



Jeanne Balibar

LET ME GO

A FILM BY

Maxime Rappaz

WITH

*Thomas Sarbacher
Pierre-Antoine Dubey*

Presskit

GoldenEggProduction

PARAISO
PRODUCTION-DIFFUSION



LET ME GO

A FILM BY

Maxime Rappaz

LAISSEZ-MOI

Switzerland - France - Belgium | 2023 | 93'
French – English, German subtitles

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/XXXX>

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<https://m-appeal.com/catalogue/let-me-go>

SYNOPSIS

Every Tuesday, a neighbor takes care of Claudine's son while she goes to a mountain hotel to meet men passing through. When one of them decides to extend his stay for her, Claudine is confused and finds herself dreaming of another life.



STATEMENT

The mother figure has always driven my desire to tell a story and it was obvious from the outset that the main character of *Let me go* would be a mother. I wanted to portray a woman at that turning-point in life when the time one has left to live is shorter than the time already lived. The turning-point that can surprise us, that moment when, more than at any other, we may feel the need to make a change in our life.

Let me go is the story of the emancipation of a devoted mother, a demanding lover, an inspired woman in love, a woman who lets us into her world for the duration of a summer. A novelistic world set between valleys and mountains, sets conducive to introspection. A world organized by Claudine and which enables her to have different facets of her character coexist. But it's a world that unravels with the help of a love affair. An impossible story that revives in Claudine an intense thirst for freedom and, at the same time, a painful questioning about her future.

Oriented to a melodramatic tone and a desire to break away from naturalism, *Let me go* questions the inclination some people may have to lock themselves into patterns that prevent any access to states of happiness. It's a film with a refined grammar in which, on the face of it, no major events occur. And it is in this *not much* that I sought to make the inner storms of my character vibrate and to offer the viewer a space-time relationship conducive to questioning their own feelings, hopes and possible suffering.

Maxime Rappaz



Q&A

Interview between Jean Perret, former Dean of the HEAD Cinema section and director Maxime Rappaz

The plain, the mountain, the dam, the choice of landscapes, of this topography...

I set out to compose a topography between *high ground* and *low ground* so as to convey in images the double life that Claudine leads. On the one hand, her daily life in the valley with her son and her work as a seamstress, and on the other, the getaways she treats herself to in the mountains, where she behaves as a more independent woman. I liked the idea of the leitmotif of the journeys, which are the cross roads between the two worlds. And these paths contribute to the formal construction of the narrative. The opening of the film with a long tracking-in shot in the train, the passages in the darkness of the tunnels, the vertiginous dam and this sparsely-populated mountain are highly symbolic... And it was also important that Claudine should take my narrative towards the tale, or at least into a world far removed from naturalism.

Why set the story in 1997?

The choice of the 1990s was an aesthetic one, as I wanted to depict a period both close to and far from the present, one in which I grew up and which stimulates my imagination, yet without any documentary referencing. Above all, I wanted to tell a story in a novelistic genre that had not yet been pervaded by modern means of communication. I couldn't imagine my characters using mobile phones! And 1997 was also the summer when Princess Diana - whom Claudine's son, Baptiste, adores - died.



How important is the character with a disability and his relationship with his mother?

Initially, I asked myself some searching questions about the principle of having an able-bodied actor play such a role. In any case, I was very eager to work with the Swiss actor Pierre-Antoine Dubey, whom I had already cast in my short film *Tendresse*. We met with some specialists and the actor immersed himself in a centre for people with disabilities. We did a lot of rehearsing so as to develop a strong and credible presence for this character and to avoid the pitfall of any simplification that could have been a caricature. This character makes it possible to signify his total dependence on his mother. And I liked this best-of-both-worlds side to Claudine, who has a different lover every week to vary the pleasures, but also to be able to find material for the father's fictitious letters... It's true to say that Claudine is less attached to her lovers than the close bond she has with her son.

What about the choice of Jeanne Balibar for the role of Claudine?

