

ATELIER DE PRODUCTION PRESENTS



# DEERSKIN

A FILM BY  
QUENTIN DUPIEUX  
WITH

JEAN DUJARDIN	ADELE HAENEL
---------------	--------------

**RELEASE DATE JUNE 19**

France – 1.85 – 5.1 – Length : 1 hour 17 minutes

International Sales WTFilms 20 rue Bachaumont tel: +331 42 61 09 83 sales@wtfilms.fr	International Press in Cannes <b>US/Intl Publicity Contacts:</b>  Ryan Werner, <a href="mailto:rtwerner@me.com">rtwerner@me.com</a> , +1-917-254-7653  Emilie Spiegel, <a href="mailto:emilie@cineticmedia.com">emilie@cineticmedia.com</a> , +1-516-524-9392  Jill Rosen, <a href="mailto:jill@jillrosencomms.com">jill@jillrosencomms.com</a> , +1-917-326-0145
--	--

# **SYNOPSIS**

---

**Georges, 44 years old, and his jacket, 100% deerskin, have a plan.**

# AN INTERVIEW WITH QUENTIN DUPIEUX

---

## **What was the starting point for the story?**

I wanted to film insanity. I've been pigeonholed as a director who makes crazy films, but I never really filmed insanity head on. Of course, there is something nutty about *Steak*, *Rubber*, *Reality*, *Keep an Eye Out!*. But my earlier films always used some kind of hack to keep the madness 'funny' and unreal. The movies were crazy, not the characters. I really wanted to finally confront a character who goes off the deep end, with no fancy tricks, without my usual fakery. And so *Deerskin* is my first realistic film. I know people laugh when I say it, but that's what I truly believe. This was the first time I came face to face with reality. A story, actors, and that's it.

## **“First realistic film”... After all, it's a story about a man who falls in love with a deerskin jacket...**

Yes, but Georges' madness takes place in the real world. In my other films, we were in *Crazyville*, anything could happen. Here the character is very real. And the world around him is too. You might run into Georges in the street. You might even be Georges. That's what is frightening. I've already rubbed shoulders with several “Georges” in my life. It's pretty unsettling.

Normally, in a story about madness, we see the character hit the skids. Here, we know hardly anything about Georges...

## **Why didn't you film his daily life before his encounter with the jacket?**

I did. We saw the guy's daily life, his wife, his children... And then we saw him abandon all that. But in the editing room, it looked boring. It didn't work. It was like providing the audience with useless keys. I took it all out to concentrate exclusively on Georges and his jacket. I quickly realized that showing pure obsession, with no explanation for it, was like holding up a mirror for members of the audience.

We hardly ever lose sight of Georges during the film.

## **How did you work with Jean Dujardin?**

I never really had to convince Jean. Something clicked between us. I talked to him about the story and he immediately agreed to do it. I think that the idea of obsession appeals to him as much as it does to me. He was completely inhabited by the character on set. You can see in his eyes that he's not pretending. He lived the film almost literally, while still having a ball. It was very important for me not to have Jean pretend to be crazy. The film would have been less interesting. I wanted a very intimate shoot, so that Jean could feel free, almost invisible. It's a movie about loneliness, about a kind of sadness that degenerates into craziness. It was important to get away from the very strict stagings of my previous films, aiming for something subtler, closer to the actors. There are a lot of moments in the film when Jean looks so natural, he almost gives the impression that he's not acting. It was virtually a wildlife documentary. Adèle Haenel also brought something very animalistic with her. Her encounter with Jean resulted in something very strange. A lot of stuff goes on in their eyes. It's very powerful. Her character was much more rational as written. She's the one who added something a little more disturbing. As if her character had been contaminated by Georges' insanity.

**Even if there is often something harrowing in your films, would you say that Deerskin is your first horror film?**

Yes, and I'm proud to say so. In my previous films, there was always something that kept horror at an arm's length. You might think of them as nightmares, with their share of absurd violence. But none of it was real. In Deerskin I wanted to flirt with shlock, while always remaining faithful to the more realistic aspects of insanity. I realize that that has a very different effect on audiences. It perturbs them. They don't know whether they're supposed to be horrified by what they see, or whether they're expected to laugh. I like that idea very much.

**It is also a movie about the cinema. Georges becomes a director and an actor...**

Careful, there's nothing tongue in cheek about it. Georges finds a way to be creative, to express himself with a camera. In the end, it was more an homage to the child I was - as a teenager I made little horror films in the woods with my buddies as actors – than an earnest discourse about the cinema. Georges documents his "great plan" with a camera. For us and for Denise, it becomes an entertainment. Maybe not even fiction. Just a movie. Images. But for Georges, that's part of the real world.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JEAN DUJARDIN

---

**What appeals to you in the cinema of Quentin Dupieux?**

With Quentin, it's all about seduction. I was familiar with his cinema, but I wasn't really sure that there was a place in it for me. And then he came with Deerskin. You see this guy show up, funny, friendly, relaxed, and cool. It only takes a few minutes to realize that the guy has a super precise idea of what he wants to do. He told me the story of this jacket, and I liked it. There's something very seductive about him. You want him to like you. You can tell that with him things are not at all like they are elsewhere. And then I immediately liked his energy, his desire to make a movie, on the spot, now, right then and there. Directors with a vision as compelling as Quentin's are few and far between. You feel safe with him, even in the craziest scenes. That's one thing typical about the people you let yourself go with. It's no use having an ego with Quentin. It won't fly. You have to be at the beck and call of his imagination.

