

«PARADISES OF DIANE»



SCREENING DATES

18.2.2024, 18:45  
HAUS DER BERLINER FESTSPIELE

19.2.2024, 15:45  
CUBIX 5

20.2.2024, 09:45  
CUBIX 9

23.2.2024, 21:15  
CUBIX 5

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CUBIX 9

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# LES PARADIS DE DIANE

UN FILM DE  
**CARMEN JAQUIER ET JAN GASSMANN**



LOGLINE

**After the birth of her first child, Diane disappears in an unknown city, but her body reawakens her memories and what she is fleeing from.**



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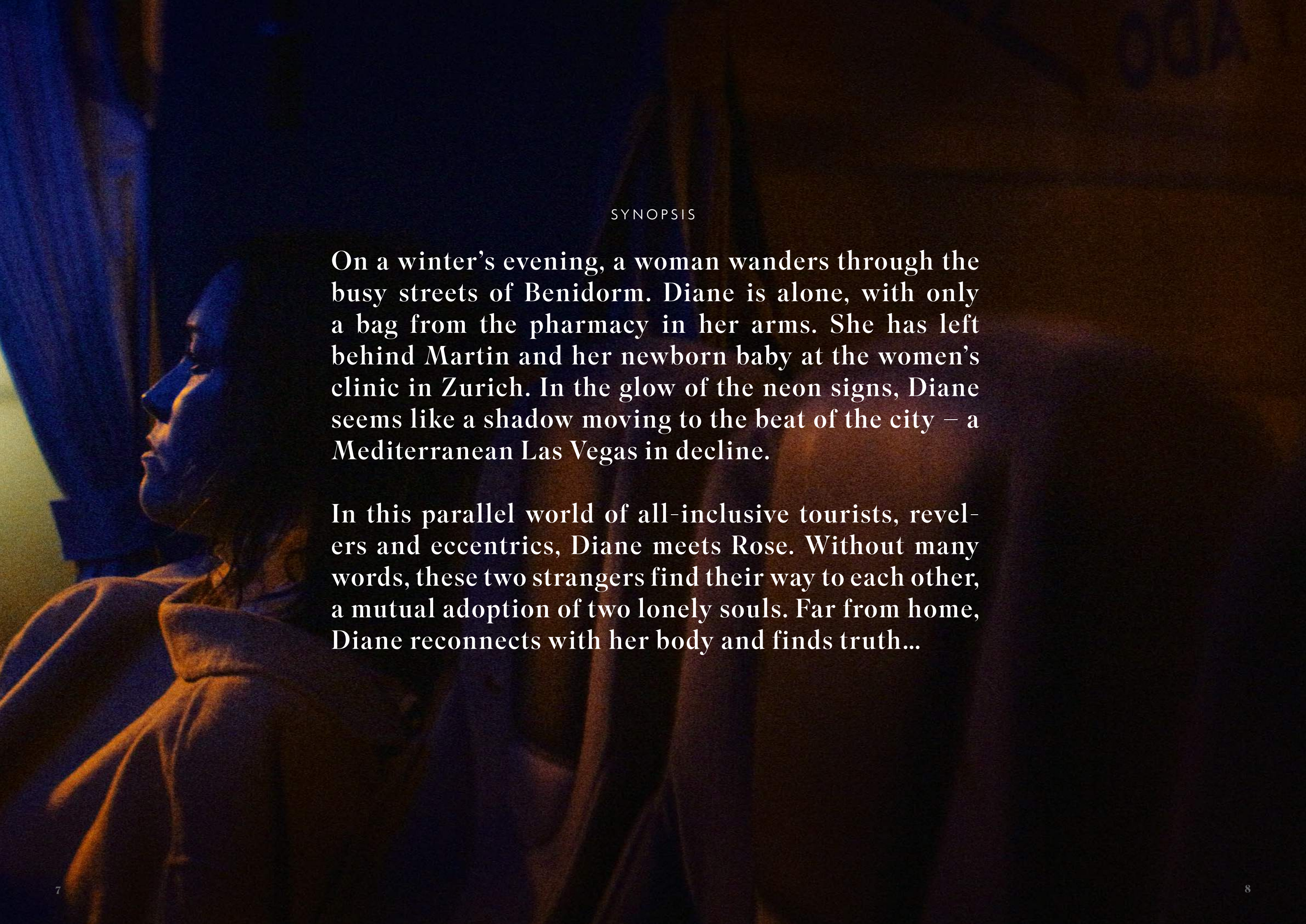
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A woman is shown in profile, looking upwards and to the right. She is wearing a dark jacket. The scene is dimly lit, with a strong blue light source on the left and a warmer, orange light source on the right, creating a dramatic, high-contrast atmosphere. The background is dark and indistinct.

