

A SECOND CHANCE TO FALL IN LOVE  
FOR THE FIRST TIME

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PRESENT

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TWO IS A FAMILY

FRANÇOIS CIVIL JOSÉPHINE JAPY

with  
BENJAMIN LAVERNHE  
FROM THE COMÉDIE-FRANÇAISE

# love at second sight

A FILM BY HUGO GÉLIN

CAMILLE LELLOUCHE AMAURY DE CRAVENCOUR EDITH SCOB  
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# LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT

Directed by Hugo Gelin

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# **SYNOPSIS**

*When Raphael first met Olivia in high school, it was love at first sight. After 10 years of happy marriage and a thriving career as a bestselling author, Raphael has it all – or so he thinks. After a huge argument between the couple, Raphael wakes up in parallel life as an unmarried, ping pong playing, middle-school teacher who’s been glued to his childhood best friend for a little too long. Realizing Olivia was his everything, he must go above and beyond to win back the love of his life – who in this world has absolutely no idea who he is.*

## Interview with HUGO GÉLIN

### **Does this project stem from a desire to make a romantic comedy in an Anglo-Saxon style?**

Absolutely, but with a distinctly French tone. I'm interested in bringing together my French identity and Anglo-Saxon film culture in order to make something universal. My main character's name is Raphaël Ramisse, which was based on the director of *GROUNDHOG DAY*. However, I was also inspired by other movies such as *ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND*, *ABOUT TIME* by Richard Curtis, *HER* by Spike Jonze, and *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* by Frank Capra. The common thread among all these movies is that they tell stories whose fantastical aspects are very realistic. In doing so, the simplest things about human existence take on an incredibly cinematic quality. The challenge was to get the audience to latch on to this supernatural component, to surprise them and transport them...

### **The script was carefully written and has an excellent rhythm. How was the writing process?**

The question I wanted to explore, which became the subject of the film, was to imagine what your life would be like if you hadn't met that person whom you consider most important. Whether you're a man or a woman, single or in a relationship, there is something pleasurable, intellectually, in wondering what you would have become if you hadn't met a certain person. It could be a great love, a wonderful colleague, or a friend. We mulled over the story for a long time before attacking the script. A few years ago, with the encouragement of my producer, Laetitia Galitzine, I had started to write a few iterations of the story with David Foenkinos, but they didn't convincingly fall within the realm of reality. I probably wasn't mature enough then to tackle this story. A year and a half later, after having directed my first feature, *COMME DES FRÈRES (JUST LIKE BROTHERS)*, I still had a strong desire to develop this idea. I got back to work with Benjamin Parent. This was one of the first scripts he's worked on. We went back to square one but kept the charm and a few of the ideas that we'd developed with David Foenkinos. And, with him, I was able to birth the film I'd envisioned.

### **What happened next?**

After drafting about forty pages with Benjamin Parent, I convinced Stéphane Célérier from Mars Films to join the project. We had a wonderful connection that is rare in our field. We met before making *TWO IS A FAMILY* together. He and I have similar sensibilities when it comes to film; he never lost his sense of childlike wonder when he watches a movie. With him, just as I've been doing with Laetitia Galitzine since my early days, we talk about characters, about stories, feelings and cinematic aspirations.

To write the script and the dialogues, I wanted to work as a team with Igor Gotesman (*FIVE*), whom I'd met when I produced Pierre Niney's series *CASTING(S)*. We wanted to tell this story as an emotionally charged romantic comedy, with an attention to detail that is rooted in reality, but also with a lot of jokes and comedy. Too many French romantic comedies only offer one of the ingredients of the genre—comedy or romance—at the expense of the other. We wanted to offer both ingredients in equal measure. We wanted a true comedy, with funny, modern situations and dialogues as well as true romance devoid of cynicism or vulgarity, which, to my mind, are an ephemeral trend. We worked on several versions of the script because we wanted a script with very specific dialogues, with strong comedic situations and emotional content, without ever being silly. A script in which you can say "I love you" while laughing. And that can also shake you to your core...

I wanted the film to impact young people who dream of falling in love as well as older people who can look back on their first love.

**Raphaël's character is immediately likeable, but you make him less sympathetic after about ten minutes, and we have to reverse course throughout the movie in order to find him likeable once again. That's a risky bet to make when it comes to the hero of a romantic comedy...**

Yes, but in *GROUNDHOG DAY*, Bill Murray is not a likeable guy at the beginning! His character has a sense of humor and is generous, and yet he gets carried away in the name of pseudo-celebrity and does not realize that he is distancing himself from his wife. In only paying attention to himself, he loses sight of her and their relationship fails. It's the same thing in *WHAT WOMEN WANT*: even though Mel Gibson acts like an idiot, he has an undeniable charm that makes him appealing. My movie questions our view of ourselves and our view of those we love. That's why I needed a charismatic actor with incredible charm for the character of Raphaël. In addition to be an exceptional actor, François Civil really delivers on this aspect of the role. He lures us into his story: at the beginning, we want to see him punished for his actions, and therein lies the comedy. Later, he acknowledges his mistakes and will do everything to become a good person, which he always was deep down—that is the romantic aspect of the film.

**Given the fact that he is a writer and that he decides his characters' fate, one can't help but wonder whether he is your double.**

I met my wife young and we grew up together. Wondering about where I would be without her, and how my development would have been different, made me want to tell this story. Those questions can also be anxiety-provoking and unearthed a desire to imagine what might have happened in the other person's life. It's an amazing source of comedy! There's nothing more pleasurable than projecting yourself onto a character and imagining the worst, funniest situations and the best possible consequences. Our characters are our superheroes. So yes, in the movie Raphaël is an artist, like me, and it's certainly not a meaningless detail, but the important thing is that the original feeling that made me want to write this story is universal. It applies to young and old alike, men and women, gay or straight individuals...In the end, we are talking about love with a dose of humor.

