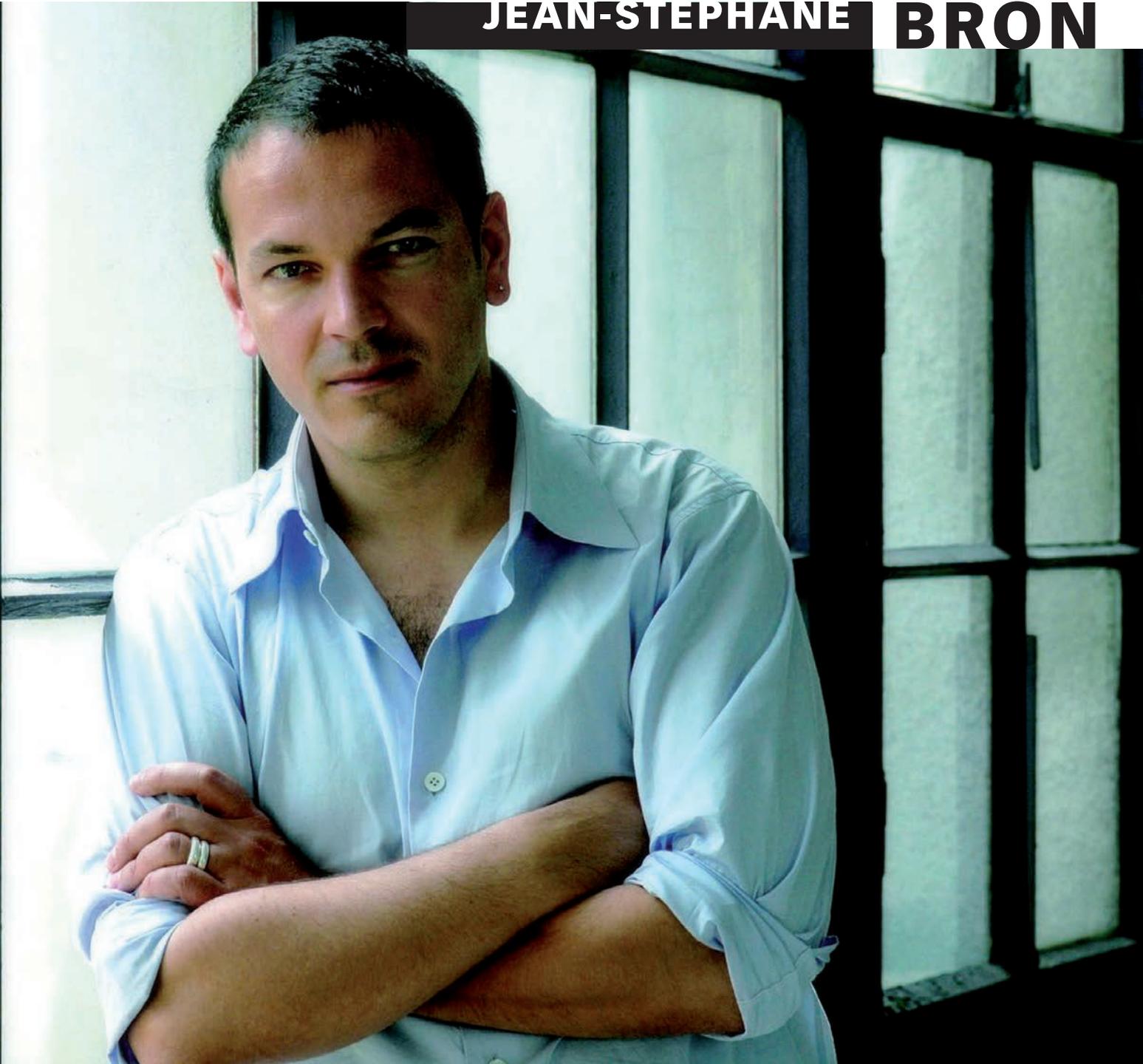


JEAN-STÉPHANE BRON

©Photo: Luc Chessex



Born in Lausanne (Switzerland) in 1969, Jean-Stéphane Bron is a graduate of Lausanne's ECAL (University of Art and Design). After winning several awards in Europe and the USA for **Connu de nos services** (1997) and **La bonne conduite** (1999), in 2001 he began shooting **Mais im Bundeshuus – le génie helvétique**: two years in the making, this film became a box-office hit in Switzerland, attracting some 100,000 viewers and winning the Swiss Film Prize for the best documentary film in 2004. In 2006, he directs his first fiction film, **Mon frère se marie**, based on his own family story. In 2009 he founds the production company *Bande à part Films* (www.bandeapartfilms.com) in Lausanne, together with filmmakers Ursula Meier, Lionel Baier and Frédéric Mermoud. his fourth feature-length documentary **Cleveland Versus Wall Street**, was released in 2010 and presented at the Cannes Film Festival within the framework of the Directors' Fortnight. the film was nominated for France's César Awards and won the Swiss Film Prize 2011 in the category of Best Documentary Film.

