

FAN CLUB

An immersive feature film by **VINCENT RAVALEC**

SYLVIE TESTUD DENIS LAVANT

DENIS MPUNGA ARTHUR H ASTRID ROOS AUDE-LAURENCE BIVER JEAN-FRANÇOIS WOLFF

with the voices of **MATHIEU KASSOVITZ** and **KESTER LOVELACE**

a_BAHN
ANIMATED PRODUCTIONS COMPANY

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l'image animée

MAIRIE DE PARIS



Distribution



FAN CLUB

a_BAHN in coproduction with LES FILMS DU GARAGE presents "FAN CLUB"

with SYLVIE TESTUD - DENIS LAVANT - ARTHUR H - DENIS MPUNGA - ASTRID ROOS - AUDE-LAURENCE BIVER - JEAN-FRANÇOIS WOLFF

with the voices of MATHIEU KASSOVITZ and KESTER LOVELACE

art direction ELISE MORIN cinematography AMANDINE KLEE costume design VIRGINIA FERREIRA production design JULIETA FERNANDEZ DI MEO

editing AMÉLIE RAVALEC sound mix FRANÇOIS FRIPIAT special effects BENJAMIN RAVALEC original score ANDRÉ MERGENTHALER

produced by STÉPHANE HUEBER-BLIES - FRANÇOIS LE GALL - NICOLAS BLIES - MARION GUTH screenplay by VINCENT RAVALEC directed by VINCENT RAVALEC

ABOUT

Fan Club is one of the first (if not the first) feature-length VR film ever made. It is 55' minutes long and it represents an immersion into a fictitious world, which is dreamlike, ornate, eccentric and emotional.

Fan Club dramatizes the complexity of managing the unfortunate consequences of our actions and highlights the futility of revenge and the importance of atonement. This film is a reflection on the burden of memory and resilience, all in the form of a psychedelic thriller.







SYNOPSIS

In a misguided attempt to please a famous film director with whom she wants to work, Anna, a television celebrity, accepts her fan club's invitation to spend a weekend in their company.

However, very quickly, the experience turns into a nightmare. Anna is kidnapped by her borderline obsessive admirers who want to make her to relive the highlights of her career. Their aim is to make her experience all of the emotions that they suffered through as fans and viewers.

Though the predominant emotion is distress, little by little, questions begin to formulate. Was it just craziness that brought her fans to create this terrifying experience or does the story have more esoteric motivations? Do the fans themselves have more complex motives?

By revisiting the memory of this celebrity and the echo that it created in the imagination of her fans, we will better understand how the lives and very existence of different people are intertwined.

Moving through a castle environment that's imagined as a labyrinth of emotion, projections and synchronicity, the entire group ends up as a single sentient entity whose parts interact with each other. These 'fans' actually end up as the creators of an experience whose goal is to remove the desire for revenge without denying painful trauma.



ANOTHER VISION

Despite the relatively recent history of virtual reality, the feature-length film *Fan Club* is already trying to shake up norms. Until now, there were some things that never changed in VR films, like the placement of the viewer and the limited use of cuts.

However, director Vincent Ravalec had another vision for *Fan Club*: including a viewer who is no longer an actor, but who focuses on just living and listening to a story, and a more traditional cinematic style of editing that energises the experience by playing with the 360° and the viewer's attention. In this way, *Fan Club* will add a new dimension to conversations on VR narration because, in this film, the editing and the camera movements are omnipresent. *Fan Club* will spark debate and will further the discussion on how to write for VR-- a field that is still trying to find itself.







INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR VINCENT RAVALEC

Where did the idea for Fan Club come from?

I've been thinking about this for a long time. Recently, I realized that I've had this project in my computer since... 2004. At first, I wanted to make it as a feature film. Then, I started making it into a comic book along with Luc Cornillon, formerly of Métal Hurlant. Then, it became a novel published by Seuil. And, in the end, it became a VR project.

It's a film about how we deal with memory, trauma and resilience. How can VR help us more deeply explore these themes?

