

# YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA

Discover a New Generation of Directors



**2020 FILM SELECTION**

*Young French Cinema is a program of UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the U.S.*



# Foreword

Over the past few years, contemporary French directors have continually been singled out for praise by the international press: The « sensuality and intellectual engagement » and « thrilling vibrancy » of « a booming new generation » of young French filmmakers distilling « emotional and carefree story-telling » with « a blend of style & intensity ».

The **YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA** program is one of the most convenient entry points to their works. For the sixth year in a row, it offers a selection of today's best films and filmmakers. Most of the films selected in this program have premiered in 2019 in top international festivals. The program mainly focuses on rising talents, from high-profile independent works to quirky comedies, powerful documentaries about the world around us and exciting shorts. The current selection highlights two specificities of French cinema today, its focus on themes of gender diversity with half of the films directed by female filmmakers, and its curiosity with the world outside of France, from Algeria to Congo-Brazzaville and Switzerland.

After five successful years with over 120 bookings in more than 30 cities throughout the US in 2019, the 2020 selection demonstrates that this young generation - more than ever - shares a global vision and an amazing capacity to combine cultural influences and tackle an incredibly wide range of subject matters.

In this brochure, you will find information about the guidelines of the program as well as descriptions of the films selected for the 2020 program. Please note that the 2020 film selection is available until December 31, 2020 under the conditions mentioned in this brochure.

YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA has been set up by UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy as a way to bring French films with no US distribution to art house cinemas, film societies, the Alliance française network and American universities. The scope of the selection has widened this year to include co-productions from Switzerland, in partnership with Swiss Films. We are also pleased to welcome our partner l'ACID for the fourth year in a row. This year we have included three films from their recent Cannes selection in our program.

We hope that you will be inspired by these films and we look forward to working with you!



# YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA

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# Guidelines

**YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA** is available to U.S. art house cinemas, film societies, the Alliance Française network and universities. Part of the selection is also available in Canada.

**FILM SELECTION:** The program includes 10 feature films and 8 short films from emerging French filmmakers. All films can be booked “à la carte”: there is no minimum or maximum number of films that you must choose. In the event that you are showing more than four films from the program as a festival or series, that festival/series should be named YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA.

**COST:** Each feature film in the 2020 program is available for a \$300 booking fee for up to two screenings per film. Each short film is available for a \$40 booking fee for up to two screenings per short. Fees are paid to UniFrance who then reimburse directly the rights-holders. If a venue takes the entire selection of Young French Cinema (features & shorts), the feature booking fee will be reduced to \$250 per booking for up to 2 screenings, in order to act as an incentive. Please note that outgoing shipping costs are to be paid by each organization.

**TIMELINE:** All inquiries must be sent at least six weeks before the screening date and addressed to [adeline.monzier@unifrance.org](mailto:adeline.monzier@unifrance.org). UniFrance will be the third party between you and the rights holder in France.

**FORMAT:** All films are available on DCP and on EclairPlay in DCP-quality and the latter is our preferred method of delivery. Some films are available in DVD or Blu-ray if necessary. Please check the formats available before booking a film..

**PUBLICITY:** All publicity materials must include the following credit line:

*"This Young French Cinema program was made possible with the support of UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy."*

**TRAVEL GRANT APPLICATION:** Venues that would like to organize a master class with the director/actor of one of the films shown can apply for a travel grant to fly the artist to the U.S. Please send us an email with your request and be as detailed as possible about your proposed master class, the venue, the number of students expected, the moderators of the discussion and explain why it's important for the screening to have the artist attend. UniFrance will consider your application and if positive, facilitate the contact with the artist.

**CANADA:** 6 features and 8 shorts are available for booking by Canadian art house cinemas, film societies, the Alliance Française network and universities under the conditions listed above.