## SYNOPSIS

On a winter's evening, a woman wanders through the busy streets of Benidorm. Diane is alone, with only a bag from the pharmacy in her arms. She has left behind Martin and her newborn baby at the women's clinic in Zurich. In the glow of the neon signs, Diane seems like a shadow moving to the beat of the city – a Mediterranean Las Vegas in decline.

In this parallel world of all-inclusive tourists, revelers and eccentrics, Diane meets Rose. Without many words, these two strangers find their way to each other, a mutual adoption of two lonely souls. Far from home, Diane reconnects with her body and finds truth...



# INTERVIEW WITH CARMEN JAQUIER & JAN GASSMANN

BY  
LILITH GRASMUG

IMAGES  
CHLOÉ COHEN AND THOMAS SZCZEPANSKI

***es Paradis de Diane is a portrait of a woman who runs away from the maternity ward shortly after giving birth. Where did the idea come from?***

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**Carmen Jaquier :** The idea for the film came to me when I learned that a close friend had been through a long period of depression after giving birth to her daughter. She concealed her suffering for years because she was ashamed that she had not felt love for her baby right away. Her confession touched me deeply. After this emotional experience I began to look at motherhood as a political, philosophical and aesthetic issue. I started researching by reading books and articles about suffering linked to the postpartum state. In particular with regard to the topic of «regretting motherhood». A subject that has only just begun to be discussed in public.

**Jan Gassmann :** Carmen gave me an early version of the script to read in 2017. She was just discovering my films. Although we'd been living together for two years, for some mysterious reason we hadn't yet watched each other's films.

Immersing ourselves in each other's work – Carmen with her very visual storytelling style, me with my techniques that blend reality and fiction – is what gave us the idea of doing a joint project. Together, we collected around fifty deeply moving accounts from women who told us about their emotional and physical shock, the tension between the maternal body and the sexual body, and the feeling of extreme loneliness. I remember being struck when one of them confided in us that she lacked courage in the maternity ward, thinking that since her child was in good hands, she might as well leave... We wanted to take this idea of abandoning a child, which was often nothing more than a secret thought for these women, and transform it into a cinematic journey.

**How was working together while filming?**

**C.J. :** Two voices directing a team is a unique experience. There were suddenly two people making decisions, and we didn't always agree with each other...

**J.G. :** And we had doubts... I think that we shared a common goal and were honest with each other. Most of the time, we knew before shooting a scene who would be focusing on







the visual approach and who would be directing the actors. Occasionally we switched roles during the scene. It's all about trust; we spent a long time preparing the shoot and creating the shotlist together, as well as studying films that inspired us like *The Rain People*, *Sue Lost in Manhattan*, *Wendy and Lucy* or *Les Rendez-Vous d'Anna...*

**C.J :** Covid happened a few weeks after the filming was completed. We then each shot a film on our own (*Foudre | Thunder* for Carmen Jaquier and *99 Moons* for Jan Gassmann, both released in 2022) before starting post-production on *Les Paradis...* By the time we were back in the editing suite, two years after the shoot, we were different people. That was a new starting point for the film.

**The film is both political and subversive in its presentation of a version of motherhood that is neither a given nor something innate or natural. It tackles the myth of the family.**

**J.G :** With *Les Paradis de Diane* we wanted to offer a different point of view and a different vocabulary to that of medical jargon. Postnatal depression and the baby blues are vague concepts that pathologise mothers and often make them

feel guilty. We wanted to look at both the separation from a child and the treatment of motherhood from a different angle.

