

LES IMPRODUCTIBLES AND KALY PRODUCTIONS PRESENT

NICOLAS
GOB

ALBAN
LENOIR

MICHAËL
ABITEBOUL

DAVID
BAÏOT

ROMAIN
LANCRY

ROLAND
MENOU

GEOFFREY
COUËT

ROMAIN
BRAU

FÉLIX
MARTINEZ



Les Crevettes Pailletées



A FILM BY CÉDRIC LE GALLO AND MAXIME GOVARE

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#LesCrevettesPailletées



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UNIVERSAL PICTURES FRANCE, LES IMPRODUCTIBLES AND KALY PRODUCTIONS
PRESENT

Les Crevettes Pailletées

A FILM BY
CÉDRIC LE GALLO AND MAXIME GOVARE

FEATURING
**NICOLAS GOB, ALBAN LENOIR, MICHAËL ABITEBOUL, DAVID BAÏOT,
ROMAIN LANCRY, ROLAND MENOU, GEOFFREY COUËT, ROMAIN BRAU, AND FÉLIX MARTINEZ**

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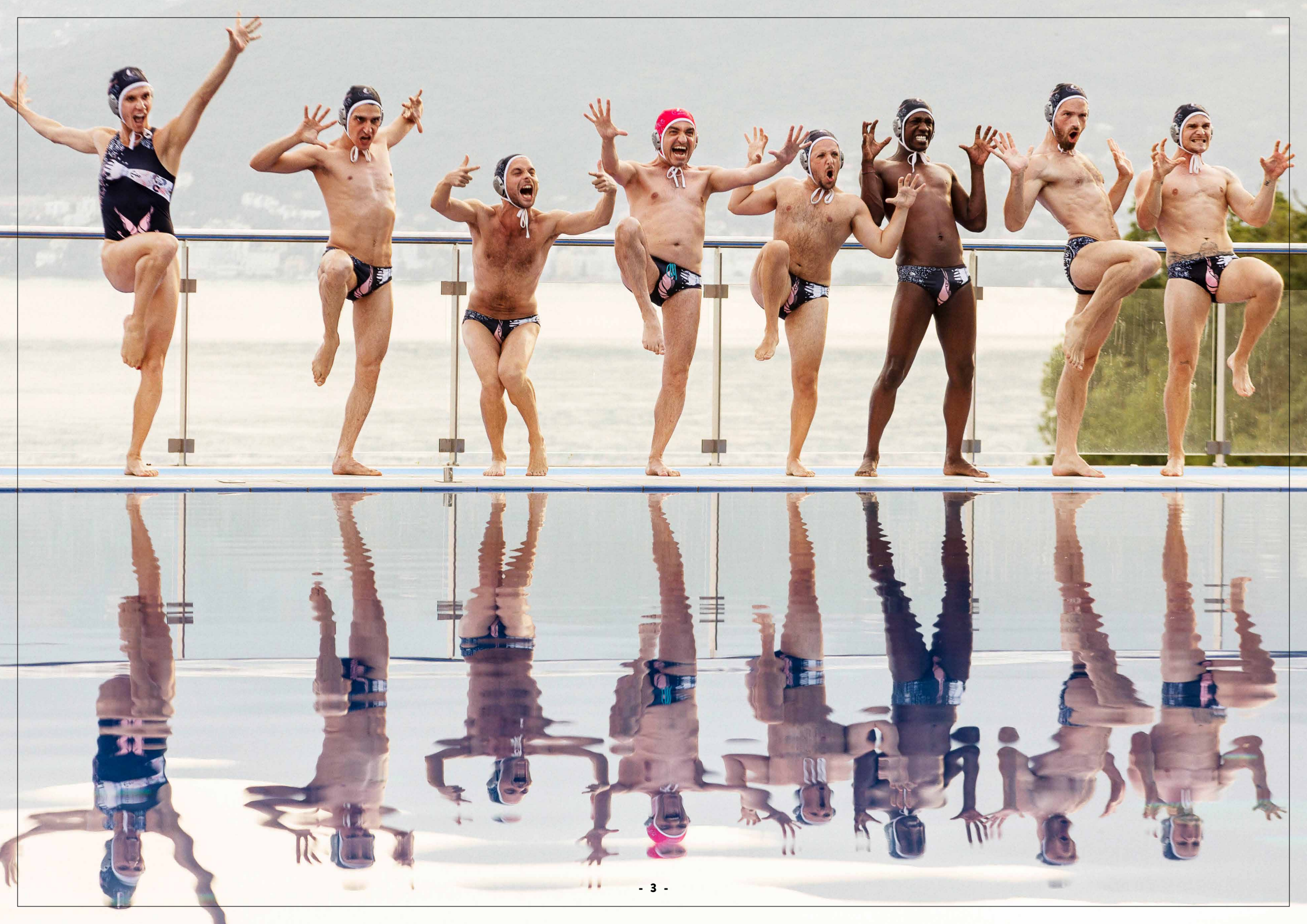
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#TheShinyShrimps

PRESS

HAPPY DAYZ
Daisy Spinau

2, rue Meissonier 75017 Paris
daisy@happydayz.fr
06 16 36 74 36



- SYNOPSIS -

Matthias Le Goff, World Swimming Championship silver medallist, makes a homophobic remark on TV. His punishment? To coach “The Shiny Shrimps”, a gay water polo team, motivated more by partying than competition. This explosive coach-and-team combo then heads to Croatia to take part in the Gay Games, the world’s biggest gay sports meet. The journey offers Matthias the chance to discover an unfamiliar world that forces him to take a fresh look at himself and rethink his priorities.



This film is inspired by my real-life gay water polo team that I've travelled the world with for the last 7 years, from tournament to tournament, including the Gay Games. I was well aware I'd embarked on a unique life-changing adventure and wanted to stand up our core values: freedom, the right to difference and excess, and above all the triumph of humour over the serious side of life. Ultimately, they're universal values.

CÉDRIC LE GALLO

Co-author, co-director and real-life Shrimp

The first time we met, Cédric Le Gallo told me the incredible tale of the Shrimps and I was immediately fascinated by this adventure - equal parts crazy and strange. A gay water polo team more interested in partying than sport per se? Their tale needed to be told and brought to the screen.

MAXIME GOVARE

Co-author, co-director





**co-screenwriter
and
co-director**

CÉDRIC LE GALLO

WHAT'S A "SHINY SHRIMP"?

