



the Bird

A FILM BY
YVES CAUMON





BLUE MONDAY PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

the Bird

l'Oiseau



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
la Biennale di Venezia 2011
Orizzonti – Competition

INTERNATIONAL SALES
FILMS DU LOSANGE
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SYNOPSIS

Anne is discreet. Secretive.
She is a mystery to herself.

Anne does without love. She feels no emotions.
It suits her fine.

Anne has been through an ordeal, not lost her mind.
She has put herself in quarantine.

Anne is making her way back upstream, retracing the journey, taking things one at a time.
Let us wait for her joy to come back.



Yves CAUMON INTERVIEW

How was *The Bird* born?

There are people who already, at the age of 35, seem to be out of the running. They're bracketed off, as it were. They have no family, no friends, no love. They go to work, keep their heads down, go home. They're like shadows. *The Bird* was a way of getting close to one of them.

I wrote a first draft of the script a long time ago. It was very different then, but it was already called *The Bird*. At the time, I didn't feel strong enough to take it on. Talking about people who have lost a child when it hasn't happened to you is like playing with fire. The subject oppressed me. I delayed getting down to it. I felt it was sacrilegious. I still do.

The film seems inextricably linked to its actress, Sandrine Kiberlain.

It's a very different film depending on which actress plays the part. Anne can appear fearful, frigid, or puritanical. Is it her real nature? Was she born like that? Or did she become like it? Sandrine Kiberlain isn't self-effacing. She has temperament. Between the character and the actress, there's a tension, a contradiction that needs to be resolved. Basically, that's what the film is about.

Did she accept at once?

Sandrine phoned me three days after she'd received the script. She was enthusiastic and she never changed her mind. The glow of her faith lit up the whole shoot. You know, a script only means something to those who believe in it. I can't persuade the actors. I can't strum a mandolin under their windows all night to convince them that tomorrow's scene is right. They have to want it, and the wanting has to be mutual. Sure, I chose Sandrine, but she chose to be Anne. Our first discussions were quite funny. I was at pains to dispel any possible misunderstandings and anticipate any disagreements. I told her, "You know it's a film where you won't do anything. You'll peel carrots." "That's what I like best," she answered. She said it whenever I tried to discourage her.

As individuals, we're a long way apart from each other. We're both experienced but our experience isn't the same. That creates a differential, as in electricity. I was counting heavily on that. You could say it's my only real act of mise-en-scène. You have to start from scratch and invent a common language. It worked for us, like in the Léo



Ferré song: "Without knowing each other, we loved each other."

I love actors who commit themselves, who transform things by feeling them. Sandrine, quite simply, has all the qualities plus one: naivety. Even with all her experience, she's still naïve and down to earth.

What sort of agreement did you have between you?

I told her I was looking for not just an actress but a team-mate. I invited her to join in a more economical, craftsmanlike, "Rohmeresque" way of working, and I think she really enjoyed it. The film could easily have been rather abstract. It had to find its biological structure, its immune system. I was counting heavily on the actress. The agreement I had with Sandrine was simple: she would take care of the character, I would take care of the directing. Separate jobs. We would meet and discuss and share suggestions. We would aim for consensus. I wanted an actress who could handle the character all by herself, from first to last. On my side, I would film a documentary about that woman. It was perfect.

The first scene shows her coming home. You don't really get close to Anne...

I had been planning to film shadows, the shadow of a streetcar, of people in the city, and then Anne's shadow gradually emerging, like in a silent movie. In the end, I didn't film those shots but I kept the spirit of them. We start with a silhouette, a shape, a woman. That's all we know. We enter her privacy not knowing anything, just guessing. What follows is something I often try to do in the script: I try to write *the most boring thing possible*, to find a kind of neutrality, to leave room for the actors, their sheer presence. You shouldn't put too much in the script. You have to believe in it. It's also a way to make people listen harder. This woman peels carrots and takes a shower. Nothing happens. It starts to create a strange

feeling. Why is nothing happening? Where's the excitement? Of course it's a gamble. The whole film is a gamble. The risk is that it will fall flat and collapse into a lament, into earnestness. Sandrine's presence in each shot is crucial. I think I only ever asked her for one thing: "Just promise me this, that she'll never be down in the dumps. She'll never be sullen or miserable." But Sandrine already knew that.

