

LIONEL BAIER



©Photo: Claude Dussex

Lionel Baier was born into a Swiss family of Polish descent in Lausanne in 1975. In 1992 he began working as co-programming manager at the Cinema Rex movie theatre in Aubonne (Switzerland). From 1995 to 1999, he studied film, Italian and modern French at the University of Lausanne. From 1996 to 2000, he worked as first AD for, successively, Jacqueline Veuve (with whom he also co-wrote **Jour de marché**), Richard Dindo, Yves Yersin, Jean-Stéphane Bron and Yvan Butler. In the year 2000 he forms the film production company Ciné Manufacture CMS with Robert Boner and Jean-Stéphane Bron. Since 2002 he is the head of the film department of Lausanne's University of Art and Design ECAL. In 2009, Lionel Baier founds Bande à part Films (www.bandeapartfilms.com) in Lausanne with filmmakers Ursula Meier, Jean-Stéphane Bron and Frédéric Mermoud. He is also a Board member of the Swiss Cinematheque.

LIONEL BAIER



Lionel Baier, or the young man without gloves

How to draw up a portrait of Lionel Baier? He's someone who strikes no poses, but strikes out in all directions and who never sits still. Always in between... two classes, two shots, two films, two planes or trains, three or four countries (Switzerland, France, Poland, Portugal). That's the key word: between. No doubt because he always wants to be elsewhere than expected, and maybe even than he expects himself.

"I'm a boy with light blond hair and a green jacket," is the only clue he gave over the phone for me to recognize him.

I knew nothing at all about him, except for his first feature film, **Stupid Boy** (*Garçon stupide*, 2004), which I had come across by accident when swept along by a crowd drifting in from the Marais district [of Paris], where it would soon be swallowed up again. So, to me, Lionel Baier was but a voice-over that converses with the film's main character, whom Baier finds more intriguing to comprehend than apprehend.

Waiting for him at a café, I saw no one in any way resembling my idea of a Swiss filmmaker. The one person with light blond hair and a green jacket looked more like an over-aged teenager: a porcelain doll's pale face, except for the high, pronounced cheekbones of a Kalmuk, and the mischievous twinkle in his eyes. Yet it was indeed he, and I immediately got the feeling the two of us would get along well because we were both good listeners.

As a child, I wanted to be a lumberjack and a surgeon. Working with films promised to combine the two for me: I could spend my days in the trees, grasping human flesh with my hands. LB, in an interview with Mathilde Babel, March 2007

First, there is his voice – seemingly objective, all the better to keep his passion or derision in check. I would hear it again in his documentaries, when he questions and annoys his father in **The Pastor's** (*Celui au Pasteur – ma vision personnelle des choses*, 2000), and likewise in the male and female homosexuals of **The Parade (our history)** (*La Parade – notre histoire*, 2002), and yet again in his fiction feature, addressing Loïc, the "stupid boy."

Then, too, there is his body, or rather his face, briefly cropping up between two shots in each of his films. This is no narcissistic quirk: to Baier, appearing in the midst of those he has taken onboard his projects is a moral imperative. He has taken us all onboard, and for him to be but the missing body of the person shooting the film would be to dissociate himself from all those – be they real or fictional – whose truth he seeks to capture, would be to deny his impassioned relationship with them. And so he sneaks himself in – here as the pastor's son, a fragile and almost helpless figure overpowered by his real-life father's strong convictions, meeting his father in order to film

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- 2014 **La vanité** (fiction)
-
- 2013 **Les grandes ondes (à l'ouest)** (fiction)
-
- 2012 **Cartographie 11 - En onze** (experimental)
-
- Emile de 1 à 5** (short film)
-
- 2011 **Bon vent Claude Goretta** (documentary)
-
- 2010 **Low Cost (Claude Jutra)** (fiction)
-
- Toulouse** (fiction)
-
- 2008 **Un autre homme** (fiction)
-
- 2006 **Comme des voleurs (à l'est)** (fiction)
-
- 2004 **Garçon stupide** (fiction)
-
- 2003 **Luc Chessex**
Jean Mohr (short documentaires in the collection *Photo-suisse*)
-
- 2002 **Mon père, c'est un lion (Jean Rouch, pour mémoire)** (short documentary)
-
- 2001 **La Parade (notre histoire)** (documentary)
-
- Onoma** (4 short films for Expo.02)
-
- 2000 **Celui au pasteur (ma vision personnelle des choses)** (documentary)
-
- Jour de défilé** (short documentary)
-
- 1999 **Mignon à croquer** (short film)

LIONEL BAIER

> Lionel Baier, or the young man without gloves

him as much as filming his father in order to meet him. And there we see him helping prepare the Gay Pride Parade that is being clumsily organized in the little town of Sion (Canton of Valais): clear out of the blue, he admits to being gay, inspiring a dubious local crusader to call down curses on his infamy. Again, at the end of **Stupid Boy**, he shows up as the unassuming donor in the corner of a scene, the swirling focal point of his creature's attention, nonetheless eliciting her smile because it is through him that she has learned all she wants to avoid being. No surprise, then, to see him in two roles – at once the filming subject and the figure being filmed – in **Stealth** (Comme des voleurs, 2006): freed of his inbred respect for others, he can make fun of himself as a scapegoat or as a Polak by descent, thus enabling him to exploit a comic vein far more successfully than his compatriot Johann Suter, aka John Sutter, got to exploit the gold on his California homestead.

Rather than inducing mechanical laughs, this comic mood – this *vis comica* – elicits lively laughter. Far from contradicting the work's construction, it represents a distinct form of distancing from so-called reality, which is something that only imagination can interpret by making some sense of it, no matter how fleetingly.

