

PRESS KIT

BEFORE WE GO

A film by Jorge León

> FIDMarseille (F)

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5/07 at 19:45

7/07 at 11:00

> Brussels (B)

19/09 at 20:00 > BOZAR Brussels

24/09 at 20:00 > Cinéma GALERIES Brussels

With **Simone Aughterylony, Walter Hus, Benoît Lachambre, Noël Minéo, Lidia Schoue, Meg Stuart, George Van Dam, Michel Vassart, Alex Verster, Thomas Wodianka.**

DIRECTOR **Jorge León** CINEMATOGRAPHY **Rémon Fromont, Jorge León, Thomas Schira** MUSIC **Liesbeth Devos, Walter Hus, George Van Dam, Alexander Verster** DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT **Célia Dessardo** SOUND **Quentin Jacques** SCENOGRAPHY AND COSTUMES **Ann Weckx, Natacha Belova, Silvia Hasenclever** EDITING **Marie-Hélène Mora** SOUND MIXING **Benoît Biral** PRODUCTION **DERIVES - Julie Freres** LINE PRODUCERS **Véronique Marit, Sabine Raskin** With the support of Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles et de VOO COPRODUCTION Present Perfect, CBA – Centre de l'audiovisuel à Bruxelles, RTBF – Unité de Programmes Documentaires, Les Films du Fleuve, Pillarbox a division of New Impact, With the support of De Munt – La Monnaie, TOPAZ, La Ville de Bruxelles
www.derives.be/before-we-go

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SYNOPSIS

Brussels, La Monnaie Opera House. Three people near the end of their lives meet with choreographers, actors and musicians. They take part in a unique experience which involves music, dance and silence. Their journey becomes a tribute to the fragility of the human condition, between reality and representation, tragedy of the body and freedom of the spirit. Together they question their own relationship with death.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film is the result of decisive encounters with the residents of a palliative care centre in Brussels that welcomes terminal patients, avoiding the use of intensive medication. For some years now, the centre's directors have been inviting me to host creative workshops. When I suggested exploring the theme of death to the residents, their strong support and commitment gave me the idea of making a film. I suggested leaving the therapeutic space for the Opera, an emblematic setting for tragic representation. Choreographer, actor and musician friends joined us and together we attempted to give shape to the questions, hopes and fears that the end of life gives rise to... Before We Go is an intense journey into the heart of that experience.

Death and grace

Interview by **Jacqueline Aubenas**

How did you happen to treat a serious subject like the end of life?

I was involved since quite some time already in the “TOPAZ” Palliative Care Centre, directed by Dr Wim Distelmans, centre which brings together men and women touched by various diseases and who learned that medicine could not do anything for them anymore. It’s a Day Care Centre. I assisted Mary Jiménez who made her film there *La position du lion couché* (“The position of the lying lion”) and I kept in touch with this institution. Upon their request, I carried out portraits, video letters for some whose family was far. Through the cinema, I was present and solicited. I was intrigued and touched by these meetings and I had the feeling that these people held a kind of knowledge, not an intellectual but a sensitive one. I, of course, know that I am mortal but I wasn’t given an expiry. Dying in one year, one month? This radicalism of the calendar, I wasn’t aware of it. I wanted to get closer to this enigma.

I started by raising them a question. “And if all were to be remade, what would you do?”, taking the question of the life

through the fiction. I asked them, by the means of a photograph, to stage this dream of the other self. It is when I discovered that there was for them a kind of pleasure to reinvent themselves. And like that, I made rather playful, liberating portraits. The imaginary is a resurrection.

Evolving from a private, personal point of view to the public exposure that a movie implies must have been a big step?