What aspects of mise-en-scène were you not prepared to compromise on?

In the first place, exactly that: the mise-en-scène. Film directors have to embrace the privileges of directing. Here, I had to film a character who was present from start to finish. What do you do in that case? You can make *Germany Year Zero*, let's say, or *Rosetta*. You can stay glued to the character and watch their every move, like a cat watching a mouse. Or you can do something else. I chose to keep a certain freedom from the character, a sort of indifference towards her, as if the camera just happened to be there and Anne, too. It's a fake indifference, of course. But towards the end, we are allowed to leave her for about ninety seconds and just glimpse her from behind, in the shadows.

I don't think consistency is the Holy Grail. I made a point of varying the mise-en-scène, altering the tension, the potential, with a degree of randomness: a quiet scene followed by a vibrant shot which has no reason to be there, for example. In a way, the film had to be out of character with itself. I looked for uncertainty, vacillation, sometimes within a single shot. Switching from one register to another, from dream to reality and back again in the same shot.

What about the excerpt from Mizoguchi?

I was a Mizoguchi addict. I wanted to write a book about him but it would have been a lover's testimonial, a hymn of adoration. Everything in Mizoguchi is magnificently beautiful and yet also magnificently true. Every frame is a picture. It's astounding, intimidating. But at the same time, his characters are amazingly autonomous. They have a humanity that's worthy of Ford or Renoir. It's impossible to do anything half as good. It would be nice to be influenced by Mizoguchi, but there's no way. I'm glad to pay tribute to movie-loving, to my fellow watchers in the dark. Many people go to the movies to cry. We're there in the darkness, gazing upwards, and we cry. It's pure revelation. You could say that *The Bird* is about a girl who can't cry. The only place where she can manage to let out her emotions and relate to her feelings is there, in the refuge of the movie theatre, through a story told by someone else. Then she is able to feel emotion. It's the first time in the film.

What guided your choice of actors around Sandrine Kiberlain?

I looked for contrasts. Each character had to come from a different planet. They all had to be worlds in themselves, exchanging little with the others. It makes the relationships more electric. To be honest, I chose



actors I was already fond of. I've been watching Sibony in movies since he was a kid and I like him whatever he does. I'd forgive him anything. Riaboukine, Todeschini and he appealed to me as human beings. They had no hand in it. Neither did I. But that was how I chose them!

What I like about these three actors is that they don't mind why they're there or what they're acting. They aren't imprisoned by the scene's functional purpose. They're free agents. It's very empowering for them. Todeschini shows up at the cemetery in his red trousers, with an aching back, with an aching back. Nothing matters to him. And then, it looks real to me.

- After that, I took them to a particular territory. I knew them well enough. I'd studied them, to a degree. With Riaboukine, I tried to bring out his presence, his pure, enigmatic strength. There was no need to add to it. I looked for the childish ogre in him. There aren't many French actors with that kind of substance.. With Todeschini, I pushed him to be dégagé, a bit of a limp dick. Restrained, in other words. Vaguely adrift, powerless, and vulnerable. Vulnerability is the male characters' most decisive trait. As for Sibony, I was glad to give him the role of a more mature man with responsibilities and practical ambitions. His character, Raphael, is charismatic and generous. He doesn't just want to get Anne into bed. He thinks highly of her. He wants to do something for her. Coming on to her is just one way, a ritual way, you might say, of approaching her. "You can't live like that. It's not human," he tells her. Clément brings a lot of sincerity and warmth to the role.

Why did you choose to set the film in Bordeaux?