Film after film, shows us his hand, and we realize he has a number of trumps up his sleeve. Plowing the mother earth that made of him what he is today, a particular individual, he unearths his differences from others, perhaps in the secret hope of changing into something else... How, he asks himself, can one be Swiss? Or, how can one have Polish roots? Or, how can one be the son of a pastor? Or then, how can one love men? And, finally, perhaps the most crucial question of all: how can one be a filmmaker? The idea is not so much to revel in such differences as to outrun them. Already today, he is no longer what he once had us believe he was.

To him, then, shooting a film is targeting enslavement by fascinations that once did, or still might, tie him down to a certain stance: being captivated by the father figure representing God on earth – all-powerful and, only yesterday, totally abhorred **The Pastor's**; fantasizing over his Polish ancestry **Stealth** (Comme des voleurs); becoming involved in good causes (**The Parade**); or, finally, heightening sexual pleasures into a frenzied orgy (**Stupid Boy**).

One evening – making our knives and forks freeze in midair and leaving us gaping – he invited an ogre to join us at table. And a far less charming one it was than the ogress in his **Sweet enough to eat** (Mignon à croquer, 1999)! He had convened our childhood ogre, the very monster that – so we threatened our little ones – “will come eat you up if you don't behave”! To make this man the hero of his next fiction film has involved keeping company with several serial killers, child-

I abhor the idea of the natural, of the obvious. What makes human life interesting to me is how it transforms: we tell lies, make up stories, twist the truth and tamper with nature in our surroundings. But I consider tampering with things, wanting to change them, more of as a worthwhile human value. LB, *360° magazine*, November 2006

2014 Les grandes ondes (à l'ouest)
Trophées francophones du cinéma 2014: Best Director; Swiss Film Award 2014: Nominations Best Screenplay, Best Actor (Patrick Lapp), Best Fiction Film; Special Award of the Swiss Film Academy 2014 for Françoise Nicolet (costume design); Cinessonne, Essone: Prix du Public Long métrage 2013; Rencontres du cinéma francophone en Beaujolais, Villefranche sur Saône: Prix du Jury 2013

2012 Emile de 1 à 5
Swiss Film Award 2012: Nomination Best Short Film

2009 Un autre homme
Swiss Film Award 2009: Nominations Best Fiction Film & Best Actress (Natacha Koutchoumov)

2007 Comme des voleurs (à l'est)
Swiss Film Award 2007: Nomination Best Fiction Film; Jury Special Award, Bucarest Film Festival; Jury Special Award, 55° International Film Festival of Mannheim-Heidelberg (Germany)

2004 Garçon stupide
Best European Film Director, NEFF (New European Film Festival of Vitoria-Gasteiz, 2005); Best of 2005: included in list of top 10 films of the year (Los Angeles Times' classification); Diversity Award 2005, The Barcelona International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

2002 La Parade (notre histoire)
Pink Apple Film Festival, Zürich/Frauenfeld: Audience Award

LIONEL BAIER

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devourers, whom he visits regularly at the various prisons where they are serving more-or-less life sentences.

Slightly revolted, one of us cried out: "What possible sense can there be to such an investigation into murder country, to the search for both identity and foil, granting that the dark forces released by such a confrontation – defying all law and ethics – can be resisted?" To which he coolly replied: "I cannot answer that question. And that's actually why I'm going to do a film on this story. Precisely because I do not know."

"I handle subjects that fascinate me because I don't know how to contend with them in real life," he explained. "I'm not very talented at everyday living. Not very fearless or bold."

His tone of voice was factual, not at all sorrowful or regretful. I begged to differ, for is it not brave of him to progress as he does, by successive stylistic breaks, following the advice of his longstanding master **Jean Rouch, In Remembrance** (Mon père, c'est un lion – Jean Rouch, pour mémoire, 2002)? Such breaks are comparable to stampedes that put the hunter off the scent – the hunter seen as a taxonomist, killing to satisfy his fearsome eye for classification.

For as long as this hunter hesitates under which heading his films are to be classed – gay, Swiss, autobiographical, political, activist, Nouvelle Vague, art house, provocative, general public, action, comic, documentary, portrait – Baier will remain where he wants to be, in the film world. So he wrote in an article I had asked him to contribute to for the *Lettres françaises*. Unabashedly, he intends to explore the vast field – no fences or hedges, no boundaries or customs – bequeathed to him by his chosen and admired masters of yore: Kramer, Rouch, Truffaut, Sirk, Varda and Keaton. And to do so freely, following his own narrative pathways. Such a breakaway is all the more beautiful in that shooting a film is no solitary exercise. It is also an adventure to be shared with a technical and artistic team, no matter how basic (sound, image and the flesh-and-blood creatures to lend them sense) a one. To such a team he imparts the same desire as his own, the same urgent want to speak out, the same need to tell a story, the same hands-on pleasure.

To hear Baier tell it, filmmaking is the simplest thing in the world, requiring solely a protagonist to bring across emotions akin to those of the director, a script to pave the way in the general direction that the camera – meant to be kept as invisible as possible – is to follow. This concise vademecum is a way of putting the filmmaker's tools (actor, script, equipment) in their place, which is necessarily second. They are the humble servants who serve us at table without drawing the slightest attention to themselves.

Devoted to rehabilitating Alexandre Dumas, Claude Schopp is the author of the landmark biography *Alexandre Dumas: Genius of Life*. He has also provided critical editions of works by Dumas. In 2009, he received the Grand Prix Jules Verne for *Le Salut de l'empire* (inspired by Alexandre Dumas' notes). Himself the author of four novels, Claude Schopp is the film critic responsible for the weekly review *Les Lettres françaises*, in a column entitled *Journal du cinéasteur*.

