

ARTÉMIS PRODUCTIONS and CHRISTAL FILMS PRODUCTIONS
present

DAVE JOHNS

OLIVIER GOURMET

TURTLES

a film by DAVID LAMBERT



PRESSKIT

TURTLES is a film written and directed by DAVID LAMBERT, starring DAVE JOHNS, OLIVIER GOURMET, BRIGITTE PROPPAT, and VALÉRIE VALA, produced by PATRICK BOMET and executive producer CHRISTIAN LAROCHE, co-produced in Canada by AMÉLIE PUYE and BÉATRICE BÉGIN, with co-producers AMÉLIE PUYE, BÉATRICE BÉGIN, YANISV VIEYCKEN, VALÉRIE DRELEMAN, and PHILIPPE LOGIC. The executive production was handled by STÉPHANE BUIWÉ, bearing cinematography by W. GARE, CHLOÉ FAÏSE, production design by KURT BRISILLÉ, editing by TOM BARRAUX, costumes by CAROL VAN RENSTERS, makeup design by SIMA PRADHAN PRADHAN, hairstylists by SEBASTIEN VEIGIERS, sound design by MARCO SENICIK, musical music composition by ANDRÉ BARRAUX, and original music composition by MARCO SENICIK, production direction by VINCENT CARBARI, and assistant direction by VALÉRIE WEYER, production ARTÉMISS PRODUCTIONS and CHRISTAL FILMS PRODUCTIONS, with the support of the CENTRE DU CINÉMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA RÉGION VALLEONNE, PRESSEBELLES and the ADRESSE CONCRÈTE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES SECTEURS CULTURELS. Distribution by production with ETOILE (PÉLÉVINON BELGES), EPICARDUS, AJOLO DE L'OL, CHLOË PHOTO, and with the participation of LA RÉGION DE BRUXELLES CAPITALE and TRISOMIE, with the support of BULGACÉ - CREDIT ET IMPACT CINÉMA ET TÉLÉVISION, CANADA - CREDIT ET IMPACT PRODUCTIONS CANADIENNES (PRODUCTION) and production by collaboration with CHLOË and PATRICK BOMET. A production which should not be cut off, with the support of the TAX SYSTEM INCENTIVE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF BELGIUM, co-financed by THE EUROPEAN UNION, CREATIVE MEDIA PROGRAM, with the support of the REGION OF WALLONIE, BRUXELLES ET DE LA LIBERTE NORD. All rights reserved.





COMEDY DRAMA / 83 MIN / BELGIUM, CANADA
LANGUAGE : FRENCH, ENGLISH / SUBTITLES: ENGLISH, FRENCH

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INTERNATIONAL SALES & FESTIVALS

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Turtles is the film I wish I had seen during my teenage years, when I was frantically looking for role models and couples I could relate to. In the 80s, the few queer characters on screen had tragic fates and were reduced to their sexual and transgressive dimension.

At the time, as a young gay man, I had to project myself into straight love stories and couples and make all the equivalences. The magic of cinema always worked but I would have liked to see a story that was closer to me. I would have liked to ask my straight friends to project themselves onto a story between two men, without having to do it myself.

The time has come...

The time has come to portray an old couple: decades of living together, sharing, and arguing. Characters who have sealed a life-and-death union long before they were allowed to marry. Middle-class characters (in contrast to the privileged worlds in which gay characters evolve), a police officer and a former queen of the night with a modest life. It is a film that gives the actors the space and time to make us vibrate and to carry us away in different ranges of emotions between laughter and tears.

The time has come to make an unabashed remarriage comedy between two men. Thom and Henri have a similar dynamic to Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. They bicker, they grumble, they complain, they have some really tragic, even sadly cruel moments, but the film leaves room for light, sweetness, and tenderness. I want to focus on the emotional life of the characters, share intimate moments with them and transform these moments into narrative movements.

The time has come to film a couple's crisis that is triggered by a life-changing moment, a retirement that unsettles both of them and forces them to rethink the founding principles of their relationship. It is a turning point in life that shakes us, an obligatory passage that we will all face one day or another.

