

EX NIHILO PRESENTS



**JEAN-CHRISTOPHE FOLLY
GOLSHIFTEH FARAHANI
ISABELLE CARRÉ
SAMI AMEZIANE**

BLIND SPOT

A FILM BY
**PIERRE TRIVIDIC
& PATRICK MARIO BERNARD**

**doc&
film**
international

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DOC & FILM INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS AN EX NIHILO PRODUCTION



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FRANCE / RUNNING TIME 104' / IMAGE RATIO 1:33 / SOUND 5.1 / 2019

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SYNOPSIS

Dominick Brassan has the power to turn invisible, but rarely uses it. Instead he has kept it a shameful secret, hidden even from Viveka, his fiancée. But when his ability to control his gift gets out of hand, his life, friendships and relationships will be forever turned inside out.



INTERVIEW

WITH PIERRE TRIVIDIC AND PATRICK MARIO BERNARD, DIRECTORS

WITH BLIND SPOT, DID YOU WANT TO OFFER YOUR OWN VERSION OF THE MYTH OF THE INVISIBLE MAN?

PIERRE TRIVIDIC In 2006, I was approached by Emmanuel Carrère. He had read one of my screenplays and had liked it. He suggested that we work together on a story of an invisible man who loses his power of invisibility. We met three or four times, and then Emmanuel told me that he was abandoning the project, that he no longer believed in it enough. However, I had begun working and I believed in it more and more. So I told Emmanuel that if he confirmed that he was abandoning the project, I would resume it with Patrick Mario. And that's what happened. We adopted the abandoned project.

WHY DO YOU GIVE NO EXPLANATION FOR THE GIFT OF INVISIBILITY OR THE GRADUAL LOSS OF THIS GIFT?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Our subject is loss, among other things. The easiest way was to make invisibility a natural gift, without any explanation. A living thing that goes out of control, like all living things. Dominick didn't choose to be an invisible man.

YOU PREFER TO ANCHOR THE FANTASTIC IN EVERYDAY LIFE?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD The whole story takes place today and in an everyday world. Dominick has to make a living. He has a job. He rents an apartment in a tower block. He is closer to Peter Parker/Spiderman, who sells pizzas to make a living, than to Bruce Wayne/Batman, who lives in a mansion. Dominick has a very ordinary or universal appearance, without being a superhero. He doesn't know what to do with his power. Is it that intoxicating to be able to make yourself invisible? He suffers because of his gift as much as he exploits it. And he suffers all the more because it is going haywire.



IS THIS PROSAIC APPROACH A WAY TO BETTER INSPIRE AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD It was first of all a way for us to explore the phenomenon by asking ourselves concrete questions. How exactly does it feel to be invisible? When you are invisible, your clothes are not. We're only really invisible when we're completely naked. Invisibility therefore concerns the body. And the body is vulnerable. Invisibility is therefore a vulnerability.

WE USUALLY IMAGINE INVISIBILITY AS A GREAT POWER, BUT YOU IN FACT TREAT IT AS A HANDICAP?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Yes, it's useful for only one thing, "watching", as Dominick says. It allows us to be there, secretly, when things are seen and heard that we are not supposed to see or hear. But other characters manage to use it differently. Like the magician, who uses it as a way to make his living. And who, in doing so, sells an amazing reality as a mere stage trick. The gift forces you to deal with how you use it. What have you done with your talent?

PIERRE TRIVIDIC It is also a form of imprisonment. Dominick says so at one point to Richard: "We have this gift, so what? What does it force us to do? If I'm two and a half

meters tall, do I have to play basketball?" Do I want to do what I can do, just because I can? The gift of invisibility, do I own it, or does it own me?