JEAN-STÉPHANE BRON



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Irony and Tenderness

Three films – **Known to Our Departments** (*Connu de nos services*), **The Way I look at You** (*La bonne conduite – 5 histoires d'auto-école*) and **Corn in Parliament** (*Mais im Bundeshuus – le génie helvétique*), – have propelled Bron to the ranks of Switzerland's most promising filmmakers. Basking in praise and prizes, it is as if he were flying in the face of the law of forced exile whereby native artists must seek recognition in more favourable cultural markets abroad... A filmmaker attached

to his origins but also capable of targeting the universal, Bron blends intelligence, humour and love of his viewers with all the ingredients required to develop works that straddle the dividing line –fragile and penetrable – between fiction and documentary.

From the start, what appealed to Bron was the idea of creating documentaries as fascinating as any feature-length fiction film, Thus his research has always focused on exploring the resources of a narrative regime based on the dialectics between two seemingly contradictory modes of representation. Belying conventional wisdom as to the documentary-maker's approach, Bron does not seek to convey real facts left in the raw. Rather, using material drawn from such reality, he sets up worlds that bring into play certain fiction codes. For instance, **Corn in Parliament** is presented as a document, yet it obeys a rationale involving a specific plot, a canonical narrative structure (the narration is linear, homogeneous and coherent, as if unfolding on its own), the psychologization of the "characters", and a viewer-centred strategy (forging transparent images that ensure the illusion of reality).

Driven by a desire to explore human relations in their various modalities, Bron has chosen to concentrate above all on individuals facing the sort of conflicts (personal, moral, socio-cultural, political, etc.) that highlight all that separates them as much as – despite their surface differences – all that unites them. Starting out from a patchwork of different positions and world outlooks, each time he seeks to bring to the fore a complex and contrasting image of the relations between individuals with heterogeneous, or even incompatible, backgrounds and environments. This Otherness – diminished as it is through each person's deep humanity – remains inextricably linked with an overriding concern for nuance and the rejection of anything that smacks of dogmatism. Bron respects the opinions of the subjects whose life he films, and it is important to him for every viewpoint to be expressed. In this manner, he creates room for reflection accessible to viewers without the help of a readymade reading grid. To attain this result, he attaches great importance to the words that are exchanged, uttered, overheard or quoted, and that form a pattern accentu-

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2013 **L'expérience Blocher**
(documentary)
- 2013 **La petite leçon de cinéma:
le documentaire** (short film)
- 2010 **Cleveland Versus Wall Street**
(documentary)
- 2009 **Traders** (documentary)
- 2006 **Mon frère se marie**
(fiction)
- 2003 **Mais im Bundeshuus –
Le génie helvétique,**
(documentary)
- 2001 **En cavale** (documentary)
- 1999 **La bonne conduite,
(5 histoires d'auto-école)**
(documentary)
- 1997 **Connu de nos services**
(documentary)
- 1996 **Ted Robert, le rêve américain**
(short film, co-direction with
François Bovy)
- 1995 **12, chemin des Bruyères**
(short film)

JEAN-STÉPHANE BRON

> Irony and Tenderness

ating, irrigating and rendering more dynamic the flow of each cinematographic narration.

This very staging of words allows Bron to set forth a diversity of viewpoints. These reflect the complexity of various problematic issues, while at the same time they enable the filmmaker to question the world that surrounds him. By the same token, it is a way of disarming, as much as possible, the power of prejudices, platitudes and all manner of preconceived ideas. His tack is to act like someone who knows nothing but is determined to try to fill in the gaps. Fuelled by an innate curiosity tinged with humanism, he explores the contradictions and ambiguities that are the vagaries of life in society. Every one of his films develops from certain basic questions, many of which incidentally concern the Swiss people as a whole: What about a police system that keeps secret files on citizens? What goes on in a driving-school car between the driving instructor and the student driver? How does democracy work at the highest institutional echelons?

Bron does indeed enjoy telling stories. His goal is to better communicate, to convey a message to each of us, whatever our origin or allegiance, our convictions or doubts, our commitments or lack thereof. What comes across in each of his films is his capacity to reconstruct a series of arguments without inflecting them in any given, univocal direction. Turn by turn an attentive witness or a conduit for information, he shows respect for both the "actors" captured by the camera and the viewers captivated by the screen. His goal is not to deliver a "reality" revealing his ideas as an author, but to challenge the certainties of his viewers. He invites them to actively participate in the questioning process, thus enhancing their perception of the issues at the heart of his work. When all is said and done, Jean-Stéphane Bron nevertheless remains an engaged filmmaker – not in the political sense, but in the sense of his personal ethics, buttressed by the principles of authenticity and respect for others. This is what comes through in the ties that he forges with the persons in his films: his combination of irony and tenderness proves that a critical eye and empathy can join forces to better fathom the psychology of our fellow humans, while making it easier to identify with them, which is essential to the film's grip on the audience.