**For all requests and for access to screeners, please contact:**

adeline.monzier@unifrance.org

*“Enlightening for cinephiles,  
Francophiles, feminists or  
all three together...”*

—HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

*“A perfectly charmant way to  
forget about your worries and  
your strife for 100 airy minutes.”*

—THE GUARDIAN

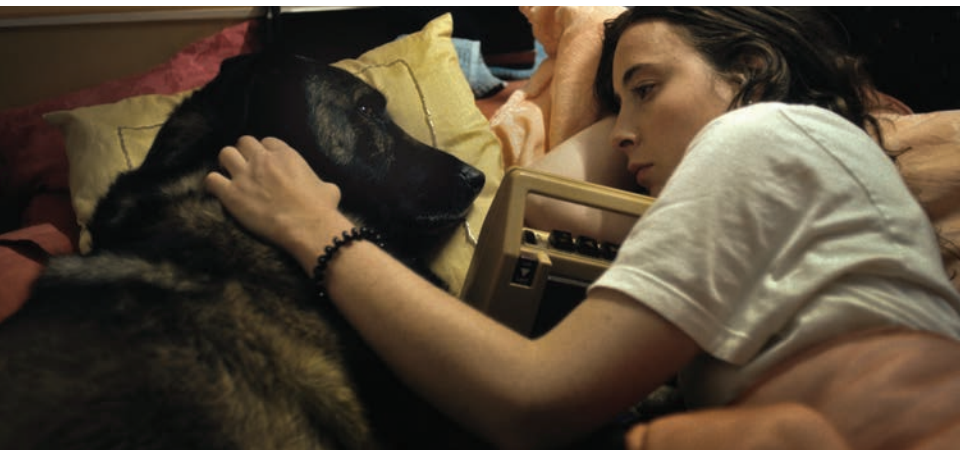
*“A pitch that could hardly be  
more intriguing.”*

—HOLLYWOOD REPORTER



# *As Happy As Possible*

(RÊVES DE JEUNESSE)



## **DIRECTOR**

Alain Raoust

## **SCREENPLAY**

Alain Raoust,  
Cécile Vargaftig

## **CAST**

Salomé Richard,  
Yoann Zimmer,  
Estelle Meyer

## **DETAILS**

2019,  
France/Portugal,  
92 min,  
Drama

While this is only his fourth feature, writer-director Alain Raoust has a solid reputation as a gifted and poetic outsider in French cinema. His experience shows in this subtle yet ambitious portrait of contemporary France through the encounter between a few young people trying to make the most of their lives in a country that may have left them behind: Salomé, who returns to the village in the South of France where she lived ten years ago as a teenager to run a remote waste center; Jessica, a motor-mouthed fireball who washes up at the waste center after being eliminated from a Survivor-style reality show, terrified she'll have to go back to working at a supermarket; and Clément, a local young man mourning the killing of his brother by a police stun grenade during a demonstration. While Raoust is now in his early fifties, his spot-on dialogue captures the expressions and concerns of contemporary youth with an ear for the humor and unexpected lyricism in everyday slang. But it is in the silences that we feel the tenderness of his gaze, a perfect complement to the political indignation that drove him to make this poignant and unusual film.

*Selected in the 2019 Cannes ACID Program.*

# The Bare Necessity

(PERDRIX)



## DIRECTOR

Erwan Le Duc

## SCREENPLAY

Erwan Le Duc

## CAST

Swann Arlaud,  
Maud Wyler,  
Fanny Ardant

## DETAILS

2019,  
France,  
100 min,  
Romantic  
Comedy

*The Bare Necessity* is an ebullient high point in the recent spate of eccentric French films by young directors distinguished by an ability to use comedy to express their generation's uncertainty in the face of an increasingly crazy world. And the world of *The Bare Necessity* is as crazy as it gets: here in the idyllic woods of the Vosges Mountains, one runs into revolutionary nudists, obsessive earthworm scientists, explosive reenactments of World War II battles, and a host of other weirdos. Possibly the only regular guy around is police officer Captain Pierre Perdrix, whose buttoned-up life starts to come unbuttoned when out-of-towner Juliette turns up after having her all her earthly possessions stolen by a militant nudist. Naturally, the upstanding policeman and the itinerant young woman are fated to become an item, but they'll have to climb mountains, dive into freezing lakes, and dodge overenthusiastic war reenactors before they fall into each other's arms. Starring rising stars Swann Arlaud and Maud Wyler and the great Fanny Ardant as Captain Perdrix's oddball mother, *The Bare Necessity* is a marvel of deadpan comedy, cinematic quirkiness, and genuine romance.

