

QUINZAINE
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2011

KIDS OF TODAY

BY JÉRÔME DE MISSOLZ
FROM AN ORIGINAL IDEA BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS SANZ

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KIDS OF TODAY

LOVE STREAMS AGNÈS B PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS
A FILM BY JÉRÔME DE MISSOLZ
BASED ON AN ORIGINAL IDEA BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS SANZ
FRANCE / 2011 / 97'

A legendary rock critic from the 70s takes possession of a bunch of young clubbers. From Paris to Beijing, via New York, Montreal and Hong Kong, a dream-wave breaks across their lives generating a series of William-Burroughs-style cut-up scenes in which sensuous past and urban future are plaited together in musical patterns like serpents' skins.

Night brings freedom. Antoine, Aurélie, Mathieu, Riposte and Sabine have all come up to Paris to escape provincial drudgery. They organize amateur tattoo nights on the club circuit, play in noisy bands, run a semiotic magazine, spend drowsy days adrift on a sea of Facebook screens.

The stranger calls himself 69-X-69, executor of the last will and testament of Yves Adrien, rock critic, early user of the term punk, inventor of növo, chronicler of the heyday of Paris glam, when the Palace club was the crucible from which Gaultier and Mugler sprang. Yves Adrien staged his own death in the Seychelles in 2001.

With his giant fur hat, hair down to his bum, his fondness for expensive wines, adulation of the Virgin Mary and addiction to girls thirty years younger than himself, this stranger is his own doppelganger, fake executor, real-life vampire, ludicrous by day, captivating by night when his skeletal form starts to dance to the sound of Crystal Castles.

KIDS OF TODAY is a documentary. Nothing is invented. As the movie progresses though, reality morphs into drama, upsetting every known rule of story-telling, every known rule of movie-making.

Super 8 from 1979 and 1980 combines with TV news footage from the period, punk graphics, present-day I-phone clips, contemporary stills-camera memory stick and HDV images, producing a plunge into the electronic whirlpool, many of whose tenets and premises were anticipated in the cold wave years when the last analogue generation was inventing a future now come true.

The film shuttles between past and present nights, making thought sexual.

Girls and boys of from a post-punk past wander through present-day nights like withered ghosts, unable to live, unable to die in the darkness of our pixellated cities. And the tears stream down their cheeks as they turn human at last.

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KIDS OF TODAY opens with an extract from German silent movie classic *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, quick cutting to clips from Canadian electro-punk band *Crystal Castles*. For a couple of nano-seconds, it seems like we're in for yet another coked out rockumentary. But no.

Starting out with a voyeuristic interest in the fools' paradise of sex and drugs and rock and soul – most especially an ironic fondness for the split-crotch transgressions of the underground scene – Jérôme de Missolz soon finds himself shuttling back and forth between archive material from the late seventies and a depiction of Paris' current night-time counterculture.

KIDS OF TODAY is a documentary of sorts, a movie about the digital age. It takes a bunch of young clubbers in today's Paris and watches as, gradually, they are possessed by a ghost from the past, a rock critic of the seventies named Yves Adrien, a.k.a 69-X-69, who says he is dead – the better to feed on this tender prey.

Legendary Rock critic, Yves Adrien is the creator of innumerable avatars. Early user of the term punk back in 1973, inventor of the term *Novö* on a bender with Iggy Pop in 1979 he claims the truth about Facebook in the room where Oscar Wilde died almost exactly one hundred years ago.

Mathieu and Bench, Riposte, Sabrina and Antoine want fame. They run a club-night tattoo outfit, a semiotic fanzine, a band called *This is Pop*. They make musical instruments out of plastic toys, hold all night after parties, flit from cybernetic seminars to openings and straight or gay, they live by night, spending their days surfing the Internet in the cellars and bedsits they inhabit. At the touch of a trackpad, instantly they access everything they think they need to know. With one click of their smartphones, they immortalize and disseminate every scrap of experience. Everything they do is advertised as soon as it is done. As the ghost of Yves Adrien comes into their lives, they learn to contemplate their own desires in the looking-glass of a previous age, when synthesized sound and gloomy two-piece suits were heralding an electronic era still to come. They discover that the jittery sounds and graphics and fashion styles of early eighties Paris were a foretaste of the world we live in now.

The story thus shifts back and forth between the two eras, resurrecting true-life figures such as former child star Lio as well as Edwige Belmore, the girl on the door at Paris' fabled *Le Palace* club, whisked to Manhattan by Warhol himself.



When 69-X-69, executor of the last will and testament of Yves Adrien, suddenly returns to New York, Edwige has the words "Ne Me Quitte Pas Forever" tattooed into her forearm live on camera, before giving a heart-rending bilingual version of the Brel song as a tenor sax James White queals and all the young people in the room omit to pay heed.

