

THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH

Directed by Alexandre Arcady

PRODUCTION NOTES



INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY

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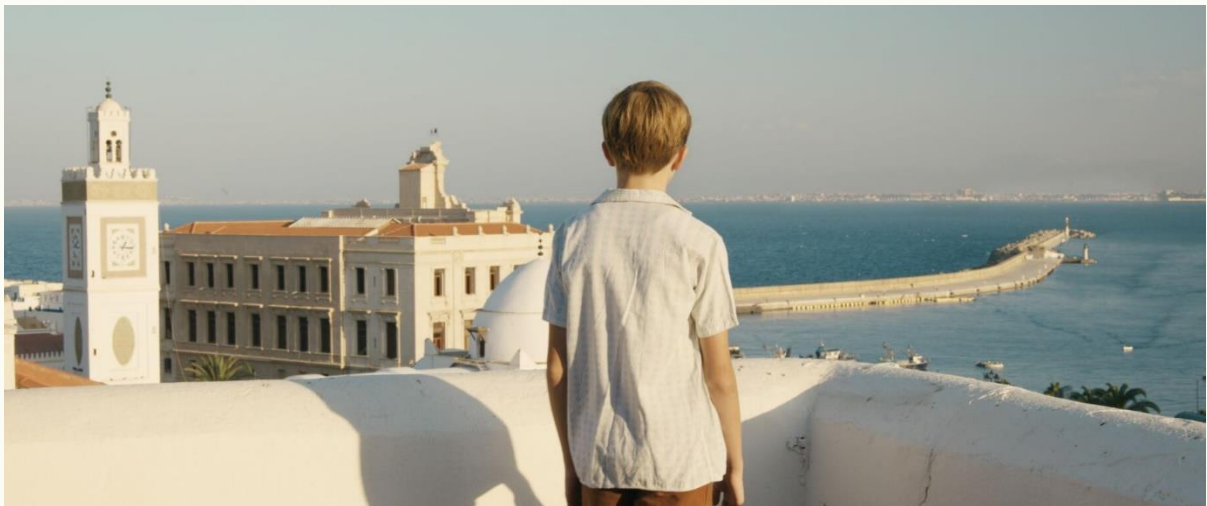
INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

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SYNOPSIS

Passionate filmmaker Antoine travels to his birthplace, Algiers, with his young son to present his new film: an account of his childhood in mid-20th century Algeria during the country's civil war. As he wanders through the city, the filmmaker immerses us in the moments of happiness, laughter, and tears of his childhood – spent between school, friends, and his Jewish family. Growing up in the final moments of Algeria's pre-independence period, the young Antoine discovers his profound fascination with cinema and starts to understand who he truly is.



DIRECTOR STATEMENT BY ALEXANDRE ARCADY

Ever since the departure of the liner that brought us from Algiers – a scene I evoked in my first film, LE COUP DE SIROCCO – I have never forgotten my country of origin. In 2004, I wrote an autobiography, THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH, but the idea of doing it as a film no doubt scared me at the time. Looking at your childhood to explain the man you've become is a dangerous exercise, vertiginous and surely very positive. When I finally began to work on the screenplay, I imagined an alter ego: Antoine, 13 years old in 1960, a boy from the casbah, who grew up at school, with friends, family and neighbors and who discovered a fascination for the cinema while living through the final moments of pre-independence Algeria.

When making this film, I believe I wanted to close the circle, as they say, and offer a more serene view of those days for all who have a connection with Algeria, and for those who have never lived there.

Above and beyond the colonial war that ripped apart entire populations, I want to talk about what united them. The rue du Léopard where I come from, and whose story I tell is a microcosm of Algeria back then, with its Kabyle, Mozabite, Moslem, Catholic and Jewish communities. I was part of the Sephardic community, present in Algeria for three thousand years. Their coexistence with the other populations was alternately fertile or tumultuous. The cultures were enriched by common practices, shared feasts and rites... We all lived together until decolonization destroyed that equilibrium.

I would like this film to transmit that common memory in the same way as the adult Antoine hands on the memory of his family to his son.

Like all those who survive a vanished era, I dream of bringing those days back to life on screen, to recreate a way of life that many today fail to understand.

Using my own biography, examining my own childhood, I felt that what I wanted to come through in this film would prove interesting to us today in France, where our diverse communities are also struggling to cohabit peacefully today.

INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDRE ARCADY (THE DIRECTOR)

In 2003, you published a novel entitled THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH which told the story of your childhood in Algeria. How did that book come about?

There was that horrible civil war in Algeria in the 1990s, a terrible war, with one massacre after another. Islamic radicals were poised to take power. I was stunned by the silence of Algerian filmmakers about what was happening in their country. Cinema may not be able to change the world, but it does allow for bearing witness, and I could not stay indifferent. And so, in the 2000s, I made *Return to Algiers*. That film had two levels of narration: a reenactment of the colonial past during the war for Independence and at the same time the civil war that was raging in Algeria. The Algerians wanted me to preview the film in Algiers where the audience loved the film.

That screening was on my birthday, March 17. The Minister of Culture back then, who is now the President of the Republic organized a party in my honor. At the end of the meal, a cake arrived, bearing the legend: "Return to Algiers" But before I could blow out the candles, another cake arrived. With the legend "This is your country". That gesture overwhelmed me. I always knew that I loved Algeria, but that evening I realized that Algeria loved me too.

My son Alexandre was with me on that visit. I returned to the casbah for the first time with him, to 7 rue du Léopard, where we had lived. And I also visited our old apartment for the first time too. It all came back to me: the violent riots in the casbah, the three nights of fear spent in that apartment and of course our rushed departure. And then I saw the boat that brought us from Algeria to France. We all felt lost as Algiers disappeared in the pale December light. As the first cars drove along the seafront... my mother suddenly cried "I forgot the photos in the kitchen cabinet". And I can still hear my own 13-year-old voice "I'll bring those photos back to you, Mom!"

