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PERSMAP



LES OLYMPIADES

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EEN FILM VAN JACQUES AUDIARD



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2021 OFFICIAL SELECTION



Drama - 2021 - Frankrijk - 104 minuten

Bioscooprelease: 28 april 2022

Meer over de film: [Cineart.nl/films/les-olympiades](https://www.cineart.nl/films/les-olympiades)

Persmaterialen: [Cineart.nl/pers/les-olympiades](https://www.cineart.nl/pers/les-olympiades)

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SYNOPSIS

LES OLYMPIADES is een bitterzoete stadssymfonie van Jacques Audiard (DE ROUILLE ET D'OS, UN PROHETE). Céline Sciamma (PORTRAIT DE LA JEUNE FILLE EN FEU) schreef mee aan het scenario. In Les Olympiades, een wijk in het 13e arrondissement van Parijs, ontmoeten we drie jonge vrouwen en een man. Ze staan midden in het leven als vrienden, soms geliefden, maar vaak als allebei.

Emilie (Lucie Zhang) leert Camille (Makita Samba) kennen als ze op zoek moet naar een nieuwe huisgenoot. Ze kunnen het goed met elkaar vinden en worden meer dan vrienden. Nora (Noémie Merlant) is de vriendin van Camille, maar heeft moeite met intimiteit en voelt zich meer op haar gemak bij Amber Sweet (Jehnnny Beth) die ze online heeft leren kennen. De jongeren ontdekken wat moderne liefde is, waarin vriendschap en liefhebben dichter bij elkaar liggen dan ooit.

LES OLYMPIADES werd geselecteerd voor het Filmfestival van Cannes, waar Rone de prijs won voor Beste Soundtrack. De film is gebaseerd op een aantal graphic stories van cartoonist en illustrator Adrian Tomine.



JACQUES AUDIARD

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2021	LES OLYMPIADES
2018	THE SISTERS BROTHERS
2015	DHEEPAN
2012	DE ROUILLE ET D'OS
2009	UN PROPHÈTE
2005	DE BATTRE MON COEUR S'EST ARRÊTÉ
2001	SUR MES LÈVRES
1996	UN HÉROS TRÈS DISCRET
1994	REGARDE LES HOMMES TOMBER

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

To begin with, there were Adrian Tomine's three graphic novels. I liked their brevity, their discreet depth, their characters filled with whimsy and melancholy, the skillful use of ellipsis and finally how they consider each human being to be a small unfathomable abyss.

Before this starting point, the desire to write a co-medy had been there for a while. In linking comedy with Tomine's work, I had the possibility of writing a "fluctuating" story mirroring Tomine's characters. A discreetly constructed film whose heroes, however, would be constantly talking.

At the very beginning of the beginning, there was Rohmer's *My night at Maud's*, and without knowing it, the desire one day to make a film about love discourse, or more exactly: when and how does one speak about love today? In *My night at Maud's*, two men and a woman, but especially a man and a woman, talk all night long. They speak about everything: themselves, naturally, but also God, Blaise Pascal, the falling snow, provincial life, the charm of young Catholic girls, and so on. In the end, while all the signs of a mutual attraction have been shown and acknowledged, while they should fall into each other's arms and love one another, they don't. Why? Because everything has been said and the seduction, eroticism, and love have all been channeled through words alone. Following it up would have been superfluous.

How would this situation play out today when we are offered just the opposite? What actually happens in our era of Tinder and "sleeping together on the first date?" Can there be an amorous discourse in these conditions? Yes, of course, how could we possibly doubt that. But at what moment does it come into play? What are the words and the protocols? That is one of the main narrative threads of LES OLYMPIADES.



INTERVIEW WITH JACQUES AUDIARD

Why did you choose Olympiades for the French title of the film?

The Olympiades is a neighborhood of high-rises in the middle of Paris' 13th arrondissement between the rue de Tolbiac and Avenue d'Ivry. This neighborhood came to be through a renovation program that took place in the 1970s hence its highly visible architectural homogeneity. As a tribute to the 1968 Winter Olympics in Grenoble, each tower is named after a city that hosted the Olympic Games: Sapporo, Mexico, Athens, Helsinki, Tokyo... and the streets are named after Olympic sports: rue du Javelot [Javelin Street], rue du Disque [Discus street].