*Selected in the 2019 Cannes Directors' Fortnight.*

# Burning Ghost

(VIF-ARGENT)



## DIRECTOR

Stéphane Batut

## SCREENPLAY

Stéphane Batut,  
Christine Dory,  
Frédéric Videau

## CAST

Thimotée Robart,  
Judith Chemla,  
Saadia Bentaieb

## DETAILS

2019,  
France,  
104 min,  
Fantasy,  
Romance

As an astonishingly gentle and strikingly original reflection on death, loss, and love, *Burning Ghost* takes its place in that rare category of poetic classics such as Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* and Hirokazu Kore-Eda's *After Life*, films that redefine our thinking about mortality. The story begins in a Paris park when Juste, a lost young man who appears to be invisible to all, is rescued by a mysterious drifter. We learn that Juste has died but that Death has granted him a furlough of sorts, allowing him to serve as a guide into the afterworld to those recently deceased. And so, he continues to exist among the living, just another anonymous face in the crowds of Parisians. Until the day he is recognized by Agathe, a woman who loved him when he was alive. With this first fiction feature, Stéphane Batut, one of French cinema's best casting directors, tells a unique love story that is both luminous and melancholy, anchored in the shadowy romance of the Paris night. *Burning Ghost* received the 2019 Prix Jean Vigo, the prestigious French film award that recognizes independence of spirit and stylistic originality.

*Selected in the 2019 Cannes ACID Program.*

# *Delphine and Carole*

(DELPHINE ET CAROLE, INSOUMUSES)



## **DIRECTOR**

Callisto McNulty

## **SCREENPLAY**

Callisto McNulty,  
Alexandra  
Roussopoulos,  
Géronimo  
Roussopoulos

## **CAST**

Carole  
Roussopoulos,  
Delphine Seyrig,  
Chantal Akerman

## **DETAILS**

2019,  
France/  
Switzerland,  
69 min,  
Documentary

This revealing portrait of the friendship between screen icon Delphine Seyrig, known for her work with Chantal Akerman, Luis Buñuel, Marguerite Duras, Jacques Demy, and François Truffaut, among others, and documentary filmmaker Carole Roussopoulos, a pioneer in the use of video to make political films, serves as an invigorating reminder of the struggles and triumphs of 1970s feminism, perfectly timed to our current moment of renewed activism for equality and accountability. Initially developed at the request of the late Carole Roussopoulos, Callisto McNulty's sensitive film uses present-day interviews and rich archival material to tell the story of these two women's collaborations on epochal videos that combined outrage and humor to bear witness to the Women's Liberation Movement's joyful, creative, and untiring efforts to combat systemic misogyny and support the rights of women. Featuring generous excerpts from Seyrig and Roussopoulos's rarely screened video archives side by side with truly jaw-dropping examples of sexism in mainstream media, the film serves as a primer of a kind of activism born of a true democratic impulse. Look for archival interviews with luminaries including Simone de Beauvoir, Jane Fonda, Marguerite Duras, and Chantal Akerman.

*Selected at the 2019 Berlin International Film Festival.*

# Kongo

(KONGO)



## DIRECTOR

Hadrien La Vapeur,  
Corto Vaclav

## SCREENPLAY

Hadrien La Vapeur,  
Corto Vaclav

## CAST

Apostle Medard

## DETAILS

2019,  
France,  
70 min,  
Documentary

*Kongo* begins by plunging viewers into the everyday life of a witch doctor in the slums of Brazzaville, Congo, following Apostle Jean Ménard as he treats patients with a variety of rituals and attempts to cast off evil spells by visiting cemeteries to implore the dead to protect the living. But when two children are killed by a bolt of lightning, Ménard is accused before a court of law of having commanded the lightning. The ensuing depiction of the persistence and practice of ancient beliefs in a contemporary society would alone be an impressive accomplishment, in line with the trance films of the great ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch, but this fascinating first documentary feature by experimental filmmaker Hadrien La Vapeur and anthropologist Corto Vaclav goes further by providing a rich, nuanced picture of life in the Congo, while recognizing the shadow of the colonial past and the outside forces affecting this Central African nation today. In one of the most arresting sequences in the film, Apostle Ménard returns to a waterfall allegedly inhabited by sacred mermaids to discover that the entire river has disappeared, diverted by a Chinese construction company. Rarely has the clash between local customs and global capital been so poignantly illustrated.

