



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE  
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2019  
Official Selection - Orizzonti

NIELS  
**SCHNEIDER**

ADÈLE  
**EXARCHOPOULOS**



**REVENIR**  
**BACK HOME**

a film by JESSICA PALUD

# SYNOPSIS

This is the farm where Thomas was born.

This is his family. His brother, who won't be coming back, his mother, who is going down the same road, and his father, who has always stood aloof. Thomas gets back to everything he ran away from twelve years ago. Only today, there is Alex, his six-year-old nephew, and Mona, the boy's radiant mother.

## INTERVIEW WITH JESSICA PALUD

### *What was your background before this first feature film?*

I first directed short films and music videos, improvising as I went. Then my last short, Marlon, was well received in France and abroad: I showed it around in many festivals, until it was nominated for a Cesar Award in 2018.

### *The importance of feelings, a taste for unsaid things, there are similarities between Marlon and Back Home...*

I find reserve more appealing than hysteria on screen. I like films that take you on an emotional rise: you bring in characters, without knowing where they come from or where they are going, you take them through a journey, and let the audience learn more about them along the way. The funny thing is I was raised on Hollywood mainstream films, only later did I shift alone into a more delicate form of cinema, with more sensitive and damaged characters...

### *Where did you find the setting for Back Home?*

In the Drôme area, between Valence and Montélimar: I wanted sunlight, a warm atmosphere and a bright image to compensate for the harshness of the story. I also needed the audience to believe that the place really existed. I wanted realism, but with colours, not a bleak kind of realism.

### *Why is there such a conflict between the father and the son?*

It is never really explained. Thomas left. We learn in a dialogue with Alexandre that Thomas is the eldest son, the one who is traditionally meant to take over the farm.

I guess he left when he was quite young, at 17 or 18. He didn't want to get stuck, he wanted to see the world. Twelve years have passed. Maybe he did come back for Christmas at first, then less and less frequently. With the distance, people don't call anymore, years go by and when they come back eventually, it's too late. When Matthieu died, his father told Thomas not to come. I don't judge Thomas, life is complicated. He feels some shame. Maybe if he had stayed, none of this would have happened...

### *How did you choose your actors?*

Niels Schneider is an actor both mysterious and strong; he doesn't need to speak to convey emotions. It was important for Thomas, who is so quiet. Since we catch pieces of information along the way, bit by bit, we needed to be engrossed, both emotionally and physically, in the character. The story takes place in five days. Within a few hours, Thomas discovers everything he has missed: the selling of the cows, the real cause of his brother's death, the disarray of his family. He lets himself be swept away by this house, which he deserted years before, and by this touching young woman... I like the idea of the audience wondering whether or not he is in love with Mona, but really, it is above all the story of two people fixing themselves together.

As for Adèle, if Blue is the Warmest Color is such a masterpiece, it is mostly thanks to her. Adèle is a great actress: she shows real emotional intelligence, humanity, power and rare instinctive moves. She is the real deal.



### *And what about little Roman, who plays Alexandre?*

I met about a hundred kids, and I was at once taken with Roman. Although there were two things against him: he was really short-sighted, yet I needed him to play without glasses, and he has a strong character. But something happened when he appeared on screen. It was a crucial choice, because much information goes through Alexandre in the film, as the boy speaks more than the adults. Also, when stories are difficult, children bring people together... Roman was incredible during his screen tests. I told my producers that I wouldn't make the film without him!

On set, it wasn't always easy: Roman had moments of pure magic, but suddenly, in the next take, he didn't feel like playing anymore, he would just stop. I spent a lot of time handling him. He didn't have the script, I just explained him every scene, and what was at stake for his character. I would read him the dialogues before each take, and since he has this crazy memory, he would repeat each and every word of it.

