

THE HOUSE BY THE SEA

(La Villa)

A film by
Robert Guédiguian



107 mins /France /2017 /French with English subtitles/Certificate tbc
Venice, Toronto, San Sebastian Film Festival 2017

Release 11 January 2019

FOR ALL PRESS ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

Sue Porter/Lizzie Frith – Porter Frith Ltd

Tel. 07940 584066/07825 603705 porterfrith@hotmail.com

FOR ALL OTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

Robert Beeson – robert@newwavefilms.co.uk

Dena Blakeman – dena@newwavefilms.co.uk



79-80 Margaret Street

London

W1W 8TA

Tel. 020 7299 3685

info@newwavefilms.co.uk

SYNOPSIS:

By a little bay near Marseilles lies a picturesque villa owned by an old man. His three children have gathered by his side for his last days: Angela, an actress living in Paris, Joseph, who has just fallen in love with a girl half his age and Armand, the only one who stayed behind in Marseilles to run the family's small restaurant. It's time for them to weigh up what they have inherited of their father's ideals and the community spirit he created in this magical place. The arrival, at a nearby cove, of a group of boat people will throw these moments of reflection into turmoil.

Further information and downloads [here](#)

Photo set can be downloaded [here](#):



CAST:

Angèle
Joseph
Armand
Martin
Bérangère
Benjamin
Yvan
Suzanne
Maurice
The Officer

Ariane Ascaride
Jean-Pierre Darroussin
Gérard Meylan
Jacques Boudet
Anaïs Demoustier
Robinson Stévenin
Yann Tregouët
Geneviève Mnich
Fred Ulysse
Diouc Koma

CREW :

Director
Screenplay
Director of Photography
Editor
Sound
Production design
Line producer
Assistant director
Location manager
Costume designer
Makeup
Sound mixing
Producers

Robert GUÉDIGUIAN
Robert GUÉDIGUIAN and Serge VALLETTI
Pierre MILON
Bernard SASIA
Laurent LAFRAN
Michel VANDESTIEN
Malek HAMZAOU
Ferdinand VERHAEGHE
Bruno GHARIANI
Anne-Marie GIACALONE
Hermia HAMZAOU
Armelle MAHÉ
Robert GUÉDIGUIAN and Marc BORDURE

Production
In coproduction with
With the participation of
In association with

AGAT Films & Cie
France 3 Cinéma
Canal + France Télévisions Ciné +
Cinéma 11 Cinéventure 2

DIRECTOR'S NOTE - ROBERT GUÉDIGUIAN

The initial idea was to shoot the film entirely in the Méjean calanque (creek), near Marseille, which has always made me think of a theatre. The colourful little houses built into the hills seem to be no more than façades... A viaduct overlooks them and its trains look like child's toys; the openness towards the sea transforms the horizon into a backdrop... like painted canvases... especially with the winter light, when everyone has gone. It becomes an abandoned set – melancholy and beautiful.

In this open-air 'bubble', a few brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, friends and lovers exchange past love and love yet to come... All of these men and all of these women share the same feeling. They are at a time of life when they have an acute awareness of time passing, of the world changing...

The paths that they'd opened up are gradually being sealed off. They must constantly be maintained... or new ones must be opened up. They know that their world will disappear with them... They also know that the world will go on without them...

Will it be better, worse?
Thanks to them, because of them?
What will be left of them when they go?

In this situation, suddenly, something happens that may radically overturn all of these thoughts, a kind of Copernican revolution: child survivors from a wrecked boat are hiding in the hills. They are two brothers and a sister, like an echo of Joseph, Armand, and Angèle, and that brings a sense of fraternity back into play, since they decide to keep these children with them. I believe in this encounter. There is something about "globalisation" that naturally relates to the future.

Though I exaggerate, I'd say that I couldn't make a film today without talking about refugees: we are living in a country where people are drowning at sea on a daily basis. I deliberately choose the word "refugees". I don't care whether it's due to climate change, for economic reasons, or because of a war – they are coming in search of a shelter, a hearth.

With these three little ones arriving, perhaps the calanque will be revived? Angèle, Joseph, and Armand will stay there with these three children to raise, and they're going to try to make the restaurant, the hillside community, and their world view survive... And keep up the connections between a few people... and in that way, maintain peace.



SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

2017	THE HOUSE BY THE SEA - Venice, in Competition
2015	DON'T TELL ME THE BOY WAS MAD - Cannes, Official Selection
2014	ARIANE'S THREAD
2011	THE SNOWS OF KILIMANJARO - Cannes, Un Certain Regard
2009	ARMY OF CRIME - Cannes, Official Selection
2008	LADY JANE - Berlin, in Competition
2006	ARMENIA - Toronto, Official Selection
2005	THE LAST MITTERRAND - Berlin, in Competition
2004	MY FATHER IS AN ENGINEER - San Sebastian, in Competition
2002	MARIE-JO AND HER TWO LOVERS - Cannes, in Competition
2001	LA VILLE EST TRANQUILLE - Venice, in Competition
2000	A L'ATTAQUE! - Toronto, Official Selection
1998	A LA PLACE DU COEUR - Toronto, San Sebastian, Special Prize of the Jury, Best Screenplay, OCIC Award
1997	MARIUS AND JEANNETTE - César Awards, 7 nominations, Best Actress César – Ariane Ascaride
1995	TILL DEATH DO US PART - Toronto, Official Selection
1993	MONEY BUYS HAPPINESS
1990	GOD THROWS UP THE LUKEWARM
1985	KI LO SA
1984	RED MIDI - Cannes, Directors' Fortnight
1981	LAST SUMMER - Cannes, Directors' Fortnight

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT GUÉDIGUIAN

“My films reflect where I am”

Cineuropa: Why do you like working with people you already know so well?

Robert Guédiguian: It's more than just pleasure: it's my life, my philosophy and my way of doing things. It might not work for other people, but it works for me, because I have always liked being surrounded by other people. I guess my films reflect where I am in life, and we are all the same age, so they speak with my voice and I speak through them. We share the same values, the same vision and political views. It's our 21st film together, and we are already working on another project. With them, I always feel free to invent new stories.

Were they involved in the script?

The division of tasks is still very strict. They are the actors, and I am the screenwriter, the director and the producer. But it's a bit like osmosis – you can't help being influenced. We see each other all the time; we go on holidays together. Our bond is so strong that it would be hard not to have them at the back of my mind. It actually happened to me once that I decided to make a film with a completely new cast. In *The Last Mitterrand*, I worked with Michel Bouquet, who is a wonderful French actor. It went very well, the film got good reviews, and it was shown at Berlin. But nobody wants to talk about it! It's almost as if it was made by someone else – someone who just happens to share my name. I guess I did it just to prove to myself that I could.

In *The House by the Sea*, their participation feels even more special. After all, it's a film about the past.

I wanted to think about where I am nowadays, ponder how we were and how we have changed. That's why I decided to use this self-reference in the film – the footage from 1986's *Ki Lo Sa*? It's quite funny because back then, I actually pirated the Bob Dylan song you can hear in the background [laughs]. So I've finally paid for it now, almost 30 years later. It's touching for me to go back and see that footage again. But there is also something almost diabolical about it because unlike photos, film always gives you this impression of being alive. It's a great way of connecting your past and your present.

Would you say that the film answers some of your own questions?

I don't think it has anything to do specifically with my life. Also because when you decide to say something about the passing of time, you inevitably start looking for mentors, but not only in cinema, because Chekhov was always on

my mind, especially *The Cherry Orchard*, or Ozu with his *Tokyo Story*. All of these masters spent their lives trying to deal with this particular theme. But when it comes to cinema, there is nothing more general or more universal than time. I needed to flesh out this idea, to focus on little details like a sentence here and there, or the way my characters dress. Otherwise, I would just be boring the viewers with my musings. They had to share the emotions of the characters. Their presence had to be felt – they had to be there in all their physicality.

You mentioned *The Cherry Orchard*. Just like in Chekhov's play, *The House by the Sea* is also a story about a certain place.

I wanted to shoot the film in one specific place. Méjean is very small, but open to the world. In a way, it feels like the whole world is surrounding it. Although it's close to Marseilles, the city that I used to know and that I portrayed in my first film has changed completely. It has disappeared. Now it's trying to change and restructure itself, so I am always looking for places that remind me of what it used to be like when I grew up: reminders of that landscape from my childhood. That's what I am searching for right now, so I am looking back in time after all. In a way, we all are.

Cineuropa Interview, by Marta Bałaga, from Venice Film Festival, Sixth of September, 2017

