



Beluga Tree et Caviar présentent

Lanna De Palmaert Emilie Dequenue Stéphane De Groodt

TKT

(T'INQUIÈTE)

Un film de Solange Cicurel





SYNOPSIS

As 16-year-old Emma is admitted to the hospital's intensive care unit, her parents anxiously wait for news from the doctor. Strangely, Emma is fully aware of the world around her but unable to communicate with it. To understand what is going on, Emma must investigate her past and unravel the mystery surrounding her sudden hospitalization. Little by little, she will be confronted with the harsh reality of what has happened to her.



INTERVIEW WITH SOLANGE CICUREL

TKT is the story of a 16-year-old girl, Emma, who ends up in a coma for no apparent reason. The film reveals what happened to her in reverse. It's an investigation, a thriller, based on the film's main theme: bullying. I tried to show how a popular young girl who's comfortable in her own skin comes to be bullied, without anyone seeing it coming. Harassment is like a spider's web in which Emma gradually becomes trapped. No matter how hard she fights, once trapped, she can't free herself. Throughout the film, she says, "Don't worry, don't worry, I'll manage. That's something parents of teenagers hear a lot. But in fact, when your children say "Don't worry", worry! I felt it was urgent and essential to tackle this issue, which is a real scourge in our schools. With this film, we wanted to raise awareness and open up the debate.

The theme is dramatic. How did you choose to approach it cinematically?

I especially didn't want to make a visually dark or gloomy film; it's actually quite a bright film. I also wanted to make a popular film. It tells a love story, stories of friendship—both beautiful friendships and toxic ones. Lastly, I wanted my main character to have everything going for her: to be kind, pretty, and confident, and yet still be a victim of bullying. This can really happen to any teenager.

In the film, Emma's parents are present, yet they struggle to see the signs of her distress. How did you want to guide the audience in understanding what's happening with Emma?

I think parents don't see because they don't know where to look. In the film, we show that there are clues, signs. For example, at the beginning, Emma dresses in very colorful clothes. Then, little by little, she starts avoiding her parents, dresses all in black, secretly smokes, becomes much more withdrawn, and, most importantly, she stops communicating. Yet, her parents are wonderful—they're attentive, but that doesn't stop them from missing the signs. I was lucky to work with two exceptional actors, Emilie Dequenne and Stéphane De Groodt, who perfectly portray these parents who don't understand how they missed the immense pain that devastated their daughter's life.



How did you find your Emma, Lanna De Palmaert, who is playing her first role?

I found her thanks to my daughter Nina. They've been friends for years, and Nina had seen Lanna perform in theater. I was starting the casting process, and she said to me, "Mom, don't bother looking, it's Lanna." So I called Lanna and said, "I hear you do theater. Nina tells me you're amazing. Would you be willing to audition for me?" The second I heard her, I knew she was the one. It was obvious.

What connects all these teenagers is also social media and messaging apps, which play a huge role in the unfolding of the story.

It's clear that social media plays a major role in Emma's tragedy. If only our young people could do without it, or at least limit their use! Let's go back to the good old Nokia 3310! Social media puts enormous pressure on our children. They feel protected by their screens, as if it creates a distance and they can see and send everything without consequences. That's false. Theory is one thing, but practical illustration is better. So I hope the film will help demonstrate this issue in practice, to make people understand that even if the intention isn't explicitly to hurt someone, the accumulation of messages can be harmful to the person receiving them. And of course, you should never send or forward sexually explicit messages. Cinema allows us to step into someone else's shoes, in this case, the shoes of the one who receives far too many messages.



What originally inspired you to tell this story?

Several bullied teenage girls who had loving parents, yet their parents didn't see what was happening to them. And then, the increasing number of young people who were taking their own lives. I wanted to address this topic, but I couldn't find the right angle, until the day Elena Tenace sent me her novel *Tout ira bien*. The structure she uses inspired me a lot. So, I decided to tell the story as an investigation, which allows the viewer to follow Emma on her journey. It's a unique approach, as Emma is essentially retracing her memories. She starts by looking at her friends, then her parents, her neighbor. Little by little, she pieces together her memories like a puzzle, and as she goes along, she understands what happened to her.

You specifically chose not to avoid the tragedy, not to shy away from it. Why?

Because I believe this is the reality for teenagers who are faced with bullying. It is a tragedy—there's no other word for it. It's not something you can deal with halfway. You can't skirt around it or turn a blind eye.



What references inspired and influenced you during the writing and directing process?

