

TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 17, 2019
2:00PM • WHITNEY
HUMANITIES CENTER

THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



After many years spent making commercials, short films, and music videos, the duo of French directors Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro made *DELICATESSEN*, their debut feature film, in 1991. The film, a dystopian dark comedy which won the pair César awards for Best First Work and Best Screenplay, became a cult hit and was an art-house success around the world. Before *DELICATESSEN*, though, Jeunet and Caro had completed a screenplay for an ambitious science fiction story about a dream-stealing scientist, a group of bickering clones, and a brain living in a fish tank called *LA CITÉ DES ENFANTS PERDUS*, or *THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN*.

Funding the production of *DELICATESSEN* was a difficult and lengthy endeavor, and Jeunet and Caro knew that their vision for *THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN* would require an even heftier budget. The success of *DELICATESSEN* finally made this production possible, and thirteen years after its original conception, shooting began on *THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN* on a soundstage outside Paris in April, 1994. The filmmakers' conception of the film called for extensive digital visual effects, requiring a lengthy pre-production phase and the services of two different French visual effects companies. At the time it was made, the film was the most ambitious French production in terms of digital effects, with 144 digitally augmented shots for a total of 17 minutes of screen time.

American actor Ron Perlman, who plays the circus strongman One, was best known at the time for his role in television's "Beauty and the Beast." Perlman did not speak French, and learned and delivered his dialogue phonetically. The rest of the cast was made up of French actors, including Jeunet and Caro stock players like Dominique Pinon, the star of *DELICATESSEN*, who would go on play a key role in Jeunet's most successful film, *LE FABLEUX DESTIN D'AMÉLIE POULAIN* (2001), known in the U.S. simply as *AMÉLIE*.

The film's crew is a formidable lineup of creative artists: cinematographer Darius Khondji made his name on *DELICATESSEN*, his first major film, and three months before *CITY* was released, Khondji's work on David Fincher's *SEVEN* (1995) brought him to even greater attention. In the years since, he has gone on to work with directors including Danny Boyle, Wong Kar-Wai, and Michael Haneke. Angelo Badalamenti, best known for his work on "Twin Peaks," composed the haunting and hypnotic score for the film, including "Who Will Take My Dreams Away," sung by Marianne Faithfull. The costumes for the film were courtesy of famed designer Jean-Paul Gaultier. According to a *New York Times* piece on Gaultier, *DELICATESSEN* "felt so much a part of the designer's universe that Mr. Gaultier later cursed the fact he had not designed the costumes." He made up for it with Jeunet and Caro's next film, for which he designed jump suits, leather pants, brocade vests, tweed coats, and other distinctive fashions worn by the film's characters. About the film, Gaultier said, "The set was a mixture of all the things I truly love, a mixture of Jack-the-Ripper London, the Eiffel Tower and Captain Nemo."

While his praise for the film was measured—"I would be lying if I said I understood the plot," he notes at one point in his review—Roger Ebert concluded that the film was likely one of those "inspired films made for the eye," such as *BLADE RUNNER*, *2001*, and *BRAZIL*. While the film doesn't have quite the reputation of those films, *THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN* has certainly overcome the decidedly chilly reception it received when it opened the 1995 Cannes Film Festival, and now enjoys a cult following nearly 25 years after it was first released.

DID YOU KNOW: AFTER THE RELEASE OF JEUNET'S FILM *A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT* (2004), HE WAS APPROACHED BY FOX FILMS TO ADAPT AND DIRECT A FILM VERSION OF YANN MARTEL'S NOVEL *THE LIFE OF PI*. JEUNET AND COLLABORATOR GUILLAUME LAURANT WROTE A SCRIPT, JEUNET VISITED FOX'S WATER TANK IN MEXICO, WHERE *TITANIC* WAS SHOT, AND HE CREATED HUNDREDS OF STORYBOARDS FOR THE FILM. AFTER FOUR MONTHS, THOUGH, FOX BALKED AT HIS PROPOSED \$85 MILLION BUDGET, AND JEUNET LEFT THE PROJECT. IN 2012, THE ANG LEE-DIRECTED *LIFE OF PI* WAS RELEASED, EVENTUALLY GROSSING \$125 MILLION AND WINNING LEE BEST DIRECTOR HONORS AT THE ACADEMY AWARDS. THE FILM HAD A REPORTED BUDGET OF \$120 MILLION.

NEXT UP: THE *DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA* FILM SERIES CONTINUES WITH A SCREENING OF GUS VAN SANT'S 2008 FILM *MILK*. SEAN PENN STARS IN AN ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING PERFORMANCE AS SAN FRANCISCO POLITICIAN AND ACTIVIST HARVEY MILK. THE FILM, WHICH ALSO STARS EMILE HIRSCH, JOSH BRODLIN, ALISON PILL, AND JAMES FRANCO, SCREENS IN 35MM, FOLLOWED BY A DISCUSSION WITH PROF. LAURA WEXLER, ON **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21 AT 7:30 PM.**



DIRECTED BY **JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET**
AND **MARC CARO**

SCREENPLAY BY **JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET,**
MARC CARO, AND **GILLES ADRIEN**

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **DARIUS KHONDJI**
RELEASED BY **SONY PICTURES CLASSICS**
(1995) 112 MINS.

STARRING **RON PERLMAN, DANIEL**
EMILFORK, JUDITH VITTET, DOMINIQUE
PINON, JEAN-CLAUDE DREYFUS, RUFUS,
TICKY HOLGADO, AND JEAN-LOUIS
TRINTIGNANT