

IOTA PRODUCTION, BLUE MONDAY PRODUCTIONS, LOUISE PRODUCTIONS PRÉSENTENT

LÉONIE SOUCHAUD LUDIVINE SAGNIER ALBAN LENOIR

Into Dad's woods

LA FORÊT DE MON PÈRE

UN FILM DE VERO CRATZBORN

AVEC LÉONIE SOUCHAUD, LUDIVINE SAGNIER, ALBAN LENOIR, MATHIS BOUR, SASKIA DILLAIS DE MELO, CARL MALAPA & YOANN BLANC SCÉNARIO VERO CRATZBORN AVEC LA COLLABORATION DE FRANÇOIS VERJANS & EVE DEBOISE RÉALISATION VERO CRATZBORN PRODUCTRICE ISABELLE TRUC (IOTA PRODUCTION) COPRODUCTRICES NATHALIE MESURET (BLUE MONDAY PRODUCTIONS) & ELISA GARBAR (LOUISE PRODUCTIONS) PRODUCTEUR ASSOCIÉ AU DÉVELOPPEMENT CHRISTOPHE DELSAUX (ORIFLAMME FILMS) IMAGE PHILIPPE GUILBERT MONTAGE LOREDANA CRISTELLI DÉCORS STEPHAN RUBENS COSTUMES SYLVIE DERMIGNY MAQUILLAGE CATHERINE TILMANT SON HENRI MAIKOFF MARC BASTIEN, EMMANUEL DE BOISSIEU MUSIQUE ORIGINALE DANIEL BLEIKOLM & MAXIME STEINER 1ER ASSISTANT RÉALISATRICE FRÉDÉRIC ALEXANDRE CASTING SÉBASTIAN MORADIELLOS & LAURE COCHENER DIRECTION DE PRODUCTION CÉCILE RÉMY-BOUTANG DIRECTION DE POSTPRODUCTION LIONEL DUTRIEUX EN COPRODUCTION AVEC LA RTBF, BE TV, RTS, SRG-SSR AVEC L'AIDE DU CENTRE DU CINÉMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA FÉDÉRATION WALLONNE-BRUXELLES ET DE L'OFFICE FÉDÉRAL DE LA CULTURE (OFC) AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DE WALIMAGE (LA WALLONIE), PICTANOVO - RÉGION HAUTS DE FRANCE, CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE (CNC), AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DE CINEFORM ET LE SOUTIEN DE LA LOTERIE ROMANDE, ET AVEC LE SOUTIEN DU TAX SHELTER DU GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL BELGE - CASA KAFKA PICTURES - BELFIUS, COFINOVA, L'ASSOCIATION BEAUMARCHAIS - SACD, FOCAL, ET CREATIVE EUROPE DISTRIBUTION FRANCE KMBO VENTES INTERNATIONALES BE FOR FILMS

IOTA BLUE MONDAY PRODUCTIONS LOUISE PRODUCTIONS RTBF BE TV RTS SRG-SSR CNC COFINOVA CASA KAFKA PICTURES BELFIUS FOCAL KMBO Be For Films



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

VERO CRATZBORN

GENESIS

I grew up in what is called madness, this strange malady that my father had always suffered. Madness was my normality..

The story of my first feature film comes from the awareness of the boundary between normality and madness that I gradually became conscious of growing up. The moment when as a child I began to realise that things were not that normal. .

Stories are important, they keep us alive. From the beginning, I wanted to write about my personal experience as a fictional proposal for cinema with documentary aspects. I started writing the script within the framework of the Fémis Workshop. For my initial draft I received support from the French National Cinema Centre and a Beaumarchais-SACD grant. There were successive rewriting stages with Ève Deboise and then François Verjans. The co-writing helped me to move towards a more universal dimension.

During a period of two years I had worked with caregivers and nurses in day hospitals of the biggest psychiatric institutions in Paris. I made short fiction films as part of my artistic residencies. In my personal life I went to visit the hospital as the daughter of my sick father. During the writing of the screenplay I returned to one of the institutions as an artist. I was inspired by the help of long-term consultants: a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a psychiatric nurse.

"MADNESS"

One in five people can be affected by mental problems. Children are the first witnesses of family life. Kids are told about death, sex, abuse, violence, but they are rarely told about mental illnesses. It is a reflection of how society regards mental illness.

Reducing mental illness to just the clichéd subversive or creative power is to dismiss the suffering caused by the illness. Such stereotypes lead to less empathy than is the case for physical pathologies. They still carry many prejudices, such as dangerousness. There is still a perception that individuals with mental illness will always be likely to do harm to others. These diseases are invisible: they cannot be seen. We don't know when they start and we never know when they end. They are scary, because it can happen to anyone.

When I was younger I felt different from other teenagers. I did not understand, I was ashamed and felt guilty. My film focuses on a particular relationship: a girl who unreservedly loves her extraordinary father with all her conviction. She idealises him while others consider him crazy. Her dad is a rebellious and whimsical hero, particularly fascinating at that special time in adolescence when we rebel against society and the established order. How can one not love an unconventional father?

