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SAINT LAURENT

A FILM BY
BERTRAND BONELLO

GASPARD ULLIEL

JEREMIE RENIER **LEA SEYDOUX** **LOUIS GARREL** **AMIRA CASAR**
AYMELINE VALADE AND **HELMUT BERGER**
MICHA LESCOT

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF
VALERIA BRUNI-TEDESCHI **VALERIE DONZELLI** **JASMINE TRINCA** AND **DOMINIQUE SANDA**

SCREENPLAY AND DIALOGUES
BERTRAND BONELLO AND **THOMAS BIDEGAIN**

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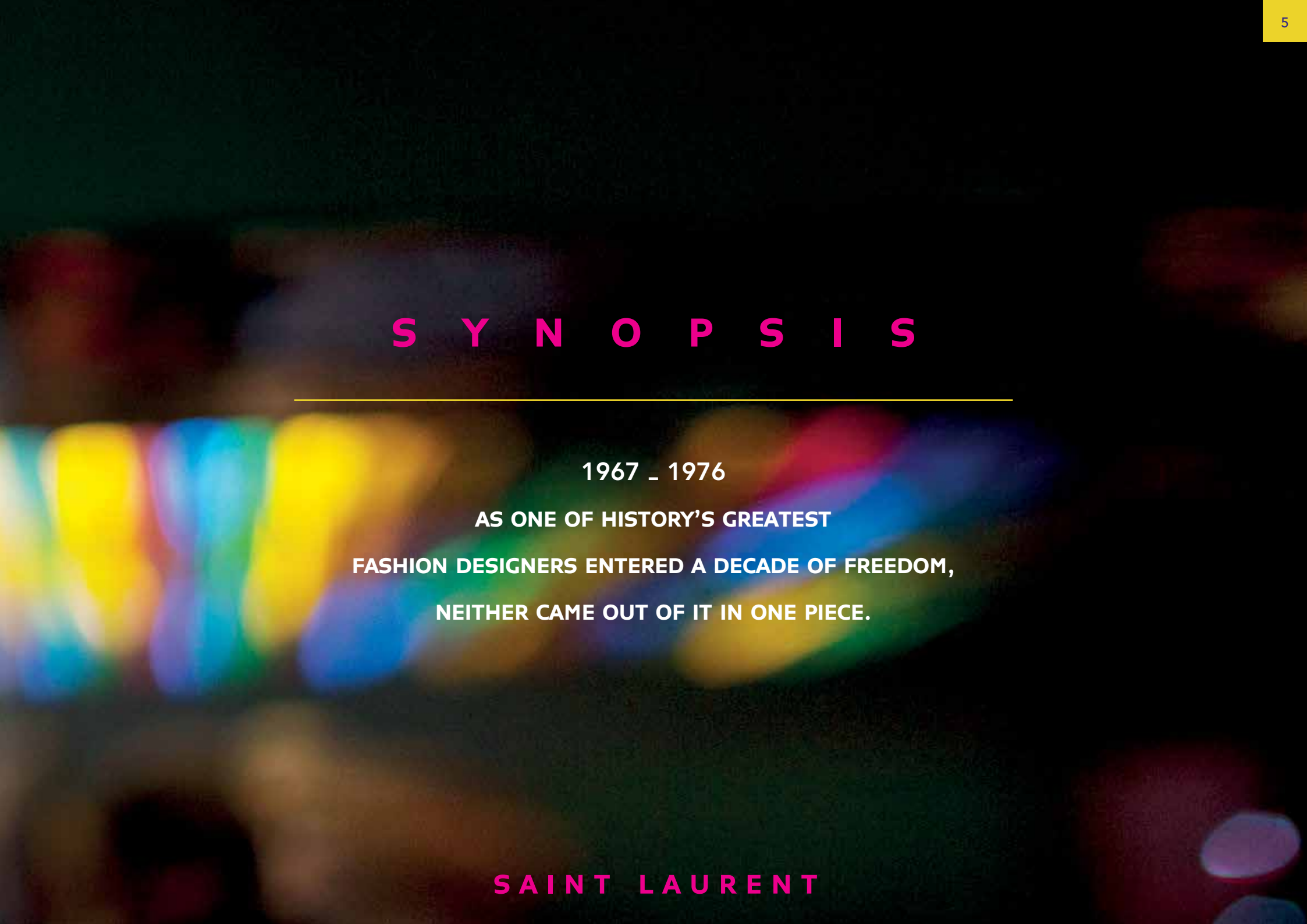
SAINT LAURENT



S Y N O P S I S

1967 _ 1976

AS ONE OF HISTORY'S GREATEST

FASHION DESIGNERS ENTERED A DECADE OF FREEDOM,

NEITHER CAME OUT OF IT IN ONE PIECE.

SAINT LAURENT

AN INTERVIEW WITH

BERTRAND BONELLO

How did this project begin?