Visually, I wanted an image somewhere between *Sex Education* and *Euphoria*—two great teen series with a language that speaks to them. I talked a lot about this with my cinematographer, Son Doan. We wanted a very bright image at the beginning, which gradually darkens as the drama unfolds.

Music also plays an important role in the film, just as it does in Emma's life.

Music is essential in the film. Emma retreats into music when things aren't going well, as many teens do. The score was composed by Remy Lebbos, and there are also two songs by the Belgian band Colt. The music sets the rhythm of the film. We also worked extensively on the sound design, which mirrors Emma's emotional experience. The idea was that as her heart beats, your heart beats too. The music carries you—it's truly a character in the film.

Finally, what mattered most to you with this film?

To show that no matter what you may have said or done, no one deserves to be bullied. I also hope I conveyed the message written at the end of the film: If you witness bullying, speak up!





INTERVIEW WITH EMILIE DEQUENNE

To begin, could you tell us about *TKT* in a few words?

It's the story of Emma, who is in her final year of high school. She lives a typical teenage life. She's beautiful, vibrant, and smart. She's deeply loved by her parents. She has everything going for her. Yet, we come to realize that she's a victim of bullying—a form of bullying that is very subtle. What starts as small, seemingly insignificant things gradually turns into a real tragedy. What gives this story and the film its power is that it shows bullying can affect absolutely anyone. I play the role of Emma's mother, a loving and close parent, but completely unaware of what her daughter is going through. The film depicts the spiral of bullying without casting judgment or blame, taking the time to understand it. It dismantles and dissects it with nuance. The audience isn't treated as ignorant—Solange Cicurel trusts them to grasp the insidious nature of the dynamic at play.

What made you agree to take on the project?

This story resonates with me personally because I, too, was a victim of bullying at that age. For me, the situation was tragic; it was really tough. I watched the film with my own mother, who came out of the screening with tears in her eyes. She said to me, “It’s crazy; no matter how close you are to your child, you don’t realize anything, it’s truly dramatic. It’s so true—your child keeps saying ‘Don’t worry, don’t worry,’ and we see nothing.” I found myself as a teenager, recognizing the bullying and the bullies. Perhaps that’s what affected me so deeply and made this subject resonate with me.

How does the film choose to approach this very serious theme?

The film doesn’t exaggerate; it doesn’t preach while still offering many keys to understanding the situation. Despite its subject, it remains very entertaining and popular. It’s a true cinematic film, with beautiful imagery; at first, it feels like a teen movie, a bit American-style, which reminds me of the films that marked my adolescence. There’s a certain magic in this approach, and I believe it’s a good thing to carry such a powerful topic. For me, it’s a film of public utility. I think as many teenagers as possible should see this film. It’s important for parents too, and even for all adults in general. I believe this film will resonate with many people and can help give a voice to those who need it. It’s so important to express oneself in these situations and not keep everything inside—it’s a real poison.



How was the filming experience with director Solange Cicurel, as well as with your co-stars Lanna De Palmaert and Stéphane De Groodt?

With Stéphane, we had crossed paths a year earlier at the Cabourg Film Festival, and we had done an interview together for Canal+, where we were surprised—and regretted—that we had never worked together. Right after that, Solange Cicurel came along with this project and offered us the chance to act together. It felt like our wish had been granted. I was very happy to meet Stéphane in a different context than at social events and finally share a moment with him on set.

As for Solange, she is an extremely caring person who truly pays attention to her actors. She loves them, and believe me, that's not always the case. She is very involved and very meticulous. Those are two different things. Not only does she have a lot of talent, but she is also completely multitasking. When I think of Solange, I really think of her kindness and generosity, while remaining very firm about what she wants. She was a true captain of the ship.

Finally, Lanna is just like her character Emma—so beautiful, so radiant, so everything. The kind of person that vampires generally target (laughs). Plus, I don't think she's even aware of it. She has an incredible photogenic quality, and the emotion she brings to the film is no less impressive. It was a privilege to work with her, as well as with all the other young actors, who were extraordinary. I believe Solange's casting choices were spot on.





INTERVIEW WITH LANNA DE PALMAERT

Could you introduce us to your character, Emma?

Emma is a sixteen-year-old girl, quite extroverted, popular in her high school, and comfortable in her own skin. She has many friends and is not isolated. She comes from a very loving family and moves within a nice social circle. Until the day everything changes for her. She will be bullied, and in a very quick and brutal manner, her life will turn into a nightmare. She finds no peace anywhere, neither at school nor at home. Not to mention that social media plays a crucial role in the story. Even her best friend, Manon, turns away from her. She has no one to confide in and doesn't even consider talking to her parents about it. They notice the changes in her mood and personality, but they think it's just part of adolescence. It's difficult for parents to realize the severity and violence of certain situations. Plus, she constantly tells them, "Don't worry." That's her catchphrase.