The Olympiades is a very original, exotic, lively neighborhood with an impressive social and cultural blend. The film's characters live there and cross paths there. The term "Olympiades" also is a reference to athletic feats, and if you have a bit of a dirty mind, it can also refer to the characters' sexual achievements.

The screenplay is adapted from three stories by the American graphic novel writer Adrian Tomine. What did you like about his universe and how did you choose the stories you were going to adapt?

Tomine's narratives are concise, close to reality, with characters who are lost and on a quest for something they can't really define. I liked all these aspects. Further, his drawings are very simple and impactful, they don't distract from the narrative and seem ready-made for cinema, almost like a storyboard. And then, a little like Eric Rohmer, Adrian Tomine is a moralist: at the end of these stories, his characters seem to have learned something about life and themselves.

How did you come up with the idea of the film? What happened for you to one day wake up and say: "To-day I'm going to adapt three of Tomine's stories"?

I am increasingly under the impression that the expression "looking for a good subject," doesn't make much sense and that "looking for a subject" is most likely the surest way never to find one, or at best to find a bad subject. You don't look for a subject, but you think about shapes and patterns, about things in general, made up of lights, rhythms, colors, sounds, types of characters and themes. For example, after having made *The Sisters Brothers*, I naturally started thinking about its direct opposite, meaning an urban story, with city characters, and a limited perimeter (Paris' 13th arrondissement) without color and little action.

And one day a friend spoke to me about Adrian Tomine's work, which I wasn't familiar with. I read it and then all these things that were swirling around in my mind started to crystallize and little by little it all became Paris, 13th District.

Paris, 13th District is foremost a film about youth.

Youth indeed, but they are no longer teenagers. The four main characters are young adults who already have some life experience, and who are going to meet each other and love one another. They all have a social existence; they aren't hermits. Three of them are in their thirties and have already dealt with difficulties in finding housing and/or a job, are going through professional crises, and are unable to settle down in their sexuality let alone a relationship. They change their lifestyle while they've only just become self-sufficient. This is where they are, like the lost souls in Adrian Tomine's stories. The character Camille (Makita Samba), a young high school teacher, is already disillusioned by the school system. Nora (Noémie Merlant) has come to Paris to go back to school after a painful past with her family. After spending many years studying at university, Emilie (Lucie Zhang) has chosen, deliberately it seems, to let herself flounder from one menial job to the next. Cam girl Amber Sweet (Jehnnny Beth) will for the first time reach out to the other side of the screen.

In fact, all of the characters face disillusionment, but in a good way because they were deluded about themselves. The experiences they will go through will open their eyes to who they really are, what they want and what they really love.

The film, which is very much rooted in the here and now, 2020, was shot in black and white, which is counter-intuitive, but gives it a timeless aspect.

I've already shot quite a bit in Paris, and I find that it is not an easy city to film: too museum-like, too Haussmannian; there aren't enough perspectives and lines...

Choosing the 13th arrondissement and filming in black and white gave me the possibility of offering something that was more graphic, switching up expectations about Paris. We filmed this European city almost like an Asian metropolis. In the end, it could be said that Paris, 13th District is in a way like a "contemporary period film." And then, naturally, there is the visual reference to Woody Allen's Manhattan.

A single moment is shot in color, in a very symbolic way.

Yes, it's when Amber Sweet arrives in the story, the cam girl, meaning pornography. Amber, who is only seen through computer and telephone screens and who lives far from Paris, is in fact the most influential character in the story. Turning Nora's life upside down, through a domino effect she also ends up changing the lives of Camille and Emilie.

Let's talk about the characters, starting with the Emilie/Camille couple, whose story is told in the first part of the film.

Emilie, a young French-Chinese woman, is torn between her family's ambitions for her and her freedom as a young woman. She has just graduated from the prestigious Science Po School, but has decided to make a living through menial jobs (operator in a call center, waitress). She is brilliant but wastes a lot of time fighting against her family's expectations, pettily provoking them.