In November 2011, shortly after the release of *L'Apollonide*, Eric and Nicolas Altmayer asked me if I'd be interested in making a film about Saint Laurent. I have no particular affinity for biopics but there was no script or treatment, just the name Saint Laurent. As a result, I was tempted. I wrote a pitch, emphasizing that I didn't want to make a traditional biopic covering a whole life in an informative way. I didn't want the audience simply to watch Yves Saint Laurent, but for people to be as close as possible to him. As with *L'Apollonide* I didn't want to put myself in the characters' shoes, but to latch onto them, giving priority to the visual, romantic, Viscontian aspect of Saint Laurent, and setting aside the very French aspect of the biopic, although Saint Laurent was also a very French figure, which has its importance. The Altmayer brothers gave me complete freedom. They merely asked me not to write alone, so I met with Thomas Bidegain.

Why do you think your name occurred to them to direct a project such as this?

They were looking for the visual sophistication of *L'Apollonide*. There are connections between the two subjects: a very beautiful and harsh universe—self-contained as if shut away behind heavy curtains—that is drawing to an end, the 19th century in one case and the 1970s in the other.

And in your case, where did the desire to work with them come from?

For a long time, I have thought that producers who give most freedom to an auteur are, paradoxically, those who produce the biggest hits. And I am convinced that each project has its intrinsic economy. A film about Saint Laurent called for producers such as these.

Did the character interest you before starting work on a film about him?

I knew a little about him, thanks to my mother who admires him and gave me several books about his houses and objects, particularly the enormous five-volume catalogue of the Grand Palais auction in 2010. I was more familiar with his universe and period than with fashion. Above all, I was drawn to the cinematic possibilities linked to the extravagant and decadent aspect that it was possible to highlight thanks to the filter of reality. Inventing that would be impossible! I wanted to extend the idea, present in *L'Apollonide*, of magnificent confinement falling to pieces. That is also why I shot the film on 35mm. It lends the colors, textures and fabrics a voluptuousness that digital does not render.

Celebrities who are the subjects of biopics—Claude François, Edith Piaf and so on—are often poor people who succeed in fulfilling a childhood dream without disowning their working-class origins. It always plays with audiences. Saint Laurent, on the other hand, was surrounded from birth by the love of his mothers and sisters; his family was wealthy; age 17, he won first prize in a competition; at 20, he was a star at Dior; at 22, he had his own brand; at 25, he was a celebrity worldwide. That handicap, with regard to usual biopic standards, fascinated me.

How did you react when you found out there was another film about Saint Laurent in preparation?

I was very surprised, obviously. We had been working on the project several months when Jalil Lespert's film was announced. Naturally, it complicated matters, and we had to overcome many obstacles to ensure this film got made.

Despite the fact that we were much further down the line, the priority of the other movie's producers was to overtake us. I had no desire to botch my film simply to wage a sterile war. I came to terms with it, telling myself that another, more official picture could take care of the obligatory biopic aspects, thus relieving me of them. To some extent, Lespert's film gave me greater freedom.

At what point was the issue of the actor who would play Saint Laurent raised?

We started casting in early 2012, well before the script was completed. Gaspard Ulliel's name soon cropped up. I was very keen that his resemblance to Saint Laurent should not be the sole factor, so I met with Gaspard, as I did with another twenty or so actors. For three months, we shot tests, mainly to see if we could work and communicate together.

Saint Laurent's reedy yet assertive voice is a crucial feature of the character. How did you both work on that?

Gaspard could talk about that better than I. Personally, I restricted myself to a single remark: I did not want there to be any possible confusion between nervousness and quavering. As with *L'Apollonide*, where the actresses had no call to imitate the Parisian patter of 1900, but needed to put some of themselves into their characters, so it was necessary for the film to contain as much Gaspard as Saint Laurent. If I no longer see the actor I'm filming, there's no point. It's that merger that is beautiful. Gaspard fascinates me as much as Saint Laurent, and Louis Garrel as much as Jacques de Bascher. As a filmmaker, you have no choice. You must take an interest in what is before your eyes.

How did you cast the other members of Saint Laurent's circle?

The second strategic choice was that of the actor to play Pierre Bergé. The age difference between Gaspard and Jérémie, with whom I had worked on *Le Pornographe*, is fairy exact in terms of the six-year difference between Saint Laurent and Bergé. It so happens that they have been good friends for a long time. The connection between them, especially in sensual terms, was obvious from the earliest tests. Since the film opens several years after they first met, I liked that it was immediately apparent and that nobody wonders why these two men are together.