The name's taken from my water polo team. The "Shiny Shrimps". The idea struck me one evening in the pool: shrimp for the aquatic part. And shiny for the partying side. In France, the film's called "Les Crevettes Pailletées". So there are real-life people behind the name...

HOW DID YOU COME TO JOIN THE WATER POLO TEAM?

Once upon a time, I didn't have any gay friends. One day, a female friend convinced me to join the team. When I met up with them, I enjoyed the really friendly atmosphere. I went back for more and then, with one thing leading to another, very soon I was playing in tournaments, and we became firm friends. They became my best mates. Meeting them changed my life... I didn't think being part of a group was so important for me to blossom and accept who I was.

WHY A GAY WATER POLO TEAM?

Because we can tell each other about our problems, our highs, our lows. Sexuality, personal relationships, romantic relationships: the locker room jokes aren't quite the same as with straight people. It's good to be able to share them. And we all like partying, dancing, and dressing up. It's also something I've done ever since I was a kid. We're stretching our teenage years out a touch more...

IS "THE SHINY SHRIMPS" A STATE OF MIND, TOO?

Of course. For ages, my water polo team lost every match. But we bet on our routines and costumes. We weren't aiming for the top step of the podium - we wanted the "best atmosphere" prize instead. We really love water polo, it's a great sport for letting off steam. But unlike other teams, we're not aiming to win at all costs. Our main motivation is spending time together.

WHEN DID YOU REALISE THE STORY WOULD MAKE A GOOD FILM?

It's pretty crazy to have this experience, i.e. a kind of very close, almost adolescent, friendship. Mates who have loads of stuff in common but also all work different jobs, are different ages, and have different stories to tell.

IT'S ALREADY SUPER CINEMATIC...

Exactly. And simply saying I was in a gay water polo made people smile at parties. Because water polo is a weird sport, plus the fact it's gay piques people's interest that little bit more. When I made my short programme "Scènes de culte" (i.e. cult scenes) for Canal+ série, I'd already come up with the idea. When I talked about it to one of the two producers, Edouard Duprey, I saw his eyes light up. I'd found the theme for my first film. I started writing. The team was the inspiration but I needed a tale to tell. So Maxime and I imagined this confrontation between a homophobic coach and the Shiny Shrimps, between two fundamentally-opposed worlds.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE CHARACTERS EXIST IN REAL-LIFE?

None of the characters are the exact equivalent of a Shrimp but there are major archetypes that everyone can identify with. For instance, the character of Cédric is interesting because he reflects what some people at my club, who are in long-term relationships, are going through. Having to divide their time between family and friends. Being a Shrimp takes a lot of time and energy. We're a very close-knit group, with our own sense of humour, references, culture, and past. We're difficult to divide. The character of Fred, the transsexual, doesn't exist in real life but we're all a bit like Fred with his spectacular showmanship, his passion for choreography, and his taste for fashion. 3 or 4 of my clubmates are really like Fred: even though they haven't transitioned they've got that showmanship, that theatrical trait, and want to be in the spotlight for something other than their sporting prowess.

WHICH CHARACTER IS MOST LIKE YOU?

There's actually a bit of me in all the characters. I'm Vincent 7 years ago when I first set foot in the water polo club. I'm a bit like Fred with his spectacular showmanship. I'm a bit like Xavier with his "epicurean" side, and like Alex when I idealise romantic relationships. Cédric is perhaps the character that's the least like me. They're all like me at different stages of my life.

FOR AN ENSEMBLE MOVIE TO WORK, YOU NEED CHARACTERS WITH VERY DIFFERENT DYNAMICS..

Yes, everybody's got to have their own challenges. It's really important. The overall challenge is going to the Gay Games but everyone has their own goal. For Fred, that means getting the routine right, what's important for Jean is spending time with his best friends, all while hiding a weighty secret from them. Vincent is embarking on the voyage of discovery of a young gay man arriving in Paris. Alex wants to win back Jean, the love of his life. As for Cédric, he wants to reconcile family and friends. They each have their own journey, path, and challenge.

THESE ARE VERY UNIVERSAL, VITAL THEMES. GAY OR STRAIGHT, WE GROW ATTACHED TO THEM ALL...

Yes, because the underlying theme is the triumph of humour over the serious side of life. This seriousness is embodied by the character of Matthias, who is very stern, leads a strict life and has just one goal: to be world swimming champion, even if it means sacrificing his relationship with his daughter. The Shrimps are all about partying, excess, joy and laughter. Humour is often under-valued in the world of film. That's wrong. Humour is also the politeness of despair, a cry for freedom, and a way to lighten your load a little. The Shrimps' sense of humour helps them to help each other to feel better.



WATER
POLO

Travis

SEATTLE
EST. 1724
Geoffrey

A
TERADEK
BOND-500

LES WATER

WWW.ATLANTIC

WHAT'S REALLY GREAT ABOUT THIS FILM IS THAT YOU STOP BEING AN OUTSIDER, YOU WANT TO DANCE AND SWIM WITH THEM!

You can control what you write but not exactly what happens later on set. Will the magic work? Will people simply see the shrimps as curious creatures, or rather identify with them or say to themselves “I don’t know this world but I’d like to learn more about it”? That’s the main challenge of this kind of project...

WHAT DID YOUR JOURNALISTIC PAST BRING TO YOUR ROLE AS A SCREENWRITER AND DIRECTOR?

I worked on a lot of reports and documentaries and spent endless hours in the cutting room developing storytelling and narrative construction. I also trained with John Truby, who’s a kind of iconic Hollywood script doctor. He really taught me the keys to screenwriting. As a journalist, I went to plenty of film sets and was already keeping a close eye on how people worked...

WHEN PEOPLE SEE “THE SHINY SHRIMPS”, IT REMINDS THEM OF FILMS LIKE “THE FULL MONTY” AND “PRIDE”. AS THESE OBVIOUS REFERENCES FOR YOU?

Yes! “Pride” is a confrontation between two fundamentally-opposed factions - a group of highly-extroverted gays and a set of homophobic characters. Instead of “The Full Monty”, I’d say “Priscilla, Queen of the Desert” because it’s got that “extravagant road-trip” side to it. We also had “Little Miss Sunshine” in mind,

due to the diversity of the group. The Shrimps function as a family, complete with its tensions and its resurgent past, but also a whole lot of kindness.

