

ARTEMIS PRODUCTIONS, SAMSA FILM, LIAISON CINEMATOGRAPHIQUE & MILLE ET UNE FILMS
PRESENT

Rachael
BLAKE

Lucie
DEBAY



Melody

A film by
Bernard BELLEFROID

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Bernard BELLEFROID

WRITTEN BY BERNARD BELLEFROID AND CARINE ZIMMERLIN WITH THE COLLABORATION OF ANNE-LOUISE TRIVIDIC AND MARCEL BEAULIEU

A ARTÉMIS PRODUCTIONS (BELGIUM), SAMSA FILM (LUXEMBOURG), LIAISON CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUE (FRANCE) PRODUCTION
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH .MILLE ET UNE FILMS. (FRANCE).

BELGIUM/LUXEMBOURG/FRANCE - 2014 - 1H34 - OV FR/ENG - ST ENG/FR

***World Première at French Film Festival Angoulême
August 22-26 2014***

***Internatinoal Première at Montreal World Film Festival
August 21 - September 1 2014***

Press Kit

THEATER RELEASE TO BE CONFIRMED

EPK DOWNLOADABLE ON DROPBOX [CLICK HERE](#)

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Synopsis

To buy the hairdressing salon that she has always dreamed about, Melody, 28, agrees to become a surrogate mother for Emily, 48, a rich Englishwoman who can no longer have children. But the pregnancy will generate unexpected emotions for each of them and bring together two women otherwise very different.

Interview with the Director



Your first feature film, *The Boat Race*, talks about intra-family violence, portraying a teenager who is mistreated by his father. With your second feature film, *Melody*, are you continuing to explore the bond between parent and child?

Whether you consider *The Boat Race* or my documentaries – *Rwanda*, *The Hills Talk* and *Why Can't We See Each Other Outside When the Weather Is Nice* – they always explore the bond between parent and child and reflect a certain tension between this bond and other types of connections, those we create independently. In a way, my work is about adoption in the broader sense. In addition, I have always found it striking how a child can be viewed as an object – a sort of thing. This is the particular context in which I wanted to continue exploring the parent-child bond.

“Your children are not your children (...) They come through you but not from you (...) they do not belong to you.” Does this poem reflect what *Melody* is about?

I prefer to talk about Emmanuel Lévinas, a philosopher whose thoughts on the concept of responsibility towards Another inspire me a great deal. We are clearly responsible... but not necessarily for a child. We are faced with a strange paradox in reality because our child is both born from our flesh and blood, like an extension of ourselves, yet is also in fact Another who belongs to no one. With that in mind, am I responsible for him? I am responsible for helping him grow, enabling him to grow himself, but in no way do I “own” him. The film tackles this issue by asking further questions rather than providing definitive answers.

Surrogacy has not been particularly present in films until now. It is a topic which gives rise to a great deal of moral and ethical questions and, therefore, to many controversies. Where do you stand in relation to these debates?

I've been working on this subject for three years now and, the further I go, the less I understand! When a murder takes place and we don't understand what happened, we question the murderer and the presumed witnesses, examine the alleged weapon and reconstruct the events leading up to the crime. I make films in a similar way: when I don't understand something, I write a story, create characters and set up a kind of life-size reconstruction... I believe the sticking point is whether surrogacy is tantamount to abandonment or can in fact be ethical. I'm not sure whether *Melody* is about surrogate mothers. At face value, you might think so, but when you dig deeper, like *The Boat Race*, *Melody* is actually about the parent-child bond, adoption and two lone individuals who progressively discover a mother and a daughter within each other. That is the film's real subject.

Another controversial subject in France and elsewhere: the practice of giving birth anonymously. In the film, we discover that *Melody* was in fact born in such circumstances and has never known her mother. Do you believe that *Melody*'s personal journey in relation to the child she carries would have been the same without this past experience?

A story is always an exception. It just so happens that, in this case, the character was born not knowing her mother's identity and goes on to carry a child. I thought it would be interesting to put these issues face to face: surrogacy and giving birth anonymously. The latter is a dreadful act of violence, in my opinion. Have we the right to amputate a child's past? How can a human being who knows nothing of where he comes from (re)build himself? But, at the same time, how can we ignore

the injustices visited upon those women who are forced to give birth anonymously? Children who are abandoned as a result of this procedure are always given to families. This once again gives rise to the question of whether the parent-child bond is genetic or emotional. Essentially, the question is whether it is essential for an individual to know where he originates in order to evolve, or whether it is the emotional and social ties he forms that are key to his wellbeing.



You are Belgian and French-speaking. Why have you chosen to set your story in England?