VR can do this because of one of its inherent qualities: the global connection with the totality of the suggested reality. In the VR world, viewers become ONE. We can't get out of it, or the experience is interrupted. VR provides an illustration of the systemic form that is characteristic of our condition.

We are all linked to each other, to the world, to nature... it's a reality, even if we forget and aren't really aware of it.

The style of the film is very surprising. What universe are you in? How would you describe the style that you developed in terms of the dramatization and the game?

My belief is that the role of VR is to take us into unheard of, novel virtual worlds. Already, it is quite a cumbersome process to put on a headphones, VR must allow you to do something amazing-- you fly, you are two centimeters from a tiger or, at least, you are in a world that is, at the very least, surprising.

So Fan Club is crafted to be both dreamlike and baroque. It is a sort of fairytale, like the fantastical realism of fun fair. It is similar to Jodorowsky or Del Toro or the silent, black and white film, Blancanieves.

Our artistic director Elise Morin also added a touch of modern art, which gives the film quite an original feel. Her ideas for the set and the treasures she found give the film a strong visual identity.

Mathieu Kassovitz's voiceover is very present in the film and his voice accompanies us throughout. What is the role of the voiceover? What does it bring to VR?

It was a personal choice. I love voiceovers. I think that the debate over the fact that they are not a narrative device is outdated.

Voiceovers add to the feeling of total immersion and subjectivity (don't forget that you already have headphones on when experiencing VR), even if we aren't in a subjective point-of-view.

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There isn't really a subjective point-of-view at work here, even though with virtual reality we're used to first-person narration. In Fan Club, the viewer is in the middle of the action without actually being directly involved in the narration. What's behind this decision, which is quite radical ?

I've never been really at ease with the subjective point-of-view, ever since my first encounters with virtual reality. VR tends to simulate reality. But with a subjective point-of-view – at least with the kind of traditional VR that Fan Club uses – you see right away that you're not actually in the body that you're supposed to be in because as soon as you look down you realise those aren't your feet. Not everybody feels this way about it – but it feels slightly fake to me.

Total immersion seems to me a much more important aspect of VR, especially because in real life we're limited by our physical bodies and with VR we can be all-knowing and we can have a vast, intense awareness of the world. Why wouldn't you want that ? On top of that, this omniscient point-of-view worked perfectly for the subject: to translate the complexity of a group relationship which, through a trauma, has generated a psychological entity. So we are not a person, we're the entirety of the situation and we are completely immersed in it. This allows for a lot of freedom in the navigation, which suits me. And it's a kind of writing that works very well, contrary to what I'd been told initially. The editing works, the camera moves work. You understand right away that even if you're not a character who exists in the environment, you have a stake in it nonetheless – physically – anytime anything happens.

Can you tell us about the character of Anna, played by Sylvie Testud, and about the slightly 'borderline' fans?

She's like a star in the solar system. She's at the center and the others revolve around her. But if they weren't there, she'd really be alone, and perhaps would disappear into the interstellar void like a poor wretch. But she is the person who affects the group principally. As for the fans, they appear 'borderline' but in fact are quite ordered; you realise this in the last chapter.

How is a VR shoot different to a traditional film shoot ?

It's labour-intensive and it's complicated. You can't be on the set with the actors so it's difficult to get them into a rhythm, or to organise them... It's almost like the theatre – you can't intervene too much. The fact that you're filming in 360° also affects everyone who works on the shoot. But everybody got into it and enjoyed the shoot, including the crew.

We get the feeling that you wanted a more cinematic VR, with camera moves, high production values, visible editing and the use of cuts. Can you tell us more about this ?

I had a very simple goal with Fan Club : to tell a story which is not a film but which uses some of the codes from film, and also some from contemporary art, circus, graphic novels, photography, theatre. And the end result is what I was hoping for: it's different to a cinematic experience but it acknowledges the link, at the same time.