**Olivia's character also has a fascinating arc, starting out as a somewhat restrained young woman who becomes a classical music star and eventually turns into a free-spirited person...**

The plan was to show Olivia as a young woman who finds love thanks to her sense of humor, quirkiness and uniqueness, who then loses all of the qualities that made her likeable after she loses Raphaël's attention. She shuts down. It is therefore a shock for him to realize that, in another life, she finds success in music and realizes her dreams—something she couldn't do with him by her side. When Raphaël is thrown into this new life, she is no longer the Olivia of their adolescence, but a great adult pianist who has fallen in love with a man who supports her. And yet, she is not completely happy because she is missing those things that only Raphaël could bring to her life. Even with different trajectories, they have remained soul mates, just like in the beginning of the film. Something stronger than them unites them and makes them faint at the same time; they are made for one another. This is what is depicted in the rear-view mirror shot in Camargue, in which he finds the Olivia of his youth. The film is a quest to reignite that initial spark.

**Raphaël's friend is very compelling. The value of friendship, a central theme in your movies, is quite tangible.**

I have noticed involuntary parallels between my films, no matter what the plot. In my three feature-length films, the central character is female. Charlie, played by Mélanie Thierry in *COMME DES FRÈRES* (*JUST LIKE BROTHERS*), is the starting point of the story and brings together the three male characters. In *DEMAIN TOUT COMMENCE* (*TWO IS A FAMILY*), a little girl, Gloria, is the central character in the father-daughter relationship. And in *MON INCONNUE* (*LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT*), Olivia is the anchor of the entire movie. I also realized that there is a journey in each one of these: a journey through France and Corsica in *JUST LIKE BROTHERS*, a journey to London in *TWO IS A FAMILY*, and a journey across time in *LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT*. And lastly, friendship is another central pillar: *JUST LIKE BROTHERS* tackles the themes of friendship and rivalry, and in *TWO IS A FAMILY*, the stability of the character played by Omar Sy depends on his friendship with his best friend. In *LOVE AT SECOND*

SIGHT, we used a sidekick dynamic that is common in romantic comedies. But to go further down this road with a humorous foil, the story explores the different iterations of a friendship from onelife to the next. Félix moves the plot forward by asking himself which Raphaël he prefers, and the link between the love story and the story of friendship is crucial. The best friend character is inseparable from Raphaël's adventure, making his appearances in the story indispensable—and hilarious.

### **How did you get the idea to incorporate science fiction in Raphaël's story?**

At first it was a joke, to fool the spectator into thinking that they might have stepped into the wrong movie theater! However, it's also because science fiction is the main character's universe: it is completely his culture. It is his writing genre and what makes him popular among teenagers. If he was a real person, Raphaël Ramière would be the latest author bringing together young readers across the globe, just like the authors behind Harry Potter, *Fantastic Beasts*, *Twilight*, or Marvel and DC Comics. Lastly, the science fiction universe is an indirect way to connect the characters to the main story. It seems more likely that a science fiction author would believe in a fantastical event in his own life...It's more than just a plot trick.

### **You exercise restraint when it comes to Raphaël's omniscience concerning Olivia, just like in *Groundhog Day*...**

He does have some knowledge, of course, because that's a great source of comedy, but most of the time that doesn't work. In *EVERYONE SAYS I LOVE YOU*, Woody Allen seduces Julia Roberts because he manages to know everything about her and, in turn, she feels understood and close to him. I was inspired by this, but over the course of a decade, I found it amusing to make the characters and their traits evolve in order to create obstacles and humorous situations. The Olivia who has not grown up with him has become another Olivia. Though he still knows her in some respects, she is a complete stranger in other ways. For example, he is convinced that she likes madeleines, but that is no longer the case. It allows us to poke fun at him, and most importantly, it will force him to find other strategies in order to win her heart. The famous and inexhaustible "boy meets girl movie" turns into "boy meets MY girl movie," and this changes everything. It is a completely different premise. It is certainly a comedy about winning back someone, but Raphaël must win back the woman he knows best...who has somehow become a complete stranger! I really enjoy this irony.

### **The film is sometimes tinged with nostalgia for the carefree nature of our high school years.**

That's true, there is a bit of nostalgia there, especially since at the beginning of the movie, in a short amount of time, we span ten years of a passionate relationship that takes a turn for the worse. The first ten minutes of the film are an entire romantic comedy to themselves. This was a very fun challenge to tackle and allowed us to really go back to square one when the main character has to do it all over. We are just like him; we know the two lovers well and we like them. They are us, in a way. So we are completely taken with Raphaël's story once he is thrown into this new world, because we know where he comes from. And we want them to get back together all the more. But this is not so simple...At the end of the film, a new story begins with the same person. You have to start over yet again in order to keep the flame alive. And so, this terrible comedic hex on Raphaël becomes a unique opportunity. At the end of the film, we know that there is a tomorrow for Olivia and Raphaël.

### **There seems to be a lot of thought behind the evocative power of a piece of music, a gesture, or a look.**

The characters are two artists: a man who writes (dealing in the abstract) meets a young woman who plays music (dealing in the concrete). I wanted to work with Joséphine's hands and on life's small details: a strand of hair, a sentence, a brief touch, a suspended moment, a piece of music, a breath...All of these little details make us who we are and connect us to the world and to others. I really love the sensory aspects of a love story. I wanted to emphasize the fact that it is through the senses—music, touch, etc.—that these characters reconnect. It is therefore a comedy about winning your own wife back through other means than seduction.