HOW DID YOU WORK WITH MAXIME GOVARE? IS IT HARD TO WORK WITH SOMETIME WHEN, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, IT’S YOUR STORY YOU’RE TELLING?

It was the producers’ idea for us to join forces because I’d never written a feature-length film before. It’s not easy to work on your own. We realised we were really complementary. He’d already directed two films, “I Kissed a Girl” and “Daddy Cool” and also written a lot of TV films. He fleshed out the character of Matthias. The fact we’re different really added something extra to the script. I was able to “live test” things on someone who didn’t know the Shrimps’ world and could immediately say “hang on, I don’t get it”. This avoided us ending up with a minority-interest film. The challenge is also to make the world accessible to as many people as possible without misrepresenting it.

BECAUSE IT’S NOT A FILM ABOUT THE GAY COMMUNITY BUT ABOVE ALL THE STORY OF A GROUP OF MATES...

Of course, we’re not looking to represent all gay people. In the same way that “Les Tuche” doesn’t represent all straight people! The film’s characters are like my mates. They’re not caricatures, they’re strong characters who exist in real life: being in the group helps to bring out their creative and excessive side we all have deep down inside.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE CASTING THE SHRIMPS?

It was a very tricky business. We were lucky enough to work with Coralie Amedeo, who's an incredible casting director. Every time an actor, who'd already been pre-selected via video audition, came into the casting room, it was a bit like love at first sight. We knew he was right for the part even before he started the scene. From the way he said hello, how he entered the room, we could see the character. In the end, it was an easy choice to make. The character who was the hardest to find was Fred. We're not in the US - there are very few transgender actors in France. But we still wanted to find one, for reasons of realism. After several weeks of open casting calls, we still hadn't found the right person for the role. And then we ran into Romain at the "Madame Arthur" cabaret in Pigalle. We'd found our Fred. We're obviously talking about colourful characters because it's out of the question to tone down what this group of friends is really like but the actors really helped to avoid falling into the realm of caricature. They were careful - we all were. We needed to keep some credibility and a form of subtlety in spite of everything, it was like walking a tightrope all the time. Finding the right balance.

DO YOU THINK IT'S A MILITANT FILM?

That's THE difficult question!

MAYBE IT'S A MILITANT FILM BECAUSE IT ADVOCATES A LIFE WITHOUT REGRET, LIVED TRUE TO WHO YOU ARE?

The Shrimps stand up for certain values: living your life to the max, not worrying about what other people think, being true to yourself wherever that leads you. And then there's this notion of "committed carefreeness" as a value. So I wouldn't say it's a clearly militant film like "BPM (Beats per Minute)" but if militancy means sharing your worldview, then I guess it is. The Shrimps share their worldview.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO HEAR AUDIENCE MEMBERS SAYING AS THEY HEAD OUT OF THE CINEMA?

Whether they're gay, straight, male, female, whatever, I'd like to hear people say they'd love to jump on board the bus and head off on holiday with the Shrimps.





**co-screenwriter
and
co-director**

MAXIME GOVARE

A ROAD TRIP WITH NINE ACTORS IS NEVER GOING TO BE AN EASY FILM TO MAKE!

No, and that's exactly why I wanted to work on "The Shiny Shrimps". It really took two of us to make it - we brought different things to the table. It's really a multi-genre film that fluctuates between comedy, drama, sometimes action, sport, dance and even full-on road trip. Technically, the film taught me an enormous amount. I can't even imagine what it was like for Cédric, what with it being his first film. To use a skiing analogy, he started on the black run.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM YOUR FIRST TWO SHOOTS?

That the script is THE number one thing you have to really work on, even during the shoot. All the time. With so many actors, we sometimes hit on the right tone as we go along, things need constantly rewriting. That's what happened practically every evening, it didn't matter what time we finished. It's a real a moving object. If we can keep it under control, it's quite exhilarating.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE NINE ACTORS AT ONE TIME?

Like a class of 4-year olds (Laughter). I've already made a film with kids, it's absolutely marvellous to shoot but the hard bit is spending half of your time as a friend, the other half as a tyrant. The

"group" dynamic can quickly evolve into something wonderful or unbearable as the case may be. But it creates exceptional energy!

AND THEY NEEDED THAT TO BE ABLE TO SHOOT MOST OF THE SCENES IN THE WATER...

People don't realise that water polo is the hardest and most physical sport imaginable. Some of the actors could hardly tread water when we first met them. They trained for three months before the start of the shoot to learn how to swim hard, play water polo, and look believable. They really had a hard time of it.

THE SHOOT WAS PARTICULARLY INTENSE, TOO...

When we arrived in Croatia, we'd recently beaten them in the World Cup final. So they weren't that happy to see us! It was extremely hot and we didn't have access to the pools for as long as we wanted. We had to work at night, cheat a bit, and sometimes shoot in the water until 4 a.m. with exhausted actors. Keeping nine characters in frame is often a real headache - we shot lots of long takes due to budget and time constraints.

WHICH SCENES WERE THE MOST COMPLEX?

As soon as scenes are shot in the water, it's absolutely exhausting. There's a lot of pre-roll, plus problems when the camera gets wet, etc.... It's really hard. One evening, there was an electrical storm

when we were shooting. It started raining cats and dogs on set and we lost 3 hours of shooting time watching the rain fall. But there's something quite exhilarating about standing there with 200 extras dressed in swimming costumes, with a megaphone, a crane and the chief cameraman filming under the water. It's a childhood dream.

WAS THE NIGHTCLUB SCENE A REAL CHALLENGE?

Yes. There's a 7-minute scene in the film shot in a kind of swimming pool transformed into a giant nightclub. It was an extremely stressful day with 150 extras we'd had specially brought over from Paris. We had no chance of reshooting the scene if we were missing something. The camera had to go in and out of the water during the long shot: it was quite intricate. We didn't have any good takes until the last one, which was perfect. Just then, I realised that we - and when I say we I mean a big part of the team - were all watching on the monitor with our fingers crossed. It was 44° and finally, one minute before we had to cut the lights, we did it. It was almost orgasmic!



“ THE GAY GAMES ARE LIKE THE OLYMPICS, BUT LESS BLOODY BORING AND WITH ONLY GOOD-LOOKING GUYS. ”





- casting -

Jean

ALBAN LENOIR

WHICH SHRIMP ARE YOU IN THE FILM?