Betty Catroux was a leading Chanel model, for whom it was difficult to find an actress,

however tall. Aymeline Valade was suggested by Amira Casar, to whom I give thanks and who had met her in Scotland with Chanel and found she had a lot of personality. We shot screen tests and right away I liked the image of Gaspard and her side by side. She has a strange way of dancing. I love the improvised scene on the couch when Jacques reads Jean-Jacques Schuhl's *Rose poussière* and she makes odd hand gestures. There is real chemistry on screen between Gaspard and her. Léa Seydoux was looking for a role that was lighter and more dynamic than usual. Of course, it's a supporting role, but we were keen to work together again six years after *De la guerre*, and I could picture her perfectly fitting into this universe, with its colors and atmosphere. We needed somebody very adroit to play Monsieur Jean-Pierre, the atelier supervisor, and Micha Lescot has the finesse to play the part without veering into cliché.

As for Amira, whenever I said I was working on a film about Saint Laurent, everybody who knew the firm told me, Mrs. Munoz is Amira Casar! Louis Garrel brings lightness and a contemporary feel to the complex figure of Jacques de Bascher. He has a natural facility to speak the sentences of a character, the like of whom no longer exists. Louis doesn't drag Jacques into the seedy, which would be possible with such a weird and decadent character. Yves and Jacques' love story developed in editing: primarily atmospheric scenes were drawn out because something wonderful happened between Gaspard and Louis. It was almost enough to set up the camera and watch them. It's important to take the film in a new direction when particularly graceful things occur.

I like de Bascher's theatrical, devil-may-care attitude: the artifice of artifice. He embodies the insouciance of the period, before AIDS, with no economic worries. But deep down I'm less interested in de Bascher himself than, as Bergé has explained, the fact that he pushed the right button to enable Saint Laurent to hit rock bottom. It could have been someone else.

How did you research the project?

I read a lot. Three or four books before starting to write and the rest thereafter. Research is not about knowledge, but about knowing why you take liberties, all the better to capture the truth.

Why did you decide to restrict yourself to ten years in Saint Laurent's life and career, between 1967 and 1976?

It's such a powerful decade we could have narrowed it down further. Equally, we could have begun in 1965 with the Mondrian dress, which marks the moment when Saint Laurent stops being post-Dior and becomes Saint Laurent. The creation of prêt-à-porter came just afterwards——a pioneering decision that ensured his popularity and allowed him, as he said with a hint of exaggeration, *«to take to the streets.»* By taking care of many events, particularly his meeting with Pierre Bergé and the founding of the brand, Jalil Lespert's film enabled me to get even closer to the character, radicalize my vision and enter the story later with fewer explanations.

Very early on, Thomas and I chose to restrict ourselves to two emblematic collections, the Liberation collection in 1971 and the Russian Ballet collection in 1976. The first provoked outrage: in 1971, with hippie chic booming, Saint Laurent dressed women like their mothers, drawing on his passion for his own, for 1940s movie stars and so on. The newspapers were in uproar, but six months

later everybody was wearing vintage. As for the second collection, it has oriental influences, from Gauguin, Delacroix, Matisse, to the Russian Orient. We divided the script into three chapters. We called the first, up to the 1940 collection, just before the famous photo of Saint Laurent posing naked, *«The Young Man.»* The second, from that photo to the end of his affair with de Bascher, became *«The Star.»* And the third, 1976, *«YSL»*: Yves becomes a brand; he's lost touch with who he is. That's when the contrast is greatest between above and below. A psychiatrist who knew his psychiatrist called him the *«lift attendant.»* He was constantly going up and down. These three chapters were subtitled *«Day,» «Night»* and *«Limbo.»* Then, in 1976, we jump to 1989, when Helmut Berger is Saint Laurent: the body has changed but the voice is Gaspard's.

That's one of the most daring aspects of the film——the jump in time and re-embodiment.

Yves says he can no longer face himself. We shift then to 1989 and Helmut Berger. The film becomes a parallel montage, going back and forth. It was one of our first ideas: to show this body changing until it becomes Saint Laurent in his sublime tower on Rue de Babylone, alone but still full of vigor. The introduction of Helmut Berger, even if it disconcerts at first, allows another door to be opened, through which the audience enters deeper into Saint Laurent's mind and affect. The film becomes truly mental.

Why 1989 exactly?

Saint Laurent was still working. The year isn't specified, but it allows us to introduce the 1980s, which marked the shift into another world——Jean-Paul Gaultier, the stock exchange listing... By the beginning of the 1990s, that shift has already occurred.

Where were the locations reconstituted?

We hired an enormous townhouse that we used as a studio for practically every scene, except the runway shows and nightclubs: the premises on Rue Spontini, Babylone, the ateliers, *Libération* newspaper, Proust's bedroom

How did you avoid the standard scenes of the biopic genre that is so popular now?

It's the biopic concept that raises a problem. *«Yves Saint Laurent transforms women,» «Yves Saint Laurent is a success...»* How do you show that? Definitely not with shots of people in the street wearing Yves Saint Laurent creations. Or with magazine covers. Or popping flashbulbs. All ideas for the trashcan. We used Andy Warhol's letter: *«You and I are the two greatest artists of our day.»* Warhol and Saint Laurent. America and Europe. Success is affirmed, no need to say any more. As for the tuxedo, it involves a recording of Marlene Dietrich's voice and a mannequin, that's all.

