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FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2024 OFFICIAL SELECTION
CANNES CLASSICS

FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT MY LIFE, A SCREENPLAY

A FILM BY
DAVID TBOUL
CO-WRITTEN WITH
SERGE TOUBIANA

2024 – FRANCE – FRENCH – 52' / 94' – 2K

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SYNOPSIS

François Truffaut likened films to trains, stating, "They move like trains, you understand? Like trains in the night." His life mirrored their pace: swift and unwavering. He was 52 when he abruptly reached the terminus of his life. A few months before, the acclaimed director had embarked on a journey with his old confidant Claude de Givray, exploring the depths of his familial past. But time was not on his side, leaving his envisioned autobiography, "The Screenplay of My Life," incomplete.

David Teboul's documentary unveils fragments of this untold intimate tale for the first time, enriched with a treasure trove of previously unseen correspondence and archival materials.

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François Truffaut My life a screenplay

A film by David Teboul

Written by Serge Toubiana and David Teboul
With the voices of Isabelle Huppert - Louis Garrel - Pascal Greggory

And also the voices of Clément Dupoux - André Dussollier - Marie Nodde Genod - Barbara Sukowa
Produced by Cathy Palumbo et Victor Robert
Editing Caroline Desourmay - Muriel Gregoire Heczel
Assistant director Clément Dupoux - Sound editing Romain Collinac
Mix Olivier Gottrand - Production manager Michèle le Povec
Archive researcher Sharon Hammon - International sales mk2 films

Photo: Claude Turfina

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ANGOA

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PRODUCTION NOTES

François Truffaut by himself – This is the approach of this documentary, entirely crafted from archives, where only the filmmaker would speak: his voice, his thoughts on life and cinema, but also on criticism – which was for him an essential stage of development, between 1953 and 1958 – through his characters or cinematic creations, when they are in a way his doubles on screen, throughout his work.

There are already several documentaries on François Truffaut, made since his death in October 1984, all more or less based on testimonies from those close to him, whether actors, screenwriters, critics, or filmmaker friends who belonged to the New Wave or the "Cahiers du cinéma" group. Here, the aim would be to construct the thread of a life and a intertwined work, interwoven in a very original way, sometimes borrowing the autobiographical framework, sometimes the fictional path, striving to keep only Truffaut's own words, considering that he was in a way the author of his own life. There is a real dramaturgical challenge here, due to the fact that François Truffaut would have always tried, in essence, to "keep control" of his life, obsessed with his independence and freedom, from childhood, adolescence, through his turbulent youth, where he chose the sidelines of life, opting for truancy, which for him meant the school of Cinema. Cinema was never for him what is commonly called "a reflection of life," social or familial, even less political; it was precisely the opposite: another, solitary but shared path, to experience more intensely the feelings, adventures, and secrets of childhood and love life.

As Ferrand says in *Day for Night* – portrayed by Truffaut himself, which gives these words an even stronger intensity and truth, when he speaks to Alphonse (played by Jean-Pierre Léaud): "Listen, Alphonse, come. You're going to go back to your room... you're going to reread the script... you're going to work a little bit and you're going to try to sleep. Tomorrow, it's work, and work is more important... You're a very good actor, the work is going well... I know, there's private life... but private life limps for everyone. Films are more harmonious than life, Alphonse. There are no traffic jams in films, there is no dead time. Films move forward like trains, you understand, like trains in the night. People like you, like me, you know well, we are meant to be happy in our work... in our cinema work. Goodbye, Alphonse, I'm counting on you."

This essential passage from *Day for Night*, we will take seriously, that is, at face value, starting from the following principle: François Truffaut always expressed himself about his activity, first as a critic, then as a filmmaker, by constantly exercising a kind of lucidity, on oneself and on others, to the point of making it his cinema ethic, and more broadly his guideline for life.