*Selected in the 2019 Cannes ACID Program.*



# Particles

(LES PARTICULES)



## DIRECTOR

Blaise Harrison

## SCREENPLAY

Blaise Harrison,  
Mariette Désert

## CAST

Thomas Daloz,  
Néa Lüders,  
Salvatore Ferro

## DETAILS

2019,  
France/  
Switzerland,  
98 min,  
Fantasy Drama

The buzz young Swiss filmmaker Blaise Harrison generated with documentaries that discover strangeness in the everyday is confirmed with this assured fiction debut that takes the familiar genre of the coming-of-age story and turns it into an undefinable tale pulsing with big ideas, fragile emotions, and entrancing atmospheres. The film centers on Pierre-André, a shy teenager living in the sticks a few miles from the French-Swiss border. At first glance, his life couldn't be more banal: the tedium of high school, band practice with his friends, camping trips and drug experimentation, awkward mooning over girls. But little by little, Pierre-André's reality starts to slip: he sees lights in the forest, the soil seems to be breathing, and his best friend disappears into the woods. Could this be related to the massive particle collider lying 500 feet beneath the ground? Is any of it really happening? Harrison seamlessly blends pitch-perfect observations of teenage life with haunting elements of science fiction to express the momentous changes of adolescence and the wonder of life itself.

*Selected in the 2019 Cannes Directors' Fortnight.*

# Real Love

(C'EST ÇA L'AMOUR)



## DIRECTOR

Claire Burger

## SCREENPLAY

Claire Burger

## CAST

Bouli Lanners,  
Justine Lacroix,  
Sarah  
Henochsberg

## DETAILS

2019,  
France,  
98 min,  
Family Drama

After his wife of twenty years leaves the family home, Mario remains alone to care for his teenage daughters Niki and Frida. While the father struggles to accept this separation, his daughters are facing their own milestones: Niki is about to turn eighteen, thinking about striking out on her own, and fourteen-year-old Frida is in love with one of her girlfriends. After winning the *Caméra d'Or* for best debut at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival for *Party Girl*, co-directed with Marie Amachoukeli and Samuel Theis, writer-director Claire Burger follows in the same vein of tender social realism with her stunning solo debut *Real Love*. Shot in the director's hometown of Forbach, a small working-class town in the northeast of France, *Real Love* is a film grounded in a deep knowledge of its setting and close observation of human relations, but occasionally surprises the viewer with an astonishing twist (witness the way the initially distressing scene where Frida spikes her father's tea with strong party drugs turns into the film's most uplifting moment). Belgian actor Bouli Lanners brings a moving warmth and vulnerability to the part of Mario, while young actresses Sarah Henochsberg and Justine Lacroix deliver revelatory performances as Niki and Frida.

*Selected at the 2018 International Film Festival Rotterdam.  
Winner of Giornate degli Autori Director's Award at the 2018 Venice Film Festival.*

# Stars by the Pound

(100KGS D'ÉTOILES)



## DIRECTOR

Marie-Sophie  
Chambon

## SCREENPLAY

Marie-Sophie  
Chambon,  
Anaïs Carpita

## CAST

Laure Duchêne,  
Angèle Metzger,  
Pauline Serieys

## DETAILS

2019,  
France,  
88 min,  
Drama

Sixteen-year-old physics whiz Lois wants only one thing: to travel into space. But heavy set people like Lois don't get to be astronauts... Though she has a genetic predisposition to be overweight, Lois starves herself to trim down—and winds up in a clinic after a series of fainting spells. Here, she meets three girls facing their own stiff challenges: Amélie suffers from gender dysphoria, Stannah is in a wheelchair, and Justine is so terrified of electromagnetic waves that she destroys whatever appliances she can get her hands on. The girls form a motley crew, but they have one thing in common: they want to get out of the clinic. And when Lois reveals her plan to make it to Toulouse to compete at a national science competition for the grand prize of a zero-gravity flight, the girls band together to break free and make a dream come true. Acclaimed screenwriter Marie-Sophie Chambon's charming blend of a heartfelt coming-of-age story and a zany road movie is an inventive and uplifting paean to accepting yourself without letting go of your dreams, lifted by stirring performances by its four young leads.