**C.J. :** In a society where women absorb sexist norms from a very young age, the birth of a child can crystallise social frustrations, restrictions and inequalities that are all linked to gender. Pregnancy can be the moment when women become aware of these injustices. We portray birth as a catalyst for this sudden, painful realization that one does not want to take on the role of a mother.

**The father and the child remain off-screen for most of the film. Was that a choice you made from the start of the project?**

**J.G. :** From the very beginning. We really wanted to capture Diane as an individual before thinking of her in the context of her partner or her child. Martin and the newborn baby are present through their absence. They cling to her like a veil that she can never cast off. We wanted to show a character who needs to save herself before she can take care of others. Like a protective gesture towards the people she loves. I see it as an act of bravery. I believe you should

always point the camera in the direction of what hasn't yet been shown on film. A film about a heroic father taking care of his daughter after being abandoned would just reinforce existing structures.

**C.J :** The film also questions our capacity to set aside our pride. The character of Diane's partner, Martin, represents the possibility of re-evaluating the family home. He understands that he cannot have any influence over his partner's choices. And at the same time, he realises the intensity of his love for Diane.

**The film takes us from Switzerland to Spain and vice-versa. How do these locations contribute to Diane's inner journey and her ambivalence?**

**J.G. :** We wanted to utilise that tension between two different places. Zurich, a place of organized family life, and Benidorm... Benidorm is a city that's full of energy, a paradise for lovers of low-cost holidays and all-you-can-eat buffets. Several British TV series have been filmed in Benidorm, and Martin Parr published a photo series about the city. To us, it's a place that embodies the decline of an ideal, specifically that

of Europe and its worn-out dream of consumerism. We wanted to use this setting to put Diane's fall from grace into context.

**Benidorm is also the setting for the character's metamorphosis.**

**C.J. :** It's a place where people go to disappear, to forget themselves or to die. Diane finds herself in this parallel universe and sees the possibility of reinventing herself. We needed a city where Diane was able to reconnect with her various identities, which seemed to have been shattered by the birth of her child. The architecture of the city, with its buildings, was ideally suited to this identity crisis.

**J.G. :** Along with the director of photography, Thomas Szczepanski, we decided to show a "romantic" and benevolent side of Benidorm and its inhabitants. It's a place that in some way reminds us that who we are or who we would like to be is often about putting on a performance. And this artificiality leads to moments of vulnerability and truth.





**Dorothee de Koon is a musician. How did you come to entrust her with the film's lead role?**

C.J. : This is Dorothee's first leading role. Our French co-producer, Camille Genaud, recommended that we meet her. From the first screen test, we were blown away, it seemed obvious. Dorothee has the familiar face of a neighbour while also possessing a special aura that captivated us immediately. Her acting is simple, concrete, and natural, yet she takes us very far with it. This slight, poetic shift within reality that she achieves fits perfectly with the film, which at times pushes psychology aside and keeps surprising us.

**You also asked Aurore Clément to play the character of Rose.**

J.G. : Her enthusiasm for our project and for the way we filmed it – with a small team – was such a gift for us. For the role of Rose, we were looking for someone who could bring a romantic, imaginative energy to the film. Aurore Clément has that quality. As a mysterious actress who left France for the

United States, she embodies a whole slice of cinematic history. In particular the way she delivers her lines in Chantal Akerman's *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna*, was a huge inspiration for us. We wanted the film to have that cinematic flair her presence provides.

**Diane and Rose sometimes seem to be two sides of the same person. How did you develop this duality and the substitution devices in the film?**

C.J. : We were inspired by the work of Annie Ernaux in terms of mirror characters, above all by *The Years*. We wanted to play with parallel timelines, to show these stories of women who had broken ties with their respective daughters side by side, like the same person at two different moments of her life. We loved the idea of filming a mother-daughter relationship that develops between two people who are not related by blood. The film aims to show how family can be rethought.

**It is intriguing to see an intimate film set against the backdrop of public space. This reappropriation of a territory seems to occur through the**

**body of Diane.**

C.J. : Diane confronts other people, because she needs something to happen to her. There's a refusal within her which is impossible to verbalise. So it's her body that speaks, that expresses it.