Having constantly gone back and forth, from his childhood, then his adolescence, then his training period, under the protection of his cinema "fathers," it will be interesting and undoubtedly exciting to identify in his words and in his artistic journey what he borrowed from one or the other of these tutelary figures. Examples will be provided. Like collages.

Finally, the fact that he died young, at the age of 52, reinforces even more the feeling of an internal coherence in the work, as if he had "constructed" it knowingly, fully aware, by multiplying the bridges or references, which circulate from one film to another, thus creating a dialogue with himself and his ghosts. A work that presents itself as a Rubik's Cube, where it will be a matter of finding the right pieces and the right colors to discover the perfect object.

This documentary presents itself as a game of goose, with François Truffaut playing all the roles, including his own, advancing from one square to another, and revealing to us the secrets of his cinema, and his intimate part.

Truffaut Intimate

In essence, there have been two François Truffauts, a bit like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. One hiding or masking the other...

There's the Truffaut known and recognized, adored, a master of cinema, author of a romantic oeuvre dedicated to childhood (*The 400 Blows*, *The Wild Child*, *Small Change*) and thwarted loves (*Jules and Jim*, *The Soft Skin*, *Two English Girls*, *Mississippi Mermaid*, *The Man Who Loved Women*, *The Woman Next Door...*).

And then there's another Truffaut, the one who gnawed at his nails and always showed great anxiety about "running his business," that of Films du Carrosse, having been his own producer since the beginning, the one who had the habit and the will to foresee as much as possible the big effects of small causes and vice versa, who never forgot to celebrate the Masters who accompanied his life as an artist - André Bazin, Jacques Audibert, Roberto Rossellini, Jean Renoir, Jean Cocteau, Max Ophuls, Alfred Hitchcock, a craftsman advocating a relative modesty of his aesthetic project. The project of this documentary film is to bring together the two Truffauts through a self-portrait of the filmmaker, a former fierce critic, gifted for controversy, reconverted into a master of childhood and love. In the double paradox of a false rebel who becomes a legitimate figure and of a man made to last who dies far too early, there is something new to explore.

By letting Truffaut speak, by organizing the continuum of this film around his words (supported by numerous documents never used before), his correspondence (very rich and varied, much of it unpublished: with filmmakers, writers, close friends like his American friend Helen Scott), his films (where he reveals himself more intimately through his numerous alter egos), our project will aim to unify the limping child Truffaut (his childhood remains more legendary than known), the educator Truffaut, concerned with lineage, transmission of knowledge (the role played by Jean-François Stévenin in *Small Change*, but also the one played by Dr. Itard - Truffaut himself - in *The Wild Child*), the actor Truffaut who had an extraordinary way of playing falsely, the asocial Truffaut devoted to the conquest of women (*Jules and Jim*, *Mississippi Mermaid*, *The Woman Next Door*, among others), and finally the Truffaut devoted to the cult of the dead (*The Green Room*). It is also here, between these two poles, the masculine and the feminine, that Truffaut knew how to oscillate, to balance. It seems to us that at the end of this process, the true François Truffaut will appear on the screen. A unique and multiple Truffaut, who managed to keep all his secrets for a long time.

François Truffaut and Serge Toubiana: The Passion for Cinema

To rehabilitate François Truffaut... the expression may nowadays seem surprising, the filmmaker being considered one of the major figures of our heritage. Yet, in the 1970s, he was criticized by a significant part of the critics. Truffaut, the romantic, literary filmmaker, opposed to Godard, the inventor of forms, the "artist." This opposition between the two masters of the New Wave then replayed, on a critical level, the theoretical rivalries about cinema and, on an intimate level, the dispute between the two former friends behind *Breathless*. The Cahiers du cinéma swore only by the "revolution" and Godard, at a time when Maoism dictated its law. Truffaut, the former critic, was ignored by the magazine that saw him born. François... who admits to no longer understanding what is written about his films.