I wanted to put two empires face to face: England, where surrogacy is authorized under strict conditions, and France, where women may give birth anonymously. As the film is primarily set in England, I wanted to tell the story in two languages to make it more realistic. *Melody* speaks mainly French while *Emily* speaks mainly



As for Emily, she wants a child at all costs, irrespective of the consequences. She has done everything she could to have one but can no longer get pregnant. So, together, they opt for surrogacy, a drastic solution that I decline to judge but which casts doubt upon the politics of austerity, the way in which Europe is evolving and young people's place in society. Initially, the film is simply about a deal between two consenting adults. Emily will then realize, through contact with Melody, that carrying a baby then giving it away to someone else is no easy task, and each will end up finding in the other what she never had. The director of photography, the production designer and I agreed that Melody would be a character who lived only outside and during the daytime, whereas Emily would always be inside, in her house, like some sort of prison, cut off from the outside world, until the last part of the film when, symbolically, the outdoors and indoors finally meet.

If *The Boat Race* is “a men’s film” – a son, his father and his rowing coach – here, you are clearly focusing on women and maternity. As a man, how did you approach this very feminine and intimate issue of wanting a child and, especially, wanting to be pregnant with regards to both writing and acting?

Youssef Chahine says that you should make films for women because they are the ones who choose what people see at the movies. I decided to follow his advice after making *The Boat Race*!

On a more serious note, I never bore a child, true, but must you be African to talk about Africa? Filmmakers and storytellers must also explore subjects that are far removed from their lives. And I wasn't the only one writing. In addition to Marcel Beaulieu's contribution, I worked with a co-writer, Carine Zimmerlin, a consultant, Anne-Louise Trividic, and both my actresses. All these women influenced my story in their own way.

English. More than anything, the story is about the tensions between these two women. Whenever the tension mounts, one character addresses the other in her own language and conversely whenever there is tenderness it feels more touching if things are said in the other person's native language. The actors' work changes greatly whether they speak French or English – emotions are conveyed very differently. Exploring these nuances was fascinating to me.

Both Melody and Emily seem very strong in their relationships with others yet also very fragile as a result of their respective pasts. Cold and distant at first, the sponsor-surrogate partnership will evolve little by little and quite unexpectedly into a very tender bond...

Both these women wear great big armours. Melody wants to get her head above water and decides to carry another person's child in order to finance her hair salon – “it's better than being poor”, she says. She embodies a character from 2014, at the start of the 21st century, a young European woman in mid-crisis Europe.

Lucie Debay, who plays Melody, is new to the screen and a true revelation. How did you meet her and work with her before filming?

She is new to feature films but is a renowned theatre actress in Belgium. I was fortunate enough to meet her and it quickly clicked. She owned the role through her strength, resilience and generosity. Her face can leave you feeling helpless in an instant, with minimal acting. A face without trickery.

Why did you choose Rachael Blake (Australian actress who featured in the highly controversial *Sleeping Beauty*) for the role of Emily, the mother and sponsor?

We worked with Kahleen Crawford who is, notably, Ken Loach's casting director. She made various suggestions, including Rachael Blake, to whom we sent the script. Two days later, she responded in a modest and touching manner.

I believe that she plays Emily with true finesse, on a knife-edge, and that her radiance contrasts beautifully with the harshness of what she is going through.

Director of photography David Williamson was tasked with filming. What instructions did you give him?

He gave effect to my wishes and even intensified them. Namely, that characters' gaze remain close to the axis, sometimes giving the impression that they are looking at the viewer, as if calling on his kindness. I also placed a great deal of importance on maintaining the right size and distance respectively. Not too close, or I lost the pregnancy. Not too far, or I lost the characters.

We lit the film from above, from the ceiling, so as to free up the frame and the actors' space and facilitate my work as director – I always had 360°.

I certainly did not want harsh lighting, the story already being quite intense. For me, the human face is like a sanctuary, I don't like a stark contrast on faces – I need

to see every feature. I therefore wanted soft, serene lighting that is beautiful yet realistic, and contradicts what the characters are going through.

Would you describe your film as a tragedy? Despite the harshness of the subject, one senses a genuine desire on your part to be hopeful and move towards the light...

Though the themes I choose tend to be tough, I cannot stop myself from instilling a little glimmer of hope in my films, however slight. I am not a desperate filmmaker.



