

Charles Gillibert presents

ISABELLE HUPPERT

THINGS TO COME

A FILM BY

MIA HANSEN-LØVE



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THINGS TO COME

A film by
MIA HANSEN-LØVE

with

**ANDRÉ
MARCON**

**ROMAN
KOLINKA**

**SARAH
LE PICARD**

**SOLAL
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FRENCH, GERMAN • 2016 • 1H40 • COLOR • 1.85 - 2K • SOUND 5.1



Nathalie teaches philosophy at a high school in Paris. She is passionate about her job and particularly enjoys passing on the pleasure of thinking. Married with two children, she divides her time between her family, former students and her very possessive mother.

One day, Nathalie's husband announces he is leaving her for another woman. With freedom thrust upon her, Nathalie must reinvent her life.



Photo © Ludovic Bergery

Interview

MIA HANSEN-LØVE

/ What's the first shot in a movie that made an impression on you?

I'm not sure I could name the first shot but a scene that obsesses me is the final scene in Eric Rohmer's *A Winter's tale*. On a bus, the heroine bumping into the man she has rather absurdly carried a torch for. And that ending—"Don't cry." "They're tears of happiness." Like "A funny old road I've taken to reach you" in *Pickpocket*. A character's arc, all that perseverance eventually justified by the end of the movie, two people reunited, cinema working its spell. That kind of ending gives me a glimpse of the relationship I have with the cinema.

/ For you, has cinema always been a way of exploring the inner workings of a person who is constantly evolving?

Yes, it's also the possibility of capturing existence, through a presence. To my mind, films are moving portraits and only cinema is capable of making that. It's as much about pinning down that which may be sensitive, sensual or simply ephemeral, as trying to find an opening onto the impalpable, the infinite.

/ Your films, specifically, seem to blend a portrait of contemporary manners with an exploration of the soul in order to delve deeper, film after film, in the depiction of interiority.

In any event, my films all share in that quest and speak to each other. It's about embodying a destiny, trying to give it meaning, without it being through words. And without the stories I tell ending particularly well, I try both to express a truth and to find in it a kind of plenitude. That's what I expect cinema to do.

/ Your films do not check the "psychological drama" box, in the sense that the meaning that emerges is multifaceted and questions us long after we have left the theater.

When I write, I'm concerned with rhythm, musicality and lots of other things but hardly at all with a lack of information about the characters' "psychology." What we need to know is generally expressed as we go along without needing to be explained. In fact I try, from writing through editing, to remove as much information as possible. If I feel a scene

merely serves a purpose, I cut it out. If I keep it, it has existential value, poetry.

/ More than ever, in *Things To Come*, your characters' destinies are not set in stone. You film life as an eternal chance to start over.

I have an ambivalent relationship to that idea. How is it possible to believe simultaneously in freedom and destiny? This creates tension, between the conviction that you must allow yourself to be swept along and the belief in possible fulfillment through movement one cannot control.

/ It often feels as if Isabelle Huppert's character has absolutely no idea not only what tomorrow, but also what the very next moment will bring. Does that come from liberties that you allow yourself on set? Do you stick closely to the script or do you look for happy accidents?

My films aren't cut out to be rehearsed before we shoot simply because the truth of every scene relies heavily on the setting, its lighting, its atmosphere, and how that influences the actors. The script, structure and dialogue are very important but what is at stake on set is bringing it to life, and that comes from an interaction between cast and director that can only occur at that precise moment. It may take some time or slot swiftly into place, it may be how you pictured it or take you in a completely different direction—there are no rules, except to maintain a state of openness, total acuity.

/ You are a young filmmaker but you brush off the issue of age by looking at stages of life that you have not physically experienced.



Photo © Ludovic Bégery

***Things To Come* is the portrait of a woman of your mother's age. How important is this notion of generations in your work?**

I have always felt out of sync with my age, to an almost pathological degree that drives my writing. It nurtured a melancholy, from which cinema released me. You write to free yourself of your demons while constantly going back to them. When I shoot, my sense of removal from the world vanishes. The sustained tempo of writing and shooting over the last ten years comes from an addiction to this feeling of rediscovering the present. Whatever the age or gender of the characters, when I'm shooting, I feel totally at one with them, and with myself.

/ *Things To Come* is the portrait of a woman who teaches and profoundly loves her job.

You explore an under-exploited theme in movies, which could be the world of ideas.