Amidst these quarrels between factions, Serge Toubiana occupies a central place in the rehabilitation of the filmmaker. What dictate his feelings? That at the age of 16, he became passionate about the films of Godard and Truffaut. Why choose, settle an artistic rivalry, when both men have mattered equally to him? By joining *Les Cahiers* in 1972, Serge Toubiana campaigned to steer the famous

magazine towards reconciliation. "I told Serge Daney that it was not right to remain angry with Truffaut. We asked him for a meeting, and he received us in his office at Films du Carrosse. We explained that we wanted to remake Cahiers into a cinema magazine, and he replied, 'I have two things to tell you. First, if you had had the courage, you would have started a new magazine, because André Bazin never intended Cahiers du cinéma to become a Maoist publication. You've pushed it a bit. And secondly, you come to ask for my help, I will now be with you in a benevolent neutrality.' It took me years to understand that it meant: 'Prove yourselves!' " Serge Toubiana

The *Cahiers* are completely rethought: Serge gains the filmmaker's trust. For his first trip to the United States in 1978, Toubiana is surprised to see Truffaut accompany him. The latter introduces him to evenings, exposing him to this continent inseparable from the Hollywood imagination that inundates the world. The dialogue is resumed, culminating in the very long interview that the filmmaker grants to *Cahiers*, in July 1980, a sign that Truffaut is finally honored as an essential filmmaker. Serge Toubiana, accompanied by Jean Narboni and Serge Daney, converses with the filmmaker from morning until nightfall. Truffaut, who has just completed *The Last Metro*, which will be his biggest commercial success, opens up like rarely before, entrusting them with personal archives, and advises on the publication of texts about his "spiritual masters" such as Bazin, Hitchcock, Renoir, Welles, Langlois, and Audibert.

Gone too soon, in 1984, at the age of 52, Truffaut leaves a void that Serge Toubiana is quick to fill. "Even after his death, I kept a form of dialogue with him," he confides. To keep the memory of the director alive, the critic embarks in 1993 on writing a biography of Truffaut, in collaboration with Antoine de Baecque. The two biographers work tirelessly for three years, investigating, exploring substantial archives, and collecting a considerable amount of testimonies, to finally produce a major work of over 800 pages, which will be published in 1996 by Gallimard. As director of the Cinémathèque française, Serge Toubiana decides, thirty years after Truffaut's death, to dedicate an exceptional exhibition to him. Truffaut and the Cinémathèque... an obvious choice. As a teenager, François fled his home to take refuge in the dark room of the prestigious institution. There, he discovered the works that would inspire his vocation and determine his future. Henri Langlois, his "educator," was like a second family to him. He defended him with all his soul in 1968, when the Minister of Culture sought to dismiss him. Paying homage to Truffaut in the temple of cinema: a fitting tribute.

But for Serge Toubiana, the adventure does not stop there. The following year, he co-wrote a documentary on the relationship between Hitchcock and Truffaut, based on the rediscovered magnetic tapes, those of interviews conducted in August 1962, which would serve for the edition of the famous book: *Hitchcock/Truffaut* (Robert Laffont, 1966). The film, directed by Kent Jones, notably questions several contemporary directors, such as Martin Scorsese, James Gray, David Fincher, Arnaud Desplechin, and Olivier Assayas (among others), about what they owe, in their own work, to the famous book of interviews between these two giants of cinema. Because Truffaut, more than any other French director, can boast of having "explained" to American critics the genius of Alfred Hitchcock, while inspiring the most important directors of New Hollywood. Hitchcock according to Truffaut... a work that gives Toubiana the idea of another book in 2020, this time dedicated to a lesser-known but essential figure in François's life: Helen Scott. Finally, Serge Toubiana has also produced, written, and directed a series on France Culture about the director.

Numerous archival sources

Unpublished archives and the approval of the Truffaut estate have provided much material. On one hand, he was not stingy with radio and television interviews; there are a plethora of them, some of which are still completely unpublished, with (almost) only Serge Toubiana knowing of their existence, thanks to the enormous research he undertook to create "La Grande Traversée" in 2008, a fifteen-hour compilation of audio archives, documentaries, and roundtable discussions broadcast on France

Culture. He notably discovered a large number of radio interviews that have never been used as archives, both in France and abroad.