L'expérience Blocher

One World Human Rights Film Festival Prague 2014: Special Mention by the Grand Jury; Swiss Film Award 2014: 3 Nominations (Best Documentary Film, Best Editing, Best Film Score)

Cleveland Versus Wall Street

Swiss Film Prize «Quartz 2011»: Best Documentary Film; César du cinéma français, Académie des Arts et Techniques du Cinéma, Paris: Nomination for Best Documentary 2011; Solothurn Film Festival: Prix de Soleure 2011; Filmfest München 2010: One-Future-Prize, Recommendation Reference of the Jury; Festival Paris Cinéma, Paris: Prix du public 2010

Mon frère se marie

Swiss Film Prize 2007: Best Performance in a Leading Role (Jean Luc Bideau) & Nomination for Best Fiction Film; NEFF New European Film Festival, Vitoria-Gasteiz: Best European Film 2007; Festival du Film Francophone, Wien: TV5 Monde Public Prize 2007; Namur International Festival of French-Speaking Film: Bayard d'Or 2006 for Best Script (Jean-Stéphane Bron & Karine Sudan) and Best Actor (Cyril Trolley)

Mais im Bundeshuus – Le génie helvétique

Swiss Film Prize 2004: Best Documentary Film; Cinéma du Réel, Paris 2004: Mention by the SCAM International Jury; Nomination Europa Prize Berlin: 10 Best European Documentaries 2004

La bonne conduite (5 histoires d'auto école)

Double Take Documentary Film Festival, USA: Jury Award 1999; Jury Award «Original vision» presented by the New York Times 1999; Nomination Europa Prize, Berlin: 10 Best European Documentaries 1999; Mentions Prize CIRCOM: Best Film and France 3 Award for Originality 1999; Study Grant by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture 1999

Connu de nos services

Study Grant by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture 1997; Script Award by the Swiss Society of Authors (SSA) 1996

JEAN-STÉPHANE BRON

> Irony and Tenderness (Interview)

All your documentary films are very strong on narrative and fictionalization. Is it a strategy meant to avoid the pitfalls of “pure” fiction or a compromise between two contradictory wishes? I only hope it is a dynamic compromise... and not a lifeless one. Until now, I have been happy to script, adapt and even stage on the basis of my observations, or of my desire to see a long-dreamt gesture or image appear on the screen. It may seem like a matter of luck, but it also takes working together with the persons over a long period of time, keeping a sharp eye peeled for the slightest detail to help keep the story rolling. Before telling the story, however, I try to impose some rules on myself by latching on to a restrictive cinematographic device. Such a device must fulfil two requirements: it should be productive of meaning in connection with what I want to say or show, and it should enable viewers to become involved. A good example of what I mean would be **The Way I Look at You**, which – set inside driving-school cars – is entirely written using shot and reverse shots: two cameras run continuously, one focused on the student driver's face and the other on the driving instructor's. Such a device, actually quite simple, allows the two gazes to be cross-connected or, on the contrary, to be separated — silences can be used, time can be expanded, a situation can be reconstructed. All this means that whatever is made of the persons, of the silences, the unsaid or the doubts, falls into the category of fiction. It is like asking an actor to play out a scene while thinking about something else, as if there were a subtext or a physical contradiction to what is being played out. That is exactly what goes on in this film: the persons are always seen in a setting that takes up their concentration, so that it is unconsciously that they simultaneously express what unites them and what separates them.

By showing interest in such subjects as the federal citizen records, cultural clashes within a driving school in French-speaking Switzerland, or the work of a parliamentary commission in Berne, it's as if each time you were reasserting a certain fascination with “Swissness”. That's because there's much to tell in Switzerland. It also comes from a certain sense of detail and a feel for situations, which I probably inherited from my mother. She was such a good storyteller, humorous – all kinds of stories, funny situations, bits about people in our neighbourhood. It is extremely interesting to make a film like **The Way I Look at You** that, set exactly between Villeneuve and Geneva, is eminently local and yet visibly to the taste of several millions of TV viewers and several tens of thousands of viewers at festivals and in movie houses here and abroad. I am highly suspicious of filmmakers anxious to put a distance between themselves and their origins, resulting in a kind of bland “Euro-pudding”. On the other hand, I have no taste for what is termed the call of the mountain, for that fascination with a Nature always in the right, where Man is infinitely small in the face of the immensity of the glaciers, the snowy peaks, and so

JEAN-STEPHANE BRON

> Irony and Tenderness (Interview)

forth. Not that I reject that tradition, but it's of no interest to me. If that's what is meant by Swissness, what I call folklore, then it is not for me. My goal is to integrate in light-handed fashion a more tenuous Swissness found in the concrete, in the language people use, the way they express themselves.

