

THUNDER FILMS INTERNATIONAL PRÉSENTE

LE NOIR (TE) VOUS VA SI BIEN

UN FILM DE **JACQUES BRAL**

SOEBA MANOUSHA LOUNES TAZAÏRT JULIEN BAUMGARTNER GREGOIRE LEPRINCE-RINGUET
ELISE LHOMEAU SOUAD AMIDOU SALIM KECHIOUCHE THIERRY LHERMITTE

SID AHMED AGOUM DELPHINE RICH MAGID BOUALI LISA MAKEDJOUE

MUSIQUE ORIGINALE **NATHANIEL MÉCHALY** DIRECTEUR DE LA LUMIÈRE **FRANÇOIS L'ARTIGUE**

DIRECTEUR DE CASTING SOPHIE MOULÉVRIER DIRECTEUR DE LA LUMIÈRE FRANÇOIS L'ARTIGUE COORDONNATRICE GÉNÉRALLE HELENE MEUNIER MONTAGE SON JEAN-DOMINIQUE BOBITAGE JEAN-PIERRE LÉLONG MIXAGE VINCENT BARRAUD
MONTAGE JACQUES BRAL PLUMER DE JUFFROY ASSISTÉE DE ESTERLENA MORAN MONTAGE PIERRE VALÉRY MUFFRE MUSIQUE ORIGINALE NATHANIEL MÉCHALY CRÉATEUR DES COSTUMES OLGA PELLETIER CHEF COSTUMIERE MILA VIGOROUK
CHEF MAQUILLAGE LAETITIA QUILLERY ASSISTÉE DE THACY KAHNKE PESNARD UNE PRODUCTION THUNDER FILM INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUIT PAR LES FILMS NONSTRANSYAMEDIA PRODUCTEUR DÉLÉGUÉ JACQUES BRAL
PRODUCTEURS ASSOCIÉS CHRIS JAM LEVASSER FIANCES LABARDE RÉNÉALO CALCAÏNI CONSEILLER À LA PRODUCTION BERNARD GUIREMAND UN FILM PRODUIT, ÉCRIT ET RÉALISÉ PAR JACQUES BRAL



AVEC LE SOUTIEN DE LA RÉGION ÎLE-DE-FRANCE AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DU CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE ET LE SOUTIEN DU FINIS-IMAGES DE LA DIVERSITÉ

do France



THUNDER FILMS INTERNATIONAL

presents

A

JACQUES BRAL

movie

**Black Really Suits You
(Le noir (te) vous va si bien)**

<http://le-noir-te-vous-va-si-bien-le-film.com/home/>
<https://www.facebook.com/lenoirtevousvasibien>

Running time : 1 hour, 28 minutes
Format 1.85 - Sound 5.1 Dolby SRD and SR

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Storyline

The life of a Middle-East family of immigrants in Europe.

The father carries the heavy burden of banishment. To rescue his culture, his traditions, is mandatory, so he remains faithful to his past, his origins, to himself.

His daughter is now a grown-up. He worries and wishes she would get married soon.

The young woman leaves the family home every morning, but changes her clothes in a bar before she goes to work, her hair down.

She puzzles the young boss of the company that employs her. He fell in love and is ready to do anything to marry her. But the young woman keeps her freedom of choice, just like her mother had done with her father.

She won't have time to introduce the only man for her to her parents. A friend of her father's catches them. In a cafe.

« Black Really Suits You » carries within its title, all the ambiguity the movie contains. Subtly, from sensual to lethal, from singular to universal, from feminine to masculine, the movie brings together rather than opposes cultures that seek in each other answers to the same question : Women, men's desire, as well as the fascination that each culture has for the other.

Sex war or culture war? Too much interest and complicity between these two enemies who tame and respect each other.

All the audacity and sharpness of the comment resides in this specific point of view, where everyone has his own place and his own "legitimate" motivations. This ability to make us forget, in a simple and mostly carnal description of daily life, the tragedy that bursts out in an absurd and unexpected way.