There was no real reserve, just that some did not feel ready to get into the project. On the other hand, those who did, fully did it. Saying “yes” to the project, was taking responsibilities, accepting and giving. This commitment created a very strong link in the order of life, of their life. I organized workshops with those who wished to take part in them. Personally I did not solicit nor excluded anybody. We worked on the reality of death through the use costumes, possibilities of representation. This work was not without consequences. There were very strong reactions, unsuspected zones of resonance. From my side, the fear of doing bad, of being at side was very quickly evacuated, like the one of morals – I do good, I do bad –, morals that

is different from ethic. I also felt, from the participants, the great relief to be able to express themselves and the desire not to do it from a confession stand but from the invention and creation point of view: to grapple with death, this thing which scares and of which nobody knows nothing since it was never crossed, I can only represent it. Question it and share it at the same time, with the very strong idea to leave a trace. An act, like the one of an artist. For people outside the world of theatre and cinema, it was a revelation.

And the choice of the La Monnaie Opera House, a prestigious cultural place?

I wanted to overpass the therapeutic context. Although the TOPAZ centre is not an hospital, they were there as patients. I saw them like migrants and I proposed them a journey, not geographical but symbolic. La Monnaie Opera House is for me the exemplary place of the tragedy representation and I wanted to offer them this best one. The gates were open to me. The project not only was accepted but *welcomed*.

Essence was then to find the calm, the vacuum of the workshops during the holidays. The annual closure time of La Monnaie - two weeks - is very short. Such a short time for a shooting was very distressing more especially as I had to take into account participant availabilities who had care constraints. I had also requested the participation of some artist friends: Meg Stuart, choreographer, Benoit Lachambre, performer and choreographer, Simone Aughterlony, also choreographer, the composer-interpreters Walter Hus and

George Vandam, and Thomas Wodianka, actor. All made sure to be free during this constraining and limited period.

You had the place, the “actors”, your common desire but also two stage-directions: yours and those of these people become characters.

It was set up in a way that was, at the same time, very planned and very intuitive. Because of their personality, some went towards construction, precision. Noël, for example, who is the ascetic and elegant man, always in costume, in the film as in daily life, was very careful to the form and details. Together, we sought, found the scenes with the costume of death which he finally wears in the movie. Others, as Lidia who wants to dance, were in the emotion, the instinctual dash. What we filmed is her first meeting with Meg Stuart, without rehearsals, nor real preparation. Together, immediately, they offered what one sees on the screen. It went well beyond what I had imagined.

I never found myself in a position of casting for the set-up of the meetings and the “couples”: I did not wonder in a voluntarist way who would work with whom. That was naturally organized and when, for script reasons, it was necessary to make a plan of the sequences to be filmed, all was already there. While I was filming a scene, another “couple” would be working elsewhere and then we would readjust details together. It was at the same time about a strict control and a total release.

Michel, the colour layer, the man in wheel chair, I had already filmed him in 2006. At

that time, he was homeless, living in the street. He often spoke to me about his faded perception of the world because of drug usage: we imagined these multicoloured filters which he sticks on the panes and which transform the reality in a very simple way. Benoit, the man with the pigeon, his “partner” is an artist who has already a splendid personal work. They did not know each other and discovered touching and disconcerting affinities during the shooting.

You had to choose the right spaces in that so diversified one of La Monnaie so that the “set design” makes sense with the sequences.

I chose places at the periphery of the main stage, spaces that the spectator usually doesn't see. It mattered to me to show the backstage, i.e. the work. I explored and chose the sewing workshops and those of moulding full with body representations. I did not want to yield to the fascination of certain magic places. I was held with these two guides: work and the body.

Did you shoot many scenes which are not in the movie?

In term of rushes, there is a sequence which is not in the final edit, however it is emblematic. The experience of the movie generated strong and very sharp reactions from everyone. Some people expressed the desire to speak, to ask questions. I brought together all the participants, the members of the team, the artists and we staged a reception, the type of reception which one organizes following a funeral where the participants have the opportunity to exchange, share memories, etc.

We filmed a whole afternoon, with songs, words, dances, freedom of emotions. That was very useful for the group but for the film, there was a “too explicit”, “too shown” part. That was a necessary discharge system which did not find its place and yet some moments were beautiful and touching. With Marie-Hélène Mora, the film editor, we really tried to integrate it but no, impossible.

How did the technical team experience this shooting?