I had already thought of Jeanne Balibar for my last short film, as I was already convinced by her allure, distinction and unparalleled diction. I asked her to read the screenplay for *Let me go*, and that convinced her. I was looking for a woman who could play the role of mother, lover and woman in love. A woman who could act in several registers: that of everyday life, sewing, her son; and the register of getaways in the mountains, where she comes across as a more expansive woman when she brings about encounters with strangers in the hotel. An elegant and mysterious woman who emanates a melancholic air that's simply moving. The power of Jeanne Balibar's acting has brought a decisive wealth of nuance and ambivalence to Claudine's character.

And the choice of Thomas Sarbacher to play Michael?

For the character of the man, I had, from the outset, imagined someone whose mother tongue would not be French, a man from Northern Europe. I met the German actor Thomas Sarbacher in Vienna, where we did a few tests that were very quickly conclusive. He has a literary, intellectual side to him, but at the same time he emanates a simple, unpretentious charm, enhanced with a melancholic touch. His Germanic accent adds to his natural charisma. I liked the fact that Thomas Sarbacher is not well-known in the French-speaking world and that he would be a great discovery alongside Jeanne Balibar.

And how about directing the actors?

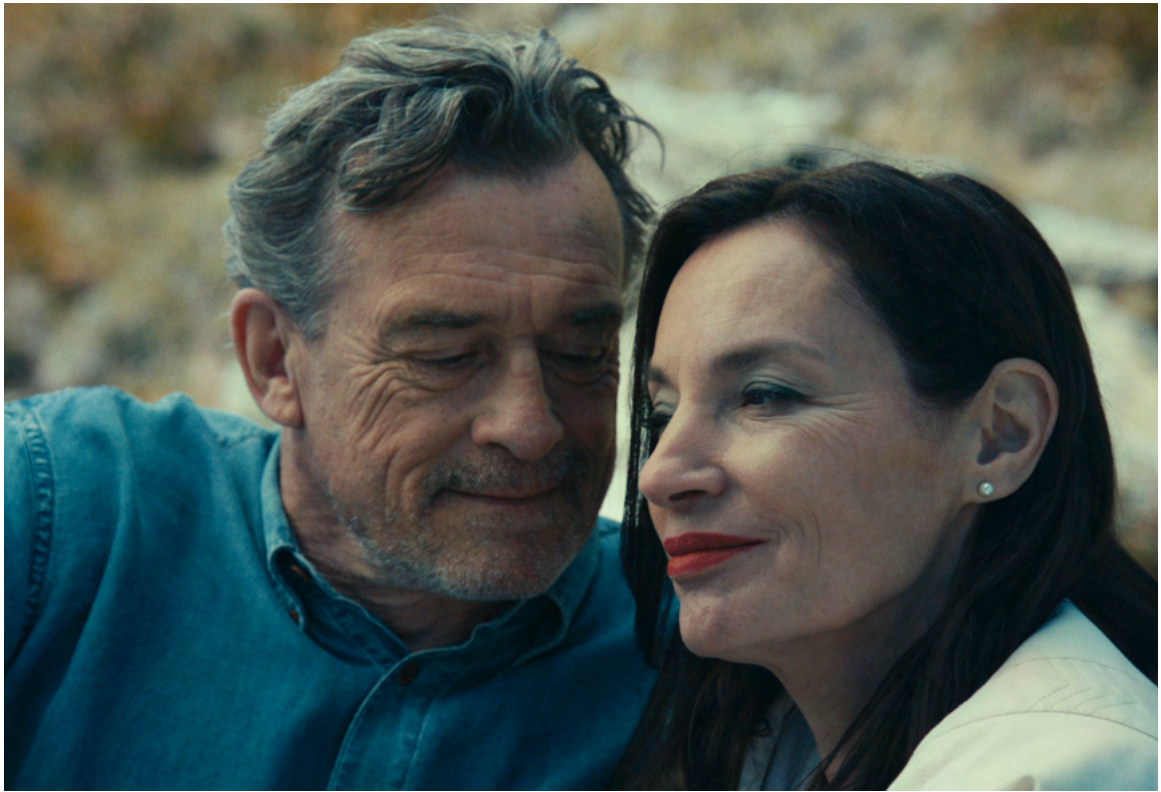
I like giving instructions mainly about voice intensity, the direction in which the actors look and the pace of their replies, I don't like the psychological aspects so much. I feel the need to work scrupulously in line with the screenplay, while preparing the movements and choreography ahead of time with my team and the actors. And I have the impression that this structured working framework nonetheless affords the actors a degree of freedom to make proposals. Jeanne Balibar surprised me in each shot and enabled me to nuance entire aspects of the character during the editing process.