How do you get the information across? That's the issue with a biopic, with the added difficulty that in fashion, everything goes so fast. How do you show that Saint Laurent wants to break with something, that it doesn't work, and then that it works? It's complicated unless you are very explanatory. I used the reply to Warhol, in which Saint Laurent says he wanted to be modern, but now he just wants to be Saint Laurent. That's the kind of way with words that speeds things up. The love I have for the films of Robert Bresson has taught me how to disrupt time by the use of voiceover.

«Yves Saint Laurent transforms women.» How do you film that? I thought of *Vertigo*—you know the passion I have for *Vertigo*—for the scene with Valeria Bruni Tedeschi: a man manipulates a woman who is suddenly transformed before our eyes. Valeria is brilliant in that scene. In her performance, she becomes 15 years younger in three minutes.

Another traditional difficulty with biopics is the legend or myth angle...

Generally, a biopic dismantles the myth around a person in order to make that person accessible and explain how he or she became famous... This film doesn't show how Saint Laurent became Saint Laurent, but what its costs him to be Saint Laurent. From the beginning, with Thomas, that was our main angle. What it costs him to go from black and white to color, from steady to aerial, having to deliver four collections a year, being a star... It's not about demystifying everything. The choice of Helmut Berger, himself a mythical figure of 70s cinema, fits in with that. The film gets closer to Saint Laurent in order to get closer to his affect, not to make him banal or comprehensible. At the end, the audience hasn't grasped how it works. The myth is still a myth. It was in that context that the question of the film's opening was raised. The film opens in 1974 with the scene in the hotel at Porte Maillot in Paris. I begin at the height of his success, but also at the height of his depression. I took care to give Saint Laurent an entrance. We see him from behind from a distance, then from behind on his bed; there is talk of him in the atelier, then we see his hands and, eventually, his face. This is Monsieur Saint Laurent. We don't make him banal.

Which films did you watch or re-watch when working on this one?

Saint Laurent is a slow character, which can be complicated in cinematic terms. I watched Scorsese's *The Aviator*, with Leonardo di Caprio, with great attention: his Howard Hughes is unlikable, but possesses such energy that things balance out. I watched Jacques Becker's *Falbalas* again: a beautiful movie about haute couture but different than the one I had in mind. Thomas and I watched Visconti's *Conversation Piece*, with Burt Lancaster, astonishing, Helmut Berger and Silvana Mangano. I saw *Ludwig* again, for the approach to time. While we were shooting, for reasons of rhythm as always, I watched *Casino* again. When I shoot, I see films over without seeing them. Not for inspiration, but to reaffirm my faith in certain things. That's why, before I start shooting, I always watch Bresson's *Money* again. And always twenty minutes of Godard's *Nouvelle Vague*. I also watched two movies again for their approach to split-screen: Norman Jewison's *The Thomas Crown Affair* and Richard Fleischer's wonderful *The Boston Strangler*.

The split-screen sequence is not devoid of harshness: on the left, news footage from the late 60s—May '68, Jan Palach, the IRA; on the right, the same never-changing images of models coming down a flight of stairs

True, it's a pretty brutal scene. I wanted to establish critical distance, in order to say at some point that while Saint Laurent is making dresses, the world is changing and that we, director and audience, are aware of it. The split-screen sequence is topped-and-tailed by two different shots of Betty dancing at Regine's, in the same place and filmed in the same way. Only the dress changes. The

characters haven't moved an iota during three years of turmoil in the world.

Another great scene is the business meeting between Bergé and his American partner.

It lasts eight minutes. It's a real chunk! And it's the film's only business scene. It was important for the audience not to understand everything, but to be impressed by the exchange and grasp that the right to use Saint Laurent's name is at stake. I am increasingly frustrated by scenes between specialists, in which I understand everything, as if their words were intended solely for the audience. This scene had to come across as real. I was struck by the opening of *The Social Network*, where all the action is in the dialogue. The interpreter is very important. She adds clarity and chaos, as well as a play on levels of language. Jérémie Régnier is excellent. The scene took nine days to write. More and more, I am drawn to long scenes, and less and less to scenelets. For example, there is only one scene at Le Sept, the nightclub where Saint Laurent and his circle spent every evening, but it lasts six minutes. It's the scene where Yves meets de Bascher. I favored that over the frequentative, alternating between scenes in the atelier and Le Sept.

The film is very precise on the details of haute couture.

I made sure of that. In haute couture, everything is handmade. I wanted to film the atelier, the seamstresses at work, and the hierarchy. Olivier Père, head of cinema for Arte, summed it up very nicely, «documentary at the opera.» We built an atelier to make the dresses for the film and hired seamstresses, who were given lines to say.

You take very complex paths to recount the birth of the creative process—they are magnificent meanderings...