And in that apartment, 40 years after we left, the kitchen cabinet was still there. I couldn't help opening the drawer... but the miracle did not take place... The photos were of course long gone!

Even though my mother is no longer with us, I think that I made this film to keep my promise to bring back photos of all those who left theirs behind, all those who one day had to leave their native land, leave a piece of paradise or a family house... And in some ways, I think the film speaks even more about another, more universal exile. Our exile from childhood.

And then what happened?

In Paris, I met publisher Olivier Orban with whom I talked about this gut-wrenching voyage. He immediately suggested that I write the story. He thought that my writing a book about my childhood would explain how I became the filmmaker who made *Coup de Sirocco*, *Le Grand Carnaval* and *What the Day Owes the Night*. So, with Daniel Saint Hamont, my friend and faithful screenwriter, I dove back into those turbulent and luminous days. I looked back on the most important events and people who had marked me. Like my Uncle Coco, the pimp

with the slicked back hair, Uncle Jacob, the ingenious inventor, and his wife, my Aunt Blanche the flirt, my father the legionnaire with the buzz cut and who ate bell peppers at night, my mother, sweet and beautiful Driffa, my four brothers and of course my grandmother, enormous Lisa. And how could I forget my dear neighbor, Josette, who introduced me to the cinema and her mother Pierrette, the most famous fortune teller in Algiers... A portrait gallery, charming and hilarious.

Why the title, THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH?

While writing I recalled a memory from my childhood that I had completely suppressed. I must have been ten, and I was playing with my friends in the twisted alleys of the casbah. We were a funny group, all brunettes and me, the only little blue-eyed blond. Some tourists were coming down the rue du Léopard and when they saw me, they took out their cameras and took pictures of me, not the others. I felt terribly humiliated. Paradoxically, their gesture made me stand out, in spite of myself. I suddenly felt different, and that is when I started to observe the world around me. My neighborhood, the neighbors, family and friends... That photo, I think, is the first memory that I have intact from my childhood.

When writing the book, did you think of one day turning it into a feature film?

No. Readers often asked why I didn't do it as a film, but I was unable to imagine actors in place of my family. It was too private. I had a mental block. And even though I've always told stories close to my own sensitivities, and though I had already evoked Algiers, it was always in the context of someone else's story, like COUP DE SIROCCO, LÀ-BAS MON PAYS, or WHAT THE DAY OWES THE NIGHT... I never talked about my own past and love for cinema...

And then there was confinement. A real parenthesis in the lives of the entire world... It all happened one morning. The silent city brought back the sounds of my childhood. I don't know why, but I suddenly heard the milkman's cart being pushed over cobblestones, the scraping of donkeys' hooves during garbage collection, the cockerel's crow, the bell of the church next door... All those sounds so typical of the Algiers of my childhood strangely came back to me, and suddenly I thought that it was perhaps time to write my story. But I still had to find a way to adapt it. And so, I simply borrowed the book's principle: following a filmmaker who returns to Algiers to present a new film, accompanied by his son, who is the same age as the filmmaker when he left Algiers. And in parallel, a period film: the story of a little blond boy, not quite the same as the others, with his family, building, and his love for cinema... With that narrative principle I had all the freedom afforded by fiction to become carried away by the writing in total delight.

And then I saw the magnificent ROMA, Alfonso Cuarón's film, on Netflix. That film gave me even more courage to tackle the screenplay. But I was far from realizing that at the same time as I was talking about my own childhood, other directors like Paolo Sorrentino, Steven Spielberg, James Gray, Kenneth Branagh, would be doing the same. When I finished the screenplay, I had to cast it. All the actors I had thought of, and to whom I sent the screenplay, Marie Gillain, Françoise Fabian, Christian Berkel, Pascal Elbé, Dany Brillant, Patrick Mille, Michel Boujenah, Valérie Kaprisky, Olivier Sitruk and the rest immediately answered: present. That bolstered my confidence and determination. I even found my childhood double- Léo

Campion. I discovered him in Christophe Barratier's THE TIME OF SECRETS. He played young Marcel Pagnol. Two years later, he would become the young Arcady. But there was one character I couldn't find: my grandmother, Lisa Messaouda Hadjedj. She measured 1,50m, weighed 150 kilos and spoke nothing but Arabic. What actress could play that extraordinary woman. That's when I remembered Jean Benguigui's "one man show" about his mother and grandmother. Long before Michel Boujenah, Elie Kakou or Gad Elmaleh, he took over those two female characters who had marked his life too. Thinking back on his show, I remembered one particular gesture that had me screaming with laughter: Jean was sitting on a chair with a napkin on his lap to imitate his grandmother. He took a corner of the napkin to fan himself moaning: "Che! Che!" (Hot! Hot!). Why not him? Jean immediately agreed. He knew it was a performance and I trusted him. And I think I was right.

Did you shoot in Algiers?

In part. But I found the building on the rue du Léopard in Tunis. We filmed LE COUP DE SIROCCO, LE GRAND CARNAVAL and WHAT THE DAY OWES THE NIGHT in Tunisia. I was lucky enough to find a building that was the spitting image of mine, with its passageways and outside staircases. If I had tried to rebuild it, I couldn't have done better. We renovated it entirely and during the five weeks of the shoot we all lived there cheek by jowl; neighbors, actors, technical crew. It was magic!

