

GOGOGO FILMS PRESENTS



A FILM BY NICOLAS PEDUZZI

ON THE EDGE

A FILM BY NICOLAS PEDUZZI | PRODUCED BY CARINE RUSZNIEWSKI | IN ASSOCIATION WITH ARTE FRANCE | WITH THE SUPPORT OF LA RÉGION ÎLE-DE-FRANCE OF LA REGION NOUVELLE AQUITAINE OF PROCIREP - SOCIÉTÉ DES PRODUCTEURS AND OF THE ANGOA | WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF TËNK AND THE SUPPORT OF MEDIAPART | THIS FILM BENEFITED FROM THE NOUVELLE AQUITAINE FILM WORKOUT AND WAS PRESENTED AT NEBULAE | IN ASSOCIATION WITH CINÉVENTURE 6 | EDITING NICOLA SBURLATI | ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK BY GAËL RAKOTONDRABE | PHOTOGRAPHS PÉNÉLOPE CHAUVELOT | IMAGE NICOLAS PEDUZZI - LAËTITIA DE MONTALEMBERT | SOUND ALEXANDRE BRACQ - BENOÎT DÉCHAUT | SOUND EDITING LOUIS BLANC | SOUND MIXING ANTOINE PRADALET | COLOR GRADING LUCIE BRUNETEAU

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In a hospital in the Paris region, a psychiatrist devotes himself to his mission at the risk of going out of his depth.

How do you provide good care in a sick institution?

In a hospital in the Paris region, Dr. Abdel-Kader, a liaison psychiatrist, navigates from the emergency room to the intensive care unit, from patients with mental disorders to those who are chronically ill and bedridden. Despite the pressure to be productive and the lack of resources, he tries to alleviate their suffering.

The French public hospital has always had a friendly face for me: it was the hospital that saved my father in 1990, the hospital that welcomed and supported me in the psychiatric ward when I needed it. Four years ago, the health crisis revealed the extent of the malaise in the institution, but the causes of the gangrene were obviously deeper. I wanted to question them, to understand where and how the breach had opened, and I began to film the daily life of the caregivers at Beaujon Hospital. There, I quickly met Jamal, an indispensable and controversial figure. Indispensable: he was the only psychiatrist in the hospital; controversial: despite his youth, despite all his love for the hospital, he works against the drastic changes in the institution, which are in direct contradiction with his humanist values. Every day, with his sneakers on, he climbs and descends the iron stairs, running from one department to another and from one bedside to another. Jamal is Sisyphus, and Beaujon is his mountain.

Our first contact was head-on: in the midst of the Covid crisis, Jamal was suspicious of journalists. I had to prove to him that my approach was not journalistic. So I took up residence at Beaujon to accompany his doctors and patients over the long term. This is what convinced him: time is Jamal's main concern. In an unreasonably fast-paced environment that buries people under the numbers, he makes it his duty to take his time with his patients and their loved ones and offer them the attention and care that no one else is willing or able to provide. He soothes, reassures and guides with infinite patience. One of the challenges of the film, for me, is to bring together these contradictory timeframes: on the one hand, the frantic rhythm of the hospital, in a permanent state of emergency - long, overcrowded corridors, hasty conversations, the cries of patients demanding attention; on the other hand, the bubbles of time that Jamal creates for his patients, impervious to the chaos. Jamal devoted a lot of his time and energy to his patients, but also his colleagues during the period of Covid, and some of them have kept the habit of opening up to him about their problems. The film also includes the voices of Romain, a caregiver, Alice and Lara, the interns who assist him on a daily basis, and Ayman, a former patient who has become a trainee.

All of them share the same vocation and speak of their love of providing care, but also of their vertigo when faced with the suffering of patients, their own discomfort, their doubts and their aspirations.

"I tried to film the public hospital as it is experienced by those who live there, doctors and patients alike, and as I myself perceived it during my months of immersion: as a twilight institution."

Jamal and his interns are the only doctors at Beaujon who circulate in all the departments. Through them, I had access to the whole hospital. Everywhere the same observation: lack of funding, beds, personnel and time. Many shortcomings could be blamed on the lack of attention. This is not the case: every day, the caregivers at Beaujon Hospital strive towards the humanist ideal that led them to become involved. However, not everyone is ready to sacrifice their life and health on the altar of their ideals. Jamal is a character in a class of his own, out of the ordinary, Dostoyevskian, someone who substitutes the world as it is for the world he would like it to be. The problem is that reality threatens to catch up with him. It was his body that first gave the alert: a lower back pain set in over the weeks. And with the pain comes doubt. The film lifts Jamal's mask of confidence to reveal his doubts: it sometimes seems to him that the lines will not move fast enough, and that exhaustion, loneliness, lack of recognition and discouragement will eventually get the better of his vocation.



