PRESENT ISABELLE HUPPERT and OLIVIER GOURMET

A film by

URSULA MEIER

97 minutes

Dolby SRD - 1.85 - 35 mm

World Sales

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A family’s peaceful existence is threatened when a busy highway is opened only meters away from their isolated house in the middle of nowhere. Refusing to move, Marthe, Michel and their three children find innovative ways to adapt to their new environment. They continue their happy-go-lucky routine despite the daily stress of hundreds of noisy speeding cars. But suspicions about the highway’s unknown long-term dangers cause family tension. Remaining in the disrupted household might not be so easy, but it’s still their home.
HOME was born in a car, while looking at the highway's edge:
houses only a few meters from the pavement, people in
their yards, plastic tables a few meters from exhaust pipes,
and other houses abandoned with boarded up windows...
Houses like stories flying past a car window.
Accented by the incessant movement of the ebb and flow of
cars and trucks on the highway, HOME is the opposing image of

a road movie, its negation in some way. There's movement in
HOME, but hardly any travel. HOME is a sort of expedition
without displacement. It's an interior voyage, a cerebral one.
It's only in the end when the road movie can begin...
HOME tells the story of a family who has pulled away from
the world to try to maintain its model of family happiness. A jovial
atmosphere reigns at the heart of the family, even if they have
adopted a well-regulated life far from the rest of the world.
This isolated feeling will become more and more evident with the functioning of the highway, which is only the catalyst to an already existing situation. The opening of the highway—metaphor for the world which arrives before their own home (a world which is noisy, dangerous, polluted, dirty, worrisome, vampiric, menacing...)—acts as sort of a magnifying glass at the heart of the family and it reveals its dysfunctions and inner troubles. Life slowly becomes unbearable for the family and despite every member’s efforts, for better or worse, to take hold of the situation by his or her own means. Between them, there’s a sort of tacit agreement in the obstinacy of wanting to remain living in this house, an almost unconscious will to preserve the “ideal” home, to hold on to a model of family harmony...

This family withdrawal and this growing fusion results in strange moments of happiness, thanks to which the family finds its strength to confront the hostile world which is the highway. But due to their obstinacy, it won’t be known anymore whether the highway of the family represents the biggest danger...

The story goes hand in hand with the setting and the situation. Remaining there at the highway’s edge at all costs day after day becomes a real menace for all family members. This situation at the most hostile of highway’s edges is not experienced as a problem by the family. Instead, it is taken as an act, and facing acts, the family responds with acts. Thus the viewer ends up facing something unaccountable in this permanent will of adaptation. To maintain the family unity and cohesion, each character keeps his or her suffering private, only going deeper inside into troubled areas, sinking into a personal madness. This family, which has been unconsciously created around the fragility of the mother, Marthe, has found an equilibrium in this unique location. With the approaching opening of the highway, Marthe denies the situation and refuses to leave. She is incapable of tearing herself away from this place. Michel, the father, supports her with love, loyalty and fidelity even when she lacks judgement and beyond... With each gesture, each action, and all his will power, Michel acts and proves that it is possible to remain and live there. Michel’s unreasonableness is born from his ability to over-adapt without cracking... The more Marthe will let go and the more Michel will become proactive and make decisions but never the right ones. He ends up using bricks instead of words...
MIXED TONES

The film oscillates between burlesque and drama, by carrying the audience to the limits of absurdity and lack of reason, without being able to distinguish between them. Black comedy and uneasiness are called forth mostly by the obsessional nature of the characters. This family wants to continue to live “normally”, to keep up the appearances of family life, but despite itself, it becomes more and more marginal day after day...

The “go-all-the-way” attitude is part of my personal obsessions: whether in my short film TOUS A TABLE, in which friends meet around a table to solve a riddle and stay there without question until the enigma is solved, thus leaving their evening no choice but to turn badly. Or in another way, STRONG SHOULDERS, which shows how the enraged obsession of a young female athlete makes her push her body all the way, like a machine, to its own limits and detriment.

NOISE

In this situation of a house on the edge of a highway, there’s something strong in terms of sounds and visuals which has an effect on the film’s subject matter itself and on its narrative.

During the film, little by little, the noise of the highway becomes the film’s subject matter and in an almost organic way. This uninterrupted noise slowly begins to eat away at the characters, slowly destroying them. This audible presence from the highway was so important for me that I ended up writing the screenplay by continuously listening to the background sounds of a highway.

TWO PARALLEL WORLDS: THE HIGHWAY AND THE FAMILY

The uniqueness of this family drama is that it’s played out only a few meters from the thousands of people who pass by on the highway and remain sheltered from their sight.

The drivers remain anonymous to the family throughout the film. The world of the highway and that of the family remain two very parallel worlds which never enter into interaction. The family merely receives bits from that other world which passes in front of them, honking, headlights closing, thrown trash, Radio Highway Network. Apart from the last shot of the film, the camera is always from the family’s point of view, allowing the audience to live out this situation with the characters and to enter little by little into each one’s mindset. The highway, such a continuous flowing river, reacts like a sort of mirror on which each character projects his own worries, neuroses…

Through the characters’ increasingly strange behavior, we realise little by little that the danger might not come from the highway, but from the family itself. For in HOME, what is the most violent and obscure is the will to remain living there and to hold on. We observe to what extent the human being is capable of withstanding such a situation, of dealing with naivety, of adapting, even over-adapting in the name of family happiness. The progression of the film doesn’t happen in a long group awakening, but in an inescapable enclosure. The characters evolve in bursts, abruptly. But from the moment of being walled in, there is no more possible movement. The characters have gone all the way and they can’t go any farther. They are literally immobile, locked up, physically and spiritually.

