

CENDRE

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UN FILM DE  
RENE-LOUIS CACCIUTTOLO



# Synopsis

Cendre is heavily influenced by his childhood's fairy tales. Living alone with his adopted sister, he pursues an obsessive quest to connect with the familiar characters of his memories, posting numerous ads to find the princess of his dreams.

When he finally meets her, he realizes that his desires don't conform to the stories he was read as a child. In an attempt to live his perfect love, lost between his emotions and his romance model, he blurs reality through hallucinatory episodes which all relate to the tales he knows of.



But do the people interacting with Cendre even exist? Is his sister a fairy, or a witch? Who is he truly in love with? Victim of his uncontrollable fantasies, Cendre's reality starts to disintegrate as some truths about himself grow out of proportion, threatening to destroy his carefully balanced world.

The movie deals with various taboo topics such as schizophrenia, fetish, incest and gender confusion. « Cendre » is the portrayal of a young man grasping for idealized romance and the painting of his failed attempts to reach adulthood while trying to conform to the norm.

# Production Note

March 2011. I watch the evening news about the Fukushima catastrophe. In the report, the disembodied voice of the Japanese anchor speaks over aerial views of the disaster, providing nearby citizens with government advice to stay indoors and to lock doors and windows until further notice.

I have a nightmare that night. I am in a room, terrified, it's pitch black. Something terrible just happened. Someone is there with me. His voice in the dark keeps repeating it is dangerous outside, we need to stay indoors and close every window.

I know that the danger is inside, not outside ; I urge him to leave, but he refuses. And I realize that maybe that person doesn't even exist, that he is dead already, that his voice lives only in my mind, and that the real danger indeed comes from inside, born out of my fear of the unknown. I wake up, and start to write Cendre's screenplay.

Fukushima is just an excuse, the metaphor of the invisible danger within. It helped trigger my realization that the danger of a routine life is more unbearable than the fear of deciding to step out and to realize my first movie.

Three days later, "Cendre" was born - on the paper. Three months later, I quit my job and shot the movie, with no experience whatsoever. Three years later, Cendre was finished, all my savings gone, and I crave to continue telling stories with my camera.



# Director's Statement



Cendre is not only my first feature film, it is also my first movie. I never had the chance to do cinematographic studies but I always have been attracted by and passionate about this discipline. On the other hand, I have studied music - and music plays a crucial role in my movie.

Having been residing in China for many years, out of convenience (and also because of budget concerns, the movie being entirely self-funded), I decided to shoot Cendre in Hong Kong and Macau, in Chinese Mandarin.

Cendre is a surrealistic musical story, referring to different fairy tales we are familiar with, and which nurtured our childhood.

It's also a psychological drama featuring a disturbed young man, who becomes the victim of his own fantasies. My intention is to describe through the main character, how the desire to conform to the standards of society can push someone to negate reality and obliterate his/her identity; I wanted to study one of the ways this situation can lead one to bury one's own compulsions so that one can try and reproduce the models one has always been shown.



Ultimately, this denial generates heavy psychological pressure, which has to be released at some point. Being a great fan of fairy tales I chose to illustrate my point with references that can be identified during the screening. I use hints of fairy tales in order to make the story progress, hoping they will resonate with the audience and challenge one to reconsider not only the way we read our familiar stories, but also to ponder on their dark side.

# In A Nutshell

## Key Information:

- Co-production: France / Hong Kong
- Feature Film: 60'51"
- Format: 16:9 / DCP / Color / Stereo
- Completion Date: April 2014
- Language: Chinese Mandarin with English subtitles
- Genre: art house / drama; surrealistic,
- Sub-genre: "Noir fairy tale"

## Cast:

- Cendre: Duan Bo Wen
- The Princess : Huang Huan
- The Fairy: Pauline Castelli
- Jack: Ray Pan

## Crew:

- Author, Director, Producer: René-Louis Cacciuttolo
- Executive Producer: Alexander, Chan Mong Wah
- Set Director: Leonardo Montecchia
- Camera,/ Light: Terry, Feng Fat Chi
- Artistic Director: Nathalie Sapin
- Post-production Supervisor: Niu Jing
- Music & Sound Effects: Blue Mantra



# René-Louis Cacciuttolo Biography

## Citizenship:

- French national (French passport)
- Hong Kong permanent resident

## Education (France):

- Paris VIII Dauphine University: License, Chinese Mandarin
- Music Conservatory of Perpignan: 5<sup>th</sup> Degree, Piano
- Music Conservatory of Versailles: 10<sup>th</sup> Degree, Music composition, Harmony

## Career Highlights:

- Managing Director, Saatchi & Saatchi Greater China
- CEO, Ogilvy & Mather South China
- Owner & Director of Theatre du Minotaure, Béziers, France
- Managing Director of Artifixe Limited, Hong Kong registered movie production company

## Cinematographic experience

- 2005 / 2011 : Artistic direction in various advertising commercials working for Saatchi & Saatchi and Ogilvy
- 2011 / 2014: Scenario writing (“Cendre”, “Entre chiens et loups”, “Dédale”)
- 2011 / 2014: First feature film, “Cendre”: author, director, producer