I love it when the atmosphere of a place imbues a film, like Orange in *Gueule d'Amour*, Clermont-Ferrand in *My Night With Maude...* I like when a film breathes through its space. It gives them a special identity which strangely captures the memory and

the imagination. Bordeaux is a bewitching, majestic, underrated and even maligned city. It's a romantic, novelistic place. It's also a cage. People don't get out of it. But the most beautiful thing about Bordeaux is the Garonne river. That was where I had my sentimental education and I'm attached to it, whether I like it or not. The quays of Bordeaux are *my Perpignan train station*, my own center of the world. Of course the people are no longer the same. But the Garonne is still there.

And water is a crucial element in the film.

Yes, it's a kind of story within the story. The film travels towards the sea, passing through ponds, basins and rivulets. I wanted to convey the force of attraction, the magnetism exerted by rivers and currents. I wanted to give people the urge to dive in and submerge themselves in it, like amniotic fluid. The film is the time it takes Anne to agree to let herself go with the flow, yield to the current and make peace with the elements, with what made her suffer. You could say that the liquid element — that which flows, is ungraspable and never stops — permeates the whole film. It prefers fluidity over disruption, and sound over picture. The scenes are less important than the transitions between them! The hard job was to even things out so that the layers of time blend into one another, so that we move from one plane of reality to another, seamlessly, without dramatization, almost without noticing, as in a daydream. The contrast, the drama, comes from elsewhere. The editing wasn't a matter of splicing scenes together. It was more a process of feeling, finding kinships between sensations. What thing led us to another? By and large, I staked a lot on sensations: simple, tactile things like caresses, swirls of water, the wind, leaves, things you can feel on your skin. Anne's hair. You should want to reach out and touch it.

Speaking of which, how important are nature and trees to you?

I don't feel as if I filmed much outdoors this time, but as we're closeted indoors for much of the film, the outdoor scenes may have more impact. Out of doors, things seem more straightforward and reachable to me. I was born in a desert of forests. I would rather my love of the countryside came from not having been born there but I was, so there it is. When I film in the middle of nature, I think I get rather lyrical. You know what Stendhal said? "A good painting is a painting that kindles desire." I'm with that. I like films that kindle desire. The main thing is that the world around Anne should be desirable. If it's ugly, the drama's gone.

You found a good partner in your cinematographer, Céline Bozon.

I'm very sensitive to the lighting in films. I saw the six or seven films that Céline made with Jean-Paul Civeyrac.



Her lighting says a lot to me but it's hard to explain. I have a feeling that great cinematographers don't work with light or shadow, but with half-light. Céline Bozon works with half-light fantastically well. Also, she has worked on a great many movies but she doesn't know everything and neither do I. We go looking together. The difference with my other films is that here the lighting frames the shot.

