

SATD BEN SATD PRESENTS

Alex
LUTZ

Léa
DRUCKER

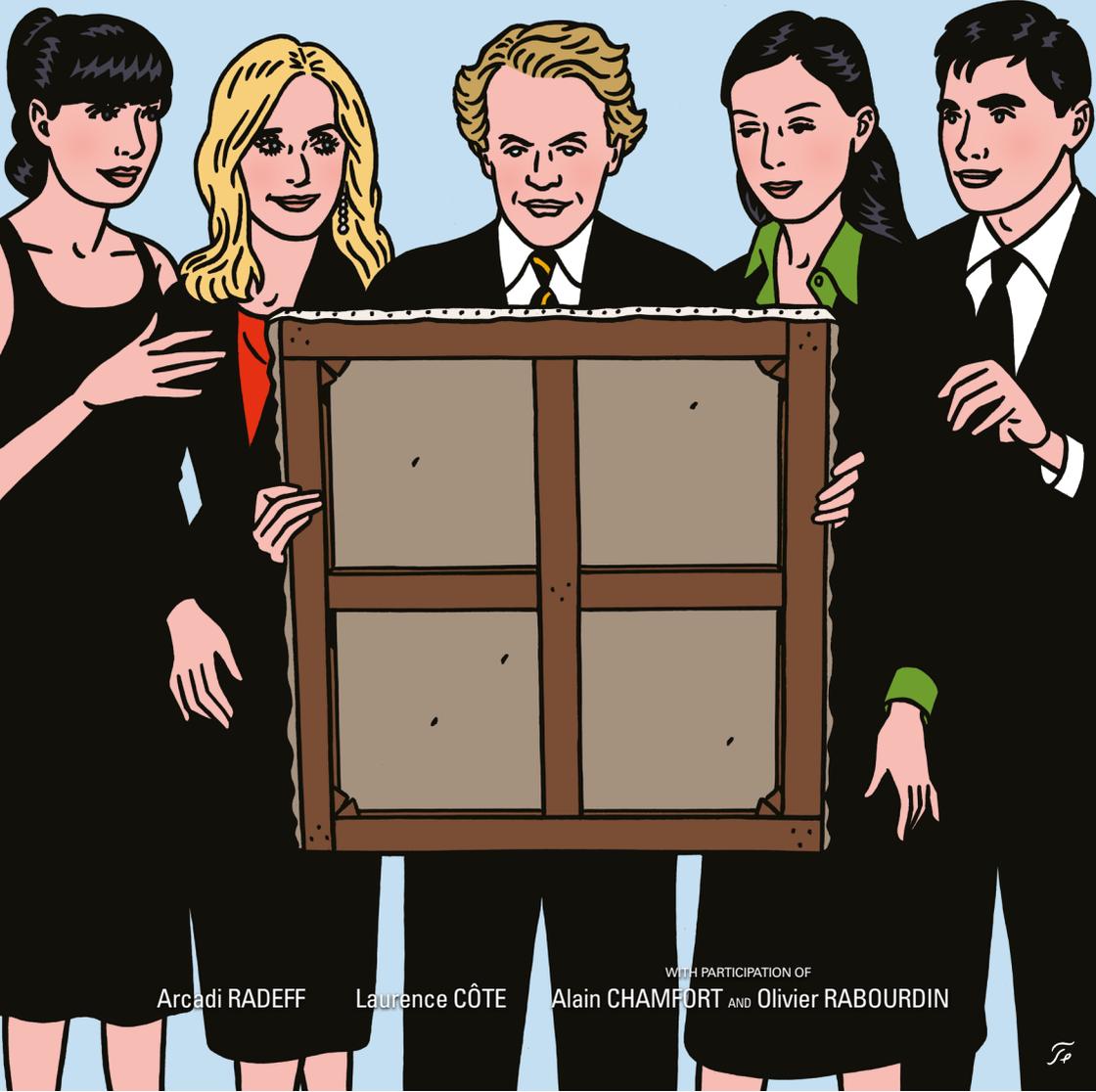
Nora
HAMZAWI

Louise
CHEVILLOTTE

AUCTION

LE TABLEAU VOLÉ

a film by
Pascal BONITZER



Arcadi RADEFF

Laurence CÔTE

WITH PARTICIPATION OF
Alain CHAMFORT AND Olivier RABOURDIN



André Masson, an auctioneer at the famous Scottie's auction house, receives a letter one day stating that a painting by Egon Schiele has been discovered in Mulhouse at the home of a young worker. Very skeptical, he makes the trip and has to face the truth: the painting is authentic, a masterpiece gone missing since 1939, confiscated by the Nazis. André sees this discovery as the pinnacle of his career, but also the beginning of a struggle that could jeopardize it. Fortunately, he will be assisted by his ex-wife and colleague Bertina, and by his eccentric intern Aurore...





INTERVIEW WITH PASCAL BONITZER

INTERVIEW BY ANNE-CLAIRE CIEUTAT

In the opening credits, you mention that this work of fiction is based on real events.