**How do you approach a character like Georges?**

By not playing the screenplay. An Actor's Studio take on craziness was out of the question. Americans are very good at that, but it's foreign to the tone of Quentin's cinema. I understand Georges. There's something inside of him: a sense of loneliness, a desire to throw everything overboard. I feel personally touched. Georges abandons everything. Who's never dreamed of doing that? Once I understood that, I began to play the character as normally as I could. Little gestures, little glances, a way of keeping his feet on the ground. For this character to work, you have to believe in him from the start. He has to be very earthbound. I don't think you should try to be clever in a Quentin

Dupieux film. You just have to be in your right place. That obviously results in something unexpected. During the shoot, I didn't realize to what extent I was Quentin's onscreen doppelgänger. I don't know. It's bizarre. The beard, the gestures, the way of speaking... I in no way tried to imitate him, and he himself never pushed me in that direction. But you have to admit that there's something eerie about it on screen.

### **How would you define his way of working?**

I love the "non-professional" aspect of his cinema. That's something he's proud of. He doesn't have a method or a system. He makes movies as fast and spontaneously as he can. I love that. And then, Quentin has something very important in common with Michel Hazanavicius. He works with empty spaces. He likes scenes to last, even when there's nothing left to play. Time stands still, but it's not necessarily time out. It's to give the characters and actors time to exist, time to react to what's been going on. That can throw some actors off balance. I love it. It's in those moments of hesitation that the comedy and drama blend. You're right on the borderline. All those scenes, for example, in which Georges demands money, or can't pay. Quentin takes the time to stretch out the sense of malaise, to allow for some lingering doubt. Is Georges going to turn violent? Weep? Laugh? You never know what will happen. Time stands still for a moment, and those little agonies make me want to die laughing.

### **This is also your first genre film and your first time playing a serial killer...**

What a riot! I had already played a borderline character in *Cash Truck* (Nicolas Boukhrief, 2003), but nothing like what Quentin was offering me. I've wanted to explore this kind of territory for a long time now. Madness, obsessions have always fascinated me. I like the way the film degenerates from a socially-aware thriller into something completely weird and gory. I was reminded a lot of Patrick Dewaere in *Série Noire* (Alain Corneau, 1979). The landscapes, France, the boredom... Quentin appropriated the atmosphere of that cinema and transmuted it into something very personal and very unique.

### **Aside from Adèle Haenel, your main partner is a deerskin jacket... How do you play when your costume is a character too?**

I tried on seven jackets. This was one of the first...I felt something happen when I put it on. We said "Bingo, that's it". Spontaneously and very soon. It was in fact a kind of audition. There was chemistry between us. It worked. This jacket told a story. The jacket is a character. Maybe because no one can actually wear it. It's way out there, beyond the pale of good taste and common sense, You don't feel ridiculous wearing a jacket like this. You feel different. That helped me a lot in my acting. I maybe shouldn't say this, but Georges and I are both slightly fascinated by a piece of clothing. I love boots. I buy tons of them and never wear them. I don't know why, but I like seeing them at home. The deerskin boots that Georges wears in the movie are actually mine. So I immediately hit it off with the jacket. We talk about it as if it was a character, but if you ask me, I think that the jacket is haunted. I don't know if Quentin would agree with me, but that's the impression I got when I saw the film. That is Quentin's editing genius. When you shoot with him, you never really know what the film is going to look like. All those scenes in which I talk with the jacket... on set we said "Cool, that's hilarious." But when edited by Quentin, it becomes unsettling, funny, tragic, weird... It's as if he found the right rhythm, the best place for each scene. Suddenly the puzzle takes shape. Few film makers have that kind of mastery. For an actor, working with him is obviously very exciting.

## CAST

---

Georges	<b>Jean Dujardin</b>
Denise	<b>Adèle Haenel</b>
Monsieur B	<b>Albert Delpy</b>
The Kid	<b>Pierre Gommé</b>
The Receptionist	<b>Laurent Nicolas</b>
The Neighbor	<b>Coralie Russier</b>
Bar patron	<b>Marie Bunel</b>

## CREW

---

Screenplay, Photography, Editing	<b>Quentin Dupieux</b>
Directed by	<b>Quentin Dupieux</b>
Art and set direction	<b>Joan Le Boru</b>
Sound	<b>Guillaume Le Braz, Alexis Place, Gadou Naudin, Cyril Holtz</b>
Special Effects	<b>Olivier Afonso</b>
Costume Design	<b>Isabelle Pannetier</b>
Production Manager	<b>Arnaud Tournaire</b>
Post Production	<b>Abraham Goldblat, Camille Cariou</b>
Executive Producers	<b>Thomas and Mathieu Verhaeghe</b>
A Coproduction with	<b>Atelier de production, Arte France Cinéma, Nexus Factory &amp; Umedia, Garidi Films</b>
In association with	<b>UFund, Cinemage 13</b>
With the participation of	<b>Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image</b>

	<b>animée</b>
With the support of	<b>The Nouvelle Aquitaine Region in partnership with the CNC</b>
With the participation of	<b>d'Arte France, Canal+, OCS</b>