

STORIES KEEP ME AWAKE AT NIGHT



A FILM BY JEREMY VAN DER HAEGEN PRODUCED BY NEON ROUGE PRODUCTION AND AFTER HOURS WITH VIDAL ARZONI, JESSICA BATUT, ALYSSIA DESMETH, SEBASTIEN VION & FLORIAN DUBOIS, LAURENCE VANHAEREN - DOP THOMAS SCHIRA - SOUND BRUNO SCHWEISGUTH - SETTINGS LEO LARGARDE - COSTUMES NOUSCH RUELLAN - EDITING THOMAS VANDECASTEELE - SOUND EDITING & MIX STUDIO CHOCOLAT-NOISETTE COLOR GRADING COBALTFILMS - PRODUCTION DIRECTOR NOEMIE DUCLOS WITH THE HELP OF THE AUDIOVISUAL AND CINEMA CENTER OF THE FRENCH COMMUNITY OF BELGIUM AND WALLOON TELEVISION DISTRIBUTORS AND THE TAX SHELTER OF THE BELGIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

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STORIES KEEP ME AWAKE AT NIGHT

Written and directed by Jérémy van der Haegen

"Stories Keep Me Awake At Night" is the portrait of day-to-day childhood. A village, a family, a little boy who likes to wear dresses, the return of the wolf and everyday life, ordinary, banal. These elements are used to tell of hidden desires.

Date of Completion : November 2020

Genre : Fiction

Lenght : 30 minutes

Shooting format : 16mm

Projection format : DCP

With

Vidal ARZONI : Oscar

Jessica BATUT : La mère

Alyssia DESMETH : Laura

Sébastien VION : Le père

DOP : Thomas Schira

Sound : Bruno Schweisguth

Settings : Léo Lagarde

Editing : Thomas Vandecasteele

Direction of production : Noémie Duclos

Production Aurélien Bodinaux Néon Rouge Production

Coproducted by par Jérémy van der Haegen After Hours A.S.B.L

Coproducted ny (France) par Oualid Baha Tact Production

With the help of the Wallonia-Brussels Fédération

and the Tax Shelter if the belgian gouvernement.

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Festival screenings status

WORLD PREMIERE : FIAPF accredited PÖFF BLACK NIGHT FILM FESTIVAL, TALLINN - 26 NOVEMBER 2020
Rebel With A Cause Official Competition.



WINNER OF THE BEST SHORT FILM AWARD « REBEL WITH THEIR SHORT ».

"Jérémy van der Haegen's film could echo deeply to many gay or queer men who lived that moment in their childhood when they were not sure about their gender belonging. But the qualities of *STORIES KEEP ME AWAKE AT NIGHT* go beyond this sheer identification with the young character. It is also a matter of how the story is told, in a subdued, naturalistic and true-to-life manner. There is an uncanny quality to the storytelling style of the film that places it at a crossroad between a (cruel) fairytale and a tender coming-of-age story."

Head of the Jury Paolo Bertolin

(Cannes Director's Fortnight and the Venice Film Festival selector).



CLERMONT FERRAND INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Market Picks : new label highlighting quality, signaled by the festival programmers of the International Clermont Ferrand Film Festival.



Côté Court Pantin (France), fiction competition, June 2021.

WINNER OF THE PRESS AWARD, jury statement :

"We unanimously chose to award the press prize to a family chronicle in which desire and sexuality are embodied in a unique way in each of the characters. We were touched by the way the film seizes on a very contemporary subject and turns away from the social angle sketched in the first sequence to prefer the trouble of a fantastic atmosphere carried by a strong esthetic ambition."

(**Press Jury** : Les Cahiers du Cinéma, Les Inrockuptibles, Trois couleurs, Bref, Le Cercle, 7 minutes de réflexion)



Les Rencontres Internationales du Moyen-Métrage de Brive, International Competition, June 2021.

Press release after the festival :

"Gender Trouble. Shot in 16mm, *stories keep me awake at night* (Presse Award at Côté Court, also selected in Brive) achieves the almost perfect match of form and narrative through the portrait of a dysfunctional family in an ageless house, in the heart of a mountain worthy of a Grimm fairy tale. An androgynous little boy wearing dresses and heels, a father and a mother flaunting their nudity without scruple, an indifferent sister experiencing her first emotions with a boy... In this rural prosaism where everything must be named and standardized, everyone watches each

other and the unease sets in insidiously. A wolf prowls the valley and slaughters the sheep, a metaphor for male libido. Staged with an almost hypnotic minimalism, starting with an astonishing opening scene where the child faces a psychiatrist, this third short film by Jérémy Van der Haegen is one of the revelations of this selection."

Julien Bécourt, Mouvement - magazine culturel interdisciplinaire
(<http://www.mouvement.net/critiques/critiques/cinema-du-desarroi>)



Le Court en Dit Long (Paris), Official Competition, June 2021.
WINNER OF A SPECIAL MENTION OF THE JURY



INDIELISBOA, International Short Film Competition, August 2021.



LEIDENSHORTS, Official Selection 2021, August 2021.



Brussels Short Film Festival, Official Competition, August 2021.



Rhode Island International Film Festival, Official Selection, August 2021



Film and Art Festival Two Riversides, Poland, International Competition,
August 2021

Sales



Acquisition for a broadcast by Finland's and Belgian's national public broadcasting TV in between end of 2021 and 2024.

Word of the director

"Stories Keep Me Awake At Night" is my third film. It is based on autobiographical experience. As far back as I remember, people have told me I'm girly, a fairy, a fag.