Truffaut also wrote extensively. He kept everything, as if he had methodically constructed the memory of his life. He spent his life documenting everything, a filmmaker of paper, of writing, leaving behind a considerable mass of documents for posterity. Since 1957, the year of the creation of Films du Carrosse, his production company which guaranteed him total artistic independence, the filmmaker had a secretary and made it a habit to keep all received letters, as well as a copy or draft of letters and telegrams sent. Madeleine Morgenstern, his wife and accomplice, made all these documents and archives available to Serge Toubiana. Among these pieces are many unpublished letters that the former director of the Cinémathèque was able to transcribe.

The François Truffaut collection at the Cinémathèque française includes one hundred and twenty-two boxes of archives, over twenty linear meters, as well as several thousand letters sent or received. It sheds light on the impulses and ruptures of the director, revealing the genesis and reception of his journalistic career and cinematic work, from the early 1950s to his premature death in 1984.

The institution also has the archives of Robert Lachenay, Truffaut's childhood friend. These provide access to childhood notebooks and letters evoking the Pigalle neighborhood, the movie theaters with the films they would clandestinely watch. Over the years and through his research on Truffaut, Serge Toubiana has been able to explore other essential archival collections for this documentary, rarely exploited. Such as those of the Institute for Contemporary Publishing Archives (IMEC) to access Truffaut's correspondence with Jacques Audibert, the Historical Library of the City of Paris (BHVP) for correspondence with Jean Cocteau, the Jesuit Archives of France of the Society of Jesus for correspondence with Jean Mambrino, and the Jacques Doucet Literary Library for exchanges with Louise de Vilmorin. In addition, there are private recipients and collectors with whom Serge Toubiana is also in contact.

All these documents, mostly unused, form the raw material of this first-person documentary. The Truffaut family fully supports the project and backs this intimate and comprehensive portrait of François Truffaut. They thus provide access to numerous unpublished documents and archives.

Direction

"When I was a critic, I thought that for a film to be successful, it must simultaneously express an idea of the world and an idea of cinema; *La Règle du jeu* or *Citizen Kane* answered this definition well. Today, when I watch a film, I expect it to express either the joy of making cinema or the anguish of making cinema, and I am not interested in anything in between, that is, all the films that don't vibrate." *What do critics dream of?* François Truffaut

David Teboul and Serge Toubiana have long nurtured the desire to make this film together. On one side, Serge, who knew Truffaut and interviewed him, accompanied him, rehabilitated him. On the other, David, passionate about the filmmaker since childhood, has become a filmmaker himself.

Serge Toubiana brings his personal knowledge of the man and his status as a legitimate specialist. He has delved deeply and extensively into the filmmaker's work, dissecting, analyzing, and diligently decrypting it, now perceiving its internal coherence.

David Teboul, on the other hand, possesses a perspective capable of exploring the filmmaker's subjectivity and providing that feeling of intimacy with Truffaut. Throughout his career, he has unveiled the psyche of major 20th-century personalities, relying on their own words, writings, correspondence, and testimonies, without resorting to overarching commentary or external interviews. This documentary approach, drawing from the texture of words as its raw material, perfectly corresponds to the nature of this project: allowing François Truffaut to tell his story through his own words, writings,

and films. Whether with Sigmund Freud or recently with Simone Veil, David Teboul has demonstrated the relevance of this singular, eminently subjective approach, unburdened by the weight of analysis and post hoc explanation. This first-person narration, guided solely by Truffaut's words, may rely on the voice of an actor when it comes to reading writings.

