

AFTER THE RESTLESS AND AFTER LOVE

STENOIA PRODUCTIONS  
PRESENTS

DANIEL

EMMANUELLE

AUTEUIL A DEVOS

# SILENCE

A FILM BY JOACHIM LAFOSSE



SSIFF

OFFICIAL SELECTION



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Having remained silent for 25 years, Astrid, the wife of a prominent lawyer, sees her family's equilibrium shatter when her children initiate their quest for justice.



## INTERVIEW WITH JOACHIM LAFOSSE

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**How did you approach writing your tenth feature?**

Film by film, I realize there is a thrill in seeking, and in seeking to take yourself by surprise. The screenplay is the map of a journey. And the journey is the shoot, then editing.

**Nonetheless, you write a script?**

Yes, but the rhythm, beats, silences, intensity of an expression, or evasion, cannot be put down on paper in a script. Tears springing forth, a stifled sob—you can't write that. Writing is a collective undertaking thanks to the actors.

**So what's your process?**

With the actors, at the locations or sets, I rehearse the whole film before I shoot it. It was during those rehearsals, seeing Emmanuelle Devos and Daniel

Auteuil bring Astrid and François to life, that we sensed how much shame and its disastrous effects were what we had to embody.

**The subject of the film is shame?**

Yes, I think so, but I didn't grasp just how much it was when I was writing. We sensed it on set.

Crime provokes terror; terror provokes silence, which engenders guilt and shame. We are wrong to judge silence. It must be examined. It's a symptom.

You must never forget that silence is not the crime, and behind every silent person, there is an ordeal, difficulty to speak up, fragility.

It was magnificent to be able to film that feeling of shame with Emmanuelle Devos and the other actors. Caroline, Astrid's daughter, does not share her shame. She is able to take a step back from it, and has carried the

burden of the crime for less time than her mother, while also living at a time when people evoke the necessity to listen and speak out. The shame is Astrid's. She has to confront her solitude. In some way, Caroline embodies a messenger for her mother.

### How did you strike a balance between fiction and reality?

The question doesn't arise in those terms. Sure, reality is always a more or less direct source of inspiration but, since this is a work of fiction, clearly not a documentary, fiction replaces reality. Fictional characters have their own agency.

If I wrote a story based on what became known as the Hissel affair in Belgium, it's because the case perhaps dealt with what each of us makes of shame, guilt and silence.



When I found out that the lawyer for the parents of Julie and Melissa, the little girls who were the victims of Marc Dutroux, had in turn been convicted, and everybody in Belgium found out what his son had done, I immediately wanted to explore the tragic dimension of the case.

When I'm writing, whether it be *Our Children* or *A Silence*, the central question for me, as a filmmaker, is how did it come to this, what preceded the tragedy, how does an 18-year-old come to commit an unthinkable act.

Once again, the question is of shame. The shame of a teenager who sees his father appear as a media hero, the protector of the weak and defenseless, while he is aware of the deviances that the powerful patriarch hides in the heart of the family home.

However hard the sister, mother and father try either to cover up the truth or to bring it out into the open, it's an explosive mix for the son of the criminal who becomes a criminal in turn. As in all tragedies, the outcome is fatal, inevitable and devastating.

I also wanted to write this film because, as a teen growing up in Belgium at the time of the Dutroux affair, witnessing the "White March," I could not help but think that among the 400,000 people marching through the streets of Brussels to proclaim "Never again," there must have been a few masked wolves.

Twenty years later, when the Hissel affair came to light, it occurred to me that it was a chance to capture the shift from the fear of the lone pervert, the monster coming out of the woods, out of a widespread belief in



purity, to a commendable questioning of what happens within our families and bedrooms.

### Emmanuelle Devos, who plays Astrid, is practically in every shot...

With Emmanuelle, we gauged how risky the undertaking was in building the character of Astrid, the mother. We had to delicately bring to life a woman who has kept quiet for over thirty years. To our eyes, she possesses a great narcissistic fragility. There is an age-old wound in her. To support her, Emmanuelle and I simply tried to observe and listen to our failings, fears, acts of cowardice, and our bourgeois inability to lose or

take the risk of questioning the established order. We tried to follow her on her journey to her truth without judging her, in the knowledge that truth is multifaceted—the truth of the trial, the truth in the press, and the truth of human beings in all their complexity. In that respect, it seemed inconceivable to us not to go all the way to the trial because it may be through justice being done that Astrid and Raphaël have their dignity restored.