Filming the emergence of an idea is one of the most difficult tasks. We racked our brains for weeks to find a way of showing how Yves got the idea for the Russian Ballet collection in 1976. Before we get to the hallucinatory snakes, he enters Proust's bedroom and gets into his bed. Memories and images of all kinds come back to him: a scene from Max Ophüls' *The Earrings of Madame de*..., with Danielle Darrieux, that Saint Laurent adored; fragments of emotions from childhood—the opera, his little theatre, his aunt dressing him; and, of course, Oran, which is present in two ways, through an evocation worthy of Marguerite Duras when Yves arrives in Marrakech, and here through snippets of flashbacks when everything starts to diffract. Agonizing mental torture to avoid the clichés with which the birth of an idea is usually shown!

When *L'Apollonide* came out, you said that a period movie is always a film about its own period, the year when it was shot. In what way is that the case with *Saint Laurent*?

If only through the actors, it will always be a film from 2014. The fear is always that a so-called period movie will seem like folklore. It's important to try to give it a real form, rather than a sense of visiting a museum. Choosing Adèle Haenel for *L'Apollonide* was a way of escaping folklore. Louis Garrel, here, represents a modern dandyism, even if there is something resolutely Proustian in de Bascher.

One of the difficulties of making a movie about the 1970s stems from the locations,

particularly because it's a period that is still in people's minds. It is that of our parents. Coming out of make-up, everybody always said the same thing, I look like my mother or my father... Yet, what is wonderful with Saint Laurent is that he was living in places from another age. The house on Rue de Babylone, for example, was decorated in an Art Deco style. Saint Laurent is a brilliant blend of the modern and the past. He knows Proust as well as he knows the Rolling Stones: classicism and the zeitgeist.

Although Saint Laurent has several episodes of depression, the film maintains a kind of smile, a luminescence. Although it also tells the story of a world coming to an end, it is less macabre than *L'Apollonide*.

L'Apollonide is more complex. It is an opiated spiral spinning around itself. It is also a much more impressionistic film, since it moves constantly from one girl to another, whereas here we hold on Yves throughout. Beauty dies quickly in *L'Apollonide*, whereas Saint Laurent survived. He was unhappy, but he preserved a life force. Which is what prompted his famous line, *«I am strong and fragile at one and the same time, but I will never be broken.»*

He possesses a kind of lightness that I wanted to emphasize, precisely because it is so rarely underlined. I like when he says he wants to fart, when he dresses up as a woman in front of his friends and talks about *«Endive Warhol,»* when he takes his mother to Le Casino de Paris... I didn't want the film to be too serious, nor schematically about somebody designing through suffering. I like the scene where Helmut Berger reads a celebrity tabloid magazine. Saint Laurent loved those. One of my favorite dialogues is the one with his hair stylist—played by his real-life hair stylist, who gave me the line—when Yves tells him he wants Johnny Hallyday's hair color. I like the contrast between high culture and pop. Louis Garrel adds lightness and Gaspard Ulliel mischievousness to characters that could be ponderous. Likewise, Jérémie Régnier possesses a positive sweetness and strength. That's good, I think.

There are also very simple moments that touch me, like the close-up followed by a zoom-out on Yves looking at a bottle of YSL nail varnish. Perhaps he is wondering what he has become; perhaps he is thinking that it needs a touch more red... We have absolutely no idea what he is thinking. They mystery remains complete.

AN INTERVIEW WITH

GASPARD ULLIEL

Were you interested in Yves Saint Laurent before Bertrand Bonello asked you to play him in this film?

It so happens that Gus Van Sant planned to make a film about him at one point. Gus and I had got on well on the set of his segment of *Paris, je t'aime*. One evening, he was dining out with Hedi Slimane when he saw a photo of Saint Laurent on the restaurant wall, and was struck by my resemblance to him. For me, Saint Laurent started there. I was very enthusiastic about the project, but it was shelved, which made me even happier to make the film with Bertrand.

I had devoured Alicia Drake's book, *The Beautiful Fall: Fashion, Genius and Glorious Excess in 1970s Paris*, when it came out. It's one of the best works on Saint Laurent and an incisive portrait of the period. I had scant knowledge of Saint Laurent's life and work, but I knew they both represented something very important.

How did Bertrand Bonello direct you in this very special role?

He guided me rather than directed me. Bertrand and I met several times before the shoot to talk and swap books. I also participated in screen tests with other actors, which was an advantage. Bertrand gave me complete freedom, just as he let a number of scenes veer off in unexpected directions when we were shooting. It was marvelous working with him.

How did you make such a complex, and surely quite intimidating, role your own?

I did as much research as possible, as any other actor would have done. There are a lot of photos, but not much archive footage or sound archives. Yves wasn't comfortable in interviews and, most likely, Pierre Bergé protected him. I re-read *The Beautiful Fall*, as well as the major biographies of his life. As I knew the people who had recently bought it, I had access to his apartment on Rue de Babylone. Then came the time to put all that as far as possible behind me. The film is fiction. It would be a shame to try to chronicle every detail and fact. That's why, deep down, I'm not displeased not to have met the members of his circle. That way I felt free to try to understand Yves in general, but more specifically Yves as he is in Bertrand and Thomas Bidegain's script.