Nathalie's destiny, her strength in enduring the breakup, is indissociable from her relationship to ideas, teaching and transmission. I could not approach that in an anecdotal manner. Moreover, what reinforced my desire to film a philosophy teacher who is possessed by her job is the cinema's lack of liberty in terms of the representation of intellectuals and of the seesaw elaboration of ideas. There are few films where you know which newspapers the characters read, which ideas they are attached to and which political issues agitate them. I always try to establish my characters in the real world, but *Things To Come* was a chance for me to embrace fully this relationship to books and ideas. That cannot be reduced to

a description of a social environment. It also involves a form of precision that may be seen not only as documentary but also poetical. I am touched when I hear the names of the places the characters pass through. Likewise, the names of magazines they read or bands they listen to. Patrick Modiano's obsession with names, places and dates, as fixed points that one can cling to, is an aspect of his inspiration with which I have always identified. It's linked to our need for memory, the fragility of life and the desire to bear its marks.

/ Where does Nathalie come from? How did she take shape in your imagination?

Partly, she comes from the couple my parents formed, their intellectual bond and my mother's energy. Afterwards, there is the brutality of separation and the difficulty for many women over a certain age to escape a form of solitude, which I, like everybody else, have had occasion to observe. But I wrote the movie with Isabelle Huppert in mind, so Nathalie emerged from the encounter between my memories and observations, and Isabelle. The script of *Things To Come* practically wrote itself despite the fears I had about the theme and its effect on me. The subject matter frightened me because of a certain darkness linked to the fact of being a woman, but it had to be. If I was going to go there, I wanted to do so without fear or self-censorship. Fear, for example, would have been to introduce a romantic encounter to make it a happier ending. Self-censorship would have been to make Nathalie something other than a philosophy teacher. The more I worked on it, the more I realized the link between philosophy teaching as I experienced it through



my parents and what cinema means to me. That which was passed onto me and that I reproduced in my own way is the quest for meaning. Constant questioning. It is also an obsession with clarity and preoccupation with integrity. Deep down, for me, art and philosophy are two possible routes to a single thing, and that is our link with the invisible. The strength and courage that our questioning, however scary, brings us are at the crux of the movie.

/ In films, characters are often defined by their social background. Here, it's as if they are defined by what's on their bookshelves. Nathalie and her husband have a near-biological relationship with the books they own, as if those books were the backbone of their existence.

In the apartment where I grew up, the great luxury was the book collection. I don't think I

could live in a place devoid of books and I have always paid particular attention to what's on the bookshelves in my movies. It's not simply about showing that the characters are educated but also about taking pleasure from the choice of books and publishers. A row of first editions or a row of paperbacks, a brown row or a multicolored row don't say the same thing. When what's on the bookshelves is phony, it jumps right out at me. What's more, in my films, people do read and they do go the movies. They do engage with works that make them what they are. As is true of most people in real life. Contrary to preconceived ideas, I think that people accord a greater place in their lives to art than their social "peers" in movies. Toward the end, in the Vercors, Nathalie reading Vladimir Jankélévitch's *La mort (Death)* is an image drawn from a memory. Shortly after my parents separated, I remember my mother



Photo © CG Cinéma



Photo © CG Cinéma

reading that same book, with a dedication from her old university professor, whom she adored. It made me laugh that she should be engrossed in *Death* at that particular moment, and oblivious to the huge signification. At the same time, it shook me up. That could be the starting point of *Things To Come*. There is often an image that sums everything up. In this case, of course, it expresses the dialogue between Nathalie's life and her job. The same dialogue I engage in, between life and cinema.

/ Isabelle Huppert is in any number of films, yet she succeeds once more in surprising us, as the ultimate incarnation of a character--the way she moves, occupies the space, talks, sunbathes, thinks...

Beyond the fact that I rate her as the greatest French actress, I couldn't imagine anyone else playing the part. Besides the well-known facets of her talent (finesse, energy, humor, the hint of ferocity, etc), I also had in mind the Isabelle Huppert that I had met away from the movies, who cannot be summed up by the characters we are used to seeing her play. There was something else that caught my attention, a particular fragility and sort of tranquility in total contrast to the tough cookies she often plays. I was keen to bring that out and take her toward something more gentle, tender or even innocent.

/ There is something absolutely spot-on about the choice of actors, whether part of the family--husband, mother, children--or in the school or student environment. How do you manage to achieve such authenticity?