### **How did you decide on François Civil?**

I wanted an actor with a natural sense of empathy so as not to lose the spectators' sympathy towards him during those moments in the film where he behaves poorly. After shooting with an actor like Omar Sy, I thought it would be fun to discover young talent. This time, the star of the movie would be the story. I wanted to find a new generation. I wanted to relive the experience of staging talents like Pierre Niney in *JUST LIKE BROTHERS* and Gloria Colson in *TWO IS A FAMILY*. I then had to create a duo, then a trio. Early on, I wanted to reconnect with François Civil, with whom we'd made the series *CASTING(S)*. He has excellent technique, and really loses himself when he's acting. Complete abandon is a rare quality among his generation of actors. And to me, it is one of the most admirable qualities. He is very funny, sensitive and sensual—and seductive too, which is important for a love story. We had already shot a very dark and grim short film together called *LES BAUMETTES*, which I'd directed for a documentary about escapes from prison. That's when I really got a sense of his creativity, dedication, and work ethic. On top of that, he's a human Stradivarius. He was able to play a hilarious idiot in *FIVE*, a suburban biker in *BURN OUT*, a young winemaker and *CE QUI NOUS LIE*, and a sound monitor in a movie about submarines called *LE CHANT DU LOUP*. He makes me think of Jean-Paul Belmondo. He has the same thoughtfulness as Belmondo in *PIERROT LE FOU*, as well as crazy charm and true charisma! Since I like to combine different genres within a single film, he was perfect. I loved working with him and would like to keep writing material to explore other facets of his acting skills.

### **Tell me more about the other actors.**

I fell in love with Joséphine Japy, with her camera angles, her natural elegance, lightness, finesse, and overall allure. Her eyes sparkle, she's an easy laugh, and most of all she never watches herself act, which is very uncommon for an actress. She lends her character a certain self-assurance that makes her likeable to women watching the film. Even though she is an internationally touring pianist, she needed to suddenly become inaccessible to Raphaël's character, while remaining perfectly accessible and normal for the spectators. Joséphine has excellent technique thanks to her experience, which is considerable for her age. And she is naturally likeable. She took piano lessons for several months for the film, and I was amazed by the work she put in to become the character of a great pianist.

In addition, I thought long and hard to figure out who to cast alongside François Civil. I knew that he had already worked with Benjamin Lavernhe in *CASTING(S)*. They are friends in real life, which saved us a lot of time. They are extremely different, so they're not stepping on each other's toes. But Benjamin is also charming, kind, whimsical and hilarious. He is primarily a theater actor and is as rigorous as he is playful. As a director, this is wonderful because the creativity is always there—always. You have to remain alert. We read the text a lot during prep and exchanged ideas, and then I'd make a decision. And on set, we knew exactly how far we could take it. Nothing was chosen at random. I remember that during readings, everyone thought of jokes for others. They were having fun surprising each other and making each other laugh. They were brilliant and fun; I was their spectator. Their kindness was beneficial to the entire team because they always wanted the film to be the best it could be and did everything they could to make that happen—whether it concerned their character or a joke from someone with a small role. What a treat it was to work with the three of them! And with Camille Lellouche, too, whom I loved meeting for this wacky, loveable character.

### **Édith scob, in this supporting role, is a triumph...**

Joséphine's natural elegance inspired me to find someone with the same quality for the role of her grandmother. What I loved in Édith is that I felt like I was filming an actress in a Coen brothers film: her face, her voice, her sparkling eyes...She had an amusing way of approaching the story, and I was very proud to have a woman who comes from great auteur cinema in my comedy. It's a real privilege.

### **The film is a rare example of elegant and fluid staging, evoking the romantic comedies of Richard Curtis. What were your priorities?**

The film prioritizes intrigue above all, and my camera needed to serve the plot and carry the characters as discreetly as possible. Yet it is my job to inspire emotional reactions from spectators without their noticing. So I was very focused on having solid artistic direction. I looked for elegant frames to highlight the actors, without losing sight of reality. I like feel-good movies like *LOVE ACTUALLY* and I wanted to do something in the vein of Richard Curtis' films, while giving a French identity to a film with a universal

theme. Yes, the story takes place in Paris, but the backdrop is not Haussmann's Paris; it could take place somewhere else. I wanted to exercise careful direction and create a visual identity with the decor, the light, and the costumes. This is the first movie in which I worked with an artistic director. Nina Rives supervised the work of the photography director, costume designer and production designer. No single element of decor, costumes, or lighting was chosen without the whole team's input. She really fostered excellent teamwork and I'm very proud of the result. We had hundreds of photos, maps, paintings, drawings, and album covers as sources of inspiration. Together, we established the artistic direction from A to Z for several long months before the shoot. We thought of all the colors ahead of time in order to produce harmonious images. We even went so far as to dress the extras with clothing we had selected in advance, in case the colors they were wearing didn't work. Just as a painter selects each and every hue that makes it onto the canvas, we cared about every detail in the image. And the goal is for no one to notice this work. It should generate an overall feeling. When this is successful, it's hugely satisfying.

**Tell me about your music choices.**

I decided to work with Sage again, who created the original score for the film. He was the front man for the band Revolver and worked as the composer for JUST LIKE BROTHERS. Since one of the main characters' primary occupation is classical music, I thought about incorporating piano compositions into the film's score...and in the end, there are quite a few! I wanted a timeless cinematic theme and Sage was able to deliver, producing several magnificent pieces. Meanwhile, we had to work on the classical music choices as early as the writing stage, in order to allow Joséphine to practice the piano—especially for the compositions by Liszt or the Chopin at the end of the film. This music sets the tone and charm of the film. I liked the idea that some of the classical music played by Olivia in the film could narrate a scene in parallel. So, none of the music in the film is for granted. It always has an impact on the story or an emotional function. The music is a character in the film.