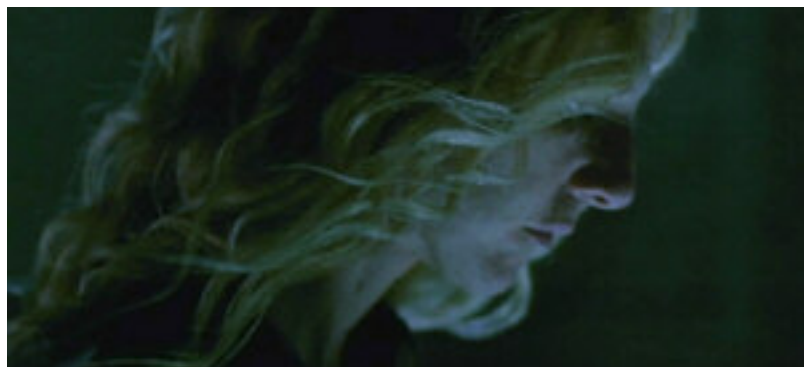
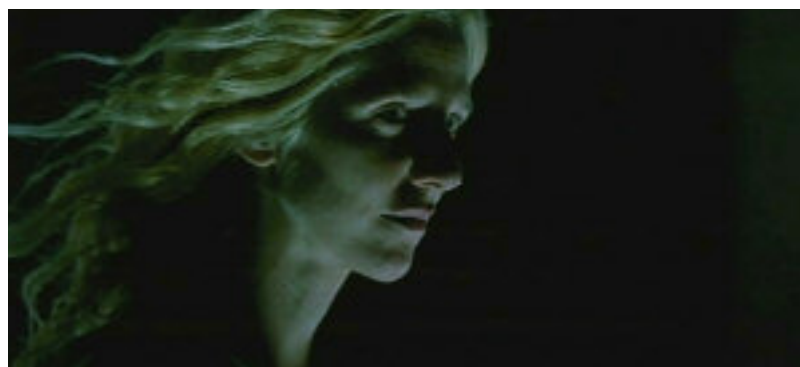
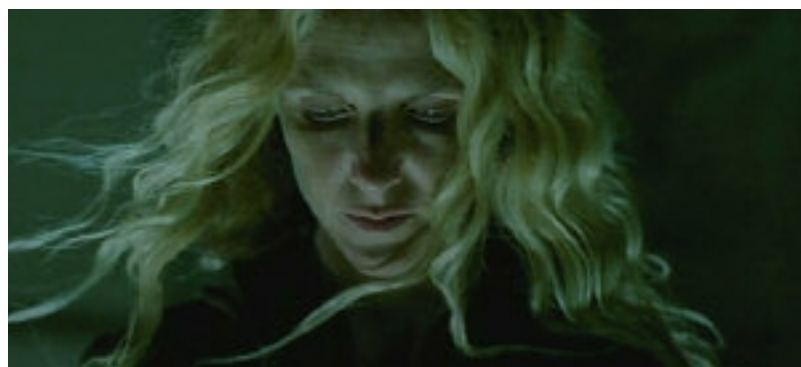
What can we say about the bird itself?

I enjoy telling one story through another. Showing things at an angle, by reflection, lets me see them, quite simply. The past resurfaces and yet it's the present. We don't know what's going to happen. It's the same thing and yet it's different. It doesn't quite match up. When Anne breaks the wall, she is in labour, it is like giving birth. Besides, it is how she experiences it.

When you start with a simple but clear enough dramatic vision, everything takes on a different meaning and starts to vibrate. The film was made in that spirit. It's less about widening out and hammering in than about digging deeper into what is there. From then on, all you have to do is encourage the resonances and correspondences. They appear of their own accord. There is what's there, and there's something else. It's the spectator who makes the film, I have to say.

And about sexuality?

Anne stays out of life. She brackets herself off. She eats, sleeps, works. She functions. But a grain of sand makes it all grind to a halt. There's a noise in the wall. She can't sleep any more. She stops functioning. Something is missing and she can't ignore it any more. She has to tackle the problem. By pulling on one little strand, we unwind the story like a ball of wool but in the end, we get there: how to come back to life, to sexuality?



Yves CAUMON

FILM

THE BIRD [*L'Oiseau*]

- 68th Venice Film Festival – Official Selection – Orizzonti Competition

PEEKABOO ! [*Cache-Cache*]

- Directors' Fortnight, Cannes 2005

BOYHOOD LOVES [*Amour d'enfance*]

- Un Certain Regard Prize, Cannes 2001



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S a n d r i n e K I B E R L A I N

CINEMA

THE BIRD

by Yves CAUMON

POLISSE

by Maïwenn Le BESCO

- *Jury Award – Cannes Film Festival 2011*

SERVICE ENTRANCE

by Philippe LE GUAY

A BALCONY OVERLOOKING THE SEA

by Nicole GARCIA

MISS CHAMBON

by Stéphane BRIZE

- *Nomination César 2010 – Best actress*
- *Nomination Lumières 2010 – Best actress*

LITTLE NICHOLAS

by Laurent TIRARD

ROMAINE 30° BELOW

by Agnès OBADIA

THE ARTIST'S LIFE

by Marc FITOUSSI

WELL, THANK YOU

by Emmanuelle CUAU

A HARMLESS LITTLE GAME

by Bernard RAPP

AFTER YOU...