The editing came about quite naturally since I have a background in cinema and in writing that uses cuts and juxtaposition. One of the problems with VR is the use of space-time, which is central to the story. In a VR film, it's complicated because the choice of shot is difficult so you can't really exploit this as a resource, or not very much. You can use some editing however. But that raises the issue of maybe losing the viewer in the shot sequence. Fan Club lets us think about these questions because editing and camera moves are constantly being used. I think it will start a discussion and will help advance VR scripting, which is something that's still being understood.



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FILM DIRECTOR

VINCENT RAVALEC

A writer, director and producer, Ravalec has written novels, short stories, songs, films, radio dramas, comic strips, web series, essays, recipes, art criticism and travel essays. He has also addressed a wide array of topics, ranging from France's low-income suburbs to the literary milieu to sorcery to real estate to gastronomy to sound to shamanism to space travel to plants used in rites of passage to illness to elections to drugs to swinging to ecology to good and evil to the end of the world to education to artistic expression and... cinema.

He has brought some of his books to the silver screen. Some of his other books were made into films by other people. He has also written comic strips that he didn't illustrate and songs that he didn't sing. His production company is called Les Films du Garage.

His books have received different prizes, including the Prix de Flore, the Prix des Bouquinistes and the Prix Auchan. One of his films was the opener in the French cinema category at Cannes. Others have also won prizes at other festivals (including Clermont).

His web series *Addict* received the Prix de l'Innovation at the Geneva festival. He had a diamond album with *Sang pour Sang* by Johnny Hallyday. He also often teaches at writing workshops and film schools.

Passionate about new forms of writing, he has written and directed VR films (Opéra Garnier, Musée d'Orsay). He is a member of Uni-VR and president of the VRSTORY collective.



ART DIRECTOR

ELISE MORIN

French visual artist Elise Morin works with different media and materials blending light, video sculpture and new technology. Morin has trained in all different artistic theories, practices and approaches, including fine arts (Villa Arson), decorative arts (Ensad, École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs, Paris), art & design (Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London) as well as post-graduate studies in new media (Tokyo University of the Arts (Tokyo Geidai)).

She develops installations and films that explore the differences and similarities that make up our ideas about the environment, industry and technology.

Both the place and method of production are integral components of her work, which makes one reflect on the relationship that fosters creation for the common good. Her work incorporates ideas about time and space, progress and science, which she puts together.

Her work has been exhibited at the Grand Palais (Art Paris Art Fair), at the Centquatre and at Jeu de Paume in Paris, as well as at the museums of modern art in Bucharest (MNAC), Moscow (NCCA) and Tokyo (Mori Art Museum).

In 2003, Morin was awarded the research fellowship MONBUKAGAKUSHO, MEXT. In 2012, her engagement in creation was rewarded by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Prize [USA]. She won Best of Lab art and sustainability.

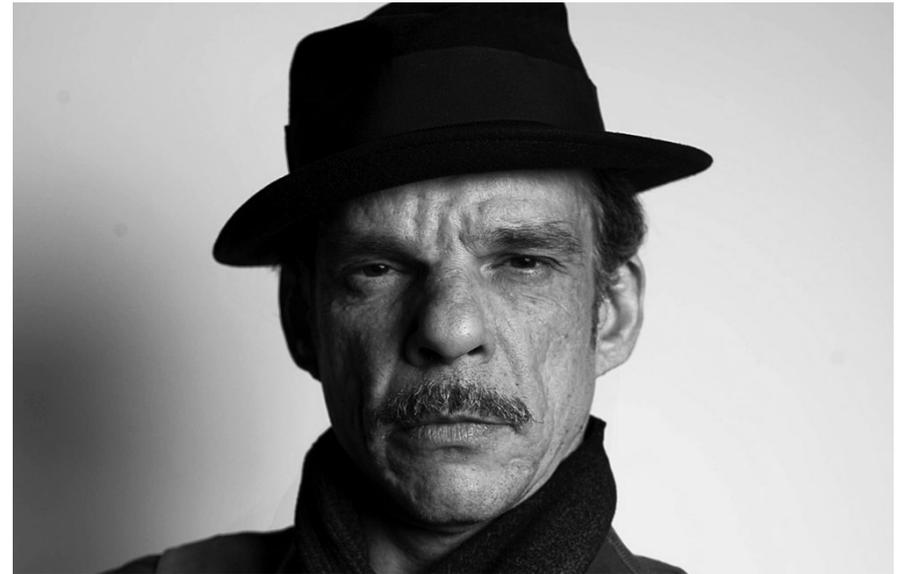




ANNA (the star)