Camille is more grounded in life. We see more of his family. We meet his sister, who is trying to break into stand-up comedy. They are a family who has benefited from public school education. We can easily imagine their mother as having been an English or Spanish teacher and their father a math teacher. Camille teaches literature and is having a professional crisis. In his relationship with others, he is both charming and insufferable. He's quick-witted but knows it and likes to hear himself talk. He's interested in women, his love life, and his freedom. But through blindly pursuing these interests, he ends up getting stuck in his own trap.

Let's speak about Nora and Amber now, the other "couple" in the film.

Nora is 33. She's escaped from the provinces and her profession as a real estate agent to go back to school at Paris-Tolbiac University. She's a woman who doesn't realize she's beautiful and intelligent. She thinks she's boring, but in reality she's just uncomfortable in her skin. Meeting Camille will appease her momentarily, but it's her encounter with Amber Sweet that will really change her life. Amber, who is frank, courageous, and world-wise, will teach her what freedom means in every way possible. Nora will be deeply and ultimately changed by her.

Tell us a little about your choice of actors and your work with them.

Christel Baras, the casting director, was essential in the choice of actors. I must credit her with finding Lucie, Makita, Noémie and Jehnny.

Because the members of the troupe all had different levels of experience, we did a great deal of work in pre-production: rehearsals of course, but also specific sessions working on body and movement to face the "sex" scenes as serenely as possible.

Three days before the film shoot was to begin, we went through the entire screenplay from start to finish in a theater in Paris. It was an opportunity for the actors to all meet, see each other in their roles and to have an idea of what worked and what didn't, and also to build confidence. Something else: having dedicated so much time to rehearsing, we were sure to have a very fast film shoot, thus limiting our exposure to Covid.

One of the major references for the film is Eric Rohmer's My Night at Maud's (1969). Why is this film so important to you ?

At the very beginning of my life as a young film enthusiast, there was My Night at Maud's. A movie that left such a big impression on me that when I made my first film, See How They Fall, in 1994, I asked Jean-Louis Trintignant to play the leading role.

In *My Night at Maud's*, two men and a woman, but especially a man and a woman talk all night long. They speak about everything: themselves, God, Blaise Pascal, the snow, provincial life, young Catholic girls, etc. In the end, while all the signs of a mutual attraction have been shown and acknowledged, while they should fall into each other's arms and love one another, they don't. Why? Because everything has been said and the seduction, eroticism, and love have all been channeled through words alone. Following it up would have been superfluous.

How would this situation play out today when we are offered just the opposite? What actually happens in our era of Tinder and "sleeping together on the first date?" Can there be an amorous discourse in these conditions? Yes, of course, how could we possibly doubt that. But at what moment does this discourse come into play? What are the words and the protocols? That is one of the main narrative threads of *Paris, 13th District*.



INTERVIEW WITH LUCIE ZHANG

Can you tell us about Emilie, your character?

Emilie is a young Taiwanese girl in her twenties who grew up in Paris. She's extroverted, excessive, a little crazy, and a bit weird. Above all she is misunderstood and thus lonely at times. She is prey to her conflicting emotions, but has trouble showing them

This is your first big movie role, tell us about your background.

Three to four years ago I started acting in 2-minute-long short films that I made with friends. There was no script, only images. I moved around, took poses... Then in 2019, while I was a university student I also studied theater at the 16th arrondissement conservatory in Paris.

When did you realize you wanted to be an actress?

When I was a teenager. I didn't have a big social life and I watched a lot of Chinese series on TV. The characters fly in the air and have magnificent costumes... I told myself this was what I wanted to do, but I never thought about what needed to be done to make this dream concrete. I didn't plan or schedule anything.

How did you get to meet Jacques Audiard?

I saw a message on Instagram: looking for bilingual Chinese girls who grew up in Paris. I sent in my resume and met Christel Baras, the casting director. When we first met, she thought I was too young and too "green." I wasn't able to embody Emilie's unconventional side. But we stayed in touch during the first lockdown. I knew that she was very fond of me.

When she called me back in the Spring of 2020 so I could meet Jacques, there was also the assistant director Jean-Baptiste Pouilloux, and Makita Samba, who plays Camille. We went

straight to work: we proposed ideas and Jacques directed us. He was trying, I believe, to gauge our creativity and adaptability. Two weeks later, I was told that I had been chosen for the part. So I took a year off from my studies in economics and management.