And what about the direction, collaboration with Benoit Dervaux?

I very soon realized that Benoit Dervaux was the right cinematographer for my film: he became integrated in the process very quickly, he always listened to my intuitions and was kind about my hesitations. First of all, I knew about his commitment - camera on his shoulder - to the Dardenne brothers' films, before discovering other facets of his work, notably his own productions. We understood each other right away about the world of *Let me go*: a soft and pictorial tone, full shots, either static or in structured movements. We both wanted to take up the challenge of a rigorous approach to the agreed frames. I'm very grateful to him for his enthusiasm and work.

How was the film's ending decided on?

Even though the love story proved impossible for Claudine, it served as a springboard to change the course of her destiny. It was unthinkable for Claudine to accompany her lover across the Atlantic and, at the same time, everything had to change for her. At the end of the narrative, my character has, as it were, lost her son, she's left her home, let her lover take off: she's alone, she doesn't know where to go. But at last she's been set free! I like endings that gently shake us up and ask questions. I felt I wanted an open ending, in which the main character doesn't know what will become of her, an ending that would call for a second film.



Maxime Rappaz

Born in 1986 in Geneva, Maxime Rappaz worked in the fashion world before turning to cinema. In 2016, he obtained a master's degree in cinema and screenwriting (HEAD/ ECAL) and then directed the short films L'ÉTÉ and TENDRESSE. His first feature film LAISSEZ-MOI, starring Jeanne Balibar, will be released in 2023. Maxime Rappaz is currently writing his second feature film.



FILMOGRAPHY (selection)

- 2023 Laissez-moi (*Let me go*) | Fiction, 93' (ch/fr/bel)
ACID - Festival de Cannes
- 2018 Tendresse (*Tenderness*) | Fiction, 20'
Palm Springs ISFF, Kurzfilmtage Winterthur, Chéries Chéris, Queerlisboa...
- 2016 L'Été (*Summertime*) | Fiction, 13'
Festival Tous Ecrans Genève

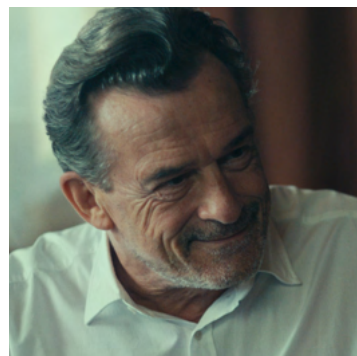
Jeanne Balibar

- 2023 Laissez-moi | Maxime Rappaz
- 2022 Irma Vep (serie) | Olivier Assayas
- 2021 Memoria | Apichatpong Weerasethakul
- 2019 Illusions Perdues | Xavier Giannoli
- 2018 Merveilles à Montfermeil | Jeanne Balibar
- 2018 Les Misérables | Ladj Ly
- 2017 Cold War | Pawel Pawlikowski
- 2017 Barbara | Mathieu Amalric



Thomas Sarbacher

- 2023 Laissez-moi | Maxime Rappaz
- 2022 Ouija (serie) | Thomas Bourguignon
- 2019 Unsere wunderbaren Jahre | Elmar Fischer
- 2017 A Gschicht über d'Lieb | Peter Evers
- 2016 Jonathan | Piotr Lewandowski
- 2015 Solness | Michael Klette
- 2014 Zoe & Julie | Markus Fischer
- 2007 Die Welle | Dennis Gansel



Pierre-Antoine Dubey

- 2023 Laissez-moi | Maxime Rappaz
- 2024 My Taiwanese Brothers | Maria Nicollier
- 2023 La Vie Devant (serie) | K. Reynicke & K. Wegenbauer
- 2018 Preparation To Be Together For
An Unknown Period Of Time | Lili Horvath
- 2015 Un Juif pour l'exemple | Jacob Berger
- 2014 Sweet Girls | Xavier Ruiz & Jean-Paul Cardinaux
- 2013 Pause | Mathieu Urfer



