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THE SMELL OF US

DIRECTED BY LARRY CLARK

88' – French - Color - 1.85 – 5.1 – France - 2014

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High definition pictures and press kit can be downloaded from
http://www.wildbunch.biz/films/the_smell_of_us



SYNOPSIS

In Paris, every day, the same crew of kids meets up at The Dome - behind the Museum of Modern Art, opposite the Eiffel Tower - skateboarding, goofing off or getting stoned as they ignore the smart crowd of art lovers.

Bound by complicated family ties, they are inseparable. Boredom, the lure of easy money and the anonymity of the Internet will all play a role in tearing their world apart.

Legendary director and photographer Larry Clark ventures further than ever before with this harsh and poetic tale of self-destructive Parisian youth.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

All about The Smell of Us

It was during my trip to Cannes in 1995 for the presentation of my first film, **Kids**, that the urge to make a film about the youth of France first came to me.

I introduced myself to French teenagers and subsequently invited them to the premier of **Kids** at the Grand Théâtre Lumière (in the Palace) ... During my stay, I spent time with them, took photos of them and learned a little something about the youth culture in France ... I met their parents and I was often invited to their homes for dinner ... Through these experiences, I knew I could make a film in France that could speak truthfully about French youth. What interested me was working in France, to film in a language foreign to my own in a city like Paris; a city to which I am very personally attached.

In 2010, the Museum of Modern Art in Paris presented a retrospective exhibition of photos I've taken over the last 50 years, and my films were screened at the French Cinémathèque. I was installing my exhibition at the museum for a month and as I was working until late at night, which meant I was also leaving later from the back entrance of the museum. This required me to circumvent the building and pass amongst the skateboarders behind the Palais de Tokyo ... It reminded me of the youth in my movie **Kids** who were skateboarding in Washington Square Park. I stood there, staring at them intently and thinking how this image of skateboarders in Paris would be the perfect start for a film about the youth of Paris ... I met a young French poet known as SCRIBE. He and his friends took me to trendy bars and clubs where all the young people gather. So I began talking to them and listening to their stories, and then I asked SCRIBE to write **The Smell of Us** for me, after having spent all my free time with him talking about the script. Although later during shooting, I changed the storyline and certain characters.

The script is about young French people of today and the world today ... showing the ways they function in this new society that has been altered so greatly by the internet... A new world that offers them instant communication, as well as the consequences, often unsettling, that accompany this. They think they are free from anything that could hold them back, but in reality, they are easy prey for predators and the temptation of easy money quickly becomes a trap. They can connect to the entire world, explore everything, and yet paradoxically they live in immense solitude. Their world is virtual, but their problems and their wounds are real. These teens are trying to make sense of their world, for it is their world in question and not ours. And as always it's sex, drugs, and music that make it up. The stories that are written are fictional, but they are inspired by the stories of those who truly lived those experiences. I wanted to show this secret world that is constantly changing. Some details are shocking to me while others are not; but that's the world of these young Parisians today.

For the first time I gave myself a role; I play Rockstar, a man who has no age, a kind of fallen angel, alcoholic, one can imagine that he had another life along time ago and he's had his fifteen minutes of fame. This is the only adult that the group tolerates. They drag his troubles to Trocadero with them. This is the character of transmission, in his drugged up songs he delivers his message to them.

Another character, perhaps the child of Rockstar, appears with his guitar from time to time. He never talks, he sings. He is played by Michael Pitt, whom we know from *Bully* and who came onto the film as a friend.

It's not a secret that things heated up during the shoot. In my job I need a climate of extreme tension to continually push the limits even further, letting them express what they really have on the inside. But even if the French teenagers in the film may not have the same resilience as the street teenagers of America and some behaved like spoiled and sullen kids, they are all beautiful and their sincerity moves me in the film.

I love youth and I am often criticized for it! I've photographed and filmed for the last fifty years and the world has had time to change its relationship to teenagers as well. With **The Smell of Us**, I wanted to pay a tribute to youth to show it's naivety, its confusion, it's errors and even more than before, it's solitude. What one sees here had, if one looks at appearances more than opportunities at the start, Math and his group evolving in the 16th arrondissement of Paris, the nicer neighborhoods. But they are also lost souls, navigating carefully as much as any other born with less privilege. These teens share in common a mastery, better than most, of new technology, but these children of the Internet, born with a proverbial joystick between their fingers, were cast off by adults. They play the role of free men and they can be cruel, but they are the victims. I wanted to show their beauty, their freedom at risk. They are misled by their attraction to money, consumerism, brand names etc. They consume and are also consumed and manipulated.

It is adults and their fucking marketing that created all of this.