CAST

<i>Cobra</i>	Sofia MANOUSHA
<i>Moncef</i>	Lounès TAZAIRT
<i>Serge</i>	Julien BAUMGARTNER
<i>Richard</i>	Grégoire LEPRINCE-RINGUET
<i>Anaïs</i>	Elise LHOMEAU
<i>Maléké</i>	Souad AMIDOU
<i>Rachid</i>	Salim KECHIOUCHE
<i>François</i>	Thierry LHERMITTE
<i>Rachid</i>	Sid Ahmed AGOUMI
<i>Hélène-Laure</i>	Delphine RICH
<i>Majid</i>	Magid BOUALI
<i>Salima</i>	Lisa MAKHEDJOUF

REVIEW

« How can judgment be passed on anyone ? » These words, on which EXTERIEUR, NUIT end, come back to us as we watch BLACK REALLY SUITS YOU.

Although Jacques Bral deals with a social issue that was, and still is, provocative, he does it in his own way, shying away from simplifications, never accusing anyone.

As a film-maker, he watches his characters, accompanies them into their social milieu, is witness to their yearnings, their inconsistencies, frailties, he pinpoints all the misunderstandings from which dramas arise and that should have been avoided had circumstances been different.

In the film, everything is predicated on being deprived of one's roots, from ill-transmitted traditions and badly received customs, from the fear of what other people may think, from questions that were never raised. Even if the movie stirs up numerous problems, it never develops a particular message.

BLACK REALLY SUITS YOU is first and foremost a tragic love story, a sensitive portrait of a young woman free of dogma (a magnificent performance by Sofiia Manousha), but also the portrait of a father and a family broken and crushed by a fate that is terribly blind. If the characters really EXIST for us in flesh and blood, and if we are deeply moved, it is because they are trapped day after day in a situation that is preposterous and nevertheless familiar to all of us.

François Guérif,

September 3rd, 2012

INTERVIEW

The movie starts with a pre-title sequence that announces the structure of the narrative, the tone of the movie and the tragedy; how did you plan this?

Actually this idea came to me afterwards.

In the screenplay, there was already this idea of building the whole movie on a flash-back, and therefore of providing elements about the end of the story at the very beginning.

But of course, as shooting goes, things change and evolve.

I had edited and mixed the movie, and after the initial screening, it occurred to me that two or three scenes didn't work, even for people who liked the movie, for those who loved it.

There were strong elements at the very end, but they came together with the last scenes which were already very strong : that was too much.

So I strengthened the beginning with a tougher, more solid tone.

Then comes the time to enter the story, get introduced to the characters, time for them to take substance and flesh. Furthermore, the tone gradually changes; there is even some comedy and the audience completely forgets the drama.

The story is told through images, much more than through words.

People who write subtitles can't make a living out of my movies: in this one, there must be about 700 subtitles, whereas you can find thousands in other movies!

I am a director of images; words are important, but similar to the gas you put in a car.

The pre-title sequence allows the audience to get more easily into the mood of the movie. And the story consists in a series of flashbacks which seem to flow like a linear narrative.

The movie starts with a violent sentence; the leading character says: 'I should never have left my country', an overwhelming statement.

It is indeed a violent sentence, which sprang out on the set. Before including it in the editing, I gave it a lot of thought. When I shot this scene, I think I was unable to get any sleep for 48 hours!

The character talks about his feeling of failure. But it's ambiguous; he thinks he didn't make it, but it doesn't mean that if he had the same choice to make, he wouldn't emigrate again, and maybe he would change faster. It's true this is a dark hint at announcing the new turns in the plot and the evolution of the character.

He also says: 'if I could do it all over again, I would do things differently'; two sentences, that immediately herald a tragedy and the fact that this person we see in the beginning and we don't know yet feels responsible.

What is of interest to me is that he stares at the audience when he says those words.

What's important is that he kind of says: 'I'm going to tell you a story. If it had been possible, I would have loved to start again from scratch and tell you another story'.

I am a structuralist: in my movies, there is always some reminder system, sentences and situations that recall things to your mind. This beginning foreshadows the end of the movie,

and as you finally get to it, it gives even more power to what Moncef says then. At the very end, he clarifies: he doesn't say, 'If I could do it all over again, I would do it differently'. He takes responsibility for facts, for consequences.

This gazing into the camera comes up several times in the movie; most of the leading characters address the audience directly.

For me, the father character tells the story in the first person; he's the one who tells it, only part of the story, but he does tell it. He calls out to the audience as he tells his story. In the beginning, I wanted Cobra to address the audience too, but this I cut out while editing.

The other characters, pushed forward by desire, their yearning for life and the wish to build their future, question the audience. They talk and play for the audience.

The first image after the credits is also highly symbolical: Cobra's face and the black headscarf.