J.G. : From the start of the film, the body is placed in the foreground, notably through the use of unflinching images of a woman in labour and a body in transformation. It was necessary for us to unfold her physical existence; we didn't want to be in a purely psychological relationship with the character.

C.J. : Diane also experiences moments of sensory pleasure and tenderness with the people she meets. We felt it was essential to show that even if she couldn't be a mother, she is capable of sharing and loving – and of taking care of others.

**The film is imbued with an ethereal atmosphere, as if to express a post-traumatic state. How did you develop the film's sound and music?**

J.G. : The use of wind instruments, particularly the clarinet, came from a very clear idea that Carmen had right from the first version of the script. We were inspired by the frantic rhythms of the experimental musician Lea Bertucci. We loved the fragility of these quivering motifs and the restrained emotion they express. Like a vague, rumbling anger or an underground force threatening to implode. The composer Marcel Vaid then developed these motifs with the Norwegian trumpeter Nils Petter Molvær. The trumpet came to represent Diane.

C.J. : Creating a dreamlike soundscape contributed to the structure of the film and the feeling of a fever dream. That's what we tried to achieve with Mélia Roger, who created the film's sound design.

**Les Paradis de Diane is a portrait of a woman at a specific point in her journey that aims to open up the debate around the impositions linked to motherhood and the fact of being a woman. What have you learned from this long journey?**

J.G. : Making this film, searching for images to convey Diane's feelings as precisely as possible, has undoubtedly made us more empathetic and open to another person's experience. This also made us reflect on our own concept and situation.

C.J. : *Les Paradis de Diane* was written at a time when we had not yet experienced pregnancy, childbirth, or the arrival of a child in our own lives. It was during the long funding phase that I became pregnant and day by day, we discovered our connection with the newborn. From then on, we had to rethink our personal connection to the film, to Diane, and her journey. In this aspect, the film is dizzying, as it concludes with the idea that something needs to be reinvented.

Interview conducted by Lilith Grasmug, Geneva, 7th December 2023.

















