

ALIZÉ PRODUCTION
PRESENT

The Belgian Road TO CANNES

A FILM BY HENRI DE GERLACHE



SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE
CANNES CLASSICS
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



NARRATED BY
STÉPHANE DE GROODT



SYNOPSIS

A cheerful road movie all about Belgian films at Cannes over the past 70 years. Moviemakers from the past converse with those from the present to paint the portrait of a cinema that is both diverse and free. An account of Belgium's participation in the greatest film festival in the world.

« La Belge Histoire du Festival de Cannes »
(The Belgian road to Cannes)

INTENTION

The story of Belgian cinema is one of inventive handymen, an indeterminate bunch of poetic spirits, all pleasantly crazy or ludicrous or dedicated; a free cinema, one that is penniless but nevertheless creative and excitedly alive. What links Henri Storck, Felix Van Groeningen, Bouli Lanners and Cécile de France? Their free spirit and the fact that they have all climbed the steps of the Palais des Festivals at some point in their career...

This documentary aims to paint the portrait of much of this Belgian cinema which, for the past 70 years, has developed and grown over time together with the Cannes Film Festival.

We decided to hit the road to make a film about this original story and take the audience on an unconventional journey in a camper van converted into a mobile house full of memories of Cannes. We travel through the various eras of Belgian cinema, stopping along the way at important people who were part of the history of the festival, before arriving on the Croisette for the 70th festival.

Journeying through the years that merge together along a route full of detours in the direction of Cannes, the camper van goes on a scenic trip past all kinds of land- and cityscapes, visiting leading figures from films, visiting actors, going to places with memories of Belgian films that have been at the festival since 1947.

Sometimes a simple nod to a film set as the camper van drives past, then some excerpts, then an extended stop with a notable moviemaker invited into the camper van for a chat. He tells the story of his experiences at Cannes, his words illustrated by archive images. Did the festival influence his work, give him new impetus or simply provide important publicity?

A cheerful, quirky road movie all about a cinema that is still evolving, with leading figures from the past talking to those from the present to provide an account of Belgium's participation in the biggest film festival in the world.





PRODUCTION INTENTION

In 2017 Cannes Film Festival is celebrating its 70th anniversary! Since its creation this event, which is a mixture of glamour, culture and romance, has played a decisive role in the evolution of Belgian cinema, for which it has acted as a stimulating mirror. Incidentally, did you know that the biggest film festival in the world was almost held on the Belgian coast, at Ostend?

We decided to retrace this story to showcase Belgian cinema in all its diversity and originality. Since the beginning, whether it has come from Brussels, Flanders or Wallonia, Belgian cinema has always been received in a special, memorable way at the Cannes festival.

Alizé Production has always produced documentaries about subjects linked to art, adventure and cinema and the company has been located in Brussels since it was set up in 1999. This project naturally follows on from the numerous films it has brought to the screen over the past almost 20 years.

After films like “Magritte: Day and Night”, “The Tears of St Peter”, “Vincent Van Gogh, the Choice of Painting” and series like “Profession Actor” and “Profession Actress”, Henri de Gerlache’s years of directing experience has produced something that is both original and profound.

This documentary takes us from one beach to another. We travel through space and time to relive the great moments of Belgian cinema on the Croisette. Since its creation 70 years ago the most famous of all film festivals has maintained a special history with Belgium. The vast majority of Belgian producers, directors and actors have walked along the Croisette at some time and this exceptional showcase has given some of them the chance to present their talent to the world.

Henri de Gerlache immerses us in the history of Belgian cinema. A story of archives, memories, myths, dreams, deception and success to help us understand the roots and the rise of a cinema that is still evolving.

TECHNICAL & ARTISTIC SHEET

Genre	Documentary
Country of production	Belgium
Length	62 minutes
Support	HD - Colour
Original language	French
Shot	September - December 2016
Distribution	2017

Director	Henri de Gerlache
Original screenplay	Henri de Gerlache
Based on an idea by	Philippe Reynaert
Executive producers	Alizé Production Bernard de Launoit
Associate producers	Alizé production Christopher Thompson
Line producers	Alizé Production Virginie Chapelle
Narrator	Stéphane De Groodt
Editor	John Pirard
Cinematographer	Bernard Vervoort
Sound engineer	Olivier Ronval
Musique Originale	Charles de Moffarts
Mix & Sound design	Sonix Christophe de Moffarts
Contributors-witnesses	Arno Emilie Dequenne Pascal Duquenne Thierry Frémaux Marion Hänsel Benoît Mariage Jacqueline Pierreux Fabrizio Rongione Raoul Servais Jaco Van Dormael Felix Van Groeningen

BIOGRAPHIES

Henri
de Gerlache

Since 1998 Henri de Gerlache has written and directed around twenty documentaries that have been distributed worldwide. He started his career making a series of 7 documentaries about the highest mountains on each continent ("Views of Sagarmatha" – 2003). As well as making films about adventure and exploration he also made musical films ("Fauré, a Requiem" – 2001; "The Tears of St Peter" - 2010) and portraits of artists ("Magritte: Day and Night" – 2008; "Van Gogh, the Choice of Painting" 2014). In 2007, he made "Inheriting Antarctica", a documentary that, using previously unseen archive material and remarkable accounts, tells the story of his ancestors' adventures as they explored Antarctica in the service of science. He made "The Wings of the Sun" about Bertrand Piccard's solar plane (Arte, Rtb, Discovery...) and "Belgium between Earth and Sky", a series of two films portraying the country of Belgium via original portraits. He also made two documentaries about the cinema, "Profession Actor" in 2003 and "Hollywood At the Foot of the Slag Heap" in 2015

With meticulous narration and images, his films always endeavour to afford better comprehension of our world. He regularly works for France Télévision, Arte and RTBF.

Henri de Gerlache set up his own production company in Brussels (Alizé Production) and in Paris (Arctic Productions). He is also a scriptwriter, an author of books and chairman of Galeries, a limited company that runs an art house cinema and exhibition venue in the centre of Brussels.



ALIZE PRODUCTION

An independent audiovisual production company created in 1999 by three partners: Bernard de Lauvoit, Christopher Thompson and Henri de Gerlache. Alizé Production has always undertaken productions concerning things its creators are passionate about, namely cinema, music and adventure.

Alizé Production's catalogue of documentary productions comprises more than 70 titles, most of which have been shown by the major international cinema chains.

Since 2006 Alizé Production has been a preferred partner for cinematic coproduction in Belgium.



CONTACT

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