



# Suspended Time

marcel



# Suspended Time

## OFFICIAL WEBSITE OFFICIAL STILLS

105 MINS / COMEDY, DRAMA / FRANCE / FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES / 2024

### CONTACT

#### NATIONAL PUBLICITY REQUESTS

LISA TRIFONE

[LISA@BRIGHTIRISFILM.CO](mailto:LISA@BRIGHTIRISFILM.CO)

#### REGIONAL PUBLICITY REQUESTS

ELIZABETH ARNOTT

[EARNOTT@MUSICBOXFILMS.COM](mailto:EARNOTT@MUSICBOXFILMS.COM)

#### BOOKING REQUESTS

KYLE WESTPHAL

[KWESTPHAL@MUSICBOXFILMS.COM](mailto:KWESTPHAL@MUSICBOXFILMS.COM)

## LOGLINE

A film director returns to his childhood home in provincial France with his brother and his girlfriend and discovers isolation to be an artistic curative in this neurotic comedy from master filmmaker Olivier Assayas.

## SUMMARY

As society recedes in the spring of 2020, film director Paul Berger (Vincent Macaigne) returns to his childhood home in the provincial Chevreuse Valley. Still processing the legacy of his parents and feeling out the uncertain shape of the world to come, Paul hunkers down with his documentary filmmaker girlfriend Carole (Nora Hamzawi), his music journalist brother Etienne (Micha Lescot), and Etienne's new girlfriend Morgan (Nine d'Urso). Squabbling over the minutiae of health protocols and the morality of a hermetic lifestyle mediated by ubiquitous online shopping, the makeshift household finds new ways to lacerate familiar wounds. Yet Paul also finds a surprising refuge in the compulsory quietude of pandemic life, an opportunity to reconnect with the books and art and enchanted forests of his youth. A scabrous French comedy from master filmmaker Olivier Assayas, *Suspended Time* is a sharply personal and fiercely neurotic ode to the eternal expanse of memory and the allure of life beyond our personal screens.





Olivier  
Assayas

After studying art and literature, Olivier Assayas made short films, wrote screenplays and contributed to French film magazine Cahiers du Cinéma. His films have brought him international recognition, ever since his debut **DISORDER** was awarded at the 1986 Venice Mostra.

2022 -**IRMA VEP** (HBO Mini-series)

2019 -**WASP NETWORK**

2018 -**NON-FICTION**

2016 -**PERSONAL SHOPPER**

2014 -**CLOUDS OF SILS MARIA**

2012 -**SOMETHING IN THE AIR**

2010 -**CARLOS**

2008 -**SUMMER HOURS**

2008 -**ELDORADO** (Documentary)

2007 -**BOARDING GATE**

**TO EACH HIS OWN CINEMA**

**RECRUDESCENCE** (segment)

2006 -**PARIS, I LOVE YOU**

**QUARTIER DES ENFANTS ROUGES** (segment)

2005 - **NOISE** (Documentary)

2004 -**CLEAN**

2002 -**DEMONLOVER**

2000 -**LES DESTINÉES**

1999 -**LATE AUGUST, EARLY SEPTEMBER**

1997 -**HHH, portrait de Hou Hsiao-Hsien**  
(Documentary)

1996 -**IRMA VEP**

1994 -**COLD WATER**

1993 -**A NEW LIFE**

1991 -**PARIS AWAKENS**

1989 -**WINTER'S CHILD**

1986 -**DISORDER**



# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER ASSAYAS

In one of Patrick Modiano's latest novels, the preamble states: "He wrote down the thoughts that crossed his mind as he went along. Usually in the morning or late afternoon. All it took was a detail that would have seemed trivial to anyone else." The process of the voice-over in **SUSPENDED TIME** is like a book being written before gradually taking on the shape of a film.

I wrote [Suspended Time] at a special time: the very end of lockdown and I had just finished the pilot and the bible for the series IRMA VEP for the American producer A24. Luckily, I didn't catch COVID, but I ended up with a week-long fever of an unknown origin. Fortunately, it was benign. But I had nothing to do but pass the time sitting in my garden. So I started writing in this floating state, like a kind of daydream. I wrote scenes with no real purpose; they just came to me. I didn't look for the script, it happened to me rather than I caused it.