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One of the world’s most prominent actresses, Isabelle Huppert is acclaimed for her versatility of character. She was awarded a Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival for the whole of her work, recently ranging from the sexually repressed title character in Michael Haneke’s THE PIANO TEACHER to a contrasting comic turn as the sharp-tongued spinster in Francois Ozon’s 8 WOMEN.

Huppert’s frequent collaboration with director Claude Chabrol has resulted in numerous acclaimed performances: COMEDY OF POWER, NIGHTCAP / MERCI LE CHOCOLAT, LA CEREMONIE, MADAME BOVARY, UNE AFFAIRE DE FEMMES and VIOLETTE.

Huppert’s career has always sparkled with acting kudos. She has won Best Actress twice at the European Film Awards (THE PIANO TEACHER and 8 WOMEN), twice in Cannes (THE PIANO TEACHER and VIOLETTE) and twice in Venice (LA CEREMONIE and UNE AFFAIRE DE FEMMES). She won the Cesar for Best Actress for LA CEREMONIE and has received 12 other Best Actress nominations for the coveted French Academy Award.
BELGIAN actor Olivier Gourmet has become one of European cinema’s most respected actors. He received the Best Actor Award at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival for THE SON / LE FILS (dir. Jean-Pierre & Luc Dardenne). He also appeared in the Dardenne Brothers’ Golden Palm-winning films ROSETTA and THE CHILD, as well as their acclaimed THE PROMISE.
ADÉLAÏDE LEROUX

CAST
Isabelle HUPPERT
Olivier GOURMET
Adélaïde LEROUX
Madeleine BUDD
Kacey MOTTET KLEIN

Martha
Michel
Judith
Marion
Julien

Reniography
HOME (dir. Ursula MEIER)
SÉRAPHINE (dir. Martin PROVOST)
FLANDERS (cr. Bruno DUMONT)
Born in 1971 in Besançon, France. Dual citizenship in France and Switzerland. From 1990 to 1994, Ursula Meier studied Film & TV at the Institut des Arts de Diffusion (IAD, Belgique). She worked as 2nd assistant director on Alain Tanner's FOURBI (1995) and JONAS ET LILA, A DEMAIN (1999). HOME is her first feature film.

**Filmography**

- 2008 Home (feature, 97’)
- 2004 Monique Jacot (short, 12’)
- 2004 Alain de Kalbermatten (short, 12’)
- 2000 Strong Shoulders (TV feature, 96’)
- 2001 Pas les flics, pas les noirs, pas les blancs (video documentary, 73’)
- 2001 Tous à table (short fiction, 30’)
- 2000 Acteur (short fiction, 54’)
- 1998 Des heures sans sommeil (short fiction, 24’)
- 1994 Le long de l’eau (short fiction, 11’)

*part of the ARTE collection "Masculin-Féminin/Petite Caméra***
CREW

director
Ursula MEIER

screenplay
Ursula MEIER

Antoine JACCOUD
Raphaëlle VAUFRINE
Sébastien TAURAND
Olivier LORELLE
Alice WINGOUR

photography
Agnès GODARD, A.F.C.

sound
Luc YERSIN

editing
Susana ROSSBERG
François GEGDIGER
Nelly GUÉTIER
Étienne CURUHO
Franco PISCOPO
Ivan NICLASS

make-up
Philippe CARAZ
Ana VAN BRE

artistic advisor
Dorothée VUARIN
Mathieu SCHIRMER
Elodie VAN BEUREN
Philippe PHILIPPOV
Thomas ALFANDARI
Patrice SANDRIN (Solifile)

1st assistant director
Elena TATTI

script supervisor
and Thierry SPICHER (Box Productions - Switzerland)

location manager
Dennis FREYO (Archipel 35 - France)

production manager
Dennis DELCAMPE (Need Productions - Belgium)

line producer in Bulgaria
Ariette ZYLMENBERG (RTBF - Belgian television)
Isabelle TRUC (Luma Production - Belgium)

costumes
Anna VAN BRE

associate producers

with the collaboration of
François GEGDIGER
Nelly GUÉTIER
Étienne CURUHO
Franco PISCOPO
Ivan NICLASS

sound editing
Etienne CURUHO
Franco PISCOPO

sound mix
Franco PISCOPO

set
Ivan NICLASS

artistic advisor
Philippe PHILIPPOV
Thomas ALFANDARI
Patrice SANDRIN (Solifile)

script supervisor
Elena TATTI

sound editing
Etienne CURUHO
Franco PISCOPO

sound mix
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1st assistant director
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Isabelle TRUC (Luma Production - Belgium)
a production of
Box Productions - Archipel 35 - Naed Productions
in coproduction with France 3 Cinéma Télévision Suisse Romande a SRG SSR Idée suisse company RTBF (Belgian Television)
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