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You do not bring a film to a close, but open it up; you do not spool it onto the reel (which would imply a circular movement) but progress along with it: at any given moment, one of its parameters is likely to change... For instance, his auditioning of Pierre Chatagny in the chocolate factory in *Bulle* prompted Baier to drag out from the drawer a vaguely outlined and later abandoned fiction piece, which would become **Stupid Boy** (*Garçon stupide*). He is not one to back down from this sort of break in style, which practically imposes itself on him (cf. the last part of **Stupid Boy**). Nothing is ever definitive: close-quarters shooting, ultra-light equipment, a pared down team—all provide leeway for thinking things back over, changing course, trying out something new, altering the film's construction. Happenstance is a welcome partner that may, at any given moment, become an artistic necessity. Nosing about insatiably, he loves the perpetual movement that shifts the lines of his emerging projects. He has but one fear, and that is of being harnessed with any moral or aesthetic restrictions.

I have jotted down a few lines, sketched a rough outline, gone back over my scribblings in an effort to lend them a human face, his face. In doing so, I wonder: these lines that I have drawn in words, might they not be made of the same material as the bars of a cage – as if, more or less consciously, I were seeking to imprison this weird bird? That would be heartbreaking, for he would no longer sing. Let me erase what I've written and give him back his freedom. Claude Schopp, December 2006

Directed by: Lionel Baier
Written by: Lionel Baier,
Julien Bouissoux
Cinematography: Patrick Lindenmaier

Editing: Jean-Christophe Hym
Sound: Vincent Kappeler
Cast: Patrick Lapp, Carmen Maura,
Ivan Georgiev

Production: Bande à part Films,
Lausanne; Les Films du Poisson, Paris;
RTS Radio Télévision Suisse, SRG SSR

World Sales: WIDE, Paris
Original Version: French (english
subtitles)

Lionel Baier's latest feature film is an at times surreal fairy tale that plays on ambiguity and throws together desire and indifference, reality and fiction, Eros and Thanatos. (...) With his trademark dreamlike and 'comic' (and delightfully grotesque) touch, the Swiss director broaches two delicate subjects, euthanasia and prostitution. A seductive and sensual film that is full of mystery. Muriel del Don, *Cineuropa*, 02.06.2015

Lionel Baier offers a meditation on life and death which is full of levity. *Le temps*, 19.05.2015

Neither melodrama nor black comedy, the film skillfully sidesteps the inherent gravity of the subject, without lapsing into comical farce. Christian Georges, *La Liberté*, 19.05.2015



LA VANITÉ

| 2015

| DCP

| colour

| 75'

| Switzerland / France

David Miller wants to end his life. This elderly architect, now ill, doesn't want to leave anything to chance, so contacts an assisted suicide organization. However, Espe, the woman accompanying him on his quest, doesn't seem that au fait with the procedures. Meanwhile David tries everything he can think of to convince Tréplev, the Russian prostitute in the next room, to act as witness to his final moments, as required under Swiss law. Over the course of one night, all three discover that a liking for others – perhaps even love – are curiously tenacious feelings.

World premiere at ACID, Cannes Film Festival 2015

Directed by: Lionel Baier
Written by: Lionel Baier, Julien Bouissoux
Cinematography: Patrick Lindenmaier

Editing: Pauline Gaillard
Sound: Henri Maikoff, Raphaël Sohier, Stéphane Thiébaud
Music: George Gershwin
Costumes: Françoise Nicolet

Cast: Valérie Donzelli, Michel Vuillemoz, Patrick Lapp, Francisco Belard, Jean-Stéphane Bron, Adrien Barazzone, Serge Bozon

Production: Rita Productions, Geneva; Bande à Part Films, Lausanne; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse, Les Films Pelléas, Paris; Filmes do Tejo, Lisboa
World Sales: Films Boutique, Berlin
Original Version: French/Portuguese (german/english subtitles)

Caught up in a veritable game of verbal ping-pong, the four main actors take visible and infectious pleasure in their work. (...) Leaving Switzerland of the seventies for Portugal during the Carnation Revolution, this surprising quartet will have some exploits more memorable than others, as well as some truly classic moments (...). But the director never loses sight of the singular tone, a synthesis of the above-mentioned experiences, blending nostalgia with humour, spicy with sweet, frivolity with discreet solemnity. This challenging combination, joyfully expressed in the exuberant music of George Gershwin, leaves a hint of a smile long after the film's conclusion.

Noémie Luciani, *Le monde*, 11.02.2014

(...) Often downright funny, the film succeeds in the end thanks both to the amused historical reconstruction and the return to stylistic devices such as zoom and split-screen. (...) One grasps the topicality in Europe of a call to revolution which exhorts getting beyond isolationist reflexes and feeble conservatism, only to end in derailment. Even though the invasive musical intrudes mercilessly on the comedy and the streets of Lisbon, *Les grandes ondes* sends out good vibrations. Thierry Méranger, *Cahiers du cinéma*, 01.02.2014

The Swiss director Lionel Baier has made a well-paced road movie, a character study full of quick wit and tenderness. A "period" film that doesn't settle for a nostalgic re-enactment of the 1970s, but rather captures living in the moment and the intoxicating impact of a revolution. One senses in the characters a certain joyous innocence and the freshness of hope in that decade of activists and dreams.. (...) Cécile Murry, *Télérama*, 12.02.2014



| 2013

| DCP

| colour

| 85'

| Les grandes ondes (à l'ouest)

It is April 1974 and Julie Dujonc-Renens, young feminist journalist and the cunning Joseph-Marie Cauvin, leading reporter for the Swiss radio, have been sent to Portugal to investigate Switzerland's aid to poor countries. Sparks fly during the bus trip with Bob, sound engineer approaching retirement. The projects financed by Switzerland prove to be calamitous and the workers' revolution that suddenly breaks out doesn't help, obliging our heroes to disregard first the radio's management, and then their own codes of conduct.