Do you see yourself in this character?

I find this character particularly interesting because we often think that bullying only happens to weaker individuals, those who don't know how to defend themselves. However, that's not the case for Emma; she expresses her thoughts confidently and normally has no problem speaking up—she's strong. But after a while, no matter how hard she fights back, she is brought down by the strength of the group.

I believe it takes great maturity, sometimes even courage, to help someone who is being bullied without being influenced by others. In the film, Emma's friends capitulate to group pressure.

I haven't experienced bullying like my character in TKT, but high school was a challenging time for me and for some of my friends as well. It's a period when we discover ourselves, begin to grow up, and our bodies and perspectives on the world change. We need to be able to accept these changes and try to assert our own vision and personality while surrounding ourselves with the right people. That's far from easy! For my part, without the support of my loved ones, I would also feel lost due to my inability to communicate with them.

Is this your first film? How did you find yourself in TKT?

Making movies was a dream of mine when I was little, but I thought it was an inaccessible world. So, I somewhat gave up on my dream. Then one day, Solange called me to audition. Her daughter Nina, who is a friend of mine, had seen me perform in theater and suggested to her mother that I audition. So, I went for the casting. I couldn't believe I was selected—like, “Wow, you trust someone who has never acted before for a lead role?” I admit I felt a lot of pressure since I'm in almost every scene. But I told myself that if Solange chose me, it was because she believed in me and my acting.

How did you prepare for the role?

First, I prepared for the audition thoroughly with the help of my loved ones, including my best friend. Once I was selected, the real work began. I started by reading the script alone with Solange. She was very present and truly supported me. I can never thank her enough. I had no experience; I had everything to discover, and she reassured me a lot while making me rehearse as many times as necessary. We read and reread the script, and she rewrote some dialogues so that they sounded better coming from me. We also did physical training; Solange played all the roles, which was very serious yet also very funny.



What was the most difficult for you on set?

First, it was about ignoring the 30 people on the team who were scrutinizing my every move. It's very intimidating and quite complicated at the beginning. The scenes with the extras at school also stressed me out a lot. I had to portray very strong emotions under the gaze of young people my age. I felt like I could hear whispers everywhere. It was almost a reflection of what Emma goes through, in fact.

And what did you enjoy the most?

The encounters! The other actors were amazing, and the entire technical team was fantastic. It really made me want to continue working on film sets. Everyone had so much experience and anecdotes to share. It was fascinating.



What would you say to your friends or loved ones to encourage them to see the film?

This film is a public utility, both for young people and for their parents or teachers! The subject of bullying is addressed head-on and without compromise. The film is real. It reflects our lives as young people, where bullying is so prevalent. It makes you think. Prevention is essential, and there is not enough of it in schools. The film also shows that bullying can happen anywhere and to anyone. Emma's case is extreme, but it's important to show this to both young people and adults. It helps parents better understand their children and helps young people realize that bullying also accumulates from all those little things, those small words, those messages. Everyone contributes, even in a small way, to the structure. I believe everyone can relate to *TKT*, whether it's through Emma's character, her friends, or even her parents. The film provides an opportunity to reflect on what bullying represents and what it means to be young and face this challenge.





FILM INFO

Release date 10 / 09 / 2024

Title : TKT

Distribution : Beluga Tree

Genre : Drama comedy

Director : Solange Cicurel

Cast

Emma - Lanna de Palmaert

Meredith - Emilie Dequenne

Fred - Stéphane De Groodt

Manon - Lily Dupont

Lou - Elisa Lubicz

Jeanne - Lisa Du Pré

Raph - N'Landu Lubansu

Lenght : 90 min

Format : Scope (ratio 2:1)

Country : Belgique



CREW LIST

Script : Solange Cicurel

Director: Solange Cicurel

1AD: Fabrice Couchard

Script supervisor : Leenda Mamosa

Casting director : Doriane Flamand

Production : Diana Elbaum & David Ragonig

Production manager : Charles Kinoo

Location manager : Vincent Bredael

DOP : Son Doan

Sound : Rainier Buidin & Julien Vanhee

Costumes : Sophie Van Den Keybus

Make up / Hair : Lila Vander Elst

Set Design : Mohamed Ayada & Floris Van Looy

Post-production

Editing : Emilie Morier

Laboratory and VFX : Clarissa Vermaak