You collaborate on a regular basis with other young Swiss filmmakers like Lionel Baier and Ursula Meier. Do you feel like you belong to a "generation" on Switzerland's audiovisual scene? Beyond belonging to a same generation, we share a same desire to appeal to the public without giving up certain principles or the radicalness of our approach. All three of us have had different experiences: Ursula and Lionel have made fiction films. The two of them relate to their actors in ways I know nothing about. We each have a world, a distinctive tone that identifies us. That's true especially of Lionel, who has a method all of his own. What unites us above all is a certain way of seeing cinema, but also of seeing the world in general – we have shared human values, similar ethics, a political relationship to the world. We do not only tell stories. What we try to do is to show, within a moral framework, persons grappling with the world. When it comes to documentaries, the same holds true for all of us: we conclude a moral contract with the people being filmed, under the credo that the persons captured by the camera have as many rights as the person capturing them. Mireille Berton, Dept. of Film History and Aesthetics, University of Lausanne, 2004 (French original text)

12, CHEMIN DES BRUYÈRES

| 1995 | Beta SP | colour | 20'

Everyday-life incidents at 12, *chemin des Bruyères* in Lausanne. His neighbours open up to the filmmaker, pouring out their disillusionments, their memories, and their hopes, or whatever is left of them...

"I still have the kitchen apron I hid under my pillow the day after she died. It's been there for eight years." Camille, in *12, chemin des Bruyères*

"Dreams – I'm sure I had some, but I can't really remember which ones." Hans, in *12, chemin des Bruyères*

"That night, a boat arrived. My big sister said: 'We're leaving.'" Dinh Phuc, in *12, chemin des Bruyères*



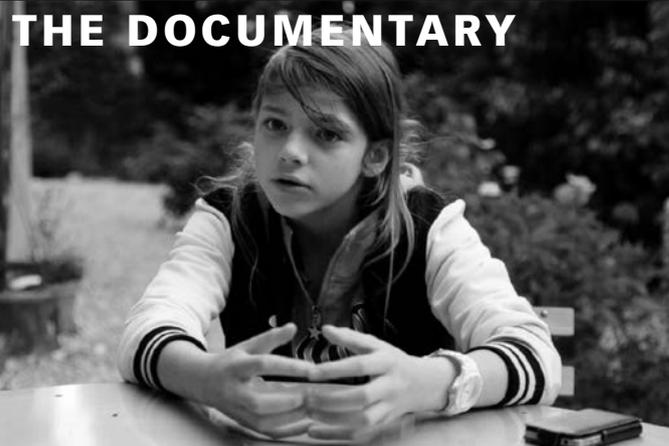
Cinematography: Hans Meier
Sound: Luc Peter
Editing: Sylvie Ballyot, Mamouda Zekrya-Boulé
Production: ECAL/DAVI, Lausanne

World Rights: ECAL/DAVI, Lausanne, Jean-Stéphane Bron, Lausanne
Original Version: French (german subtitles)

A SHORT LESSON IN CINEMA

| 2013 | DCP | colour | 10' | La petite leçon de cinéma: le documentaire

A two-way conversation both happy and profound, between a young girl and the director who has chosen to paint her portrait. Essentially, what is a documentary? Like Russian babushka dolls, the two films interlock; the director's film and his subject's film together actively contribute to the creation of the artwork.



Written and directed by: Jean-Stéphane Bron
Cinematography: Blaise Harrison
Sound: Jürg Lempfen, David Lipka, Jérôme Cuendet
Editing: Gwénola Héaulme
Music: Christian Garcia

Production: Milos-Films SA, Neuchâtel; La Lanterne Magique, Neuchâtel; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse
World Rights: Milos Films SA,
Original Version: French (german/english subtitles),

Script: Jean-Stéphane Bron, in collaboration with Antoine Jaccoud
Cinematography: François Bovy

Sound: Luc Yersin, Graziella Antonini
Editing: Daniel Gibel
Music: Arthur Besson

Production: Robert Boner, Ciné Manufacture, Lausanne; Radio Télévision Suisse RTS
World Rights: Bande à Part Films; Lausanne

Original Version: French (german/italian subtitles)

"It seems to me that young people today lack enthusiasm. They seem to be following certain tracks, certain paths, that are different from those of my times. Times when there was enthusiasm, when we committed ourselves to causes, when we would hit the streets shouting, maybe set off a police chase... No one protests anymore. Protest, sometimes, brings change. Now, it's like everyone's gently falling asleep..." Ernest Hartmann, ex-Security Police Inspector for the city of Lausanne

[...] Humorous and exciting, and also appealing in its respect of a form and writing style that address the subject head on.

Tribune de Genève, August 22, 1997

[...] The brilliant idea in *Known to Our Departments* is to alternate the activists' testimony with that of the police officers who kept files on them for thirteen years. Discourses and ideologies fly back and forth.