The film is a filial, family love story. Because there is madness it is difficult to love. Love is deviated, attacked. I want to talk about that love - love as 'resistance' along with the deep-seated fear of losing oneself by rejecting a father who is a part of oneself. Gina has to grow up rapidly and ends up taking charge of her family. She accepts this task in which she is out of her depth all the more easily because she is ready, like all children, to forgive her father for all his excesses. Gina will have to battle, to free herself, to look to the future without deadly desires or pathos.

If this father falls into madness, it is perhaps because it is his only response to the violence of society. It's the only protection he can offer to his children. .

Through this narrative line, I wanted to express the idea that mental disorders question our world so inclined to normalise everything and erase individuality. Gina's father's borderline world is poorly tolerated in a standardised society. In my opinion, the cinema allows raising questions through the eyes of a teenager who enters little by little into 'normal' society.

I worked on the lines between these relationships father/daughter, madness/society which act as borders at every level of my film such as sets, casting, image, sound design and music.

I want to portray the outbreak of mental illness in the family sphere with sobriety - from the moment of the first hint of change without avoiding difficult moments and crises. My desire is to enter the everyday and intimate life, away from the 'spectacular' or from a 'romantic' vision of madness.

CASTING

For Gina, I specifically wanted to work with an actress who was the same age as the character. Adolescence is something unspeakable, tenuous, played out in the body, a grace mingled with clumsiness.

We launched a pre-casting of teenagers. Among them was a young girl from Brussels, Léonie Souchaud, who had played a major film role in Lola Doillon's 'Fanny's Journey'. I was struck by her mystery, her looks and her ability to inhabit silences. When filming was made possible two years later, I felt a little apprehensive because adolescents grow up quickly, especially girls. Indeed Léonie had grown a lot. Curiously, she still had a very distinct presence. As a young girl scout she had spent many nights in the forest and I felt she could bring this experience to the film. We talked a lot about Gina's determination and modesty and her character being someone who does not show feelings easily .

Just before meeting Ludivine Sagnier and Alban Lenoir who play her parents, she told me: "I hope they will please me". For me, it was a sign that she could shoulder the burden of the film. The shooting time was physically very engaging and relatively short given the small budget we had. Léonie had just turned 16.

For Jimmy, the father, I wanted a sensitive giant who does not carry the stigma of a victim. I really liked the movie 'French Blood' by Diastème in which Alban Lenoir plays the lead role. He is a very physical actor with an incredible range of emotions. His authenticity touched me. He was not afraid to express his vulnerability.





To prepare for the role he worked with a Belgian coach, Olga Masleinnikova, a specialist in movement and Laban choreology. The preparation was based on the work on the psychotic body by Gisela Pankow, a neuro-psychiatrist and psychoanalyst.

For Carole, I wanted a lover with sensual and mothering qualities. I saw Ludivine Sagnier singing. I felt very sensitive to her voice. I like voices that tell a life. I also liked her way of moving, her fragility and great strength. We spoke to each other very briefly after the concert and two days after she was on board. Ludivine is luminous, combative and protective. She proved to be a great collaborator..

From the first rehearsal session with Alban and Ludivine, I immediately saw that they were well matched. They worked well together as partners and were open to constructive proposals. It was a gift. As they were involved a long time before the shoot, we got to know and trust each other.

Mathis Bour (Tony) and Saskia Dillais de Mello (Nora) were very natural in the setting of an unconventional family. The younger actors are very prominent in my film - they are important characters. Their ability to build their characters by drawing upon their imagination and life experience was just as important as their desire to be with us. I also wanted them to have fun. Mathis who is Ludivine's nephew had some previous film experience. As in the film, in real life he is also the middle child. Not always an easy place, but a role that he plays well. Saskia had little acting experience : her first meeting with Ludivine and Léonie definitely convinced me. I wanted an awkward little girl, not a princess.

I adapted the working method to each child actor according to their age. Everyone in this family reacts to the outbreak of the mental illness according to their character and age.

When Carl Malapa (Nico) originally auditioned with Léonie during the casting sessions, I liked the chemistry between them: a mix of embarrassment and seduction. Carl also brought density and nuances to Nico's character who is an ally, not a follower. He respects Gina. He also has his secret world and stands out from others, like the time he rescues an injured pigeon.

SETS & ARTISTIC DIRECTIONS

I need to walk through places and scenery during the writing process: I write for particular places. I absorb atmospheres, wind, colour, light, spaces. I wanted to create contrasts between where Gina and her family live and the natural surroundings. The strong presence of nature draws the relationships into a world in which they evolve. It also embodies the desire to escape their father.

The forest is never far in every scene - it is close to the apartment block, the supermarket, the villa and the hospital. The forest acts as sounding board, sometimes intimidating, sometimes protective. It's the foster mother of Jimmy's delusions and the last bulwark against his changeover. The forest is also a place for children's tales, fears and mysteries. It has its own distinct character

Thanks to the Wallimage West Belgian film commission, I discovered a building tucked away, off the beaten track. I immediately knew that we had to shoot there. On top of the old rooftop, I had an intense emotion facing the vestige of a common collective life. From there, you have an incredible view of the tree canopy, like a sea of trees.

