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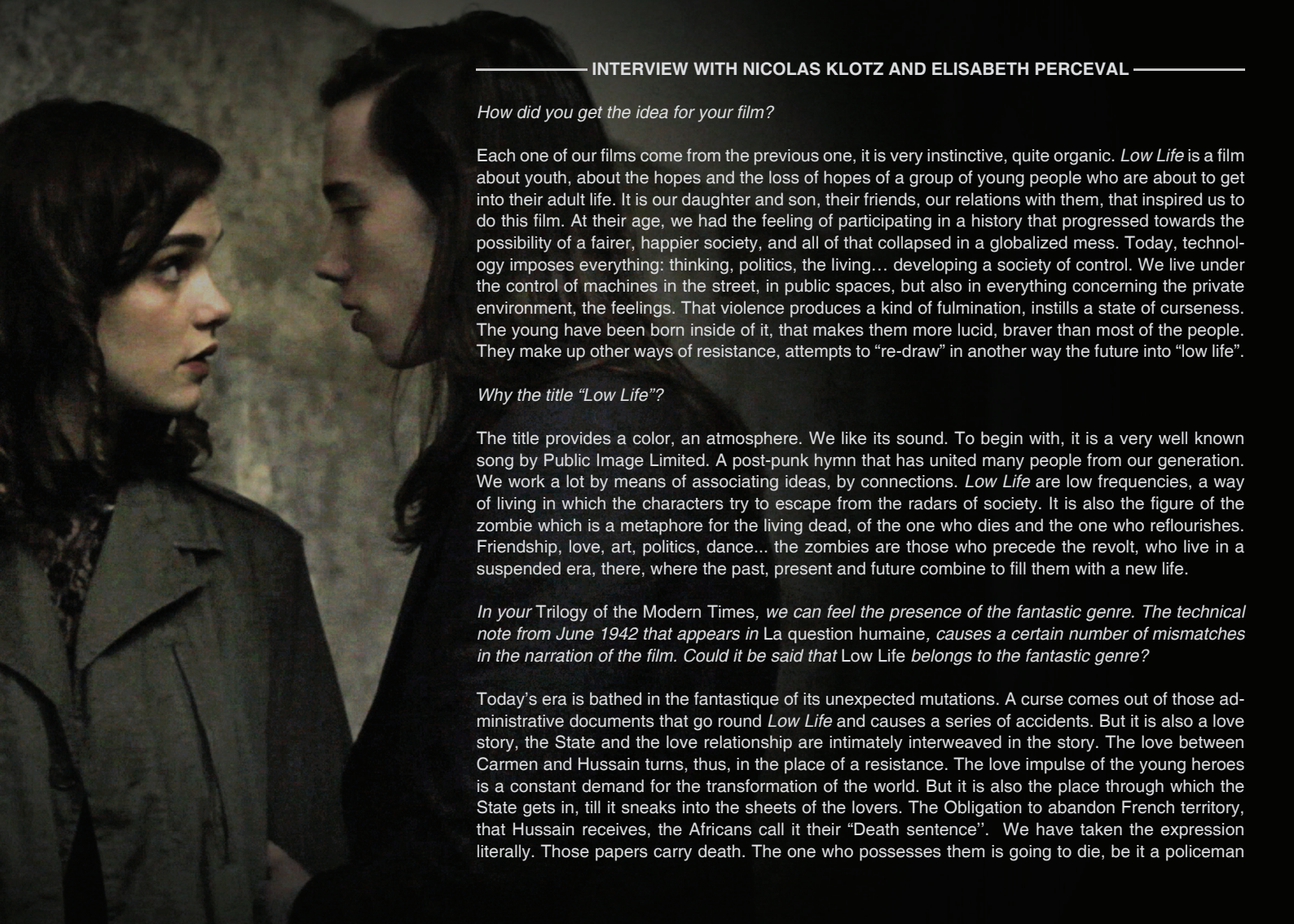
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# LOW LIFE

A film by Nicolas Klotz and Elisabeth Perceval



les films du losange



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## INTERVIEW WITH NICOLAS KLOTZ AND ELISABETH PERCEVAL

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*How did you get the idea for your film?*

