

THE

BOCALUPO FILMS presents

OTHER

a film by ARMEL HOSTIOU

PROFILE



with PETER SHUTSHA OUELA - SARAH WOLLE - CROMIX UNANA BENDA - FALONNE LUANDA MAMOU - LYNDIA MATERS camera ARMEL HOSTIOU - ELIE MBANGING sound AMADRY ARBOUN - ARNAUD MARTEN editing MARIO VALEDO styling EMILIE CERVIA sound editing AMADRY ARBOUN sound mixing GILLES DENARDEAU producer JASMINA SJERJIC
directed by ARMEL HOSTIOU 1st assistant director CELINE GUILLEMIN 1st assistant editor OUA GUNJAK 2nd assistant editor ALEXANDR DUPLESSIS - TITOUAN ROBERT music CROMIX UNANA BENDA - ARCAN animation STUDIO HARBOR laboratory ARCHPEL PRODUCTIONS distribution MÊTEORE FILMS sales agent LIGHTDOX supported by CNC & NOISE FILM&TV



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Bocalupo Films presents:

The Other Profile

France, 2023, 82 min.

PRESS NOTES

**A film by
Armel Hostiou**

World premiere

CPH:DOX 2023

Dox:Award

Press materials can be downloaded [HERE](#)



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LOGLINE

One day filmmaker Armel Hostiou discovers he has a second Facebook account: a fake Armel who has real photos of him and many female friends, all of whom live in Kinshasa. Fake Armel invites them to audition for his next film, which is supposedly set in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Faced with the impossibility of closing this account, the filmmaker decides to go looking for his double.

SYNOPSIS

One day French filmmaker Armel Hostiou discovers he has a second Facebook account: a fake Armel who uses photos of the real him and who has many female friends, all of whom live in Kinshasa. According to the profile, fake Armel invites these women to audition for his next film, which is supposedly set in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

After having discovered the existence of his other profile, the filmmaker's first reaction was to notify Facebook about what clearly seemed for him an identity theft, naively thinking that this will be solved quickly. Two weeks later he received a message from the social platform, declining his request because according to them this other profile was not a false one. Meanwhile the double was publishing more and more messages about the auditions he was organising. Bewildered, the real Armel decides to travel to Kinshasa in order to look for his double himself. He's welcomed in the artist residency 'La Vie Est Belle' - straight in the heart of the lively Matonge neighbourhood. Conscious of the complexity of a quest in the massive city of Kinshasa, the residency's manager, Peter, and Sarah, one of the artists, immediately decide to help him. Days are filled with absurd meetings with lawyers, IT specialists, marabouts - anyone who could help get them on the right path. Time is running, the tiredness rising, and slowly Hostiou's hope in finding his digital double fades. Until an old fisherman crosses his path, taking the filmmaker on a totally new type of journey. New horizons open up and the borders between the true and false Armel start to blur.

INFO

2023 | France | Documentary Film | 82 min

English Title: The Other Profile

Original Title: Le Vrai du Faux

Filming Location: Kinshasa, RDC

Shooting Language: French, Lingala

Shooting format: HD

Image format: 1.85

Sound format: 5.1



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INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR ARMEL HOSTIOU

It is briefly mentioned in the film, but to start out with the burning question: how did you find out about the fake profile of Armel Hostiou on Facebook?

The first time I discovered it I was travelling with a friend of mine, a singer, for whom we were shooting a video. He wanted to add me on Facebook and he discovered that there are two accounts for Armel Hostiou on the platform. When I was asked which one is mine, it was quite a surprise. This other profile had several pictures of me, and it was befriended with a lot of women, all of them living in Kinshasa, Congo. A place I have never been before. Of course I dived a bit deeper into this account and found out about the casting calls through chats going on in the posts. My first reaction then was to get this account deleted. I contacted Facebook, claiming identity theft. Two weeks later they responded, saying that they see no relatable reason to delete it, as it seems like a real profile. Their proposition was that I either block the account or defriend it, defriend myself practically. The situation was so absurd, so Kafkaesque, like the beginning of a fantasy film. As a filmmaker myself I made the decision to start this project then.

It sounds all like quite a coincidence you found out about this other you in the first place. How active are you on social media in general?

Like many people of my generation, I think I was trapped within social media. Facebook, for example, crossed my way years ago through an Argentinian friend who motivated me to join the network. It must have been around 2007, I found it very time consuming and didn't use it that much. Then, when in 2012 my first feature film 'Rives' was released in France I realised I needed to do something to spread the word about it. So Facebook became this tool of self-promotion, as it is widely used nowadays. That might be a good trap of social media: everyone becomes its own little brand, a new era of capitalism where even private identities become products.

At some point, you decided to actually visit Congo. How did you manage to travel there?