I'm Jean, the character who created the "Shiny Shrimps" water polo team.

IT'S RARE TO SEE YOU IN A COMEDY! WHAT MADE YOU SAY YES TO THIS FILM?

There are several things that came into play, on top of the screenplay, which I really liked. I worked in gay environments when I first came to Paris, as a waiter and porter. I know the community really well. Over my career, I've often been offered gay roles but I always refused because they didn't seem true or have a message for the gay community. The "Shiny Shrimps" script addressed all these shortcomings. I tested for two roles, Jean and Matthias, but I was absolutely determined to play Jean...

IT'S A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU SMILE. WAS IT A REAL STRUGGLE FOR THE DIRECTORS?

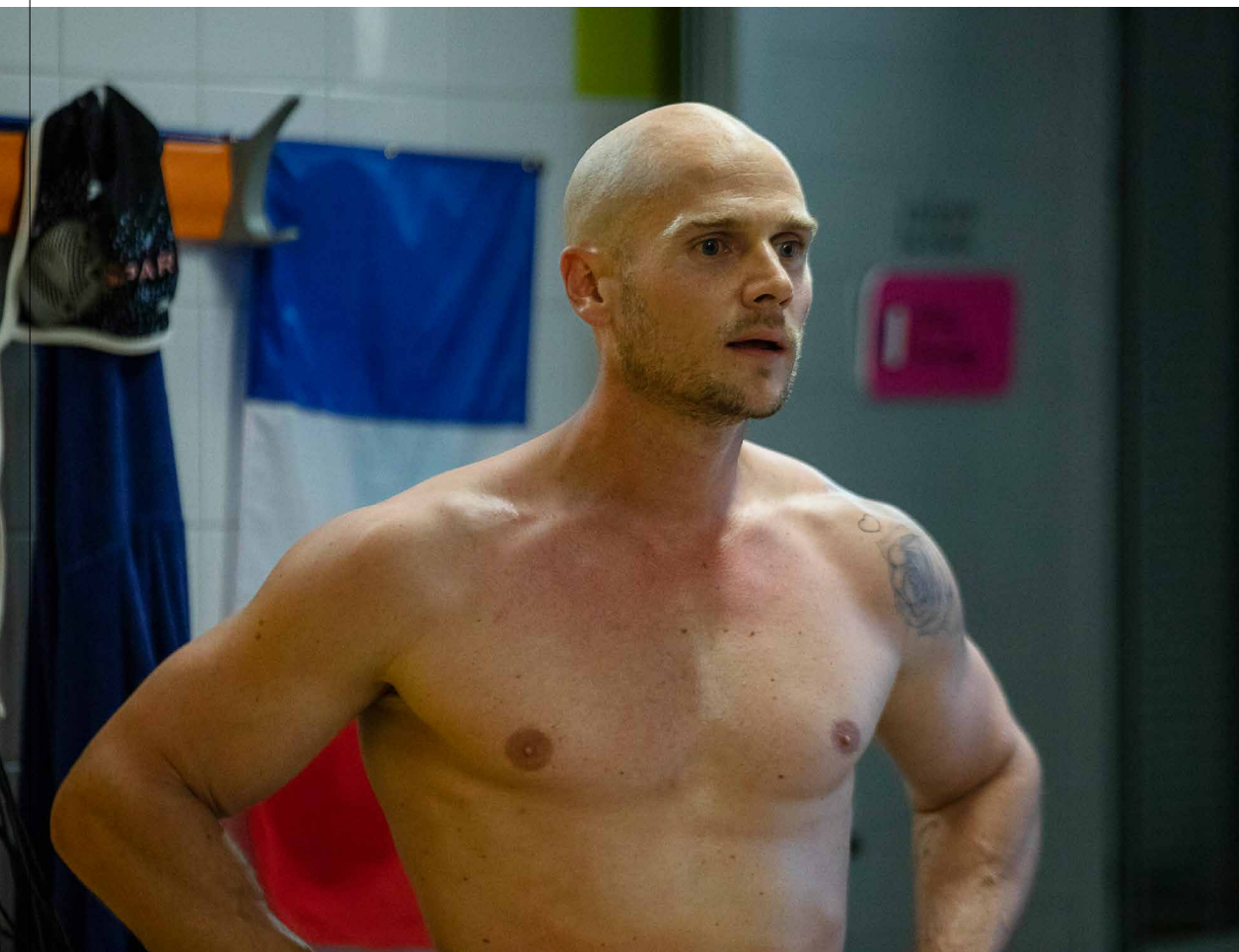
Above all, it was a daily debate! If there's one thing I love, it's being wrong. Cédric, the co-director, kept on telling me to smile. And I told him: "Man, I'm going to punch you right in the face!" (Laughter). But in the end, when I saw the film, I realised he'd been right all along. Smiling gives Jean a sunny side, which is essential. I was pleasantly surprised with the result.

WHAT WERE YOU LIKE WITH WATER BEFORE THE FILM?

There are two things I hate in life. Water and the cold: all my prayers were answered! The training was really difficult. You're out of your depth, you're out of breath, and then they drown you. I thought I was literally going to die! You have to be really strong, both mentally and physically, to play water polo.

IS IT FUN HAVING NINE GUYS ON SET?

I had a great time. It took a little less than a week for us to get to grips with each other, get to know what made each of us tick, get certain things ironed out as a group, with the film in mind. We constantly strived to raise the level of every scene to bring this friendship to the screen. We were lucky enough to form a very close-knit group. We helped each other a lot with our acting, because with nine of us, everything goes really fast. And they're roles where you mustn't overact. The film works because we never tried to be funny. The dialogues and situations look after that side of things.



- casting -

Matthias

NICOLAS GOB

MATTHIAS IS A TRICKY CHARACTER. HE'S PARTICULARLY UNPLEASANT!

He's unpleasant because he's completely out of his comfort zone. He's a champion swimmer who loses a race, and then his cool, and makes a homophobic remark. He has to make up for it by training a gay water polo team. He needs to learn to relax to successfully establish some form of communication. I've often played gay roles, particularly on TV. This time, I'm playing a character who discovers a new way of looking life, at the same time as the audience.

WERE YOU TOUCHED BY THE VALUES SEEN IN THE SCREENPLAY?