SOCIETY'S MISFITS ARE OFTEN CONSIDERED THE "INVISIBLE" OF OUR TIMES. ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT FORMULATE ANY MESSAGE, DOES BLIND SPOT HAVE AN UNDERGROUND POLITICAL DIMENSION?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD That idea probably runs through the whole film, but we didn't aim to make it the focus.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC Invisibility in the film is a developing metaphor, which exposes a variety of issues. It is a question of what we see, what we do not see, how we are seen. And, of all these things, invisibility is also a social metaphor, yes. Invisibility is a metaphor that has become a commonplace in the social field. Everyone knows who these invisible people are. These are people who suffer from their invisibility.

RATHER THAN A SPECIFIC MESSAGE, BLIND SPOT CREATES A COLD, NOCTURNAL AND SLIGHTLY WORRYING URBAN CLIMATE. IS THE WAY YOU FILM THE CITY AND ITS SETTING PART OF A DESIRE TO DEPICT THESE ANXIETY-PROVOKING TIMES?

PIERRE TRIVIDIC Yes, it's cold in the film. But, at first, we were more interested in going from summer to winter, from a heatwave to the silence of a snowy day. Nevertheless, there is still something of that left in the prologue, whose atmosphere is rather saturated and suffocating. And in the ending which takes place in the silence of a snowy day.

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD This does not mean that we go from the heat of life to the cold of death. The silence of the snowy day is that of tranquillity, which makes music and speech possible. It is not an ending but a beginning. It is this silence that allows Dominick to start singing. His destiny is not unrelated to that of the hero of *The Incredible Shrinking Man*: he is constantly shrinking and weakening, but however small and weak he may be, there is always a part of the world that is on his scale, habitable for him, however tiny it may seem to be.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC Nevertheless, the world described is rather anxiety-provoking, as you say. Even if it is not the end of the world that the Asian grocer jokingly predicts at the beginning, we hear a lot of sirens. All this reflects the mental meteorology of a Dominick struggling with the disappearance of his power.

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD We look for sets that are like small theatres. This is particularly true in *Blind Spot*. Architecture has its role in the title and in the film's action. We were looking for boxes, boxes within boxes, all kinds of interlocking, small machines that guide, build the gaze and limit it at the same time. These housing blocks are like a set of cubes. They are simple and pure spaces and forms, without illumination. This troubled world also has its beauties.

HOW DO YOU WORK TOGETHER?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD We have an intuitive way of working, there is no clearly established distribution of roles. So much so that we don't really know in the end who did what.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC We exchange continuously. Development evolves through this dialogue. A line in the screenplay is the balanced sum of these exchanges. At the end of the day, *Blind Spot* follows a very straight path. A single line leads from beginning to end, without any superfluities.



PATRICK MARIO BERNARD We each have our own preferences. Pierre is the meticulous guardian of the screenplay while I am rather inclined to cross the line.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC I'm not a cop. But, if things veer off, I feel it can be interesting to question the reasons for that. Including, if necessary, how to integrate them. It's the meaning that counts.

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Finally, the work, the film, is done by a third person, who is neither Pierre nor me. An invisible person standing between us. But who makes a film alone? No one works alone.

HOW DO YOU WORK WITH YOUR DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, JONATHAN RICQUEBOURG, WHO HAS CREATED A MAGNIFICENT IMAGE?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD We first noticed his work on *Mange tes morts*, Jean-Charles Hue's beautiful film, and in particular his framing. He has worked a lot since then. He has made an impression every time, especially with the photography of *Shéhérazade*. In general, we work according to very common methods. We gathered a very broad iconography with photos, film extracts, visual arts, etc. that provided a foundation for our exchanges with Jonathan.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC Not just photos. There are also Patrick's drawings and watercolours. There are six thick notebooks for *Blind Spot*. This is important work, which has a great expressive power. These "notebooks" serve as a basis for working with all the key crew members, not just the director of photography..

