person, who is neither Pierre nor me. An invisible person standing between us. But who makes a film alone? No one works alone.

**How do you work with your Director of Photography, Jonathan Ricquebourg, who has created a magnificent image?**

**Patrick Mario Bernard** We first noticed his work on *Mange tes morts*, Jean-Charles Hue’s beautiful film, and in particular his framing. He has worked a lot since then. He has made an impression every time, especially with the photography of *Shéhérazade*. In general, we work according to very common methods. We gathered a very broad iconography with photos, film extracts, visual arts, etc. that provided a foundation for our exchanges with Jonathan.

**Pierre Trividic** Not just photos. There are also Patrick’s drawings and watercolours. There are six thick notebooks for *Blind Spot*. This is important work, which has a great expressive power. These “notebooks” serve as a basis for working with all the key crew members, not just the director of photography.

**Can you talk about the music, which is just as important “in” as “off”?**

**Patrick Mario Bernard** The music, oh, wow, it’s impossible to talk about. It was there right away. We wrote the screenplay from the opening scene, the Afro-funk concert in the prologue. Everything came together: the music, the dark areas of the rehearsal room, the disappearance of the baby from his basket. Music is therefore a primary factor. Our character was born in music, his life would be linked to music. In a rather paradoxical and problematic way, as we can see. In any case, it would always be about music. It’s a reference point for measuring Dominick’s trajectory. He’s an unfulfilled guitarist. He is “called” so, but he does not dare to take that step.

**Pierre Trividic** Patrick composed all of the music for the film. Not only what is referred to as the film’s score, but also all the music you hear in the film. It goes from hard-rock to
bossa-nova. His curiosity, know-how and appetite seem to know no bounds. He is also the creator of the sound design.

**PATRICK MARIO BERNARD** Basically, this film could well be a song. Not a novel, not a painting, not theatre, but a song

**HOW DID YOU CHOOSE JEAN-CHRISTOPHE FOLLY TO PLAY DOMINICK?**

**PATRICK MARIO BERNARD** We met him ten years ago for this role. We had seen him in *Schlafkrankheit* and *La Prima Neve*. We found him amazing but unfortunately a little too young to play a character who is beginning to lose his abilities and powers. We then considered a different cast, which we had to give up for various reasons. Finally we realized that almost ten years had gone by. We met Jean-Christophe again. And he was ripe for the character. We were overjoyed.

**THE CHARACTER PLAYED BY ISABELLE CARRÉ REPRESENTS THE AUDIENCE’S POINT OF VIEW. ACCORDING TO WHAT CRITERIA DID YOU CHOOSE HER?**

**PATRICK MARIO BERNARD** Well, it was an idea of our producer, Patrick Sobelman. And our physical meeting was decisive. We saw in her someone other than in her films,
except in exceptional cases, such as with the Larrieu brothers. From the outset, it was her modernity that struck us. Isabelle has an amazing ability to make suggestions. Inventiveness, rigour, generosity, musical sense.

AND WHAT LED YOU TO PICK GOLSHIFTEH FARAHANI?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD The role of the blind woman was the first to be cast, while the screenplay was still only a synopsis. Vanessa Paradis accepted the role and followed the adventures and misadventures of the project over the years. And then, at the last moment, when the lights finally turned green, insurmountable scheduling issues prevented her from making the film. It was a heart-breaking experience.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC We thought that looking for a duplicate of Vanessa was a lost cause. And yet, in a way, that’s what we did when we started considering Golshifteh. If you agree to see in Vanessa a kind of fairy, straight out of the Arthurian cycle, then you can see that Golshifteh is like an oriental equivalent, a fairy too, but from The Arabian Nights. We hadn’t spoken to anyone about that when Laurent Grégoire, her agent, offered to introduce us to her. We saw that as a sign.

GOLSHIFTEH GAVE US A VERY WARM WELCOME. SHE APPROACHED THE SCRIPT FROM A VERY PERSONAL ANGLE, A MAGICAL OR MYSTICAL ANGLE, WHICH INTERESTED US A LOT.