# Interview with FRANÇOIS CIVIL

## **How did you get involved with this film?**

In early 2017, I got a call from Hugo G lin. He wanted to meet up to talk about his next movie. It was a huge surprise when he announced that he wanted to offer me a lead role! I read the script and thought it was amazing, and I was obviously very excited about the prospect of working with a director whose films I love, and whom I also consider a friend.

## **Were you familiar with the work of Hugo G lin?**

The first time I heard his name, it was when I was auditioning for his first movie, JUST LIKE BROTHERS. After several rounds, I made it to the finals along with...Pierre Niney! I didn't know him then. While he was the one who was chosen (to the great benefit of the film!), I felt a connection between Hugo's ambitions and my own aspirations as an actor. I want to be in movies that explore human emotions with accuracy and originality—movies that marry several genres, that can make you laugh, but not just laugh...

## **What did you find interesting, touching or funny in the script?**

The script was right up my alley. It was a great romantic comedy (a genre that I really have a thing for, especially NOTTING HILL, HEARTBREAKER, LOVE ACTUALLY, CRAZY STUPID LOVE, among others), but also a buddy movie and a movie with a supernatural twist. That last detail, to me, promised to be an incredible playground in which Rapha l's character must navigate disorienting situations, dramatic irony, despair, and personal growth...I've often been taken with movies that use the same kinds of devices, where the spectator witnesses an extraordinary event and watches the protagonist evolve (like LIAR LIAR, BRUCE ALMIGHTY, BIG, ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND...)

## **Your character, who is very likeable at the very beginning of the film, quickly becomes a self-centered guy who no longer pays attention to his wife. What do you think happens to him?**

Rapha l's success changes him. Becoming a public figure, in the public eye, turns him into someone who is always performing. He loses himself and the people he loves, starting with Olivia.

## **Thrown into a parallel world, he tries to win back his first love... Is it a kind of redemption for him?**

Redemption is a slow process! First, he must get knocked off his ivory tower, and that is a painful process. He tries to strong-arm his way through with manipulation and performance but is forced to live through some humbling moments. Instead of trying to return to his old life, no matter the cost, he needs to understand why he lost it in the first place.

## **In general, the hero becomes famous and gets the woman he loves towards the end of a movie. Here, it's the opposite journey, which gives him a particularly lucid outlook...how did you approach this as an actor?**

This is the film's central challenge: finding the gap between Rapha l's actions and what's going on in his head. How should he approach his wife, who is no longer the same person? How can he see her with new eyes? All of this turmoil was an extremely interesting arena to dig into. Throughout the shoot, Hugo and I made sure to mine this theme of the double game and offer different interpretations.

## **You are playing a writer who has full control over his characters' fates. Might this be a stand-in for the director?**

If the question is whether there is a part of Hugo in Rapha l's character and in this story, yes, I'm sure of it! I know this is an intimate story for him, which explores his views on love and the people we love. He was completely invested in both the artistic direction and directing the actors. I was very happy to bring to life a character he's been thinking about for many years.

**You really have a tangible bond with Benjamin Lavernhe in the film. How did you establish this rapport?**

Benjamin is a friend on stage and in life. We had already acted together in the mini-series CASTING(S) (which Hugo co-directed for one season!) but it was the first time that we had the space to create complete characters, and a relationship that evolves. Our effortless connection was definitely an asset in making the scenes feel real. I greatly admire his work. And working across from such a rigorous, funny and creative actor made me better at what I do!

**What about Joséphine Japy?**

We had almost worked together in the past, but the project fell through. She had left a strong impression on me, and we hoped to cross paths again. I was thrilled to hear that Hugo had given her the role of Olivia. Her intelligence, credibility and beauty shine through the image. It was illuminating to work with her.

**What is Hugo like as a director?**

There was a lot of preliminary work. The richness of the script and compressed shooting schedule forced us to prepare quite a bit. We read together, improvised, rehearsed and filmed! Joséphine, Hugo and I also needed to get to know each other well and understand how the others approached their work. To that end, Hugo organized a trip to Prague, which also allowed him to capture a few images he would later incorporate in the film. By the time we got to set, we were a well-tuned orchestra. Sometimes I could understand what Hugo wanted to try or change with a single look. He has a very precise idea of what he wants and how to get it, without ever over-directing. He was passionate and let us try things, make mistakes and try again. It was a very positive experience, where each one of us wanted to give our best for the film!

**How was it shooting science fiction scenes?**

It was really fun to try and make this element credible. Even though these scenes are in a completely different register as the overall movie, all of the departments took the challenge very seriously and gave it their all. It was strange to focus on that for a few days in the middle of the shoot—we saw it as a kind of break, though it was very intense!

# Interview with JOSÉPHINE JAPY

## **How did your involvement with the project come about?**

I auditioned first, which was crucial so that Hugo Gélin could find his Olivia. I met up with François, then with him. It became clear that I was meant to work with Hugo and François, because we saw eye to eye when it came to the staging and the work required. I could sense that being together during the shoot would be more than just having a good rapport. François and I had crossed paths, but the project never became concrete. I really wanted to work with him because we understand each other immediately, and our regard for each other pre-dates this project.

## **And with Hugo?**

Over lunch, we talked about all of his film references, such as IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE by Capra, which we have in common as one of our favorite films. It's my Christmas movie! Just like in IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, the male character in LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT experiences frustration as he comes to terms with his life's shortcomings.