So all the interiors were shot in Tunis, and the exteriors and contemporary sequences in Algiers. I received authorization to shoot in August 2022, when I accompanied President Macron on his official visit to Algeria. During a dinner at the Summer Palace, Abdelmadjid Tebboune tapped me on the shoulder while I was on my way to the buffet. "What, no hugs?" Shocked at first, I suddenly recognized the Minister of Culture who had hosted me at the screening of L'À-BAS MON PAYS. The one who had organized the surprise birthday party that touched me so deeply.

You describe an out of the ordinary family. Beginning with your father, Alexandre, a Foreign Legion veteran, and an extremely romantic character.

My father always spoke very loudly. Like all men who were in the military for a long period of time. But he was soft-hearted, and he adored his family. After 19 years in the Legion, he became the administrator of the Cercle Militaire in Algiers, where my mother was a waitress. They fell in love at first sight. He was thirty years older, he came from a strange country, Hungary, and he spoke with a funny accent. My grandmother was at first surprised by her daughter's odd choice. But she accepted him, thrilled to see her daughter starting a new life. She had divorced her first husband. My father was divorced too. He had been married in Hungary. And so, he couldn't get married civilly. He had to wait twenty-five years to marry my mother. My parents only had a religious ceremony. No one ever checked to see whether my father was Jewish. His attitude to religion was always strange. He wasn't around on Kippur or for his sons' circumcisions. To my great surprise, the family was never offended. He was Alexandre, that's the way he was... And then, he did them so many favors. He was successively an accountant, male nurse, * doctor. All the relatives adored him: the Hadjedj, Atlan, Sassi, Arfi...

And your mother?

She was a silent woman, timid even. After their wedding my parents temporarily moved into my grandmother's small apartment at 7 rue du Léopard. They had five boys in five years. I was the oldest. They were very close, but my father, who was crazy about her, was pathologically jealous. Any man she ran into was a possible lover. My mother had a foolproof defense in those crises. She left home for a few days, leaving my father alone with five children. That was his punishment.

You've often talked about your siblings. Were you close-knit like in *COMME LES CINQ DOIGTS DE LA MAIN* ?

Yes and no. Two of my brothers work with me in the cinema, one as production designer, the other as a location manager. But my relationship with my younger brother was always complicated. I was blond, he was a brunette, I was gentle, and he was violent. And that went on, even as we grew older. I made the film, *LES CINQ DOIGTS DE LA MAIN*, after my mother died. It was a way of talking about her and him. Vincent Elbaz played him: impetuous, but big hearted! When he saw the film, my brother Elmer, who is unfortunately no longer with us, took me in his arms and whispered: "You know, I love you too". It was the most beautiful of declarations...

Is the *joie de vivre* that you show in the film real or idealized by your memories?

We were very poor, but our lives at home were happy and noisy. My brothers and I were never bored. In sunny climates, children were often left to their own devices. Streets and terraces were places of freedom. Our parents handed down their carefree attitudes to us. Even during the war, we remained innocent. I remember one day I was eating ice cream with a friend, Place du Gouvernement. We heard a burst of machine gun fire and fell to the ground, as we were taught, but continued to enjoy our ice cream cones. That was the most important thing for us, even when bullets were whistling overhead. It was a terrible time, but we never realized the extent of the danger.

All your memories aren't carefree.

Of course not. I remember one night a man was killed under our balcony. I got very frightened when I saw the corpse lying in its blood. I was so traumatized that my father took me in his arms and slept with me in my bed. My second memory is his humiliation when General Massu's paratroopers arrived at 7 rue du Léopard, looking for a fugitive. My father took some time opening the building door and was unceremoniously manhandled as we looked on. A real humiliation for a decorated veteran of the French Foreign Legion, who would have given his life for France. That incident was probably one of the catalysts that hastened our departure in December of 1960.

And more pleasant memories?

There are many. The day I won a contest at Radio Alger remains a unique moment for me. I was the neighborhood star. I used the money I won to buy a brown leather wallet for my father's birthday. I saw him weep for the first time and that marked me terribly. There were our escapades with Josette at Padovani Beach. And of course, the first time I went to a movie

was with her. We saw FORBIDDEN GAMES. The cinema was the most important discovery of my childhood. I never stopped going. Back then I obviously never thought that I would one day become a director. For the child I was, coming from my world, that was unimaginable.

You also talk about the cohabitation between Jews and Muslims and the other communities. That is a subject you address in most of your films.

In our building, all communities and religions were mixed. Downstairs there was Margot, an Italian married to an Algerian, across the way was Pierrette, the Russian fortune teller who had married a Kabyle and adopted my friend Josette, and then two or three Jewish families, and the Muslim families. One of them blared Luis Mariano all day. At 7 rue du Lézard, conviviality was total. Doors were always open, there was no need for an invitation to visit anyone. And religious feasts were for everyone. But it wasn't idyllic for all that. The communities were segregated, even though we all spoke the same language, Arabic. I experienced antisemitism at the local school after having been with the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul. The boys pushed me around, because I was blond, and because I was a Jew. In other neighborhoods, young Muslims were the victims of racism.

In this film, as in most of your other films, you mix fiction and reality.

I pushed the mix of genres much farther here, mixing film images and photos with family photos. In real life, I never recovered those photos. But cinema allows for hopes and utopias, and I wanted Algeria to restore that lost past. In this film, I went right all the way with a *mise en abyme*. Many, many times during the shoot I had to leave the set because I started to break down. This leapback into the past was vertiginous. My brother Tony, the production designer, had a lot to do with that because he was able to recreate all the details of a world he knew as well as I did. My eldest son, Alexandre Aja, was our second unit director and it was very important for him to be at my side as we filmed the past. His past! My other children, my nieces and nephews saw the film and they were touched. I had the great fortune to recreate for them living images of a past that has disappeared. A beautiful gift of memories for my grandchildren.

Is your nostalgia - if that is what it is - sunlit or melancholy?

