

Amin

A film by
Philippe Faucon



91 min / 2018 / France / French with English subtitles / Certificate 18
Directors' Fortnight Cannes premiere 2018

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SYNOPSIS:

Amin (Moustapha Mbengue) works as a hired hand for a building company based in a Paris suburb. He lives in a hostel that he shares with other African immigrants including a Moroccan co-worker who, unlike Amin, cannot adjust to his circumstances. Amin can only visit his wife Aïcha and three children in Senegal once or twice a year, but they are dependent on the money he sends.

Then he encounters Gabrielle (Emmanuelle Devos), a middle-aged French divorcée whose house Amin has been hired to renovate. As time passes, he drops his reserve and an intimacy develops between them.

Further information and downloads [here](#)

Photo set can be downloaded [here](#)



CAST

Amin
Gabrielle
Aïcha
Abdelaziz
Ousmane
Sabri
Célia
Hervé
Waitress
Agency client

MOUSTAPHA MBENGUE
EMMANUELLE DEVOS
MARÈME N'DIAYE
NOUREDDINE BENALLOUCHE
MOUSTAPHA NAHAM
JALAL QUARRIWA
FANTINE HARDUIN
SAMUEL CHURIN
LOUBNA ABIDAR
SORIA ZEROUAL

CREW

Director
Based on an original idea from
Script

PHILIPPE FAUCON
YASMINA NINI-FAUCON
PHILIPPE FAUCON
YASMINA NINI-FAUCON
MUSTAPHA KHARMOUDI

Producer
Photography
Sound
Editing
Sets
Costumes
Co-produced by

ISTIQLAL FILMS
LAURENT FÉNART
PASCAL RIBIER
SOPHIE MANDONNET, MATILDE GROSJEAN
MANUEL SWIETON
CHARLOTTE DAVID
ARTE FRANCE CINÉMA, NJJ ENTERTAINMENT
AUVERGNE RHÔNE-ALPES CINÉMA and TANIT FILMS
CANAL+, CINÉ+
CNC and the RÉGIONS ILE-DE-FRANCE and PACA

With the participation of
With the support of

France / 2018
91 Minutes
1.85 / Dolby 5.1

PHILIPPE FAUCON

Philippe Faucon is a French film director, screenwriter and producer. He was born in Oujda (Morocco) in 1958, the son of a French soldier and an Algerian pied-noir mother. He grew up between Morocco and Algeria, where his father did his military service. After completing his studies in French Literature at the University of Aix-Marseille, he began to work as an assistant director for Jacques Demy (*Trois places pour le 26*), Leos Carax (*Mauvais sang*) and René Allio (*Un médecin des lumières*).

In 1984 he directed his first short film, titled *La Jeunesse*. After a couple of short films and documentaries for television, his encounter with the maverick French producer Humbert Balsan led to the production of his first feature-length fiction film, *L'Amour* (1989, Perspectives du Cinéma award at Cannes). Humbert Balsan went on to produce his next five films. In 2005, he founded Istiqlal Films with Yasmina Nini-Faucon. Faucon continued to work across film and television and often with non-professional actors.

In 2015, his film *Fatima* was screened in the Directors' Fortnight section of the 2015 Cannes Film Festival. *Fatima* was awarded the Louis Delluc Prize for Best Film, the César Award for Best Film and for Best Adaptation, as well as the César for most promising actress for Zita Hanrot.

Although little known in the UK, Philippe Faucon's films and TV series have won critical and public acclaim in France for their engagement in the world we live in and their poetic and subtle approach to the stories, subject matters.

FILMOGRAPHY

1992 *Sabine* (Cannes Film Festival)

1995 *Muriel fait le désespoir de ses parents*

1996 *L'amour est à réinventer* (TV series, one episode: 'Tout n'est pas en noir')

1996 *Mes dix-sept ans* (Being Seventeen) (TV)

1999 *Samia* (Venice Film Festival)

1998 *Les Étrangers* (Strangers) (TV)

2002 *Grégoir peut mieux faire* (TV)

2004 *La Trahison* (The Betrayal) (Toronto International Film festival)

2007 *Dans la vie*

2008 *D'Amour et de révoltes* (TV series, four episodes: 'L'Enfant de l'utopie', 'De Woodstock aux désillusions', 'Road to San Francisco', 'La Fin des sixties')

2010 *La Désintégration* (The Disintegration) (Venice Film Festival)

2015 *Fatima* (Cannes Directors' Fortnight, César Awards: Best Actress, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Film)

2016 *Fiertés 3 x 52 min series* TV

2018 *Amin* (Cannes Directors' Fortnight)



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

It seems to me that you have never addressed the uprooting experience of immigration by structuring your story around two different geographies: the country of origin and the receiving country. Why did you choose this time to tackle this crucial topic in that way?