It is indeed an intimidating role! When we started shooting, I got the same feeling as on stage when the curtain goes up and there is no margin for error, especially as we began with the scene in the studio, where Yves

appears for the first time in close-up. I had never had access to a role and task of this scale. Until then, my characters were always in construction, a state of semi-maturity, going from point A to another point B. It's the first time I play a character who is so established.

How did you work on Saint Laurent's very singular voice? And the physical aspects of the character generally?

Overall, I tried to avoid mimicry and find my own rhythm, my own music. Before we started work on the character, Bertrand had sent me interviews from the national broadcasting archives. He emphasized Saint Laurent's singular diction, which he said had a fragile quality without being feminine—something pretty difficult to grasp and reproduce. But once we found the voice, we never revisited it.

As I have drawn for a long time, it's me that you see drawing in the film. Yves was a tall figure with long arms. He was slender, but with cheeks. I lost weight to match that silhouette. At the time, I think, men were slimmer than they are now. We found several suits in Olivier Chatenet's collection. Curiously, everything fitted me and very few adjustments were required.

I also had to get used to wearing the wig, several wigs even, because his hair was such an important aspect of his character. Saint Laurent changed his hairstyle often. It was beautifully styled, almost a helmet. His greatest fear was of going bald!

What was your approach to the film as a biopic?

For me, the film is much more than that. It's the first time, I think, that a biopic makes no attempt to recount the major steps in a celebrity's life or unravel his enigma. It could be anybody—the story would be just as interesting.

After I read the script, late one evening, I was so excited that I couldn't sleep. I think it's one of the five best scripts I've ever had the chance to read. It's as if Bertrand had obtained direct access to Saint Laurent. The story isn't constructed in a linear way, but as a series of important scenes, none of which is insignificant. To some extent, each could be a standalone movie. The film doesn't tell the story of Saint Laurent's life. It is interested in his state of mind rather than the ups and downs of his career. It's a journey to the deepest recesses of the character, with some audacious, voluntarily abstract elements.

The film highlights two of Saint Laurent's love affairs: with Pierre Bergé, played by Jérémie Régnier, and with Jacques de Bascher, played by Louis Garrel. It's one of the strongest, and most likely one of the least expected, aspects of the film.

Jérémie and I have been friends for a long time, so his presence was very reassuring for me. As he had just finished working on a biopic, he was able to give me valuable advice. Crucially, he adds softness to Pierre Bergé's virility. Our friendship is, I think, visible on screen.

I hardly knew Louis on the other hand. We had just bumped into each other a few times. He was very friendly and open. His inventiveness in every scene amazes me. Once again, the physical resemblance was secondary. It's there, but de Bascher wasn't actually very tall. Louis was totally committed. On screen, there is constantly a powerful sexual tension between us. That's how Bertrand wanted it.

I think Saint Laurent would have been ready to give it all up for de Bascher. He was clearly a shady character, but he gave Yves something extra. Jacques produces a break in the character's curve. He pushes Yves to the limits of his personality and introduces him to a wilder and occasionally darker sexuality. He carries a threat, suspense... All of which causes Saint Laurent to reflect on his life and his art. By seeking closure after their affair, he is forced to bounce back, to go looking for the same passion elsewhere, the same excitement, not only through drugs but also through his work. What emerges is one of his major collections, the one that closes the film, the Russian Ballet collection of 1976. The mark of his genius is also in his capacity to exploit his personal experiences and emotions to create something unique.

Having spent so long in his company, how would you describe Yves Saint Laurent in creative terms?

His strength was that he freed women from a rigid, constricted figure. He offered comfort, particularly by designing clothes for everyday wear, not just eveningwear. He was a precursor of the transition to prêt-à-porter, which was so critical. He adapted his clothes, as Dior and Chanel had also begun to do, but with a stroke of genius, he liberated women while drawing his inspiration from the past, especially in the famous 1940 collection. His tuxedo, which he was the first to design for women, is still probably one of his most sensual pieces. Yves absorbed the period he lived in and what was happening around him like a sponge. I used that a lot—his sense of perspective on his period, never really being taken in by it—as well as his blend of heightened sensitivity and extreme intelligence. I genuinely believe he was an artist, most likely weighed by the frustration of working in a minor and ephemeral art, without the longevity of painting, for example, which was an art he greatly admired. In his collections Saint Laurent frequently paid homage to painters, starting with Mondrian. His use of color was masterful and his imagination boundless. For example, he makes a huge leap from his 1976 Russian Ballet collection to the next one, known as the «Chinese and opium» collection.

What's your view of the balance, or imbalance, between his depressed and lighter moments?