Yes, this is more or less related to what I said before; the beginning of the movie introduces a series of shots that lead to flashbacks leading on to other flashbacks.

The pre-title sequence ends on a black screen; out of the black come the credits and in this black appears the headscarf that covers the face of the leading female character. This conjures up some of the themes in very few images.

You lead us into the daily life of a family; we know they live in the Paris area. We know the young girl works somewhere close to La Defense, but you don't provide any details about the country they came from. Why?

Because I was interested in the difference between the two cultures.

I am a man of those two cultures. I am from Iran. I am permeated with all these differences and our modern world puts further stress on it. But the huge difference between these two cultures today has to do with womanhood; the role of women in society and the way they are looked upon. It has very little to do with religion.

Is this why there is no specific scene about religion in the movie?

Yes, because it's a universal topic, and the final point is what the father concludes: there is no reason why his daughter shouldn't have had the same rights as his son. And this might be the idea I would like to share.

Let's talk about the title: Black Really Suits You. Why? The use of the familiar 'tu' that brings people together, and the use of the polite form that keeps them away or apart... this is an ambiguous title!

It just came like that. It reflects the structural idea of the movie. The choice of a title is always something weird, it comes forth like part of a poem.

As a matter of fact, when I started writing, I already knew the title. So obviously there is a deep link with the movie; then I wanted to change it as it seemed too long; people didn't know if they had to say 'te' or 'vous', but those who had worked on the movie, the actors and all, said I had to keep it, that it was great. It finally looks like it works well.

And black is really one of two colors over there. Black or white, no bright colors! It reminds me of my origins; it has multiple meanings, but black also carries a sense of mourning.

The ‘te’ relates to the closeness with the character, and the ‘vous’ states the difference with the culture the other embodies?

Yes, and it’s also what the busboy says to the young girl.

One of my movies is called *Exterieur, Nuit*. Actually, it was mostly shot at nighttime, and really outside. And it’s true that making movies, I choose a title that speaks of the film; but instead of a hyphen, I put a comma between those two words so that there was a kind of identification of the movie and its title, just like the way it also works this time.

Where did the first idea come from, a specific event?

I hadn’t gone back to Iran for a very long time, and after so many years, I did go back after my mother died, to visit her grave. The first image that really gave me a shock was that of women dressed like crows, all in black, whereas in my memories of Teheran, they wore short skirts; that was the first shock. The second shock happened when I came back. In the plane, women had their hair covered with a headscarf, but in the airport in Paris, when I went to retrieve my luggage, most girls wore jeans and tops; I didn’t recognize them! They had all changed in the restroom !

Here we see girls wearing headscarfs, but this is identity claiming; wearing it is a way of saying ‘you see me as being different, so I emphasize the difference!’ But nobody has to do it, a woman can dress the way she likes. Over there, it’s mandatory, and this gives anyone the right to criticize hair that shows a little, or if the headscarf is drawn a little too high on the forehead, or a bit too high on the nape of the neck. As a matter of fact, it’s ridiculous, it brought about a contrary result; girls have never been so free and so out of control since they were forced to hide !

So I thought first of what women have had to endure. It was a start; I started with this idea and the fact that if women had to do it over there, here some of them wanted to do it. But this was at the beginning of the writing process. Then the topic became deeper, more universal, about women and their rights.

Actually, I talk a lot about myself in this movie. Usually, I see my work as an officer’s report, but a subjective one; to me, that’s what creation is about! So I very seldom put in my movies something that is important to me personally.

Anyway, there are always personal things in movies.

In *Extérieur, Nuit* this was already true, but now, being uprooted is deeper, it’s a real tragedy!

When Moncef talks about his roots, when he talks about his ashes, he talks about the gap between having another nationality, or having two nationalities, and the earth that is really yours. The earth is made up of your ancestors’ remains.

But in the movie Moncef finally says ‘my country is where my children live’.

It’s nothing but a statement! When you live in another country and your children settle down there, when your wife lives there too, things change. Your country is where you and your family live, of course. But the wound is there, and you feel miserable. It’s just a single note when you start thinking about it and then it becomes music all around! I started with the girl, the cultural differences, immigration and being uprooted which is a heavy burden all your life long, so it has been at least for me! A painful loss.

And the expression of his face, his body, his general behavior, things you see on the set carry out Moncef's suffering.

