



Presents

LET THE SUNSHINE IN

(Un Beau soleil intérieur)

A film by Claire Denis
94 mins, France 2018
Language: French with English subtitles

Official Selection:
2017 Cannes Film Festival

Distribution



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SYNOPSIS

Juliette Binoche delivers a luminous performance in the deliciously witty, sensuously romantic new film from acclaimed director Claire Denis (*White Material*). Isabelle (Binoche) is a divorced Parisian painter searching for another shot at love, but refusing to settle for the parade of all-too-flawed men who drift in and out of her life. There's a caddish banker (Xavier Beauvois) who, like many of her lovers, happens to be married; a handsome actor (Nicolas Duvauchelle) who's working through his own hang-ups; and a sensitive fellow artist (Alex Descas) who's skittish about commitment. What reads like a standard romantic comedy premise is transformed, in the hands of master filmmaker Denis, into something altogether deeper, more poignant, and perceptive about the profound mysteries of love.

Interview with Director Claire Denis

I was in one of those lull periods between two projects: my previous film, which was particularly tough, and the next one, a foreign co-production, which is naturally more difficult to put together. So, I was in a suspended state of expectation. Then, exactly at the right moment, Olivier Delbosc presented me with a proposal: he had a project he wished to produce and he wanted me to be part of it. He called it "an omnibus film," as it would be an adaptation of Roland Barthes' book *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, with several different directors. When he contacted me, I was wrapping up a one-year workshop at the Fresnoy National Studio with student artists.

The summer before, in Avignon, I had attended the reading of a Christine Angot text by the actors Norah Krief and Alex Descas. Afterwards, I had told Christine "I have the funny impression that I could film this dialogue right now, exactly as it was spoken, without any preparation or scenery, just a camera and a sound man. It's solid in my mind." And she'd answered: "But that won't work!" And I told her, "Yes it will, you'll see." So I decided to make this part of the workshop at Fresnoy, and the project was quickly put together. I kept the two actors from Avignon; Agnès Godard was the director of photography and all of the workshop's participants helped out. In three days of shooting, plus one week of editing, we made – only using what we had on hand in Fresnoy – a 45 minute film that's called *Here Is the Concatenation*, the story of a couple's break-up. This experience was very liberating for me, something akin to the having the chains that come with working in cinema, all the difficulties in pulling a film together, just break apart.

Christine has that effect on me: she revives my belief that working is worth the while. I believe in work, of course, but sometimes it is difficult to consider your own projects like real work - particularly in cinema, where there is such a dependence on others that sitting alone in your kitchen in the early hours of the morning figuring out how to tackle your work isn't bearable for very long. From that standpoint, I think that writers are more efficient than filmmakers.

The Fresnoy experience did me a world of good because it rekindled my desire for work. In short, Christine and this little film with the Fresnoy workshop put me back on track, and redefined my connection with work.

Christine and I wanted to extend this happy adventure. So I spoke to Olivier Delbosc about Christine, and I spoke to Christine about Olivier's project. But we no longer wanted to adapt Barthes' book, we now wanted to write our own screenplay: *Our lovers' fragments*. In the

end, this allowed us to make the theme completely our own. For the rest, we entirely set Barthes aside and we dismissed the idea of making an adaptation. There isn't a single fragment of Barthes' texts in our dialogue. There was, however, this one word engraved in our minds: "Agony," but we used it to shed some light on our own lives, and we simply kept the free structure, which turned into a film made of fragments. Besides, Christine and I worked in fragments, or "moments," and that was what suited us best.

I told Christine Angot that in Barthes' *Fragments*, there was a word I loved: "Agony" and we made it our keyword, the point from which we started working. Agony in my mind evokes a very chic and slightly smug way of saying that one is overwhelmed by romantic woes: the unquenchable expectation, the thwarted ideal. You can begin to "own" this word the moment you've become more pragmatic about your love affairs, when you allow yourself be ironic about your past history. And the word "Agony" immediately put Christine and me under a sort of spell, transporting us into a sort of imaginary world. In a way, our own "amorous throes" fed the writing process.