This first-person narrative style unveils the filmmaker's inner world. It will be supported by a visual narrative composed of archives, film excerpts, but also dreamlike images, evoking the thoughts, emotions, obsessions, dreams, and troubles of the director of *The 400 Blows*. Because the originality of David Teboul's approach also lies in the search for specifically cinematic tools to offer what could be called a "visual psychoanalysis" of his character, thus bringing a sensory dimension to the narrative. The films themselves will sometimes be used in their biographical aspect, as Truffaut scattered his cinema with alter egos and personal elements. But cinema is also a space of projection, a dream for Truffaut, which tells us even more about his interiority, his personality. Cinema, according to him, is transforming a settling of scores into a work of art, because cinema is better than life. Not "cinéma vérité," but a way to sublimate reality.

"I believe that cinema is an improvement on life because it is extraordinary; consider the power we have, when making a film, to organize an entire life, a life of one's own, a life without traffic jams, without congestion, an intense life."

Themes

Unwanted - Born at dawn on February 6, 1932, to a 20-year-old unwed mother and an "unknown father," François Truffaut almost didn't come into the world. His mother, Jeanine, wanted to have an abortion. Fearing scandal, his parents encouraged her to give birth alone, discreetly.

Abandonment - He was placed with a wet nurse until the age of three. In the meantime, Jeanine met Roland Truffaut, who agreed to recognize him. The child now had a name but still no place. The couple exiled François to his maternal grandmother's in 1934. When he returned to "his" parents eight years later, he was ordered to disappear.

Books that save and educate - To survive, he immersed himself in a burgeoning passion: literature. Reduced to being invisible, books became his family. In these writers, he saw friends, role models, and even fatherly figures. He convinced himself early on that real life was elsewhere, thanks to Dickens, Genet, Balzac.

Discovery of cinema - But the true passion, a lifelong one, was on the screens. From 1939, François frequented movie theaters, in the evenings and often during school hours. He didn't have his parents' permission or the necessary money. He entered through exit doors or windows or diverted cafeteria money to pay for his ticket.

A consuming passion - A prelude to his career as a critic, he noted down the names of films, compiled nearly three hundred files cataloging newspaper articles clipped and stolen photographs from cinemas about filmmakers, Renoir, Gance, Cocteau, Vigo, Clair, Allégret, Clouzot, Autant-Lara... A dragon mother, a non-existent father - His family situation hardly improved. Jeanine was a dragon mother, lacking in tenderness, selfish, fickle. Until he was 12, Truffaut believed he was his father's son. But suspicions accumulated. In 1944, he discovered the truth... in the 1932 diary, where his "father," on the supposed date of his birth, had nothing noted. When the teenager unearthed the family record book, there was no more room for doubt.

A lifelong friend - Fortunately, there was Robert Lachenay, whom he met in 1943 in school. A partner in truancy, an accomplice in fetishistic outings to movie theaters. These two became inseparable, writing to each other tirelessly when separated.

School is the screen - They compared their tastes endlessly. They played truant together to go to the movies. They set records for the number of screenings to beat. For them, school was the screen. Cinema was a clandestine pleasure where young Truffaut forged his own morality, which had nothing to do with that of others, meaning adults.

Delinquent - All this led Truffaut, at the age of 14, to become what is commonly called a juvenile delinquent. He ran away from home, was arrested, went to the police station, then was sent to a juvenile detention center.

Cinémane Circle - At the age of 16, François lived in Robert's maid's room. Movie clubs were flourishing, and they had to be part of them. In the fall of 1948, they founded the Cinémane Circle at the Cluny-Palace. Truffaut met a man who believed that popular education passed through cinema: André Bazin.

Incarceration - But the young Truffaut's sleight of hand eventually backfired on him. After clearing his debts once, his father grabbed him by the collar on December 7, 1948, as he was about to present a film at the Cluny-Palace. He was placed in the Center for Observation of Juvenile Delinquents in Villejuif.

André Bazin, father figure - He wrote to Bazin, and the latter went to great lengths to get him out. He went to see the psychologist and managed to get him emancipated. His parents easily gave up their rights.

