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presents

BRUSSELS XELLES

AN URBAN JOURNEY

A film by
LUC JABON



PRESSKIT

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1 SYNOPSIS



To tell the story of Brussels during a journey across some of the city's streets, boulevards and squares, means witnessing how much the urban space of Brussels is changing, reinventing itself and dividing, but also examining how the citizens are managing to reclaim it.

SHORT

LONG

The story of Brussels is told during a journey across boulevards, squares, alleys, urban space...

By making a heroine out of these streets, discovering those who tread upon them, work there, pass by, take a stroll there and give up their time to celebrate them or demonstrate on their behalf.

By immersing ourselves in certain districts of Brussels, in collaboration with informed speakers, reacquainting ourselves with the origin and past of these streets and examining the various changes and destruction that they have incurred and the current transformations and imagining what the future holds.

Streets are not just public roads that you drive along and use to get from A to B. They present a whole range of political, economic, urban, societal, cultural, poetic... and amusing issues.

To examine these issues is to show how much Brussels is changing and how today, citizens are managing to reclaim their urban space.

Fundamentally, when the streets are alive, the city comes alive.

AUTHOR'S INTENTIONS



Il Brussels urban space has a story. Compared to other cities in Europe, its story is chaotic because it is a space in permanent mutation, has suffered many cycles of destruction and (re)construction and, as a result, much of its past is buried. How can you still imagine a versatile river, the meandering Senne, passing through Brussels today lined with dead ends, bridges, mills, small industries and a port? Having become an open sewer in the 19th century, the vaulting of the Senne is one of the most spectacular construction projects of the century. To evoke this past is to understand why, with a river lost from sight, a closed-down port, a north-south junction breaking the east-west axis of the organic medieval town, everything is «twisted» and messy in the urban space of modern-day Brussels.

This urban journey tells the story of a Brussels that seems to be a permanent building site, which often seems irrational but also irresistibly charming. A journey chosen to suit our own quest (others would certainly opt, according to their own preferences or inclination, for other neighborhoods and other streets). This matters little. What matters here is that the chosen streets have become the heroines of the film. From them, has stemmed this desire to question the citizens' place in these streets. How do we make our public space benevolent? How do we share it? Is it not also where the future of democracy is decided? The street is «the collective apartment,» wrote Walter Benjamin. Nothing is ever neutral. And its users are not anonymous figures who may evolve within a setting.

In their own way, without even realizing it, everybody appropriates urban space, if only by enjoying moving around the streets as they see fit, freely. Questioning the various kinds of appropriation is the main concern of the film. Brussels streets have always been places of conflict, disagreement and usurpation. Thus, for centuries, everyone has walked on the streets. And it took several royal decrees in the 1930s to decide that, from then on, the inhabitants of Brussels would have to walk on the sidewalks, use pedestrian crossings and let the car become queen of the street for a while. Today, we are witnessing a complete paradigm shift, with the car's place in public space dwindling. This urban journey through Brussels is at the heart of this change and recovery, with, among other things, the pedestrianization of certain boulevards, the reconfiguration of certain places, the reallocation of Canal access and even the birth of new streets.

To visually involve the viewer in these problems is to immerse them as far as possible in the experience of living in these different neighborhoods. How? By filming most of our interviewees on those very streets. Thirty speakers as diverse as Brussels itself show us how the democratic sharing of public space is constantly being reestablished. But it is also a question of their singular attachment to our city which demonstrates a certain Brussels mindset. A mindset that never

takes itself too seriously while assuring its right to rant and be passionate. Finally, at certain times of the day or night, according to those who occupy them, the streets of Brussels reveal a singular, beautiful and bitter poetry. In our opinion, the sequences of the film that attest to this show how, when we stop by streets and they come alive, it makes our world.

Luc Jabon

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Your film shows Brussels through its past, its streets, its inhabitants and sometimes its inconsistencies. How did the idea of this urban journey come about?

With this journey I wanted to «narrate» Brussels only from the perspective of some of its streets and public spaces. But what exactly is it to narrate in a documentary? I did not want to do it through voiceover, a process often used in other excellent films on Brussels. So I chose a wide range of speakers whose remarks could, by their diversity, constantly resonate. The film then became challenging in terms of editing as we had to streamline the sequences so that this very elaborate and diverse journey became almost «natural» and that the viewers simply let themselves get caught up in it.

The film is a precious testimony and contains a wealth of essential information and fascinating stories about Brussels. What guided your choices in the selection of the issues broached?

What is exciting about a street, when you consider that it can't be reduced to just a public road that you walk along or cross over, is that it has a past, a present and a future. A street is always transversal. That's what guided me in the choice of issues, according to whether my interviewees are interested, by their respective jobs, in a particular aspect of urban space. Thanks to them, I hope that after watching the film, the viewers will take another look at their nearby urban spaces and stop there to, perhaps, (re)discover them.

Of the thirty or so speakers that we see in the film, whose testimony touched you the most?