**EDUCATIONAL PICK!**



# Twelve Thousand

(DOUZE MILLE)



## DIRECTOR

Nadège Trébal

## SCREENPLAY

Nadège Trébal

## CAST

Bouli Lanners,  
Justine Lacroix,  
Sarah  
Henochsberg

## DETAILS

2019,  
France,  
111 min,  
Social Romantic  
Drama

When Frank loses his livelihood scamming customers from a local junkyard, he and his partner Maroussia quickly realize the only way for their couple to survive and maintain its fierce sexual bond is for him to leave in search of a job that will allow him to make as much money as she does: twelve thousand euros a year, and not a penny more or less. With that ice-cold pact formed in the heat of passion, writer-director Nadège Trébal sets forth the program of her exhilarating, sharply political first fiction feature: an analysis of the relationship between sexuality and economics, exploitation and freedom. Grounded in the sensual reality of bodies and the hard truth of money, *Twelve Thousand* goes further than one could ever hope to imagine, lifting the French social realist drama into a kind of mythology for container yards and industrial landscapes populated by hustling Amazons and dancing factory workers, a reflection of a world of transience and transaction in which love is constantly at risk of being corrupted. This modern-day, working class odyssey establishes Nadège Trébal—who also delivers a searing performance as Maroussia—as a major new voice in French cinema.

*Selected at the 2019 Locarno Film Festival.*

# 143 Sahara Street

(143 RUE DU DÉSERT)



## DIRECTOR

Hassen Ferhani

## SCREENPLAY

Hassen Ferhani

## CAST

Malika,  
Chawki Amari,  
Samir Elhakim

## DETAILS

2019,  
France/Algeria,  
100 min,  
Documentary

For the follow-up to his rightly celebrated feature debut *Roundabout in My Head* (2015), Algerian director Hassen Ferhani places his camera in a tiny teahouse on the edge of the Trans-Sahara highway and introduces audiences to Malika, the venerable owner of this open-air hut deep in the desert, frequented by long-haul truck drivers, the occasional intrepid tourist, and “locals” in an area where “local” might range anywhere within a 200-mile radius. As is immediately clear, Malika is an extraordinary woman whose isolated living circumstances have done nothing to dull her sense of humor or her singular spirituality. Taking his cue from his subject’s playfulness, Ferhani creates an unforgettable film portrait that skirts the fertile border between fiction and documentary and toys with genres like the Western and the road movie without ever leaving the confines of this small parcel of desert land. Despite its geographical limits, this is a profoundly expansive film that has a great deal to tell us about present-day Algeria. Ferhani was awarded the prize for Best Emerging Director at the 2019 Locarno Film Festival for *143 Sahara Street*.

*Winner of Best Emerging Director Award at the 2019 Locarno Film Festival. Selected at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival.*

# Short Films

## *Ahmed's Song* (LE CHANT D'AHMED)

**DIRECTOR** Foued Mansour

**CAST** Bilal Chegrani, Laurent Maurel, Modeste Maurice

**DETAILS** 2018, France, 30 min, Drama/Portrait

One day Ahmed, employed at the public baths and nearing retirement, encounters Mike, a teenager adrift. Between the bath house walls, in a place on the point of disappearing, a strange relationship will develop between these two fractured souls.

*Winner of Bridging the Borders Award at the Palm Springs International ShortFest 2019.*

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## *The Distance Between Us and the Sky*

(LA DISTANCE ENTRE NOUS ET LE CIEL)

**DIRECTOR** Vasilis Kekatos

**CAST** Nikolakis Zeginoglou, Ioko Ioannis Kotidis

**DETAILS** 2019, France, 9 min, LGBTQ Romance

Two strangers meet for the first time one night in a remote gas station. The first one fills up his car, while the second one lacks a few euros necessary to get home. The two men will haggle over the price of what separates them from a story.

*Winner of Short Film Palme d'Or and Queer Palme at Cannes 2019.*

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## *The Glorious Acceptance of Nicolas Chauvin*

(LE DISCOURS D'ACCEPTATION GLORIEUX DE NICOLAS CHAUVIN)

**DIRECTOR** Benjamin Crotty

**CAST** Alexis Manenti, Antoine Cholet, Caroline Deruas, Pauline Jacquard

**DETAILS** 2018, France, 26 min, Portrait

During his acceptance speech for a lifetime achievement award, Nicolas Chauvin - farmer soldier, veteran of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and the father of chauvinism - embarks on a grand monologue, sending him back in time and space. Until, at a bend on a moonlit road, a spectral encounter changes the course of his non-existence.