Yves was a born depressive almost. He had suffered from depression since adolescence at least, since his stay at Val de Grâce hospital during his military service. He was on medication from then till the end of his life. His homosexuality also exposed him to mockery and hasty judgments, as did his fragility and slenderness. But I also think he took strength from these ordeals. Part of his success undoubtedly comes from taking revenge on the hand life had dealt him. I've thought a lot about Saint Laurent's shyness. Now, I think it was fake shyness, hiding a real sense of self-confidence.

My aim was to make sure that nobody ever judges the character, that the audience pushes back its moral boundaries. I think I made a breakthrough when I was able to bring light to what I had considered as darkness. Initially, I conceived of the scenes where Saint Laurent hits rock bottom as gray areas, but I eventually reached a stage where it was almost the opposite. When he starts living two lives, like a schizophrenic almost, at the office during the day, with de Bascher at night, it seems

to me that his offices become something like a cell, where he is constantly watched, observed and infantilized, whereas his nights with de Bascher were like playing hooky from school, a space where he flourished.

Bertrand insisted on showing how Yves has moments of insouciance, lightness and joie de vivre, particularly at the beginning. That corresponds perfectly with the recollections of those who knew him well: he had a sense of humor, liked to laugh, and flash his broad smile... Showing that within a film that is darker was one of the big risks the film takes.

SAINT LAURENT

JOSÉE DESHAIES

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

As with *L'Apollonide*, there were historical codes to be respected, or transgressed but with our eyes wide open! Anaïs and Katia were wonderfully thorough in their research on the period.
Above all, there was a journey, the destiny of one man. That's what provided the spine for me, not the fashion world in general. *Saint Laurent* is written in three acts, three different periods that I lit in three distinctive ways. The first in almost monochromatic cream that I wanted to be wintry, like a shroud. The second, a baroque period of parties and decline. The third, violent, dark and unidirectional.

Gaspard is magnificent. I've seen the film several times now. In every shot, I find him absolutely spot-on, in his movements, his diction... I never tire of watching him. And hearing his voice in Helmut Berger's body sent shivers down my spine. Helmut is astonishing. He is one of those «bodies» that forms a cornerstone of the cinema, like Jean-Pierre Léaud or Marlon Brando. You don't make it out unscathed.

To film Saint Laurent's life, you don't only need elegance—that would be too easy—but also discipline and a few moments of pure grace. Even though it's a biopic, I think this movie is one of Bertrand's most personal yet.

I'd conclude by saying that the biggest challenge was to put the 1970s into pictures. People forget how colorful and alive the period was. Not just the clothes but cinematography in general. Today, everything seems gray. We dress in black, our interiors are painted white, lighting in films aims to be neutral and tasteful. We've left colors by the wayside. I think Yves Saint Laurent may have been the first master of the art.

KATIA WYSZKOP

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

A period picture always provides the same challenge for production designers: interpreting and transposing what was. I don't aim for reconstitution and try to stick to the idea that we have nowadays of the period.
I love the script. The character is very inspiring and Bertrand's take on him is fascinating. Focusing on ten years in YSL's life, for me, it's not a biopic but a film about a life in creation. The sets are inspired by the characters rather than a particular reality.
We tried to get every detail right to reinforce the character's credibility, which involved YSL's accessories, library books, favorite writers and composers, and of course the accumulated artworks that decorated

the locations. I tried to dust off the stylistic tics of the period, by using luster and colors to reflect the 1970s. A major challenge was the tight budget for this very ambitious project. The solution was found in the shape of a very big space that already contained the bare bones of most of the locations, and a very committed team.

It was an astonishing space on Avenue d'Iéna where we could build and rebuild YSL's two ateliers, various apartments and even the Moroccan interiors (no money meant no Morocco, with exteriors shot in the suburbs of Paris), all in a single building. Carpentry, painting and sculpture workshops were installed on the ground floor and basement. Every room was used. You'd open one door and it was Paris—Yves' apartment on Place Vauban or his new house on Avenue Marceau. The third floor was reserved for Saint Laurent's first two ateliers on Rue Spontini, the *Libération* newspaper officers, and parties. On the second floor, the new ateliers successively became the bedroom in Morocco and the apartment on Rue de Babylone.
Twenty different sets, in all!

ANAÏS ROMAND

COSTUME DESIGNER

Yves Saint Laurent... Very intimidating, having to dress the character and his whole entourage. So I fell back on the script and what Bertrand wanted to say about this gifted, tortured man, and about the period—the 60s and 70s in a small elitist Parisian circle in the vanguard of fashion, before AIDS struck France's still very conservative society. Fashion had to be present but naturally, so that the actors could slip into their costumes, with the quest for beauty as part of their personalities and not a stilted esthetic display. For me, the crux of the film was succeeding in getting the actors to slip naturally into these clothes and seduce us in 2014.

Technically, the most difficult part was to make two complete, legendary YSL collections, with barely nothing to go on, no access to the archives or real dresses kept by the Bergé Saint Laurent Foundation. It was a very meticulous research project aimed at deciphering the right volumes, right fabrics and exact colors, without betraying the spirit of YSL while bringing to the screen the novelty, freshness and sumptuousness of these collections. In that respect, cinema is a great help!

