

# We had the day bonsoir

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But what's great is that we have added this film project like a future.  
Michel was involved right up until the end... and I can hear him  
telling me "there is no end".

A FILM BY Narimane MARI

The music of the living is played there, of which we are all,  
in our place of presence, an invented note.

61 minutes // 1.85 // DCP // 5.1 // French English subtitles









WORLD PREMIERE July 2022

## FID Marseille

Grand prize of the French competition

Prize of the National Center for Plastic Arts (CNAP)

What does the author tell ? A love story, the one with her partner, the artist Michel Haas, and a loss - he is gone, died a few years ago. She, the director, assembles the images according to a rhythm that is that of the heart, but closely linked to her cinematographic dimension, to the desire to find a form to this material that accompanies her gently. Without rhetoric or sentimentality, Narimane Mari takes us into a poetic and at the same time daily universe, in the streets of Marseille where she lives and among the art objects, in the confidences and among the words whispered during her illness. She moves delicately, sometimes as if she were telling a fairy tale, in search of the traces of what remains, life, its energy, its links. What is there and what has been transformed, the moments of grace and the tenderness of a smile. It is not easy but she succeeds in the continuous invention that is the deepest meaning of this existence.

### Cristina Piccino, *Il Manifesto*

"Narimane Mari is a radically humble filmmaker. In a time of dangerous coldness, her films challenge their viewers to feel through the world alongside her and an intimate, tightly bound group of friends, companions, and other kinds of collaborators. Although Michel Haas is neither a child nor an academic (two kinds of people with whom Narimane has previously made films), he embodies the spirits of both of them, as well as an enormous range of other presences from throughout the human and animal kingdoms. We see him and Narimane take an astonishingly moving journey together throughout 'We had the day bonsoir', a journey that occurs over a short span of time and yet encapsulates a lifetime as it does. Thelonious Monk, Djibril Diop Mambéty, and Jean Vigo are just a few of their companions. In the end, and from its beginning, the journey has also been ours. »

Aaron Cutler, Mutual Films/The Moviegoer

Interview by Olivier Pierre

Michel Haas took part in *Holy Days* (2019), and is the main character in *We had the day bonsoir*, which emerges as a portrait in the present, an ode to life, love and art. What was your project?

Michel always took part in all my films, that's how we worked, and in this one, he has the main role. In *Holy Days*, I began to explore what I'd always wanted to do, to make a narrative from the confused and at the same time clear snippets of what we perceive. I think that in this film, I went further in my exploration. But there's more to be done. There's always more to be done.

The film was written with Michel Haas. How did you devise its development together?

I decided to record his sounds that seemed to me, as his life was coming to an end, to be something that shouldn't die. I imagined that I could bear the disappearance of his body, but not of his voice or his everyday sounds. He told me that it was our final adventure together, this film project. Dying is an adventure, and we lived it. But what's great is that we added this project like a future. He was involved right up until the end... and I can hear him telling me "there is no end".

One character trait asserts itself, that of Life, in both serious moments and happy ones, where laughter comes thick and fast. Did this aspect develop during the writing process?

Joy has always been Michel's driving force and mine too, but he was never able to be gloomy even when he tried. We wrote this film together, him alive or dead, driven by what we couldn't give up, otherwise it would mean disappearing, a word that doesn't suit any human story.

*We had the day bonsoir* is made up of sundry fragments of his life, different timeframes, film clips, quotations and songs. How did you choose them?

I don't think I can answer that very clearly. I could say that they offered themselves to the film. "She listens: everything that passes through the ear becomes truer than experiences through the eyes" writes Unica Zürn in *MistAKE*. All I did was listen – to everything, to encounter what was going to be said there. What's described in the question has existed, exists and will exist again. And we never paid attention to the timeframes, but instead to the thickness that it all created in us.

## How did you tackle the editing?

All the way through, I had the feeling of having written, filmed and edited at the same time, whereas I didn't write anything, I shot and edited spontaneously, in a very short time. I began this work when Michel died. In several stages, without ever glimpsing the end of the film before it turned up of its own accord, again, either thanks to or because of other events that occurred. I could say that I didn't try and do anything, but let what happened happen with, of course, a very firm idea of what this film is now, a living film.

## At certain moments, you've chosen to set the voices into the image according to variable adaptations, audible or not, comments that also play out like graphic signs. Why did you do this?