On this film, by its subject itself, we had to manage many uncertainties, but all the members of the team said to me that this film, they really wanted to do it. There was a dash, a unique concentration. The fact of being confronted with this urgency of life placed us in front of the essence of life. There was a quality of silence, a respect, a kindness for each other which deeply touched me. The technicians moved the wheelchairs, worried about the tiredness of the “actors”. And as soon as the main characters entered the Opera House, they felt that this movie was meant for them. I keep the memory of a very intense but merry shooting too.

It was an important team in number. Sometimes we were thirty, thirty-five. For a shooting with a small budget, it means many people. I had also an additional interlocutor, Rémon Fromont, to which I had entrusted the light whereas in my preceding films, I ensured at the same time the light and camera work. We also used a camera with extremely precise fixed lenses. This gives a beautiful quality of image

but it is necessary to constantly take care of the focus, so the need of an assistant who was to be very alert because many sequences are shot in a documentary way. And then, we needed guides to take care of the patients, to help them move around.

And what about the reaction of Lidia, Noel, Michel and the others? And, before that, that of the project readers?

Noël knew he wouldn't see the end of the film (he died during the editing period). Lydia wanted to see it during the editing and she gave the most beautiful compliment that one can offer to a filmmaker. "I find myself very beautiful" she told me. As for the artists, they were all totally available for the film and the meeting with Lidia, Noel and Michel deeply touched them. The impact of these meetings is in the centre of the movie. I can't wait to show them the film.

To get to the beginning, this film was made with little money because it was sometimes rejected at the project reading stage. The letters of certain film commissions which I had solicited pointed out the ethics issue: "Can one film people at the end of their lifetime even if they are completely conscious of being filmed?" For me, the question did not arise anymore at this stage, considering the preparation period we had gone through.

In life, the question of death is still problematic, it is often perceived as a scandalous thing. What is scandalous are certain collective or individual circumstances which lead to it: violence, madness of all

sort of conflicts. But as such, I consider it more as a "compulsory figure".

The sound and the music, being given the subject and the place, it was necessary for you to avoid doing too much.

The trap was there, the opera and all that it supposes and brings. I made the choice of *Dido's Lament* from Purcell, a classic but filmed in rehearsal and interpreted on less usual instruments... and then Nick Cave's song *The Mercy Seat*, title which evokes the Mercy seat and the electric chair at the same time. It allowed to recall radical loneliness towards death and the fact that this death is sometimes imposed by other men. The readings of these musical interventions in the film are multiple. They also authorize some lyricism.

The editing was conceived as a musical composition. There were various colours, various tones both on the level of the characters and of the images. All the stake was to weave a network which gathers them without crushing them, flatly unifying them. Intuition is important and also all the work upstream which settles and emerges again at the moment of filming. Things which had been thought well before shooting awake and appear. That means in these moments, trusting the unconscious work. Sometimes, the meaning comes after. I like when it emerges from the matter itself. I am wary of the too much writing where one sticks a knowledge on a reality which is already programmed. Even for the editing, all that seems to me to be of an immediate obviousness, I am wary about it too. I prefer sometimes to

find myself in front of incomplete rushes because they force me to find a different form to articulate them.

Were you never afraid of the one too much image?

For the first part of the film where we shoot the protagonists in their closest intimacy, I asked each one of them, before shooting, to write a letter and describe their daily routine. What each one agreed to describe in this letter could be found in the film. Nothing of what they would not describe, would be there. I, thus, had a scheme of work, a roadmap and I stuck to it. In her letter, Lidia evoked the pains she must face every morning when waking up. I then knew that I had to go there early in the morning and that it would not be a comfortable situation, that it was

out of question to “rehearse” the scene. Once there, in her apartment, the question wasn’t anymore “Can I film that?”, but: “How does she cope with that every morning?” Later, she will tell me: “I shared my loneliness”. It was not question of indecency or even obscenity.

Brussels, May 16th, 2014.