Yes, in reality it took quite some time to organise the trip. To get a visa, you need to be invited by someone who is based there but I did not know anyone. Then I found out that two befriended directors worked in Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of Congo. There are two countries with the same name, which has to do with colonial history. The Republic of Congo, northwest of the Congo river, used to be a French colony, and south of the river there is the Democratic Republic of Congo - a much bigger country which used to be occupied by Belgium. They put me in contact with an artist residency called *La vie est belle*, through which I got an invitation. After landing at the airport I went directly there. It is located in Matonge, the most lively district in Kinshasa, with a very active artistic scene. As it turned out, I could not be more lucky for the film. Being surrounded by all the local artists and performers was just fantastic.

Once you finally arrived in Kinshasa, how did the people there react towards a white, male European, in search of his fake self?

That was actually funny, because when I explained the reason for my travel and why I was there nobody was really surprised. Everybody was used to stories about such digital scams, I discovered it is something very quite common there. All of them heard stories similar to mine, especially when it comes to these fake auditions promoted through fake accounts. It follows a certain scheme: the auditions are usually announced by a director coming from abroad and who basically never shows up directly. The person who is organising these casting calls explains the absence of the director briefly, introducing themselves as an assistant and asks for a subscription fee from participants. If you will get ten dollars from a hundred people, you earn a thousand dollars in one day. Kinshasa is the biggest French speaking town in the world with around 20 million inhabitants living in the city. Among them a lot of young people searching for their path. So when such auditions take place, those who are interested in pursuing a career in acting or those who just want to try out an opportunity will show up.... So to answer your question again: most of the people from *La vie est belle* found it amusing that I came all the way here. They decided to help me. Like Peter, the residency manager, or Sarah, one of the artists. Or Elie, who became the second camera operator. Suddenly I had a little crew, partners in crime, or partners in justice if we want to call them that. I was not alone anymore.

How was your reaction once you knew it was a common scam?

First of all it is important to mention that this scam was not thrown directly at me for being Armel Hostiou. The scam was used to scam other people. I was just a tool in this strategy, not the target. If I wouldn't have been a filmmaker I would have probably not gone further, but I had the intuition this story could become cinematic.

It comes through that colonisation also takes its part in the whole story. How did all of this affect the process of creating the film?

During the making of this film the concept of colonisation was constantly in my mind. I tried to be very self-conscious about the bigger meaning of the story that brought me there. Congo is a country with a very tough and brutal history of European occupation, particularly by Belgium. At the beginning of colonisation, Congo did not even have the status of a colony, but a private property of the king of Belgium, Leopold II, during whose reign the worst atrocities were committed. I had some knowledge about those times, but once I got there, I heard a lot more stories about the extent of how brutal this period was and their consequences nowadays. The colonisation keeps on, it is not like there was a strict cut, it continues not only through politics or military, but also through dominant western ideologies, cultural representations and of course economy. For me it's very significant that Franz Fanon, one of the precursors of the postcolonialism theory, was initially a psychiatrist. He sought to analyse the psychological consequences of colonisation on both the colonist and the colonised. I do believe that, contrary to what we are taught in history books,

colonisation is not a bygone era and it continues to exist in the collective unconscious, in the South as well as in the North.

Let's move directly into the film: As a viewer you are taken on a journey where you can actually feel the ups and downs of your quest for your fake self. Did you follow a certain script you had in mind or do we see the journey simply as it happened in the finished film?

The structure of the film is really based on this quest I found myself in during the shooting. I arrived in a completely unknown country, where I knew nobody. In the beginning I was not sure at all if it would lead to a film one day. But once I turned the camera on I let myself be carried away by the encounters and situations that arose during this survey. The film was taking shape day after day, like a film diary. I really liked the idea of making a film where I didn't know what the next shooting day would bring and what the outcome would be. Another challenge was to appear in my own film as it was the first time to be in front and behind the camera. But I knew I wanted to add a fictional dimension to my character and to the film, mixing and playing with different film genres: thriller, road-movie or absurd comedy. Having previously directed fiction films, I was attracted to the idea of capturing the unexpected, the surprises that reality has in store for us. I tried to bring them into the film and make them resonate with the state of mind of my character who in the beginning is quite naive, with a simple idea stuck in his mind. Who gradually realises that his quest and the reality that surrounds him are much more complex.

Complex and at times even haunting. At one stage you are - or your character in the film, as you just mentioned - is even visiting a Marabout, talking to spirits.

Yes, that was one of the most surprising and disturbing moments of this shooting. This whole journey became little by little kind of a labyrinth, a maze. Not only because of spirits, but also because of the quantity of unexpected situations I went through that I could have never written in advance. But the complexity for me arose especially during the editing, which lasted longer than the shooting, when it was necessary to recreate the narrative thread of all these experiences. My wish was to recreate within the length of a film the wide range of feelings and emotions from humorous to metaphysical. A lot of experiences, all of them starting with a fake profile.