Le Monde, March 13, 1998

KNOWN TO OUR DEPARTMENTS



1997 | 35 mm | colour | 64' | Original title: *Connu de nos services*

At the age of 50, Claude Muret – a former activist linked to several French-Swiss extreme-Leftist groups – pores over thirty years of files kept on him by the government services, like an album of his youth.

A youth under surveillance: the album starts off in 1964, when Muret was 16, a communist and a first-time protest marcher; it ends in 1977, the day of his marriage. The police were still there.

We see things through the eyes both of the activists and of the police officers who painstakingly recorded so much of their life. Claude Muret – as his activist self – and Ernest Hartmann, an ex-police officer from Lausanne, play the main roles. In humorous but tender fashion, the film brings the players of a generation seeking to make changes to life face-to-face with those devoted to maintaining the status quo.

[...] Bron has caught up with the secret agents and, for the first time – long after the scandal of their mysterious existence – he has them go public and speak out. Their local accent squelches the KGB, in sequences that, attaining comic heights, have the audience in stitches. In Bron's work with the police, however, laughter is akin to the chorus used in Greek dramas to convey folk wisdom spiced with absurdity. The former secret agent is left to ruminate the pointlessness of his long nights watches, and viewers may again want to wax indignant over the grotesque state apparatus against subversion. For Bron, though, the aim is to metamorphose old conflicts by suggesting, in the most humane of outlooks, the way things evolve with the passing of time: the sneering gratitude of the victim whose past is handed back to him by the police, but also the irrepressible surge of friendship felt by the special agent towards the activist whom he once tracked. Bertil Galland, *Le Nouveau*

Quotidien, 1997

Script: Jean-Stéphane Bron, in collaboration with Antoine Jaccoud

Cinematography: François Bovy
Sound: Luc Yersin

Editing: Karine Sudan
Production: Robert Boner, Ciné Manufacture, Lausanne; SSR SRG

World Rights: Bande à Part Films, Lausanne; Radio Télévision Suisse
Original Version: French (german/italian/english subtitles)

Dear Friends,
Provided that between us
Be it but for an instant
Was drawn a segment
Each of us bears the imprint
Of a friend met along the way.
In each the trace of each.

Primo Levi



| 1999 | 35 mm | colour | 54' | Original title: La bonne conduite (5 histoires d'auto école)

A tale of five encounters – both comic and tragic – confined to the inside of a driving-school car. Five driving instructor-student driver pairs are united on the road to obtaining a driver's license, yet separated by nationality or, at times, skin colour. The instructors are Swiss, Portuguese or Vietnamese. The student drivers Brazilian or Afghani. What goes on between them? What do they have to say to each other? To share with each other?

Built up into a dramatic comedy, the film avoids the double temptation of radical pessimism or blissful optimism. Some of the paired couples hit it off in **The Way I Look at You**, others do not. Ten lives intersect between tears and laughter, before each heads for the next crossroads.

[...] It is one thing to film people expressing themselves and saying something funny or interesting, but quite another to lend rhythm to the overall result, to sort out the material gathered – in short, to subject the whole to a single gaze, to the actual viewpoint of the filmmaker. Jean-Stéphane Bron understands this well: by shooting the five stories along two sole axes, he obliges his viewers to concentrate. More simply, he puts the audience in the position of the third passenger, which by the same token is his own. Hence we see things with his eyes and, too, our involvement in every vignette is simply unavoidable. In the documentary genre, **The Way I Look at You** stands out among many. Pascal Gavillet, *Tribune de Genève*, 22 October 1999

Author: Joseph de Beaugard
Cinematography: François Bovy
Sound: Jean-Stéphane Bron

Editing: Karine Sudan
Production: Chantal Bernheim,
Leapfrog, Genève; Dune Productions,
Paris

Co-production: Radio Télévision Suisse
RTS; Arte; RTBF Radio Télévision Belge
de la Communauté Française

World Sales: France Télévisions, Paris
Original Version: French

[...] This exceptionally powerful documentary brings to the fore a feeling of urgency. What is it that these outlaws were fleeing? What were they seeking? What did the end up finding? So many difficult questions and disarming answers.

[...] Philippe Muri, *TéléTemps*, April 21–27, 2001



| 2001 | Beta digital | colour | 52' | On the Run

A film that follows the series of events, emotional crises and geographical shifts experienced by five men who, each for reasons of his own, are all on the run: Daniel Bloch (Swiss, re-imprisoned), Jean-Claude Pirotte (a Belgian lawyer), Cesare Battisti (Italian left-wing extremist), André Pauly (French rioter), and Yazid Kherfi (Algerian hold-up man). The life led by these runaways, the path they follow, is akin to being caught up in an inescapable spiral. Viewers share in moments that alternate humour with tragedy.