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD She is also an actress who is interested in film technique. She looks to see what lens is mounted on the camera, and that tells her enough about how she is filmed. She doesn’t need to go to the video assist.

THE CAST IS IN THE FORM OF A QUARTET. THE FOURTH MEMBER IS SAMI AMEZIANE, WHO IS BETTERknown AS THE COMTE DE BOUBERBALA.

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Sami Ameziane is part of the “historical” cast of Blind Spot. When we met him, he was doing his first one-man show. We noticed him because of the posters for that show. He was wearing a court jester’s hat, with bells and everything. What struck us was his strange blend of candour and strength. The radiance of childhood and also something else, a dark, worried, perhaps violent side just below the surface. We wanted to build up Richard as a character bearing this kind of complexe energy. And then we saw Sami on stage, and our intuition became obvious. The screenplay appealed to him right away.
BIOGRAPHY
PIERRE TRIVIDIC AND PATRICK MARIO BERNARD, DIRECTORS

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD, a visual artist and composer, is a former student of the Paris Fine Arts School.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC is a former student of the IDHEC (36th class) and a laureate of the Villa Médicis hors-les-murs (1989).

Their working partnership began in 1996 with LE CAS LOVECRAFT (Fipa d’Or), a commission from France 3 for the Un Siècle d’Ecrivains collection. For television again, they directed CECI EST UNE PIPE for Canal+ in 2000, and UNE FAMILLE PARFAITE for Arte in 2005.

For the cinema, they have written and directed two feature films, DANCING in 2001 and L’AUTRE in 2008 (Best Actress Award for Dominique Blanc at the 65th Venice Film Festival).

In addition to their joint projects, Pierre Trividic works as a screenwriter for the cinema (from PETITS ARRANGEMENTS AVEC LES MORTS by Pascale Ferran to MARVIN OU LA BELLE ÉDUCATION by Anne Fontaine, as well as CEUX QUI M’AIMENT PRENDROUENT LE TRAIN by Patrice Chéreau).

As for Patrick Mario Bernard, he continues to work as a visual artist and, in 2018, directed GOOD, a feature film dedicated to the musician Rodolphe Burger.
2018  LES GOÛTS ET LES COULEURS by Myriam Aziza
2016  JEUNE FEMME by Léonor Serraille
2014  FUORI MIRA by Erik Bernasconi
2014  MAMA TI PORTO IN VACANZA by Ludovico di Martino
2013  LES SALAUDS by Claire Denis
2012  VOUS N’AVEZ ENCORE RIEN VU by Alain Resnais
       LA PRIMA NEVE by Andre Segre
2011  NEVERS by Emilie Lamoine
       CLAIR OBSCUR by Nicolas Wackerbarth
2010  SCHLAFKRANKHEIT by Ulrich Kohler
2009  EDEN À L’OUEST by Costa Gavras
       VILLA AMALIA by Benoit Jacquot
2008  CLIENTE by Josiane Balasko
       35 RHUMS by Claire Denis
ISABELLE CARRÉ
SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY SINCE 2010

2018  L’ESPRIT DE FAMILLE by Eric Besnard
       UN VRAI BONHOMME by Benjamin Parent

2017  GARDE ALTERNEE by Alexandra Leclere

2016  UNE VIE AILLEURS by Olivier Peyon
       COMMENT J’AI RENCONTRE MON PERE by Maxime Motte

2015  PARIS WILLOUGHBY by Quentin Reynaud and Arnaud Delaire
       LE CŒUR RÉGULIER by Vanja d’Alcantara

2014  RESPIRE by Mélanie Laurent
       21 NUITS AVEC PATTIE by Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu
       LES CHAISES MUSICALES by Marie Belhomme
       ANGE ET GABRIELLE by Anne Giafferi
       MARIE HEURTIN by Jean-Pierre Améris