Biographies

Jorge León

Jorge León studied film in Brussels (INSAS). His interests led him into the documentary field as director and director of photography. He's been working as photographer and videomaker, with a.o. Éric Pauwels, Wim Vandekeybus, Thierry De Mey, Xavier Lukomski, Olga de Soto, Ana Torfs, Meg Stuart, ... His photographic works have been exhibited in Belgium and abroad and were published in different newspapers and magazines. At the kunstfestivalesarts 2010 in Brussels he created his first theatre production, *Deserve*, in collaboration with Simone Aughterlony. His productions as documentary director include *De Sable et de Ciment* (2003), *Vous êtes Ici* (2006), *Between Two Chairs* (2007). His latest films *10 Min.* (2009) and *Vous êtes Servis* (2010) have been widely presented in film festivals worldwide and were awarded on several occasions. His new film, *Before we go* (2014), is selected for the International Competition of FIDMarseille 2014.

Simone Aughterlony

Simone Aughterlony graduated from the New Zealand School of Dance in 1995. She joined Meg Stuart/Damaged Goods in 2000 and worked on the productions of Highway 101 and Alibi among others. She has choreographed for theatre productions in Schauspielhaus Zürich, Volksbühne Berlin and Burg Theatre Wien under the direction of Falk Richter, Stephan Pucher and Niklaus Helbling. Simone first began the production of her own performance work in 2003 with the presentation of her solo, *Public Property*. Her subsequent works, *Performers on Trial* and the group work *Bare Back Lying* toured extensively in Europe. Simone likes to collaborate with artists on specific projects; in 2006 she created *Between Amateurs* together with Video artist, Meika Dresenkamp and with filmmaker, Jorge Leon Upon invitation from SPIELART München, Simone created the duet *TONIC* which was presented in the frame of *What's Next ?* on recommendation from Tim Etchells.

In 2012, Simone has been working in smaller formats with her return to solo performance in *We need to talk* and the series of duos she is planning. Show and Tell the first of the duo series premiered in January 2013 and was a collaboration with performer, Phil Hayes.

Walter Hus

Walter Hus, besides being a composer, is chiefly a pianist and an improviser. From the age of ten he has performed as a concert pianist both in his native Belgium and abroad, appearing as a pianist-improviser from 1979. Hus was a member of the Belgian Piano Quartet and was connected with *Maximalist!*, a musical grouping set up in 1984, which attempted to tread a middle way between pop, rock, classical music and the avant-garde. The musician-composers who came together in this group (including Vermeersch, Sleichim, De Mey and Hus) had met a year previously in the context of the first choreography made by Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker (Rosas danst Rosas). The music would seem best to be situated in the context of the New Simplicity, a movement that grew out of minimal music. For the rest, it was chiefly the functional and discipline-crossing aspect that characterised *Maximalist!*: a strikingly large percentage of the music written by this collective is conceptually linked with other arts such as dance, theatre and film. This applies also to the music written by Hus after *Maximalist!*. Besides music for fashion shows, (*Five to Five for Yamamoto* (1984)), choreographies (e.g., *Murwerk [Wallwork]* (1985), and *Hic et Nunc* for Roxane Huilmand (1991), and *Devouring Muscles* for Irène Stamou (1997)) and films (*The Pillow Book* by Peter Greenaway, and *Suite 16* by Dominique Deruddere), various of his compositions have been the result of collaborations with contemporary poets or playwrights

(such as Stefan Hertmans [*Francesco's Paradox*], Peter Verhelst [*One Day They Appeared*], Jan Decorte [*Meneer, de zot en tkint*] and Jan Lauwers of Needcompany [*Orfeo*]).

Walter Hus has worked for Limelight in Kortrijk since 1996, at which time the refreshing new festival and CD label, Happy New Ears, was founded. At present he is working on a cycle of 24 preludes and fugues for various instrumentations.

Benoît Lachambre

Constantly developing himself in the field of dance since the 1970s, Benoît Lachambre discovers the release technique for himself in 1985. Hence, the kinaesthetic approach to movement and improvisation leaves its marks on his choreographic work. He devotes himself to an exploratory approach of movement and its sources, with the aim to seek the authenticity of the gesture. His approach is based fundamentally on his work sharpened with the senses where the artistic and the somatic become a necessity. In his creations, he equally aims at modifying the performer's empathic experience with the audience. In 1996, Benoît Lachambre created his own company Par B.L.eux in Montréal: "B.L." for Benoît Lachambre, and "eux" for "them," creative artists he collaborates with and which are becoming more and more influential in his career.

