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PRESENTS



TWO IN THE WAVE

Produced & Directed by Emmanuel Laurent
Written & Narrated by Antoine De Baecque

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SYNOPSIS

The French New Wave crashed onto international shores when François Truffaut's debut feature, *The 400 Blows*, premiered at Cannes in 1959, followed quickly by Jean-Luc Godard's equally thrilling *Breathless*, based on a Truffaut story. The two filmmaking rebels, great friends and fellow graduates of the Cahiers du Cinema, for which both wrote extensively, hailed from different sides of the tracks: Truffaut, a poor reform school boy, and Godard, a Swiss haute-bourgeois. Both cast Jean-Pierre Léaud in many of their movies (for Truffaut, as his alter-ego, Antoine Doinel) and led the movement to save Henri Langlois's job at the Cinemathèque Française in '68. *Two In The Wave* poignantly melds revealing period footage of both men (and of Léaud, torn between father-figures) with scenes from some of their greatest films, as it moves inexorably toward their bitter falling-out. (Karen Cooper, *Film Forum*)

CREDITS

Directed and Produced by Emmanuel Laurent
Written and Narrated by Antoine de Baecque
Starring Islid Le Besco
Cinematography by Etienne de Grammont & Nick de Pencier
Editing by Marie-France Cuénot

A Films à Trois Production

Produced with the cooperation of
Argos Film, Ciné Tamaris, Gaumont,
Les Films Du Jeudi, MK2, Studio Canal, Warner Bros,
INA, Gaumont Pathé Archives, RTBF

France / 2009 / 93 minutes
In French with English subtitles

FESTIVALS

Cannes International Film Festival
Rotterdam International Film Festival
Guadalajara International Film Festival
Hong Kong International Film Festival
Visions du Réel – Nyon Documentary Film Festival

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

EMMANUEL LAURENT (DIRECTOR/PRODUCER) taught himself filmmaking by watching movies in the front row of the Cinémathèque and learning how to edit. He founded the independent production company Films à Trois in 1984, and has written, directed and produced more than twenty feature-length and short documentaries made for television — most recently, *The Incredible Journey of the Butterflies* (2009), *Hitler's Museum* (2006) and *Killer Cure* (2006). His current projects include *The Quest for the Unicorn* (about the mythology of the unicorn), *Leonardo's Last Journey* (about Da Vinci's life and obsessions), and *Mademoiselle V* (an investigation into the life of Victorine Meurent, the subject of Manet's *Olympia* and a painter in her own right), based on his 2003 book.

A former chief editor for *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Libération*, **ANTOINE DE BAECQUE (WRITER/NARRATOR)** is a renowned film critic and historian, and the author of biographies on both François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. He is currently editing a collection of books on cinema for the publisher Ramsay.

INTERVIEW WITH EMMANUEL LAURENT AND ANTOINE DE BAECQUE

Did you meet François Truffaut or Jean-Luc Godard? What did they mean to you?

EL: The first Truffaut movies I saw in the mid-sixties were the first films that spoke my own language. Antoine Doinel was my older brother. I liked his hatched-out, literary way of expressing himself. I would visit him at Godard's because he intrigued me, but I liked him better when he was living at Truffaut's. I decided to follow in the footsteps of this older brother by leaving the last school that wanted me — not because I wanted to see the sea, but because I wanted to watch movies.

My first job was as an editing intern near the Champs Élysées where I would often go to watch movies in the evening. Once, and only once, I saw Truffaut crossing an avenue — he was probably coming out of the Films du Carrosse offices. He stopped briefly to look at me, as if he recognized me, and then walked away. I was moved by this encounter as one is moved at the age of 17 — or was it, in fact, ten years later? When he looked at me, I sensed a sort of fraternity, an invitation for us to get to know each other. Unfortunately, we never did. I continued to see his newest films. And I was going to the movies as much as Antoine did. When I was working in the editing room, my boss, Roger Ikhlef and his team, mostly talked about Godard's films while editing the shows of Jean Christophe Averty, Dim Dam Dom, and Techiné, Paul Vecchiali or Raymond Depardon's first films (strangely, I feel hesitant to mention José Bénazéraf, who was highly regarded by the Cahiers and who made a caméo in *Breathless*). Godard was acting as a protective guardian; he was an admired filmmaker, but one didn't always listen to him. I always preferred listening to Truffaut.

AdB: I never met Truffaut, but I became a film critic because of him. When he passed away on October 21, 1984, I was in shock like every 20-year-old and every cinema enthusiast. Thus, I started writing a text about film to express my pain and the influence he had on me. I then mailed it to his "home address": the Cahiers du Cinéma. Two months later, the text was published and my career at the Cahiers was launched. I started writing for them regularly. I met Godard there in

the fall of 1990 when we were working on a special edition of the magazine called “Godard, the last 30 years.” We went to visit him in his Parisian office, and while I cannot say why, what struck me were the wads of banknotes coming out of his pockets. He was smoking a cigar and his hands were very beautiful.

Later, I took on the writing of two biographies. I immersed myself in the Cahiers’ archives for a few years and enjoyed my closeness to the written material. In the mid-nineties, I wrote my first biography about Truffaut, which allowed me to get access to the Films du Carrosse et to dive into the countless boxes of archives that he left behind. I became part of his life, his obsessions, I read his diaries, his lists, his letters, his texts, his scripts and I looked at all of his pictures.

Ten years later, I started writing Godard’s [biography]. In his case, there was no written material readily available for me to go through; the man was still around and most likely hostile to the idea of my biographical undertaking. So I decided to lean on his friends, his loved ones, his acquaintances, and even his enemies who all generously opened themselves to me. Thus I was able to put together the puzzle of Godard’s life, create a whole body of work and discovered a very secretive and shy person underneath his public persona.