So we readily drew from our own experience. The woman, from the moment she appears in the screenplay, is at first a version of us, Christine Angot and myself: Fragments of our lives, chunks of our stories. Then we realized it had to be Juliette. Juliette Binoche stood out to us as the ideal vessel for the role of Isabelle. The screenplay called for a creamy, voluptuous and desirable feminine body: A woman whose face and body are beautiful, and whose demeanor in no way conveys defeat. Someone for whom in love battles, victory is still possible, without however, ever assuming that the outcome is certain.

Christine and I didn't know each other very well. We became close, clinging to each other's lives. We met each other in the middle of life's journey and bonded profoundly during the course of the story. We tried to face together, and with sincerity, our failures in love, our darkest clouds – and we laughed about them. And since it made us laugh, it could make others laugh as well. When writing in duo with someone, there is a natural and healthy distance that sets in that adds irony and levity.

This bond we formed, like two accomplices, can be seen in the fishmonger's scene where we make Philippe Katherine, a client in the shop, use the silly French word "poisaille," which is a bit like saying "fishies" in English. Christine and I were perfectly in tune: a grown man using this term is simply unpalatable! And Christine is the kind of writer who instantly grasps that the word "fishies" would make a great scene. It's this type of playful thinking that brought us together in the working process. This playful meeting of the minds resulted in this fortuitous film, which became for me an unexpected experience – in every way possible, including the sheer joy I felt during the whole process.

I had a very precise mental image of Isabelle's character. I envisioned a very feminine brown-haired lady, with thigh-high boots, because it's an expression of her desire. We see her thighs between her mini-skirt and the top of her boots. For her hair: in a bob, like Mystic's belligerent-looking women, those monochrome stencil drawings that you'd see in the streets in the 1980s. I also had in mind Crepax characters: dark-haired women with short hair and a strong sexual aura. A woman without taboos, neither nympho nor hooker.

Isabelle also knows that she if she wants to find true love, she's going to end up in tears from time to time. I'm fed up with film characters who are invariably heroic; one can't always be that way and Isabelle no longer endeavors to be that way.

Isabelle is a woman who sees the widening disparity between what she is looking for in men, and what she can find. This gap is only growing wider over the course of her different encounters, her "fragments." But she's not a feminine version of Don Juan: a depressive seductress, prey to an addiction that is slowly killing her. She's more of a Casanova and a hedonist, but because she's a woman, it had better remain hidden.

Choosing the men she associates with and meets was crucial. Above all, I didn't want Juliette to go through a string of actors as though she speared them successively. I placed in her path a number of filmmakers such as Xavier Beauvois and Bruno Podalydès, and people with whom I have a common history, like Alex Descas and Laurent Grévill. This weaves in fragments of my own history, and a certain way of viewing men. Since I was a teenager, the strongest male role models for me, the most appealing, were often filmmakers.

Gérard Depardieu only pops up at the end of the film, like a grand finale to a journey through, and to, love. We shot the tête-à-tête scene with Juliette in one day and that ended up being the most intense shoot I have ever experienced: 16 minutes of film in a single day. That had never happened to me before. We had two takes with Juliette and three with Gérard. That's all. I didn't understand the feat they'd accomplished at the time, but Gérard pointed it out to me afterwards. This scene became a single block that absolutely could not be cut. Though I never intended to take on any such challenge, going in this direction was the right idea, because I am convinced that if we had spent eight days on the scene, we would have lost something, we would actually have lost a lot: Gérard's magnificence would have been shredded into meaningless fragments.

You almost can't describe the effect Gérard has on a set. And I think that it is something he's had forever. In the role of this clairvoyant, I found Depardieu spellbinding. When a man possesses this kind of beauty, this physical and sexual power, you tell yourself this energy must have been there since childhood. When he is in a room, something in the air, in the particles is unquestionably altered. His tone of voice, his delivery, create a form of music. It doesn't matter whether he is on a film set, in a room, in a car or on stage: I went to hear him

sing Barbara and it was fantastic. It's beautiful when he sings, indeed very, very beautiful, but it isn't just that: more than anything, it's magic.