### What led you to cast Daniel Auteuil?

The character of François is not an easy one to carry. He scared people off. Daniel was very brave to accept it. At our first meeting, he said to me, "I'll try to embody the



Photo © Kris de Witte

character before judging him. I can play him because I see perversity as a defense mechanism—the worst of all, but a defense mechanism all the same. François is a man fighting so no one will know. He is a man who cannot look at the truth for fear of collapsing."

#### What were your initial aesthetic choices?

Along with my DP, I soon realized that it was a question of making those aesthetic choices as inconspicuous as possible, keeping them under wraps. The story had to move forward surreptitiously almost, with the camera on the move without the audience noticing it. So everything was shot on a dolly, which I feel is more discreet than a Steadicam, less in-your-face (and I say that with the films of Claude Chabrol in mind).

*A Silence* is one of the films that demanded most of me in terms of precision and rigor. Since nothing must stand out, one movement too many was unacceptable, and so was scratched out. It was also about rejecting shot/reverse shot and high-angle/low-angle. Never look down on anything or anyone, and never loom over the scene.

#### The storytelling is intricate...

For me, the logic was the same as for *Our Children*. I work exclusively on dramatic irony. Suspense matters less to me. There is some because it is a filmic device but what matters to me is, how did things come to this, and how to film that arc.



#### Plot revelations take place in shadow and light. Were paintings an inspiration?

This is my seventh time working with DP Jean François Hensgens. Some painters may have inspired us but, sticking to our quest for sobriety, we favored an aesthetic approach that left space off-camera and avoided the spectacular in favor of nuances.

#### You paint a cruel picture of that bourgeoisie...

I set out to film a bourgeoisie that never brims over, the provincial bourgeoisie that raises its children, gives them an allowance, lets the kid drive the drop-top. It's rarely seen in the movies but it exists. The setting I chose is a space that resists the winds of change. Or at least belatedly lets them in, even if Caroline is working on opening up the windows.



**The music plays an important role...**

The whole sound editing process was crucial, as a way to bring out Astrid's soul as well as the underlying tragedy. We needed the music to set a particular tone and to remind people that no one is master in their own home. I worked with Olafur Arnalds, who did the music for *The Restless*. I was influenced by the Icelandic school, Arnalds and Johan Johansson, as well as by two young composers, Hania Rani and Meredi, and the work of a musician I greatly admire, TEPR.

**Did you change a lot in editing?**

As with the cinematography, the idea was not to be aware of the editing, for it to lead the audience furtively along.