What kind of relationship do you have with Emilie, your character?

A complicated one! Sometimes I hate her, other times I love her and sometimes I judge her. But in the end we get along just fine. I tried to get to know her as well as I possibly could with the goal of becoming her when we shot the film. It was a true spiritual journey.

Did Jacques Audiard give you any references when you were preparing for the shoot?

He mostly asked me to watch romantic comedies, in particular WHEN HARRY MET SALLY for its levity.

How did you prepare for this role with him?

From the beginning, he wanted me to be independent, for me to be the one to create my character. I also had three coaches: one for the body, one for the voice, and one for acting. We rehearsed a great deal. Jacques made me understand that it was about exploring, not getting dead set on one idea; it was okay to make mistakes in order to happen upon something that worked. One day, he told me that he chose me not because I resembled Emilie, but because with work, effort, and my intelligence I could become her, but first I had to let go of many things that were me. It was a revelation. I'm naturally a little introverted, inhibited, shy, calm, and well-behaved, but I then understood and accepted that I had to simply lend my body and my voice to Emilie.

Did it allow you to let go for the sex scenes?

Yes ! It's difficult when you are playing a strong emotion to understand what is real and what is fake. I was a little stuck between the character and myself, a little lost. But that's a good thing too, to be lost.

You act in both French and Chinese in the movie. What was it like to go from one language to the other?

It was very interesting because I quickly understood that Chinese is the language I use for everything that is personal while French is the language I associate with the intellect. When I try to communicate something in an intellectual manner, I use French; but I cry in Chinese.

What is it like to cry in Chinese?

It's dramatic! In fact, once, in order to help me get closer to my character and her emotions, my coaches and Jacques advised me to translate all of the dialogue into Chinese, and then to play the role that way. It helped me a great deal.



INTERVIEW WITH MAKITA SAMBA

Can you introduce your character Camille to us?

Camille is a young and single 30-year-old Parisian high school teacher who has recently been dumped by his girlfriend. I had waited a very long time to play a lively young mischievous man my age.

What made you want to become an actor?

Baywatch! When I was five, or six years old I dreamed of being David Charvet. And in the movies it was Robin Williams. After high school, I studied law for three years (I wanted to work for the IMF, I dreamed of saving the world), before being accepted into the Cours Florent Classe Libre, and then into the Conservatory. Very quickly things went smoothly, almost naturally, so I simply followed this path that had opened up for me. I did a great deal of theater, notably with Guillaume Vincent and I also shot a film in Austria called Angelo.

How did the audition go and what was it like to meet Jacques Audiard?

It was long! I went through the first screen tests in January 2020, and I was waiting to meet Jacques when the lockdown was announced. I spent three months at home wondering if I was going to be in Jacques' next film...

Were you very familiar with his work?

Of course. I started the Cours Florent training program when The Prophet came out. The only film of his I hadn't seen was Read my lips. I watched it before the screen tests and then once again before the actual shoot. I thought about it a great deal while working on the film.

And your first meeting with him?

I was very intimidated. But I found in his writing and in his work the things I was expecting and even more: wittiness and playfulness.

How did you work with him to create the character of Camille?

Before the shoot we worked a lot on the sex scenes so that Lucie [Zhang] and I would feel perfectly com-fortable. More generally, the main reference he gave me for Camille's character was Perdican in Alfred de Musset's *Don't trifle with Love*, about a young man who is going to disappoint the love interest to whom he is promised.

Was there a lot of rehearsing?

Yes. Lucie and I took dance lessons together to get to know one another. At the beginning, it was just the two of us working together most of the time, then the assistant director joined us and then the director of photography. We very quickly started working as a team, a little like a theater company.

Camille is not a very nice character. How did you picture his evolution as the story moves along until we finally see him lower his guard?

Not being nice was a big part of the job. We don't see a lot of Camille as a teacher, but I enormously worked on this aspect of his life. I spoke to teachers, tried to understand what it is like to stand in front of an audience of teenagers to whom you have to impart things, being approachable, but not overly soft, setting boundaries. Most of the characterization was structured around this part of his life, scenes that we don't see in the film.