Written and directed by: Jean-Stéphane Bron
Cinematography: Eric Stitzel
Sound: Luc Yersin

Editing: Karine Sudan
Music: Christian Garcia
Production: Robert Boner, Ciné Manufacture, Lausanne

Co-production: SSR SRG
World Rights: Bande à Part Films, Lausanne

Original Version: Swiss-German/
French/German (german/french subtitles)

A captivating (and comic) X-ray of democracy. *Le Monde*

A masterpiece fashioned like a soap opera. *Le Temps*

A gem! *Le Nouvel Observateur*

An excellent surprise from the "Cinéma du réel" film festival: a political thriller! *Télérama*

How long until a cinéma-vérité version of the Italian Parliament and the intrigues in its committees comes along? *Il Manifesto*

An enthralling film that portrays – in uncompromising but most charming fashion – how things work in the Swiss Parliament. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

A candid, universal fable on the exercise of democracy, created by one of our national cinema's most promising authors. *Corriere del Ticino*

CORN IN PARLIAMENT



2003 | 35 mm | colour | 90' | Original title: Mais im Bundeshuus – le génie helvétique

In Room 87 of the "Palais fédéral" (Swiss Parliament) in Berne, a legislative committee has been charged with drawing up a bill on genetic engineering (GEN-LEX). To ensure the secrecy of their deliberations, access has been denied to the public. Not that this prevents a patient and curious film crew from waiting outside the closed doors...

A dizzying overview of the strategies and power plays exercised by those pleading their economic interests and those fearing the negative effects of this revolutionary technology.

[...] Using facial close-ups to shoot his film, Jean-Stéphane Bron records the confessions, doubts and rages of his film characters, bringing alive their fictional roles. In this way he miraculously transforms a seemingly deathly dull subject into a fantastic suspense story. Succeeding brilliantly, the result contradicts the prevailing cynicism as to the uselessness of politics. It is a citizen film built up into a thriller, an exceptionally powerful revelation of democracy in action. *Rafaël Wolf, Le Matin, September 17, 2003*

Script: Jean-Stéphane Bron, Karine Sudan
Cinematography: Matthieu Poirot-Delpech
Sound: Luc Yersin

Editing: Karine Sudan
Music: Christian Garcia
Cast: Aurore Clément, Jean-Luc Bideau, Cyril Trolley, Delphine Chuillot, Quoc Dung Nguyen, Michèle Rohrbach, Man Thu, Thanh An

Production: Thierry Spicher, Elena Tatti, Box Productions, Lausanne; Géraldine Michelot, Philippe Martin, Les Films Pelléas, Paris
Co-production: Télévision Suisse Romande TSR; SRG SSR

World Sales: Films Distribution, Paris
Original Version: French (english/german/italian subtitles)

The situation gives rise to many clever, surefire gags [...] There is, however, a dramatic dimension to the comedy and, showing through the film's comic devices, intense emotion. It is no innocent comedy that feigns lost happiness. Beyond the burlesque to which he resorts, Jean-Stéphane Bron draws on reality: his own parents adopted a Vietnamese child when he was 10, and when Vinh recounts his departure from Vietnam in a boat headed for a refugee camp, the actor Quoc Dung Nguyen is also confiding his own true story. Family arguments and scores to be settled will come to a violent head, but this mock family reunion will, in the end, unearth something that neither separation nor differences can destroy:

authentic love. Juliette Bénabent, *Télérama*, February 3, 2007

Sensitive and sharp-witted, *Mon frère se marie* (My Brother is Getting Married) brings to mind Noah Baumbach's deadpan domestic tragic-comedy *The Squid and The Whale*, where a Brooklyn family about to break up tries to settle some private scores on the tennis courts. [...] Jean-Stéphane Bron has already made a name for himself internationally with his documentaries. He has shot this, his first feature-length fiction film, in like fashion, as if to make live witnesses of the screenplayers. His handling of the subject produces a darkly humorous comedy based on a study of people's idiosyncrasies and the exposure of their private wounds. The discourse – never cynical or venomous – nonetheless veers away from surefire humour when the plot takes an irreversibly ridiculous turn towards world-weary reflection on lost illusions. Carried off by a great cast (Delphine Chuillot is worth seeing over again), the fruits of his observation are all the more relevant in that Bron knows how to observe his fellow humans. Gilles Renault, *Libération*,

January 31, 2007

MY BROTHER IS GETTING MARRIED



| 2006 | 35 mm | colour | 94' | Original title: Mon frère se marie

Vinh is a boat-people refugee adopted twenty years ago by a Swiss family, and now about to marry. His Vietnamese mother welcomes the chance to at last meet the family who lovingly raised her son, and to put a face on the names on the annual Christmas card boasting the family reunion and assuring her that she is in their thoughts. But things are not all that rosy in the Depierraz family... Mrs. Nguyen's unexpected visit will create a commotion in their midst, obliging them to revert for a few days to their forgotten roles of father, mother, brother and sister. They will have to act out a fragile comedy of happiness.