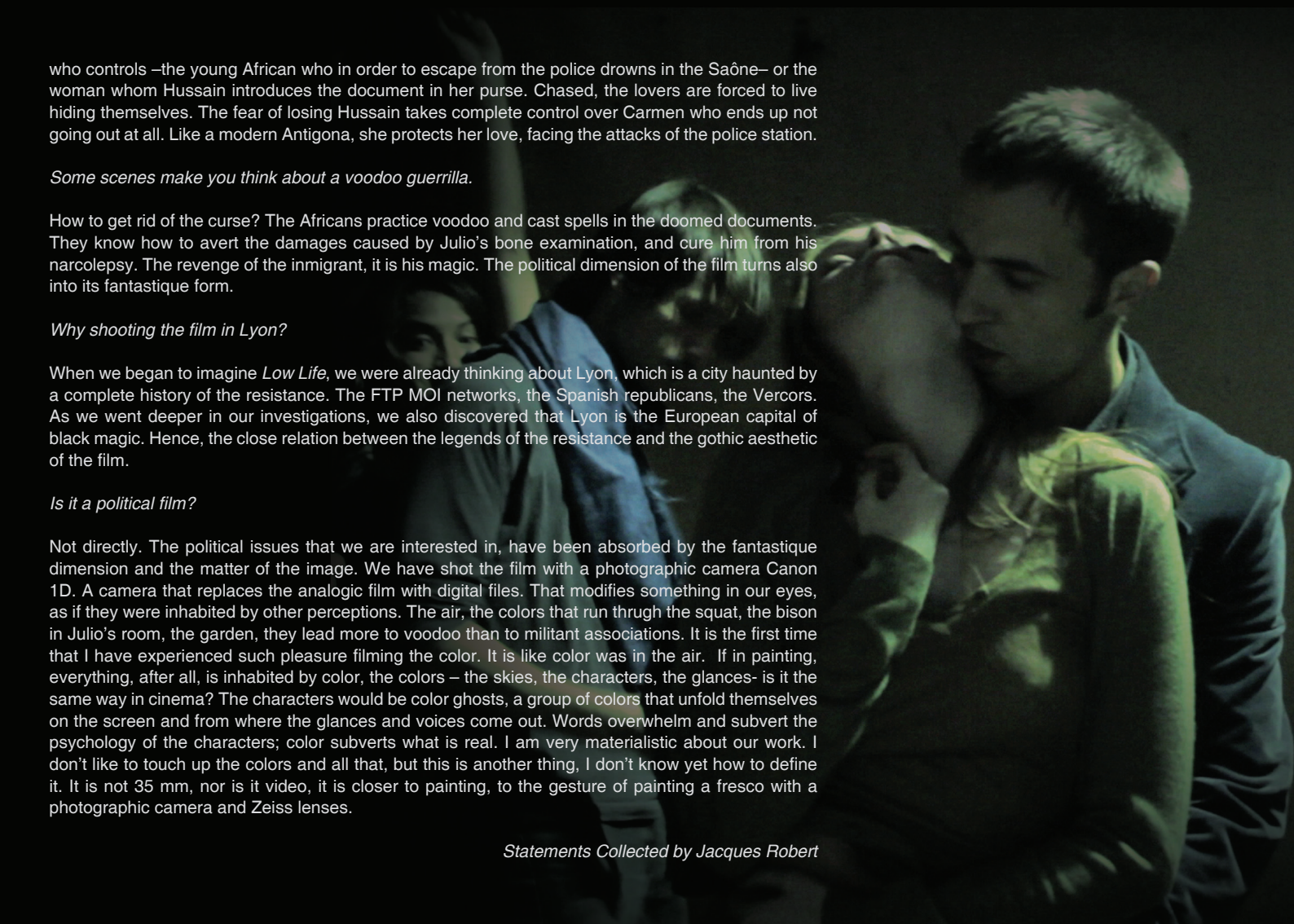
Each one of our films come from the previous one, it is very instinctive, quite organic. *Low Life* is a film about youth, about the hopes and the loss of hopes of a group of young people who are about to get into their adult life. It is our daughter and son, their friends, our relations with them, that inspired us to do this film. At their age, we had the feeling of participating in a history that progressed towards the possibility of a fairer, happier society, and all of that collapsed in a globalized mess. Today, technology imposes everything: thinking, politics, the living... developing a society of control. We live under the control of machines in the street, in public spaces, but also in everything concerning the private environment, the feelings. That violence produces a kind of fulmination, instills a state of curseness. The young have been born inside of it, that makes them more lucid, braver than most of the people. They make up other ways of resistance, attempts to “re-draw” in another way the future into “low life”.

*Why the title “Low Life”?*

The title provides a color, an atmosphere. We like its sound. To begin with, it is a very well known song by Public Image Limited. A post-punk hymn that has united many people from our generation. We work a lot by means of associating ideas, by connections. *Low Life* are low frequencies, a way of living in which the characters try to escape from the radars of society. It is also the figure of the zombie which is a metaphor for the living dead, of the one who dies and the one who reflowerishes. Friendship, love, art, politics, dance... the zombies are those who precede the revolt, who live in a suspended era, there, where the past, present and future combine to fill them with a new life.

