Fabrice Champion was the star of a prestigious international troupe of trapeze artists. During one of his practice sessions, he crashed into one of his colleagues. In the accident, he lost part of his mobility.

Over the years, Fabrice tried different kinds of physical therapies. Thanks to his endurance strength, he was able to regain a part of control over his upperbody.

While teaching at the National Circus School, he meets with Matias and Alexandre, two young acrobats. Together, they try to re-invent acrobatics with his handicap, they create and rehearse the first choreographies. They grow closer. For Fabrice, it is the beginning of another way of dealing with his paralysis. For Alexandre and Matias it is the beginning of a new approach of both acrobatics and life.
Fabrice Champion was born in Grenoble in 1972.

His first steps into the circus: he joined the Beetchouc Circus, a recreational school, at 11 years old and entered The National School of Circus (CNAC) at 16.

January and February 1992, he left Châlons safe and sound, joined the trapeze troup of Archaos.

Winter 1992, triumphant tour with the Sicilian circus “La Citta di Roma”. Unforgettable! Glitter and mandatory smile, three times a day!

In 1993, he took part in the creation of the Arts Sauts Company and in a three years world tour.

In 1996, he decided to take a one year and a half break, cultivate a kitchen garden and devoted himself to Buddhist meditation.

In 2003, back with the Arts Sauts Company, he toured with the new show “Ola Kala”. While still seeking for the incandescence of the acrobatic movement, he is stopped in full flight in May, 22nd 2004. He crashed in the air into one of his colleagues, and it’s the beginning of his tetraplegic adventures!

Between June 2004 and February 2006, hospitals, several physical therapies: he tried to get back on top. A warrior never gives up!

In September 2009, he returned to the circus to teach at the CNAC during one week to pass on his passion for acrobatics.

From January to May 2011, he took part in the creation of a show revolving around the movement of a tetraplegic and two young acrobats.
The first time I saw Fabrice Champion he was flying on a trapeze in Paris. He was bare chest with long hair, and wearing a light white kilt. Fabrice was flying through the air like a cat who always lands on its feet. Beyond acrobatics, he projected an incredible energy, a joy mixed with gravity and distress. You could feel Fabrice fully living through his acrobatics. This experience left me with an indelible impression. When I met with him, months later, he was tetraplegic.

For a longtime, he refused to be filmed. He couldn’t recognize himself in his broken body. We became friends. Then he changed his mind. Fabrice never cheated in acrobatics and doesn’t cheat in life. He gives everything. I have been keeping up with Fabrice along those long years. Most of his friends were anxiously waiting for him to return to the big top which he did with two of his students. A circus man always returns to the circus.

Even though it took us seven years to complete, the narrative is a very simple one. Very little music. Almost no effects. We have been looking to create a « cinéma vérité » structure. It tells the nostalgia of flying. The importance of friendship. It shows the energy and the incredible will power that Fabrice exhibits each day. Moments of tiredness and doubts. It is sometimes lyrical and harsh. All these elements are part of Fabrice’s character. It shows Fabrice’s daily life getting fueled by the strength of a new generation of acrobats. It is a story about transmission. It shows how movement never stops.

Without knowing it during the film process, we have been witnessing a impressive life cycle. « Parade » sometimes looks like a philosophical fable. It has been a dramatic but a fantastic journey. I am happy to show you this film.
OLIVIER MEYROU

BIOGRAPHY

After studying literature and cinema, he was working as assistant director for the opera and as a film director. Since then he has been directing. His film Beyond Hatred about the murder of a gay man by three skinheads was selected at the Forum and won a Teddy Award at the Berlinale in 2006. Celebration screened in the Panorama in 2007. After these 2 films, he directed The Advocate’s Devil for the French public TV in 2009. Parade is his last film.

FILMOGRAPHY

Acrobates (52’, 2011)
L’Avocat du diable (70’, 2009)
Au-delà de la haine (85’, 2006)
Berlinale Forum 2006
Celebration, (80’, 2007)
Berlinale Panorama 2007
Bye, Bye Apartheid (60’, 2002)
Young Talent Scam Award
Zelda (52’, 1999)
Le Village Sourd (52’, 1997)
★ CREDITS ★

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