From a certain perspective you could say I owe the film's French title to Depardieu [*Beautiful inner (sun)light*]. For a long time, Christine Angot and I didn't have one. Between us we had a working title: *Dark Glasses*. I liked it but I felt it wasn't the ideal match for the film. It was only when shooting the aforementioned scene with Depardieu that the title became clear to us, when he plunges his gentle gleaming eyes in Juliette's and says: "Open...stay open to things...find your own unique life path and you'll find a beautiful inner light..." He pronounces this line in a practically supernatural manner. He is the only actor who can get away with saying something so grand in that way; and it took Gérard Depardieu saying this line of dialogue in this exact way for me to "hear" the title. We then dropped "Dark Glasses," and their protective shade, to make way for the beautiful inner light, the soul's radiant blaze.

Note from Screenwriter Christine Angot

Hope, expectation and disappointment in love: Isabelle goes through many a state and experiences many feelings. She would like to find true love; to meet someone with whom she could be herself. She's not sure that this is ever going to happen. When a man appears, it could be him – but never is. She's going through a period like this – of uncertainty, in the hopeful pursuit of an ideal – and she discovers once again that a feeling can make you happy, just as much as it can harm and hurt you. Whether man or a woman, everyone has experienced the promise of love and the hope of finding it. It's an absolute hope, so profound that it can extract cries of anguish from the most distant depths of one's soul. It's this man, in a parked car, to whom a woman explains she's deeply touched by his feelings, but that she doesn't, however, feel the same.

Isabelle meets men, loves them, or believes she does. They all have something special about them, but they also have social reflexes. And at times we are given the impression of a love grapple tainted by social bias and reflexes, in which everything counts: the way a word is pronounced, a simple physical gesture made, and the way one is generally looked upon by others.

Cinema is not my world. I had never considered making a film. I had never thought about writing a screenplay. I had a collective and technical understanding of cinema. It wasn't something for me; it wasn't something that could interest me. I expressed all these reservations to Claire Denis who swept them away, one by one, as inconsequential to her. I understood that this could be something simple, that cinema allowed you to gather your individual strengths, and strive to be understood through sound and image.

FILMOGRAPHY

CLAIRE DENIS

Feature Films

2013 - BASTARDS (LES SALAUDS) – Cannes IFF Un Certain Regard
2009 – WHITE MATERIAL – Venice IFF
2008 – 35 SHOTS OF RUM – Venice IFF
2005 – VERS MATHILDE (Documentary) – Tribeca IFF
2004 – THE INTRUDER (L'INTRUS) – Venice IFF
2002 – FRIDAY NIGHT (VENDREDI SOIR) – Venice IFF
2001 – TROUBLE EVERY DAY – Cannes IFF
1999 – BEAU TRAVAIL – Venice IFF
1996 – NENETTE AND BONI – Locarno IFF Golden Leopard Winner
1994 – I CAN'T SLEEP (J'AI PAS SOMMEIL) – Toronto IFF
1990 – NO FEAR, NO DIE (S'EN FOUT LA MORT) – Venice IFF
1989 – MAN NO RUN (Documentary) – Berlin IFF
1988 – CHOCOLATE (CHOCOLAT) – Cannes IFF