Why did you then decide to work together?

AdB: I remember the day Emmanuel came to visit me for the first time. I was working on the Godard biography at the archives of the Cinémathèque library. We spoke at great length about the history of the Cahiers du Cinéma, the New Wave and about other things too — our passion for taking walks, going to the mountains and skiing. Emmanuel showed me his science films, his documentaries on the unicorn and on Darwin. I also read his novel about Victorine Meurent, Manet’s favorite model. I really enjoyed his open-mindedness and his curiosity. He wasn’t the typical Parisian cinéphile.

One day, while in the mist of a passionate conversation about an explorer who traveled to the Antarctic ocean, we decided to take the bull by the horns and make a movie about the French New Wave. We didn’t have a precise idea of what the movie would be. We just knew that we would be using archival footage and that I would write a text, a commentary, which, to the extent possible, would illustrate these images.

EL: When I asked Antoine to make this movie with me, he was instantly enthusiastic. I knew then that I had to make this film...that no one wanted to make for a long time, except the two of us.

How did you become interested in this specific connection between Truffaut and Godard?

EL: For *Two in the Wave*, we felt like we had to tell the highly romantic story of the Truffaut/Godard couple. After reflection, we knew we had to leave the other members of the New Wave behind. Doinel/Léaud also became a key character. Antoine knew the subject really well. He had a ton of anecdotes and stories I could draw on and he made them available for me to use freely. We did, however, establish a rule: we would only cut scenes revolving around Godard and Truffaut, or their fictional son, Léaud. The irreplaceable Christine Loiseau found interviews from 1959 and beyond, each taking place in a different part of the world. Each of these interviews had to echo, answer or stand in contradiction to one another, much like the excerpts of their films.

Keeping with this method, we wouldn't shoot an interview with Godard today, because Truffaut isn't around to answer back to him.

AdB: They were accomplices in their friendship and in their hatred for one another. We felt that this was an important story to tell first and foremost because of its universality. By watching Truffaut and Godard getting close and then violently pushing each other away, each viewer, can better understand, through his or her own experiences, the characters and destinies of the filmmakers and of their mutual child, Jean-Pierre Léaud. Everybody is familiar with these love stories and heartbreaks. The friendship that they shared was also very telling of French cinema because it shows its affairs and its major break-ups. After Truffaut and Godard had a falling out in 1973, most French filmmakers, even to this day, have had to take a stand and decide whose side to be on: Godard's or Truffaut's? Which is to say: Classic or modern? Craftman or artist? Wise or provocative?

What's striking in *Two in The Wave* is the archives...

EL: I was a big fan of Antoine's writings before I met him. With my images, I wanted to show his affection for the "real" archives, those we can't find on Google. The film is a love letter to the sound of the turning pages, to skimming through a book when looking for the right information, and to the testament of time passing between a one piece bathing suit and a forgotten character important enough to take over a whole page.

AdB: I think that any archive, whether it contains images of manuscripts, be it a textual or audio archive, is a source of emotion. And my work on *Two in The Wave* took this idea as a point of departure: in every archive, there is a potential for meaning and emotion. Then, it is montage and interpretation that will allow us to reveal it, to present it to the public. It is the public that will endow it with its true power, which enables the tangeable and sudden incarnation of a time period, an idea, a conflict, a personality.

Why did you ask Isild le Besco to be a part of *Two in the Wave*?

EL: I wanted to create a connection between the filmmakers' youth and the youth of our time. Not for the sake of comaparison, but because I was interested in the dialogue between the two. Isild le Besco was the perfect match because — through her singularity — she represented the typical young woman of our century. She showed the qualities of a beautiful spirit: generosity, discretion, and humility. Watching her, I was keeping to one of Truffaut's principles: to make a successful movie, one need only film the face of a pretty woman.

EXCERPTED FILMS

Monika (1953, Ingmar Bergman)
The Kids (1957, François Truffaut)
Moi un noir (1958, Jean Rouch)
The 400 Blows (1959, François Truffaut)
All the Boys Are Called Patrick (1959, Jean-Luc Godard)
Breathless (1960, Jean-Luc Godard)
Charlotte and Her Jules (1960, Jean-Luc Godard)
Shoot the Piano Player (1960, François Truffaut)
A Woman Is a Woman (1960, Jean-Luc Godard)
A History of Water (1961, Jean-Luc Godard)
Lola (1961, Jacques Demy)
Antoine and Colette (1962, François Truffaut)
Cleo From 5 to 7 (1962, Agnès Varda)
Jules and Jim (1962, François Truffaut)
My Life to Live (1962, Jean-Luc Godard)
The Carabineers (1963, Jean-Luc Godard)
Contempt (1963, Jean-Luc Godard)
Le petit soldat (1963, Jean-Luc Godard)
A Married Woman (1964, Jean-Luc Godard)
The Soft Skin (1964, François Truffaut)
Pierrot le Fou (1965, Jean-Luc Godard)
Masculine Feminine (1966, Jean-Luc Godard)
The Nun (1966, Jacques Rivette)
La Chinoise (1967, Jean-Luc Godard)
Two or Three Things I Know About Her (1967, Jean-Luc Godard)
Cinétracts (1968, Jean-Luc Godard)
Stolen Kisses (1968, François Truffaut)
Bed and Board (1970, François Truffaut)
Two English Girls (1971, François Truffaut)
Tout va bien (1972, Jean-Luc Godard)
Day for Night (1973, François Truffaut)
Love on the Run (1979, François Truffaut)