Yes and it's one of the reasons why I absolutely wanted to appear in the film. It's about out-and-out acceptance of other people. That's how I raise my kids - I think life's meaningless without other people. Being able to accept differences is essential nowadays. When I read the script, I found the soul of the film to be extremely well-defined, with the "feel-good movie" touch I love so much. The positive message shines from start to finish.

WAS IT A ROCK'N'ROLL SHOOT COMPARED TO WHAT YOU'D EXPERIENCED PREVIOUSLY?

It was actually quite unlike anything I'd ever seen before! (Laughter) The film couldn't have been shot under normal conditions because it's a rock'n'roll film. The fact it was shot in that way is what allowed the actors to let loose and riff off each other. There was a real synergy between the work we were doing and the pleasure of being together.

IF YOU COULD KEEP JUST ONE MEMORY FROM THE SHOOT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Laughter. I laughed as I've rarely done on a film set. All the actors have a really offbeat, sometimes even quite cynical sense of humour. There was something about the film that brought people together...



- casting -

Cédric

MICHAËL ABITEBOUL

WHICH SHRIMP ARE YOU?

I'm Cédric, a Shrimp who's got his life in order to some extent but who still struggles with the odd inner demon. He's a character torn between two lives - new and old.

WHAT MADE YOU SET OFF ON CÉDRIC LE GALLO AND MAXIME GOVARE'S CRAZY ADVENTURE?

It's quite simple: I don't think I'll often be given the chance to do 2 months of water polo training! With every new adventure, I tell myself there's a challenge, something I can't do yet and I'm going to learn to.

YOU ALL SUCCEEDED IN CREATING A VERY CLOSE-KNIT GROUP ON SET. WHAT MADE IT WORK?

It wasn't easy because there were nine of us, all guys, all from different backgrounds. There were two directors with different experiences, we were in the water a lot, and we had to find a way for all 9 of us to get along, all the time, in this setting. But I think

that despite our different characters, we all wanted to go in the right direction. The film is more touching than it might appear, it's not just laugh-a-minute. We made something magical, somehow. We learned every day, everybody worked hard to improve. We came out of it not only alive but friends, too, which isn't bad!

AND WHAT WOULD BE YOUR "WORST MEMORY" IF YOU HAD TO NAME JUST ONE?

I'd say the temperature of the pool in Mulhouse which, even for the real water polo players we came up against, was extremely cold. Everybody kept telling us it was a normal temperature, even though everybody knew that it was far colder than that!



- casting -

Alex

DAVID BAÏOT

WHICH SHRIMP ARE YOU?

I'm Alex. I work for a bank: I'm the most materialistic Shrimp. I look after other people's comfort but mine, too. I'm also in love with Jean but our relationship came to a premature end due to his illness. There's unfinished business there.

WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU ABSOLUTELY HAD TO BE IN THIS FILM?

When I saw the casting. I wanted in. It's my first lead role in a film. I was over the moon when the directors chose me.

DID YOU PUT BOTH DIRECTORS THROUGH THE WRINGER?

No, quite the opposite! (Laughter). We were pretty well-behaved. We spent day after day in the water - it wasn't easy. It's not our natural element, it's hard-work but the chemistry was there. We were all driven by the desire to make a good film. Roland was a bit unruly: he loves telling jokes.

WAS THE SHOOT VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU'D EXPERIENCED ON TV, PARTICULARLY WITH (FRENCH SOAP OPERA) "PLUS BELLE LA VIE"?

I'd always heard that feature-length film shoots were extremely slow, that everything took a long time. On "The Shiny Shrimps", it was quite the opposite because with nine actors in every scene, we had to move fast and not screw up.

WHAT WERE YOU LIKE WITH WATER BEFORE THE FILM?

I always liked swimming but I learned to go about it in a far more disciplined manner. Water polo is quite a violent and physical sport, which requires a lot of training. I was comfortable in the water but I thought I'd cope much better than I did! I quickly grew disillusioned (Laughter). I must admit we weren't very good water polo players but that fits with the characters.

YOUR BEST MEMORY?

A fit of the giggles with Geoffrey under the water in the pool. It was one of the first days on set and we nearly suffocated.

THE WORST?

When I injured my shoulder on one of the first days of the shoot. It was really sore. Otherwise, I'd warned everyone to watch out for sea urchins in Croatia and then, obviously, I was the only one to step on one!





- casting -

Xavier

GEOFFREY COUËT

WHICH SHRIMP ARE YOU?

I'm Xavier. He's a joyfully excessive guy. He's not afraid to go overboard and be himself, but he's always super happy, and sees friendship as essential. He represents part of the modern gay community. He's not looking to be more masculine or more feminine. Or more normal. He's how he is.

WHAT MADE YOU SAY YES TO THIS FILM?

