le lac

78
Locarno Film Festival
CONCORSO INTERNAZIONALE
OFFICIAL SELECTION

casa azul films - l’atelier

À corps perdus, un couple se jette dans une course de voile de plusieurs jours et nuits sur un grand lac.

With everything they've got, a couple throws themselves into a sailing race lasting several days and nights on a large lake.

Clotilde Courau Bernard Stamm

a film by

Fabrice Aragno

produced in Switzerland by

casa azul films and l'atelier

in coproduction with

RTS Radio Télévision Suisse

Françoise Mayor

Celya Larré

with the support of

Cinéforom et le soutien de la Loterie Romande

Office Fédéral de la Culture OFC

Fondation Culturelle de la BCN

On voudrait passer de l'autre côté... on ne le peut pas... on perçoit néanmoins la voix de cette vie dans le grondement des flots, le souffle de l'air, le passage des nuages, le cri solitaire des oiseaux. Mais il faut pour cela une exigence du cœur et cette déchirure au plus profond de soi que provoque la nature.

*We would like to cross over to the other side... but we cannot... nevertheless, we can hear the voice of this life in the roar of the waves, the breath of the air, the passing clouds, the lonely cry of the birds. But this requires a demand from the heart and that deep inner turmoil that nature provoke*s.

Expressing the stages of a sensory escape, ***le lac*** is a slide towards a here and now, the observation of a present to throw oneself into it physically, totally.
At the end of an endurance race on a large lake, a woman, a man, two human archetypes, united by loss, gradually escape from the world and time, from their times, their durations.
This is a film of few words, a film of sound, a pictorial film.

Landscapes filmed as characters, bodies as landscapes.

Slipping on the waterline between life and death, the relationship between the couple explored and expressed in a simple and human way, confronted with the incessant adversities of the elements, is the cinematographic expression of what we have all felt from near or far in our lives.

The third character is Lake Geneva, the backdrop that embraces our shores. The story of this desperate passion to be in the world is unfolding in front of us, under our eyes.

Fabrice Aragno

Fabrice Aragno

Swiss director, born on 31 March 1970 in Neuchâtel Switzerland.

He has directed several short and medium-length fiction and documentary films since *Dimanche* (official selection at the Cannes Film Festival, Cinéfondation 1999).

Close collaborator of Jean-Luc Godard since 2002, editor, director of photography, sound engineer, producer. Nominated by the National Society of Film Critics (USA) in the category ‘Best Cinematographer 2014’ for Adieu au langage.

In autumn 2020, he received the Fondation vaudoise pour la Culture's Rayonnement Award.

He is one of the four authors of the Orae, experiencing the borders project for the Swiss pavillon to the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale.

In 2025, he direct Le Lac, his first feature film.

Clotilde Courau

French and Swiss actress.

In 1991, Courau was nominated for a César, for Most Promising Actress (Meilleur espoir féminin), and won a European Film Award for Best Actress, both for the film Le petit criminel (1990). She then appeared in Dusty Hughes' A Slip of the Tongue opposite John Malkovich on the stage, and in Vincent Ward's Map of the Human Heart. In 1995, she won the Prix Suzanne Bianchetti at the SACD Awards. She was nominated again for a César twice in 1996 for Best Supporting Actress (Meilleur second rôle féminin) and Most Promising Actress (Meilleur espoir féminin) both for the film Élisa.

In 1998 she was named one of European cinema's "Shooting Stars" by European Film Promotion and in 2000 she won the Prix Romy Schneider.

She was created a Dame of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France on 7 February 2007.

In 2015 returning to the limelight with the drama L'Ombre des femmes, directed by Philippe Garrel.
Film for which she received the Best Actress Award at the Seville European Film Festival.

Bernard Stamm

Swiss professional yachtsman, born on 29 November 1963 in Geneva, Switzerland.

He is an offshore sailor who has started the Vendée Globe three times but never officially completed the course. He did not have any luck starting in the 2000-2001 edition of the race where he retired after a week of racing because of auto pilot failure. In 2004-2005, he lost his keel in the Transat race five months before the start so didn't make the start. In the 2008-2009 he collided with a cargo vessel on the first night and had to return to repair his bowsprit and mast. Setting out again three and a half days after his rivals, he got half way round before discovering a problem with his rudder bearings and attempted to find safe harbor in the Kerguelens but bad weather made it impossible to moor despite outside help, and the boat had to be abandoned. In 2012-2013 edition he did complete the course but was disqualified from the race before the finish.
He was rescued in 2013 after his boat was hit by a large wave in severe weather on the way back from the Transat Jacques Vabre.