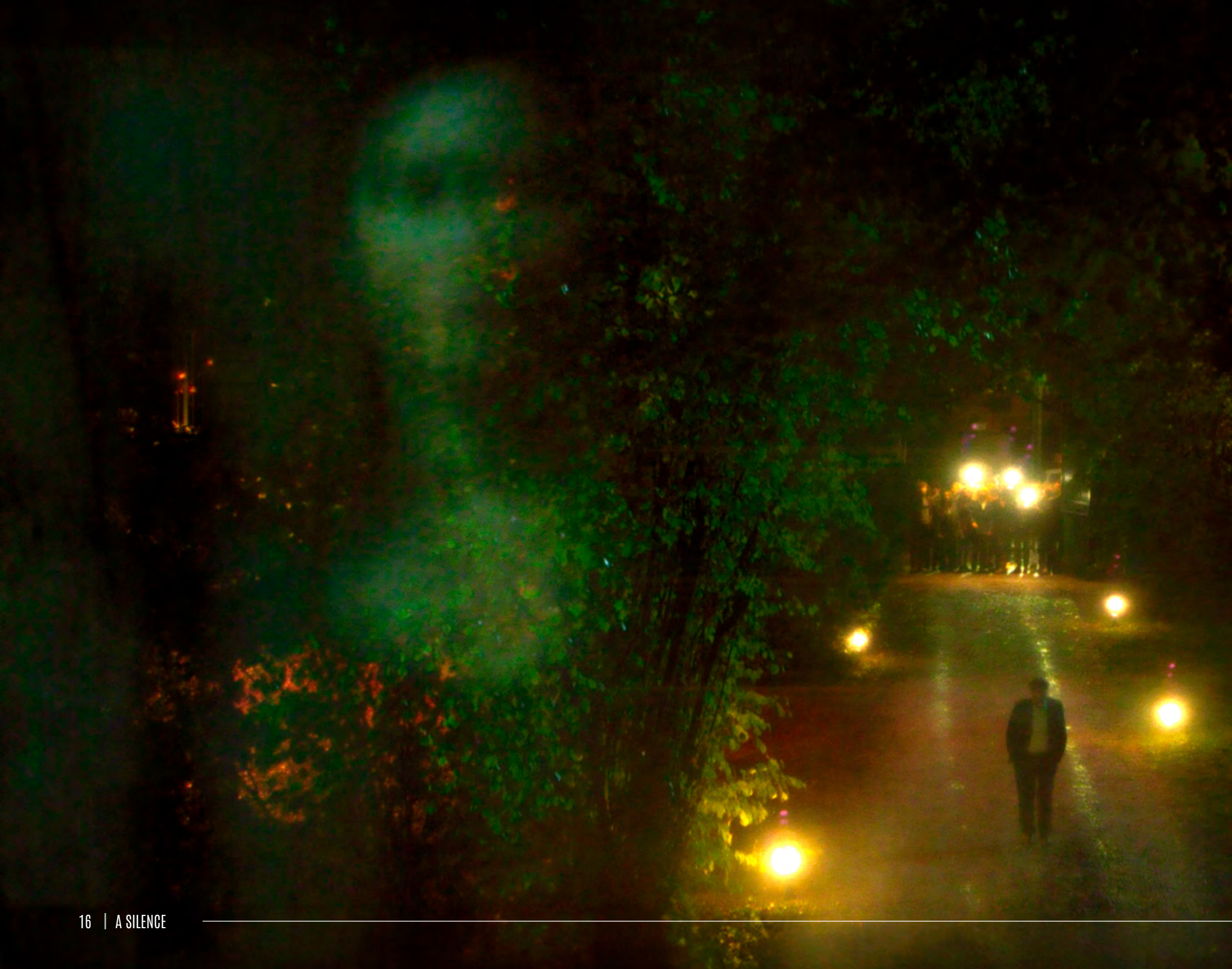
**Since your first feature, you have asserted your own voice, your own style...**

You know, it's not the style that directs my movies, it's the substance that determines their style. Filmmaking for the sake of it is not my thing. ■

— Interview conducted in August 2023







## CAST

François Schaar - **Daniel Auteuil** • Astrid Schaar - **Emmanuelle Devos** • Raphaël Schaar - **Matthieu Galoux** • Inspector Colin - **Jeanne Cherhal** • Caroline - **Louise Chevillotte** • Gillet - **Nicolas Buisse** • Barras - **Karim Barras** • Christelle Guérin - **Larisa Faber** • Etienne Guérin - **Baptiste Sornin** • Shann - **Shann Case** • Reporter 1 - **Massimo Riggi** • Reporter 2 - **Colette Kieffer** • Reporter 3 - **Elsa Rauchs** • Reporter 4 - **Jonas Wertz** • Ismaël - **Ismaël Michiels** • Pierre - **Damien Bonnard** • François Schaar's lawyer - **Magali Pinglaut** • Barrister - **Laure Hemmer** • Mme Sautiaux - **Raphaëlle Bruneau**

