



20/10/2021

**CINEMED 2021** Cinemed Meeting

**Pauline Seigland • Produttrice de *Les Fantômes***

"Un film di spionaggio con spie improvvisate"

di **FABIEN LEMERCIER**

© 20/10/2021 - Ai Cinemed Meetings incontriamo la produttrice della società francese Films Grand Huit che ci parla del progetto di Jonathan Millet



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Founded in 2015, the French production company [Films Grand Huit](#), led by **Pauline Seigland** and **Lionel Massol**, is on the rise. After twenty or so multi-primed shorts, the structure is currently finishing shooting its first feature *Disco Boy* by Italian **Giacomo Abbruzzese** (read the [article](#)) and is present at the 43rd [Festival du Cinéma Méditerranéen de Montpellier](#) where it is pitching for the Cinemed Meetings development grant (read the [news](#)) for the project *Lives of Hamid* (*Les Fantômes*), which will be Frenchman **Jonathan Millet**'s first feature film.

## **Cineuropa: What attracted you to the project Lives of Hamid ?**

Pauline Seigland: I have been working with Jonathan Millet, the director, for five years. We made the short film *Et toujours nous marcherons* together, which had a very successful run, winning an acting award in Clermont-Ferrand and getting selected for the César Awards. We went on to make more experimental shorts because Jonathan wanted to explore, and at the same time we were looking for his first feature film project. Jonathan had this idea of a spy film with characters who would be improvised spies, whose job wasn't to spy. I found this element very interesting because it is a bit of a reinvention of the genre by going towards something more intimate. Jonathan's story is based on real events: the creation by a group of Syrians from civil society of a cell intended to track down their country's war criminals on the run throughout Europe.

Jonathan's whole approach to filmmaking is linked to the question of exile. At the beginning of his career, he was a reporter and was sent by magazines to the most unlikely countries to take photos and bring back images. He also studied philosophy and when he came to cinema, it was really to talk about borders and what it means to be human in today's world.

### **How far along is the project?**

We've been working on it for a year now, but the project was lucky enough, right from the processing stage, to be part of the annual selections for the Moulin d'Andé and Groupe Ouest writing residencies (a rare double), so this year we've had great support from these two places. We have a V1 of the script and we are starting to work on a V2. So we hope to get the film into funding next year.

### **Is Lives of Hamid representative of the editorial line of Les Films Grand Huit?**

We defend filmmakers with very different filmographies, but who all share the idea that they tell, each in their own way, the state of the world. I'm a film lover who likes extremely diverse films, so it would be very sad to defend only one type of film. *Disco Boy* by the Italian Giacomo Abbruzzese, for example, which we are currently shooting, is more of a metaphysical film (about how who you are depends very much on all the people you've met, the country you come from, whether it's Africa or the West, etc.) in the tradition of Apichatpong Weerasethakul and filmmakers who believe that the poetry of the images says a lot about the inner state of the characters. Jonathan Millet's cinema, like that of Rémi Allier (with whom we won the César for best short film in 2019 with *Les Petites Mains*), is more in keeping with a political and social vein, à la Asghar Farhadi. It's true that we are very sensitive to political subjects, but without tackling them head-on.

### **What other projects are you working on? Mainly first features?**

We started with short films because it is a space we know and master. We use the successes of our filmmakers in this field with films selected at Cannes, Toronto, Venice and Berlin as a little sesame to develop their first features. Above all, we make sure that there is a great deal of coherence between the shorts and the features, because we work in a long-term perspective. You have to think about filmographies over time: that's what's exciting about being a producer. At present, we are also developing the first full-length films *Quand viendra la fin du monde*, *on sera riche* by Belgian Rémi Allier, *Deep Fake* by his fellow Belgian Ismaël J. Chandoutis, *Rabbia* by German Mareike Engelhardt, *El día de mi Bestia* by Colombian Camila Beltrán, and also a second full-length film: *Casablanca* by Italian Adriano Valerio ([Banat \[+\]](#)). It's true that we work a lot with foreign filmmakers, but that's simply because their visions of the world interest us.