## **What spoke to you in the script?**

Right from the first read, I was transported by this simple, relatable love story written in the form of a wonderful fable. LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT is emotionally complex, with love, laughter, melancholy and fantasy. To be able to throw myself into these different worlds, one after the other, was incredibly intriguing!

Beyond the romantic comedy aspect, though, I loved Olivia's character. I knew how to slip into the role and what I could bring to it. I immediately wanted to become her and evolve with her.

## **Are you a fan of romantic comedies?**

I love the genre! Once a year at least, I watch this kind of film in bed while eating popcorn, and it feels amazing! There is a reassuring optimism in movies like ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND, HEARTBREAKER, GARDEN STATE, NOTTING HILL, and GROUNDHOG DAY. But what also impresses me is these films' capacity to move into more dramatic registers, to compel the audience in very different ways.

## **You embody a character whose development is incredibly rich: she is first reserved, then glamorous as well as whimsical and unfettered! Did you feel like you were bringing to life two different characters?**

Totally! That's how it felt, and I tried to construct the character in this manner. We are in a fable: the first Olivia from the beginning of the movie has nothing to do with the second. In the first part, she loses herself for the man she loves, without realizing her sacrifices until he stops paying attention to her. In that moment, she realizes that it made no sense to have abandoned her art. What's more, the strength she used to get from her love for him, and from the sensation of being loved, crumbles. The second Olivia is consistent with the first, but her preferences have changed, and she has become a great pianist. We felt that since she has grown up in a different way and adopted a different path, she should have a stronger personality, especially since she feels well-rounded in her artistic and personal life.

## **Nonetheless, she seems a little bored with her mentor and future husband...**

Her life lacks fantasy and spontaneity. Everything is timed, like sheet music! Her daily life is perfectly organized and scheduled. She is far from unhappy but not completely fulfilled. This imperceptible dissatisfaction leads her to accept Raphaël's biography proposal. While, up until then, she was performing for large audiences without really having to make her own decisions, the writing of her biography throws her into a far less predictable arena.

### **What does she see in Raphaël?**

His unique way of looking at her. In the scene where he wants to convince her to take on the biography, she states that she is not interested, and he answers, “Well, you can’t say I haven’t tried.” There’s something very moving in this, because he is the only one who doesn’t impose anything on her—the only one who respects her choices. He doesn’t want to force anything on her. Instead he brings spontaneity and lightness to her life. The entire part of the film that takes place in Camargue narrates Raphaël’s rediscovery of his wife, and Olivia’s discovery of this man. All of the characters in the film grow on their own, as well as through contact with others. To me, it was a real gift to play Olivia, to construct the two women that she inhabits, with continuity from one to the other.

### **And in her first life?**

It’s love at first sight in the beginning! It’s a romantic exercise that is very difficult to translate to film and make it believable: if the spectator doesn’t believe in the strength of their love, the movie falls apart. It’s a very important step in the script, because these two soul mates grow together—individually and as a couple—over the course of ten years, but their evolution leads to turmoil. It was a real challenge because the film is informed by Hugo’s personal history, and it’s more engaging to narrate this other history between the lines.

### **What is your personal connection to classical music and piano in particular?**

Hugo asked for photos of me for the country home, and while looking through things in my grandmother’s home, I found a picture of myself when I was three years old, sitting at the piano with her and laughing. It was a privilege to have my grandmother introduce me to classical music at a young age. She took me to the opera, which I loved. Those turned out to be precious bonding moments between us. That said, I have never played an instrument. Still though, the movie has a few parallels with my own life!

### **What was it like to learn the piano?**

The teacher asked me how far I wanted to go. I said, as far as possible! For four months, I took a two-hour lesson every day, and I practiced for 2 or 3 more hours each day. This allowed me to arrive on set with the ability to play certain pieces. As soon as decided on a specific composition, we started to think about gesture, posture, and emotion. Then I would sit at the piano and the teacher would have me mime the positioning of my hands on the keys to figure out what we could enhance. So, I learned where my hands needed to be and when. We then worked with my double, so that we could become each other’s shadow. And lastly, there was more work around posture at the piano, because really playing means getting involved with the music, and this totally changes your breathing and how you carry yourself. The piano says a lot about Olivia, her ties to her grandmother, and even has a role in her romantic life. A pianist uses everything that’s inside of them to play, and as an actress, I needed to communicate this.

### **How did you feel shooting science fiction scenes?**

In the first scene we had to play, there was an explosion and we had to run. It was quite physical, and I started laughing during the take because there was something juvenile and amusing about it! Embodying Olivia, I felt like I was moving through different modes: adolescence, the “shadow” character in the science fiction portion, the reserved adult, the glamorous artist, and the young woman who finally wakes up and is able to breathe.

### **You sometimes make us think of Audrey Hepburn...were there any actresses who inspired you?**

One of my references was TWO FOR THE ROAD with Audrey Hepburn. While we were discussing the character with Hugo, we imagined a glamorous, radiant woman with genuine sincerity. Olivia, in the second life, needed to shine for Raphaël to stay hooked, and want to go back to the first life. So this woman is full of joy, sincerity, and happiness. She also needed to be humble and carry zero amounts of cynicism around her art—in this regard, she is the opposite of Raphaël in the first life.

**Were you excited about shooting with Edith Scob?**

She is very funny! We laughed a lot together! I found her very moving because she acts with great intensity. She really inhabits the character without being inaccessible. The grandmother she plays in the film has an important role because she is the link between reality and the parallel dimension. We often sat at the piano together and played a few keys—badly, might I add!