Sun-drenched, good-natured, gentle, it is – the word I prefer most - insouciant. I don't know whether all childhoods are like mine, which was happy in a turbulent climate. But the adult I am today still cherishes all those influences... Arabo-Andalusian music, sunsets, the scent of jasmine and orange blossoms all transport me.

Is that the ambiance you wanted for your film?

Yes. I wanted warm gold images and simple movements. At first there was a problem with the configuration of the apartment. We couldn't use voluminous equipment. Our DOP (Gilles Henry) had a brainstorm. He suggested using a very stable small camera hung around his neck that allowed for creating the right harmony for the film. My brother, Tony Egry, our set designer, and our head costume designer, Valérie Adda, had a ball using contemporary photos to recreate the right ambiance. I was all choked up when I saw the kids who played our roles all dressed the same. As for the music, composers Armand Amar and Anne Sophie Versnaeyen

immediately grasped the spirit and emotional tone of the film. I had already worked with Armand on several of my latest films. He is a great artist. Our editor Manu de Sousa had to juggle with an incalculable number of shots. When we finished the film there were 2400. Manu has a talent for capturing beautiful glances and quivering flesh. Our casting director, Pierre-Jacques Benichou, suggested actors I adore. Some were already friends, others had already worked with me, but I have a special soft spot for Françoise Fabian, who plays my mother, when older in Paris. She had already played in LES CINQ DOIGTS DE LA MAIN. She gave me the lovely gift of participating in this very personal film.

This is your 16th film. Has production changed over the years?

And how! When I began directing, there was no Canal, no TV channels, no platforms. The risks were greater, but you had more people in the cinemas.

Today producing and directing a film is an obstacle course. I won't deny that there were times I wanted to throw in the towel. But luckily, Diane Kurys was there to support me and to encourage me to find other financial and artistic solutions. THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH was produced exclusively thanks to the complicity and support of Maxime Saada, Canal +, Ciné + and TV5 Monde. No TV channels, no Soficas participated in this project.

And if I managed to make my dream come true, it is also thanks to financial partners who believed in the story and the screenplay. And I thank them all.

And so, if I had one word of advice for directors, it would be never throw in the towel. When the door shuts, don't be shy about climbing through the window.

Do you have any other projects after this film?

Yes, I'm preparing a series based on LE GRAND PARDON and a very original film about Albert Camus, a kind of "biopic" based on his novel THE STRANGER. And then we'll see...

INTERVIEW WITH MARIE GILLAIN (Dinah)

Playing Alexandre Arcady's beloved mother is no small thing! What did you think when you first read the screenplay?

I discovered an embarrassment of riches: authenticity, emotion, and fantasy in this Mediterranean family with all its rantings and shortcomings. All the characters are delightfully kooky and true to life. Despite their poverty, they are endearing, full of life and good cheer!

Did you also read Arcady's book on which the screenplay is based?

Yes! To be honest, I have no connection, close or distant, with the story. I come from a 100% Belgian background and had only the vaguest familiarity with the context. I didn't know that all those communities lived there at the time, all from different backgrounds and social strata, and who cohabited in peace and sympathy despite the many problems. I was very surprised. I also didn't know that there so many Whites, born in Algeria or elsewhere who lived in such precarious situations. I knew nothing about their brutal uprooting. I also knew nothing about the Jews of Algeria, who had such deep roots in the country. I discovered all that in the screenplay, the book, and on the shoot.

How did you approach the character of Dinah? Was Alexandre Arcady directive or did he leave you a lot of latitude?

Alexandre is very directive with the technical crew. If he could be at one and the same time DOP, production designer, makeup artist and costume designer, he'd be fine with that. But paradoxically he leaves his actors a lot of freedom. First of all because he already has everything broken down in his head and he knows exactly what he wants, and then because he trusts us. Throughout the shoot, mysterious things happened, there were emotions we couldn't control, as if there was an invisible thread joining us. Alexandre talked to me a lot about his mother beforehand. He showed me pictures of her and her family, and that helped. She was far distant from me and the women I know, but I still loved playing her. She was a woman without a second to herself, she was vampirized by her five children and a jealous husband but remained a formidable cornerstone for her family and who despite all that weight on her shoulders, never lost her sense of humor, her fantasy, or her desire to dream. She was a woman deeply attached to her country, and who never understood why they had to leave. That part was very moving to play.

Were you able to pinpoint the character immediately?

I didn't want to speak with my Parisian accent. During the shoot, Pascal Elbé, Michel Boujenah - who has a charming accent that I love - and Jean Benguigui helped me a lot with little things. Benguigui was sort of my guide. I often asked him if I was exaggerating or if I sounded right. I also kept Sophia Loren's Italian comedies in mind, the seductive femininity she exuded even in daily life. And I loved playing as a couple with Christian, who also has a complicated past.

He's not Hungarian, he's German. They' were a strange couple – he was insanely jealous – but they loved each other in spite of it all and playing that was a joy.

What was the shoot like?

A joyful mess. Alexandre was on a very tight budget, with a bare-boned crew. He shot fast, with few takes. It was very intense, with incredible energy and dynamism. The emotion was there from the very start. We were really there in that building, with all that family, and with all those delightful characters. Alexandre had this story in his head for years. With COUP DE SIROCCO it's one of his most authentic films. It's an homage to cinema, to Italian comedy, a UFO. Not many films like this are made anymore. A real film with magic nostalgia that casts its spell over it all.

INTERVIEW WITH PASCAL ELBÉ (Jacob)

This is the third time you're back with Alexandre Arcady as director. This time playing the role of Jacob. What did you think when you read the script?