Speaking of which: does the fake account still exist? It was not revealed in the film.

Yes, it does. But it does not seem very active anymore.

After this journey and now finishing the film, do you see it as a comment regarding identity theft at all?

The concept of identity theft remains the pretext for the film, to travel and meet Congo. But beyond this, what really interests me and what I explore in the film is the notion of the 'double' with its mythological dimension. It is paradoxical and intriguing at times. I really like the idea, as in

Dostoyevsky's novel, of a character who discovers that he has a double but that this double not only does the same things as him but that finally he also does them better! For me this theme is fascinating, and this is perhaps the deepest reason that led me to want to make this film. In the end, my double led me to create it.

What do you wish the audience to take out of the film?

That is a tricky question. I hope that when people leave the cinema they will have some new impulses and thoughts provoked by this journey... but might also check if they have their own digital double!



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ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Armel Hostiou



After studying political sciences, Armel Hostiou studied cinema at La Fémis film school in Paris in the camera department. His graduation film SoLoS, that he directed, has travelled and won several awards nationally and internationally. He has since dedicated himself to directing, first of short films but also installations and music videos. His first feature film Rives was premiered in ACID Cannes and distributed in France in 2012, his second feature shot in New York, Une Histoire Américaine, premiered at Lincoln Center in New York at RDV with French Cinema and was distributed in France in 2015. His first documentary La Pyramide invisible premiered at Cinema du Réel in 2019. His last feature The Other Profile will premiere at the main competition of CPH:DOX and will be released in theatres in France by Météore Films in June 2023. He is

currently working on a script for his next fiction feature film.

Filmography

Rives (Day) | 78' | 2011 | Acid Cannes

Une Histoire Américaine (Stubborn) | 86' | 2015 | Indie Lisboa

La Pyramide invisible (The Invisible Pyramid) | 66' | 2019 | Cinéma du Réel

The Other Profile (Le Vrai du faux) | 82' | 2023 | CPH:DOX

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

Bocalupo Films is a production company based in Paris. Founded in 2008 by directors Armel Hostiou and Mauro Herce, they were joined by producer Jasmina Sijercic in 2016. They share a communal passion for films that explore original narratives and they defend a strong collaboration between authors and producers. Since the creation of the company they have produced and co produced titles such as 'Rives' by Armel Hostiou (ACID Cannes 2012), 'Stubborn' by Armel Hostiou (RDV with French Cinema Lincoln Center 2015), 'Dead Slow Ahead' by Mauro Herce (Locarno IFF 2016 – Jury Award Cineasti del presente), 'Invisible Pyramide' by Armel Hostiou (Cinéma du Réel 2019), Merry Christmas, 'Yiwu' by Mladen Kovacevic (IFFR 2020), 'The Last Bath' by Davide Bonneville (Tokyo IFF 2020), 'Landscapes of Resistance' by Marta Popivoda (IFFR Tiger Competition 2021), 'The Last Chapter' by Gianluca Matarrese (Closing Film of Settimana della Critica Mostra de Venice - Queer Lion Award 2021), 'Another Spring' by Malden Kovacevic (Karlovy Vary IFF Proxima Competition 2022), 'Il Posto' by Gianluca Matarrese (Visions du Réel 2022). Currently new projects by Marta Popivoda, Daphné Hérétakis, Armel Hostiou, Sara Rastegar and Simone Pozzi, Ivan Salatic, Ivan Markovic, Gregor Bozic and Giacomo Abbruzzese are in the works.

www.bocalupofilms.com

ABOUT THE PRODUCER

Jasmina Sijercic

Originally from Bosnia, Sijercic studied in Prague, first International Relations at the University of Economics and went on to study Film Production at Prague's FAMU. She spent a year at University of Sorbonne in Paris at the Cinema Studies Department after which she decided to move to France. She joined documentary production company ISKRA where she worked as an executive producer. In 2014 she started to collaborate with Bocalupo Films as an independent producer. Armel Hostiou's feature film 'Une Histoire Américaine' was her first project as a producer within Bocalupo Films, followed by experimental documentary feature 'Dead Slow Ahead' by Mauro Herce that premiered in Locarno IFF and won a Special Jury Award. Since then Sijercic has continued to produce fiction and documentary films, mostly in international co-production. She is a Eurodoc, Emerging Producer and Berlinale Talents alumni.





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CREDITS

Director

Armel Hostiou

With

Peter Shotsha Olela

Sarah Ndele

Cromix Onana Genda

Camera

Armel Hostiou, Elie Mbansing

Sound

Amaury Arboun, Arnaud Marten

Editing

Mario Valero

Sound editing

Amaury Arboun

Grading

Emile Cervia

Sound mix

Gilles Benardeau

Production

Bocalupo Films - Jasmina Sijercic

Partners/Financiers

CNC

Bocalupo Films, France

Météore Films - Distributor for France

Lightdox - International sales agent



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