Script: Lionel Baier
Cinematography: Bastien Bösiger
Sound: Raphaël Sohler, Stéphane Thiébaud

Editing: Félix Sandri
Music: Edward Elgar, Robert Schumann, Claude Nougaro
Cast: Julia Perazzini, Alexandre Angiolini, Julien Baumgartner

Production: LWL Films, Vevey; Bande à part Films, Lausanne; Troupe de la Dentcreuze, Aubonne

World Rights: Bande à part Films, Lausanne
Original Version: French

This film focused on the mother-daughter relationship shows, as Lionel Baier emphasizes, "how we can be used by someone we love and yet go on to find a life of our own." Despite the psychological implications, the storyline for this search for freedom remains above all a comedy. Actors and settings alike achieve a lighthearted effect that, to the director's mind, is akin to "a sherbet." *24 Heures*, 25 October 2010

(...) In the old Ford "Solange" – rebaptized "Ariane", like the space shuttle – the filmmaker and his cameraman (Bastien Bösiger) treat viewers to a getaway across the beautifully magnified countryside. This August 1st (the Swiss National Day) is a far cry from the usual. Returning to personal themes linked to the myriad intricacies of love and family relationships, Lionel Baier again reclaims the Swiss landscapes, divesting them of all clichés. Humor in the vein of Michel Soutter alternates with literary "quotes" and Godard-style advert transplants. All this to music that is pure Baier, a fluid and erudite chronicler who quills together the folds of time in a way of his own.

Jean-Louis Kuffer, *24 Heures*, 9 August 2011



| 2010

| HD Cam

| colour

| 62'

August 1, somewhere in the Aubonne countryside, Cécile and her ten-year-old daughter Marion have just acquired an old 1970's Ford Taunus estate car. But the roads through the region at the heart of the north shore of Lake Geneva are much longer and strewn with pitfalls than would appear and their voyage is delayed incessantly. Perhaps, however, the way ahead will open up for Cécile and Marion once the problems have been solved. As far as the moon.

Script: Lionel Baier

Cinematography: Lionel Baier
Sound: Lionel Baier, Raphaël Sohier, Stéphane Thiébaud

Editing: Lionel Baier

Music: Pascal Auberson, Johannes Brahms, Händel

Cast: Adrien Barazzone, Pierre Chatagny, Thibault de Chateauvieux, Marie-Eve Hildbrand, Brigitte Jordan, Natacha Koutchoumov, Savatore Orlando, Emmanuel Salinger

Production: Bande à part Films, Lausanne; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse
World Rights: Bande à part Films, Lausanne
Original Version: French (english subtitles)

[...] Beyond a manifesto for the cinema of tomorrow, *Low Cost* (Claude Jutra) – compensating any technological limits with an exceptionally intelligent storyline – breezily and brilliantly reflects on love. [...] None of the other films in competition can match this sparkling, “handmade” film’s inspiration and originality. In the space of one hour, through images at times nigh to abstract, it allies humor with metaphysics and satire with melancholy and, last but not least, pays a tribute to Claude Jutra, a Canadian filmmaker who passed away twenty years ago. [...] Antoine Duplan, *L’Hebdo*, 12 August 2010

In his trademark fashion, the director has created a nuanced film-within-the-film documenting the last days of a death row inmate.

Documentary images shot on the fly blend in with fictional scenes played by his actors, friends and lovers, including a weird elegy to Claude Jutra. [...]

If *Low Cost* moves us so deeply, it is thanks to the ideal form dreamt up by its author. This low-definition film with high-flying intentions targets the eternal Proustian question: what images can sum up a lifetime?

Jacky Goldberg, *Les inrocks.com*, 11 January 2011



| 2010

| 3g/MP4

| colour

| 54'

David Miller has known his date of death since the age of nine. As it approaches, he spends his final moments with those dear to him and is obsessed with the idea of learning how to tie a bow-tie and the Quebec filmmaker Claude Jutra’s falling into the water. Shot using a mobile phone over the course of ten years from Lausanne to Ouagadougou, this is a fiction film about the value of human life in an age where everything is at a “discount”. Life is priceless; death, however, bargains...

Script: Lionel Baier

Cinematography: Lionel Baier
Sound: Thibault de Chateauvieux,
Kaveh Bakhtiari, Joëlle Bacchetta,
Laurent Gabiot

Editing: Pauline Gaillard

Music: Karol Szymanowski

Cast: Robin Harsch, Natacha
Koutchoumov, Elodie Weber,
Georges-Henri Dépraz, Brigitte Jordan,
Olivier Csiky Trnka, Kaveh Bakhtiari,
Jean-Stéphane Bron, Ursula Meier,
Bulle Ogier

Production: Saga Production,
Robert Boner, Lausanne

Coproduction: RTS Radio Télévision
Suisse; SRG SSR

World Sales: Wide Management, Paris
Original Version: French

(...) The work of Switzerland's most promising young filmmaker of the moment, *Another Man* nonetheless has no accounts to settle with any part of the establishment. To the contrary, it affords a charming tableau of a boy-object – a cute and terribly passive character who stakes out his lack of taste and judgment. The more the film progresses, the less it is a matter of fraud and the more of love and sex. If the storyline remains frothy from beginning to end, the scenes and images are rarely so: wintry Swiss landscapes smothered under heavy layers of snow, dead foxes, the female lover's wicked sadism, and morbid black & white all combine to define this captivating film's complex identity. Olivier Séguret,

Libération, 14 July 2008

How does Lionel Baier do it? The answer is simple: what stymies others inspires him to take up the challenge. What others tire of incites his desire. Desire, appeal. Doing as if, by doing like that. The "that" is just what *Another Man* has to say, meaning life, slow death in the snowy Vallée de Joux. Slow death of the cinema being resuscitated. (...)