The Cinémathèque, a cinema family - Bazin became his first surrogate father. At the end of July 1949, he invited him to the Festival of the Cursed Film where Truffaut met Chabrol, Godard, Rivette, Rohmer... and immediately attached himself to this group, which regularly met at the Cinémathèque. He now had a cinema family.

Engagement and desertion - A romantic disappointment led him to make a surprising decision: Truffaut joined the army! But, in April 1951, before embarking for Indochina, he deserted. Immediately alerted, Bazin convinced him to simulate an illness and be hospitalized. Truffaut joined another regiment, in Germany. He deserted a second time.

Saved by his adoptive parents - André and Janine Bazin pretended to be his parents in order to get in touch with him. Six months of efforts and procedures were necessary for the army to release him in the winter of '52. Back to freedom, Truffaut lived under the roof of his "adoptive parents" for nearly two years, in Bry-sur-Marne.

Critical apprenticeship - It was there, in the small maid's room of their three-room kitchen, that he wrote his first reviews. He also began writing to the spiritual fathers who had educated him. Starting in March 1953, André Bazin had the reviews written by François Truffaut published in *Cahiers du cinéma*.

The *Cahiers* years - François Truffaut was a tough... even murderous critic. With virulence, in the name of a very high idea of the seventh art, he tore into everything and railed against the mediocrity and lack of ambition of the filmmakers who displeased him, while declaring his admiration for his masters.

Against "papa's cinema" - And it only got worse, with an article he published in 1954: "A Certain Tendency of French Cinema": a polemical text against the filmmakers of "French quality" and "papa's cinema." The young critic heralded the New Wave, advocating self-production and artistic freedom.

Rossellini, cinema father - Truffaut continued his journalistic activity while becoming Roberto Rossellini's assistant. This other surrogate father convinced him to delve into his youth, his only reality, to dare to draw from it the necessary material. *The 400 Blows* would be born from these initial work sessions.

Acting Out - A true creative fever seizes the young editors of *Cahiers*. The *politique des auteurs* is born. It's up to the young filmmaker to assert his singular point of view. His short film *Les Mistons* (1957) is a

poem where five kids spy on a couple in love. A work that announces the major themes to come: "women and children first".

A Marriage of Convenience - But for what comes next, funds are needed... Fortunately, his in-laws are there. Truffaut indeed married Madeleine, daughter of Ignace Morgenstern, owner of the film distribution company Cocinor, on October 29, 1957. It's a sensible marriage that doesn't match Truffaut's romantic aspirations.

Les Films du Carrosse, like a shelter - With the funds from his father-in-law, he ventures into filmmaking and founds a production company, Les Films du Carrosse, named in homage to Jean Renoir and his film *The Golden Coach*.

Renoir, a spiritual father - Renoir... another spiritual father, whom Truffaut discovered at the age of 14 when he saw "The Rules of the Game". Renoir even came to consider him his own son. From Renoir the humanist, Truffaut cherished for his entire life the moral and cinematic lesson: "Give every character a chance without judging them. And never forget that life is paradoxical."

The 400 Blows, rebirth in cinema - In 1959, the release of *The 400 Blows* caused a seismic shift in the French cinematic landscape. Adolescence is portrayed frontally, without the condescending gaze of adults, with a sincerity and authenticity in the narrative seldom achieved. In Truffaut's films, children speak truthfully and never mimic adults.

The doubles - Antoine Doinel appears to everyone as the filmmaker's alter ego on screen. Truffaut thus puts into practice what he aspired to: making authorial cinema, with a strong biographical dimension. An exceptional complicity is born with the actor Jean-Pierre L aud, and Truffaut gradually takes on the role of a father figure with him.

Filming childhood, educating, shaping - Childhood is Truffaut's favorite theme: *The Wild Child* (1969), where the director portrays himself, is the story of the difficult upbringing of a child who grew up away from humans, *Small Change* (1975) a tender portrayal of childhood. It's first a form of self-analysis about his life, his desire to understand his own childhood.