GoldenEggProduction

GoldenEggProduction is a film production company created in 2012 in Geneva, committed to identifying, developing and distributing films and, more broadly, ambitious audiovisual works by filmmakers with original and unique signatures whose points of view are rooted in contemporary society.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2023 Laissez-moi (*Let me go*) | Maxime Rappaz, 93' (CH/FR/BEL)
ACID Cannes
- 2022 Flores del Otro Patio | Jorge Cadena, 15' (CH/COL)
* Best Swiss Short - Winterthur, Special Award – SXSW, Audience Award – Glasgow ISFF*
- 2022 As Sacrificadas (*The Left Behind*) | Aurélie Oliveira Pernet, 21' (CH/PT)
Nominated to the Swiss & Portuguese Film Awards IFFR, Curtas, Clermont Ferrand ISFF...
- 2021 Chute (*Strangers*) | Nora Longatti, 20'
* Pardino d'Oro at Locarno Film Festival, Best Intl. Film at Reykjavik IFF *
- 2021 Menschenskind! (*Our Child*) | Marina Belobrovaja, 82'
Visions du Réel, DOK.fest München, Biografilm, Astra Sibiu IFF
- 2020 Supreme | Youssef Youssef, 20'
* Best Swiss School Film at Kurzfilmtage Winterthur *
- 2019 Tempête Silencieuse (*Silent Storm*) | Anaïs Moog, 13'
* Pardino d'Argento at Locarno Film Festival *
- 2018 Soeurs Jarariju (*The Jarariju Sisters*) | Jorge Cadena, 20' (CH/COL)
* Special Mentions at Berlinale & Kiev Molodist *, Karlovy Vary IFF
- 2018 Putin's Witnesses | Vitaly Mansky (CH/LAT/CZ)
* Grand Prix at Karlovy Vary IFF *, TIFF, IDFA, DOK. Leipzig, BFI London
- 2018 Tendresse (*Tenderness*) | Maxime Rappaz
Kurzfilmtage Winterthur, Solothurner Filmtage, Palm Springs ShortFest
- 2018 Je fais où tu me dis (*Dressed for Pleasure*) | Marie de Maricourt
* Special Mentions at Berlinale, Outfest LA & interFilm Berlin *
- 2017 Dans le lit du Rhône (*The River's Bed*) | Mélanie Pitteloud
Visions du Réel, Festival dei Popoli, DC EFF
- 2017 Les Dépossédés | Mathieu Roy (CH/CAN)
Jihlava IFF, RIDM Montreal
- 2016 Tadmor | Monika Borgmann & Lokman Slim (CH/FR/LEB)
* Best Swiss film & Special Mention of the Jury - Visions du Réel *

CURRENT PROJECTS

MALESTAR TROPICAL by Jorge Cadena | SPECTRUM by Philbert Aimé Mbabazi | KEIGEI KAKOCHO by Sophie Dascal | L'OCÉAN by Salah El Amri | LOOKING SHE SAID I FORGET by Naomi Pacifique | TROIS SOEURS by Aurélie Oliveira Pernet | COMMENT ALLEZ-VOUS? by Maxime Rappaz

Paraíso Production

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

2022 **CHURCHILL, POLAR BEAR TOWN** by Annabelle Amoros | Doc. 2022. 37 min. HD

* Nominated to the César Awards for Best Short Documentary 2023 *. *Festival International du Film de Clermont-Ferrand (Fr.) - Mention spéciale, Champs-Élysées Film Festival (Fr.), Festival Visions du réel (Sui.) - Special Youth Jury Award, Concorso Film Festival (It.), Festival du film de l'Est (Fr.), Indie Lisboa (Port.), Mention spéciale in Sylvestre Competition, Côté Court (Fr.) - Prix Prospective, RIDM (Can.), Cervino Cinemontain (It.), Festival de Gindou (Fr.), Festival Silhouettes (Fr.), Territoires en Images (Fr.) - Grand Prix, Doxs Rhur (All.), The Wild Fest (Esp.)...*

2022 **LE RITE** by Nils Schneider | Fiction. 2022. 28 min. HD

Diff : France 3 – *Festival côté court (Fr.), Festival du court métrage en plein air de Grenoble (Fr.), Indie Short Cannes (Fr.) - Best First Time Filmmaker Short & Best Actress for Virginie Efir, BFF Brussel Short Film Festival (Belg.), Psarokokalo Athens International Short Film Festival (Grec.)*.