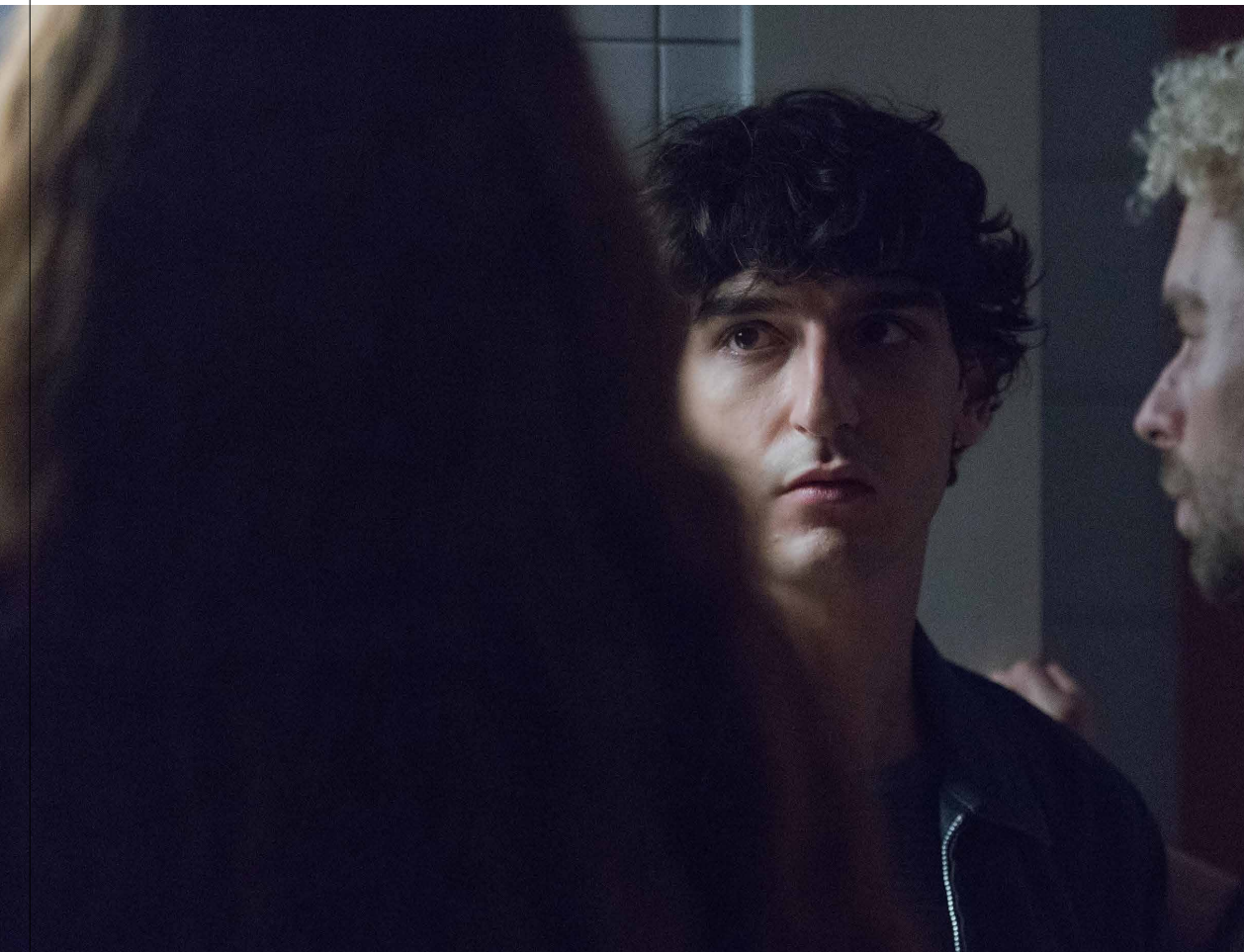
I really liked the script and its story of the triumph of friendship. Friends are essential nowadays, probably more than family or romantic relationships. It has a very strong message of acceptance, too. I hope audiences will be moved. I come from a more "authorial", more theatrical world so I got to know the world of popular comedy through "The Shiny Shrimps". It's quite exhilarating to look at each other, to be so different and to grow closer by everybody taking that step towards each other. It was a pleasure to be together. That come across on screen.

AND TALKING OF PLEASURE, HOW DID YOUR TRAINING IN THE POOL GO?

I really enjoy swimming but I think I still haven't understood the rules of water polo, or I'm just too slow to apply them! (Laughter). It's a brutal sport: you fight against three giants in the water while simultaneously trying to grab a ball and beat the keeper! (Laughter). Being in the water makes everything exhausting. It was intense but it's good to push your limits. One of the joys of being an actor is being able to suddenly step into an entirely different world.

YOUR BEST MEMORY?

A fit of the giggles in the pool in Croatia. We were all exhausted. We'd been filming in the water for hours. Then Roland started shouting: "We hate Croatia! We hate water polo! ". All nine actors were crying with laughter in the water. We all forgot how tired we were.



- casting -

Vincent

FELIX MARTINEZ

WHICH SHRIMP ARE YOU?

I'm the new Shrimp. Vincent comes from the countryside where he wasn't really fully accepted. He ends up working in Jean's restaurant and comes to hear about the Shrimps. He discovers his sexuality and little by little opens up to life in this voyage of discovery.

THIS WAS YOUR FIRST FILM, SO IT WAS A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY FOR YOU TOO...

Yes, it was the first time for both of us! (Laughter). It was like a big holiday camp. There were a lot of us - the atmosphere was really friendly. We shared collective responsibility for the film. I was really spoiled. I got lots of advice off everybody. Alban Lenoir particularly impressed me. He can be standing shivering with cold out in the rain then snap back into character as soon as he hears "lights, cameras, action!". There's a sudden transformation. Nicolas and Michael always knew how the shots were going to be spliced together, and where the cameras were. They had genuine industry expertise. Roland has a very striking style. I watched and learned a lot.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS PROJECT?

I liked the idea that the film addresses the theme of homosexuality but doesn't make a big deal out of it. French cinema tends to only focus on the problems of being gay. With "The Shiny Shrimps", homosexuality is going mainstream. The tone is light, the film doesn't see being gay as a serious matter. It's important to finally adopt this way of looking at things.

HOW DID THE AQUATIC PART GO FOR YOU?

I hate water. I wasn't any good at all but we trained a lot. I don't think I'll win anything even now but by the end I could stay in the water without drowning.

FOR YOUR FIRST FILM, YOU CERTAINLY PUT IN A SCENE-STEALING APPEARANCE...

Yes, inspired by Céline Dion! I was dead worried about doing the whole routine in heels! When I set off, I saw all my mates around the table watching me, smiling. I was absolutely thrilled.



- casting -

Damien

ROMAIN LANCRY

WHICH SHRIMP ARE YOU?

I'm Damien, the youngster with his head in the clouds. I'm the one who's always two seconds late for everything. Or two seconds early. You know, who's never there at the right time. He's the outsider. To start with, we don't really know why he's friends with them. We very quickly learn that he was abandoned as a child and this group of mates is his family.

HAD YOU ALREADY WORKED WITH MAXIME GOVARE?

Yes, Maxime wrote the series "Ma pire angoisse" (i.e. my biggest fear), which was broadcast on Canal+, with me. I liked the idea of having him as director, of seeing him with another hat on. I found the story moving and funny. That's exactly what you see on the screen. It's rare for a film to stick to its script. Generally, things change a lot during shooting and editing. Cédric brought real gay credibility to the story. If the film hits the right tone, it's thanks to him. He got it spot on. Without him, the film would have been unbearable both to act in and watch.

GAY COMEDIES ARE RARE IN FRANCE... ARE WE OVER-CAUTIOUS?