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE MUSIC, WHICH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT "IN" AS "OFF"?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD The music, oh, wow, it's impossible to talk about. It was there right away. We wrote the screenplay from the opening scene, the Afro-funk concert in the prologue. Everything came together: the music, the dark areas of the rehearsal room, the disappearance of the baby from his basket. Music is therefore a primary factor. Our character was born in music, his life would be linked to music. In a rather paradoxical and problematic way, as we can see. In any case, it would always be about music. It's a reference point for measuring Dominick's trajectory. He's an unfulfilled guitarist. He is "called" so, but he does not dare to take that step.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC Patrick composed all of the music for the film. Not only what is referred to as the film's score, but also all the music you hear in the film. It goes from hard-rock to

bossa-nova. His curiosity, know-how and appetite seem to know no bounds. He is also the creator of the sound design.

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Basically, this film could well be a song. Not a novel, not a painting, not theatre, but a song

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE JEAN-CHRISTOPHE FOLLY TO PLAY DOMINICK?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD We met him ten years ago for this role. We had seen him in *Schlafkrankheit* and *La Prima Neve*. We found him amazing but unfortunately a little too young to play a character who is beginning to lose his abilities and powers. We then considered a different cast, which we had to give up for various reasons. Finally we realized that almost ten years had gone by. We met Jean-Christophe again. And he was ripe for the character. We were overjoyed.

THE CHARACTER PLAYED BY ISABELLE CARRÉ REPRESENTS THE AUDIENCE'S POINT OF VIEW. ACCORDING TO WHAT CRITERIA DID YOU CHOOSE HER?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Well, it was an idea of our producer, Patrick Sobelman. And our physical meeting was decisive. We saw in her someone other than in her films,



except in exceptional cases, such as with the Larrieu brothers. From the outset, it was her modernity that struck us. Isabelle has an amazing ability to make suggestions. Inventiveness, rigour, generosity, musical sense.

AND WHAT LED YOU TO PICK GOLSHIFTEH FARAHANI?

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD The role of the blind woman was the first to be cast, while the screenplay was still only a synopsis. Vanessa Paradis accepted the role and followed the adventures and misadventures of the project over the years. And then, at the last moment, when the lights finally turned green, insurmountable scheduling issues prevented her from making the film. It was a heart-breaking experience.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC We thought that looking for a duplicate of Vanessa was a lost cause. And yet, in a way, that's what we did when we started considering Golshifteh. If you agree to see in Vanessa a kind of fairy, straight out of the Arthurian cycle, then you can see that Golshifteh is like an oriental equivalent, a fairy too, but from *The Arabian Nights*. We hadn't spoken to anyone about that when Laurent Grégoire, her agent, offered to introduce us to her. We saw that as a sign.

GOLSHIFTEH GAVE US A VERY WARM WELCOME. SHE APPROACHED THE SCRIPT FROM A VERY PERSONAL ANGLE, A MAGICAL OR MYSTICAL ANGLE, WHICH INTERESTED US A LOT.

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD She is also an actress who is interested in film technique. She looks to see what lens is mounted on the camera, and that tells her enough about how she is filmed. She doesn't need to go to the video assist.

THE CAST IS IN THE FORM OF A QUARTET. THE FOURTH MEMBER IS SAMI AMEZIANE, WHO IS BETTER KNOWN AS THE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA.

PATRICK MARIO BERNARD Sami Ameziane is part of the "historical" cast of *Blind Spot*. When we met him, he was doing his first one-man show. We noticed him because of the posters for that show. He was wearing a court jester's hat, with bells and everything. What struck us was his strange blend of candour and strength. The radiance of childhood and also something else, a dark, worried, perhaps violent side just below the surface. We wanted to build up Richard as a character bearing this kind of complexe energy. And then we saw Sami on stage, and our intuition became obvious. The screenplay appealed to him right away.

BIOGRAPHY

PIERRE TRIVIDIC AND PATRICK MARIO BERNARD, DIRECTORS



PATRICK MARIO BERNARD, a visual artist and composer, is a former student of the Paris Fine Arts School.

PIERRE TRIVIDIC is a former student of the IDHEC (36th class) and a laureate of the Villa Médicis hors-les-murs (1989).