KIDS OF TODAY is a true story of possession in which the players are willing accomplices. The terms drama and documentary, fiction and non-fiction soon fall obsolete as Jérôme de Missolz weaves his web, drawing all the people he meets into his design.

The line between reality and imagination... between observation and invention is erased. Real characters, at first observed, are steadily lured into playing fictional selves, thus depicting the world in parallel and simultaneous forms as real and unreal at one and the same time...

As if Shakespeare had been able to direct the real Henry V in a stage performance of his own life.

The story morphs as it moves, shifting from Paris to New York to Beijing in search, not just of future futures, but also surviving scraps of humanity to remedy the cold harshness of 21st century nights.

As the movie progresses, in some strange way, it becomes apparent that, unconsciously perhaps, he has stumbled on a roundabout form of autobiography.

THIS IS THE BACK-GROUND

April 2008. Paris Galerie du Jour unveils the exhibition *Des Jeunes Gens Modernes*. Soon arises the idea to make a film based on the exhibition's central topic. Love Streams agnès b. Productions propose the project to veteran music director, Jérôme de Missolz. Thus **KIDS OF TODAY** was born: a pop/art/style kaleidoscope of late seventies-early eighties Paris Niche interest you think. Well sure. Paris was always more about le look than la musique. Clubs like *Le Palace*, *Le Privilege* or *Les Bains Douches* were pale copies of New York's *Studio 54*, commercial flashpoints in a wannabee local scene fuelled by rag-trade dollars, that capitalized on a blasé backlash against riots and revolutionary dreams to sell more fashion. The left-wing antics of May 1968, style-hounds claimed, had deprived French kids of the simple pleasures of music and sex and drugs that everyone else was enjoying. It was time to catch up, time to have fun.

From the late seventies on, a decade-long festival of limp-wristed pose, glitter and glam, began, steeped in that special Paris thing, that blunts even the self-loathing of punk into camp. It was a right-wing, post-Gaullist movida that aped the futurism of *Kraftwerk*, plundered the angst of *Joy Division*, plagiarized the craftsmanship of *Bowie*, to counterfeit a counterculture in which only the cross-dressing, the catwalks and the coke were up to scratch.

But to Jérôme de Missolz, all this meant something else. As a young man from a dead-end arms-manufacturing town three hundred miles south of Paris, the freedom and lack of moral constraint were what he aspired to. He hit the scene with a super-8 camera and went to work, shooting gay underground movies with cult hero Lionel Soucaze, an early *Rita Mitsouko* promo, bodybuilders taking *Le Palace* by storm, Edwige prancing down a catwalk in black rubber diving flippers and countless other musical and fashion-fetish climaxes.

All this footage is cut into **KIDS OF TODAY**, making the movie not just an essay on how electronics changed the way people hope for the greater freedoms of night, but also a clandestine (if "noisy") meditation on the passage of time, with a playlist to die for and an uncanny knack for generating spurts of emotion in motel suites and backrooms the world over.

Because the story is told through the eyes of rock critic, who claims to be dead, it becomes a documentary fairy-tale of sorts, a vampire movie for the new underground. The characters travel from sound to sound, from night to night and across the globe, searching for humanity – in a world with almost none.

In the end, it is as though this need for humanity triggers a self-knowledge in sadness and joy they never knew.

To this day, Jérôme de Missolz leads a double life. The visible part is as a veteran music and arts documentary director, working for all the major channels. The other is his life in experimental film, shooting stop-frame, mixed media, transgression and pose, turning up the volume till the body starts to spin and the mind starts to go. For the first time, with this project, he brings the two parts of himself into fusion. The result is a complex magic that steals up unawares, making you laugh and think and cry in no particular order. And by the time he is through you know nothing quite like this combination of private and public, of loud and quiet, of thoughtful and vain and true has ever been seen before.



ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTORS

Entrisme

Entrisme is a contemporary, cross-cultural magazine, covering music and literature, fashion, geek culture, clubbing, movies and architecture in no particular order.

Mathieu Chausseron, Editor

A contributor to the Franco-American publication *Face b / Architecture* from the Other Side, Mathieu Chausseron is also on the Editorial Board of *POLI – Politique de l'Image*. He is a member of ALD, a video collective and a musician, a member of the band *This is Pop*, with whom he has performed in London, Berlin and Hong Kong.

Sabine Noble, Editor

A film studies graduate specializing in late Westerns and road movies, Sabine Noble is also editor of the online edition of *POLI – Politique de l'Image*. She is a founder member of the ALD video collective with Mathieu Chausseron.