Poetic in the fashion of Signé Renart (*The Surveyors*) by Michel Soutter, sensual to the point of perversity, *Another Man* is a little winter's tale. It tells of mixed genres and styles in drawing the portrait of an imposter.

Patrick Ferla, *RSR*



| 2008

| 35 mm

| b/w

| 90'

| Un autre homme

François and his companion Christine have settled in the thickly wooded and secluded region of the Vallée de Joux.

Although he is not a journalist, François contributes to a small local weekly, describing the life of the region's inhabitants and the films shown at the valley's only movie theatre. Since he is no film critic, he doesn't know what to make of the films he's supposed to write up. So he ends up copying word for word the reviews in "Travelling", a highly specialized review published in Paris and devoted to the seventh art.

Very quickly, the cinema becomes his passion, and he sets off for Lausanne to view the press screenings organized for the Lake of Geneva area critics. Here he meets Rosa, a critic for "L'Époque", a benchmark-setting daily.

A kinky relationship develops between the two of them, leading François to discover the inner workings of desire: desire of a woman and of a critic. Until the day his cheating is discovered...

Another Man is a social satire of our insatiable need to please and pretend.

Script: Lionel Baier with the collaboration of Marina de Van
Cinematography: Séverine Barde
Sound: Benedetto Garro, Raphael Sohler
Editing: Christine Hoffet

Music: Maurice Ravel
Cast: Natacha Koutchoumov, Alicja Bachleda-Curus, Stéphane Rentznik, Luc Andrié, Anne-Lise Tobaggi, Michal Rudnicki, Bernabé Rico, Cynthia Schmassmann, Lionel Baier

Production: Saga Production, Lausanne; Ciné Manufacture, Paris; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse

World Sales: Bande à Part Films, Lausanne
Original Version: French/Polish

"With marvelous insouciance, the young director of *Stupid Boy* totally muddles our terms of reference in this, his latest film, which is akin to a highly entertaining game of liar's poker...

Refusing to concoct an autofiction, Baier lightheartedly resorts to such nevertheless heavy devices as biography, rites of passage, gender differences and the ancestor syndrome. (...) Excellently accompanied by Ravel and Cendrars, it is turn-by-turn derision, sincerity and tenderness that drive this one-of-a-kind road movie... In a word, one of the best Swiss films of the year. Vincent Adatte, *L'Express*, 17 November 2006

Stealth boasts a very personal rhythm and language, taking liberties in the same manifesto spirit as *A bout de souffle* [...] In *Stealth*, Koutchoumov is prodigious, vibrant, impassioned, stubborn and manipulative; as such, she gives a disturbingly real-life image of the bond between brother and sister. Antoine Duplan, *L'Hebdo*, 9 November 2006

Like the first films produced by certain directors in the sixties—Godard, Truffaut, Soutter, Forman, Chytilova and Polanski come to mind—this film is endowed with poetic and lyrical energy of the finest sort. Freddy Landry, *Courrier Neuchâtelois*, 15 November 2006



| 2006

| 35 mm

| colour

| 104'

| Comme des voleurs (à l'est)

A couple crosses the border from Switzerland over into Germany, disappearing into the night at the wheel of a "borrowed" car. Lucie and Lionel are sister and brother, the children of a Canton Vaud pastor; possibly, they are of direct Polish descent. That remains to be seen. What we do see is a car chase in Slovakia, closed-down factories in Silesia, a stolen car, a paper wedding, a student from Cracow, fake passports, real problems, the road to Warsaw – an action-packed story. Plus a horse that drowns night after night, somewhere in Poland.

Script: Lionel Baier, Laurent Guido
Cinematography: Séverine Barde, Lionel Baier
Sound: Robin Harsch

Editing: Christine Hoffet
Music: Sergueï Rachmaninov
Cast: Pierre Chatagny, Natacha Koutchoumov, Rui Pedro Alves

Production: Saga Production, Lausanne
Coproduction: Ciné Manufacture, Paris; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse

World Sales: Bande à Part Films, Lausanne
Original Version: French

The good news is that *La Salamandre* has had a child and it's a boy, who goes by the name Loïc. Although he is much younger (21) than the number of years separating him from uncompromising Swiss film director Alain Tanner's film of 1971, the two could be contemporaries. Not that this implies continuity from one Swiss generation to the next, between the "young" film director Lionel Baier and the "old" Alain Tanner. Fitting into somebody else's shoes or any other sort of filiation is hardly up Baier's alley. The fact is, though, that in the middle of *Stupid Boy* there is mention of *La Salamandre* (seen on TV) and that, in many ways, Loïc – like Rosemonde (the character Bulle Ogier plays in Tanner's film) – is a rebel without a cause, an anarchist without knowing it. Or at least not yet, since *Stupid Boy* is the tale of his emancipation (...) Loïc is Rousseau's Emile as a pederast (well played by Pierre Chatagny): the film director scrutinizes his "stupidity," much as Loïc himself, standing on his tippy toes and totally starstruck, spies on his close relations or the soccer player with whom he is currently infatuated. Similarly, in one of the film's more beautiful moments, we spy on Loïc as he looks up the word "impressionism" in the dictionary. The definition he finds there couldn't be more fitting as a user manual for the film: "To depict the fleeting impressions and delicate nuances of feeling." Gérard Lefort,

Libération, 19 January 2005

(...) Above all, Baier knows how to create an incredibly intimate atmosphere that allows viewers to cast themselves, invent themselves, or categorize themselves in relation to, against or in agreement with, his screen character. The intelligence of such a vision is so rare as to make it infinitely precious. Grégory Alexandre, *Ciné-Live*, January 2005



| 2004

| 35 mm

| colour

| 94'

| Garçon stupide

Between working the day shift at a chocolate factory and cruising for lovers at night, Loïc's life follows an unvarying pattern. However, he intends to do something exceptional one day, something "new." Not that he knows exactly what, but already he's been scrimping on food and shriveling his appetite with the help of stomach pills.