We travelled across the countryside in the North of France, we got lost and we came across the forest road where we found the tree of life used at the beginning of the film, the woods where the children are lost and Gustave Doré's forest with the gigantic roots of the two firs cut by a storm for the end scenes.

The film is shot in real and natural settings. This friction of fiction and reality is very important for me, especially for the mental hospital scenes. There are many representations of psychiatric hospitals but the most open and hospitable places are unfortunately too few and there is still a lot of improvement and reflection to be made in this area. .

My short films with the caregivers and the patients in the large French mental institutions opened my eyes and allowed me to refine my approach. This experience helped me to easily obtain authorisation from the institution where we were shooting with respect to the privacy of their residents and staff. I wanted to give an actual overview of the reality of these places: a hospital is a place of care and a place of work.

The hospital also put at our disposal real material for our shoot. I always tried to confront the script with reality while bringing a slight shift to mark the fiction.



MUSIC

The music embodies the unique type of happiness of the family. It also helped that all the actors knew the song before the shoot. During the song the dancing partners, mother and daughter occupy the space left by the absent. It is also this melody that makes life reappear. Manuel Roland wrote and composed the song 'The Girl without a name'.

We recorded it as two versions with two different tempos. The first with Ludivine just before the shoot. I was with Manu and Ludivine in the same room; it was very moving to participate in the creation and development of the piece. For the second version, the tempo was accelerated to 140 BPM for the dance scene between mother and daughter. Jeanne Added, who won two 2019 French Victoires de la Musique (Female artist and rock album of the year), added her voice in postproduction.

SYNOPSIS

Gina, 15, has grown up in a loving family who lives on the edge of a forest. She admires her father, Jimmy, an unpredictable, whimsical man whose constant excesses and extravagance she readily forgives. Until the day when the situation becomes unbearable: Jimmy tips over the edge and the family's fragile balance is shattered. Unable to understand the situation and in a period of rebellion, Gina teams up with a teenager from her neighborhood to save her father.



BIO FILMOGRAPHY VERO CRATZBORN

Vero Cratzborn grew up in the countryside in East Belgium. She first discovered the film industry as assistant to Bruno Pétery, producer. She was mainly involved on feature films by Alain Resnais, Noémie Lvovsky, Olivier Assayas, Claire Denis...

She then worked as director's assistant to Leos Carax on two projects. She has written and directed 5 short films, broadcasted on main television companies and presented in international film festivals. She has also directed 2 documentary film and a digital documentary experience within the frame of artist residences;

INTO DAD'S WOODS is her first feature film.

CAST

Léonie **SOUCHAUD** • Gina
Ludivine **SAGNIER** • Carole
Alban **LENOIR** • Jimmy
Mathis **BOUR** • Tony
Saskia **DILLAIS DE MELLO** • Nora
Carl **MALAPA** • Nico
Yoann **BLANC** • Dr Le Floch

CREW

DIRECTOR Vero **CRATZBORN**
SCRIPT Vero **CRATZBORN**
WITH THE COLLABORATION OF François **VERJANS**
Eve **DEBOISE**
CINEMATOGRAPHY Philippe **GUILBERT**
PRODUCTION DESIGN Stephan **RUBENS**
COSTUMES SOUND Sylvie **DERMIGNY**
EDITING Henri **MAÏKOFF**
SOUND DESIGN Loredana **CRISTELLI**
SOUND MIXING Marc **BASTIEN**
MUSIC Emmanuel **DE BOISSIEU**
Daniel **BLEIKOLM**
Maxime **STEINER**
PRODUCTION Isabelle **TRUC**
Nathalie **MESURET**
Elisa **GARBAR**

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2019 - BELGIUM / FRANCE / SWITZERLAND - VO FR - ST ENG - Running time 90'
- Aspect ratio : 1:85

PRODUIT PAR IOTA PRODUCTION, BLUE MONDAY PRODUCTIONS ET LOUISE PRODUCTIONS EN COPRODUCTION AVEC LA RTBF, BETV, RTS, SRG SSR AVEC L'AIDE DU CENTRE DU CINEMA ET DE L'AUDIO-VISUEL DE LA FEDERATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES ET DE L'OFFICE FEDERAL DE LA CULTURE (OFC) AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DE WALIMAGE (LA WALLONIE), PICTANOVO - REGION HAUTS DE FRANCE, CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINEMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMEE (CNC), CINEFORUM ET LE AVEC LE SOUTIEN DU TAX SHELTER DU GOUVERNEMENT FEDERAL BELGE - CASA KAFKA PICTURES - BELFIUS, COFINOVA, L'ASSOCIATION BEAUMARCHAIS, SACD, FOCALLET CREATIVE EUROPE DISTRIBUTION FRANCE KMBO VENTES INTERNATIONALES BE FOR FILMS