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Locarno Film Festival  
Concorso internazionale

ARIEH WORTHALTER    NADÈGE TREBAL

# TWELVE THOUSAND

When one loves, one counts

A FILM BY NADÈGE TREBAL

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# TWELVE THOUSAND

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With

**ARIEH WORTHALTER, NADÈGE TREBAL, LIV HENNEQUIER, FRANÇOISE LEBRUN, FLORENCE THOMASSIN, THÉO CHOLBI and JOSIANE VERMARE**

111 minutes - DCP - 1.66 - color - 5.1 - French, Filipino - France - 2019 - Visa n°149.036

## AUTUMN 2019

Poster, trailer, presskit, extracts, stills to be downloaded on  
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# Synopsis

While losing his clandestine job, believing Maroussia and him will no longer love each other as well, Frank leaves to earn as much as she does: twelve thousand, just what is needed to live for one year. No more no less.

In the course of this proletarian odyssey, Frank becomes the hero he always dreamed of being. But there was a price to pay...

# Interview

with the

# Director



**Before *Twelve Thousand* you made two documentary films; *Bleu pétrole* and *Scrap Yard*, both devoted to workers at work, one in an oil refinery, the other in a scrapyard. Why was that?**

My first films were set out around toxic places which summarizes my relationship to the world, my vision. It is in this industrial excess, that the class struggle is incarnated; in those men with bare hands who have only their bodies as capital. It is in this adversity that they appear to me in all their splendor. I find it difficult to find something stronger than the deep political and sensual emotion that I get from seeing the decay of the workers bodies for the sake of machines, or from the charm of one who breaks off from work to smoke.

**One of the beginning scenes of *Twelve Thousand* is sexually explicit. Did you want to show desire is core to the couple?**

Desire and money. I wanted to stress the material foundations of the couple. An attempt of showing feelings through actions by comparing wedlock to a small enterprise, where one does not declare one's feelings, one proves them.

**In the film, the man finds himself economically inferior to the woman. Would the opposite situation, create such erotic imbalance?**

The excitement of the film is to see men up-side down from what we usually see them. Maroussia is aware that Frank's precarious situation somewhat castrates him, inhibiting the reciprocity of their desire.

**Like a modern Ulysses, Frank leaves to earn the magic figure of twelve thousand euros: the more he delays in raising this sum, the further he is from Maroussia-Penelope, the less they can make love. It seems that the interdependence money-sex-marriage, cuts through the story, it's in its core.**

Exactly. All along I explore this relation in various different ways. I like the triviality when the characters trade and bargain, when they measure themselves and against each other. It's even the starting contract between Frank and Maroussia which gives the title to the film and sends him into his odyssey. When his plans fail and he has to return back home, he doesn't give up, he tries to find other sources of income in order to repair the image he has of himself. Twelve thousand is not only a love story, but also a self-love story.

**Why did you film the sex scene between Maroussia and Frank with a mixture of modesty and confidence?**

I think a filmmaker has a duty to be shameless. Modesty is within the reach of everyone. We filmmakers must be violent to get something out of ourselves, we must expose ourselves. Modesty comes back easily, but the moments when we are completely open are really rare, so it's vital to portray them. The issues in this scene are central to the film. For Frank, his marriage; the love for his wife is everything to him; but in order to get what he wants, he has to tear himself out from the bed of his lover.

**Does the separation of the couple suggests the question of infidelity?**

It's a love story in a hostile environment. Liberalism takes men to war. Should the disgrace of not having a job and a place in the world kill the couple? During his odyssey, Frank meets other women, women in charge of their desires. One by one they protect him from himself and lead him, against all odds, on his way back to Maroussia. Thanks to these women and inadvertently, Frank remains faithful to Maroussa...

**Could one of the readings of the film be a thousand and one ways to overthrow liberalism?**

Yes. One of the guiding threads of the film is following the money as a character, its passing from hand to hand, from country to country. While aspiring to the jobs lost by multinational relocation, Frank wonders how to create money without a job. He invents lots of small solutions, little miracles; he makes business out of anything: dancing, cigarette selling, stealing,.... Frank does not marginalize himself intentionally, only until he can buy his way into a formal white collar job from which he could feel he had a place in society and launder his cash cow.