The time has come to film bodies over 60, bodies of survivors: a body language marked by decades of exclusion, characters who reach an age that will confront them with a world that makes less and less room for our elders. It is a story about the present, but it is also a story about the passing of time, about our inheritance, our transmission, about the place of our dead in the way we deal with the chaos of our lives and our feelings.

The time has come to portray characters who give themselves a second chance, a new breath, a new life, who overcome their own harshness and the harshness of the world to give themselves moments of joy, moments of love as a final act of resistance in the face of our idle lives.

SYNOPSIS

Since Thom and Henri met 35 years ago, their love for each other has never faltered. The seemingly perfect life they had built in Brussels started to go awry when Henri retired from being a police officer. Now, Henri's days seem to stretch endlessly, each one as bland as the next while his feelings for Thom are fading fast. They drift away from each other a little more each day, to the point that their house has become a battleground. Thom's love for Henri remains strong though and he is not ready to give up. He will do anything to save his relationship and rekindle their love, even if that means asking Henri for a divorce.





DAVE JOHNS

Dave is a multi-award-winning film actor, accomplished stage actor and respected stand-up comic. He is perhaps best known for playing the lead role in **Ken Loach's** feature film *I, Daniel Blake* for which he won the 2016 BIFA for Best Actor. He also won **Best Actor** at the Dublin Film Critics Circle and Best Newcomer at the EMPIRE Awards. Other nominations included Best Actor at the 2016 European Film Awards, Evening Standard British Film Awards, Critics' Circle Awards 2017. *I, Daniel Blake* won the 2016 **Palme d'Or** at Cannes Film Festival and also the award for Outstanding British Film at the 2017 BAFTAs.

FILMOGRAPHY (extract)

2016	I, Daniel Blake
2017	Howay!
2018	Walk Like a Panther
2019	The Keeper
2019	Fishermen's Friends
2020	23 Walks
2022	Fisherman's Friends: One and All
2023	Turtles

OLIVIER GOURMET

Olivier Gourmet is a Belgian actor born in Namur. He won the **Best Actor award** at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival for his role in *Le Fils* by **Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne**. He has worked with directors as diverse as Pascal Thomas, Bruno Podalydès, Michael Haneke and Bertrand Tavernier, who gave him the role of filmmaker Roger Richebé in *Laissez-passer* (2002). He was nominated for a **César** for Best Actor for his portrayal of the Minister of Transport in *L'exercice de l'État* (2011) by Pierre Schoeller, and in the Supporting Actor category for *Grand Central* (2013) by Rebecca Zlotowski.

FILMOGRAPHY (extract)

2013	Grand Central
2014	Madame Bovary
2015	L'Odeur de la mandarine
2016	Chocolat
2017	Above the Law
2017	The Young Karl Marx
2021	Simone Veil, A Woman of the Century
2023	Turtles

DAVID LAMBERT

David Lambert is a Belgian director and screenwriter. He started his film career as a screenwriter before moving into directing with his first short *Vivre encore un peu* broadcasted on Arte. His 1st film *Hors les murs* was presented at Cannes during the 51st Semaine de la Critique and won the **Prix du rail d'or**. He then directed *Je Suis à Toi* (2014) with Nahuel Perez Biscayart (Best Actor award for his performance at Karlovy Vary FF). *Turtles* is his fourth feature film.





PRODUCERS' NOTE

With this new film, David addresses the question of a couple through the trials of aging. We developed this screenplay with the desire to give the film extensive exposure. Indeed, with *Turtles* we are supporting a well-recognized Queer author in the LGBTQIA+ community. However, in my opinion, the themes of this new project and its cast make it a universal work that appeals to everyone.

The emphasis has been unapologetically placed on the relationship difficulties experienced by the couple on screen, as well as their daily lives during the challenging transition to retirement. We believe that anyone can easily identify with it without the couple's sexual orientation on screen being an obstacle to the viewer's empathy process. Aging, retirement, changing daily routines, marriage, love, disillusionment, abandonment, loneliness - these are all universal themes that bring us together, regardless of our life paths.