Precisely because I thought that it had not been dealt with that way yet (or only in a small way), although these two geographies truly are what shapes an exile or migration journey. Cinema has the capacity to draw a parallel between both worlds most effectively. You literally go from one sequence in the country of origin to another in the hosting country, with a cut, an immediate confrontation of everything that is featured on screen: the living conditions, the characters' concerns, the social or family issues. The process would not be as immediate in writing, a medium which has other evocative tools, but which requires enough time for sentences to develop.

For almost thirty years, through your work, you have been observing French society and its diversity with such acuteness that you have always been ahead of your time. Do you see yourself as a filmmaker who specialises in societal and political issues?

Yes indeed. I live in a given society at a given time, and I can't see how I could take an interest in a means of expression such as cinema without taking an interest in the world and time in which I live. But first and foremost, I'm interested in cinema for the power, the mysteries and the poetics of its own formal means.

Even though Amin is the title role, the script is typical of an ensemble film. Therefore you can apply the plural form to the generic word of "migrant", and show the many

itineraries of all men and women concerned by the issue. Is it why you chose to make a multifaceted film?

Exactly. There are several situations of men on their own, with various backgrounds: Amin has left his wife and children back home, he only sees them after long periods of absence. Abdelaziz is older, he started over in France and the children from a first marriage he left in Morocco now tell him that he should “just stay in France with his French children”. There is also the frustration and sexual deprivation of that young man, whose life almost boils down to his capacity for hard work. There are women and children who have stayed in their country of origin, the wives met in France and the children who were born here, like Abdelaziz’s daughters.

Like in many other films of yours, the script is based on really factual things. The characters take shape through their daily activities. Why did you make that choice when writing the film?

Because on screen, visual elements, be it bodies, gestures, faces or looks express as many things as words do. The characters in Amin are not into psychological introspection. They just move forward in life, driven by vital necessities leaving little room for that kind of thing. In France, most of the time, Amin keeps his thoughts to himself, although his face and his looks sometimes betray him unintentionally. He only gives free rein to his feelings when he is with people he trusts, like his relatives in Senegal, or little by little with Gabrielle.



And yet, by relying on very concrete things, you and your co-writers, Yasmina Nini-Faucon and Mustapha Kharmoudi, manage to express without using dialogue the dull inner pain of your characters. How did you work on the screenplay?

We talked a lot about it together. We met some men who live in workers’ hostels in France, then wives who have remained alone in their country of origin. The loneliness, the

uprooting, the angst of these men who live together, but also their complicity, their laughter, which help them to hang on, those are things that Yasmina Nini-Faucon and Mustapha Kharmoudi have experienced within their own families or close relations. I am also familiar with those things, through my family history. That “dull inner pain” you mentioned, it was crucial for us to try and depict it without misrepresenting it, and to avoid the easy option of clichés and effects.



Women play a crucial part in the film. Particularly Amin’s wife... She is an isolated woman, living under the yoke of her husband’s family, but also a woman who rebels and oversees a construction project: she is the head of the family. That strong and nuanced portrait of the African woman as obstinate and independent goes way beyond the usual clichés.

In the village where we shot the film, we were amazed by the strength these women show through such harsh living conditions. Marème N’Diaye (who plays Amin’s wife) lives in France, but she comes from a village in that area. In the preparatory screen tests, she had a natural body language in the anger scenes, which I found really beautiful, so I really tried to find the right axis and frames to film it in the best possible way!

How did you meet Moustapha Mbengue and how did you work with this two-sided character, who is withdrawn in France, and radiant and friendly in Africa?

I met Moustapha through Leïla Fournier, with whom I had already worked, with much affinity, for the casting of *Fiertés*. She didn’t know him personally, but one of her contacts in Italy, where Moustapha lives, had told her about him. Moustapha isn’t completely fluent in French, and his background is similar to Amin’s. Anyway, he has a particular and profound knowledge of all the aspects of Amin’s journey: the solitude, at the margins of a country that he has reached out of vital necessity; being away from his family, but still providing for them, etc. Incidentally in the film he shows different faces depending on the thread of his

thoughts and feelings: at times withdrawn and unfathomable, at other times open and radiant.

You seldom work with professional actors, yet this time around you have chosen to collaborate with Emmanuelle Devos. Why did you do that, and what did she bring to the film, with her own personality and acting skills?

I thought that she was amazing in Jérôme Bonnell's *Just a Sigh*. She played an actress, and I remember a sequence in particular when she does two takes, back to back, during an audition. In this sequence-shot, she successively answers two different requests, and each time her performance is magnificent. She literally carries the whole sequence, which must have been tricky. For Amin, maybe I was interested in the fact that she would not be on familiar ground, as the film is unlike anything she has done before. Indeed, she wasn't, but I was amazed at how she never got flustered. She was always really professional. She might be full of apprehension, but she never brings that to the set.