There's a game of masks in the film, each person reveals themselves little by little.

Yes, it's a journey of discovery. Camille has to deconstruct the image he has of himself and to do that, he needs someone else. This is the reason why it was important for the character to be Black, to address the notion of social masks, even if the matter of his skin color is never directly addressed in the film.

Were you already familiar with Paris' 13th district, and the Olympiades' neighborhood, which gives the film its French title?

No! I grew up in Paris, I know this city by heart, but it's one of the only arrondissements or districts I wasn't familiar with at all. I was surprised to discover this incredibly cosmopolitan world – and yet I have lived in Barbes, Belleville, and in the 16th district. I had no idea that a place like this existed in Paris.



INTERVIEW WITH NOÉMIE MERLANT

Tell us about Nora...

Nora is a young thirty-year-old woman who arrives in Paris from the provinces ready to pick up her studies where she left them off and start a new chapter in her life. She's a very complex womanly character who can be at once fragile, strong, and surprising. A woman in her thirties who is trying to figure out who she is and to understand her true desires, which will be revealed to her as a result of her meeting Amber Sweet. This virtual encounter turns her life upside down, allowing her true desires to finally blossom. Thanks to this woman who resembles her, Nora listens, comes to terms with who she is, and lets herself live. She gives herself the time to let this desire come into being, becoming aware of it and then has the courage to see it through. I like the path taken by this character and what it says about the era we live in. Falling in love, falling in love with a woman... Nora has found a new life where she fits in, and she is ready to live it to its fullest.

What did you think about the character when you read the screenplay, then after your conversations with Jacques Audiard?

Understanding what you desire is a narrative thread that goes through the entire film and is something I immediately responded to. Moreover, Nora is a strong person, she is always moving forward, she's a fighter, awkward at times but joyful. Even though she is a victim of harassment at the university, which will change everything that happens to her, the focus stays on how she picks herself up now that this incident has brought her elsewhere, and how she makes something beautiful out of it. Jacques spoke a lot to me about this impetus, as well as her awkward side. There's something a little slapstick about her, and he immediately advised me to watch Annie Hall again, and to always think about the comic side of what happens to her.

How did rehearsals go?

Jacques very quickly proposed that we work with a choreographer before the shoot. The idea was to embody the characters in our bodies and gestures. For that, we worked a great deal in anticipation of the film shoot, which led to the fantastic run-through with all the actors in a Parisian theater. What a joy it would be if we had the luxury of doing that for each movie! In filmmaking, we always shoot out of order, often without rehearsal. Having a vision of all the characters and how the film unfolds from start to finish allows you to have access to what the director has imagined in his head. We arrived on the film shoot more liberated, more serene, and more aware.

A lot of preparation work went into filming the sex scenes.

Yes, which was also done with the choreographer, Stéphanie Chêne. Bodies speak as much as words, and we wanted to express as much as possible through these intimate scenes. Many of the movements and gestures were choreographed, like a dance. The more a sex scene is prepared and seen as something that serves a purpose, the more it feels like part of the work, which allows you to relax.

Paris, 13th District is in many respects a "female gaze" film. As an actress, how did you feel about the way the camera was filming you?

Naturally, a man can have a female gaze and I did feel that from our very first discussion. You can very quickly see who you are dealing with through the way that people behave and the words they choose. The key to having a female gaze is to empathize, to put yourself in someone else's shoes, here a woman, with kindness and thoughtfulness. Jacques is extremely attentive when it comes to these questions: he leaves space for others to freely express themselves without feeling forced or oppressed. It's like being in love: when you are looked upon with kindness and respect, you go for it. There is a strong link with the very notion of consent when an actor gives of his body in nude scenes.

What struck you most when you saw the film?

It's timelessness. The movie is current and modern in its way of telling stories about desire, sex and how things are inverted today (first you sleep together, then you talk), but there is also something said about solitude that is timeless, powerful, and profound. Everything is more accessible but also more difficult. Paris, 13th District is a modern take on a film composed of verbal banter rooted in today's world and society. Who are we? What do we want? There's a lot of wandering. These characters are struggling, and I find that very beautiful. You feel less alone watching this film. You want to live, make love, and fall in love. And it gives you greater courage to face the throes of loneliness.