The film resonates with the sensitivity, beauty, and portrayal of aging LGBTQIA+ couples in films such as *Supernova* by Harry Macqueen, *Two of Us* by Filippo Meneghetti, or *Forgotten Roads* by Nicol Ruiz Benavides. With *Turtles* David offers a necessary vision of a couple where homosexuality is not the subject; that's the richness of the film. It brings to life an older gay couple questioning their past and future, which may seem simple, yet it is still far too rare in contemporary cinema.

Patrick Quinet & Daniel Morin



ARTÉMIS PRODUCTIONS

Artémis Productions is one of the most important production companies in Belgium, both in terms of size and the number of productions in its filmography. In its 30 years of existence, Artémis has produced and co-produced over 200 films. Mainly feature films, but also documentaries, short films and TV productions, many of which have received international recognition at festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Toronto. In recent years, Artémis has also opened a department dedicated to series. Artémis' first series, Pandore, released in 2022, was very well received by the public and critics and sold in more than 15 countries.

The company is headed by PATRICK QUINET. In addition to his activities as a producer, Patrick Quinet was involved in the creation of the Belgian Tax Shelter and is Managing Director of Taxshelter.be. He is also the founder and president of the André Delvaux Academy, which organises the annual Magritte awards for Belgian cinema. He is one of the founding members of the Palace cinema in the heart of Brussels and was president of the Union of French-speaking Film Producers for almost 15 years.

Among Artémis' most recent and acclaimed productions are :

- Thomas Cailley's «The Animal Kingdom», starring Romain Duris and Adèle Exarchopoulos, which opened Un Certain Regard at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival.
- «Life for Real» by Dany Boon, with Dany Boon, Kad Merad and Charlotte Gainsbourg.
- «Home Front» by Lucas Belvaux, starring Gérard Depardieu, Catherine Frot and Jean-Pierre Daroussin, in the official selection of the 2020 Cannes Festival.
- «Mandibles» by Quentin Dupieux with Grégoire Ludig, David Marsais and Adèle Exarchopoulos, selected for the 2020 Venice Film Festival.
- Filippo Meneghetti's «Two of Us» with Léa Drucker, Martine Chevallier and Barbara Sukowa, awarded at the César and Golden Globes in 2019.
- «Pupille» by Jeanne Herry, with Sandrine Kiberlain, Gilles Lellouche, Elodie Bouchez and Miou-Miou, César for Best Film in 2019.
- «Le grand bain» by Gilles Lellouche, starring Mathieu Amalric, Guillaume Canet, Benoît Poelvoorde, Jean-Hugues Anglade, Philippe Katerine, Virginie Efira, Leila Bekhti and Marina Foïs, selected at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival, awarded at the 2019 César and Crystal Globes.
- «Mon ket» by François Damiens, Magritte for Best Film and Best Actor in 2019.

The complete and detailed filmography of Artémis Productions is available at the following address: www.artemisproductions.com



TECHNICAL INFOS

producer **PATRICK QUINET**
executive producer **CHRISTIAN LAROUCHE**
co-produced in Canada by **DANIEL MORIN**
co-producers **ARLETTE ZYLBERBERG, TANGUY DEKEYSER**
VALÉRIE BERLEMONT, and **PHILIPPE LOGIE**
executive production **STÉPHANE QUINET**
cinematography **N'GARE 'CHICHI' FALISE**
production design **KURT RIGOLLE**
editing **TOM RANDAXHE**
costumes **ISABEL VAN RENTERGHEM**
makeup design **JOAN PATRICIA PARRIS**
sound **GEERT VLEGELS**
sound design and mixing **LAURA HADDAD**
original music composition **MARIO SÉVIGNY**
production direction **VINCENT CANART**
assistant direction **VALÉRIE WÉRY**