## CREW

A film by **Joachim Lafosse** Original Screenplay by **Joachim Lafosse** and **Thomas Van Zuylen** Cowriters **Chloé Duponchelle, Paul Ismaël** Writing Collaborators **Sarah Chiche, Matthieu Reynaert, Valérie Graeven** Photography **Jean-François Hensgens** Editing **Damien Keyeux** Sound **Alain Goniva, François Dumont, Xavier Dujardin, Thomas Gauder** Production design **Anna Falguères** Costume design **Isabel Van Renterghem** Makeup **Garance Van Rossum, Hugues Lavau** Hair styling **Laurent Bozzi** A coproduction by **Stenola Productions, Samsa Film, Les Films du Losange, Prime Time** Produced by **Anton Iffland-Stettner, Eva Kuperman, Jani Thiltges, Régine Vial, Alexis Dantec, Antonino Lombardo** Associate producers **Tanguy Dekeyser, Valerie Berlemont, Philippe Logie, Claude Waringo, Bernard Michaux, Charles Gillibert** Production manager **Vincent Canart** Line producer Luxembourg **Brigitte Kerger-Santos** Line producer France **Fred Bellaïche** Postproduction manager **Olan Bowland** Coproduced by **RTBF (Belgian Television), Proximus, Voo & Betv, France 3 Cinéma** with the participation of **France Télévisions, Shelter Prod** With the support of the **Center of Cinema and Audiovisual of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Film Fund Luxembourg, National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image (CNC), Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF)** Cofinanced by **The European Union** with the support of **Taxshelter.BE, ING, the Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal Government** and the **Tax Shelter Investors, Brussels-Capital Region, Grand Est Region, Inspire Metz / Eurometropole of Metz** In partnership with **the Centre National du Cinéma et de L'Image Animée (CNC)** In collaboration with **Images Grand Est Office Cultural Agency** and **The Inspire Metz Services/Eurometropole of Metz** With the support of **Canal +** with the participation of **Ciné +** In association with **Indefilms 11, Cinémage 17** Distribution **Les Films du Losange, Cinéart, Samsa Distributions** International sales **Les Films du Losange**

# JOACHIM LAFOSSE

**A Silence** (2023)

**The Restless** (2021)

**Keep Going** (2018)

**After Love** (2016)

**The White Knights** (2015)

**Our Children** (2012)

**Before words** (short film 2010)

**Private Lessons** (2008)

**Private Property** (2006)

**What Makes You Happy** (2006)

**Private Madness** (2004)

# DANIEL AUTEUIL

(Select filmography)

2023 - **A Silence** by Joachim Lafosse • 2022 - **The New Toy** by James Huth • 2021 - **Farewell Monsieur Haffmann** by Fred Cavayé • 2019 - **La Belle Époque** by Nicolas Bedos • 2018 - **The Other Woman** by Daniel Auteuil • 2018 - **Isle of Dogs** by Wes Anderson • 2017 - **Le Brio** by Yvan Attal • 2016 - **Shipwrecked** by David Charhon • 2015 - **Our Women** by Richard Berry • 2013 - **Fanny** by Daniel Auteuil • **Marius** by Daniel Auteuil • **Before the Winter** by Philippe Claudel • 2012 - **Blood From a Stone** by Jacques Maillot • 2011 - **The Well Digger's Daughter** by Daniel Auteuil • 2009 - **Someone I Loved** by Zabou Breitman • 2008 - **Me two** by Bruno Lavaine and Nicolas Charlet • 2007 - **Second Wind** by Alain Corneau • 2006 - **Napoleon and Me** by Paolo Virzì • **My Best Friend** by Patrice Leconte • **The Valet** by Francis Veber • 2005 **Hidden** by Michael Haneke • **One Stays, The Other Leaves** by Claude Berri • 2004 - **36** by Olivier Marchal • 2003 - **After You** by Pierre Salvadori • **Small Cuts** by Pascal Bonitzer • 2002 - **The Adversary** by Nicole Garcia • 2001 - **The Closet** by Francis Veber • 2000 - **Sade** by Benoît Jacquot • 1998 - **The Girl on the Bridge** by Patrice Leconte • 1997 - **On Guard!** by Philippe de Broca • 1996 - **Lucie Aubrac** by Claude Berri • 1995 - **Thieves** by André Téchiné • 1993 - **The Queen Margot** by Patrice Chéreau • 1991 - **A Heart in Winter** by Claude Sautet • 1991 - **My Life Is Hell** by Josiane Balasko • 1988 - **A Few Days with Me** by Claude Sautet • 1986 - **Paltoquet** by Michel Deville • **Manon of the Spring** by Claude Berri • **Jean de Florette** by Claude Berri • 1984 - **Love on the Quiet** by Édouard Molinaro • 1983 - **Les Fauves** by Jean-Louis Daniel • 1982 - **Will the High Salaried Workers Raise Their Hands!** by Denys Granier-Deferre • **Keeping Everyone Up** by Gérard Lauzier • **The Under-Gifted on Holiday** by Claude Zidi 1980 - **Clara and the Why Not** by Jacques Monnet • **The Under-Gifted** by Claude Zidi • 1977 **Rape of Love** by Yannick Bellon • 1975 - **Act of Aggression** by Gérard Pirès • 1973 - **The Year 01** by Jacques Doillon