Their working partnership began in 1996 with **LE CAS LOVECRAFT** (Fipa d'Or), a commission from France 3 for the Un Siècle d'Ecrivains collection. For television again, they directed **CECI EST UNE PIPE** for Canal+ in 2000, and **UNE FAMILLE PARFAITE** for Arte in 2005.

For the cinema, they have written and directed two feature films, **DANCING** in 2001 and **L'AUTRE** in 2008 (Best Actress Award for Dominique Blanc at the 65th Venice Film Festival).

In addition to their joint projects, Pierre Trivodic works as a screenwriter for the cinema (from **PETITS ARRANGEMENTS AVEC LES MORTS** by Pascale Ferran to **MARVIN OU LA BELLE ÉDUCATION** by Anne Fontaine, as well as **CEUX QUI M'AIMENT PRENDRONT LE TRAIN** by Patrice Chéreau).

As for Patrick Mario Bernard, he continues to work as a visual artist and, in 2018, directed **GOOD**, a feature film dedicated to the musician Rodolphe Burger.

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE FOLLY

FILMOGRAPHY



- 2018** **LES GOÛTS ET LES COULEURS** by Myriam Aziza
- 2016** **JEUNE FEMME** by Léonor Serraille
- 2014** **FUORI MIRA** by Erik Bernasconi
- 2014** **MAMA TI PORTO IN VACANZA** by Ludovico di Martino
- 2013** **LES SALAUDS** by Claire Denis
- 2012** **VOUS N'AVEZ ENCORE RIEN VU** by Alain Resnais
- LA PRIMA NEVE** by Andre Segre
- 2011** **NEVERS** by Emilie Lamoine
- CLAIR OBSCUR** by Nicolas Wackerbarth
- 2010** **SCHLAFKRANKHEIT** by Ulrich Kohler
- 2009** **EDEN À L'OUEST** by Costa Gavras
- VILLA AMALIA** by Benoît Jacquot
- 2008** **CLIENTE** by Josiane Balasko
- 35 RHUMS** by Claire Denis

ISABELLE CARRÉ

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY SINCE 2010



- 2018** **L'ESPRIT DE FAMILLE** by Eric Besnard
UN VRAI BONHOMME by Benjamin Parent
- 2017** **GARDE ALTERNEE** by Alexandra Leclere
- 2016** **UNE VIE AILLEURS** by Olivier Peyon
COMMENT J'AI RENCONTRE MON PERE by Maxime Motte
- 2015** **PARIS WILLOUGHBY** by Quentin Reynaud and Arnaud Delaire
LE CŒUR RÉGULIER by Vanja d'Alcantara
- 2014** **RESPIRE** by Mélanie Laurent
21 NUITS AVEC PATTIE by Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu
LES CHAISES MUSICALES by Marie Belhomme
ANGE ET GABRIELLE by Anne Giafferi
MARIE HEURTIN by Jean-Pierre Améris
- 2013** **DU GOUDRON ET DES PLUMES** by Pascal Rabate
- 2012** **CERCHEZ HORTENSE** by Pascal Bonitzer
- 2011** **DES VENTS CONTRAIRES** by Jalil Lespert
- 2010** **LES EMOTIFS ANONYMES** by Jean-Pierre Améris
LE REFUGE by François Ozon

GOLSHIFTEH FARAHANI
SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY SINCE 2009



- 2018** **UN DIVAN A TUNIS** by Manele Labidi
LA NUIT A DÉVORÉ LE MONDE by Dominique Rocher
- 2017** **LES FILLES DU SOLEIL** by Eva Husson
THE SONG OF SCORPIONS by Anup Singh
SANTA & CIE by Alain Chabat
THE UPSIDE by Neil Burger
PATERSON by Jim Jarmush
LE DOSSIER MONA LINA by Eran Riklis
- 2015** **LES DEUX AMIS** by Louis Garrel
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN: DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES
by Joachim Rønning, Espen Sandberg
LES MALHEURS DE SOPHIE by Christophe Honoré
- 2014** **ALTAMIRA** by Hugh Hudson
EXODUS by Ridley Scott
GO HOME by Jihane Chouaib
EDEN by Mia Hansen-Love
ROSEWATER by Jon Stewart
MY SWEET PEPPER LAND by Hiner Saleem
- 2011** **JUST LIKE A WOMAN** by Rachid Bouchareb
SYNGUE SABOUR by Atiq Rahimi
- 2010** **POULET AUX PRUNES** by Marjane Satrapi
SI TU MEURS JE TE TUE by Hiner Saleem
THERE BE DRAGONS by Roland Joffe
- 2009** **ABOUT ELLY** by Asghar Farhadi