Indeed, the film is, as is often said, “based on a true story”: the discovery, in the early 2000s, of a painting by Egon Schiele in the house of a young chemical worker in the outskirts of Mulhouse by a modern art specialist from a major international auction house. It turned out that the painting had been looted by the Nazis. It had been kept in a room heated by a coal stove for seventy years, so it was really dirty when it was found.

How did you create the colourful cast of characters that revolve around it?

With Iliana Lolic, who is credited as script collaborator, we conducted about twenty interviews with auctioneers, gallery owners, antique dealers, etc., which amounted to two hundred and fifty pages worth of notes. I drew my inspiration from this extensive material to create the story, a plot, and characters such as the young trainee, the ex-wife, the lawyer, the young worker, his friends, his mother, etc.

After the world of finance in *Tout de suite maintenant*, this time you have immersed yourself in the art market.

There is always something cynical and disgusting about the world of money, that’s just the way it is. And regarding a work of art, I found it funny to show that people are only concerned about how much money the

painting is going to make. André Masson (the painter’s namesake) is capable of appreciating the beauty of a work by Egon Schiele, but what interests him most is its monetary and market value, and what his company (Scottie’s) is going to get out of it in terms of benefits and glory, in this fiercely competitive environment between rival companies.

Frivolity and seriousness coexist. In the sequence in the Kellers’ kitchen, the story of the painting’s journey is tragic. How did you go about balancing the tones?

I always try to mix tones in my films. My characters tend to be comedy characters. But of course, in this sequence, in which the dispossession of Jewish property and the gruesome fate of the art collector are addressed, the tone becomes more serious because we are dealing with the Holocaust. It is the historical background of the story, but it is not the subject of the film.

As the painting goes back to its rightful place, the relationships between the characters become more fluid. Communication between André and Aurore, for instance, stops being jerky. Did you envision those movements as communicating vessels?

Does the painting really go back to “its rightful place”? Actually, I don’t know. There are several conflicts between the characters in the story. In the end, we needed things to cool down. The film’s structure is quite unusual for me: I change points of view



and protagonists quite often; sequences alternate, they follow a character, lose another only to return to them again, in a constantly precarious balance. I particularly enjoyed this interplay between plots, between the main and secondary characters, which had something slightly musical about it.

You bring together characters from different social backgrounds...

That's the other novelty for me, as I usually place my characters in relatively homogenous environments. For the first time, I endeavoured to confront two socially heterogeneous backgrounds. The actors who play the three young people helped me a lot in finding the right tone for each character. They are brilliant, energetic and funny. When Suzanne Egerman, who is played by Nora Hamzawi, says that the family in Mulhouse are "simple people," it sets the tone for the first meeting with young Martin Keller and his mother: the two "specialists" from Scottie's are walking on eggshells, they try not to sound condescending, aware as they are of the social discrepancy, right up to the nervous laugh when they see the painting.

This unexpected burst of laughter exemplifies the borderline between truth and lies that runs through your film, through the question of the painting's authenticity, or Aurore's constant lies...

Aurore lies all the time and we don't know why. Even I don't know why. Some people are like that. It can make them a little scary, unless they get caught in a lie, which eventually happens to Aurore (curing her in the process). Besides, on another level, the question of the authenticity of the painting

is also raised from the outset. The art world is contaminated by money, and therefore the likelihood of a counterfeit is a constant threat. Forgers are legion, and some are even famous for their skills. But I wasn't interested in all that, and Egon Schiele's painting is authentic, end of discussion. I didn't want to dwell on the stages of its authentication. From the moment it was discovered in Martin and his mother's house in Mulhouse, we just assume that it is a genuine Schiele, whose authenticity has been properly established.

Martin is perhaps the most upright and honest character of all. Arcadi Radeff plays him as such: with unflinching eyes, on which the camera lingers at the end of the film when he is acclaimed.

He is the character who moves me the most, and I think he is the real hero of the story. Martin is both a touching and mysterious character. He unconsciously senses how money could ruin his life, change it for the worse, like those people who win the lottery and end up destroyed. He doesn't turn down the Wahlberg heirs' generous donation, but he refuses to let it turn his life upside down, or make him betray his friends, or his class.

Martin and André share similar childhood emotional wounds which are still vivid. Their stories work as a rhyme in your script.

André mentions humiliating episodes that triggered his need for social revenge, and an overcompensation that has him wear expensive watches, tailor-made suits, and drive luxury cars. Martin tells his friends about an isolated embarrassing incident with a girl when he was a child. We don't assume that he was bullied. Humiliation is a theme that interests me a great deal and that recurs regularly in my films in various forms.



PASCAL BONITZER

Pascal Bonitzer, born in Paris in 1946, published his first article in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1969. Some of his reviews and essays on cinema have been compiled in collections such as "Le Regard et la Voix" (10/18, 1976), "Le Champ aveugle" (*Cahiers du Cinéma*/Gallimard, 1981) and "La Vision Partielle" (Capricci, 2016).

In 1976, together with Serge Toubiana and Jean Jourdeuilh, he wrote *Moi, Pierre Rivière, ayant égorgé ma mère, ma sœur et mes frères...* by René Allio.