SYLVIE
TESTUD

Sylvie Testud (born 17 January 1971) is a French actress, writer, and film director, whose film career began in 1991. She won the César Award for Most Promising Actress for *Murderous Maids* (2000), the César Award for Best Actress for *Fear and Trembling* (2003), and the European Film Award for Best Actress for *Lourdes* (2009). Her other film roles include *Beyond Silence* (1996), *La Vie en Rose* (2007), and *French Women* (2014).



DAMIEN (the weirdo)

DENIS
LAVANT

Denis Lavant (born 17 June 1961) is a French actor known for his distinctive face and the physically demanding aspects of the roles he plays, which often involve slapstick, acrobatics or dance, as well as for his long-standing association with director Leos Carax. Lavant has played the lead role in all but one of Carax's films. Lavant is also known for his roles in Claire Denis' *Beau Travail*, and Harmony Korine's *Mister Lonely*.



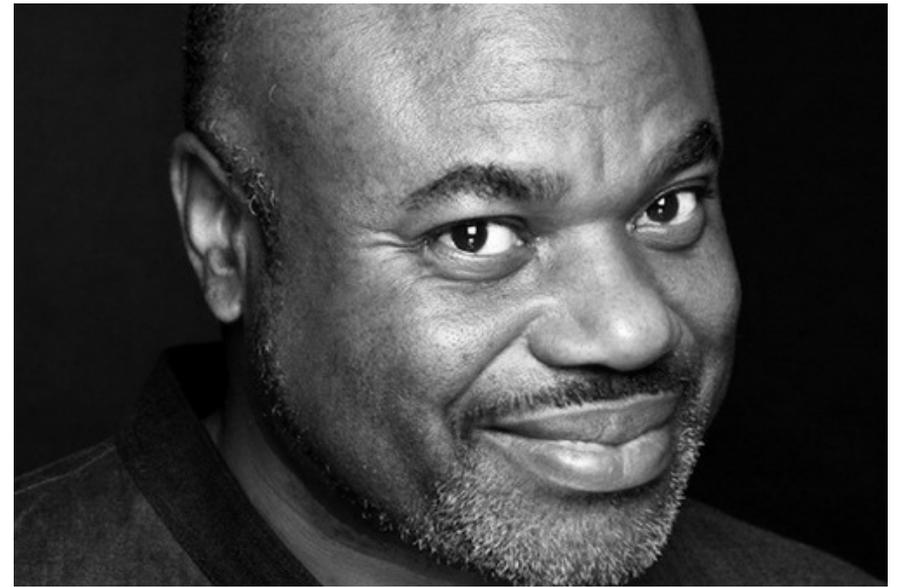


THE NARRATOR (voice over)

MATHIEU
KASSOVITZ

Mathieu Kassovitz (born 3 August 1967) is a French director, screenwriter, producer, editor, and actor. He is the founder of MNP Entreprise, a film production company.

He has won three César Awards: Most Promising Actor for *See How They Fall* (1994), and Best Film and Best Editing for *La Haine* (1995). He also received Best Director and Best Writing nominations.



GEOFFREY (the clairvoyant)

DENIS
MPUNGA

Denis Mpunga is a Belgian of Congolese origin actor known for his work with major directors, including Patrick Ridremont for whom he played in *Dead Man Talking* ; for his role as Lopez, he was nominated for the Magritte du Cinéma Award 2013 in the category of "best supporting male actor". He has also played in *Au nom du fils* by Vincent Lannoo. He played also in *Siestes Grenadines* by Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud in 1998, *Hey Stranger* by Peter Woditch in 1993 and *Je pense à vous* by the Dardenne brothers in 1992.