Race result highlights
Winner of the Around Alone Race 2002
World Record North Atlantic Crossing 2006
Winner Velux 5 Oceans Race 2007
Winner of the Barcelona World Race 2015
World Record Round the World Record Jules Verne Trophy 2017

Image	Joseph Areddy SCS - Fabrice Aragno
Camera assistant	Maxime Raymond
Second caméra assistant	Solane Mercier
Sounds	Léa Célestine Bernasconi - Fabrice Aragno
Producers	Fabrice Aragno - Jean-Guillaume Sonnier
Director assistant	Rob-Jan Lacombe
Unit manager	Ada Beaulieu
Light, grip	Antoine Buisson
Editing	Chloé Andreadaki. - Fabrice Aragno
Editing consultant	Dounia Sichov
Script consultants	Maria Giovanna Vagenas Gaëlle Macé Françoise Deriaz
Length	80 min
Screening format	DCP 4K vo fr / audio 5.1 and 7.1
Trailer	https://vimeo.com/1103488427/c96d3f77d2?

Awards

Locarno Film Festival	First price - Youth Jury Spécial Mention - Ecumenical Jury Bocalino d’Oro - Indépendant Critics Jury

The concept for the film

For me, everything comes naturally, one thing after another, they go hand in hand, grow, and are passed on.

In 2013, I had the good fortune, or rather the opportunity, to create a video work for a major exhibition in Switzerland that brought together painters who had painted Lake Geneva. From Turner to Courbet, Vallotton, and even Dürer. They wanted to include filmmakers, and therefore Jean-Luc Godard. Working on these paintings and facing the majestic lake, I was struck by the contrast between what it expresses through what we see (here, through the prism of the painters' sensibilities) and what it resonates within us, in our invisible interiors. And I found this relationship surprising. I called the video work I was doing ‘The Invisible’ precisely because feelings, which are invisible, are expressed by what we see in front of us, the ‘visible’ of the lake and its visible variations, of our invisibilities. I then thought it would be interesting to go into this visible realm, but really into it, to express our invisible feelings.

Shortly afterwards, a friend told me about a sailing race lasting several days and nights, without assistance, in pairs, where, after two days, fatigue brought out feelings like never before and the body took its place, almost animal-like in the elements.

Then, shortly afterwards, in 2015 (exactly 10 years ago to the day), I met Clotilde at the Locarno Film Festival. We were both members of the jury and found that we shared the same feelings about cinema and a common desire to pursue these feelings through practice.

And then we embarked, little by little.

Can you speak to the decision to allow the images to hold the most weight, in lieu of heavy

dialogue?

I couldn't find the words in spoken language to express my feelings, so.I was naturally attracted to cinema, I see it and feel it as an art form at the crossroads of painting and photography, music (sound and silence), dance (movement) and poetry (for the silence it also evokes...). It seems to me to be the ideal art form for expressing the » Indicible », to express what cannot or dare not be said. And what a wealth of infinite possibilities when we have at our disposal an image that can be 12 meters wide and 6 meters high, with 8 audio tracks and darkness and silence, and the fact that we can bring in captured reality (humans, landscapes, movements, etc) and turn it into a complete image and sounds composition.

In cinema, we can consider faces like landscapes and landscapes like characters, so…

Can you speak to the dedication and patience it takes to capture nature this way?

This film took quite some time. I was working very close with Jean-Luc (Godard), there were several films, then Covid, then his last films, then his departure, then the pain. But during those years, having bought a boat (the one in the film, with money from a writing grant), I filmed alone on the lake, with a camera and microphone, throughout all seasons and weather conditions (sometimes even slightly dangerous storms...). It was wonderful to be listening to things. Even simple events that can happen right in front of us, in that delightful, gentle glide of a sailboat gliding through the evening breeze along the shore. A small world, a past, paradises glide by. Magical!

Can you speak to casting the film and finding the correct chemistry between leads that would allow so much silence, while still conveying the themes of the film?

Well, Clotilde is an incredible woman, full of strength, sensitivity, fragility and strength once again. And what's more? She is a very talented, experienced actress, gentle and strong and gentle (and strong). She is magnificent! She is a woman in all her strength and beauty. And it is wonderful to work with her natural generosity, her sensitivity, her freedom of being. She threw herself into it, no pun intended, not recklessly, but with renewed vigour, I would say. And that is what I wanted to clarify, not to recount, but to express through the brushes of cinema.
And to her generosity was added, blended naturally, the presence, strength and gentleness, the body and choreography of Bernard Stamm, an immense sailor who has faced the world, storms and waves head-on, with his body, winning awards and setting records on the high seas, rounding Cape Horn several times, etc. A beast, you might say. But no, he has an incredible tenderness and sensitivity that emerges in a desperate look as he emerges from an abyss at the stern of the boat, before coming back out and restarting the engine.
And they found each other, rediscovered each other, in front of our cameras! Neither actress nor sailor, but two beings, alone, together, caught up in the torments of life, of time, of the loss of things and the return of the essentials.

Variety
Holly Jones
august 2025

Devant l’éclair -
sublime est celui
qui ne sait rien.

Before the lightning bolt -
sublime is he
who knows nothing.

Matsuo Bashô

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