**FOUDRE | THUNDER (2022)**  
Feature fiction 90' | screenwriter & director

**ZA NASE ZVIJEZDE | TO OUR STARS (2016)**  
Short-film fiction fiction | 10' | co-screenwriter & co-director

**LA RIVIÈRE SOUS LA LANGUE (2015)**  
Short-film fiction | 18' | screenwriter & director

**HEIMATLAND (2015)**  
Feature fiction | 99' | co-screenwriter & co-director

**ROME À LA TROISIÈME HEURE DE LA NUIT (2014)**  
Short-film fiction | 19' | co-screenwriter & co-director

**LE BAL DES SIRÈNES (2013)**  
Short-film fiction | 23' | screenwriter & director

**LES VAGUES (2012)**  
Short-film fiction | 19' | screenwriter & director

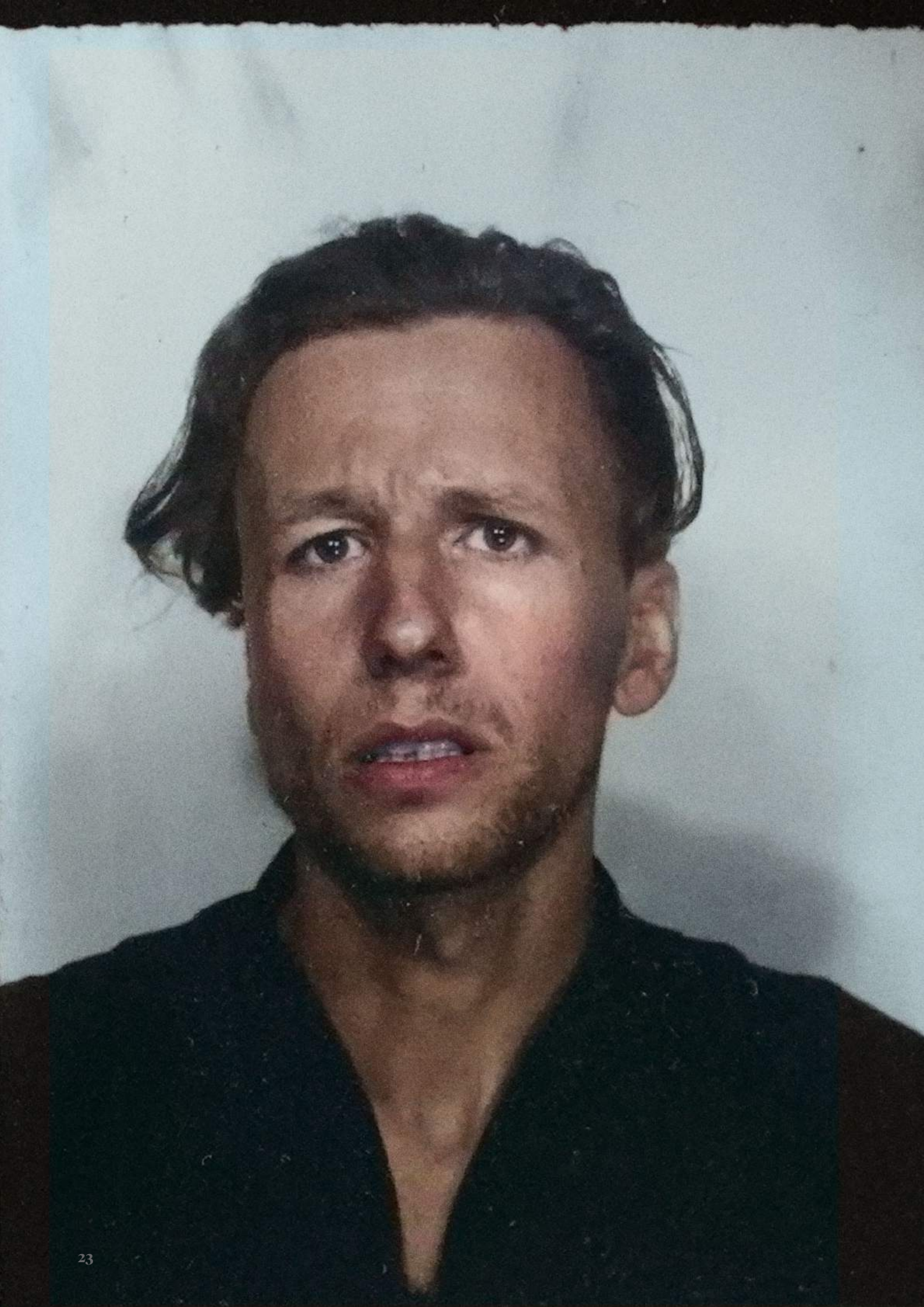
**LE TOMBEAU DES FILLES (2011)**  
Short-film fiction | 17' | screenwriter & director

Carmen Jaquier, born in Geneva, initially learned graphic design before making her first short films as a self-taught filmmaker. She later joined the École cantonale d'art de Lausanne (ECAL). Her graduation film, *Le Tombeau des filles*, received the *Pardino d'argento* at the Locarno Film Festival in 2011. She then delved into image and editing within the Aamen collective, creating two short films, *Les Vagues* and *Le Bal des Sirènes*. Her films *La Rivière sous la langue* and *Heimatland* (a collective feature film) were selected for the Locarno Film Festival in 2015. Additionally, she worked on the cinematography for Emmanuelle Antille's film *A Bright Light - Karen and the Process*, presented at the Visions du Réel Festival in 2018. Her first feature film, *Thunder* released in 2022, has been showcased at various festivals (Toronto, San Sebastian, Busan, Rome) and has received numerous awards, including Best Director at the Marrakech Film Festival. It was chosen to represent Switzerland at the Oscars.