Like many filmmakers, I think that getting the choice of actors right is 95% of the job done.

It's all about how you look at each individual and overall vision. Then, the trust you put in actors is important and can carry them, especially non-professionals. On set, if I have a method, I'd have trouble defining it. It's both intuitive and very grounded. Conversations deal with blocking, pacing and tiny details that say so much. I rarely touch on in-depth issues. I tend to think that the less you discuss those things with actors, the happier they are. There's nothing worse than loading an actor up with all your psychological considerations. I'm skeptical about abstract intentions as a way of finding a character. I believe in the truth of scenes tackled head-on, in the now.

/ Besides your hometown, Paris, you film nature a lot: the sea, Brittany beaches, mountains, snow. Nature plays an important role in the film and in Nathalie's inner journey.

Yes, like in all my films. Switching from city to countryside, from one season to another, is a constant I cannot escape. I imagine it's linked to the passing of time, and to a fairly impressionistic way of making movies. Similarly, I accord considerable importance to locations. I am drawn to places that have charm, soul and history. Other directors actively seek out the opposite and feel freer and more comfortable in neutral or sanitized environments. I need to sense a flux, a vibe, layers of life, so that I feel a connection and know where to put the camera. That's why I couldn't shoot a film in studio.

/ As in all your movies, the music provides a kind of framework for the film. The song at the end is open to every kind of interpretation.



Photo © CG Cinéma

Is it a way of saying that a film doesn't necessarily end, but keeps going inside each of us?

There is an ambivalence that stems from my relationship to life, to which I try to remain faithful. It juxtaposes apparently contradictory feelings and makes them coexist. In the final shot, the prevailing emotion is of impotence in the face of time: the sense that all we can do is embrace the force sweeping us along—in this instance, the arrival of a new life that must be welcomed, an all-consuming present. That's a form of lucidity I aspire to, while simultaneously finding it cruel. We'd like Nathalie to meet someone and fall in love but the film doesn't show that. It's a child that she ends up holding

in her arms, and the song can be heard as a lullaby. Even so, it's a love song and it could be addressed to a man, the man Nathalie is waiting for, who may yet appear. It's a sensual song that speaks to desire and hope, which are as irrepressible as time is invincible. Those two forces are battling it out, and that struggle may be where the curious balance lies that allows us to feel alive. ■

*Interview by Laure Adler
Paris, January 2016*



Photo © Ludovic Begerly





CAST

Nathalie **ISABELLE HUPPERT** • Heinz **ANDRÉ MARCON** • Fabien **ROMAN KOLINKA** • Yvette **EDITH SCOB** • Chloé **SARAH LE PICARD** • Johann **SOLAL FORTE** • Esla **ELISE LHOMEAU** • Hugo **LIONEL DRAY** • Simon **GRÉGOIRE MONTANA-HAROCHE** • Antonia **LINA BENZERTI**

CREW

Screenplay and directed by **MIA HANSEN-LØVE** • DOP **DENIS LENOIR** • Sound **VINCENT VATOUX**
 Mixing **OLIVIER GOINARD** • Editing **MARION MONNIER** • Set Design **ANNA FALGUÈRES** • Costumes
RACHÈLE RAOULT • Make Up **THI LOAN NGUYEN** • Special Effects **CLARA VINCIENTE** • 1st Director's
 assistant **MARIE DOLLER** • Script Supervisor **CLÉMENTINE SCHAEFFER** • Unit Manager **JULIEN FLICK**
 Executive Producer **CHARLES GILLIBERT** • Production Manager **SACHA GUILLAUME-BOURBAULT**
 Production **CG CINÉMA** • Co Production **DETAIL FILM, ARTE FRANCE CINÉMA, RHÔNE-ALPES CINÉMA**
 Soficas **CINÉMAGE, COFINOVA SRG SSR** • With the participation of **CANAL +, ARTE FRANCE, PRO-**
CIREP, CNC, HESSEN FILM FUND • International Sales & French Distribution **LES FILMS DU LOSANGE**

FILMOGRAPHY (selected)