I grew up with Arcady's cinema. I saw LE COUP DE SIROCCO with my grandfather, who looked like Roger Hanin. His films are a bit like my family album. Alexandre could have asked me to do anything on this film, even just one day's shooting, and I would have done it. He's been with me for as long as I can remember, and this film is a way for me to follow in his footsteps, to show my loyalty to him. And all his films about Algeria have an immediate resonance for me.

Is this a story you know well?

His story is indeed part of mine. I was born in France and grew up in Alsace, but my family, like Arcady's, is Jewish, originally from Algeria. I was immersed in this history, which was poorly digested by its protagonists. And this melancholy of exile, these regrets, don't interest many people. Arcady is one of the only directors to have worked on these subjects, and he's also the only one to have brought me back to my story. Thanks to him, I felt less alone.

Where did you find the inspiration to play the character of Uncle Jacob? Your own memories? From your own family?

Jacob was inside me. All I had to do was press the button and everything came to the surface. The character is a blend of different figures I know and have known, and there was an immediate familiarity between him and me. These were people who always rounded off any rough edges, so you didn't really know what they were doing, but they were there.

Have you been to Algeria before?

No, and I regret it. I hope I'll be able to go there with this film. I have a great affection for this country, it resonates with me, it moves me.

How did the shoot go? What were the most memorable scenes for you?

First, my biggest thrill was seeing Arcady on set again. Then there was this family from the fifties, similar to what my parents might have experienced. I was very moved by this flashback in time, by this natural way of moving through it. I'm not troubled by melancholy, any more than my family which has always moved on, but I can understand it.

What did you think of the film?

I asked my mother to see it with me. She remained silent throughout the screening. At the end of the screening, I saw how overwhelmed she was. Arcady doesn't judge, he tells a universal story. It's a moving film, fair and restorative. And very courageous too.

INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK MILLE (Alexandre Arcady)

You play the filmmaker - Alexandre Arcady - in the film. How did you approach this role?

I'm an actor, but also the director of two films, so I am very familiar with the autobiographical aspects that Alexandre Arcady refers to. He is an inspiring director, who was also an actor and who knows how to act. I loved putting myself in his shoes, stealing some of his thunder. My greatest fear was doing the voice over because he does that so well himself. I worked at it very hard, without ever really imitating him. There is a documentary part in the contemporary sequences. I went to discover the country of Algeria with a fresh eye. Arcady showed me a documentary he made with his son Alexandre Aja, who was the same age as Léo in the film, and that helped me a lot in conveying their relationship.

Were you familiar with Alexandre Arcady's cinema?

I've obviously known his films since I was very young. I remember seeing LE COUP DE SIROCCO on TV as a child. I saw THE BIG PARDON, L'UNION SACRÉE at the cinema. And LE GRAND CARNAVAL as well, which I consider a great film. We missed working together on CINQ DOIGTS DE LA MAIN because of a scheduling conflict, and I was afraid I might never get to work with him. Until this film...

What were your impressions of Algeria?

It was my first time in Algeria. I had never set foot there before. It was the shock of a lifetime. I fell in love with Algiers. I dream of going back. I loved the people, the local actors, our fabulous technical crew. And I had an excellent guide: Alexandre Arcady guided my discovery. I would have liked to spend more time there to discover more of the country.

This is the first time you've worked with Alexandre Arcady. What was it like being his double while being directed by him. What do you think of the film?

Before being directed by Arcady, I rewatched a lot of his films, especially the ones about Algeria. It wasn't traditional actors' direction, it was a sharing of memories. I listened, I borrowed things, I felt like I was stealing things. Having read Camus was also a great help in understanding things (especially reading Nuptials). It was a very moving film shoot. Visiting Roger Hanin's grave was obviously very emotional. As if closing the loop.

AN INTERVIEW WITH LÉO CAMPION (Antoine as a kid)

After having played Marcel Pagnol in LE TEMPS DES SECRETS, you play young Alexandre Arcady in his film. What were your impressions?

Playing Arcady after Pagnol was somewhat different despite the similarities. They are both biographies, but what was special about THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH is that the character I play, Alexandre Arcady, was there beside me, guiding my acting and emotions. It's two different time periods, one carefree, on vacation, and the other in a much tenser context, the war in Algeria. So, I had more tragic scenes in THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH. But one thing is similar. The two characters are children on the verge of adolescence, both surrounded by loving close-knit families.

You filmed in Tunis and Algiers. What kind of images have you come away with?

Wonderful memories. They are both beautiful countries, with magnificent scenery, a very warm ambience, and friendly inhabitants. Moreover, filming in Algeria allowed me to discover the places where Alexandre had lived. Soaking up the atmosphere helped me a lot with my acting.

Alexandre Arcady's childhood was very different from yours. What impressed you most during the shoot?

The physical locations, the atmosphere, and the time periods are very different. I was embarking on uncharted territory. Alexandre gave me the responsibility of playing a very different character, in a much tenser context than my everyday life. I had to get it right, without caricaturing him. The film takes place during a war, which made me realize how lucky I am to live in a country at peace. The most memorable moment for me was his father's birthday. It was so emotional that the entire film set was in tears!

BIOGRAPHY OF ALEXANDRE ARCADY

Born in Algeria on March 17, 1947, Arcady Egry, also known as Alexandre Arcady, is a film director. In the late 60s, he began an acting career by appearing in a TV series entitled LA CRAVACHE D'OR. Then, he began directing short films and TV movies. In 1977, with his partner, director Diane Kurys, he founded a production company with which he produced the hit PEPPERMINT SODA, as well as COCKTAIL MOLOTOV (1980). In 1979, he signed his first feature film, LE COUP DE SIROCCO. Based on his own personal story, the film, which recounts the arrival of the Pieds-noirs in France, was an unhoped-for success, revealing the talent of Patrick Bruel.