The film tells of the strength of his idealism, but we understand that Jamal must accept the limits of his humanity. When Jamal is at the bedside of his patients, I collect their testimonies. I am sympathetic toward troubled personalities, and I share Jamal's idea that the measure of a society's dysfunction is the way it treats its "crazy" people. After two previous documentaries on troubled characters in the United States, ***On The Edge*** gives voice to the suffering of people who turn to hospitals for help and whom our French society fails to see. Beaujon Hospital is a territory as difficult to access as the suburbs of Houston, and the neuroses of both sides resonate in unison.

In general, I am concerned about the treatment of mental health issues in France. Misunderstood by some, denigrated by others, psychiatry is essential to the development of our society. The discrepancy between the fragility of patients and the rigidity of the institution, which is too bureaucratic and too protocol-based, is intolerable. Finally, it is intolerable that doctors have to take on the overwhelming task of caring for people whom society has driven to insanity.

Nicolas Peduzzi



In his first two films (***Southern Belle***, Grand Prix of the French Competition of the FID Marseille and ***Ghost Song***, selected by the ACID Cannes in 2021, winner of the Best Film Award in the Permanent Revolutions section of the Seville Film Festival and acquired by the American platform Vice for Surroosh Avi's Short List), Nicolas Peduzzi explored the intricacies of souls plagued by addiction and abandonment. He has this urge, this art of filming the borders and the territories in which few venture, and knows how to film with accuracy the people we are afraid to look at. ***On The Edge*** is in line with the formal and thematic continuity of these two films in that it still deals with psychological suffering, but it marks a double change of direction.

First, Nicolas has taken a step back: by aligning his point of view with that of a psychiatrist, he has made a more distanced treatment of psychiatric disorders. It is also the first film that Nicolas has shot in France. The change is important. Where he used to look at American reality from a foreign perspective, here he approaches his subject as a citizen, and takes us along with him.

On The Edge obviously speaks about psychiatry, but it touches more generally on the state of public hospitals in France. Nicolas, like Jamal, and all those who choose to listen to the warnings of its professionals realize that the institution is dying. In an article published by Le Monde in July 2020, the economist Jean de Kervasdoué and the psychiatrist Daniel Zagury lamented: "the situation of psychiatry in France has gone from serious to catastrophic".

The fact is that psychiatry was one of the first fields to suffer from budget cuts, and Beaujon Hospital is just one example, no more or less dysfunctional, no more or less alarming than any other in the web of our ailing healthcare system. My desire to accompany Nicolas was not only due to our artistic kinship. I felt it was necessary to make this film today because its social and political impact resonates with our current situation.

Carine Ruszniewski



Jamal Abdel-Kader

The son of Syrian doctors living in France, Jamal Abdel-Kader grew up in the corridors of the public hospital. This is where he feels at home, where he decided to pursue his vocation as a psychiatrist. For the past 5 years, he has been practicing as a liaison physician in public hospitals in Paris. Most of his patients are people suffering from genetic diseases, people at the end of their lives, and survivors of suicide attempts who require daily and personalized treatment. In parallel, he trains future caregivers in the delicate practice of psychiatry.

Gael Rakotondrabe - Composer

French pianist and composer, Gael Rakotondrabe started his career on the jazz scene (winner of the Piano Solo Competition at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 2008), then expanded his horizons to other artistic forms.

He collaborates with artists such as CocoRosie, Anohni (Antony & the Johnsons), Robert Wilson, Marina Abramovic and Willem Dafoe (The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic).