Then there's Marie as well. They've been friends since childhood, so it's at her place that he ends up sleeping once he's finished prowling the Internet and then the city streets. She's someone he might be in love with, "even if we're only friends" – but for now she's fed up with acting as mother, big sister and nurse to him. This has prompted Loïc to consider her as a "hooker." But everything is about to change, because Loïc is going to make some acquaintances: the strange guy at McDonald's first, and then above all Rui, a soccer player on the local team.

Yes, change lies ahead, because Marie will oblige him to set his sights a little higher. After all, Loïc is no stupid boy...

"I've been inventing stories for myself ever since I was little. In my mind, I've already played a whole lot of roles." That was the only experience Pierre Chatagny could claim when Lionel Baier decided to hire him. Then why act in movies? "One day, when I got back from the Cailler factory, I decided I had to radically change my life. I smelled of chocolate and was really fed up! I thought it wouldn't be bad to be an actor." That said, starting off playing the role of Loïc was anything but easy. "Lionel had warned me that the role was more of a curse than a blessing. And it's a fact, I never thought I'd play the part of a homosexual." Pierre Chatagny, acteur (in an interview with Stéphane Gobbo, *La Liberté*, March 2004)

Cinematography: Bastien Bösiger
Sound: Vincent Kappeler
Editing: Pauline Gaillard

Cast: Adrien Barazzone, Elodie Weber,
Cédric Leproust, Claude Goretta,
Nathalie Baye, Isabelle Huppert,
Frédérique Meininger, Michel Robin

Production: Bande à part Films
(Agnieszka Ramu, Jean-Stéphane
Bron), Lausanne; RTS Radio Télévision
Suisse

World Rights: Bande à part Films,
Lausanne
Original Version: French

I believe I share C. Goretta's fascination with the bodies of actors and actresses. Indeed, the desire to film them almost seems to get the upper hand over staging the drives they can bring across on screen. Far more than a fiction on the romantic entanglements of a beautician, Goretta's *The Lacemaker (La Dentellière)* is a documentary on Isabelle Huppert, on her body. It is as if, in 1977, Goretta had been taking inventory of the full range of roles that this actress would be playing in her future films; as if he alone understood how tightly her range of acting techniques was bound to the proportion of her body seen on screen, compared to the rest of the cast and stage design. It took guts to bet an entire feature film on a rosy-faced redheaded teenager, a mere emerging actress at the time. (...)

Although feature films live out their own lives, the aforementioned titles (*The Lacemaker*, *Jean-Luc persécuté*, *The Madman*, *Not as Bad as All That*) are nonetheless indebted to the man who sits before me this afternoon in May 2011. For it is he alone, Claude Goretta, who put them into flesh (the actors) and blood (the editing). My way of thanking him for all those film bodies that have contributed to my desire, my desire of cinema, my desire period, has been to stand in for him tall and straight, compensating his own sore back, and to film actors. Again and again. Adrien Barazzone, Cédric Leproust and Elodie Weber. (...) A chance to say thank you to the person who consciously fuelled my own subconscious. To state where I come from, too. And an occasion to register the fact that one day our national film production did have a body, or a desire thereof. But to me the two are the same. Lionel Baier: «Un cinéma de corps et de désir», dans: *La couleur des jours*, no. 1, autumn 2011, Geneva

BON VENI CLAUDE GORETTA



| 2011

| HD

| colour

| 58'

Claude Goretta made *L'Invitation* in 1973. For filmmaker Lionel Baier, born in 1975, the film is like a "travelling companion", to adapt Serge Daney's expression. He feels it is definitive proof that a Swiss can be deeply Chekhovian. The young filmmaker goes to Geneva to ask his elder how he achieved the whoosh of water effect in the film, why attention to detail matters so much, and how to film great actors such as François Simon. And in order to grasp how it all works, Lionel Baier reconsiders scenes taken from *Not as Bad as All That*, or *The Lacemaker*, or *Jean-Luc persécuté*. This encounter with Claude Goretta, Isabelle Huppert, Nathalie Baye, Michel Robin and Frédérique Meininger leads one of the greatest of Swiss filmmakers to open up in detailed if modest fashion about a career comprising over thirty films.

Script: Lionel Baier, Laurent Guido
Cinematography: Lionel Baier, Sylvie Cachin, Laurent Guido

Sound: Lionel Baier, Sylvie Cachin, Laurent Guido
Editing: Christine Hoffet
Music: Camille Saint-Saëns

Production: Ciné Manufacture, Lausanne
Coproduction: RTS Radio Télévision Suisse

World Rights: Bande à Part Films, Lausanne
Original Version: French

(...) Another of the Festival's great moments is a Swiss documentary, *The Parade* (2000–2001), by Lionel Baier. For a period of several months, the camera follows a small homosexual community as it strives to set up a Gay Pride march in a Valais village. From the preparations to the actual parade, the film sets the record straight on such issues as underground homophobia, the faint-heartedness of the politicians but also of the homosexuals who refuse to testify with bared faces. An even greater level of interest is attained when the director himself becomes involved to the point of doubting his own word; he returns to re-interview the author of the slanderous newspaper article – whom he feels he did not question well enough – and ends up in his own film. His investigation thus goes beyond any local quarrel or sexual issue: courage is the point here, the courage to act and speak out. In the last shots, the director asserts: "I'm proud, not of being gay but of having met good people, of having been there as a witness of what has already become our story..."