Right after IRMA VEP, it was as if I had drifted towards a new kind of writing for myself, one that would take into account, or integrate, or represent what we had just experienced, and which seemed extraordinary (in the sense of out of the ordinary, freed from the ordinary) but at the same time left with the issue of exactly what to do with it.

I started by writing one scene, in a very literal autobiographical style, then another in a comic vein and finally the whole script, in chronological order, without knowing where I was going, without knowing where these characters were going. I didn't know what was going to happen to them, nor what I was going to make of this succession of scenes, which I was not entirely sure constituted a film.

I felt more like I was sketching on the spot to keep a record of what I had experienced. And perhaps also to give meaning to this moment of immobility. So this movement between past and present was immediately obvious. It was the real purpose of the notes I was taking.



# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER ASSAYAS



I was in the house of my childhood, my memories were coming back to me without having to arouse them; I don't see how I could have escaped them.

At the same time, this return of the past made me wonder about the future.

It is summertime, the lockdown is over and we do not know exactly what the next episode will be.

Are we going to be able to keep making films? And if so, how and for whom?

It is as if everything must be reinvented.

Remember that I am writing in a context where there is no vaccine yet. We have no idea how the pandemic will develop.







# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER ASSAYAS

The film seems to be a companion piece to SUMMER HOURS (L'HEURE D'ÉTÉ), to the extent that we may wonder if it is not about the same places.

There is indeed one factor that may be at the origin of this process, which has been operating for some time. This is actually an issue I have with SUMMER HOURS. Among my films, there is only one literary adaptation, LES DESTINÉES, based on Jacques Chardonne, a writer I admire but whose world is completely different from mine. What fascinated me was the documentary work behind the novel, which served as the basis for my screenplay. I extended it and immersed myself in it. The year was 1999. When I wrote SUMMER HOURS much later, in 2007, I had the unexpected feeling that I was writing some sort of contemporary postscript to LES DESTINÉES. As if that past had become my own.

It is no longer Chardonne's world, it is my memory of having lived in Chardonne's world. And writing SUMMER HOURS was a way of making it my own. But what troubled me was the misunderstanding this caused. People mistook this world for mine. Of course, there is an overtly autobiographical dimension. I evoke my relationship with my mother, with painting, since her father was a painter - but from another time and place, pre-war Hungary. This very French house is not mine, this world is not mine. I am not Jacques Chardonne at all. **As a result, I felt the need to give a truthful, let's say documentary version of SUMMER HOURS. A version in which I would unravel the fiction I had built, to find myself naked.** Strangely enough, my house and the ghosts that inhabit it – those of my father, my mother, their places, objects and furniture, all charged with meaning - became, in the process, the equivalent of contemporary art installations, à la Sophie Calle, if you like.



# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER AGGAYAS

Painting is omnipresent. The references are sometimes literary but most often pictorial. Among other references, David Hockney and the way he captured the spring of lockdown, in Normandy, not far from where you live.

At the heart of Hockney's work, as with many painters I admire, there is the question of figuration. How one can be both modern and figurative? Defenders of contemporary art consider it belongs to the past. Hockney believes, and I do too, that art can be both figurative - that is to say, in the case of cinema, telling a story supported by credible characters - and at the same time be at the cutting edge of the practices of its time. There are breakthroughs, progress and inventions which are specific to cinema and that also stimulate the other arts, with which cinema, in one way or another, is always in dialogue.









# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER AGGAYAS

To come back to the figurative aspect, there is a comic dimension in the way Vincent Macaigne slips into your shoes. He does it cleverly, without turning it into parody. But for the viewer, little by little, the physical differences fade away.

We had just shot IRMA VEP together, and in the same way, he has taken inspiration from me to create a character of a filmmaker. It was a sort of a pastiche, with him appropriating my habits, my speech patterns and my body language.

We don't look alike at all physically, so I liked this distance that allowed me to feel free about the way he portrayed me.