I notice now that I work in an abstract way. For me, shooting a movie is something theoretical. It's a design, a plotting about what it is going to become. I work in a very precise way, everything is as bare naked as to be almost minimalist. When I walk into a set, for instance, if it is an existing set, I first think about what could be removed from it! I was lucky this time to be able to put everything I wanted on the set; we've shot the whole of it with closely selected elements; therefore each object, gesture, behavior conveys meaning.

This movie is even more 'minimalist' than the previous ones. The strength of the topic gave me the opportunity to turn these abstract moments into something more significant, made of flesh and bone.

The movie deals with a sensitive topic at the moment.

It wanted the movie to be useful; I wish it could be useful socially speaking; It's the first time I shoot a movie with this idea in mind.

According to early reactions, people like it, but it could lead to debates!

When the movie was finished, I realized it was not an easy topic, at least as we perceive it here. If this story had been set in a foreign country, it would be different, but it takes place in France, among us, and all of a sudden reactions change; a lot of us carry along biased ideas.

Before I started shooting I had created a Facebook page that was rather a page to consider on (with a hint of provocation.) A lot of talking and debating took place. Especially one night, when I was answering someone online. It went on for hours and many people took part. The person I was exchanging ideas with had preconceived ideas because he thought we were talking about him as a Muslim, he thought we were going to mock his beliefs which definitely is not the case. In the end, he wrote this awesome statement: 'But this father is full of shit ! There is no reason he shouldn't want the same for his daughter and his son!'

This is how it ended. Then I opened the Facebook page for the movie itself at the beginning of summer and it brought about quite an explosion there. The first visitors had followed the conversation on the previous page. It was in July and I think they were young people, mostly students in high school or at university who were on holiday with their friends in other countries and all of a sudden there were 3,500 connections per day! You could find a little of everything in these reactions: some negative ones from kids or fundamentalists, the kind who says a girl wearing the headscarf isn't allowed to kiss... But globally, it was extremely positive. Many people living in Northern Africa where for the film and demanded to actually be able to see it, even more so as the ones who lived in France.

I was rather surprised by this enthusiastic wave, and the number of fans; over 100,000 to this day.

Let's talk about the actors chosen.

I work with Gérard Moulévrier as we get along very well. Gérard is a great guy who knows actors well, loves them and is very bright; he's an artist, he really is; he was the cast manager on the Samuel Fuller movie I produced; we met then. And he always introduced me to people who later became stars, and sometimes I didn't even hire them! So I relied on this great partnership with Gérard, and also on people I just met. I don't do screen tests. The best test is to meet people, talk and see who they are and what I can bring out in them.

For the two leading parts of Moncef and Cobra, we made the decision sometime at the end of the casting process.

Lounès, who plays the leading part, I had thought of at the beginning for a small part, but as soon as I saw him, I decided he would be Moncef. One day I called him and said: 'Are you doing anything right now ?' He said I'm in Bordeaux and about to leave for Algeria on a vacation, so I said 'I don't think you're gonna make it to Algeria' -laughs- and he came back to Paris.

As a matter of fact, I was worrying about some characters such as Cobra, practically until the end of the editing process; Sofïia is a young comedian who has some acting experience, but this is her first leading part in a movie. And I've known her for about fifteen years.

As you edit, you choose one shot after the other, check and pick each image, and I was stunned; when I was watching the movie it was not at all Sofïia, the girl I knew, that I saw anymore, she was the character now and that was what I wanted. The main characters, Sofïia and Lounès, were entrusted with their first leading part in a movie. They have been revelations to me.

Interview by Catherine RUELLE

FILMOGRAPHY

Author – director - Producer

LE NOIR (TE) VOUS VA SI BIEN (Full length 35 mm & DCP Color) 2012
with Sofiia MANOUSHA, Lounès TAZAÏRT, Julien BAUMGARTNER,
Grégoire LEPRINCE-RINGUET, Elise LHOMEAU, Thierry LHERMITTE, Souad AMIDOU,
Salim KECHIOUCHE, Delphine RICH.

UN PRINTEMPS A PARIS (Full length 35 mm Color) 2006
with Eddy MITCHELL, Sagamore STEVENIN, Pascale ARBILLOT, Pierre SANTINI,
Gérard JUGNOT, Jean-François BALMER.

Festival International du film de Munich 2006

Grand Prix de la Police Paris / New York Festival 2007

MAUVAIS GARCON (Full length 35 mm Color) 1993
with Delphine FOREST, Bruno WOLKOWITCH.