INTERVIEW WITH JEHNNY BETH

Can you tell us about your character?

Amber Sweet is a former porn star who has become what is called a "cam girl," an online sex worker. She's a character who knows who she is: she knows what she likes and what she wants; she earns a living and is established in her life. She's perhaps the most stable character of the film.

How were you approached for the role?

The casting director, Christel Baras, contacted my agent just before the first lockdown. Weirdly, the timing was spot on because my character always appears on screen via her webcam, and so I could do my first screen tests remotely, filming myself. I used the accessories I had at home, and I just went for it. In fact, I think that is what they liked. We then did screen tests via Zoom with Noémie Merlant, and finally I met Jacques.

What was it like working with him?

He gave us a lot of freedom. He wanted us to propose ideas to him, which is very rare coming from a director. It was a singular and fascinating way to work, allowing us to use our own imagination. We had the time and the liberty to submit a number of possibilities, it was like a game.

Did you research the world of cam girls before the shoot?

I already knew a little bit, but I did take the time to research this world. I studied their movements, in particular what they do with their keyboards, how they use them, where they set them up... Jacques often said to me: "In your world you are the one directing and staging

yourself.” He wanted me to propose different things to him. We worked as a group on this film, with Virginie Montel the artistic director and Stéphanie Chêne the choreographer.

What took place during the rehearsals?

Jacques wanted to shoot the film in a fast, condensed way, so leading up to the shoot we had three months of rehearsals. We got together for readings, improvisations, and movement; with the choreographer we worked on our bodies, the way we walked, how to use accessories. As a cam girl I had quite a few accessories, one more zany than the other. Everything was done in a joyful manner. There’s a comic side to the film.

You went to the Conservatory of Dramatic Arts in Poitiers, but until recently the public knows you for being a singer and musician. Is acting your first calling?

I acted in a film when I was 17, but I made the choice, at 20, to go live in London to concentrate on music. I preferred to take control of my life, do things myself rather than be dependent upon somebody’s desire, which is a characteristic of being a budding actor. I don’t regret what I did at all because I had a wonderful life and a musical career that I loved and which I am still pursuing today. But when I returned to Paris four years ago, I got a call for a role in Catherine Corsini’s *An Impossible Love*, right when I was considering trying to get back into acting. I am very serious about acting, but much more relaxed than when I was younger. I continue to make music and albums, to plan tours. This teaches me different things. But I was born with a love of words. My father was a stage director and the director of the Poitiers Conservatory, and when I was at school, I would go to the theater to hear people rehearse their lines. It’s in my DNA and I’m thrilled to be able to work in this field again.

Did your experience with performing on stage help you to construct Amber?

I’m used to directing myself, it’s true. But the most important thing that I learned on stage and from music is to be aware of your body. For singing as well as acting, I’m in the habit of using my body, and I like being rather physical in films. For this reason, I had no problem with the nudity. I felt protected, it was no longer me.

Indeed, the film has a very respectful take on your body, even when you appear completely bare. How did you feel about shooting these scenes?

At the beginning I had the impression, because of the pornographic images and because of her profession, that my character was going to channel most of the film’s sexuality. But I realized when I saw the film that I was protected by the screen. I didn’t feel that I was really that much exposed. With the accessories, the wig, I was in the role, and also I think it is important to have conversations about sexuality. I feel very concerned by what the film is talking about, casting a new light on the language of modern love. Very early on, Jacques had mentioned that he wanted to make a reverse *My Night at Maud’s*: instead of having the character spend the night talking to the point that sex has lost its meaning, because everything has been said, we started with sexuality and then the actual conversation can start.

There was work done on Amber’s voice, it changes as she evolves and reveals herself.

Jacques told me from the onset that he wanted my voice to be deeper and warmer when I was Amber Sweet, when I wear the wig, for the viewer to feel something a little overplayed, which



is also a way of protecting oneself in this profession. He gave me the song *Falling in Love Again* as a reference, which is sung by Lucie at the end of the film, to music by Rone. I would sing it before each scene, and it accompanied me throughout the movie.