After this first film, Alexandre Arcady made exile his favorite subject, directing LE GRAND CARNAVAL (1983) and LÀ-BAS, MON PAYS (2000). The director also dabbled in other genres, such as thrillers: K and BREAK OF DAWN, and dramas: THE BIG PARDON, LE GRAND PARDON 2 and DIS-MOI OUI. He also tackled comedy with HOLD-UP (1985) and TU PEUX GARDER UN SECRET?.

He then returned to dramas and crime genre with COMME LES CINQ DOIGTS DE LA MAIN (2010), WHAT THE DAY OWES THE NIGHT (2012) and 24 DAYS (2014).

In 2023, he returns with the film THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH retracing his entire history in Algiers.

FILMOGRAPHY

2023	THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH
2014	24 DAYS
2012	WHAT THE DAY OWES THE NIGHT
2010	COMME LES CINQ DOIGTS DE LA MAIN
2008	TU PEUX GARDER UN SECRET?
2004	MARIAGE MIXTE
2002	BREAK OF DAWN
2000	LÀ-BAS, MON PAYS
1996	K
1995	DIS MOI OUI
1992	LE GRAND PARDON II
1991	FOR SACHA
1989	L'UNION SACRÉE
1987	DERNIER ÉTÉ À TANGER
1985	HOLD-UP
1983	LE GRAND CARNAVAL
1982	THE BIG PARDON
1979	LE COUP DE SIROCCO

BIOGRAPHY OF MARIE GILLAIN

Revealed on the big screen as a rebellious teenager facing Gérard Depardieu in *MON PÈRE, CE HÉROS*, for which she received a César nomination for Best Actress of the Year, Marie Gillain then played the title role in Bertrand Tavernier's *THE BAIT* a crime drama based on a true story, which won the Golden Bear award in Berlin.

She then alternates roles and registers: *LES AFFINITÉS SÉLÉCTIVES*, *ON GUARD*, *LE DINER* and *HAREM SUARE*.

She played comedy characters in *ABSOLUMENT FABULEUX* by Gabriel Aghion with Josiane Balasko and Nathalie Baye, *BARNIE ET SES PETITES CONTRARIÉTÉS* by Bruno Chiche with Fabrice Luchini, *TOUT LE PLAISIR EST POUR MOI* by Isabelle Broué, *MA VIE N'EST PAS UNE COMÉDIE ROMANTIQUE* by Marc Gibaja with Gilles Lelouche, *THE VERY VERY BIG COMPANY* by Pierre Jolivet with Roschdy Zem and Jean-Paul Rouve. She reunited with Bertrand Tavernier in *SAFE CONDUCT* and met Cédric Klapisch, who offered her the lead role in *NOT FOR, OR AGAINST (QUITE THE CONTRARY)* with Vincent Elbaz. She plays Karin Viard's sister Emmanuelle Béart in *L'ENFER* by Danis Tanović, then joins the world of crime thrillers in *PARS VITE ET REVIENS TARD* by Régis Wargnier, based on Fred Vargas.

Wife of Guillaume Canet in Guillaume Nicloux's film *LA CLEF*, she plays a Resistance fighter during the Occupation in *FEMALE AGENTS* by Jean-Paul Salomé, with Sophie Marceau.

She plays Gabrielle Chanel's sister in *COCO BEFORE CHANEL* by Anne Fontaine. Prisoner of over-indebtedness in *ALL OUR DESIRES* by Philippe Lioret, in which her partner is Vincent Lindon, a magnificent role for which she was again nominated for a César for Best Actress, she plays a widow who takes her destiny into her own hands during the 1920s in *LANDES*. She also played in *VALENTIN VALENTIN* by Pascal Thomas, *MIRAGE OF LOVE*, written by Bernard Giraudeau and *GOLIATH* by Frédéric Tellier.

This year, in *QUAND TU SERAS GRAND* by Andréa Bescond and Éric Métayer, she also plays a warm-hearted mother in *THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH* by Alexandre Arcady, adapted from his autobiographical story, to be released in cinemas on November 15. She is due to appear in *MARIA* by Jessica Palud and *JE NE ME LAISSERAI PLUS FAIRE*, Gustave Kervern's first solo film. She will be shooting with Elie Chouraqui and Kad Merad next spring, followed by Hélène Médigue's first film *UNE PLACE POUR PIERROT* with Grégory Gadebois.

FILMOGRAPHY OF MARIE GILLAIN

2024	UNE PLACE POUR PIERROT	Hélène MÉDIGUE
	JE NE ME LAISSERAI PLUS FAIRE	Gustave KERVERN
	MARIA	Jessica PALUD
2023	THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH	Alexandre ARCADY
	LES CHOSES SIMPLES	Eric BESNARD
	QUAND TU SERAS GRAND	Andréa BESCOND, Eric METAYER
2022	LES CADORS	Julien GUETTA
	GOLIATH	Frédéric TELLIER
2021	A LA FOLIE	Andréa BESCOND, Eric METAYER
2015	MIRAGE OF LOVE	Hubert TOINT
2014	VALENTIN VALENTIN	Pascal THOMAS
2013	LANDES	François VIVES
2011	ALL OUR DESIRES	Philippe LIORET
2009	COCO BEFORE CHANEL	Anne FONTAINE
2008	THE VERY VERY BIG COMPANY	Pierre JOLIVET
2007	PARS VITE ET REVIENS TARD	Régis WARGNIER
	MA VIE N'EST PAS UNE COMÉDIE ROMANTIQUE	Marc GIBAJA
	LA CLEF	Guillaume NICLOUX
2005	L'ENFER	Danis TANOVIC
2004	TOUT LE PLAISIR EST POUR MOI	Isabelle BROUE
2002	NOT FOR, OR AGAINST (QUITE THE CONTRARY)	Cédric KLAPISCH
	SAFE CONDUCT	Bertrand TAVERNIER
2001	BARNIE ET SES PETITES CONTRARIÉTÉS	Bruno CHICHE
	ABSOLUMENT FABULEUX	Gabriel AGHION
1998	HAREM SUARE	Ferzan OZPETEK
	LE DINER	Ettore SCOLA
1997	ON GUARD	Philippe DE BROCA
1996	LES AFFINITÉS SÉLECTIVES	Vittorio et Paolo TAVIANI
1995	THE BAIT	Bertrand TAVERNIER
1991	MON PÈRE, CE HÉROS	Gérard LAUZIER