Aurélie-Laïla Benchekri, aka Bench, publicity and sponsorship

A trained work therapist, Aurélie-Laïla Benchekri works on everyday life, on the anecdotal, the intimate. In charge of publicity for *Entrisme*, she is also a photographer, regularly supplying the magazine with her self-fictional Polaroid images.

Antoine Capet, Artistic Director

Photographer, musician, graphic designer and video-maker, Antoine Capet is the founder of «Superficialism», a neo-bad boy Parisian tattoo movement.



69-X-69 (Yves Adrien), Writer and Rock Critic

Yves Adrien is a French writer and dandy, who first came to public notice through his articles for *Rock&Folk* magazine in the early punk years and through his book *Novövision*. His journalism expresses a fascination/veneration for those who were avant-garde, modern, innovative (or trash) artists of their time: David Bowie and Kraftwerk, precursors of the New Wave and the arty American avant-garde of the late 70s (Talking Heads, James Chance, Lydia Lunch, Mars, DNA etc.) Passionate about the future in the making and which he sublimes, Yves Adrien's articles display a strong distaste for anything overly French, old-fashioned or «provincial». He tries to keep one step ahead of the game and to contribute to the launching of new musical trends. Even back then, he was not really a journalist, more a precursor of today's rock columnist, developing – alongside his friend and colleague – Alain Pacadis – an essay style that ensured his lasting influence on the current generation. He is the inventor and apostle of the term «Novö».

Edwige Belmore, Icon & Singer

Edwige was one of the most famous models in Paris nightlife in the late 70s and early 80s. Crowned «Queen of the Punks» after posing for a *Façade* magazine cover with Andy Warhold. Fabrice Emaer, owner of Paris' legendary Palace club asked her to sit on the door when the club opened in 1978. Edwige – with her mussed blonde hair – was photographed by international photographers such as Helmut Newton, Jean-Baptiste Mondino, Pierre&Gilles (among others). She also modelled in Jean-Paul Gaultier and Thierry Mugler shows. In 1979, Claude Arto and Edwige formed the pop new wave duo *Mathématiques Modernes*. Their single, *Disco Rough*, produced by Jacno, was released in 1980. In the 80s, Edwige commuted between New York and Paris. Today, she works as a production designer, lives in Brooklyn, and prepares a new album.

Maripol

Photographer and director, producer and author, fashion and jewellery designer, Maripol was a leader of the New York 80s fashion scene. She played a vital rôle in launching new artistic currents and remains influential today. The story of her nomadic, punk life is told in a recent book, entitled *Little Red Hood* (Le Petit Chaperon Rouge, ed Damiani), for which she drew on her notebooks studded with drawing, photographs and accounts of the people she met.



Alain Pacadis, rock critic

A major figure on the Paris club and social scene from the early 70s to the mid-80s, Alain Pacadis was best known for his weekly clubbing column in Paris' *Libération* newspaper and for his writing in the monthly publications *L'Echo des Savanes*, *Palace Magazine* and *Façade*. Visionary clubber, he lived on sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll (and nothing else), becoming a hero of the Parisian jet-set during the Palace years. Alain Pacadis was the first journalist to foresee the blossoming of the punk scene and to interview friends such as Iggy Pop, Andy Warhol, Philippe Garrel, Serge Gainsbourg, Nico, Elli Medeiros and Lio. A touching, even moving character, he lived for the day until murdered by a young lover who strangled him «in order to exorcise the despair that was haunting him». A huge crowd attended the funeral.

Lio

Singer, actress, icon, muse of pop in the 80's, her first eponymous album was produced by Marc Moulin and Dan Lacksmann, from electro trio "Telex". In 1982, the American duet "Sparks" works with her on album "Suite Sixteen". Lio inspired Etienne Daho, Duvall, Jacno among others. On screen she starred in Chantal Akerman's or Thierry Jousse's films and more recently in Katell Quillévéré's *Love Like Poison*. Cult song "Banana Split" has been reissued on the album "Suite Sixteen" under the title "Marie Antoinette".

Jacno

Founder with Elli Medeiros of "Stinky Toys" (1976), one of the first music bands of the French punk first wave, Jacno meets a solo success with *Rectangle* that sets the "Jacno Sound Style". He later launches pop duo "Elli & Jacno" that contributes to Eric Rohmer's *Full Moon in Paris'* soundtrack. Jean-Jacques de Castelbajac designed Jacno's costume for his concert at Olympia in 1985. From 1985, Jacno goes on with his solo career and also produces albums for Lio, Pauline Lafont, "Mathématiques Modernes", Etienne Daho, Daniel Darc or Jacques Higelin. Jacno also writes songs for "Les Valentins", Paul Personne and Helena Nogueira and contributes to the revival of "Yéyé" music by sharing two songs with Mareva Galanter. Chain smoker, he gets his stage name from Jacno, designer of the logo of cigarette brand Gauloise. Jacno died in 2009.