by Pierre SALVADORI

ONLY GIRLS

by Pierre JOLIVET

SPECIAL DELIVERY

by Jeanne LABRUNE



BETTY FISHER AND OTHER STORIES	by Claude MILLER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Best acting award at Montreal Film Festival</i> • <i>Best acting award at Chicago Film Festiva</i> 	
EVERYTHING'S FINE, WE'RE LEAVING	by Claude MOURIERAS
LOVE ME	by Laetitia MASSON
FALSE SERVANT	by Benoît JACQUOT
NOTHING ABOUT ROBERT	by Pascal BONITZER
FOR SALE	by Laetitia MASSON
QUADRILLE	by Valérie LEMERCIER
SEVENTH HEAVEN	by Benoît JACQUOT
A SELF MADE HERO	by Jacques AUDIARD
BEAUMARCHAIS THE SCOUNDREL	by Edouard MOLINARO
TO HAVE (OR NOT)	by Laetitia MASSON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>César Award for Most Promising Actress - 1996</i> 	
THE PATRIOTS	by Eric ROCHANT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romy Schneider Award</i> 	
THERE'S NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT NORMAL PEOPLE	by Laurence FERREIRA-BARBOSA



C l é m e n t S I B O N Y

CINEMA

THE BIRD by Yves CAUMON
LET MY PEOPLE GO! by Mikael BUCH
SEE THE SEA by Patrice LECONTE
THE TOURIST by Florian Henckel von DONNERSMARCK
THE AGE OF MAN by Raphael FEJTÖ
APRIL by Gérald HUSTACHE-MATHIEU



ZE FILM by Guy JACQUES
THE ART OF BREAKING UP by Michel DEVILLE
THE GRAND ROLE by Steve SUISSA
OSMOSIS by Raphael FEJTÖ
SUPERNOVA EXPERIENCE # 1 by Pierre VINOUR
TOM THUMB by Olivier DAHAN
TAKING WING by Steve SUISSA
• Best Acting Award – Moscow Film Festival 2000
HE LOVES ME...HE LOVES ME NOT by Laetitia COLOMBANI
DEEP IN THE WOODS by Lionel DELPLANQUE
A MAJOR INCONVENIENCE by Bernard STORA
DAD ON THE RUN by Dante DESARTHE
DEAD ALREADY by Olivier DAHAN
SHADOW PLAY by Martine DUGOWSON
TAKE ME AWAY by Michel SPINOSA
FRENCH KISS by Lawrence KASDAN



B r u n o T O D E S C H I N I

CINEMA

THE BIRD

LA DÉLICATESSE

DEUIL ALLÈGRE

LOURDES

SWITCH

MA COMPAGNE DE NUIT

ONLY

BE GOOD

THIS NIGHT

THE TANGO SINGER

SUNNY SPELLS

UNSPOKEN

LITTLE JERUSALEM

GOOD GIRL

AN ADVENTURE

CAVALCADE

7 YEARS

A PERFECT COUPLE

THE LAST DAY

SECRET AGENTS

by Yves Caumon

by David et Stéphane FOENKINOS

by Arnaud BEDOUET

by Jessica HAUSNER

by Frédéric SCHOENDOERFFER

by Isabelle BROCARD

by Angela SCHANELEC

by Juliette GARCIA

by Werner SCHROETER

by Diego Martinez VIGNATTI

by DIASTEME

by Fien TROCH

by Karine ALBOU

by Sophie FILLIERES

by Xavier GIANNOLI

by Steve SUISSA

by Jean-Pascal HATTU

by Nobuhiro SUWA

by Rodolphe MARCONI

by Frédéric SCHOENDOERFFER

HIS BROTHER

A MODEL EMPLOYEE

FLOWERS OF BLOOD

A PRIVATE AFFAIR

ANGEL SKIN

WITH ALL MY LOVE

ONCE WE GROW UP

WHO KNOWS ?