2022 **SAUVAGE** de Léonore Mercier | Doc. 2022. 20 min. HD

Cinémed (Fr.), Fipadoc (Fr.) - Prix du meilleur court métrage, Les Escales Documentaires de La Rochelle (Fr.), Territoires en Images (Fr.) - Mention Spéciale.

2022 **LE CENTRE** by Alexandre Donot et Raphaël Rivière | Doc. 2022. 52 min. HD

Diff : France 3 Auvergne Rhône Alpes (23/11/22) et Public Sénat.

2022 **LÉO LA NUIT** by Nans Laborde-Jourdàa | Fiction. 2022. 22 min. HD

Festival du Film Indépendant de Bordeaux (Fr.), Festival International du Film de Clermont-Ferrand (Fr.), Champs-Élysées Film Festival (Fr.), Zinegoak Film Festival (Esp.), Lovers Films Festival (It.), Chéris Chéries Paris (Fr.), Bogoshort (Colomb.), Pink Screen (Belg.), Silicon Valley Queer Film Fest (USA).

2022 **ALIA** by Zahra Berrada | Fiction. 2022. 26 min. HD

Zinegoak Film Festival (Esp), Marocco Shorts International Film Festival (Mar.), Fairy Tales Queer Film Festival (Can.), Toronto Arab Film Festival (Can.), FIFOG Festival International du Film Oriental de Genève (Sui.), Des Images Aux Mots (Fr) - Prix du meilleur court métrage.

2021 **EMPLOYÉ/PATRON** by Manuel Nieto Zas | Fiction. 2021. 101 min. HD

Copro. Roken Films (Uruguay). Pasto (Argentina). Tokyo Films (Brazil) | SORTIE EN FRANCE LE 6 AVRIL 2022 - DIST. EUROZOOM Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Fr), Festival du Film de San Sebastian (Esp.), Mar del Plata (Arg.)...

2021 **L'HOMME QUI PEINT DES GOUTTES D'EAU** by Oan Kim et Brigitte Bouillot | Doc. 2021. 79 min. HD copro. Miru

Pictures (Corée du Sud) Hot Docs Festival (Ca), DocsBarcelona (Esp), Krakow International Film Festival (Pol) - Silver Horn for the High Artistic Value, Fipadoc (Fr.), Docaviv. (Isr.), DocLisboa (Port.), Corsica Doc (Fr.) - Young Jury Award, Traces de vie (Fr.), Doc NYC (USA), Florence Korea Film Festival (Cor.), NYCIFF NYC International Film Festival (USA), DMZ Documentary Film Festival (Cor.) - Emerging Documentary Filmmaker Award, Firenze Korean Film Festival (It.)...

2020 **LA PETITE** by Amira Géhanne Khalfallah | Fiction. 2020. 12 min. HD

copro. Prolégomènes (Algeria) 70ème Berlinale Generation (All.) Mention spéciale, Pano. du Maghreb and Middle-East (Fr.), Côté-court Pantin (Fr.)...

2019 **PRENDRE FEU** by Michaël Blin | Fiction. 2019. 26 min. HD

69ème Berlinale Shorts (Ger.). Hamburg Short Film Festival (Ger.). Côté-court de Pantin (Fr.), Concorso (It.)

2016 **GO HOME** by Jihane Chouaib | Fiction. 98 min. 2016. HD.

FRENCH RELEASE DECEMBER 2016, PARAÍSO

2015 **JE SUIS ANNEMARIE SCHWARZENBACH** by Véronique Aubouy | Doc. 88 min. 2015. HD.

FRENCH RELEASE APRIL 2015, PARAÍSO

2007 **LE RIDEAU DE SUCRE** by Camila Guzman Urzua Doc. 82 min. 2007.

FRENCH RELEASE OCTOBER 2007 - EPICENTRE FILMS

2005 **MON AMI MACHUCA** by Andrés Wood Fiction. 120 min. 2004.

FRENCH RELEASE JANUARY 2005 - OCÉAN FILMS

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PRODUCED BY	Gabriela Bussmann, Yan Decoppet & Camile Genaud
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