*Selected at the 2018 New York Film Festival. Winner of Mantarraya Award at the 2018 Locarno International Film Festival.*

# Short Films

## *Magnetic Harvest* (LA TRACTION DE PÔLES)

**DIRECTOR** Marine Levéel

**CAST** Gilles Vandeweerd, Victor Fradet, Xavier Clion

**DETAILS** 2018, France, 24 min, Romantic Comedy

In close up, Mickaël seems to move in a nebula of desires : find his lost pig, get his organic farming certification, stop being lonely in a rape desert. But from afar, Mickaël looks more like a magnet attracted to Paul.

*Selected at the 2019 Festival Premier Plans d'Angers. Winner of Prix du Public at the 2019 Palm Springs International ShortFest.*

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## *The Marvelous Misadventures of the Stone Lady* (LES EXTRAORDINAIRES MÉSAVENTURES DE LA JEUNE FILLE DE PIERRE)

**DIRECTOR** Gabriel Abrantes

**CAST** Alexis Manenti, Caroline Deruas, Liza Lapert

**DETAILS** 2019, France/Portugal, 20 min, Comedy/Animation

Tired of being a banal architectural ornament, a sculpture runs away from the Louvre to confront real life on the streets of Paris.

*Selected in the 2019 Cannes Directors' Fortnight.*

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## *Sheep, Wolf, and a Cup of Tea* (MOUTONS, LOUP, ET TASSE DE THÉ...)

**DIRECTOR** Marion Lacourt

**DETAILS** 2019, France, 12 min, Animation

**EDUCATIONAL PICK!**

At night, while family members indulge in curious rituals before sleeping, a child invokes a wolf from the bottom of a box hidden under his bed. Disturbing sheep then besiege the door of his bedroom...

*Selected at the 2019 Locarno Film Festival.*

# Short Films

## *The Tears Thing* (LE COUP DES LARMES)

**DIRECTOR** Clémence Poésy

**CAST** India Hair, Sabine Timoteo

**DETAILS** 2019, France, 25 min, Drama/Portrait

Florence is an actress. Preparations for her new role will challenge her in a way she could never have seen coming...

*Selected at the 2019 Venice Film Festival.*

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## *Tuesday from 8 to 6* (MARDI DE 8 À 18)

**DIRECTOR** Cecilia de Arce

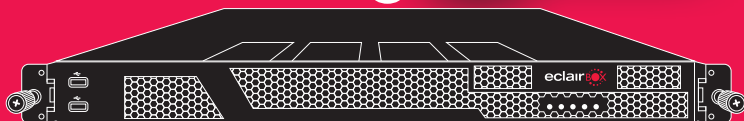
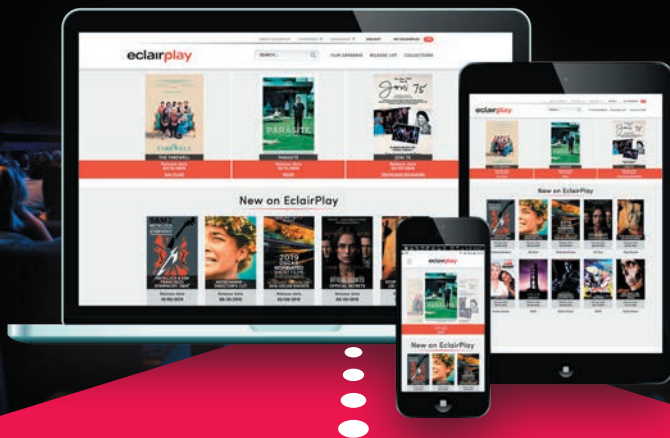
**CAST** Chainez Dehchar, Rebecca Finet, Big John de Paname

**DETAILS** 2019, France, 26 min, School Drama

Névine, a secondary school monitor, is fully committed to her somewhat thankless day job, dealing with teachers, administration and students. Logan, a pupil she is fond of, insists on getting a cap back from lost and found. She has no idea of the consequences of her gesture.

*Selected at the 2019 Cannes Critics Week.*

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