In search of the biological father - Of course, we must mention the father, the real one. Roland L vy, whom Truffaut traced in 1968, after using the services of the detective agency Dubly. In September, Truffaut hides in the corner of a building in Belfort. The man comes out. The filmmaker lets him pass. Then he rushes into a movie theater in the city showing Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*.

Always projected forward - Educating, shaping, taking on the role of the father one never knew: the man has found his way, his identity in cinema, his place in the world. "A hurried man, always projected forward," he never stops filming, writing, imagining, considering the future and its possibilities.

Jules and Jim, a pure love triangle - Despite this first huge success, Truffaut does not become bourgeois: *Jules & Jim* is proof of that. The film is censored, banned for under-eighteens. Truffaut challenges the bourgeois couple model. He fights in vain to lift the ban and has written, notably by Renoir, letters of morality. He defends his work by inventing the expression "a pure love triangle".

The Soft Skin, adultery - With *The Soft Skin* (1964), the triangular relationship of Jules and Jim has reversed: this time it involves two women and one man, caught in a story that could be quite conventional. It's a critical and commercial flop.

Films shot with a feverish passion - Truffaut's taste for renewal, the desire to surpass, to oppose his films, is palpable. At odds with the "established" director, he embarks on risky, ambitious projects. From the often acclaimed author, one might have the retrospective illusion that success was always guaranteed for him. This forgets the failures, the difficulties.

Fahrenheit 451 or the book-men - "There is only to film a burning book to make it loved." By uttering this phrase, François Truffaut expresses the deep reason that drove him, against all odds, to film *Fahrenheit 451*. All the books burned in *Fahrenheit 451* are books that Truffaut loves. The filming leaves him exhausted.

An independent and faithful craftsman - Truffaut dedicates his life to cinema. What matters to him is independence, freedom, and loyalty. He wants to produce himself, produce his friends, and be accountable to no one. The business must keep running. Truffaut is a producer on all fronts, meticulous in control, noting everything, archiving everything, to the point of obsession.

Day for Night mise en abyme - *Day for Night* (1973) shows the shooting of a film where the director is played by the director himself. The viewer discovers the backstage of cinema. This way of putting cinema into a mise en abyme, of making cinema a parallel reality, is found throughout his works.

Conquering America - *Day for Night* marks a great moment for Truffaut, who reconnects with success and conquers the American public with the Oscar for Best Foreign Film. He spends time in LA, receives many offers, finances new films there, and meets Spielberg. But he accepts no work in Hollywood. He doesn't like studio interference.

Dialogue with Hitchcock - In April 1962, Truffaut writes a long letter to Hitchcock. He proposes the idea of the "Hitchbook": a book of which Truffaut would be the initiator and which would reveal "the best filmmaker in the world." Hitchcock agrees to respond to 500 questions. For 8 days, Truffaut will question him like Oedipus consulting the Oracle.

Cinema, "where one lives best" - Cinema has become François Truffaut's reality, where he lives best, where life doesn't disappoint him as violently as it may have. It's in cinema that he settles his scores with his childhood and manages to transcend it, it's in cinema that he learns to love women, where he finds a family.

The Cult of the Dead - Truffaut pays tribute to his fathers in *The Green Room*. Davenne, who returned unscathed from the Great War but traumatized, worships the dead, his dead whom he knew and loved. We see all the names of Truffaut's fathers passing by. One of François Truffaut's most intimate and secretive films, to the point that he himself will play Julien Davenne.

To Love All Women, Except His Mother - "Love is the subject of subjects." Everyone is entitled to love, Truffaut proclaims. And especially him. It's in cinema that he lives the intensity of feelings. Truffaut falls in love with his actresses. He loves, he films. In his films, women lead the action. They are daring, tenacious, venomous, determined, irresistible. They are the ones who decide and take all the risks.