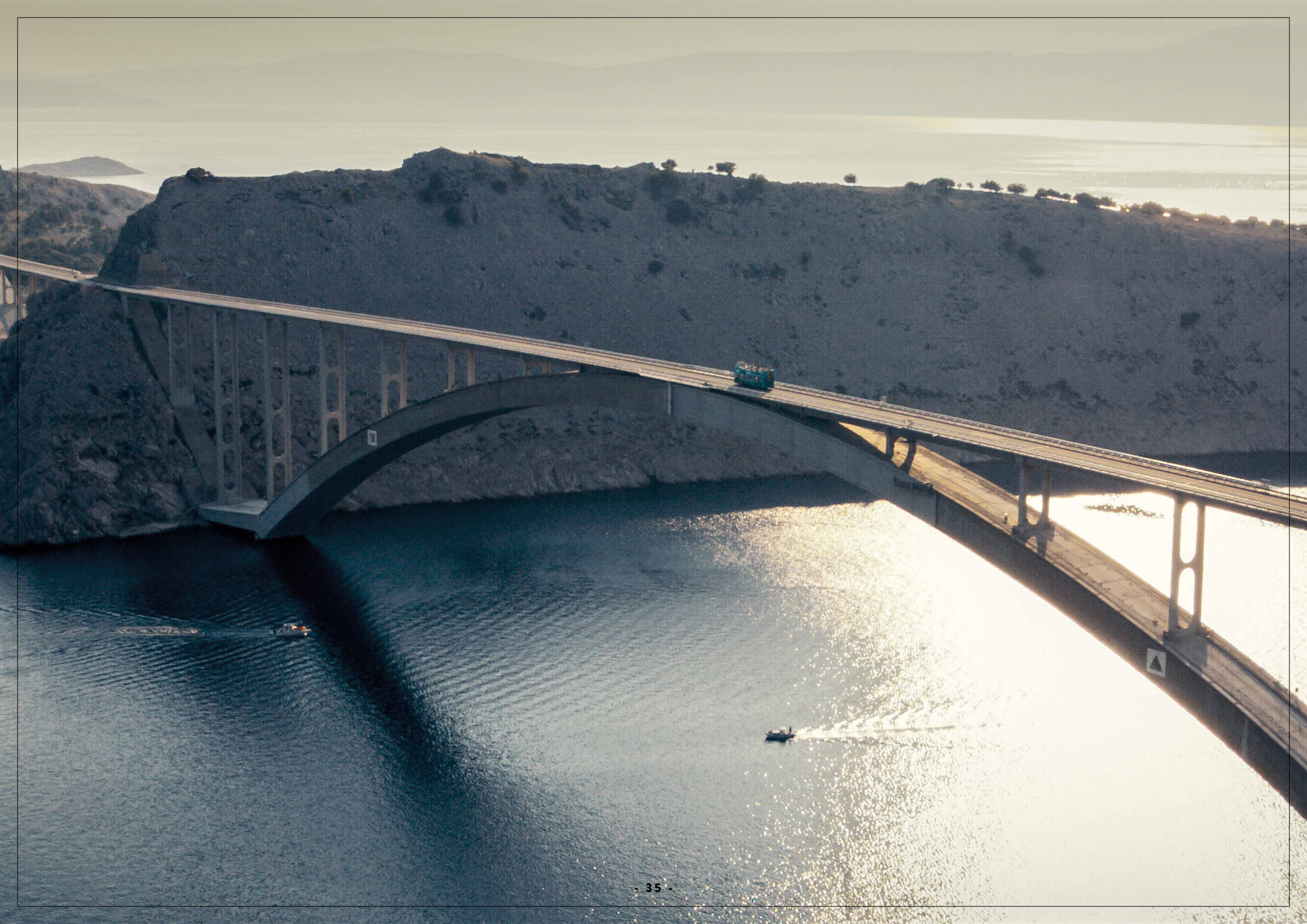
As an actor, no. There aren't a lot of offers. The last gay comedy was "Pédale Douce" back in 1995. Directors tend more to make dramas or social comedies. Films focus on disease, complicated relationships, etc. Rarely on a group of mates enjoying themselves. When you watch the film, you want to join in. A lot of people who watch the film are going to feel like that.

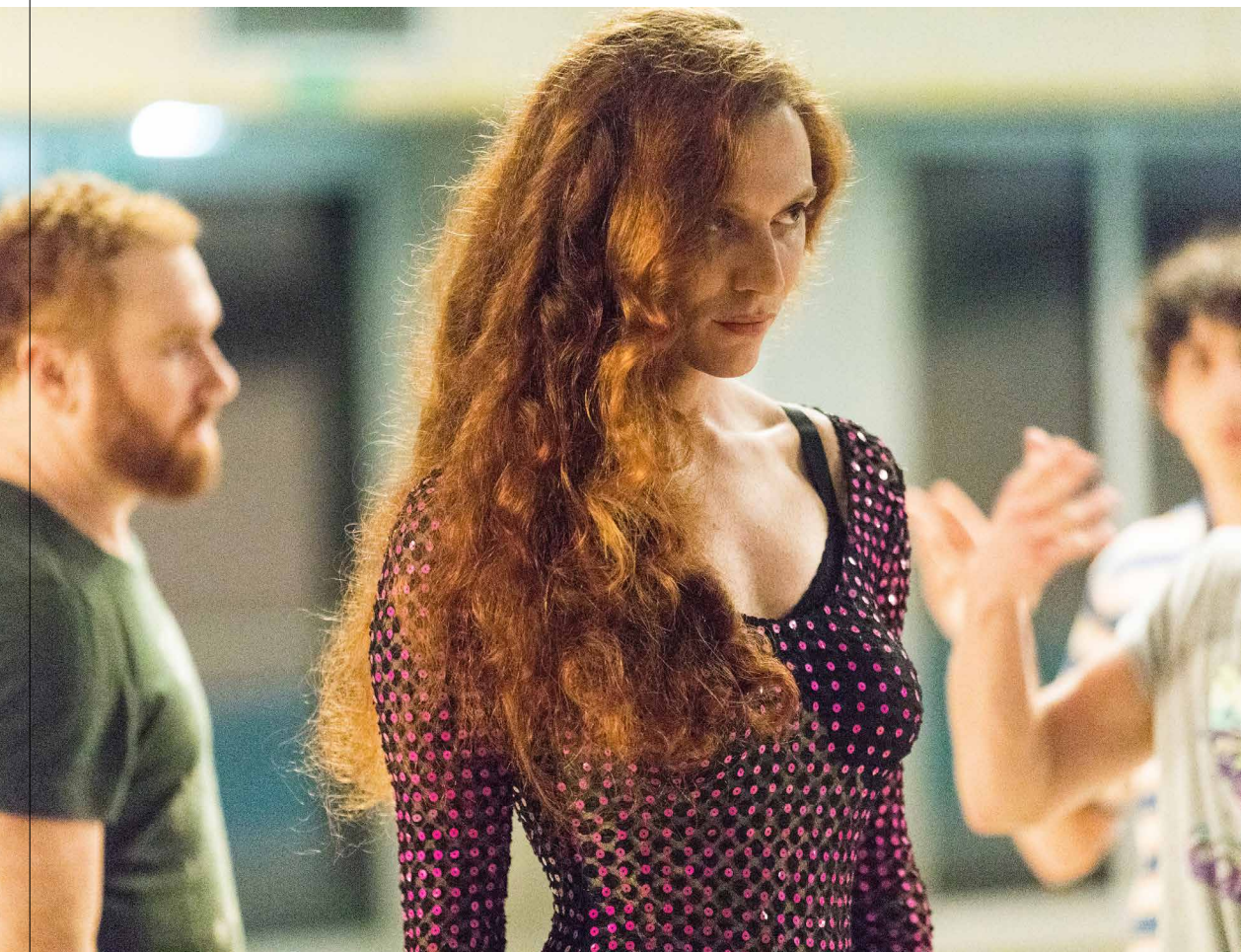
WHAT WERE YOU LIKE WITH WATER BEFORE THE FILM?