In 1977 he wrote André Téchiné's *The Brontë Sisters* (*Les sœurs Brontë*), followed in 1982 by three films: Barbet Schroeder's *Cheaters* (*Tricheurs*), Pascal Kané's *Liberty Belle* and Jacques Rivette's *Love on the Ground* (*L'Amour par terre*).

This was followed by ten films for Rivette, mostly co-written with Christine Laurent, including *The Gang of Four* (*La bande des quatre*) (1987), *La Belle Noiseuse* (1991), *Joan The Maid* (*Jeanne la Pucelle*) (1994), *Up, Down, Fragile* (*Haut, bas, fragile*) (1996), *Who knows?* (*Va savoir*) (2000) and *The Duchess of Langeais* (*Ne Touchez pas la Hache*) (2004).

Meanwhile, he has worked on films by André Téchiné: *Scene of the Crime* (*Le Lieu du Crime*), *The innocents* (*Les Innocents*), *My Favorite Season* (*Ma Saison préférée*), *Thieves* (*Les Voleurs*), *Changing Times* (*Les Temps qui changent*)...

For Raoul Ruiz (who cast him in 1977 in *The Suspended Vocation* aka *La Vocation suspendue*), he wrote *Three Lives and Only One Death* (*Trois Vies et une seule mort*) (1995) and *Genealogies of a Crime* (*Généalogies d'un Crime*) (1996).

In 1998, he met Raoul Peck, with whom he went on to write *Lumumba*, followed by *L'Affaire Villemin* (TV series in six episodes, 2006), *Murder in Pacot* (*Meurtre à Pacot*) (2014), *The Young Karl Marx* (*Le Jeune Karl Marx*) (2016) and *Les Cris* (in production).

For Anne Fontaine, he wrote the screenplay for *Gemma Boverly* (2014), *The Innocents* (*Les Innocentes*) (2016) and *White as Snow* (2018).

He directed his first film in 1995: *Encore*, with Jackie Berroyer and Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi (winner of the 1996 Jean Vigo Award).

Seven films followed, including *Nothing About Robert* (*Rien sur Robert*), with Fabrice Luchini, Sandrine Kiberlain, Michel Piccoli and Valentina Cervi (1998), *Small Cuts* (*Petites Coupures*), with Daniel Auteuil and Kristin Scott Thomas (2003), *Made in Paris* (*Je pense à vous*), with Edouard Baer, Charles Berling, Géraldine Pailhas and Marina de Van (2005), *Looking for Hortense* (*Cherchez Hortense*), with Isabelle Carré, Jean-Pierre Bacri and Claude Rich (2012), *Right Here Right Now* (*Tout de suite Maintenant*), with Agathe Bonitzer, Vincent Lacoste, Isabelle Huppert, Lambert Wilson, Pascal Greggory, Julia Faure (2016), *Spellbound* (*Les Envoutés*), with Sara Giraudeau, Nicolas Duvauchelle, Anabel Lopez, Iliana Lolic, Josyane Balasko (2019), *Auction* (*Le Tableau volé*), with Léa Drucker, Alex Lutz, Nora Hamzaoui, Louise Chevillotte, Arcadi Radeff (2023).



CAST

ANDRÉ **ALEX LUTZ**
BERTINA **LÉA DRUCKER**
MAITRE EGERMAN **NORA HAMZAWI**
AUREORE **LOUISE CHEVILLOTTE**
MARTIN **ARCADI RADEFF**
SINE **LAURENCE CÔTE**
HERVÉ QUINN **OLIVIER RABOURDIN**
AUREORE'S FATHER **ALAIN CHAMFORT**
MADAME X **MARISA BORINI**
PACO **MATTHIEU LUCCI**
KAMEL **ILIËS KADRI**
FRANCIS VIERVILLE **VINCENT NEMETH**
HENRI DAMBREUSE **ALEXANDRE STEIGER**
BOB WAHLBERG **DOUG RAND**
SAMSON KÖRNER **PETER BONKE**
MAITRE ROCHEBOURG **ADRIEN DE VAN**

CREW

SCRIPT, ADAPTATION, DIALOGUES **PASCAL BONITZER**
IMAGE **PIERRE MILON**
EDITING **MONICA COLEMAN**
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR **JUSTINIEN SCHRICKE**
ART DIRECTOR **SÉBASTIEN DANOS**
COSTUMES **MARIELLE ROBAUT**
SOUND **DAMIEN LUQUET, VINCENT GUILLON, JEAN-PAUL HURIER**
MAKE-UP **SARAH MESCOFF**
HAIR **ARNAUD DALENS**
MUSIC **ALEXEÏ AIGUÏ**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **RONAN LEROY**
POST-PRODUCTION MANAGER **CHRISTINE DUCHIER**
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER **KEVIN CHNEIWEISS**
PRODUCER **SAÏD BEN SAÏD**

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WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF **CINE+**, IN ASSOCIATION WITH **PYRAMIDE, CINECAP 6,**
CINECAP 7, CINEVENTURE 8

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