# EMMANUELLE DEVOS

(Cinema)

2023 - **A Silence** by Joachim Lafosse • **The Dreamer** by Anaïs Tellenne • 2022 - **Mascarade** by Nicolas Bedos • 2021 - **Hear Me Out** by Pascal Elbé • **I Want to Talk About Duras** by Claire Simon • 2021 - **Deception** by Arnaud Desplechin • 2020 - **Perfumes** by Grégory Magne • 2019 - **My Days of Glory** by Antoine de Bary • 2018 - **Amin** by Philippe Faucon • 2017 - **Where I've Never Lived** by Paolo Franchi • 2017 - **Number One** by Tonie Marshall • 2016 - **Sweet Dreams** by Marco Bellocchio • **For My Son** by Frédéric Mermoud • **Frank and Lola** by Matthew Ross • 2014 - **Almost Friends** by Anne Le Ny • **If You Don't I Will** by Sophie Fillières • 2013 - **Jacky in the Kingdom of Women** by Riad Sattouf • **Violette** by Martin Provost • **Domestic Life** by Isabelle Czajka • **Just a Sigh** by Jérôme Bonnell • 2012 - **Where We Grew Up** by Idit Cebula • **The Other Son** by Lorraine Lévy • 2011 - **Bachelor Days Are Over** by Katia Lewkowicz • **The Moon Child** by Delphine Gleize • 2010 - **Partners** by Frédéric Mermoud • 2009 - **In the Beginning** by Xavier Giannoli • **Park Benches** by Bruno Podalydès • **The French Kissers** by Riad Sattouf • **Wild Grass** by Alain Resnais • **Coco Before Chanel** by Anne Fontaine • 2009 - **One Day You'll Understand** by Amos Gitai • 2008 - **All about actresses** by Maïwenn • **Unspoken** de Fien Troch • **A Christmas Tale** by Arnaud Desplechin • 2007 - **Two Lives Plus One** by Idit Cebula • **Those Who Remain** by Anne Le Ny • **Waiting for someone** by Jérôme Bonnell • 2005 - **La Moustache** by Emmanuel Carrère • **Nice Girl** by Sophie Fillières • **The Beat That My Heart Skipped** by Jacques Audiard • 2004 - **Kings and Queen** by Arnaud Desplechin • **Welcome in Switzerland** by Léa Fazer • 2003 - **Small Cuts** by Pascal Bonitzer • **The Red Knight** by Hélène Angel • **Gilles' Wife** by Gilles de Frédéric Fonteyne • **It's Easier for a Camel...** by Valéria Bruni Tedeschi • 2002 - **Nearest to Heaven** by Tonie Marshall • 2001 - **The Adversary** by Nicole Garcia • **Read My Lips** by Jacques Audiard • 2000 - **Esther Kahn** by Arnaud Desplechin • **Long Live Us!** by Camille de Casabianca • **Dad on the Run** by Dante Desarthe • **Ouch** by Sophie Fillières • 1999 - **Life Is For Loving** by Noémie Lvovsky • **Maybe** by Cédric Klapisch • 1997 - **Artemisia** by Agnès Merlet • **Moving Out** by Olivier Doran • 1996 - **My Sex Life... or How I Got Into an Argument** by Arnaud Desplechin • 1995 - **Anna Oz** by Éric Rochant • 1994 - **Mutual Consent** by Bernard Stora • **Forget me** by Noémie Lvovsky • 1993 - **The Patriots** by Éric Rochant • 1992 - **The Sentinel** by Arnaud Desplechin

## JEANNE CHERHAL

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2023 - **A Silence** by Joachim Lafosse • 2015 - **The Very Private Life of Mister Sim** by Michel Leclerc • 2014 - **No Land's Song** de Ayat Najafi • 2008 - **Copy of Coralie** (short film) de Nicolas Engel • 2007 - **La Consultation** (short film) by Frédérick Vin

*Composer:*

2021 - **Tralala** by Jean-Marie Larrieu & Arnaud Larrieu • 2014 - **Des lendemains qui chantent** by Nicolas Castro • 2011 - **Les Françaises, en route pour le Printemps** (documentary) by Yvan Schreck



## MATTHIEU GALOUX

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