Philippe Piazza, *Aden*, February 2003

(...) At a time when the television channels are swamped with no-comment dramatic reconstructions, the docu-soaps that frenetically milk real life to the hilt, Lionel Baier speaks out in the first person, obliging himself to 'show his mug on screen' as he himself puts it. The result of such engagement is a highly political film, where the totally un-narcissistic 'I' gets involved in 'our story' – not only the story of homosexuals but, beyond that, of an entire society forced to experience its many differences. Jacques Mühlethaler, *TéléTemps*, 6–12 July 2002

THE PARADE (OUR HISTORY)



| 2001

| 35 mm

| colour

| 81'

| La Parade (notre histoire)

Occurring summer after summer, the Gay Pride march has become a must in Paris and Berlin. Not so in Sion (Switzerland), in the very heart of the Catholic canton of Valais and its towering mountains. Here, in July 2001, Marianne Bruchez courageously led a group of six girls and one boy to organize the first homosexual parade ever to be held in that little town. Courage is indeed what it took to avoid giving up the ship when the municipal authorities refused to grant the event advance approval, when the local fundamentalists slandered them in a dubiously humoristic page ("The Queers Hit Sion – Devil's Temptation") published in the local newspaper, and when infighting began in the homosexual community itself over whether the Valais organizers were thinking too small. A young woman in her thirties, Ms. Bruchez suddenly found herself splashed across the front pages of the whole Swiss press. She knew nothing of the gay activist agenda, but became burdened overnight with representing it for the media. It is the adventure of this struggle that **The Parade (our history)** unfolds.

The director saw to it that the film captured the strange spring of 2001 when, in Geneva, the first civil partnership agreement was voted in, recognizing the legitimacy of same-sex couples while, less than 200 kilometers away in the same country, the Bishop of Sion was condemning homosexuals to the fires of hell. Threading its way through these events is the path traced by Marianne Bruchez, who decided to raise her fist in defiance, "even if this is neither the time nor the place." Beyond the issue of homosexuality, just how far are we prepared to go in accepting differences, beginning with our own...

Script: Lionel Baier, Laurent Guido
Cinematography: Lionel Baier,
Frederico Brinca, Laurent Guido

Sound: Lionel Baier, Frederico Brinca,
Laurent Guido
Editing: Christine Hoffet
Music: Francis Poulenc

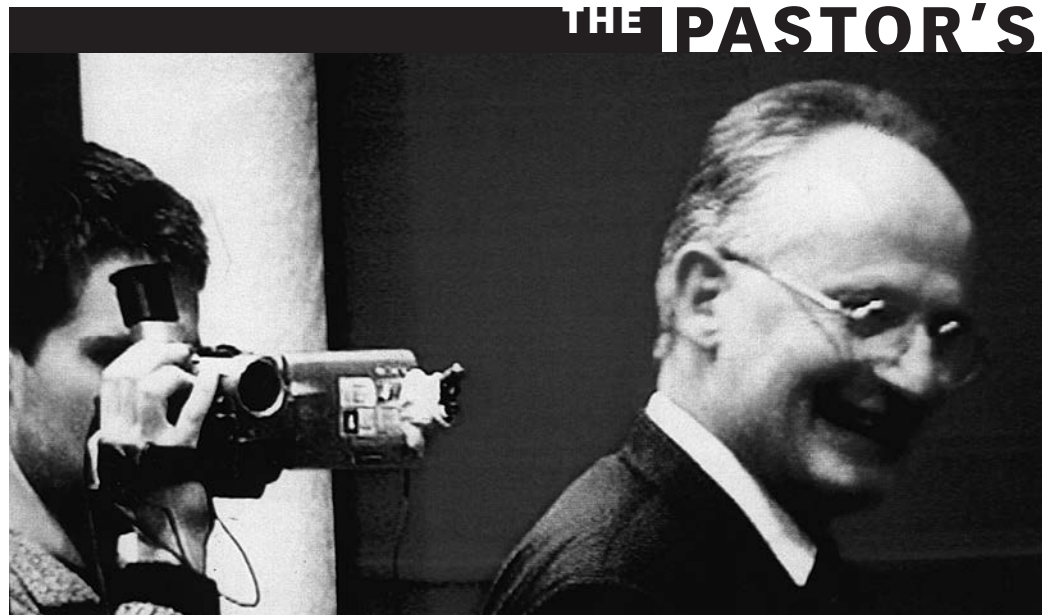
Production: Ciné Manufacture,
Lausanne
Coproduction: Les Productions
JMH, Neuchâtel; RTS Radio Télévision
Suisse

World Rights: Bande à Part Films,
Lausanne
Original Version: French

What a courageous wager the Vaudois film director Lionel Baier has made: a feature-length documentary depicting a large slice of his private life. The enterprise involves a fair share of dangers, including that of seeking to settle family scores after years of being scared stiff, of seeing things from an unappealingly voyeuristic angle, or of accomplishing a mere caricature of the religious function. *The Pastor's* avoids all these pitfalls. In the first place, following your father around with a handheld camera after eight years of being out of touch with him is an act of courage in itself. Even more so if the father in question is an imposing and authoritarian figure, and a minister to boot. This lends the film a double dimension: a depiction of father-son relations and a portrait of someone whose profession is religion. Grégoire Nappey, *La presse Riviera/Chablais*, 2000

