



# KEEP ME UPRiGHT

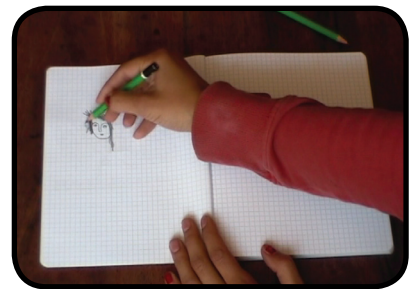
A FILM BY ZOÉ CHANTRE



## *Synopsis*

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When I was a child they found I had a giant S-shaped scoliosis of the spine and a large angioma of the left brain. These conditions prevented my carrying anything heavy and gave me ophthalmic migraines. Under pressure, I started to draw. Later, when I rediscovered these drawings, I decided to make a film all by myself, with no crew and as little gear as possible in order not to overburden my back: just one small camera with built-in mike and a computer to edit on. I spent five years harvesting images, assembling, erasing and ordering them to tell this tale of one little woman and soulmates: a tale that builds gradually over time, around spine and angioma and has become my way of handling the spokes in my wheel. Over the years, I have learnt to reach out and share my experiences with humour. Film-making, I have to say, has been a tremendous help.



## *Technical file*

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Original Title : Tiens moi droite  
Title in English : Keep me upright  
Director : Zoé chantre  
Producer : Les films de l'Astrophore  
Running time : 64 min  
Academy : 4/3  
Sound: Stereo  
Video: Digi Beta  
Subtitles: English



### *Director's Notes*

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I was 23 at the time: a student at Strasbourg's School of Art and Design, where I was taught a number of artistic practices, including drawing.

I had one purpose: I wanted to tell my own story and specifically the story of what was happening to my back, my head.

My spine is S-shaped. I have a giant S-shaped scoliosis of the spine. I also have a cerebral angioma in my left-brain, a condition that provokes intense ophthalmic migraine. I often draw when I am having an attack.

One day, I am not sure why, I decided to film these drawings. Maybe I was looking for a way to archive them, maybe I meant to slip them in among other moving images I was gradually starting to produce in the course of a day.

I decided to make a one-man movie, with no crew, using as little equipment as possible, in order not to overburden my back: just one small camera with an inbuilt microphone and a computer for editing. I spent five years harvesting images, sorting them, rubbing them out, assembling. The story builds naturally over time, as the angioma and scoliosis progress. It acts as form of resistance against these spokes in my wheel; as a way of breaking out of myself, making light of my adventures whilst sharing them.

One thing I know: making this movie has been a tremendous help.

There have been others along the way. Douce, a friend in a corset to relieve a slipped disc. Jacqueline, who has had a spinal transplant. Camille, who has cystic fibrosis. My grandmother, who has Alzheimer's and my mother, who is battling cancer with amazing spirit.

Today, I am still under treatment for the angioma, but the ophthalmic migraines have gone. As to the scoliosis, I need to choose whether to have a steel bolt placed in my spine so I can stand upright. But it will be a few years till the decision needs to be reached.



**Zoé Chantre**

**Biog**

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On my ninth birthday, my grandfather turned up with a 9mm projector. He'd brought some home movies to show me what things were like when he was a boy.

Since then, I've always believed that, before I was born, life was in black-and-white. As soon as I could, I stole my mother's camera to starting shooting in colour.

My favourite hobby was drawing. I wore my felt-tips through to the hard plastic crown around the nib. It made sense to apply to art school. In 2002, I won entrance to E.S.A.D., the School of Applied Arts in Strasbourg.

During those five years, I learnt that one means of expression – one tool – would never be enough.

I was still a student when I met filmmaker Alain Cavalier in 2005. This was a crucial encounter. It confirmed me in the belief that filmmaking is an essential part of my life. I became an artist and a filmmaker.

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**FILMS :**

2011: Tiens moi droite ( Les films de l'Astrophore, 68 min)

**VIDEOS :**

2006/2011: Correspondance, Filmed letters, Collaboration Alexandra Pianelli (Evolutionary film, project in progress)  
2011 : Le mur de chercheurs (I filmed researchers in mathematic for Les ateliers du spectacle)  
2009: Vidéo on the Le carnaval de Torres vedras (17min, 7xdanstabouche, Portugal)  
2009: Série vidéos of one minute for the project Merline (Lille)  
2009: Série vidéos of one minute for the collectif 7x dans ta bouche  
2004: Vidéo Jean-Louis, Portrait of a collector (20min), collaboration Alexandra Pianelli  
2000: Papi (vidéo Hi8, 3min) - Cartoon movie realized with three elements: pen, transparent sheet and white ink

**PUBLISHING :**

2010: Book Gisèle & Georges, carnet de vie (éd. familiale, Paris)  
2009: Book La Mélancolie (éd. graine d'encre, Paris)  
2009: Book Contes envolés, en voilà (éd. collègueFlora Tristan, Paris)  
2008: Book Projections privées (ed. Rives Dangereuses)  
2008: Book GRAA (groupe de recherches artistiques en appartement, N°1, éd d'artistes)  
2006: Book Confidences de boutons (co-éd. Candide et ESAD)

*Les Films de l'Astrophore*

*Françoise Widhoff*  
*biog*

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Though my mother nursed a hope that I might attend secretarial school, I decided radio was right. Radio led to pictures. I was assigned to interview François Reichenbach: the man's vitality was irresistible so I dropped everything and went after him. We travelled the globe: sound recordist, camera-person, film editor, I did everything. I don't know how many films we made. All I know is that I cheated on him to work with Jean Aurel and Michel Audiard.