He thus multiplies these artistic encounters

and dynamic exchanges and collaborates with numerous international choreographers and artists coming from different disciplines: Boris Charmatz, Sasha Waltz, Marie Chouinard, Louise Lecavalier or again Meg Stuart and the musician Hahn Rowe; with latters he created one of his masterpieces *Forgeries, Love and other Matters* in 2003 for which he received the prestigious Bessie Award in 2006. Benoît Lachambre is one of the major artists/choreographers of his generation, he created 15 works since the foundation of Par B.L.eux, participated in more than 20 others productions and was the choreographer of 25 commissioned works, for example *I is memory* (solo for Louise Lecavalier in 2006) and *JJ's Voice* that he created for Cullberg Ballet in Stockholm in 2009. In March 2013, he creates *High heels too*, a new choreography commissioned by the Cullberg Ballet.

Noël Minéo

Noël Minéo was born in 1945 in Tunis. He left school very young. He did not finish high-school and started working as an apprentice in an optician in Tunis, "Lumbroso". This man gave him his chance and fully trained him. He got married and in 1974 emigrates to Belgium, with his wife and 3 years old daughter. A second child, a son, was born few years later, in 1986.

He started working with optician Bodart. This famous optician trusts him and he will

make all his career there. His know-how, hard working character and rigor will allow him to get promoted and he finishes his career as a sales manager. A cancer of the tongue is diagnosed in 2000 and part of his tongue is cut down. The treatment by radiotherapy cures it but is not without consequences. He is fired and the couple split. Besides that, Noël suffered the 14 following years from the treatment side effect, in particular a progressive rigidity of the throat and muscles. This forces him, in his last years, to be fed only via gastric probe.

His disease lead him to discover the TOPAZ palliative Day Care Centre where he got a group of fantastic friends and where he found back his love for life and a motivation to fight.

His passions are cooking - especially for his friends, children and grandchildren -, fishing, sculpture, tap dance and piano. It is mainly through the music that he can escape. In one of the workshops organized in TOPAZ, Jorge León carried out a portrait of him representing his dream: becoming a composer. Before the beginning of the project he wrote to Jorge: "You allow me to have the strength to prove to myself that I can take challenges, and that helped me a lot. But we know that there are some realities against which we cannot fight" Noël died in Brussels, in February 2014. He never saw *Before we go*.

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Lidia Schoue
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Lidia was born in 1942 in the Duchy of Luxembourg. She lives in Belgium since 1962.

Divorced and without children, she worked 37 years with the same employer, a famous travel agency. Thanks to her job, she developed passion for travels far away, which appeases her independent character. Perfectly trilingual, ambitious and perfectionist of nature, she got increased responsibilities over the years, in the field of business travel to the great satisfaction of her customers, important national and international companies.

1985 marks the beginnings of her health problems: Lidia is operated for a discal hernia burst with cauda equina syndrome, which makes the sitting position very difficult. An accident in 1998 increases her physical traumas. In parallel, following various fusions, the company changes management, but Lidia keeps her responsibilities and the satisfaction of the customers. It is the period of the employee cut-off. In 1995, following a nervous breakdown, heralding of the Parkinson disease, Lidia is asked to leave, without any consideration for all the work done and results. The disappointment is tough.

It is only in year 2000 that the diagnosis falls: Lidia undoubtedly suffers from atypical/idiopathic Parkinson disease, probably due to various disappointments and professional burn-out.

As of the following year, the progression of the disease settles: moving difficulties, invalidating stiffness, cramps and pains. Will be added

to that, a few years later, a partial sight and hearing loss on the right-side, taste and smell reduction, digestive and swallowing problems and obviously an autonomy loss. In 2010, to try stopping the pain and these unbearable cramps, one places her a pump which diffuses the drug DUO DOPA directly in the blood through a stomy and a probe.