BIOGRAPHY OF PASCAL ELBÉ

French actor, director and screenwriter, Pascal Elbé began his career in theater before turning to film as a writer. It was only later that he stepped in front of the camera in Gérard Jugnot's FALLAIT PAS! Since then, he has starred in MAUVAISE FOI alongside Cécile de France, and PERE ET FILS with Philippe Noiret and Charles Berling.

Sometimes a seducer (TOUT POUR PLAIRE by Cécile Telerman, who will direct him again BLAME IT ON MUM), sometimes a best buddy (MY FRIENDS, MY LOVE), he plays with his manly image as Lambert Wilson's companion in the comedy COMME LES AUTRES (2008). Partnering Sandrine Bonnaire in the austere A SIMPLE HEART and Sandrine Kiberlain in the film ROMAINE PAR MOINS 30, Pascal Elbé, loyal to his friends, reunites with the directors of his beginnings, Ariel Zeitoun (THE LAST GANG) and Michel Boujenah (3 FRIENDS).

A policeman in the thriller R.I.F. and a homosexual in the comedy CHERRY ON THE CAKE (2012), Pascal Elbé varies the genres he plays. But it's perhaps in the dramatic register that he's most active, as evidenced by his performances in THE OTHER SON, 24 DAYS and PIEGE.

In 2016, he took part in the dubbing of the Disney Studios animated film ZOOTOPIA. He then went on to play a thug in Lorraine Lévy's KNOCK (2017), and a superintendent in Mehdi Senoussi's VAURIEN (2018).

On the directing side, Pascal Elbe has made three films, including TURK'S HEAD (nominated for a César for Best First Film in 2011), THANK YOU FOR CALLING in 2015 with Julie Gayet and Vincent Elbaz, and HEAR ME OUT in 2021.

This year, he reunites with director Cécile Telerman in MA LANGUE AU CHAT, and with director Alexandre Arcady in THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH, where he plays Jacob, the director's uncle.

FILMOGRAPHY OF PASCAL ELBÉ

2023	THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH MA LANGUE AU CHAT	Alexandre ARCADY Cécile TELERMAN
2022	ROSE	Aurélie SAADA
2021	HEAR ME OUT	Pascal ELBE
2018	VAURIEN BRILLANTISSIME	Mehdi SENOUSI Michèle LAROQUE
2017	KNOCK	Lorraine LEVY
2016	HEARTSTRINGS ZOOTOPIA	Michel BOUJENAH Byron HOWARD, Rich MOORE
2014	PIÉGÉ FRENCH WOMEN	Yannick SAILLET Audrey DANA
2013	LES INVINCIBLES 24 DAYS	Frédéric BERTHE Alexandre ARCADY
2012	CHERRY ON THE CAKE THE OTHER SON R.I.F.	Laura MORANTE Lorraine LEVY Franck MANCUSO
2010	COMME LES 5 DOIGTS DE LA MAIN TURK'S HEAD	Alexandre ARCADY Pascal ELBE
2009	BLAME IT ON MUM ROMAINE PAR MOINS 30	Cécile TELERMAN Agnès OBADIA
2008	COMME LES AUTRES A SIMPLE HEART MY FRIENDS, MY LOVE	Vincent GARENQ Marion LAINE Lorraine LEVY
2007	THE LAST GANG 3 AMIS	Ariel ZEITOUN Michel BOUJENAH
2006	MAUVAISE FOI	Roschdy ZEM
2005	TOUT POUR PLAIRE	Cécile TELERMAN
2004	L'AMOUR AUX TROUSSES	Philippe de CHAUVERON
2003	LES MAUVAIS JOUEURS PÈRE ET FILS	Frédéric BALEKDJIAN Michel BOUJENAH
1996	FALLAIT PAS	Gérard JUGNOT

BIOGRAPHY OF PATRICK MILLE

Born in Lisbon, Portugal, in April 1970, Patrick Mille is a Franco-Portuguese actor and director. He made his screen debut in Gérard Lauzier's film *MON PÈRE, CE HÉROS*. The same year, he starred in *ÉQUILIBRISTES* by Nikos Papatakis. Since then, his opportunities have multiplied. He alternates roles on the big and small screens. He was in the cast of Jan Kounen's film *99 FRANCS, THE VALET* by Francis Veber, and starred in a number of successful TV series, including *HIGHLANDER*, *CLARA SHELLER* and *LES VIVANTS ET LES MORTS*.

Patrick Mille turned to directing, and in 2012 he directed his first film *BAD GIRL*, the story of Louise and her mother in remission from chemotherapy. For this film, he won the 2013 Henri Langlois award for Best New Director.

In 2016, he switched to comedy with his film *GOING TO BRAZIL*, starring Vanessa Guide, Alison Wheeler and Margot Bancilhon, which won the Grand Prix at the Liège International Comedy Film Festival.

He continues to appear in films such as *DJANGO* by Etienne Comar, *BELLE FILLE* by Méliane Marcaggi and *R.A.I.D SPECIAL UNIT* by Dany Boon.