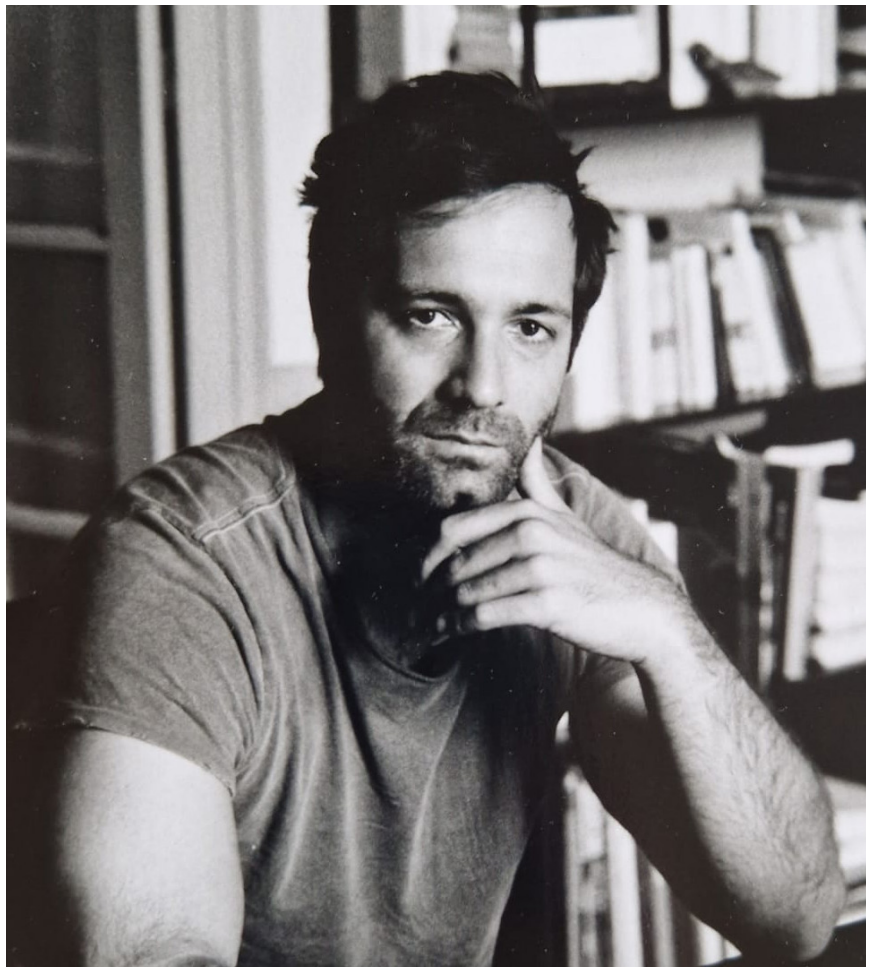
He has composed soundtracks for films programmed at the Venice Biennale, Cannes, Sundance, and Tribeca.

His first solo piano album will be released in 2023.

Pénélope Chauvelot - Photographer

At the beginning of her career, Penelope Chauvelot photographed on film sets alongside director Otto Preminger and many others. At the end of the 1970s, she was a war reporter for the Sygma agency and went to Vietnam and Cambodia in 1978, then to Lebanon in the early 1980s and Syria. Her reports are published in various newspapers, including Paris Match. After meeting the scenographer Richard Peduzzi, who became her husband, she began to photograph the productions of Patrice Chéreau and Luc Bondy on the stages of the Théâtre des Amandiers in 1982. In addition, Penelope produces features for interior design and architecture magazines.

Nicolas Peduzzi grew up in Italy, where he studied theater and cinema. He then moved to the United States to attend Susan Batson's night classes and then directed several self-financed shorts before a first feature film, ***Southern Belle***, released in France in 2018. The film was screened at numerous festivals, included in the Best of doc selection of the 2019 "Mois du documentaire" and won the Grand Prix at FID Marseille. Nicolas then directed ***Ghost Song***, selected at ACID Cannes in 2021, winner at the Seville Film Festival, released in theaters in 2022 and shortlisted by Vice in the United States. ***On The Edge***, winner of the Special Mention Jury Award at CPH:DOX 2023 and presented at ACID Cannes 2023, is his third feature film.



Original title:	ÉTAT LIMITE
English title:	ON THE EDGE
Genre:	Documentary
Year of production:	2023
Running time:	1:42
Original language:	French
Format:	DCP
Ratio:	16/9
Format:	1.78
Framerate:	25 fps
Sound:	5.1
A film written and directed by:	Nicolas Peduzzi
Production:	Carine Ruszniewski, GoGoGo Films
Editing:	Nicolas Sburlati
Original music:	Gael Rakotondrabe
Photography:	Pénélope Chauvelot
Image:	Nicolas Peduzzi
Additional images:	Laetitia de Montalembert
Artistic collaboration:	Hortense Maunoury
Assistant director:	Chiara Livia Arrigo
Sound recording:	Alexandre Bracq, Benoît Déchaut
Sound editing:	Louis Blanc
Mixing:	Antoine Pradalet
Calibration:	Lucie Bruneteau
Translation and subtitling:	Catherine Demptos
Poster:	Violette Chatiliez
Press officer:	Claire Viroulaud; Mirjam Wiekenkamp
Broadcaster:	ARTE France ; Tënk en partenariat avec Mediapart
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