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international
film festival™

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2011

TARANTULA SILEX FILMS AND LIMITED ADVENTURES
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH PCT CINEMA TELEVISION AND SOLAIRE FILMS PRESENT

VINCENT ROTTIERS
ANAÏS DEMOUSTIER
FLORENCE LOIRET CAILLE

LAST WINTER

A FILM BY JOHN SHANK



Le Pacte

CREW

Directed and Written by
In Collaboration with

Producers

Coproducers

Director of Photography

Production Designer

Sound

Costume Designer

Editor

Sound Mix

Original Music

John Shank
Vincent Poymiro
François Pirot
Tarantula
Silex Films
Limited Adventures
PCT Cinéma Télévision
Solaire Films
Hichame Alaouie
Antoine Parouty
Anna Falgueres
Christophe Giovannoni
Marie Morel
Yannick Leroy
Franco Piscopo
Emmanuel de Boissieu
D.A.A.U

Credit: na contractual



CAST

Johann

Julie

Marie

Madeleine

Helier

Vincent Rottiers

Anaïs Demoustier

Florence Loiret Caille

Aurore Clément

Michel Subor

SYNOPSIS

Somewhere on isolated mountainous plains. Johann has taken over his father's farm, devoting all his time and energy to his work. Surrounded by a struggling community and a natural landscape that has taught him all he knows, his heritage is his entire life. As autumn goes and winter comes, a barn burns to the ground and jeopardizes the fragile balance of the farm's survival.

The story of a man trying to love the world he belongs to one last time, as hard as he can, before it sinks into darkness.

France/Belgium/Switzerland, 2011, 103 min, 35mm, Scope, Dolby Digital SRD, French



With the aid of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Communauté française de Belgique et des télédiffuseurs wallons, with the participation of the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée, with the aid of the office fédéral de la Culture Suisse, with the support of Eurimages and the programme MEDIA de la Communauté Européenne, with the writing support of the Centre Images-Region Centre, with the support of the Région Midi-Pyrénées, with the aid of Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds. In coproduction with the Radio Télévision Suisse - une entreprise SRG SSR idée suisse- et Passage Antenne, with the participation of CinéCinéma, with the support of CinéFinance Tax Shelter and Mollywood, with the support of Belgacom, the Tax-shelter of Gouvernement Fédéral Belge, the Communauté française Wallonie-Bruxelles and the Loterie Nationale, with the support of the Cinéfondation, the association Beaumarchais-SACD, the SACD and of the Cinemart of the International Film Festival of Rotterdam.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

A long time ago, there was a world. A world that was given to me, a world presenting itself to me, a world that provided for all my needs.

I was part of a community. A community that had its own way of doing things, its own way of being, its own way of facing up to the world, relying on a higher law. Its laws were immutable, rooted in ancestral traditions, since time immemorial.

Later on in my life, there came a tear, a time of open wounds and unbearable uprooting. I can recall a feeling of danger threatening all that was familiar to me, threatening the world that protected me, that I had always felt safe in.

I am bound, whether I like it or not, to a place, to men and women, to gestures and rituals that have determined my existence and my position in the world. But this heritage, that has been handed down to me, with so much love and generosity, has made of me a man partially unadjusted to today's world. It is a burden, a wound that is part of me, and it is part of my body. And yet at the same time, it is this same heritage that underpins my spiritual life.

With this film, I want to tell the story of Johann, a man bearing on his shoulders two different heritages, one of them material, the other spiritual. Both heritages are embodied in the same elements, the same gestures and the same places, deeply rooted in the realities of the rural life that bring immense joy to Johann, but at the same time, wear him out.

Even though closely intertwined with the material burden he has inherited, his spiritual heritage hides something of an infinitely vaster and more singular dimension. His spiritual existence is linked to his very own and personal relationship to the living beings and the nature that surrounds him. Apart from his belonging to a long line of farmers and a close knit

rural community, Johann feels bound to the vaster and larger Natural universe that surrounds him. In this vaster universe, he feels needed. He has a purpose.

But what is to become of this man's life, of his spiritual existence, if the objects and elements, gestures and rituals that carry him, that seem to be his support, are taken away?

Johann is gradually forced to fight harder and harder to preserve his heritage, concealing his difficulties from those who surround him, trying to cling to the world slipping away from beneath his feet, and feeling the elements of his own personal mythology begin to fall to pieces. His inability to let go of his roots, plunges him into a violent uprooting, far more violent than the pain caused by material loss of his childhood home, and the disappearance of the only world he has ever known. His spiritual existence is slowly being smothered.

My aim with this film is not to accurately portray the sociological reality of the contemporary rural world. I will draw on the realities of this world, its geography, its space, as well as the place man and nature take in it, to bring out the deep internal conflict running through Johann's veins. I want to embody this story in few words and simple gestures.

I want to embody this story in the rising of the very first light of day and the dawning of night. In the coming of winter and its first flakes of snow. In the face of a young man and the relentless work of his hands and body. In the heavy drops of rain slapping faces. In the body of a man carrying the weight of his sister in his arms. In a man hiding in bushes, watching his home and his land from afar. I want to embody this story in the turning off of a bedside light, when the body of a loved one dissolves into darkness.

John Shank



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