Because in truth I don't really recognize myself that much. In fact, I am the last person who can tell when

Vincent is imitating me or not.  
I believe it because I am told so.





# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER ASSAYAS



This is the third film [Vincent and I] have made together, so there is obviously a complicity. We both see the cinema as something very playful but very serious at the same time. In a way that enables us to explore it freely, to protect our independence of movement. Without losing a certain irony about ourselves. But without ever being worried about the seriousness, or even gravity of the situation.

I was able to create this film, in the form of an autobiographical comedy, because I knew that with Vincent I could do it, as an extension of a work in which we had both already found our bearings.

Similarly, I never imagined any actress other than Nora Hamzawi for the character of Carole. This is also the third film we have made together. We don't need to say anything to understand each other. Nora is a free spirit and I know that the more freedom and space I give her, the more she will give to the character. Like Vincent, she flows fluidly between comedy, pure fantasy, balancing act and a humanity that doubts, suffers and wonders.



# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER AGGAYAS

In the distribution of roles, Etienne, played by Micha Lescot, is the counterpoint to Paul, played by Vincent Macaigne. This interplay between the two brothers is powerful, both in terms of confrontation and reunion.

Yes, there is a paradox that holds the film together. Micha looks more like me than Vincent. As much as I have often played with a certain irony about myself - I portray myself as very neurotic, but more this was the first time I filmed Micha, it was a real match, and he fitted in very gracefully in a film where the main part of the crew and actors formed a family that has been with me from one film to the next, some of them for a very long time. We didn't have much time, and the little time we had was determined by the sunshine that was essential for most of the outdoor scenes, which was often long to come. In short, we didn't have the luxury of searching for ages, we had to find a group dynamic right away, together. Micha immediately found the best way.





# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER ASSAYAS



The other key element of the film is the dynamics of the two couples and their respective relationships to love.

**There is, of course, love, with all its universal and ever-renewed aspects.** Here, we are dealing with two couples where, symmetrically, the men are older than their partners. They have been through more things than they have, and some of it resurfaces in this unlikely context. Furthermore, in this place inhabited by the past of the two brothers, with all the tensions that implies, it is the two sisters-in-law who maintain the peace, the balance... The only time the conflict erupts between Etienne and Paul is when the quartet becomes a trio. Carole (Nora) leaves. Suddenly, the insecurity of finding himself alone facing his brother's couple tenses up the character of Etienne (Micha). It is something that needed to come out, even explode. But it obviously doesn't explode at any time.









# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER ASSAYAS

Nine d'Urso, who I didn't know before and who is a revelation, brings a lot of that sensitivity and kindness that you talk about.

This is the first time I work with Nine. In many ways she is the soul of the film. She has a grace that, stating the obvious, I would describe as Rohmerian. With her, everything is simple, everything is weightless, everything is luminous; the innate poetry of her presence radiates everything she touches - cinema, theater, the visual arts. Her path is original and infused by a sense of freedom, I am very sensitive to that.

It should be very special to shoot an autobiographical film at home. How did you experience it? Did you find it easy or difficult? And what remains of it for you?

To be honest, I was worried about it. Apart from the material inconvenience, which is not negligible, of having a film crew entering your home, in your privacy. In the end, it went better than expected. I even had enough distance at times to feel like I was the set designer of my own film. That said, as I look back, there is still something uncanny about it.

I often, and maybe always, talk about ghosts in my films. And this is a film that is truly haunted. Neither Paul nor Etienne are at home; they are at their parents', and they keep staying at their parents' house. But they both have a different relationship with these ghosts.



# INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER ASSAYAS

Etienne has renovated his room to get rid of the past. He modernized it. He has brought it back into the present. Paul, on the other hand, has an unresolved relationship with the past. And instead of distancing himself from it, he does the opposite, working on himself to immerse in the past so he can achieve to live in his mother's room.

**There is something literal about the presence of ghosts. We are in a house, a setting if you prefer, where all the objects, even the most trivial, are inhabited for me;** not necessarily for the audience although I think they feel it in other ways. I have lived with these objects, I know them, I know where they come from, I know when my father bought them. My father travelled a lot in the Orient and collected Asian art. Sometimes I even remember the crates they came in. What I mean by this is that I constantly see in 3D where others see in 2D.