The period of preparation with Bertrand and Josée, to identify moments when the camera would linger on the material and others when movement would be helpful or when a long shot would facilitate a more elusive approach, helped me to conceive these collections for a cinema image without cheating on materials—nothing can replace the way real silk glows and falls—or skimping on *haute couture* techniques. Actually, I think that the difficulties we encountered helped give me a direction and drove me to find solutions for the camera. I had the very strict framework of fashion and archive footage to respect, but what we were making above all was a film, not a fashion show.

BERTRAND BONELLO

2012 ..... INGRID CAVEN, MUSIC AND VOICE / Director
2011 ..... L'APOLLONIDE – HOUSE OF TOLERANCE
..... Scriptwriter, director & producer
2008 ..... ON WAR / Scriptwriter & director
2005 ..... CINDY, THE DOLL IS MINE / Scriptwriter & director
2003 ..... TIRESIA /Scriptwriter & director
2001 ..... THE PORNOGRAPHER / Scriptwriter & director
1998 .....SOMETHING ORGANIC / Scriptwriter & director

BERTRAND BONELLO
SOUND AND IMAGE
FROM 19 SEPTEMBER TO 26 OCTOBER 2014
IN CENTRE POMPIDOU (PARIS)

At the invitation of the Centre Pompidou Cinemas and the Paris Fall Festival, Bertrand Bonello will propose, from 19 September to 26 October, an exhibition and program exploring this little investigated area.

Through a remix of his past work presented as an installation, commissions from composers and filmmakers, and the participation of the public (invited to create their own soundtracks), Bertrand Bonello will give form to and provoke thought about how sound and image spawn and transform one other.

At the same time, he will present his entire body of work, shorts and feature films, propose screenings, encounters, concerts and performances, with numerous invited guests, in addition to giving a master class.

For the occasion, Bertrand Bonello will also realize a short film attempting to state and show where he is at today.

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GASPARD ULLIEL

2014 ..... SAINT LAURENT | BERTRAND BONELLO
..... A GREEK TYPE OF PROBLEM | BRIGITTE ROUAN
2011 ..... THE ART OF LOVE | EMMANUEL MOURET
2010 ..... THE PRINCESS OF MONTPENSIER | BERTRAND TAVERNIER
2009 ..... INSIDE RING | LAURENT TUEL
..... THE SEA WALL | RITHY PANH
2008 ..... THIRD PART OF THE WORLD | ERICFORESTIER
2007 ..... HANNIBAL RISING | PETER WEBBER
..... JACQUOU LE CROQUANT | LAURENT BOUTONNAT
2006 ..... PARIS, I LOVE YOU | GUS VAN SANT
2005 ..... LA MAISON DE NINA | RICHARD DEMBO
2004 ..... THE LAST DAY | RODOLPHE MARCONI
..... A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT | JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET
2003 ..... STRAYED | ANDRE TECHINE
2002 ..... SUMMER THINGS | MICHEL BLANC

SAINT LAURENT

SAINT LAURENT

SAINT LAURENT

CAST LIST

YVES SAINT LAURENT ..... GASPARD ULLIEL

PIERRE BERGE ..... JEREMIE RENIER

JACQUES DE BASCHER ..... LOUIS GARREL

LOULOU DE LA FALAISE ..... LEA SEYDOUX

ANNE MARIE MUNOZ ..... AMIRA CASAR

BETTY CATROUX ..... AYMELINE VALADE

MONSIEUR JEAN-PIERRE ..... MICHA LESCOT

YVES SAINT LAURENT 1989 ..... HELMUT BERGER

M^ME DUZER ..... VALERIA BRUNI-TEDESCHI

RENEE ..... VALERIE DONZELLI

TALITHA ..... ASMINE TRINCA

LUCIENNE ..... DOMINIQUE SANDA

CREW LIST

DIRECTOR ..... BERTRAND BONELLO

SCREENPLAY ..... THOMAS BIDEGAIN AND BETRAND BONELLO

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ..... JOSEE DESHAIES

PRODUCTION DESIGNER ..... KATIA WYSZKOP

COSTUME DESIGNER ..... ANAÏS ROMAND

CASTING ..... RICHARD ROUSSEAU

FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ..... ELSA AMIEL

SCRIPTE SUPERVISOR ..... ELODIE VAN BEUREN

ORIGINAL SCORE ..... BERTRAND BONELLO

SOUND ..... NICOLAS CANTIN NICOLAS MOREAU JEAN-PIERRE LAFORCE

EDITING ..... FABRICE ROUAUD

PRODUCTION MANAGER ..... PASCAL ROUSSEL

POST-PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR ..... PATRICIA COLOMBAT

PRODUCE BY ..... ERIC AND NICOLAS ALTMAYER

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