In 2018, he joined the cast of the political series *BARON NOIR* with Kad Merad and Anna Mouglalis, where he plays Lionel Chalon, president of the National Rally.

In early 2023, he appeared in Martin Bourboulon's film *THE TREE MUSKETEERS: D'ARTAGNAN* and Ellen Kuras' *LEE*, which follows the extraordinary life of Lee Miller, a photographer and model who became a war correspondent during the Second World War.

This year, he can be seen again in *THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH*, where he plays Alexandre Arcady, the film's director, as well as in *THE TREE MUSKETEERS: MILADY*, due for release in December.

He continues his success with Alexandre de La Patellière and Matthieu Delaporte's film *LE COMTE DE MONTE CRISTO*, due for release in 2024.

FILMOGRAPHY OF PATRICK MILLE

2024	LE COMTE DE MONTE CRISTO	Alexandre DE LA PATELLIERE et Matthieu DELAPORTE
2023	THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH THE TREE MUSKETEERS : MILADY LEE THE TREE MUSKETEERS : D'ARTAGNAN	Alexandre ARCADY Martin BOURBOULON Ellen KURAS Martin BOURBOULON
2020	BELLE FILLE	Méliane MARCAGGI
2017	DJANGO	Etienne COMAR
2016	R.A.I.D SPECIAL UNIT GOING TO BRAZIL	Dany BOON Patrick MILLE
2014	TROIS COEURS	Benoît JACQUOT
2012	A GREEK TYPE OF PROBLEM BAD GIRL	Brigitte ROÜAN Patrick MILLE
2007	99 FRANCS	Jan KOUNEN
2006	CELIBATAIRES THE VALET LA JUNGLE	Jean-Michel VERNER Francis VEBER Matthieu DELAPORTE
2004	ALBERT EST MECHANT PEOPLE	Hervé PALUD Fabien ONTENIENTE
2002	CRAVATE CLUB	Frédéric JARDIN
1991	MON PERE CE HEROS	Gérard LAUZIER
1990	LES EQUILIBRISTES	Nico PAPATAKIS

BIOGRAPHY OF LEO CAMPION

Léo Campion is a young French actor spotted at the age of 10 to play Marcel Pagnol in Christophe Barratier's film **LE TEMPS DES SECRETS** (released March 2022). This first role in a film inspired him to continue in this direction.

In 2021, Léo shoots two short films, **HYPERNORMALITY** by Jordan I Cardoso and **SEULS** by Arthur Casez, for which he receives the Best Actor Award at the Festival Jeunesse en Court.

In October 2022, Léo starred in Alexandre Arcady's film **THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH**, in which he played the director himself (soon to be released in cinemas).

FILMOGRAPHY

2023	THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH	Alexandre ARCADY
2022	LE TEMPS DES SECRETS	Christophe BARRATIER
	13 ANS DE CONTROLE	Nicolas FABRE
2021	SEULS	Arthur CASEZ
	HYPERNORMALITY	Jordan I. CARDOSO

CREDIT LIST

LÉO CAMPION	Antoine Child
PASCAL ELBÉ	Jacob
MARIE GILLAIN ET FRANÇOISE FABIAN	Dinah
CHRISTIAN BERKEL	Sania
MICHEL BOUJENAH	Mr. Benaïm
JEAN BENGUIGUI	Lisa
DANY BRILLANT	Coco
OLIVIER SITRUK	Dr Benaïm
JUDITH EL ZEIN	Blanche
PATRICK MILLE	Antoine Adult
VALÉRIE KAPRISKY	Josette Adult
RONA HARTNER	Pierrette
IMAN PEREZ	Josette
SMAÏN	Mr. Farès
FRANCK DUBOSC	Ega the employee
MOUSSA MAASKRI	Hadi
JEAN-CLAUDE DE GOROS	Mr Ferro
ABBES ZAHMANI	Kamel
TOM HYGRECK	Officer para
MATTHIAS VAN KHACHE	Ciné-club Director

TECHNICAL LIST

FRENCH TEAM:

Director 2nd team	Alexandre AJA
Assisted by	Roxana MOCANU
1st assistant	Mathilde CUKIERMAN
2nd assistant	Emeline DUREY
Script	Joelle HERSANT
Casting	Pierre-Jacques BENICHOU
Children's casting	Julie GANDOSSI
Assisted by	Pierre VANDER-MEIREN
Children's coach	Yasmina PASTURAL
Photo and frame	Gilles HENRY
Assistant	Lara PUGH
Chief electrician	Xavier RENAUDOT
Chief Operator	Ahmed MAALAOUI
Mixer	Christian FONTAINE
Film Editor	Manuel DE SOUSA
Assistant	Frédérique VEILLARD-GARDINER
Calibrator	David MAGALHAES
Post-synchro	Sylvie FORTIN
Sound effects	François LEPEUPLE
Production designer	Tony EGRY
Assembler	Mahi GRAND
Make-up	Karine MEYER
Hairdresser	Véronique GELY
Costume designer	Valérie ADDA and Loïc BARNIER
Producer	Diane KURYS, Alexandre ARCADY
Executive producer	Claude FENIOUX
Production Manager	Olivier SARFATI
Management	Rachid AÏT ALI
Administrator	Laurent MIEL
Secretaries	Gian NITHARDT / Charlotte RENAULT

TUNISIAN'S TEAM :

GODOLPHIN FILMS	
Executive producer	Ramses MAHFOUDH
2nd camera operator	Mohamed ZEHIWA

ALGERIAN'S TEAM:

LUNA PRODUCTION	
Executive producer	Yacine LALOUÏ
Stage direction	Karima KECHIDA and Athamane HADDANOU
Costumes	Sabrina GUIGUI, Hania MAATKA and Malika AIT GAN