HECTOR (the bard)

ARTHUR H

Arthur Higelin, better known under his stage name Arthur H, is a pianist, songwriter and singer. He is best known in France for his live performances—four of his albums were recorded live. Compared to Boris Vian and French singer Serge Gainsbourg, the musician spent much of the subsequent years touring. From 1989 to 1994, Arthur H. performed over 700 shows and sold 150,000 albums worldwide. The album *Show Time*, issued late in 2006, was recorded live on tour and includes duets with Matthieu Chedid, Pauline Croze, Lhasa de Sela and Jacques Higelin. In June 2008 he released the album *L'Homme du Monde*, which won the award of Pop/Rock Album of the Year 2009 at La Victoire de la Musique.





FLORENCE (the physicist)

ASTRID
ROOS

Very quickly, she began to appear in French TV series and was cast as the main role in foreign films including *Tanjaoui* by Moumen Smihi (which was an official selection at the Marrakech International Festival International in 2012), and *Laskar Pelangi* by Benni Setiawan in 2013. In 2015, she earned the Talent Cannes Adami prize for *Service de nettoyage* by Clément Michel. That year, she also performed for Olivier Marchal in *Section Zéro*.



GREG (the assistant director)

JEAN-
FRANCOIS
WOLFF

Jean-François Wolff was born on May 3, 1963 in Brussels, Belgium. He is an actor, known for *Le marchand de Venise* (2004), *JCVD* (2008) and *The Missing* (2014) among other films.



MATILDA (the scientist)

AUDE-
LAURENCE
BIVER

Her first role was in Jonathan Harvey's play *Beautiful Thing*, staged by Kester Lovelace. Then, she worked on different shows in Paris under the direction of Anna Dewaele and Sei Shiomi. Biver also obtained the prize for best performance at the Troyes Festival and Vues sur court festival.

B^aAHN

Since the founding of a_BAHN in 2013, we've been working on developing a cinema of hybridization; in other words, a cinema at the intersection of forms and genres, which breaks free from established norms.

a_BAHN focuses on authors developing challenging narratives with high artistic value, and an international audience. As producers, we accompany them in the development of a singular view on the world. Our authors seek to interpret reality, to give birth to universes. Above all, they seek to inhabit the world poetically. By making us question ourselves, they make us feel more alive... and sometimes push us to be actors of change.

a_BAHN produced, among other, the highly-acclaimed animated film *Zero Impunity* by Blies Brothers (2019, Annecy International Animation Film Festival, Sao Paulo IFF, Moscow IFF, Thessaloniki IFF, Amiens IFF, Guadalajara IFF...), Blies Brothers' transmédia *Soundhunters* (ARTE - 2016, nominated for the Prix Europa) or VR films like *7 Lives* by Jan Kounen (2019, Tribeca Film Festival) and *Cosmos Within Us* by Tupac Martir (2019, Mostra di Venezia International Film Festival, Raindance Film Festival - Best Experience award).

a_BAHN has currently several films in production, especially ARTE's documentary *Monk, Pannonica: An American Story* by Jacques Goldstein, the ambitious TV documentary series *Draw For Change*, or the touring immersive experience *Sweet Dreams* by Robin McNicholas and Simon Wroe.

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TECHNICAL SHEET

PRODUCTION

a_BAHN
Les Films Du Garage

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION

Luxembourg
France

DURATION

55 minutes

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

French

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Film Fund Luxembourg
CNC New Medias
CNC New Technologies

PRODUCTION YEAR

2018

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A FILM BY

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CAST

Sylvie Testud

Denis Lavant

Arthur H

Denis Mpunga

Astrid Roos

Aude-Laurence Biver

Jean-François Wolff

Mathieu Kassovitz (FR voice over)

Kester Lovelace (EN voice over)

ART DIRECTOR

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Amandine Klee

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