Bernard BELLEFROID

SCENARISTE - REALISATEUR

LONG METRAGE CINEMA

2014 MELODY

Festival du Film Francophone d'Angoulême
Festival des Films du Monde de Montréal

2009 LA RÉGATE

Scénario lauréat de la fondation Beaumarchais
Prix du Public et Jury Junior FIFF Namur 2009
Prix du Public Festival «Premiers Plans» Angers 2010
Sélection en compétition Festival de Rome 2009

COURT MÉTRAGE CINEMA

2002 QUAND ON EST MORT ON NE RESPIRE PLUS

- Sélections :
- Festival Premiers Plans Angers
- Festival International Febiofest
- Festival International des Écoles de cinéma de Mexico

2001 FIONA

DOCUMENTAIRE CINÉ

2007 POURQUOI ON NE PEUT PAS SE VOIR DEHORS QUAND IL FAIT BEAU

2006 RWANDA, LES COLLINES PARLENT

- Grand prix du Festival Vues d'Afrique 2006
- Bayard d'or du Festival International du Film Francophone de Namur 2006
- Grand Prix du Documentaire du Festival International Docville de Leuven
- Grand Prix du Festival International du Film indépendant de Osnabrück 2006
- Prix du Conseil Général, Festival du Film Européen de Vannes
- Grand prix Documentaire Festival International Cinéfleuve

2000 NOUS SOMMES AU MONDE

RADIO

1998 : SECHE TES LARMES, C'EST QUE LA GUERRE

(21 minutes)

-Prix du Public du Festival de Création Sonore et Radiophonique (Belgique)

PUBLICATION

2003 : IBUKA MUZUNGU (nouvelle)

- Grand Prix de la Communauté Française de Belgique du Concours de nouvelle « La fureur de lire»



Rachael BLAKE

FILMS

2013 My Mistress (post-production)
2011 Sleeping Beauty
2010 Cherry Tree Lane
2009 Pinprick
2008 Summer
2005 Dérapage
2004 Tom White
2003 Perfect Strangers
2002 Whispering in the Dark (CM)
2001 The Letter
2001 Lantana
2000 Blindman's Bluff (CM)
1997 Paws

TV

2013 Serangoon Road (post-production)
2012 The Straits (série TV)
2010 Hawke
2009 Le Prisonnier (série TV)
2009 Nightfall: agent double
2008 Inspecteur Lewis (série TV)
2006-2007 Les flingueuses (série TV)
2007 Clapham Junction
2006 Bon Voyage (série TV)
2004 Auf Wiedersehen, Pet (série TV)
2003 Dying to Leave
2003 Grass Roots (série TV)
2000 The Three Stooges
2000 Atterissage impossible
1997-1999 Wildside (série TV)
1995-1997 Summer Bay (série TV)
1997 Brigade des mers (série TV)
1997 Heartbreak High (série TV)
1996 Fire (série TV)



A close-up portrait of Lucie Debay, a young woman with blonde hair styled in an updo, looking slightly to the right with a neutral expression. She is wearing a light-colored, intricately patterned top with gold and brown tones.

Lucie DEBAY

PARCOURS

2005-2009 : MASTER DE L'INSTITUT NATIONAL SUPERIEUR DES ARTS DU SPECTACLE-INSAS

LONG MÉTRAGE

- 2014** **UN FRANÇAIS - DIASTEME**
Rôle principal féminin
- 2013** **MELODY - Bernard BELLEFROID**
Rôle principal féminin
- 2012** **AVANT L'HIVER - Philippe CLAUDEL**
- 2008** **SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HERE AND NOW - Olivier BOONJING** - Premier rôle.

Sélections officielles aux Festivals de Bruxelles (Prix du Public) et Los Angeles (Prix Mavrick, Meilleure Interprétation Féminine).

COURT MÉTRAGE CINÉMA

- 2013** **JUNG FOREVER** - Jean-Sébastien LOPEZ
- 2013** **TERRITOIRE** - Vincent PARONNAUD
- 2013** **L'HOMME QUI SAIT** - Jean-Manuel FERNANDEZ
- 2013** **AFFAIRES COURANTES** - Ian MENOYOT
- 2012** **LE SECRET DU SERPENT** - Mathieu VOLPE
- 2012** **ROADSIDE GIRLS** - Denis MAUGUIT
- 2011** **A NEW OLD STORY** - Antoine CUYPERS
- 2011** **TOUT COMME LES PRINCES** - Claude SCHMITZ
- 2011** **CONQUÊTE SPATIALE** - Baptiste GRANDIN
- 2010** **TRANSFERT** - Pauline CAILLET
- 2009** **UN DUEL** - Pascale BRISCHOUX
- 2007** **ESSAI VIDÉO** - Azily ROMANE
- 2005** **TINTAMARRE** - Thibaut GODARD
- 2003** **INSOMNIE** - Patrick ORTEGA