**What is Hugo like as a director?**

We rehearsed a lot and worked a lot in preparation for the film, in order to fine-tune our intentions. For the key scenes, we left no stone unturned until we felt it was convincing. All of this time spent together, learning to understand each other, was beneficial to the shoot. We ran the scenes, especially the dinner in Camargue, and then shelved them for a while in order to gain some perspective. Hugo trusted us and left us a lot of freedom. To him, the real challenge was to move from one register to the other seamlessly, because the romantic comedy blended into scenes of male friendship, as well as more intimate scenes.

## **Interview with BENJAMIN LAVERNHE**

### **How did you get involved with this film?**

A feature-length film is always compelling, and I work at the Comédie-Française, so I have the privilege of choosing projects I believe in. With *LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT*, there were a lot of elements I found motivating! First off, I liked the subject of the film, and this ambitious mix of romance and fantasy. And secondly, I already knew and liked Hugo through the *CASTING(S)* series, which he produced, and also directed for a few episodes. When he called me to talk about the role of Felix, I read the script, and luckily, that was the role I loved the most because it was the funniest. I think it's exciting to make people laugh. There were other reasons too. I could sense, in the writing and sense of humor, the presence of Igor Gotesman, who was also part of the *CASTING(S)* team. Lastly, François Civil, a friend in life and an actor I admire, was going to be alongside me—what more could I ask for?

### **What was your reaction when you first read the script?**

I immediately detected the legacy and positive influence of Anglo-Saxon cinema. It's very rare for the French to have the same knack for romantic comedies! It made me think of *NOTTING HILL* and *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*, which I really loved. But there have also been some recent successes on the French side, like *HEARTBREAKER*, which are excellent and show that the French can do it too! I saw huge potential in Hugo's story, in this film that blends realism and fantasy, and really holds its own. I found the script ambitious in its writing and construction: the plot twist creates a kind of suspense, an enigma to solve. It had been a while since I'd read anything so stimulating, and I was curious to know how the main protagonist would find a resolution. There are lots of surprises and you hold your breath until the end. The story starts out as a "classic" romantic comedy, which spins out of control slowly with Raphaël's literary success and the brutal awakening of the plot twist, which is a bit like *GROUNDHOG DAY* with its fantastical, surreal, quirky and poetic elements. This strange, somewhat metaphysical dimension had a strong impact on me. There was, of course, a lot of work to bring coherence to the script, but the issues that were raised were directly related to my job as an actor: how do you throw yourself into a fiction, into other people's lives, and come back to your own when you're no longer acting? What is real life? Is it when you're acting, or not acting? It's a question we often ask ourselves about actors: "What are they like in real life?"

### **Your character believes in the value of friendship above all else and is a romantic as well.**

He's not just the sidekick who's there for laughs. He has a veritable trajectory and great emotional depth. I liked his quirks, his poetic, sensitive side, his sense of humor and his melancholy. There is a strong friendship between Felix and Raphaël, and Felix is the only one who has the empathy, naïveté and affection required to help Raphaël and accompany him on his journey. This love story affects him as well and strikes a chord in him because he is still mending the wounds from his prior relationship with Morgane. François and I know each other well and have an intimate bond, so on set, it was incredibly helpful to be on the same wavelength and play around with humor and small details.

### **The funniest part is that he's a science teacher...**

He is a very rational person, which helps him dive into subjects that fascinate him. At the same time, he is crazy enough to tackle the unthinkable. The fact that his buddy Raphaël is losing his mind isn't a problem, but a wonderful, rare opportunity to dive into a world full of unanswered questions! The scene in the locker room after the ping-pong tournament was very interesting to shoot: he talks to him about *LES VISITEURS*, Einstein, string theory, etc., and in the end, he concludes: "You had a huge fight and that may be why you fell into another dimension, why there's this fracture." In the end, he muses that getting Olivia to fall back in love with Raphaël might not be so complicated, and that maybe that will make things go back to normal. But towards the end of the film, there are doubts: who is Raphaël, really? Did he invent a life? The end is imbued with melancholy and mystery, and I liked that it wasn't your traditional happy ending. It's open to interpretation.

### **In fact, why are he and Raphaël so close?**

Their friendship is effortless. They speak the same language; they're like an old married couple who take care of each other and have all their little habits. They also share a passion for ping-pong, and truly understand each other—that's something you want out of a romantic partner as well! I really feel that friendship is a lot like love. When you fall head over heels, you feel like you've known the other person forever. There's an immediate familiarity. You're at ease and feel like you know one another. You laugh about the same things and feel like your bond precedes the time of your meeting. I think it's the same thing with friendship. When you meet a great friend, you're already on the same wavelength. Everything's easy; you feel like you're from the same family. This is the case with Félix and Raphaël. Behind the scenes, we sometimes wondered if Félix isn't secretly in love with Raphaël! You know, like those friends who get jealous of your new girlfriend because she takes away your time together. It's true that when your best friend falls in love, you're bound to lose him a little! You see him less. He leaves you, in a way. But they also argue a lot and get impatient with each other, which is equally a part of their friendship.

### **Do you think he believes his story or that he is just trying to be nice?**

The audience identifies with Félix when he wonders if his friend is on drugs, or if he's lost his mind. So Félix holds the same point of view as the audience. This was one of our great preoccupations with the script. Why would Félix buy into this insane story? How can he slowly get on his friend's side? All of this happens progressively at the beginning of the storyline, and then Félix has to face facts: there are no hidden cameras, Raphaël isn't on drugs, and most of all, he seems truly sincere and is feeling lost. A different kind of person would have probably dropped him off at the insane asylum! But that would have been a very different movie! This is why I love Félix: he's just as crazy as Raphaël, if not more! I found this setup intelligent and convincing. With Hugo and François, we worked a lot on the scene where he ends up believing Raphaël, because I like to get clarity before diving in. Hugo was very patient in answering all my questions, and he agreed to have us rework certain dialogues and situations with François.