Supported by professional assistances, invaluable friends, and cleared up by reading, scrabble, painting, she tries to accept the disease, to like her body as such as the disease deformed it. "Accepting to live in the present is my goal. I know that death is waiting for me at the end of the road. Either it will come to seek me, or I will go to it with the required assistance of the medical community.", she says.

Since 2007 she spends three afternoons per week in a supportive Day Care Centre next to Brussels: TOPAZ. It is there that she met Jorge León in 2012, who proposes her to take part in a documentary. She testifies: "The film was an exceptional experience for me, a dream of reality, a reality in my dreams. The first meeting with Meg Stuart was so full of emotions. Progressively I did not feel any barriers anymore between her, Meg Stuart, a professional dancer, and me, with my dubious gestures, signs of the disease. The impossible became possible."

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Meg Stuart
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Meg Stuart is a choreographer and dancer living and working in Brussels and Berlin. She

received her BFA in dance at New York University and continued her training following classes in Release technique and Contact Improvisation at the dance laboratory Movement Research (New York). In the 1980s Stuart worked as a dancer with Nina Martin, Lisa Kraus, Federico Restrepo and Marcus Stern, and from 1986 to 1992 she was a member of the Randy Warshaw Dance Company, where she was also assistant to the choreographer. On the invitation of the Klapstuk festival in Leuven, she created her first evening-length piece *Disfigure Study*, which launched her choreographic career in Europe. Stuart founded her own company *Damaged Goods* in 1994 and made Brussels her artistic home. She collaborated with many artists, including Pierre Coulibeuf, Philipp Gehmacher, Ann Hamilton, Gary Hill, Benoît Lachambre, Jorge León and Hahn Rowe.

With *Damaged Goods*, Stuart has created over twenty productions, ranging from solos to large-scale choreographies and including site-specific creations and installations. Over the years she has initiated and taken part in several improvisation projects. Her work has travelled a wide international theatre circuit and has also been presented at *Documenta X* (1997) in Kassel and at *Manifesta7* (2008) in Bolzano. Stuart also teaches workshops in a variety of contexts. In 2008 her body of work was honored with a Bessie Award and a Flemish Culture Prize. In 2012 she is awarded the German Konrad-Wolf-Preis.

George Van Dam

The Namibian-born violinist George Alexander van Dam has been a committed performer of contemporary music since the early stages of his career. He has worked with leading composers of today - Adès, Aperghis, Benjamin, Chin, Eötvös, Francesconi, Goeyvaerts, Harvey, Hosokawa, Kagel, Kurtàg, Ligeti, Mamiya, Reich, Saariaho, Stockhausen, Joji Yuasa, amongst others - as a soloist or within the context of contemporary-music ensembles such as Ensemble Modern Frankfurt, MusikFabrik, or Ictus, of which he is a founding member. Through close collaboration with the younger generation of composers - Cassol, De Mey, Harada, Hus, Vermeersch, and others - several new works have been written specially for him, e.g. *Homeobox* by Mochizuki, premiered with the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie.

In 2012 he resumed studying the harpsichord - with Robert Kohnen - rekindling his childhood fascination for early keyboard music. His own work as a composer includes chamber music, the song cycles *Engel-Lieder* for James Bowman, *Lorca Songs*, *Melanchotopia Songs* (written together with Claron McFadden) for Witte de With, Rotterdam 2011, a violin concerto with timbila orchestra for Drumming Grupo Percussão Porto, music for (silent) film, for theatre and dance performances - Ballet de Marseille, Needcompany, *Ultima Vez i.a.* - and works with visual artists such as Manon de Boer, Angela Bulloch, Trudo Engels, and Jorge León. Recent projects

include new music for a production of Escorial by Michel de Ghelderode/Josse De Pauw for Collegium Vocale Gent/Transparent and a new film, sequenza - on Sequenza VIII by Luciano Berio - in collaboration with Manon de Boer in May 2014.