The Pastor's is a first-person account of a father-and-son reunion eight years after the young man had flown the coop to escape a father he saw as fascist and inflexible. In a give-and-take question session of over an hour with the stranger his father represents to him, Lionel Baier manages to capture the solitude and fear of a man he himself once feared. The generation gap, the doubts and despairs of a parish mission, a family photo – all in all a great little film indeed. Thierry Jobin, *Tempo – Le Temps*, 14–20 September 2000

(...) The result is amazing. It is not simply the story of a stormy relationship between father and son, but a universal story, the story of all fathers with all sons. Nor is it only a minister father, but a Protestant man whose faith is shaken by his Church's reformation. Lionel discovers that his father is someone subject to doubts and questions, and who dreads the future. A beautiful film. *Construire* n° 52, December 2001



| 2000 | Beta SP | colour | 64' | celui au pasteur (ma vision personnelle des choses)

The *Pastor's* is a film done in the first person, in which the son casts a both tender and cruel gaze on his father, a minister in the canton of Vaud at the end of the 20th century. For over a year and a half, Lionel Baier buried himself in his childhood world of parish events, catechist camps and church on Sundays. With a small digital camera in one hand and a directional mike in the other, the film director followed his father around during his professional duties, seeking to discover what keeps this man going – a man whom he so feared as a child, scorned as a teenager and, to this day, knows so little about. The reformation of the Protestant Church of Vaud serves to trigger a number of reflections, even criticisms, addressed by the son to his father. Quite rapidly, questions linked to Hugo Baier's profession insinuate themselves into his private sphere, leading the discussion to branch out in various directions, like the forest that is the setting for their conversation. Baier tries to see behind the stiffly unapproachable man of the Church, searching for the father figure that escaped him as a child. *The Pastor's* also sheds light on the path followed by a right-wing figure for whom the Church represented a rampart against Communism, and who meets with financial ruin at the end of his career.

"The pastor is a boss; that's fascist, but I don't give a damn. I don't believe in co-management and all that stuff. I believe that at some time, somebody's got to make the decisions." (Hugo Baier in *The Pastor's*)

CARTOGRAPHIE 11 – EN ONZE

2013 | DVD | colour | 8' |

Cartographies is a project of eleven interventions in urban dance developed by the Contemporary Dance Company Philippe Saire, filmed by nine directors. This film takes place on green grass, on a stairway of stone. The subject is the duality of masculinity. Three male dancers learn how to use strength without strength, how to be gracious without fear of being precious.



Directed by: Lionel Baier
Written by: Lionel Baier, Philippe Saire
Cinematography: Lionel Baier
Editing: Félix Sandri
Sound: Laurent Kempf
Music: Moby

Art Direction: Philippe Saire
Costumes: Tania D'Ambrogio
Production & World Rights: Cie Philippe Saire, Lausanne
Original Version: without dialogue

EMILE FROM 1 TO 5

2012 | HD | colour | 3'30 | Emile de 1 à 5

Five boys in a bathtub chat about the way things go when it comes to maternity and masculinity. This short film belongs to the *La Faute à Rousseau* collection directed by Pierre Maillard and produced in conjunction with the year 2012 commemoration of the 300th anniversary of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's birth.



Script: Lionel Baier, avec des extraits de «Emile, ou de l'éducation» de Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Cinematography: Bastien Bösiger
Sound: Raphael Rivière
Editing: Pauline Gaillard
Music: Jean-Sébastien Bach

Cast: Adrien Barazzone, Simon Guélat, Julien Pochon, Raphaël Bilbeny, Nicolas Leoni
Production: Rita Productions (Max Karli et Pauline Gyax), Genève; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse
World Rights: Bande à Part Films, Lausanne
Original Version: French

JEAN ROUCH, IN REMEMBRANCE

| 2002 | Beta SP | colour | 8' | Mon père, c'est un lion (Jean Rouch, pour mémoire)

The Museum of Man in Paris is on the verge of being dismantled. The event is a bit like the upcoming disappearance of a family home whose very existence has almost flown from our minds. Here we tour the premises with Jean Rouch, that old lion of a man. We tour the premises for what is, possibly, the last time...



Directed by: Lionel Baier, Dominique de Rivaz

Script: Lionel Baier

Cinematography: Dominique de Rivaz, Lionel Baier

Sound: Dominique de Rivaz, Lionel Baier

Editing: Christine Hoffet

Production: Ciné Manufacture, Lausanne

World Rights: Bande à Part Films, Lausanne

Original Version: French

SWEET ENOUGH TO EAT

| 1999 | 35 mm | colour | 11' | Mignon à croquer

Every morning, the teacher Laura B. watches the schoolyard goings on: the mothers drive their warmly bundled children to the front of the schoolhouse, where each proceeds to give her son or daughter a little bag of sweets for the morning recess. As for Laura, she finds solace and motivation by hiding in a bathroom cubicle to gobble up stupendous amounts of food. This morning, all her attention is focused on the napoleon that the quite appetizing little blond boy Loïc has brought to class as his 10 o'clock snack. To attain her goal, Laura will do anything. Even the unthinkable...



Script: Lionel Baier

Cinematography: Thomas Hardmeier

Sound: Gilles Abravanel

Editing: Christine Hoffet

Music: Camille Saint-Saëns

Cast: Sylvia Rotondo, Julien Beck, Diana Rodrigues, Rachel Noël and the class of Fanny Gemmet

Production: Ciné Manufacture, Lausanne

World Sales: Bande à Part Films, Lausanne

Original Version: French