The film opens on a scene that replays my first encounter with French pedopsychiatry. The questionnaire with which the child is confronted actually exists. It is still used today to diagnose gender dysphoria or incongruities and propose conversion therapies that aim for re-identification with the biological sex. (Apparently, a new bill intends to ban these therapies by 2022).

"Stories Keep Me Awake At Night" revisits this experience through the prism of a family that sees an unsuspected field rise up within it: that of difference. Rather than staging an identity drama - making the child carry the burden - I chose to examine each member of this family to reveal within each of them their own emerging, confused, hesitant, frustrated, imperious desires. They crop up at the surface of everyday life with no great fuss. This daily life, which constitutes the raw material for the narrative, is observed with patience and economy. The use of 16mm film reflects both its reality and fragile beauty, its poetry. A certain refinement - in both the form and the writing of the dramatic stakes - and a polyphonic script, aim to double each seemingly trivial moment of life with a deeper, murkier dimension.



The CAST

Vidal Arzoni (child) is a child-actor of Swiss origin, born in Geneva in 2011. He notably played one of the main roles in the feature film "Pearl" by Elsa Amiel who competed at the Venice Festival in 2018.

Alyssia Desmeth (the sister) was born in Brussels in 2004. She is Belgian champion of acrobatic gymnastics and follows a course in professional artistic education.

Jessica Batut (the mother) is a Belgian actress, born in Brussels in 1979 and trained at the school of the National Theater of Brittany under the direction of Stanislas Nordey. She recently studied the peculiarity of the cinema game at the New York school of coach Susan Batson. Since then, she has mainly worked in theater and contemporary dance, for example with Claude Régy, Boris Charmatz and Meg Stuart. In 2018, she played Miss Mandel in the *Suspiria* de Luca Guadagnino (2018). It is the second time that she has collaborated with Jérémy van der Haegen after a supporting role opposite Lou Castel and Maia Morgenstern in "Les Hauts Pays".

Sébastien Vion (the father) was born in 1974 in Chalon-sur-Saône (Saône-et-Loire). He is best known in the Paris night, disguised as Corinne. He takes part notably in the second breath of the cabaret Madame Arthur. In his portrait in the newspaper Liberation, he defines the character of Corinne as "more monster-clown than woman". After twenty years of shows, tours and djying in French clubs, Sébastien Vion plays his first role as father here, very far from the character we used to see him take on.



THE DIRECTOR



Jérémy van der Haegen (°1979, Brussels) grew up in Paris and studied in Brussels, where he currently lives. After studying Philosophy at the university, he enrolled at INSAS (Institute of Performing Arts, Broadcasting and Communication Techniques) and came out with a directing degree in 2004. In 2006 he founded After Hours, a small society which co-produces his three first films with Brussels based production Neon Rouge.

His first medium-length film, *The Illuminated Boy* premiered at the FIAPF accredited MOLODIST in Ukraine and was bought and broadcast by ARTE France. His second medium-length film, *High Grounds*, co-produced in France by Le Fresnoy, National Contemporary Arts Studio, stages acclaimed actors Lou Castel, Maia Morgenstern and Tudor Aaron Istodor. It is among the top five best films of 2016 on www.FormatCourt.com.

Stories Keep Me Awake At Night, Jérémy's third short film, premiered at the end of 2020 and won the best short film award in the Rebel with a Cause competition of the FIAPF accredited Black Night Film Festival (PÖFF, Tallinn).

Jérémy writes his own screenplays. In his films he portrays his character's hopeful yet fragile quest of harmony and tries to reveal - if only by a glimpse - what is hidden behind their persona and ordinary daily life. His use of the 16mm, the precise yet original quality of his cinematographic direction and the refined work on a minimalistic sound design gives his films a particular uncanny quality.

In 2021, he associated himself with fellow film directors and long-time collaborators Nicolas Rincon Gille and Manon Coubia to create a new production house based in Brussels named Blue Raincoat (www.theblueraincoat.com).

His work can be seen on his Internet site www.jeremyvdh.com.

FILMOGRAPHY



The Illuminated Boy

(2011, 16mm, 35 min, Néon Rouge, After Hours, ARTE)
Special mention of the Jury festival Silhouette, Paris, 2012

Narrating the adventures of a teenager who is continually being confronted by dreams that see her falling into a void, the film surprises with its capacity to grasp something found in the immateriality of space and time. Featuring inventive direction and beautifully literal dialogue (without talking about the young actress, true revelation of the festival, she wouldn't have stolen the interpretation prize),, The Illuminated Boy is probably one of the most inhabited propositions of the selection.
Clément Graminiès & Théo Ribeton (Critikat)

High Grounds (2016, 16mm, 40 min, Néon Rouge, After Hours, Le Fresnoy Studio National des Arts Contemporains)
Jury's price, Festival Signe de Nuit, Paris, 2017
Top 5 best short of 2016 Formatcourt

(...) Jérémy van der Haegen places his film in the genre of contemplative cinema, akin to Deleuze's Time-Image. (...) The protagonist's metamorphosis unfurls in this temporal plane (...) High Grounds proposes a personal and eloquent moment of cinema, in which impressions combine with the unsaid to inspire a meditation on the human condition.

Adi Chesson (FormatCourt)



Stories Keep me Awake at Night (2020, 16mm, 30 min, Néon Rouge, After Hours, RTBF Belgium, YLE, Finland)

2020 Black Night Film Festival, Best short Rebel With A cause competition.

« Stories Keep Me Awake At Night » marks out director Jérémy Van Der Haegen as one to watch - it's a deeply-rewarding short, digging into our hidden desires.
(PÖFF Black Night Film Festival, Tallinn)