### **What is Hugo like as a director?**

It was really great to work with him because he's precise, demanding, passionate and attentive. François and I are nitpicky, and we like to give it our all, so we have no regrets. So, we liked shooting several takes in order to be sure that we did our best. But Hugo pushes even further. He digs as deep as he can, and when he says "One last take," that usually means there's about ten more last takes! He has a great ear, an instinct for rhythm and comedy, and a sharp eye. We often see eye to eye and we have the same sensibilities and sense of humor, but he knows how to shed light on things we can't see ourselves. So, most of the time, his expectations are in line with ours. He also listens to our suggestions and jumps on board with us. Working with him is demanding, but it's a real pleasure. He's kind but never indulgent, and he really cares about his actors.

## **HUGO GELIN** (Director)

Is an author, director and producer of feature film.

In 2008, he founded the film production company Zazi Films and produced his first feature *Just Like Brothers*. A road movie about friendship, which has been a great success in festival, Including

2 nominations for the Cesar in 2013 (Best First feature and best promising actor for Pierre Niney).

One year later, he co-wrote and produce *The Gilded Cage*, a movie by Ruben Alves. Box office success, this movie won the audience prize at the Alpes d'Huez film Festival et at European film Awards In 2013.

For television, Hugo produced three seasons of Casting(s), the sketch series directed by Pierre Niney and broadcast on Canal+ during Cannes Festival.

Zazi films quickly established itself in comedy films.

His second feature *Two Is A Family* is one of the greatest hit of 2016. This movie is seen in the whole world and in 2018, he won the best comedy prize of Unifrance In Alpe d'Huez Film Festival.

In 2019, Hugo finish his third feature *Love at Second Sight*, a romantic comedy produces by Zazi Films.

### **Director**

- 2019     **LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT**  
*with François CIVIL, Joséphine JAPY, Benjamin LAVERNHE*
- 2017     **TWO IS A FAMILY**  
*with Omar SY, Clémence POESY and Antoine BERTRAND*
- 2012     **JUST LIKE BROTHERS**  
*with François Xavier DEMAISON, Nicolas DUVAUCHELLE, Pierre NINEY, Mélanie THIERRY*
- 2002     **A L'ABRI DES REGARDS INDISCRETS**  
*With Jean DUJARDIN, Isabelle NANTY, Alexandra LAMY, François MOREL*
- 2000     **LA VIE SANS SECRET DE WALTER NIONS** (Short Film)  
*With Jean ROCHEFOR*



# FRANCOIS CIVIL

François Civil studied theatre at the studio Le Magasin. At 16 (2005) years old he plays in *Le Cactus* alongside Clovis Cornillac. After few roles for television, he revealed his talent in *Dying or Feeling Better* in 2008. He embodies Martial, a teenager excluded after his move who meets marginal twins, with them he will live exciting but also disturbing experiences. For this role he will be pre-nominated for Best Promising Actor in 2009.

After that he has a series of project from *15 Lads* in 2010, to *Borderline* or *The Stroller Strategy* in 2012.

In 2010, he meets Igor Gotesman and shoot a short range for him: *Five* that will become a long range in 2015 with Pierre Niney. With those two friends he will play in *Castings* a short programme.

He will shoot is first foreign movie in 2013: *Frank* by Michael Fassbender, a crazy comedy. And then in the successful French serie *Call My Agent!* whose Cédric Klapisch directed first season episode 1 and 2.

In 2016, he is a young muslim joining El in Nicolas Boukhrief's *Made in France* thriller.

In 2018 he will be featured in *Love at Second Sight* with Josephine Japy, he has already won the award of Best actor at the Alpe d'Huez Festival for this role.

In 2019, he shoots for the new Cedric Klapisch after worked with him for *Back to Burgundy* in 2015

2019	<b>SOMEONE SOMEWHERE</b>	Cedric Klapisch
2018	<b>LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT</b>	Hugo Gélin
	<b>WHO YOU THINK I AM</b>	Safy Nebbou
2017	<b>WOLVE'S CALL</b>	Antonin Baudry
2016	<b>BURN OUT</b>	Yann Gozlan
2015	<b>BACK TO BURGUNDY</b>	Cédric Klapisch
	<b>FIVE</b>	Igor Gotesman
2014	<b>MADE IN FRANCE</b>	Nicolas Boukhrief
2013	<b>AS ABOVE SO BELLOW</b>	John Erick Dowdle
	<b>FONZY</b>	Isabelle Doval
	<b>FRANK</b>	Lenny Abrahamson
	<b>IT BOY</b>	David Moreau
	<b>MACADAM BABY</b>	Patrick Bossard
2012	<b>THE STROLLER STRATEGY</b>	Clément Michel
2011	<b>SPONSORING</b>	Malgorzata Szumowska
	<b>BORDERLINE</b>	Alexandre Coffre
2010	<b>15 LADS</b>	Romain Cogitore
	<b>BUS PALLADIUM</b>	Christopher Thompson
2008	<b>WELCOME HOME</b>	Jean-Xavier De Lestrade

	<b>DADDY COOL</b>	François Desagnat et Thomas Sorriaux
	<b>DYING OR FEELING BETTER</b>	Laurence Ferreira- Barbosa
2006	<b>MOLIÈRE</b>	Laurent Tirard
2005	<b>LE CACTUS</b>	Michel Munz et Gérard Bitton

# JOSEPHINE JAPY

Joséphine Japy began her acting career, performing “Belle de jour” in the film *Grey Souls* when she was 10. In this feature film by Yves Angelo, she shared the stage with Jean-Pierre Marielle, Jacques Villeret and Marina Hands.

