



OUSMANE

a film by Jorge Camarotti

Official Selection

tiff

Toronto International
Film Festival 2021

LOGLINE

Ousmane, a newly arrived immigrant living in Montreal, faces a challenging situation when he meets an elderly disoriented lady at the end of his workday.



SYNOPSIS

Feeling uprooted and looking for a purpose, Ousmane, a newly arrived immigrant living in Montreal, has his life take a turn when he meets an elderly, disoriented lady, Edith, at the end of a long workday.

After learning about Edith's terrible living conditions, but not fully understanding what the task entail, he naively decides to take on the role of her caregiver as if she was his own mother.

Interview with Jorge Camarotti

How did OUSMANE come and what was the inspiration behind this film?

My creative process is still a mystery for me. It always starts with a flash, like a day-dream, where I see the whole film play out before my eyes. I see characters, blocking, turning points, etc. In the beginning everything is in third person and as the story evolves it becomes more and more personal.

Between 2012 and 2019 I didn't go to Brazil, and those seven years were very difficult because I couldn't see or take care of my relatives, especially the elderly ones. I believe I use fiction to address situations that I can't find a solution for in real life. I couldn't take care of them, and I believe *Ousmane* came to me as a response to my need to address those feelings of distance, time lost and longing.

What was the most challenging scene for you to film and looking back is there anything you would do differently on your film?

There wasn't a specific scene that was too challenging or that I would have changed. Short film budgets are very tight, we constantly work against time constraints and have to fit a lot of scenes in one day. My only wish would have been to have a bit more time to appreciate the magic happening around me, as crew and actors help to achieve what only existed inside my head.

I think that if you ask any filmmaker, I believe the answer would always be the same, we would probably reshoot our films in different ways, but I believe that each project is a necessary learning curve that takes you to the next project. So whatever things I learn in the process, I will apply to the next project instead of trying to change the one that is already done.



How much has your passion for filmmaking changed since your debut film?

There's a correlation between my self discovery and my passion towards filmmaking. Filmmaking continues to bring me the joy of understanding who I am, my past experiences, and seeing my life through a different lens. And that's a feeling that I don't ever want to give up.

"Every time I mentioned his name most people thought it was impossible to get him to come to Canada, especially in the middle of a pandemic."

Was your approach to OUSMANE different from how you approached Kinship?

I don't think my approach changed from my latest projects. With *Kinship* I wanted to show the vulnerability through the eyes of a young boy and for *Ousmane* I chose to show the other end of the scale, showing vulnerability from the eyes of an elderly person. I believe that both films bring interesting discussions about abandonment and belonging through different perspectives.

Is there any advice you wish you had been given before you started shooting your film?

Actually, I received some advice that I'm glad I didn't listen to. I wrote *Ousmane's* role for **Issaka Sawadogo** — an amazing actor with lead roles in many international productions including *Adu* (Netflix, 2020) *The Knight Of The Kings* (2020), etc — and had no idea how to get in touch with him. Every time I mentioned his name most people thought it was impossible to get him to come to Canada, especially in the middle of a pandemic. I saw *Issaka's* work in the movie *Diego Star* (2013), and his sense of humanity marked me forever. During *Kinship's* film tour I met an actor who asked me what I was working on. I mentioned *Ousmane's* story and told her I wish I could work with *Issaka*. She looked at me and said: "Oh, I know him! I will get you his direct contact info." At first I was not sure I should believe this, but about two weeks later, she sent me his phone number! We got in touch. I introduced myself, explained the story and sent him the script. He fell in love with the script, and we worked remotely on the project for a whole year until he finally arrived in Montreal for the shoot. From the moment I saw him arriving at the airport, I knew that my instinct was right all along. It was the most incredible experience of my life.

And finally, what do you hope people will take away from your OUSMANE?

I hope people can take away the spirit of humanity that can unite us despite our differences.

About the director

JORGE CAMAROTTI

Born in a working-class family in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In 2003, Jorge moved to Montreal, where he pursued a career as a professional photographer and then as filmmaker.

Since his beginnings in filmmaking 10 years ago, Jorge has directed a dozen short films, both documentary and fiction, always remaining true to giving voice to the most aggrieved individuals of our society.

Jorge wrote and directed *Kinship* (2019), which was selected in many reputable film festivals such as Palm Springs International, Maryland, Clermont-Ferrand (Sodec), *Regard* and which received a nomination at the 2020 Canadian Screen Awards for best live-action.

Besides working as a mentor for aspiring BIPOC filmmakers, Jorge is now working on his first feature film, *Edith*.



ISSAKA SAWADOGO

Issaka Sawadogo is a Burkinabé actor most known for his performances in the Canadian film *Diego Star*, for which he received a Prix Jutra nomination for Best Actor at the 16th Jutra Awards in 2014, and the Dutch film *The Paradise Suite*, for which he won the Golden Calf for Best Actor at the 2016 Netherlands Film Festival. In 2020, he appeared in a supporting role in Philippe Lacôte's film *Night of the Kings (La Nuit des rois)*.



MARIE-GINETTE GUAY

Marie-Ginette Guay is an actress, known for *On the Road* (2012), *Continental, un film sans fusil* (2007) and *Ravenous* (2017) and *Diego Star* (2013).

OUSMANE

Festivals

World Premiere
TIFF - Toronto International Film
Festival 2021

Film information

Original title: Ousmane
Genre: Drama
Country: Canada
Language: French
Year: 2021
Duration: 25 min
Picture: Color
Aspect ratio: 1.37 : 1
Sound: 5.1
Available format: DCP

Cast

Issaka Sawadogo
Marie-Ginette Guay
Nadine Jean
Kloé-Cassandre Bell
Marie-Louise Bell
Souleymane Darmon

Distribution

SPIRA
Sébastien Merckling
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Crew

Director: Jorge Camarotti
Written by: Jorge Camarotti
Cinematography: Nicolas Canniccioni
Editing: Jorge Camarotti
Production Design: Ludovic Dufresne
Sound design: Brian D'Oliveira
Producers: Jorge Camarotti
Sebastien Poussard
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