Prix d'Interprétation Féminine Festival de La Baule

Prix Coup de Coeur du Public Festival du Film de Sarlat

This movie allowed the audience to discover Bruno WOLKOWITCH.

POLAR (Full length 35 mm Color) 1984
with Jean-François BALMER, Roland DUBILLARD, Sandra MONTAIGU.

**Prix de la Meilleure Contribution Technique et Artistique Mystfest de Cattolica Prix de
L'Association 813 Festival du Roman et du Film Policier de Reims**

First leading part for Jean-François BALMER in cinema.

EXTERIEUR, NUIT (Full length 35 mm Color) 1980
with Christine BOISSON, Gérard LANVIN, André DUSSOLLIER.

Prix Perspective du Cinéma Français Festival de Cannes

Léopard de Bronze, Premio Ernst Artaria Festival de Locarno

Mention Spéciale Prix Unifrance de la Presse Etrangère

This movie allowed the audience to discover Christine BOISSON and Gérard LANVIN.

Producer

STREET OF NO RETURN (Sans Espoir de Retour) (Full length 35 mm Color) 1989
Last movie of Samuel FULLER,
starring Keith CARRADINE, Valentina VARGAS, Bill DUKE.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

A secretive and rare movie director, Jacques Bral was born on September 21st 1948 in Teheran (Iran). He is a French screenwriter, director, editor and producer. After graduating from the Alborz High School in Teheran, Jacques Bral, aged 18, left the country to settle down in France in 1966. Between 1966 and 1968, he studied architecture at the Beaux-Arts (Artech workshop), and then entered the 'Institut de Formation Cinématographique'. He co-directed the short movie **Quand tout le monde est parti** starring Julien Lévi and Jean-Paul Leca and two full length features : **M88** (1970) and **Frisou** (1973) in black and white and 16 mm.

In 1975, he directed **Une baleine qui avait mal aux dents**, starring Francis Blanche and Bernadette Lafont.

In 1978, he created a production company, Les Films Noirs, with his partners Jean-Paul Leca and Julien Lévi, and directed **Extérieur, Nuit**, starring Christine Boisson, Gérard Lanvin and André Dussolier, which was awarded with the 'Perspectives du cinéma français' Prize in Cannes and the Bronze Leopard in Locarno (among other awards).

He then shot **Polar** in 1984, an adaptation from a Jean-Patrick Manchette thriller, **Morgue Pleine**, starring Jean-François Balmer as Eugène Trapon, the Parisian detective, with a cameo appearance by film director Claude Chabrol.

In 1989, he produced **Street of No Return (Sans espoir de retour)**, the great American movie director Samuel Fuller's last movie (Sam Fuller directed **Shock Corridor, Pick Up On South Street** and many other films).

In 1993, he shot **Mauvais garçon**, a poetic tale with Delphine Forest and Bruno Wolkowitch.

After many years of writing, he shot **Un printemps à Paris** in 2006, with Eddy Mitchell and Sagamore Stevenin. The movie won the 'Grand Prix de Police Paris/New-York Festival' award in 2007.

2012, **Le noir (te) vous va si bien**, with Sofïa Manousha, Lounès Tazaïrt, Grégoire Leprince-Ringuet, Julien Baumgartner, Elise Lhomeau, Souad Amidou, Salim Kechiouche, Thierry Lhermitte, Sid Ahmed Agoumi, Delphine Rich, Magid Bouali, Lisa Makhedjof.

TECHNICAL CREW

Written and directed by..... Jacques BRAL
Original musicNathaniel MÉCHALY
Additional music Karl-Heinz SCHÄFER
CinematographerFrançois LARTIGUE
CastingGérard MOULÉVRIER
Direct sound Frédéric HEINRICH
Sound mixJean DUBREUIL
Sound effects Jean-Pierre LELONG
MixingVincent ARNARDI
Editing Jacques BRAL
.....Olivier MAUFFROY
AssistantsElisabeth MORIN
Dialogues mixValérie MEFFRE
CostumesOlga PELLETIER
Wardrobe masterJulie VIGOUROUX
Makeup director Laëtitia QUILLERY
AssistantTracy KARINEEFRESNEAU
Stage managersRénald CALCAGNI
.....Bruno SESTI
.....William MATTANA
ProducerJacques BRAL
Associate producers Christian LEVASSEUR
.....Francis LAGARDE
.....Renald CALCAGNI
Producer's adviser Bernard GUIREMAND

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Coproduced by Les Films Noirs

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