Michel Vassart

Michel Vassart was born in Charleroi in 1954. His father, a respected glass Master, dies when Michel was only 8 years old. His mother is a housewife. He had a happy childhood in Charleroi, surrounded by his three brothers and two sisters. This beautiful period brutally ended when he was 12 years old. The new partner of his mother attacked his older sister. After the judgment of his mother and her companion, the children split : Michel spends happy years with his brothers under the supervision of a nanny, his sisters are taken in by aunts.

When he turned 18, his high school diploma in the bag, Michel goes to Brussels where he opens a bar-restaurant in the Samaritaine street. With the inheritance of his father, he fixed a barge where he lives with the one of whom he later says that she was the only great love in his life. He led a dissipated life with as ingredients : many friends, drug and alcohol. When his partner got pregnant, thinking that the restaurant was a too demanding activity, he begins as an insurance broker. In total, he has worked only a few years.

Some years after the birth of his daughter, he

leaves everything – partner, daughter, job – to go to Istanbul, meeting point of many hippies. He leaves the house, the car and money to his partner and told her: “Redo your life, I won’t come back.” After Turkey, he follows his friends to New Delhi and from there, to Nepal. During a decade, he lives in one of these hippie communities in Katmandu back valleys. A life which he describes as marvelous. At that time, Michel is completely in drugs, always in search of the “flash”.

One day, the desire for re-examining Europe occurs to him. After a long journey, he lands in Lille. There happens “The Accident” : he gets run over by a car. Leg fractures, loss of an eye and an important memory loss. Until today there are some blanks in Michel’s memory. Informed by the Consulate, his first partner and their daughter come to visit him. He does not recognize them immediately.

Weakened by the accident and not entitled to a handicapped pension in France, he again moves to Brussels, where he first lives in a small apartment, always full of friends and misfortune companions. Tired of all this, he leaves his apartment and deliberately goes to live in the street, on Place Fontainas. It is there that he meets Jorge León, who lengthily films him for his documentary *Vous êtes ici* (2006). After a few months stay at the Pachéco Institute, he goes back to his life on Place Fontainas where he ends up catching gangrene. In spite of his resistance, the surgeon of Saint Pierre Hospital convinces him of the inescapable: the right leg amputation. His life in the street ends and not being happy in a Convalescent home in the Marolles, he joined again the Pachéco Institute, after a mandatory de-

toxification therapy stay. He has been there for 8 years now, happy with the professional care, the team kindness, and his friend Didier. "I am not really afraid of death" he says, "I feel peaceful and I do not regret anything." His dream is to have his own apartment and being able, strong of his experiences and with a generous listening faculty, to help other unfortunates.

Thomas Wodianka

Thomas Wodianka was born in Schrobenhausen in 1974 and gathered his first performing experiences as a street artist. After quitting his studies in medicine, he applied to the Academy of Music and Theatre Hamburg to study drama. In 2000 he joined the ensemble of the Zurich Theatre, collaborating with directors like Falk Richter, Christoph Marthaler and Stefan Pucher. Since 2004 he has worked as a freelance performance artist and was seen in several productions, such as *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* directed by Christoph Marthaler in 2012 or in *Letzte Tage – Ein Vorabend*, shown in the fringe of the Wiener Festwochen in 2013. Furthermore, Thomas Wodianka has performed in several dance pieces by Meg Stuart and Simone Aughtertlony. Since the season 2013/2014 Thomas Wodianka is a company member of the Gorki Theatre in Berlin.

DÉRIVES

Founded by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne in 1977, Dérives is a production company benefiting from the backing of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, entirely devoted to documentary film and based in Wallonia where our activity has become a reference and, we hope, a key player in the development of original audio-visual works. In an age when documentary films increasingly follow a prescribed format, we favour works that observe the world, near and far, in close-up, with attention and perseverance. The specificity of our company, if there must be one, no doubt lies in our promotion and support of the filmmakers from our Community who can give the world food for thought without being constrained by the criteria of economic profitability. Thanks to numerous selections of our films in festivals, co-productions, sales and broadcasts on Belgian and foreign TV channels, our company has now acquired an international reputation.

www.derives.be