Script: Jean-Stéphane Bron
Cinematography: Séverine Barde
Sound: Dieter Meyer

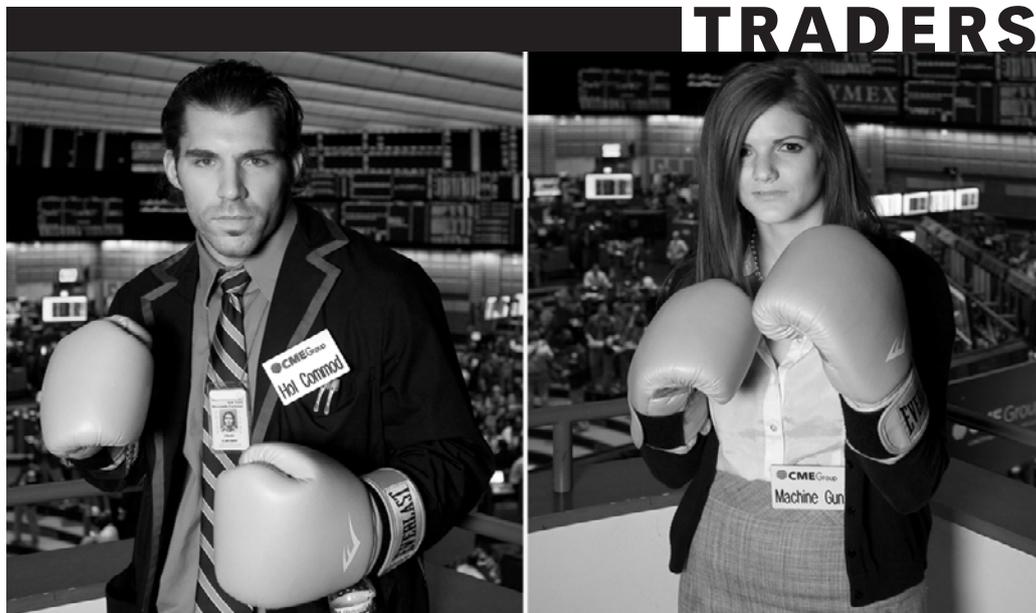
Editing: Nelly Quettier
Music: Christian Garcia

Production: Saga Production, Lausanne; Les Films Pelléas, Paris; RTS
Radio Télévision Suisse

World Sales: Doc & Film International, Paris
Original Version: English (french subtitles)

Between two fictions, Jean-Stéphane Bron returns to documentary work with the intelligence and humour that guaranteed the success of *Mais in Bundeshuus*. Nobody has approached the crisis from such an original angle as that in *Traders*. Once a year in New York, account managers and wealth managers take part in the "Wall Street Boxing Charity Championships". Some hard hitters from the profession try out the leather in the ring in aid of a good cause. The sparring sessions of autumn 2008 are a perfect metaphor of the financial industry which is hitting out in all directions, taking it on the chin and biting the dust. Ben Sadgrove, known as "Bone crusher", Ken Cunningham, known as "The Carnivore", Kelly Vergamini, known as "Machine Gun" and the others are the coal trimmers of the economic machine. Without any scruples they work so that money generates money. They are the equivalent of civil servants who, by fulfilling their mandate, ensure the accomplishment of the worst in dictatorships. As a counterpart to the testimonies, the Lausanne filmmaker films rows of condemned houses. He includes extracts from the news in which one sees the real kings of the world, such as the Director of Lehman Brothers, tying themselves up in contradictions and amorality – "privatisation of profits and nationalisation of risks"... Without dwelling on the subject, the documentary maker compares the 700 million dollars that the banks are requesting from the US government with the 100,000 dollars that the boxer-traders hope to collect to help orphans in Rwanda. (...)

Antoine Duplan, *L'Hebdo*, April 23, 2009



| 2009 | HDcam | colour | 52'

The filming of the "Wall Street Charity Boxing Championship", a gala event where traders fight each other in the ring for the benefit of charity organizations, began on Sunday, September 14th, 2008, the day that Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. While Wall Street witnesses the most serious crisis in its history, Jean Stéphane Bron interviews the traders caught up in the torment. The testimonies of Evan, Austin, Cecilia and Ben, recorded between their days at work and their training sessions in the ring, link the story together. Through these intimate portrayals over the weeks in which the global economy was set afire, the film reveals the excesses of a system and the mechanisms of the current crisis with startling clarity.