Did you meet the actors with whom you did not share any scenes?

Yes. I knew the screenplay very well as a whole, because after three months of rehearsals, Jacques organized a day at the Rond-Point Theater in Paris with all the actors, even the smallest parts. We sat in a semi-circle and played our scenes one after the other as if it were a stage play.

INTERVIEW WITH LÉA MYSIUS

CO-SCREENWRITER

Paris, 13th District, which you cowrote with Jacques Audiard and Céline Sciamma, is the adaptation of three short stories by Adrian Tomine. How did you go about writing the adaptation?

I hadn't heard about Adrian Tomine before working on this screenplay. I was quite touched by the feelings of melancholy and otherness that run through his graphic novels. When I came to work on the project, there was already a first version of the script that had been written by Jacques and Céline. The adaptation took place from this version coupled with Tomine's three stories which we interwove together. What I like about Tomine's storytelling are the scenes of everyday life that seem quite banal at first, but aren't really in fact, with characters who turn out to be far from mundane.

Do the four main characters come from Adrian Tomine's stories?

For the most part, but we "adapted" them to the story that Jacques wanted to film. The only entirely invented character is Camille, who is both charming and thoroughly annoying. He's the one who links the different stories together. The greatest part of the work consisted in linking the stories and the characters in a seamless way, while at the same time the characters are confused and lost, searching in order to figure out who they truly are. The work also involved inserting the stories into a precise context, that of the Olympiades neighborhood in Paris' 13th arrondissement.

Dialogue is a very important part of the film.

Jacques wanted a lot of dialogue. He wanted people to be talking all the time, especially Emilie and Camille. These two talk and sleep together: and yet, does that mean they are in love? Nora and Amber talk through a screen and only know each other as pixelized images. What is the nature of their relationship? Does it matter whether we define it or not? Nora and Camille aren't able to have a real conversation or sleep together, and still they decide to be a couple: yet does that mean they really are a couple? I like how the film resembles a maze, a sinuous path that the characters take with us, to find love and especially to find themselves.

Amber Sweet's character is a little different than the others.

Amber seems different because perhaps she is the only one who best knows where she is going, and she is exclusively seen through screens. Virtual communication is a part of our lives, our love lives and sex lives. Jacques wanted to speak about that, about how we handle all these different ways of being in a relationship. What I find very powerful about Paris, 13th District, is that it is about love, friendship, sex, and solitude but that deep down it's a film about communication – whether real, virtual, imaginary, experienced, or fantasized – through today's technological tools but also through words, speech, and bodies.

CAST

Emilie	LUCIE ZHANG
Camille	MAKITA SAMBA
Nora	NOÉMIE MERLANT
Amber Sweet	JEHNNY BETH
Eponine	CAMILLE LÉON-FUCIEN
Stéphanie	OCÉANE CAIRATY
Leïla	ANAÏDE ROZAM
Camille's Father	POL WHITE
Emilie's Sister	GENEVIÈVE DOANG

CREW

Director	JACQUES AUDIARD
Screenwriters	CÉLINE SCIAMMA, LÉA MYSIUS & JACQUES AUDIARD
Based on the short stories	« AMBER SWEET » « KILLING AND DYING » « HAWAIIAN GETAWAY »
by	ADRIAN TOMINE
Music	RONÉ
Produced by	VALÉRIE SCHERMANN
Casting	CHRISTEL BARAS
Director of Photography	PAUL GUILHAUME, A.F.C
Editor	JULIETTE WELFLING
Art Director	VIRGINIE MONTEL
Set Manager	MILA PRELI
Sound	BRIGITTE TAILLANDIER VINCENT GOUJON HORTENSE BAILLY NIELS BARLETTA
Production manager	ALBERT BLASIUS
1st Assistant Director	JEAN-BAPTISTE POUILLOUX
Script	CHRISTELLE MEAUX
Director of Post-Production	CÉDRIC ETTOUATI
Musical Supervisor	PIERRE-MARIE DRU
Executive Producer	PAGE 114
A coproduction	PAGE 114
With the participation of	FRANCE 2 CINÉMA CANAL+ CINÉ+
In association with	FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS COFINOVA 17