# CARMEN JAQUIER

SCREENWRITER  
DIRECTOR





**99 MOONS** (2022)  
Feature fiction | 110' | screenwriter & director

**EUROPE, SHE LOVES** (2016)  
Documentary | 100' | screenwriter & director

**HEIMATLAND** (2015)  
Feature fiction | 99' | co-scénariste & co-réalisateur

**KARMA SHADUB** (2013)  
Documentary | 94' | co-director & editor

**OFF BEAT** (2011)  
Feature fiction | 95' | screenwriter & director

**CHRIGU** (2007)  
Documentary | 87' | co-director & editor

Jan Gassmann is a director working on the borderline between fiction and documentary filmmaking. In 2004, he began his studies in documentary filmmaking at HFF Munich. His first feature film, *Chrigu*, was presented at the 57th Berlinale and was successful in theaters. He won a Bern and Zurich Cinema Award in 2008, as well as the Walo Prize in 2009. Jan Gassmann then directed his first fictional feature film, *Off Beat*, selected for the Panorama section of the 60th Berlinale, and co-directed the documentary *Karma Shadub*, winner of the International Jury Prize at the Visions du Réel Festival in Nyon. In 2015, he initiated the political and collective film *Heimatland*, presented in the international competition at the Locarno Film Festival. In 2016, his film *Europe, she loves*, about four couples on the outskirts of Europe, was chosen as the opening film of the Panorama Dokumente at the Berlinale. The film won several awards and was nominated for the Swiss Film Prize and the European Film Prize. In 2022, Gassmann directed *99 Moons*, produced by Zodiac Pictures. This amour-fou made its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in the Acid section. The film was sold to more than 25 territories.

# JAN GASSMANN

DIRECTOR  
PRODUCER





Dorothee De Koon is a German-Belgian actress and musician. After a few roles in cinema (in Gilles Marchand's *Who Killed Bambi?*, Gilles Volta's *Children in Love*, and Vincent Dietschy's *Didine*), she devoted herself to an academic career in Romance studies and translation. She translated the pacifist speeches of Dominique de Villepin into German and Spanish for several media outlets. At the same time, she started a musical career as a singer alongside Maxence Cyrin and participated in the tour (keyboards and bass) of Arnaud Fleurent-Didier for his album *La Reproduction*, for which she co-directed the music videos. As a singer, she also collaborated with various artists (Lescop, Nicolas Godin, Cabane). She later returned to cinema, first as a composer of film music for Benjamin Nuel (*Hotel 2*) and Alain della Negra and Kaori Kinoshita (*Bonheur Académie*), and then as an actress in Carlos Franklin's *Home Glitch Home* (in post-production), Arnaud Fleurent-Didier's *Vénère* (in post-production), and *Les Paradis de Diane* by Carmen Jaquier and Jan Gassmann. She divides her time between Paris, Barcelona, and Venice, where she is currently preparing for the release of her first solo album, *Le Hard*, scheduled for 2024.

# DOROTHÉE DE KOON

ACTRESS





Aurore Clément, born after the war to modest farmer parents, worked in a factory before starting a career as a model. She was discovered by Louis Malle, who gave her a first major movie role in *Lacombe Lucien*. Aurore Clément's filmography is extensive and diverse. Her love for life led her to take on roles across Europe, working with directors like Chantal Akerman, Mario Monicelli, Claude Chabrol, and Wim Wenders in *Paris Texas*. She also appeared in the final cut of *Apocalypse Now* by Francis Ford Coppola, in films by Bertrand Blier, Bertrand Bonello, and more recently by Luca Guadagnino. She acted in theater under the direction of Isabelle Nanty and Tatiana Vialle and has been collaborating with director Laetitia Masson for several years. From Aurore Clément's screen appearances, we remember her romantic presence, a fleeting figure with unique modesty and ethereal elegance, spanning the ages of cinema.

In 2022, she published an autobiographical book titled *Aurore Clément - Une femme sans fin s'enfuit*, featuring photographs by Peter Wyss and texts by Mathieu Terence.

# AURORE CLÉMENT

ACTRESS









## OMAR AYUSO

Omar Ayuso is a Spanish actor and model who studied audiovisual communication. His career took off with brief appearances in *El Principe* (2015) and *El Continental* (2018). In the same year, he made his debut as a main cast member in the Netflix series *Elite*, playing the character Omar Shanaa. This role quickly made him an icon and idol for the LGBT community. Omar Ayuso also appeared alongside Rosalía in her music video *Juro Que*.

After leaving *Elite*, Ayuso made his theatrical debut in the play *El sonido oculto*, sharing the stage with actress Toni Acosta.