The words are a poetic image, the words we hear in the street as we pass by very often make our day, make us laugh, cry, start, letting us hear about lives going on around us. Subtitles offend me – they're a long way from the pictures that those who speak the words carry inside of them. For a long time I've been fighting against what's imposed on us as language, without images, neutral, stereotyped, conformist... the correct way of speaking exasperates me; language mistakes stir my mind because they're touched by an experience. It seems to me that these words, placed as I've placed them in the image, continue to belong to those who live them and not to those who'd like to hear them in their own language, to be able to consider understanding them. Watching a film involves reaching out to the Other. The desire for encounter must be equal between the viewers and the people who've participated in the film.

## The composition with light, in both the night sequences and the sequence with the doctor, for example, is crucial. How did you work out the photographic direction with Nasser Medjkane and Antonin Boischot?

I shot all the images except those of Nasser, who also died a few months after Michel. They were shot a few years ago, like the ones of Antonin who's still very much alive. I filmed what was going on around me, opening my eyes in the morning or at night. Everything I show was visible in our space. I just put the camera next to my bed, and I filmed when it felt right. I always shoot like that, alone, or with Nasser or Antonin. I never think about working on the light, it's either there or it isn't, and both are valid.

## The film is also made up of music, recordings and voices. What specific work was done on the sound with Antoine Morin and Benjamin Laurent?

In the same way, I worked alone here... I'd always recorded Michel because we wanted to do without the journalists who came to interview him. We did our own interviews, we enjoyed it and worked out extracts that we'd send to the press. I started with Prologue, a commissioned film I made, my first film, for a museum that was showing Michel's work. Antoine is a life-long friend and Benjamin's been a friend since Loubia Hamra.

We've worked together on each of my movies, not to clean up or consider sound design work on it, but to improve the sound quality as the sources vary, and mix in the right place.

**The film opens and closes with the lapping of the waves, not to mention the other sea sequences. Why this recurrence of water?**

We were always in the water. Living in or even going through a town where there's no water, no sea or river, is impossible. Water absorbs everything and it's powerful enough to keep it all in motion. I envy it.

**All the living beings and the artworks that participate in *We had the day bonsoir* are listed "in order of appearance" as equals. Do these credits point out the conception of your film?**

In *Holy Days*, Antonin, who was holding the camera in one of the scenes when Saadi is trembling all over, wanted to get a fly out of the frame. I refused because I thought it was magnificent right where it was, that it was there, in its own life, doing what it had to do and even more than that, because during the editing (I usually edit without sound, which I bring in once I've seen it properly) it did its dance to the sound I added, as if it knew. I love that and I don't try to make it real, but I like that we all have something to contribute, at the moment we're doing it, and it will work out here or elsewhere. It develops a heightened sense of our actions and attentions. I love that!

**Narimane Mari** founded Centrale Electrique to produce films by directors and artists whose imagination and vision of the world are freely attached to tell the real in contemporary history.

At the same time, she directs her own films and installations, working on languages, exploring forms of narratives and spaces of perceptions.

Her films PROLOGUE, LOUBIA HAMRA (Bloody Beans), HOLY DAYS received numerous awards at FID, Toronto, BFI...

They were shown at the Centre Pompidou Paris, MoMA, Reina Sofia, Louisiana, Biennale of Shanghai...

LE FORT DES FOUS premiered at Documenta 14 and Locarno, and joined the collection of the Centre National des Arts Plastiques (CNAP)

ON A EU LA JOURNEE BONSOIR (We had the day Bonsoir) premiered at FID Marseille and received the Grand Prix of the French competition and the CNAP prize.

She produced ROUNDABOUT IN MY HEAD by Hassen Ferhani (awarded at FID, Torino, Belfort...) and 143 sahara street, multi-awarded: Locarno emerging director award, DMZ, Torino, ...), ATLAL, by Djamel Kerkar (first FID award).

## TECHNICAL SHEET

Original version: French, English

Subtitles: French, English

Screenplay: Narimane Mari, Michel Haas

Image : Narimane Mari, Nasser Medjkane, Antonin Boischot

Editing : Narimane Mari

Sound : Narimane Mari, Antoine Morin, Benjamin Laurent

With : Michel Haas

Production: Centrale Électrique, Narimane Mari, Olivier Boischot, Michel Haas

Distribution: Pascale Ramonda

## Filmography

Holy days 2019, Le Fort des fous 2017, La vie courante 2016, Loubia Hamra 2013, Prologue 2007

## Biography

## CONTACT :

Pascale Ramonda // [pascale@pascaleramonda.com](mailto:pascale@pascaleramonda.com)

Narimane Mari // [centralectrique@gmail.com](mailto:centralectrique@gmail.com)