2013  DU GOUDRON ET DES PLUMES by Pascal Rabate

2012  CHERCHEZ HORTENSE by Pascal Bonitzer

2011  DES VENTS CONTRAIRES by Jalil Lespert

2010  LES EMOTIFS ANONYMES by Jean-Pierre Ameris
       LE REFUGE by François Ozon
GOLSHIFTEH FARAHANI
SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY SINCE 2009

2018
- UN DIVAN A TUNIS by Manele Labidi
- LA NUIT A DÉVORÉ LE MONDE by Dominique Rocher

2017
- LES FILLES DU SOLEIL by Eva Husson
- THE SONG OF SCORPIONS by Anup Singh
- SANTA & CIE by Alain Chabat
- THE UPSIDE by Neil Burger
- PATERNON by Jim Jarmush
- LE DOSSIER MONA LINA by Eran Riklis

2015
- LES DEUX AMIS by Louis Garrel
- PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN: DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES by Joachim Rønning, Espen Sandberg
- LES MALHEURS DE SOPHIE by Christophe Honoré

2014
- ALTAMIRA by Hugh Hudson
- EXODUS by Ridley Scott
- GO HOME by Jihane Chouaib
- EDEN by Mia Hansen-Love
- ROSEWATER by Jon Stewart
- MY SWEET PEPPER LAND by Hiner Saleem

2011
- JUST LIKE A WOMAN by Rachid Bouchareb
- SYNGUE SABOUR by Atiq Rahimi

2010
- POULET AUX PRUNES by Marjane Satrapi
- SI TU MEURS JE TE TUE by Hiner Saleem
- THERE BE DRAGONS by Roland Joffe

2009
- ABOUT ELLY by Asghar Farhadi
SAMI AMEZIANE (LE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA)

FILMOGRAPHY

CINEMA

2014  SUPERCONDRIACUE by Dany Boon
2013  SMS by Gabriel Julien-Laferrière
2012  LES SEIGNEURS by Olivier Dahan

STAGE SHOWS

2018  LE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA 2
2016  LE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA
2011  STAND UP A NEW YORK
CLAUDIA TAGBO
SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

2019  QU’EST-CE QU’ON A ENCORE FAIT AU BON DIEU
           by Philippe de Chauveron
2018   LA CH’TITE FAMILLE by Dany Boon
2017   LES EX by Maurice Barthelemy
2016   C’EST QUOI CETTE FAMILLE by Gabriel Julien-Laferrière
2015   JE SUIS A VOUS TOUT DE SUITE by Baya Kasimi
2014   SUPERCONDRIAQUE by Dany Boon
2012   LE CROCODILE DU BOTSWANGA by Fabrice Eboué
2011   AMOUR SUR PLACE OU À EMPORTE by Amelle Chahbi
2010   LES SEIGNEURS by Olivier Dahan
2008   UNE ESTONIENNE À PARIS by Ilmar Raag
2011   DE L’HUILE SUR LE FEU by Nicolas Benamoun
2010   LE SENTIMENT DE LA CHAIR by Roberto Garzelli
2008   VILAIN by Jean-Patrick Benes et Allan Mauduit

STAGE SHOWS
2017  2017  LUCKY directed by Marie Guibourt
2012  2012  CRAZY directed by Pascal Eboué
CAST

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE FOLLY
DOMINICK BRASSAN

ISABELLE CARRÉ
VIVEKA BEHRING

GOLSHIFTEH FARAHANI
ELHAM

SAMI AMEZIANE
ALIAS LE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA
RICHARD JASKOWIAK

CLAUDIA TAGBO
CYNTHIA BRASSAN

TELLA KPOMAHOU
MARLETTE BRASSAN

PETER BONKE
DANY DE ROVÈRE
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<td>André Rigaut, Jean Mallet</td>
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<td>1st Assistant Director</td>
<td>Olivier Genet</td>
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<td>Marjolaine Grandjean</td>
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