Neither With You Nor Without You - Truffaut is lovesick, he seeks passion, romance. He loves secrecy and hidden relationships. Clandestine life is fundamental to him. He belongs to another era, an era of courtesy that he learned from books, where people write to each other, court each other. Married life weighs heavily on him.

Does Love Hurt? - This question, posed by Catherine Deneuve in two roles where she is named Marion, surfaces in all of Truffaut's films. He meets the actress on the set of *Mississippi Mermaid*. They live a passion but separate after two years. He becomes depressed and stays in a sleep clinic.

The Last Metro, the Monument - The filmmaker is disoriented, once again at a low point, but he embarks on *The Last Metro*, an ambitious project for which he struggles to find funding. He brings together Deneuve and Depardieu, for the first time, which reassures the financiers. *The Last Metro* is a triumph and becomes Truffaut's monument.

Depardieu, Alter Ego - The first meeting takes place in October 1979, the actor being rather reserved in front of a filmmaker he considers "a bit passé." But it's love at first sight, Truffaut finding "an alter

ego, more physical," and Depardieu being seduced by a "airy, cheerful, sharp rascal, who looks at the world with a 360° angle."

The Woman Next Door, Last Muse - The director is afraid of becoming academic and embarks on a less mainstream project. It's a "televised love at first sight" that inflames the heart of the soon-to-be fifty-year-old filmmaker. Fanny Ardant is 30. "The next film will be for you." It will be *The Woman Next Door*. A film echoing his passionate love with Deneuve.

An Unfinished Life - Truffaut falls seriously ill. Death has, to be honest, always haunted him. From August 1983, it is his own death that catches up with him. Fourteen terrifying months, where the filmmaker will go from illusory convalescence to slow agony, accompanied by his wife Madeleine and Fanny.

He dies on October 21, 1984. He had asked for these words of Sartre to be pronounced on his tomb: "Any man who feels indispensable is a scoundrel!".

ABOUT DAVID TBOUL (DIRECTOR)

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

2024 – François Truffaut, Le scénario de ma vie
2022 – La Case du siècle (TV)
2021 – Hervé Guibert, La Mort Propagande (TV)
2020 – Sigmund Freud, un Juif sans Dieu (TV)
2020 – Mon Amour
2013 – Bardot, La Méprise (TV)
2008 – Council House
2005 – Bania (TV)
2004 – Simone Veil, Une histoire française (TV)
2002 – Yves Saint Laurent, 5 Avenue Marceau 75116 Paris (TV)

ABOUT SERGE TOUBIANA (WRITER)

Serge Toubiana co-authored with Antoine de Baecque an 800-page biography of Francois Truffaut (Gallimard). As director of the Cinematheque Francaise, he devoted an exceptional exhibition to the filmmaker in 2014. He also co-directed the documentary *Hitchcock/Truffaut* with Kent Jones.

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

2024 – François Truffaut, Le scénario de ma vie (writer)
2015 – Hitchcock/Truffaut (writer)
2005 – Michael Haneke : Le Septième Continent (TV) (director)
2002 – Chaplin Today (TV series) (writer)
2001 – Isabelle Huppert, Une vie pour jouer (TV) (director)
2000 – Depardieu, vivre aux éclats (writer)
1993 – François Truffaut, portraits volés (director)

CAST & CREW

Written by **Serge Toubiana and David Teboul**

Directed by **David Teboul**

With the voices of

Narrator **Isabelle Huppert**

François Truffaut **Louis Garrel**

François Truffaut's Father **Pascal Gregory**

Jean Genet **Clément Dupeux**

Henri-Pierre Roché **André Dussollier**

Jean Cocteau **Marie-Noëlle Genod**

Helen Hessel **Barbara Sukowa**

Produced by **Cathy Palumbo and Victor Robert**

Editing **Caroline Detournay**

Music **Grégoire Hetzel**

Assistant Director **Clément Dupeux**

Sound Editing **Romain Cadilhac**

Mix **Olivier Goinard**

Production Manager **Mathilde Le Postec**

Archive Researcher **Sharon Hammon**

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