**The exploration of precariousness in a liberal environment is the realistic aspect of the film. But the film is full of escapades through humor, dancing, planing, staging... Did you want to transcend realism; overcome misery? Is movie making as important as dealing with capitalism?**

Above all, I wanted to create the man of my dreams, a mythological creature with a thousand cords to his bow, that will pierce us with his arrows. Of course, that's not realistic!

**You play Maroussia yourself, which may surprise in a first fiction film. Why?**

Acting allowed me to see the scenes from the inside. It got a different feeling from the actors: they considered me a part of their group. For me, acting means going into the fire; the joy of exposing oneself; of abandoning oneself, and as such, it's been very hard. It's not possible for me, not to love the actors I work with. And I didn't have that view about myself, so it also was an exercise in solitude, a test of self-love.

**How did you choose Arieh Worthalter?**

After a meeting, I immediately felt that he could find Frank. To embody an ideal man is impossible. Frank does everything: he dances, earns money, twists wrists, builds projects, makes love.. He's very accomplished, always ahead or in trouble, he's an asshole but at the same time, irresistible. It was very appealing for Arieh to embody all that, but he was a little scared, I liked that.

**You went for actors like Françoise Lebrun or Florence Thomassin, whom we do not see very often.**

**What guided these choices?**

Well; on the one hand, the certainty that they would embody the characters the way I needed to and on the other hand, the pleasure of working with such changing feminine powers, with their natures, irregular, irreducible, hoping that they would overflow the score. Arieh has a different approach, more distant, more thoughtful. I was interested in opposing the character of Frank, to wilder women, what would be confusing to him.

**And the choice of Liv Henneguer?**

Something about her confidence attracted me, her wit. Her face has something of the silent movies. I immediately felt she would succeed in embodying Romane's capacity for love, renunciation, and the special way Romane sits on desire.





### **How was working with Jean-Claude Gallotta?**

Dancing is a common heritage between Frank and Maroussia, a precipitation of their past, a common ground for their carnal agreement. Jean-Claude composed what he called “*The Folk Dance of an Imaginary Country*», a wacky dance, simple for our clumsy bodies. Failing to make love between two fast lanes, they jump mocking gravity. This dancing duo served as a matrix for Frank’s dance solos, amputated of his other half. I was inspired by our movements to infect the rest of the film of this physical fantasy, like on the port with the amazons.

### **Was this your first collaboration with Rodolphe Burger?**

No, he also composed the OST for *Bleu pétrole*. For this film, I dragged him towards melodic music, romantic, which could carry both, the love story and the odyssey. The OST is orchestral music effortlessly merging the lavishness in the film with its emptiness. The film fully displayed to me when I saw it alongside the music.

### **The film is entitled *Twelve Thousand*. Is it important that the letters outweigh the numbers?**

Well, I just don’t see a title written in numbers!  
For me, «*Twelve Thousand*» is an oath of love. This is how their fidelity materializes. When Frank brings back twenty-three thousand, it’s a betrayal, his self-esteem over takes his love for her. Twelve thousand in letters, also dignifies the trivial, renders power to the tangible, gives weight to their promise.



# Nadège Trebal

## Biography

After studying literature at la Sorbonne, Nadège Trebal joins the script writing courses of la Fémis, from 2002 to 2006. She then co-writes two scripts alongside Claire Simon; *Ça Brûle* (2006) and *Les Bureaux de Dieu* (2008). Later in 2012 and 2014, respectively, she directs two full-length documentaries; *Bleu Pétrole* and *Scrap Yard*. During these two endeavors, she met masculine figures of the trade-union and industrial worlds. All these laid the ground for the writing and directing of her first full-length fiction film, *Twelve Thousand* (2019).

## Filmography

- 2019 **TWELVE THOUSAND**  
*International Competition, Locarno Film Festival*
- 2014 **SCRAP YARD**  
*Berlinale, Forum*
- 2012 **BLEU PÉTROLE**

# Cast

Frank  
Maroussia  
Romane  
Evelyn  
Lisa  
Anouk  
Yanis  
Mireille

**ARIEH WORTHALTER**  
**NADÈGE TREBAL**  
**LIV HENNEQUIER**  
**FLORENCE THOMASSIN**  
**JULIETTE AUGIER CRESPIN**  
**FRANÇOISE LEBRUN**  
**THÉO CHOLBI**  
**JOSIANE VERMARE**





# Crew



Direction  
Script  
Music  
Choreography  
Image  
Editing  
Sound

Art director

Production manager  
Post production manager  
Producers

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