JÉRÔME DE MISSOLZ

Director

Born 10/08/54 in Lyon (France). Law degree in 76, first films with the Saint-Etienne MCL (Community Arts Center), settles in Paris in 77, takes part to the creation of the Experimental Cinemas Cooperative, writes in magazine "Cinéma Différent", publishes "Discopop" (75-79) an encyclopaedia of Rock (Diapason). Short films DoP.

From Entrées de Secours on punk, to *Jan Saudek* shot in the illicit basements of the dying world of East European Communism, to *You'll Never Walk Alone*, at the heart of red Liverpool and its music-making, to *Joel-Peter Witkin*, an artistic acid-trip that takes you to the limits of ethical acceptability, to *Flambe* and its portrait of gambling addicts, to *Les Rives de l'Etang de Berre*, in the boiler-room of the neo-fascist renaissance, to *La Mécanique des Femmes* on obscenity and the erotic as essentials, to *Yves Saint-Laurent-Tout terriblement* on the hellishness of creativity, to *Zone Reptile* on how music makes you free, to *Sans Titre* in which the photographic image becomes a form of suicide, from documentary to drama, long forms to short, TV to cinema, art, music and politics, Jérôme de Missolz is first and foremost an experimenter, an independent director intent on breaking the rules, flying in the face of convention, overhauling battered ideas, to find new ways of making films and new ways of defining freedom.

Selective Filmography

- 2011 Kids of Today
- 2008 La Cigogne et l'éprouvette (TV)
- 2007 Le Corps sublimé
- 2003 Chaplin Today: A King in New York (TV)
- 2002 Zone Reptile (TV)
- 2000 La Mécanique des femmes
- 1997 La Saga des Massey Ferguson (TV)
- 1996 I (comme Isabelle)
- 1994 Joel-Peter Witkin - L'image indélébile
- 1992 You'll Never Walk Alone (TV)
- 1990 Jan Saudek - Prague printemps 1990
- 1983 Entrées de secours
- 1977 Celluloïd heroes



JEAN-FRANÇOIS SANZ

Writer

In 2008, «*Des Jeunes Gens Modernes*», an exhibition devised and curated by Jean-François Sanz for agnès b's Paris-based galerie du jour gave new life to the French post-punk and cold wave scene of the late 70s and early 80s by means of a major selection of works, witness-accounts and documents. This new lease of life gave a whole generation of chic and trashy, novö, modern, kids a second wind, revealing just how seminal its influence had been – politically, artistically and musically.

During the eighteen months or so it took to set up the project (in all: exhibition, book, CD and vinyl anthology), Love Streams agnès b. Productions suggested to Jean-François Sanz that he work with photographer and video-maker Emmanuel Bovet – whose photographs from the period were included in the show – to establish a video-document based on the interviews conducted in the run-up to the show, with a view to combining these interviews with archive footage, extracts from promos and concert-footage, in order to produce a documentary film that would provide a kind of audiovisual extension of the exhibition. This film, called in French like the exhibition «Des jeunes gens modernes» (post-punk, Cold Wave and Novö culture in France 1978-1983) is currently being finalised. It will form a playful investigation into a bubbling, ultra-creative, underground, French artistic and musical scene, that has been scarcely studied up till now. It will mix archive footage, concert-footage, film, TV and promo clips and interviews with musicians, artists, journalists, photographers, directors, record-label managers and so on.

In the meantime, based on this initial documentary project, the exhibition gave rise to a second film project *KIDS OF TODAY* (entitled in French *DES JEUNES GENS MODERNES 2.0*), a feature film co-produced by Love Streams agnès b and Arte France Cinéma, written by Jérôme de Missolz and Jean-François Sanz, tending towards an original creation documentary drama, with a view to building a bridge between the late 70s scene and its nearest 2010 equivalent, via the ghostly presence of Yves Adrien, alias 69-X-69, writer and emblematic rock critic of the period, already a pivotal figure in planning the exhibition – through which he constitutes a kind of guiding genius.

Jean-François Sanz is curator and art and culture programme director at the agnès b. partnership fund at agnès b. He is also an illustrator.

TECHNICAL CREW

Director Jérôme de Missolz based on an original idea by Jean-François Sanz
 Director of Photography Jérôme de Missolz & Sarah Blum
 Sound Matthew Foldes
 Editors Elisabeth Juste & Vanessa Bozza
 Production Love Streams agnès b.
 Productions & Arte France Cinéma
 International sales & festivals
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