Rubbish! He was useless. I sunk like a stone. We needed to learn a few basics to keep afloat. Like back-peddalling. The film gave me the chance to get back on good terms with the pool.

YOUR BEST MEMORY?

The bathing scene in the lake. The directors were shouting instructions to us but we were so far out we just did what we wanted! They had no way of exerting pressure on us.





- casting -

Fred

ROMAIN BRAU

WHICH SHRIMP ARE YOU?

I'm a very tired Shrimp because I've just had a sex change. But it's not clear whether I've had all the operations needed to be a "real" woman! I'm doing hormones and plastic surgery. Fred is a woman when she wakes up and when she goes to sleep.

SHE'S A REALLY KEY CHARACTER IN THE FILM: SHE'S A SHRIMP FROM ANOTHER PLANET!

What I love about Fred is that she's very bourgeois, very elegant but also hysterical. She's obsessed by one thing: sport and the routine she wants to get just right. Whether she's up to her ankles in mud or out in the rain rehearsing, Fred's wearing Louboutin stiletto heels and a fuchsia Gaultier cloak. She's colourful and always in a good mood. She's something of a mum for the group.

YOU'RE NOT WELL-KNOWN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ROMAIN. WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

When I was 18, I left home to live in Antwerp and study at the "Académie des Beaux Arts" art school, in the fashion department. I created my own label, with shops in Paris and Belgium, and I

worked for 3 years at "Madame Arthur" cabaret in Pigalle, where I was a showgirl every weekend. I developed a taste for the stage and acting. One evening, the directors came to see me and invited me for an audition. I'm the kind of person that loves a good challenge. If I'm told "you're going to play a transsexual water polo champion", I say "you're on"! All shoot long, I was a woman in the evening, too: I would go to the restaurant as a woman. That was my character for 3 months.

IF YOU COULD KEEP JUST ONE MEMORY FROM THE SHOOT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

When we arrived in Croatia, there were lots of families at the beach in the seaside resort, and there was I wearing gold thigh boots to swim a few lengths in the sea. The Croatians gave us a really warm welcome. It was quite something.



- casting -

Joël

ROLAND MENO

WHICH SHRIMP ARE YOU?

I'm Joël, the oldest Shrimp. He's quite a grumpy character, quite militant, and like all militants, he's a real tyrant. But in the story, I told myself that maybe he'd been in just one serious relationship and that nothing had happened in his life ever since. That would explain his bitterness. He's a character who shouts all the time. But he's quite likeable.

IS THE CHARACTER LIKE YOU?

Not really, though I generally do have opinions about everything. I can be quite a tyrant. "You can't wear flipflops in town", things like that. I have quite clear-cut ideas that I share with both friends and co-workers. So I guess he is like me, after all...

IS IT IMPORTANT TO KEEP A LID ON YOUR EMOTIONS WHEN THERE ARE 9 ACTORS ON SET?

Yes and no. I was a bit of a moaner during the film. For instance, I'm exasperated by people who spend all their time on the phone

or put music on between takes, so I kept on moaning to keep things a bit more chilled, to enjoy a little peace and quiet. We were lucky enough to get along really well. That wasn't a given. People tend to think that actresses are much crueller to each other, but I think it's exactly the same with men. Actors are the worst divas when it comes to throwing tantrums and behaving badly! But that didn't happen with this film.

YOUR CHARACTER'S OFTEN IN GOAL. WAS SHOOTING IN THE WATER LESS TIRING FOR YOU THAN YOUR TEAM MATES?

It's still tiring because you have to back-pedal to keep your head above water! And I was under a lot of pressure when it came to shot-stopping! I always used to close my eyes if a ball came my way when playing tennis or football... But we did it!



THE "REAL-LIFE" SHINY SHRIMPS



THE FILM'S CAST

- Cast -

Nicolas GOB Matthias

Alban LENOIR Jean

Michaël ABITEBOUL Cédric

David BAÏOT Alex

Romain LANCERY Damien

Roland MENOÜ Joël

Geoffrey COUËT Xavier

Romain BRAU Fred

Félix MARTINEZ Vincent

- Crew -

Directed by	Cédric LE GALLO and Maxime GOVARE
Screenplay by	Cédric LE GALLO and Maxime GOVARE
In collaboration with	Romain CHOAY
Production Companies	LES IMPRODUCTIBLES and KALY PRODUCTIONS
Assistant producers	Renaud CHÉLÉLÉKIAN and Edouard DUPREY
Executive producers	Yann GIRARD, Abdelhadi EL FAKIR, Rodolphe DUPREZ
Co-produced by	CHARADES
Production manager	Abdelhadi EL FAKIR
Unit production managers	Christophe ANZOLI and Benoit BAVEREL
1 st assistant director	César CHABROL
Script	Laura BOITEL
Director of photography	Jérôme ALMERAS - AFC
Sound	David RIT and Grégoire COUZINIER

PHOTOGRAPHS

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