Nevertheless, she only returned to the cinema four years later, in 2009, for *Neuilly, Yo Mama* by Gabriel Julien-Laferrrière's playing Marie, the hero's girlfriend.

It's in 2011, in Dominik Moll's film *The Monk*, that Josephine fully revealed her talents as an actress. She plays the young and innocent Antonia, desired by Vincent Cassel, a fisherman monk.

The following year, she played France Gall in Florent Emilio Siri's biopic *Cloclo*. With Jérémie Renier playing Claude François, she played the singer, when she was 17 years old, and was in love with the famous Cloclo. In 2014, while continuing her studies at the Institut of Politique studies of Lyon, she shot *Breath*, the second feature film for Mélanie Laurent as a director. For this first leading role, which she shares with Lou de Laâge. It's her first time in Cannes Film Festival with this film presented at the International Critics' Week. She won the Most promising actress.

In 2016, she plays in *Faultless*, Sebastien Marnier's thriller in which she shared the screen with Marina Fois and Jeremie Elkaim.

In 2018 she will be in *Love at Second Sight* by Hugo Gelin with François Civil.

2018	<b>LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT</b>	Hugo Gelin
	<b>L'ÉCHAPPÉE</b>	Mathias Pardo
2017	<b>NEUILLY SA MÈRE 2 !</b>	Djamel Bensalah
2016	<b>FAULTLESS</b>	Sébastien Marnier
2015	<b>MEET THE GUILBYS</b>	Arthur Delaire & Quentin Reynaud
2014	<b>UN VILLAGE PRESQUE PARFAIT</b>	Stéphane Meunier
2012	<b>BREATHE MY WAY</b>	Mélanie Laurent Florent Emilio SIRI
2011	<b>THE MONK</b>	Dominik MOLL
2009	<b>NEUILLY YO MAMA !</b>	Gabriel Julien LA FERRIERE & Djamel BENSALAH
2005	<b>GREY SOULS</b>	Yves ANGELO

# BENJAMIN LAVERNHE

Benjamin LAVERNHE joined the Comédie-Française in 2012 and became a Member in December 2018.

At the same time, he made films under the direction of Romain LEVI in *Radiostars* and then under the direction of Nicole Garcia, Nabil Ben Yadir, Jeanne Hery, Fred Tellier, Eric Capitaine, Eric Besnard in *The Sense of Wonder*, Jérôme Salle in *The Odyssey*, Lou Jeunet in the film *Curiosa* due out in April 2019.

He was one of the nominees for the 2018 Caesar of the Best Promising Male for the film *C'est la vie!* by Nakache and Toledano.

In 2018, he played one of the main roles in Hugo Gélin's film *Love at Second Sight*, scheduled for release in April 2019, and one of the main roles in the film by Arnaud Viard.

2018	<b>JE VOUDRAIS QUE QUELQU'UN M'ATTENDE QUELQUE PART</b>	Arnaud Viard
	<b>LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT</b>	Hugo Gélin
2017	<b>CURIOSA</b>	Lou Jeunet
2016	<b>C'EST LA VIE !</b>	Eric Tolénado et Olivier Nakache
2015	<b>THE ODYSSEE</b>	Jérôme Salle
	<b>LOVE IS DEAD</b>	Eric Capitaine
2014	<b>THE SENSE OF WONDER</b>	Eric Besnard
	<b>THE SWEET ESCAPE</b>	Bruno Podalydès
2013	<b>ELLE L'ADORE</b>	Jeanne Herry
	<b>GUY GEORGES LA TRAQUE</b>	Fredéric Tellier
	<b>NICE AND EASY</b>	Benjamin Guedj
	<b>THE MARCHERS</b>	Nabil Ben Yadir
	<b>GOING AWAY</b>	Nicole Garcia
	<b>RADIOSTARS</b>	Romain Lévy

## CAST

**François Civil**  
**Joséphine Japy**  
**Benjamin Lavernhe**  
**Edith Scob**  
**Camille Lellouche**  
**Amaury de Crayencour**

Raphaël  
Olivia  
Félix  
Gabrielle  
Mélanie  
Marc

## CREW

**A Film by**  
**Original Screeplay**

Hugo GÉLIN  
Hugo GÉLIN  
Igor GOTESMAN  
Benjamin PARENT

**Adaptation and dialog**

Hugo GÉLIN  
Igor GOTESMAN

**Artistic Direction**  
**Cinematography**

Nina RIVES  
Nicolas MASSART

**Editing**  
**1er assistant director**  
**Chief Décorator**

Virginie BRUANT  
Matthieu DE LA MORTIÈRE  
Stéphane ROZENBAUM

**Costume Designer**  
**Make up**  
**Hair Stylist**

Isabelle MATHIEU  
Valérie THERY-HAMEL  
Reynald DESBANT

**Casting**  
**Original Music**  
**Musical Supervisor**  
**Sound**

Michael LAGUENS  
SAGE  
Raphaël HAMBURGER  
Rémi DARU  
Fred DEMOLDER  
Marc DOISNE

**Post-production**

Abraham GOLDBLAT  
Ana ANTUNES

**Production Director**

Olivier LAGNY

**Produced by**

Laetitia GALITZINE  
Hugo GÉLIN  
Stéphane CÉLÉRIER  
Valérie GARCIA

**Coproduced by**

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MARS CINÉMA  
MARS FILMS  
CHAPKA FILMS  
FRANCE 3 CINEMA  
C8 FILMS

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