SAMI AMEZIANE (LE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA)

FILMOGRAPHY



CINEMA

- 2014** **SUPERCONDRIQUE** by Dany Boon
- 2013** **SMS** by Gabriel Julien-Laferrière
- 2012** **LES SEIGNEURS** by Olivier Dahan

STAGE SHOWS

- 2018** **LE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA 2**
- 2016** **LE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA**
- 2011** **STAND UP A NEW YORK**

CLAUDIA TAGBO
SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY



- 2019** **QU'EST-CE QU'ON A ENCORE FAIT AU BON DIEU**
by Philippe de Chauveron
- 2018** **LA CH'TITE FAMILLE** by Dany Boon
- 2017** **LES EX** by Maurice Barthélemy
- 2016** **C'EST QUOI CETTE FAMILLE** by Gabriel Julien-Laferrrière
- 2015** **JE SUIS A VOUS TOUT DE SUITE** by Baya Kasimi
- 2014** **SUPERCONDRIQUE** by Dany Boon
- LE CROCODILE DU BOTSWANGA** by Fabrice Eboue
- AMOUR SUR PLACE OU A EMPORTER** by Amelle Chahbi
- 2012** **LES SEIGNEURS** by Olivier Dahan
- UNE ESTONIENNE A PARIS** by Ilmar Raag
- 2011** **DE L'HUILE SUR LE FEU** by Nicolas Benamoun
- 2010** **LE SENTIMENT DE LA CHAIR** by Roberto Garzelli
- 2008** **VILAINE** by Jean-Patrick Benes et Allan Mauduit

STAGE SHOWS

- 2017** **2017** **LUCKY** directed by Marie Guibourt
- 2012** **2012** **CRAZY** directed by Pascal Eboué

CAST

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE FOLLY

DOMINICK BRASSAN

ISABELLE CARRÉ

VIVEKA BEHRING

GOLSHIFTEH FARAHANI

ELHAM

SAMI AMEZIANE

ALIAS LE COMTE DE BOUDERBALA

RICHARD JASKOWIAK

CLAUDIA TAGBO

CYNTHIA BRASSAN

TELLA KPOMAHOU

MARLETTE BRASSAN

PETER BONKE

DANY DE ROVÈRE

CREDITS

SCREENPLAY AND DIRECTION PATRICK MARIO BERNARD AND PIERRE TRIVIDIC
BASED ON AN ORIGINAL IDEA BY EMMANUEL CARRÈRE
PRODUCTION PATRICK SOBELMAN / EX NIHILO
PHOTOGRAPHY JONATHAN RICQUEBOURG
SOUND ANDRÉ RIGAUT, JEAN MALLET
EDITING ANNETTE DUTERTRE
MUSIC PATRICK MARIO BERNARD
SCRIPT SUPERVISOR CAMILLE BROTTESS-BEAULIEU
1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OLIVIER GENET
CASTING DIRECTOR MARJOLAINE GRANDJEAN
SET DESIGN DAPHNÉ ET AXEL DEBOAISNE
UNIT PRODUCER ULIEN LINIÈRES
COSTUMES SARAH ANNA DA SILVA
MAKEUP & HAIR CAROLINE PHILIPPONNAT
PRODUCTION MANAGER TATIANA BOUCHAIN
POST-PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR CHRISTINA CRASSARIS
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