## DUNCAN AIRLIE JAMES

Duncan Airlie James is a Scottish kickboxer and actor. He started practicing martial arts with Shotokan karate at a young age. Later on, he shifted his focus to playing the drums and joined the hard rock band *Nazareth*. Seeking new musical opportunities, he moved to Boston, Massachusetts, before returning to Scotland and getting involved in Muay Thai kickboxing in the late 1980s. In 1993, Duncan Airlie James made history by becoming the first Scottish fighter to win a world Muay Thai title and participate in the K-1 event in Japan.

Using his martial arts expertise, James secured his first leading roles in films and also appeared in big Hollywood productions like *Tomb Raider* and *ID2: Shadswell Army*.



## STÉPHANIE LAGARDE

Stéphanie Lagarde is an actress and director. She trained in dance, music, and theater at several conservatories. She started acting in theater at the age of fifteen in *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* before taking on roles in several plays directed by Gilles Dyrec, Irina Brook, François Rollin, and others. At the same time, she appeared in movies by directors like Jean-Luc Godard and Pierre Salvadori.

She directed two short films, *La Photocopie de Papa* and *Le Bouillon*, which were shown at various film festivals including Palm Springs, Clermont Ferrand, Zagreb, La Troïa, and Ebensee, where she won a Golden Bear award. She also made a medium-length film, *Feu mon corps!*, which won a screenplay award at the Brives medium-length film festival and was selected for the Valencia International medium-length Film Festival. She met Carmen Jaquier during a writing residency at Moulin d'Andé.

## ROLAND BONJOUR

Roland Bonjour is a Swiss actor living in Berlin. He studied at the Hochschule der Künste Bern (Bern University of the Arts). He was part of the ensemble at the Deutschen Theater in Göttingen, where he worked with reputed directors. On screen, Bonjour gained recognition with the movie *Vater unser Wille geschehe* (2011). His notable film roles include *Systemsprenger* (2019), *Die Saat* (2020), and *Another German Tank Story* (2022). On TV, he has appeared in series like *Oh Hell*, *Browser Ballett*, *Tatort*, *Wilder*, and *Neumatt*.

The movie *Systemsprenger*, in which he had a leading role, won the Silver Bear - Alfred-Bauer Prize at the 69th Berlinale in 2019. In *Les Paradis de Diane*, he shares the screen with his brother, Roger Bonjour.





DURATION 97 MIN.

FORMAT DCP 2K DCI SCOPE  
COLOR, 5.1

LANGUAGES FRENCH  
ENGLISH  
GERMAN  
SPANISH

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DOROTHÉE DE KOON DANS LE RÔLE DE DIANE  
ROLAND BONJOUR OMAR AYUSO DUNCAN AIRLIE JAMES STÉPHANIE LAGARDE ET LA PARTICIPATION DE AURORE CLÉMENT  
UNE PRODUCTION 2:1 FILM EN COPRODUCTION AVEC LA RADIO TÉLÉVISION SUISSE – SRG SSR  
1ÈRE ASSISTANTE MISE EN SCÈNE MIREILLE MOROS 2ÈME ASSISTANTE MISE EN SCÈNE IRENE MUÑOZ MARTIN  
IMAGE THOMAS SZCZEPANSKI ASSISTANT CAMÉRA/LUMIÈRE ANTOINE BUISSON DIT CHLOÉ COHEN  
SON NADINE HÄUSLER MÉLIA ROGER YATONI ROY CANTU MAURIZIUS STAERKLE DRUX DENIS SÉCHAUD  
CONCEPTION DÉCORS, COSTUMES ET ACCESSOIRES ANNE WEICK SILVAN KUHL MATHIAS MAURER  
MAQUILLAGE NATHALIE TANNER EMMANUELLE OLIVET CRISTINA SIMOES  
MONTAGE CAROLE LE PAGE MUSIQUE ORIGINALE MARCEL VAID ÉTALONNAGE ROBIN ERARD VFX GIORDANO CANOVA  
RÉGIE SOFIA HAWARNI RAPHAEL DENTLER DIRECTION DE PRODUCTION CAMILLE MOREND RAFAEL DE VIGO DANA GRÜNENFELDER  
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