### *What was your approach regarding mise-en-scène?*

I chose to film really close to bodies, to scrutinize faces, to try and decipher emotions. I wanted the audience to feel like they knew these people well at the end of the film, that it could be their brother, their father, etc. Hand-held filming was also a firm choice. That way, blocking

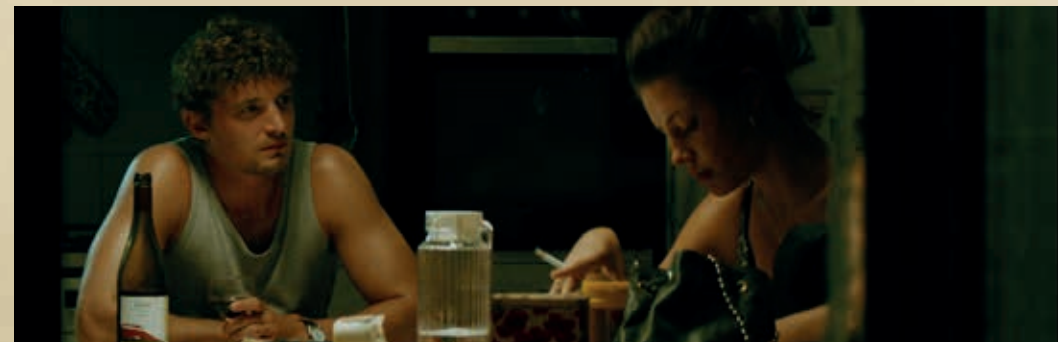
takes less time and you can focus on the acting. I like true-to-life performances in films.

### *The scene when Thomas takes Alexandre to the farm next door is pivotal: we get to learn bits of information, and it puts the family tragedy into a wider, up-to-date context, with organic farming, the right-wing, etc.*

Through that story, I also wanted to address the current difficulties of farmers, even though it is not a film about farming. The decline of the agricultural world, the farms without livestock, the empty countryside and its profound solitude, both moral and emotional. The isolated families, the worn-out men... For many of them, family and the farm are as one.

### *The film has an open ending. What will happen next?*

I like open endings, they spark off debate. People must wonder: is Thomas going to leave or not? I think they would like him to stay. I could have let the shot linger on, to suggest that he will... But actually, the story isn't about that: it is about a moment in the life of these people, for five days. Whether Thomas stays or not, during this slice of life, these persons will have helped each other and gotten themselves back on track together.





## CAST

Niels Schneider  
Adèle Exarchopoulos  
Patrick d'Assunção  
Franck Falise  
Jonathan Couzinié  
Roman Coustère Hachez  
Catherine Salée

Thomas  
Mona  
Michel  
Catherine  
Marco  
Eric  
Alex  
l'infirmière

With the friendly participation of Hélène Vincent

## CREW

Direction Jessica Palud  
Screenplay Jessica Palud – Philippe Lioret – Diastème.  
Freely based on the novel by Serge Joncour  
« L'amour sans le faire », Editions Flammarion.

Production Marielle Duigou & Philippe Lioret, Fin Août Productions  
DOP Victor Seguin  
Editing Thomas Marchand  
Sets Esther Mysius  
Sound Yolande Decarsin, Rym Debbarh-Mounir,  
Emmanuel Bonnat & Vincent Verdoux

Music Augustin Charnet & Mathilda Cabezas  
Assistant director Ilan Cohen  
Script Louise Albon  
Costumes Alexia Crisp-Jones  
Unit production manager Patrick Armisen  
Casting Stéphanie Doncker

A coproduction Fin Août Productions, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Cinéma

In association with PYRAMIDE  
With the participation of La Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes et du CNC  
With the participation of OCS  
With the support of La PROCIREP, L'ANGOÀ  
In association with COFINOVA 15, SOFCINEMA 13 DEVELOPPEMENT  
World sales PYRAMIDE INTERNATIONAL



France | 2019 | 1h17 | 5.1 | 1:66 | Color

### WORLD SALES

PYRAMIDE INTERNATIONAL  
+33 1 42 96 02 20  
amauruc@pyramidefilms.com  
constance@pyramidefilms.com

### INTERNATIONAL PRESS

RENDEZ-VOUS  
VIVIANA ANDRIANI  
+33 6 80 16 81 39 - viviana@rv-press.com  
AURÉLIE DARD  
+33 6 77 04 52 20 - aurelie@rv-press.com

Photos and Press Kit downloadable on [www.pyramidefilms.com](http://www.pyramidefilms.com)