It is not out of conceitedness that I want to put all my speakers exactly on the same level. For me, none of them should, «take the lead» on the content of the film, otherwise I lose this diversity specific to urban space. In their own way, they each touch me by their words and generosity and their desire to think and experience the street.

Your film highlights a number of challenges for Brussels (mobility, appropriation of urban space, etc.). What do you think are the major issues that Brussels will face in the future?

Today we are experiencing a pivotal moment in the perception of Brussels streets and urban spaces. For the first time and consistently, the place of the car, which has been the queen of the streets for almost a hundred years, is dwindling. But what will take its place? Beyond the essential question of mobility, it is the identity of public space that comes into play. How will it be divided up? How will this division be democratically established?

This year, the Iris Festival is celebrating its 30th anniversary. What message would you like to convey to younger generations through your film?

Brussels is still a shit hole from the perspective of its streets and urban spaces. It seems to be a permanent building site. At the same time, the city is evolving and, if only because of pedestrianization, new ways of strolling around are being established. We also walk differently in a street when the sidewalks, for example, and the roads are not clearly defined. All this is not just a matter of politics and urban planning. Civil society needs to have more of a say. And it is up to the younger generations to reclaim these spaces from now on.

AGENDA



Premiere **MAY 2nd 2019** at **BOZAR**, Henry Le Boeuf hall - **20H**

As part of the **IRIS CELEBRATION** marking the 30th anniversary of the creation of the Brussels-Capital Region

Organized with the support of Bozar and Visit.brussels



From May 2019, a series of documentary screenings followed by debates throughout Belgium

TO CONSULT THE FULL AGENDA, PLEASE VISIT:

 <https://www.facebook.com/bxlunetraverseeurbaine>

 <http://imagecreation.be/film/bruxelles-brussel-une-traversee-urbaine/>



Broadcast on RTBF and Proximus

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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

A DOCUMENTARY OF 76'

DIRECTION

Luc Jabon

SCENARIO

Luc Jabon



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CHARLES PICQUÉ, former Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region

BART LEMMENS, owner of the Union café

PHILIPPE VAN PARIJS, philosopher UC Louvain and KU Leuven

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AÏCHATOU OUATTARA, blogger & afrofeminist

SIMONA SOLEDAD, artist-activist, member of the collective Noms-Peut-Être

A TEAM OF WORKERS FROM IXELLES

LAURENT

PIERRE OLIVIER, volunteer Rolling Douche

ALIX DEGUELDRE, volunteer Bulle

LAURENT TOUSSAINT, collective Design for Everyone

ALAIN HUTCHINSON, former European deputy

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MARIE-FRANCE ZICOT, tutor at CEMEA

YVAN VANDENBERGH, resident of the St Jacques neighborhood

FRANCA RAVET, plastic artist

GIULIETTA LAKI, anthropologist ULB/Espèces urbaines

MILADY RENOIR, poet

with **CASSIUS**

LAURENCE VIELLE, poet

with **GARANCE**

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ORIGINAL MUSIC

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VIDEO EDITING STUDIO

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ScreenBox

Avec la participation de VisitBrussels

PRODUCTION

IMAGE CREATION.COM

COPRODUCTION

La RTBF (télévision belge)

Proximus

WITH THE HELP

Of the Film and Audiovisual Centre of the
Wallonia-Brussels Federation

WITH THE SUPPORT

Of the Region of Brussels-Capital

Of the COCOF

French Community Commission

De la Promotion de Bruxelles at the Wallonia-
Brussels Federation

Of Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal
Government

CASA KAFKA PICTURES MOVIE TAX SHELTER
EMPOWERED BY BELFIUS

AND THE PARTICIPATION

Of the Region of Brussels-Capital

Of Screen.brussels Films Commission

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LUC JABON

FILMOGRAPHY



LUC JABON

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Born on 11/12/1948 in
Brussels.

Luc Jabon has been writing scripts for over 35 years.

He has co-scripted many Belgian films, including **Le Maître de musique** by Gérard Corbiau, **Babylone** by Manu Bonmariage, **Marie** by Marian Handwerker, **La Cantate de Tango** by Diego Martinez Vignatti.

He has co-scripted TV movies, including, **Une si-rène dans la nuit** by Luc Bolland, **La Colère du Diable** by Chris van der Stappen, **Avec le Temps** by Marian Handwerker and **Des Roses en Hiver** by Lorenzo Gabriele.

He has also co-scripted many documentaries, the latest being **Zénon l'Insoumis** (Françoise Levie).

He has directed several documentaries: **De clou à clou**, **Le diable dans la philosophie**, **Trio Bravo**, **La vie d'un lecteur au temps de la fin**

du livre, **L'Age de Raison**, **le cinéma des frères Dardenne**, co-directed with Alain Marcoen, **Au-delà des mots**, **le cinéma de Joachim Lafosse** and just recently, **Brussels, An Urban Journey**.