*In your Trilogy of the Modern Times, we can feel the presence of the fantastic genre. The technical note from June 1942 that appears in La question humaine, causes a certain number of mismatches in the narration of the film. Could it be said that Low Life belongs to the fantastic genre?*

Today’s era is bathed in the fantastique of its unexpected mutations. A curse comes out of those administrative documents that go round *Low Life* and causes a series of accidents. But it is also a love story, the State and the love relationship are intimately interweaved in the story. The love between Carmen and Hussain turns, thus, in the place of a resistance. The love impulse of the young heroes is a constant demand for the transformation of the world. But it is also the place through which the State gets in, till it sneaks into the sheets of the lovers. The Obligation to abandon French territory, that Hussain receives, the Africans call it their “Death sentence”. We have taken the expression literally. Those papers carry death. The one who possesses them is going to die, be it a policeman

A dark, moody photograph of a man and a woman in a close embrace, possibly a scene from the film 'Low Life'. The lighting is low, creating a somber and intimate atmosphere. The man is on the right, looking down at the woman on the left. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting.

who controls –the young African who in order to escape from the police drowns in the Saône– or the woman whom Hussain introduces the document in her purse. Chased, the lovers are forced to live hiding themselves. The fear of losing Hussain takes complete control over Carmen who ends up not going out at all. Like a modern Antigona, she protects her love, facing the attacks of the police station.

*Some scenes make you think about a voodoo guerrilla.*

How to get rid of the curse? The Africans practice voodoo and cast spells in the doomed documents. They know how to avert the damages caused by Julio's bone examination, and cure him from his narcolepsy. The revenge of the immigrant, it is his magic. The political dimension of the film turns also into its fantastique form.

*Why shooting the film in Lyon?*

When we began to imagine *Low Life*, we were already thinking about Lyon, which is a city haunted by a complete history of the resistance. The FTP MOI networks, the Spanish republicans, the Vercors. As we went deeper in our investigations, we also discovered that Lyon is the European capital of black magic. Hence, the close relation between the legends of the resistance and the gothic aesthetic of the film.

*Is it a political film?*

Not directly. The political issues that we are interested in, have been absorbed by the fantastique dimension and the matter of the image. We have shot the film with a photographic camera Canon 1D. A camera that replaces the analogic film with digital files. That modifies something in our eyes, as if they were inhabited by other perceptions. The air, the colors that run through the squat, the bison in Julio's room, the garden, they lead more to voodoo than to militant associations. It is the first time that I have experienced such pleasure filming the color. It is like color was in the air. If in painting, everything, after all, is inhabited by color, the colors – the skies, the characters, the glances- is it the same way in cinema? The characters would be color ghosts, a group of colors that unfold themselves on the screen and from where the glances and voices come out. Words overwhelm and subvert the psychology of the characters; color subverts what is real. I am very materialistic about our work. I don't like to touch up the colors and all that, but this is another thing, I don't know yet how to define it. It is not 35 mm, nor is it video, it is closer to painting, to the gesture of painting a fresco with a photographic camera and Zeiss lenses.

*Statements Collected by Jacques Robert*



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## SYNOPSIS

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Young people. A possible relief. A curse runs through the city, papers carry death, bodies fall. During the night of the demonstration, Carmen meets Hussain, a young afghan poet; crazy in love, the lovers won't separate again. But, terrorized by the idea of him being arrested, Carmen forbids him to go out and shuts herself away with him. The lovers spend their days making love... little by little, Hussain gets the strange feeling that she keeps watch on him. ■

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## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

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2011: **Low Life** - Locarno International Film Festival, International Competition · 2010: **Zombies** (Experimental Film) · 2008: **La Consolation** (Short), **Jeunesse d'Hamlet** (Short) · 2007: **The Heartbeat Detector** - Cannes Directors' Fortnight · 2004: **The Wound** - Cannes Directors' Fortnight · 2000: **Paria** - San Sebastian Film Festival, Special Jury Prize · 1998: **Brad Mehldau** (Documentary), **James Carter** (Documentary)

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## CAST

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Carmen **CAMILLE RUTHERFORD** · Hussain **ARASH NAIMAN** · Charles **LUC CHESSEL** · Julio **WINSON CALIXTE** · Djamel **MICHAËL EVANS** · Julie **MAUD WYLER** · Sophie **MATHILDE BISSON-FABRE** · Georges **MATHIEU MOREAU DOMÉCQ** · Miguel **ISMAËL DE BEGOÑA** · Emma **MARIE KAUFFMAN**

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## CREW

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Screenplay **ELISABETH PERCEVAL** · Director **NICOLAS KLOTZ** · Cinematography **HÉLÈNE LOUVART (A.F.C.)** · Sound **ERWAN KERZANET** · Film editor **ROSE-MARIE LAUSSON** · Set decorator **ANTOINE PLATTEAU** · Costume designer **CAROLINE TAVERNIER** · Original music **ULYSSE KLOTZ** and **ROMAIN TURZI** · Production management **ANNE MOULLAHEM** · Executive producer **ANTOINE BEAU** · Produced by **AGORA FILMS** · In coproduction with **MAÏA CINEMA**, **LES FILMS DU LOSANGE**, **RHÔNE-ALPES CINÉMA** · With the participation of **CANAL+**, **CINECINEMA**, **TV5 MONDE**, **LA RÉGION RHÔNE-ALPES** (with the support of **CENTRE IMAGES - RÉGION CENTRE**), **LAPROCIREP / ANGOA** and **CNC**

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2011 - 2h00 - Sound 5.1 - 35MM - DCP



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