ARTISTE INTERPRÈTE THÉÂTRE

- 2013** **J'AI ÉCRIT «PAR CONTUMACE»**
Astrid MIGNON-DEMAN
- 2013** **L'ARCHÉOLOGUE ET L'ÉCRAN PLAT/L'ÉCOLIER KEVIN** - Jean-Baptiste CALAME
- 2013** **KING DOM** - Manah DEPAUW
Bit Teatergarsjen (Norvège)
- 2013** **LA PEUR** - Armel ROUSSE
Théâtre National de Bruxelles
- 2012** **HEROES** - Vincent HENNEBICQ
Théâtre National de Bruxelles
- 2012** **SALON DES REFUSÉS** - Claude SCHMITZ
- 2012** **PARASITES** Vincent HENNEBICQ
Théâtre National de Bruxelles
- 2011** **PLAY LOUD** - Falk RICHTER
Théâtre de Bruxelles
- 2010** **IVANOV** - Armel ROUSSEL
- 2010** **L'INSURRECTION QUI VIENT** - Coline STRUYF
- 2010** **ENFANT ZÉRO** - Céline OHREL
- 2009** **SI DEMAIN VOUS DÉPLAIT** - Armel ROUSSEL
- 2008** **BODYSASTER** - Collectif Corps Catastrophe
- 2006** **TRAGEDIA ENDOGONIDIA**
Roméo CASTELLUCCI
Théâtre du Maillon, Strasbourg

TÉLÉFILM

- 2009** **EN VOUS REMERCIANT** - Julien SERI
Docu-fiction
- 2009** **FRAGONARD** - Jacques DONJEAN
Court métrage télévision

Cast

EMILY
MELODY
GARY

Rachael Blake
Lucie Debay
Don Gallagher

Crew

DIRECTOR
SCRIPWRITERS

Bernard Bellefroid
Bernard Bellefroid et Carine Zimmerlin,
en collaboration avec Anne-Louise Trividic
et Marcel Beaulieu

DOP
SOUND ENGINEER
ART DIRECTOR
COSTUMES
EDITING
SOUND EDITING
RE RECORDING MIXER
MUSIC

David Williamson
Carine Zimmerlin
Régine Constant
Catherine Marchand
Jean-Luc Simon
Nicolas Tran Trong - Charles Autrand
Philippe Charbonnel
Frédéric Vercheval

GENRE
SHOOTING DATES
SHOOTING LOCATION
First DCP
THEATRICAL RELEASE DATE
DISTRIBUTION BELGIUM
DISTRIBUTION FRANCE
INTERNATIONAL SALES

Drama
January - March 2014
France, Luxembourg, UK
May 2014
January 2015
Cinéart/Artébis Entertainment
A déterminer
Doc & Film

SCÉNARIO DE BERNARD BELLEFROID ET CARINE ZIMMERLIN AVEC LA COLLABORATION DE ANNE-LOUISE TRIVIDIC ET MARCEL BEAULIEU IMAGE DAVID WILLIAMSON CASTING KAHLEEN CRAWFORD ERIC LAMHÈNE MONTAGE JEAN-LUC SIMON SON CARINE ZIMMERLIN NICOLAS TRAN TRONG CHARLES AUTRAND PHILIPPE CHARBONNEL
MUSIQUE ORIGINALE FRÉDÉRIC VERCHEVAL DÉCORS RÉGINE CONSTANT DIRECTION DE PRODUCTION MARIANNE LAMBERT PRODUCTION EXÉCUTIVE STEPHANE QUINET BRIGITTE KERGER-SANTOS UN FILM PRODUIT PAR PATRICK QUINET CLAUDE WARINGO SERGE ZEITOUN COPRODUCTEURS GILLES PADOVANI ARLETTE ZYLBERBERG EN COPRODUCTION AVEC RTBF
(TÉLÉVISION BELGE) VOO ET BETV BELGACOM AVEC L'AIDE DU CENTRE DU CINÉMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA FÉDÉRATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES ET DE VOO AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DU FILM FUND LUXEMBOURG DE LA WALLONIE ET DE LA RÉGION DE BRUXELLES-CAPITALE AVEC LE SOUTIEN DE EURIMAGES DE LA RÉGION BRETAGNE DU
PROGRAMME MEDIA DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ EUROPÉENNE EN ASSOCIATION AVEC TAX SHELTER FILMS FUNDING CASA KAFKA PICTURES CASA KAFKA PICTURES MOVIE TAX SHELTER EMPOWERED BY BELFIUS COFINOVA 10 AVEC LE SOUTIEN DU TAX SHELTER DU GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL DE BELGIQUE VENTES INTERNATIONALES DOC & FILM