He has directed a feature film, **Les Survivants**. He is a scriptwriting teacher at the IAD (Institut des Arts de Diffusion), he has published in collaboration with Frédéric Sojcher **Scénario et Réalisation, modes d'emploi ?** with Editions du Nouveau Monde.

On a voluntary basis, he chairs the Pro Spere federation which brings together professional associations of directors, screenwriters, actors and collective management societies to protect the interests of authors.

IMAGE CREATION FILMOGRAPHY

Founded in 1987 as a subsidiary of renowned service provider, Studio l'Equipe, in Brussels, the company first went by the name of Image Création before becoming Image Création.com when it was bought by its director Martine Barbé in 2000. From the beginning, the company's main activity was the production of documentary films. It has gradually established its editorial line: socially engaged creative films which are often internationally renowned, win awards at festivals and are broadcast on many TV channels. The company has a catalog of over 80 films and

collaborations under its belt with directors like Roger Beeckmans, Claude François, Pierre Stine, Eyal Sivan, Thierry Michel, Jean-Christophe Yu, Matthieu Frances and David Deroy. Notably, with the films "Un spécialiste", "Sale temps sur la planète", "Nos coeurs sont vos tombes", "Une école en terre d'accueil", "Striking Under Occupation," which have been very widely disseminated. Thirty years after being founded, the company continues to operate with just as much passion and know-how.

LATEST PRODUCTIONS 2014-2018:

AN ALPHABETICAL DISORDER

Author, director: Claude François
Documentary: 52'
Coproduction: RTBF, the WIP, Graphoui
With the support of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la FWB, the Belgian National Lottery, the Jacqueline Delcourt Fund
2014

TRACKING DOWN YU BIN

Director: Jean-Christophe Yu
Documentary: 75'
Coproduction: RTBF, WIP
With the support of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la FWB, the Belgian National Lottery, Liège city, Confucius
2015

SUCH A LONG STORY

Director: Roger Beeckmans
Documentary: 63'
Coproduction: Gsara Asbl, Cinémathèque de la Communauté française
With the support of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la FWB, the Belgian National Lottery
2014

MR ETRIMO

Author, director: David Deroy and Matthieu Frances
Documentary: 52'
Coproduction: RTBF, Playtime
With the support of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la FWB and the Belgian National Lottery
2014

MANNEKEN SWING

Author: David Deroy
Director: Julien Bechara
Documentary: 60'
Coproduction: RTBF, Playtime
With the support of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la FWB and the Belgian National Lottery
2015

STRIKING UNDER OCCUPATION

Directors: Dominique Freyfus, Marie-Jo Pareja
Documentary: 52'
Coproduction: Real productions, WEO/Télés Nord Pas de Calais, RTBF, Pictanovo
2016

THE PAVILION OF TWELVE

Author, director: Claude François
Documentary: 50'
Coproduction: RTBF, les Films de la Passerelle
With the support of the Belgian National Lottery and the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la FWB, Tax Shelter prod and the COCOF.
2016

CINEKINO

Authors: Jean Ollé-Laprune, Rainer Rother
Directors: Laurent Heynemann, Matthias Luthardt
Documentary series: 10 x 26'
Coproduction: Idéale audience, Zero One film, ARTE GEIE, RAI CULTURA, RTBF, SRG SSR, Ceska Televize
With the support of the CNC and Tax Shelter
2017

THE MARQUIS DE WAVRIN, FROM THE MANOR TO THE JUNGLE

Author: Grace Winter
Directors: Grace Winter, Luc Plantier
Documentary: 85'
Coproduction: RTBF, the Belgian Cinémathèque royale - Cinematek
With the support of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la FWB, Tax Shelter prod
2017

REBEL SCIENCE

Director: David Deroy
Documentary: 60'
Coproduction: RTBF, WIP
With the support of the Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la FWB, Tax Shelter
2017

NORTH SEAS UNDERWATER THREATS

Director: Jacques Loeuille
A coproduction of Réal Productions, RTBF, Casa Kafka Pictures
2018

ZENON, THE ABYSS BETWEEN MARGUERITE YOURCENAR AND ANDRÉ DELVAUX

Authors: Françoise Levie & Luc Jabon
Director: Françoise Levie
Coproduction: Memento Production, RTBF, Proximus
With the support of the Centre du Cinéma et de l'audiovisuel de la FWB, the Belgian National Lottery, de Wallimage, Casa Kafka Pictures, Belfius, Tax Shelter
2019

IN PRODUCTION:

D'UNE MÈRE L'AUTRE

Director: Cathie Dambel
Coproduction Abacaris films, RTBF

L'ÉCOLE DU CHANGEMENT

Directors: Anne Schiffmann, Chergui Kharroubi
Coproduction: RTBF

LE CHEMIN DES FEMMES

Author: Marianne Sluszný
Director: Tristan Bourlard
Une coproduction: RTBF, Wallimage, Casa kafka Pictures
A film by Jean-Christophe Yu