Having left for New York to film a universe in which all punches are allowed, I found myself filming the end of a world. In the autumn of 2008, during those five weeks of acute crisis, the roof came crashing down on Wall Street. And the traders began to talk... Of their anxieties, nightmares, of their collapsing world, of their system of values brutally called into question. Jean-Stéphane Bron

Script: Jean-Stéphane Bron
Cinematography: Julien Hirsch, Séverine Barde
Sound: Jean-Paul Mugel, Benoît Hillebrant, Stéphane Thiébaud

Editing: Simon Jacquet
With: Barbara Anderson, Josh Cohen, Keith Fisher, Fred Kushen, Ray Velez, Keith Taylor, Tony Brancatelli, Michael Osinski, Peter Wallison

Production: Saga Production, Lausanne; Les Films Pelléas, Paris
Co-production: Arte France Cinéma; Jouror Productions, Paris; Télévision Suisse Romande (TSR), Genève

World Sales: Films Distribution, Paris
Original Version: English (french/german subtitles)

The progression from the theory's execution to its defense is perfect: the secret of *Cleveland Versus Wall Street*'s success lies in its clever editing, designed to make it easy for us to understand the mind-boggling workings of subprime mortgages. Above all, though, the argument – discreetly shifting from the specific to the general, and despite all the incriminating and exculpatory evidence – targets the responsibility of an entire system. In its underlying criticism of 'capitalism in action', the film takes on a subversive bent, ultimately serving as an on-the-spot litmus test of an allegedly representative sample of the American population. (...)

The filmic contrivance, bringing to mind most specially the USA's great trial films of yore, from Lang to Preminger, makes sense here, as if American culture could best provide the wherewithal to at once shape and fuel the battle. Thierry Mèranger, *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*, 07/2010

By inventing a whole new cinematographic form, the director has accomplished a feat commensurate with the crisis. Neither fiction nor documentary, his film narrates a trial that never happened: the lawsuit that the city of Cleveland, hard hit by a wave of foreclosures, has tried and is still trying to bring against 21 Wall Street banks. The resulting masterpiece 'does justice' in every sense – to the victims, the viewers and cinematography. Thierry Jobin, *Le Temps*, 17.05.2010

CLEVELAND VERSUS WALL STREET



| 2010 | 35 mm | colour | 98'

On January 11th, 2008, hired by the City of Cleveland, lawyer Josh Cohen and his team filed a lawsuit against 21 banks, which they held accountable for the wave of foreclosures that had left their city in ruins. Since then, the bankers on Wall Street have been fighting by with all available means to avoid going to court.

Cleveland Versus Wall Street is the story of that trial. A film about a trial that may never be held but in which the facts, the participants and their testimonies are all real.

Written and directed by:
Jean-Stéphane Bron
Cinematography: Patrick Lindenmaier

Sound: Raphaël Sohier, Stéphane Thiébaud
Editing: Karine Sudan
Music: Christian Garcia

Production: Bande à Part Films Sàrl, Lausanne; Les Films Pelléas, Paris; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse
World Sales: Les films du Losange; Paris

Original Version: Swiss-German/French (french/german/english subtitles)

L'expérience Blocher is surely one of the best films ever made about a man of power, his complexity, and the complexity of making a film about him. Just like Orson Welles taking on Randolph Hearst in *Citizen Kane*, Bron creates a multi-faceted work which, despite being categorized as a 'documentary,' has its roots in fiction.

Slate.fr, Jean-Michel Frodon, 20.02.2014

Rather than relying on static interviews interspersed with archival images, Bron accompanies him on his trips (...). Even though the filmmaker knows he will not have access to the core of the individual, he attempts at least to question the inner self. The gamble pays off because the camera fills in the unspoken. Bron finds the proper distance, thanks not only to a very ingenious voice-over which allows him to address his interlocutor mentally, but also to an acute sense of the revealing detail. Pascal Binétry, *Positif*, February 2014

Having made several remarkable documentaries, Jean-Stéphane Bron is not exactly wet behind the ears. His challenge – and also his greatest constraint – in making *L'expérience Blocher* was in finding the right distance between Blocher the citizen, not exactly unlikeable, and Blocher the politician, emblematic figure in the national-populist trend which is sprouting up all over Europe. Rather than playing a pugnacious questioning game, just as formidable as it is risky, Bron chose to employ a weapon a priori much more difficult to counter: the cinema. That, together with its corollaries: the staging and the dialectics between director and actor.

Franck Nouchi, *Le Monde*, 19.02.2014



| 2013 | DCP | colour | 100' | Original title: L'expérience Blocher

The story of Switzerland's most controversial political leader. It also chronicles the face-to-face encounter between a filmmaker and a man of power, through a year of exclusive, up-close interviews and access to his private life. Fall 2011. Christoph Blocher is on the campaign trail, working toward a victory for his rightwing, nationalist SVP party that will ultimately win nearly a third of the votes. His car offers an unrivaled vantage point for the filmmaker, enabling him to tell the story from the inside, and in the first person. On the road, the film unravels the threads of Blocher's life – his triumphs, his methods, his secrets. How did an impoverished pastor's son become a successful businessman with a colossal fortune, and one of the most powerful men in Switzerland? A political parable and reflection on a country, the film traces the portrait of a man who has radically transformed politics in Switzerland. Moreover, the film captures the mood of a period when, all over crisis-stricken Europe, nationalism is on the rise.