There are moments when it is even more literal, when in certain shots, sometimes in a fragmentary way, family portraits appear. In the living-room, there is a self-portrait of my grandfather, a portrait of my grandmother by my grandfather, and then a child, a little girl, my mother, painted by her father. These three images date back from the thirties of the last century.

So this trio, almost a century apart - my grandfather, my grandmother, my mother - haunts the film. And it is undoubtedly this dimension that moves me the most because it disturbs time and space.









# CAST

<b>PAUL</b>	Vincent Macaigne
<b>ETIENNE</b>	Micha Lescot
<b>MORGANE</b>	Nine d'Urso
<b>CAROLE</b>	Nora Hamzawi
<b>FLAVIA</b>	Maud Wyler
<b>ANALYST</b>	Dominique Reymond
<b>BRITT</b>	Magdalena Lafont

# CREW

<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Olivier Assayas
<b>WRITTEN BY</b>	Olivier Assayas
<b>CINEMATOGRAPHY</b>	Eric Gautier
<b>EDITING</b>	Marion Monnier
<b>SOUND</b>	Roman Cadilhac, Sarah Lelu, Nicholas Moreau, Olivier Goinard
<b>PRODUCTION DESIGN</b>	François-Renaud Labarthe
<b>COSTUMES</b>	Jurgen Doering
<b>1<sup>ST</sup> ASST. DIRECTOR</b>	Dominique Delany
<b>CONTINUITY</b>	Anne-Laure Huet
<b>MAKEUP &amp; HAIR</b>	Thi Loan Nguyen
<b>LOCATION MANAGER</b>	Clément Benoist

<b>CASTING DIRECTOR</b>	Antoinette Boulat
<b>PRODUCED BY</b>	Olivier Delbosc, Olivier Assayas
<b>ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS</b>	Emilien Bignon, Sylvie Barthet
<b>A COPRODUCTION</b>	Curiosa Films, Vortex Sutra
<b>WITH THE SUPPORT OF</b>	Canal+
<b>WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF</b>	Ciné+
<b>IN ASSOCIATION WITH</b>	Cofinova 20, Cinemage 18, Cineaxe 5, Ad Vitam, Playtime



# ABOUT MUSIC BOX FILMS

Music Box Films is the prestigious North American distributor of acclaimed international, independent, and documentary feature films. Recent releases include *Mountains*, the debut feature from Monica Sorelle, who took home the Independent Spirit Awards "Someone to Watch" Award, and *In the Summers*, Alessandra Lacorazza's heartfelt and subtly powerful coming-of-age directorial debut that won the two top prizes in the U.S. Dramatic Competition at Sundance. Upcoming releases include the Cannes Directors' Fortnight baseball comedy *Eephus* by Carson Lund, and *Ghost Trail*, Jonathan Millet's tense and haunting revenge thriller that premiered at the Cannes Film Festival.

Since its formation in 2007, Music Box Films has distributed award-winning films and art-house favorites that include Academy Award winner *Ida*, *Meru* (from Oscar-winning filmmakers Jimmy Chin and E. Chai Vaserhelyi), Christian Petzold's *Transit*, the popular Swedish comedy *A Man Called Ove*, and the original *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates the Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premier venue for independent and foreign films. For more information, visit [www.musicboxfilms.com](http://www.musicboxfilms.com).

## CONTACT

### NATIONAL PUBLICITY REQUESTS

LISA TRIFONE

[LISA@BRIGHTIRISFILM.CO](mailto:LISA@BRIGHTIRISFILM.CO)

### REGIONAL PUBLICITY REQUESTS

ELIZABETH ARNOTT

[EARNOTT@MUSICBOXFILMS.COM](mailto:EARNOTT@MUSICBOXFILMS.COM)

### BOOKING REQUESTS

KYLE WESTPHAL

[KWESTPHAL@MUSICBOXFILMS.COM](mailto:KWESTPHAL@MUSICBOXFILMS.COM)