CODE UNKNOWN

THE LIBERTINE

THOSE WHO LOVE ME CAN TAKE THE TRAIN

UP DOWN FRAGILE

QUEEN MARGOT

ON THE EDGE

COUPLES AND LOVERS

COMING TERMS WITH THE DEATH

by Patrice CHÉREAU

by Jacques OTMEZGUINE

by Alain TANNER

by Guillaume NICLOUX

by Vincent PEREZ

by Amalia ESCRIVA

by Renaud COHEN

by Jacques RIVETTE

by Michael HANEKE

by Gabriel AGHION

by Patrice CHÉREAU

by Jacques RIVETTE

by Patrice CHÉREAU

by Solange MARTIN

by John LVOFF

by Pascale FERRAN



S e r g e R I A B O U K I N E

CINEMA

THE BIRD by Yves CAUMON
THE INVADER by Nicolas PROVOST
WHITE NIGHT by Frédéric JARDIN
DE FORCE by Franck HENRY
MONA LISA HAS VANISHED by François LUNEL
JIMMY RIVIERE by Teddy LUSSI-MODESTE
LIGHTS OUT by Fabrice GOBERT
LITTLE NICHOLAS by Laurent TIRARD
COLUCHE by Antoine DE CAUNES
LOCKED OUT by Albert DUPONTEL
ANGEL-A by Luc BESSON
LIKE AN IMAGE by Agnès JAOUÏ
TIME OF THE WOLF by Michael HANEKE
OLGA'S CHIGNON by Jérôme BONNELL
WOMEN OR CHILDREN FIRST by Manuel POIRIER
SAFE CONDUCT by Bertrand TAVERNIER
LINE 208 by Bernard DUMONT
THE SANDMAN by Pierre SALVADORI
ACTORS by Bertrand BLIER

CRIME SCENES by Frédéric SCHOENDOERFFER
AN OUTGOING WOMAN by Christophe BLANC
SKIN OF MAN, HEART OF BEAST by Hélène ANGEL
• Golden Leopard and best Acting Award – Locarno Film Festival – 1999
SACHS' DISEASE by Michel DEVILLE
MIDNIGHT EXAM by Danièle DUBROUX
WHITE LIES by Pierre SALVADORI
MARTHE by Jean-Loup HUBERT
PETITES by Noémie LVOVSKY
WESTERN by Manuel POIRIER
OUT IN THE COUNTRY by Manuel POIRIER
THE JULIETTE YEAR by Philippe LE GUAY
WILD TARGET by Pierre SALVADORI
LEON'S HUSBAND by Jean-Pierre MOCKY



ARTISTIC LIST

Anne	Sandrine KIBERLAIN
Raphaël	Clément SIBONY
Marc	Bruno TODESCHINI
Claude	Serge RIABOUKINE
Latifa	Alice BELAÏDI
Christina	Mirela SOFRONEA
Woman at the cinema	Stéphanie CASSIGNARD
The craftsman	Bernard LE GALL
Elise	Marianne PLOQUIN



TECHNICAL LIST

SCREENPLAY and DIRECTION
CINEMATOGRAPHER
SOUND

Yves CAUMON
Céline BOZON (AFC)
Dominique LACOUR, Nicolas BECKER,
Jean-Marc SCHICK, Didier CATTIN
Sophie REYNAUD-MALOUF
Marie LE GARREC
Stéphanie SELVA
Sylvie FAUTHOUX
Thierry MACHUEL
Aurélie GUICHARD (ARDA)
Yvon ROUMEGOUS
and the birds NORMA, ITA & ROBINE
Jacques REBOUD

SET DESIGN
COSTUMES & ACCESSORIES
MAKE UP
EDITOR
COMPOSER
CASTING
ANIMAL TRAINER

PRODUCTION MANAGER

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
PRODUCER

Nathalie MESURET
Bertrand GORE

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to Léo, Françoise & Thierry Flamand