TV Films

1993 US GO HOME
1993 TOUS LES GARÇONS ET LES FILLES DE LEUR ÂGE
Based on an original idea by Chantal POUPAUD

TV Documentaries

1998 PORTAIT DE JEAN - LOUIS MURAT
1992 NI UNE, NI DEUX
1991 CINEMA DE NOTRE TEMPS: JACQUES RIVETTE, LE VEILLEUR

JULIETTE BINOCHÉ

Selected Filmography

- 2017 BRIGHT SUNSHINE IN (UN BEAU SOLEIL INTERIEUR) by Claire Denis
GHOST IN THE SHELL by Rupert Sanders
TELLE MERE TELLE FILLE by Noémie Saglio
- 2016 POLINA by Angelin Preljocaj & Valérie Müller
SLACK BAY (MA LOUTE) by Bruno Dumont
- 2015 THE 33 by Patricia Riggan
ENDLESS NIGHT (NADIE QUIERA LA NOCHE) by Isabel Coixet
L'ATTESA by Piero Messina
- 2014 CLOUDS OF SILS MARA by Olivier Assayas – Cesar Award Nominee (Leading Role)
GODZILLA by Gareth Edwards
- 2013 CAMILLE CLAUDEL 1915 by Bruno Dumont
WORDS AND PICTURES by Fred Schepisi
A THOUSAND TIMES GOODNIGHT by Erik Poppe
- 2012 ANOTHER WOMAN'S LIFE (LA VIE D'UNE AUTRE) by Sylvie Testud
COSMOPOLIS by David Cronenberg
- 2011 ELLES by Malgoska Szumowska
- 2010 CERTIFIED COY by Abbas Kiarostami – Cannes Best Actress Award
- 2008 PARIS by Cédric Klapisch
SUMMER HOURS (L'HEURE D'ÉTÉ) by Olivier Assayas
- 2007 DAN IN REAL LIFE by Peter Hedges
DISENGAGEMENT by Amos Gitai
FLIGHT OF THE RED BALLOON by Haou Hsiao Hsien

- 2006 A FEW DAYS IN SEPTEMBER by Santiago Amigorena
BREAKING AND ENTERING by Anthony Minghella
- 2005 BEE SEASON by Scott Mc Gehee & David Siegel
CACHE by Michael Haneke
MARY by Abel Ferrara
- 2004 IN MY COUNTRY by John Boorman
- 2002 JET LAG by Danièle Thompson – Cesar Award Nominee (Leading Role)
- 2000 CHOCOLAT by Lasse Hallström – Academy Award Nominee (Leading Role)
CODE UNKNOWN (CODE INCONNU) by Michael Haneke

CAST

Juliette Binoche [Isabelle](#)
Xavier Beauvois [the banker](#)
Philippe Katerine [Mathieu](#)
Josiane Balasko [Maxime](#)
Sandrine Dumas [the friend](#)
Nicolas Duvauchelle [the actor](#)
Alex Descas [Marc](#)
Laurent Grevill [François](#)
Bruno Podalydès [Fabrice](#)
Paul Blain [Sylvain](#)
Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi [the woman in the car](#)
Gérard Depardieu [the fortune-teller](#)

CREW

Director [Claire Denis](#)
Screenwriters [Claire Denis & Christine Angot](#)
Director of Photography [Agnès Godard – AFC](#)
Editor [Guy Lecomte](#)
Sound [Jean-Paul Muguel](#)
Mix [Christophe Vingtrinier](#)
Original Music [Stuart A Staples](#)
Set Designer [Arnaud de Moleron](#)
Costume Designer [Judy Shrewsbury](#)
1st Assistant Director [Joseph Rapp - AFAR](#)
Casting Director [Stéphane Batut](#)
Script Supervisor [Zoé Zurstrassen](#)
Location Manager [Margot Luneau - AFR](#)
Post-production Manager [Clara Vincienne](#)
Production Manager [Olivier Hele](#)
Line Producer [Christine de Jekel](#)
Producer [Olivier Delbosc](#)
Associate Producer [Emilien Bignon](#)

In co-production with
FD Production
Ad Vitam
Versus Production

In association with
Cinimage 12
La Banque Postale 10
Arte - Cofinova 11

With the support of Tax Shelter du Gouvernement fédéral belge

With the participation of OCS and the CNC (Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image Animée)

In association with Films Distribution

French Distributor Ad Vitam

World Sales Films Distribution