

LES FILMS VELVET
presents

EMMANUELLE
DEVOS

GRÉGORY
MONTEL

GUSTAVE
KERVERN



Perfumes

Les Parfums

A FILM BY GRÉGORY MAGNE



Synopsis

Anne Walberg is a master in perfumes. She creates fragrances and sells her incredible gift to many companies. She is a diva, selfish and temperamental. Guillaume is her new driver and the only one who dares facing her. This is probably why she does not fire him.

Interview with Grégory Magne

HOW DID THIS FILM COME ABOUT?

I was inspired by a situation that we have all experienced. I was in a crowd, and a familiar perfume held my attention. My reflex was to search for the person who was wearing it. So I stood there for a while, watching people around me through that particular prism. Then I began to wonder how the daily life of a person with a keener sense of smell than average could be like. How this ability could change this person's relations with others. And maybe affect his or her social life, emotions or character. It all called for the creation of a singular character, that would be challenging to write and direct: how can one capture smells on screen? This is how Anne Walberg was born.

LES PARFUMS IS ABOUT TWO LONELY PEOPLE MEETING: A PERFUMER OR "A NOSE", ANNE WALBERG, AND HER CHAUFFEUR, GUILLAUME...

Anne Walberg is a fallen diva. She seems quite curt and aloof at first. With her bourgeois streak, one might find her haughty. But it is something else entirely. A kind of withdrawnness, a difficulty to communicate. Guillaume is going through a rough patch in his personal life, he is breaking up with his wife and must sort out the issue of his daughter's custody... But socially, it is quite the opposite. He feels comfortable in any kind of situation, no matter who he is talking to. Even a little too comfortable. Which is bound to arouse his client's curiosity.

SO MUCH SO THAT SHE USES HIM FOR IT AT FIRST, AS IF HE WAS BECOMING... HIS TRANSLATOR.

Exactly. From Anne Walberg's perspective, it almost makes Guillaume her bodyguard. She has a good nose but he has flair. She gets to use it, and sometimes to hide behind it. Guillaume lacks all the qualities required to be a professional chauffeur, but he is good at reading people. He lacks patience, deference. He seems awkward, out of place, which is a goldmine for comedy.

HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THE FILM? DID YOU RESEARCH BY MEETING WITH REAL PERFUMERS?

Our goal wasn't to make a scholarly film about perfumers or fragrances. Anne Walberg's "missions" were inspired by things I had read or seen on this topic, sometimes years ago. For instance, the idea of the cave whose scents she is supposed to reproduce identically was based on a documentary by Werner Herzog called *THE CAVE OF FORGOTTEN DREAMS*. But we needed to be realistic and precise as to terminology and acting. So, once the script was written, I asked a few noses to read it and they made some clarifications. It truly is a fascinating profession. There are only a few hundred perfumers in the world, most of whom have been trained and work in France. Things are changing, but women are still underrepresented. One of them in particular, Christine Nagel, Hermès in-house perfumer, advised Emmanuelle for the film. She is much more communicative than Anne Walberg, yet she recognised herself in many traits and reactions of the character. She welcomed Emmanuelle into her fragrance laboratory, and proposed her to create her own fragrance, so that she could learn the tricks of the trade.





ALTHOUGH IT IS FILLED WITH FUNNY MOMENTS,
THE FILM IS NOT JUST A COMEDY...

I like it when humour relies on what each viewer sees, catches or understands individually. When comedy is lightly suggested rather than shouted from the rooftops. To me, it seems truer to how people actually laugh in life. The same goes for the story. When two characters fall in love, you show their restlessness, their awkwardness, their desperation, their reunion... A friendship like that of Anne and Guillaume is made of much tinier, subtler things. The viewer doesn't need them to kiss, to call each other by their first names or to pat each other in the back to understand how much they have helped each other feel confident again.

WHEN DID IT OCCUR TO YOU THAT EMMANUELLE
DEVOS WAS THE RIGHT MATCH FOR THE PART?

Even before the first version of the script with dialogues, I had put Christine and Emmanuelle's pictures side by side. Probably because her overdeveloped sense of smell reminded me of *READ MY LIPS*, by Jacques Audiard. We didn't know each other. I sent the script to her agent on a Wednesday night. By Thursday morning, she had read and liked it. We met on Friday and, in less than 48 hours, the stars were aligned. Emmanuelle could relate to the rather unsociable side of the character, it reminded her of her teenage years. She was also drawn to the subtlety required to play the "nose" scenes. The comedy aspect of the project also appealed to her; it is something that she isn't offered very often. Grégory and Emmanuelle conjure up different universes and audiences, which seemed interesting for the film. They have different acting styles as well. Emmanuelle is really precise, and she has a stunning ability to feel what is good in each take and to focus all that in a single, perfect take. Grégory is more spontaneous. He knows that he often conveys a lot of things, besides the lines. And that was the point. Their acting styles matched the traits of their characters. One is diligent, while the other is spontaneous.





Director's Biography

Grégory Magne grew up in Burgundy, France. In 2007, he left to cross the Atlantic alone from La Rochelle to Salvador de Bahia, on a 6.5-meter sailboat, with no means of communication. He embarks with a camera to tell his daily life and shoots his first film, *VINGT-QUATRE HEURES PAR JOUR DE MER*. He has since navigated between documentaries and fictions, between scripts and directing. In 2012, he wrote and directed with Stéphane Viard his first feature film, *L'AIR DE RIEN*, a dark comedy in which Michel Delpech embodies a Michel Delpech riddled with debts. The film reveals Grégory Montel in his first first-role. *PERFUMES* is his second feature film.



Cast

Anne Walberg.....	Emmanuelle Devos
Guillaume Favre.....	Grégory Montel
Arsène.....	Gustave Kervern
Patrick Ballester.....	Sergi Lopez
Léa.....	Zélie Rixhon

Crew

Direction.....	Grégory Magne
Screenplay.....	Grégory Magne
Editing.....	Béatrice Herminie Gwen Mallauran
Music.....	Gaëtan Roussel
Photography.....	Thomas Rames
Sound.....	Francis Bernard Berrier Benjamin Rosier Mathieu Langlet
Produced by.....	Frédéric Jouve et Marie Lecoq
A production.....	Les Films Velvet
French release.....	Pyramide
World sales.....	Pyramide International

FRANCE | 2019 | 1H40 | DCP | 5.1 | SCOPE | COLOR





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