I think **The Smell of Us**, is written like a manifesto that lies at the heart of all my work as a photographer and filmmaker, and one that provides some answers.

Larry Clark

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Larry Clark was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1943. His passion for photography began at an early age and he was quick to assist his mother, a photographer specializing in newborn portraiture. Later, Clark's interest in underground movements and the flourishing American subculture of the 60s compelled him to document the country's underbelly, lost youth, and drug users.

His found acclaim in 1971 when he published the photo collection *Tulsa*, which quickly became a cult classic for an entire generation. *Tulsa* is made up of photos that Clark took of himself and his group of marginalized and rebellious friends, all of them hailing from the same hometown. Further collections followed, such as *Teenage Lust*, featuring a Puerto Rican teenage prostitute in New York and *The Perfect Childhood*, featuring shots of nude adolescents making love next to press clippings about adolescents guilty of murder.

Each of these works bears testimony to Clark's quasi-anthropological view of his contemporaries, and especially of youth. His work has been shown in museums worldwide, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The Museum of Modern Art in New York and The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, The Frankfurt Museum für Moderne Kunst in Germany and the Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland.

In the summer of 2012, Clark's work was also on show in Berlin's C/O, and the following summer, Amsterdam's FOAM showed the complete series of *Tulsa* and *Teenage Lust*.

In summer 2014 Clark presented *they thought i were but i aren't anymore...* at the Luhring Augustine Gallery in New York. The exhibition will be featured at La galerie du jour agnès b. in Paris this autumn.

«Martin Scorsese and Gus Van Sant readily acknowledge Larry Clark's influence on films like **Taxi Driver** and **Drugstore Cowboy**, and in 1995, with the encouragement of these two directors, Clark moved into cinema with **Kids** (Official Selection, Cannes 1995), an uncompromising portrait of a group of young Americans during a time of drugs and AIDS, based on a screenplay by Harmony Korine. In 1999, he made **Another Day in Paradise** (Grand Prix of the Jury at the Festival du Film Policier de Cognac) also set against the backdrop of drugs and alcohol, and which tells the story of how a hustling drug dealer charms Bobbie, a troubled adolescent, into joining him on a wild ride.

Clark's third film, **Bully** (Official Selection, Venice Film Festival and Panorama Selection, Deauville American Film Festival 2001), in which he once again explored the world of adolescents and their implicit, visceral relationship to violence, packed a new punch. Some view Clark's next feature, **Ken Park**, also written by Harmony Korine, as a reprise of **Bully**. The explicit sex and death scenes that punctuate this portrait of neurotic youth faced with its own incredible solitude were censored from Australia to Great Britain by way of France and the US, where the film is still banned. With **Wassup Rockers**, which, with its cast of amateurs, has a near-documentary feel, the filmmaker takes an unflinching look at the tribulations of a group of skateboarders who have come to disturb the palm tree tranquillity of Beverly Hills. Clark also directed HBO's retro-horror movie **Teenage Caveman** and published **Punk Picasso**, which documents his personal journey.

In autumn of 2010, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris invited Larry Clark for a large-scale retrospective of his photography, *Kiss the Past Hello*. Entry to the exhibition was forbidden to those under 18, sparking waves of criticism about censorship. In 2012, he directed **Marfa Girl**, which received the Golden Marc'Aurelio at the Rome Film Festival. Clark decided to distribute the film himself via his website, saluting the American cinema industry with a now legendary phrase, "Fuck Hollywood!". **Marfa Girl** was exceptionally projected in a movie theatre during the homage given to Clark by the Deauville American Film Festival in September 2013.

www.larryclark.com



CAST

LUKAS IONESCO
DIANE ROUXEL
THEO CHOLBI
HUGO BEHAR-THINIERES
RAYAN BEN YAICHE
ADRIEN BINH DOAN
MAXIME TERIN
VALENTIN CHARLES
NISEEMA
DOMINIQUE FROT
PHILIPPE RIGOT
VALERIE MAES
JEAN-CHRISTOPHE QUENON

Math
Marie
Pacman
JP
Guillaume
Minh
Toff
Ami de Toff
Catherine
Math's mother
Old Client
JP's step mother
JP's father

CREW

Directed by
Screenplay

DP
Editor
Sound
Costume Designer
Production Designer
Music Supervisor
Line Producer

Production Companies

Producers

Larry Clark
SCRIBE & Larry Clark

Hélène Louvart
Marion Monnier
Pascal Armant
Eloïse Larochelle
Natalia Brilli
Howard Paar
Céline Chapdaniel

Morgane Production
Polaris Film Production & Finance
Polyester

Pierre-Paul Puljiz
Gérard Lacroix & Gérard Pont
Christophe Mazodier