ISABELLE HUPPERT

- **THINGS TO COME** by Mia Hansen-Løve
- **VALLEY OF LOVE** by Guillaume Nicloux
- **LOUDER THAN BOMBS** by Joachim Trier
- **IN ANOTHER COUNTRY** by Hong Sang-Soo
- **AMOUR** by Michael Haneke
- **WHITE MATERIAL** by Claire Denis
- **COPACABANA** by Marc Fitoussi
- **GABRIELLE** by Patrice Chéreau
- **8 WOMEN** by François Ozon
- **THE PIANO TEACHER** by Michael Haneke
- **THE SCHOOL OF FLESH** by Benoît Jacquot
- **LA CÉRÉMONIE** by Claude Chabrol
- **THE SÉPARATION** by Christian Vincent
- **MADAME BOVARY** by Claude Chabrol
- **A STORY OF WOMEN** by Claude Chabrol
- **COUP DE TORCHON** by Bertrand Tavernier
- **LOULOU** by Maurice Pialat
- **HEAVEN'S GATE** by Michael Cimino
- **VIOLETTE NOZIERE** by Claude Chabrol
- **THE LACEMAKER** by Claude Goretta

ANDRE MARCON

- **THINGS TO COME** by Mia Hansen-Løve
- **MARGUERITE** by Xavier Giannoli
- **THREE HEARTS** by Benoît Jacquot
- **GARE DU NORD** by Claire Simond
- **ME, MYSELF AND MUM** by Guillaume Gallienne
- **SOMETHING IN THE AIR** by Olivier Assayas
- **RAPT** by Lucas Belvaux
- **AROUND A SMALL MOUNTAIN** by Jacques Rivette
- **FATHER OF MY CHILDREN** by Mia Hansen-Løve
- **GHOST RIVER** by Olivier Dahan
- **THE PORNOGRAPHER** by Bertrand Bonello
- **LATE AUGUST, EARLY SEPTEMBER** by Olivier Assayas
- **JOAN THE MAID 1: THE BATTLES / JOAN THE MAID 2: THE PRISONS** by Jacques Rivette
- **A FLAME IN MY HEART** by Alain Tanner
- **LE VOYAGE EN DOUCE** by Michel Deville
- **SOLEMN COMMUNION** by René Féret

EDITH SCOB

- **THINGS TO COME** by Mia Hansen-Løve
- **HOLY MOTORS** by Léos Carax
- **SUMMER HOURS** by Olivier Assayas
- **HEARTBEAT DETECTOR** by Nicolas Klotz
- **OF WOMAN AND MAGIC** by Claude Miller
- **THE COMEDY OF INNOCENCE** by Raoul Ruiz
- **FIDELITY** by Andrzej Zulawski
- **TIME REGAINED** by Raoul Ruiz
- **DOWN TO EARTH** by Pedro Costa
- **THE ACROBAT** by Jean-Daniel Pollet
- **THE OLD MAID** by Jean-Pierre Blanc
- **THE MILKY WAY** by Luis Buñuel
- **JUDEX** by Georges Franju
- **THERESE** by Georges Franju
- **THE BURNING COURT** by Julien Duvivier
- **EYES WITHOUT A FACE** by Georges Franju

ROMAN KOLINKA

- **THINGS TO COME** by Mia Hansen-Løve
- **EDEN** by Mia Hansen-Løve
- **JULIETTE** by Pierre Godeau
- **SOMETHING IN THE AIR** by Olivier Assayas
- **A CHILD OF YOURS** by Jacques Doillon



Photo © Ludovic Bergery

MIA HANSEN-LØVE

THINGS TO COME

Berlinale 2016 - Official Competition

EDEN

Toronto International Film Festival 2014 • San Sebastian International Film Festival – Official Competition 2014 • New York Film Festival 2014 • AFI Los Angeles Film Festival 2014 • London Film Festival 2014

GOODBYE FIRST LOVE

Locarno International Film Festival 2011 – Special Mention • Toronto International Film Festival 2011 • New York Film Festival 2011 • Telluride Film Festival 2011

FATHER OF MY CHILDREN

Cannes Film Festival 2009 – Special Jury Prize of Un Certain Regard • Toronto International Film Festival 2009 • Zurich Film Festival 2009 – International Competition • Lumières Award 2010 for Best Screenplay

ALL IS FORGIVEN

Louis Delluc Prize 2007 for Best First Film • Cannes Film Festival 2007 - The Directors' Fortnight • César 2007 – Nomination for Best First Feature Film • Gijon International Film Festival 2007 - Best Actress Award for Marie-Christine Friedrich