As a punishment, he introduced me to Orson Welles. The man was such a living legend, he crossed borders without a passport. Punishment indeed. Between them, François Reichenbach and Orson Welles taught me that artistic freedom means freedom from constraint; that pleasure lends wings that lift you soaring high over mountains; that a minor god named Enthusiasm is your best friend if you want to get ahead. This worked for François. It didn't work for Orson. Astrophore stills owns his last, unfinished film, called «The Other Side of the Wind».

When these two men died, Alain Cavalier came into my life. Now I apply the lessons they taught me to supporting and accompanying him, because those lessons always brought me happiness. Films de l'Astrophore is only little, but it has allowed Cavalier the freedom to be his own master with pictures like «La Rencontre», and «Vies», both shot using just a tiny video camera. Not to mention all the stories in the can patiently waiting to be cut.

I was privileged to produce Chris Marker too – another gift from François Reichenbach – and other less well-known filmmakers. Each of these collaborations was a joint venture taking me further into the intimate intricacies of filmmaking, from sound to camera, cutting and producing. I'm a good friend to those directors who are able to trust me

*Films de l'Astrophore*

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Films de l'Astrophore was established in 1972 by a man named Mehdi Boushehri who wanted to introduce his country – Iran – to movies.

He co-produced and helped a wide range of French films, including Zurlini's *Desert of the Tartars*, Patrice Chereau's *Flesh of the Orchid* and Peter Brook's *Orghast*. Some Iranian films, like *The Blood of Others*, would never have come into existence if it had not been for him.

I was instrumental in his saving François Reichenbach from bankruptcy by buying him out of Orson Welles' *F for Fake*. Which is how Films de l'Astrophore inherited Orson's last, unfinished film, entitled *The Other Side of the Wind* – a movie that took the close to liquidation.

In 1983, after the Iranian Revolution, which meant he could no longer work in Iran, Mehdi Boushehri put me in charge of the company. Thanks to him, I was able to fulfil my dream for independence, producing films that genuinely moved me and looking after film-makers both famous and unknown. The unhappy saga of *The Other Side of the Wind* did at least make me understand that projects of this kind weren't for me. The negative is buried in deep in the coffers at Paris' LTC lab. One day maybe I'll rescue it, but that's another story.

I am also lucky enough to have been able to establish relations of trust with industry suppliers, who know that I never commit to expenditure without having the funds to back up my decision. One consequence is that they are able to give me their best quotes, for which I thank them.

I have not produced much, but when I have it has always been in a spirit of freedom. I have sought neither glory nor honour. I just want to ensure that films like Chris Marker's *Tombeau d'Alexandre* can happen, or his last feature-length film, *Level Five*, which I executive producer with Anatole Dauman. Or a funny piece he christened *Zapping Zone*, which was an installation of heaped TV monitors showing a variety of his own shorts. This for museum viewing only.

Alain Cavalier's films, *La Rencontre*, *Vies* and *Les Braves* are the perfect example of how I can and like to produce.

Producing Zoé Chantre, whose movie *Keep Me Upright* invents a new genre with each successive shot seems to me to be the essence of what my approach is about.

## *Filmographie*

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- F for Fake (Vérités et Mensonges) -1974  
Orson Welles
- The Other Side of the Wind - 1974 /1980 - non terminé  
Orson Welles
- Orghast - 1978 -  
Peter Brook
- Iceland Breakthrough - 1978  
Paul Van der Molen
- Ce Répondeur ne prend pas de Messages - 1978  
Alain Cavalier -
- Joséphine en Sibérie - 1990 -  
Françoise Widhoff
- Le 20 heures dans les Camps - 1993  
Chris Marker
- Le Tombeau d'Alexandre - 1993 ( La Sept/Arte/ Channel 4)  
Chris Marker
- Moscou/Kursk - 1993 - ( France 3)  
Charles Marie Jaigu & Stéphane Bou
- la Rencontre - 1996  
Alain Cavalier
- Level V - 1997 ( Argos film/ Sept-Arte)  
Chris Marker
- Vies - 2000  
Alain Cavalier
- Jeannine aux fers - 2004  
Alain Cavalier
- Monsieur Bartabas - 2005  
Alain Cavalier -2005
- Joseph Morder - 2005  
Alain Cavalier
- Le Coucou - 2006  
Philippe Lasry
- Lieux Saints - 2007  
Alain Cavalier
- Huit récits Express - 2007  
Alain Cavalier
- Les Braves - 2008  
Alain Cavalier
- Sept gouttes de sommeil / Complices / Faire la mort /  
Cadeau de naissance / Le pâtissier japonais / Ma femme vit dans la peur /  
C'est plein/ Le roi des biberons - 2011  
Alain Cavalier
- Tiens moi droite - 2011  
Zoé Chantre
- Christian  
Manolo Marty