

The Iceberg

A Film by
Dominique Abel, Fiona Gordon and Bruno Romy

84 minutes, color, 2005, Belgium
In French with English Subtitles

Aspect Ratio 1.85 - Dolby SRD



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COURAGE MON AMOUR PRESENTS

**A FILM BY
DOMINIQUE ABEL FIONA GORDON BRUNO ROMY**

CREW

Written and directed by

Dominique Abel, Fiona Gordon, Bruno Romy

Assistant director Julien Sigalas, Script supervisor Jo Nijns

Photography Sébastien Koeppel

Camera assistant Virginie Gourmel

Sound Fred Meert, Christian Monheim

Art director Laura Couderc

Costume designer Claire Dubien

Make-up Nathalie De Hen

Set photographer Laurent Thurin Nal

Editor Sandrine Deegen

Sound editor Fred Meert, Christian Monheim

Sound Recorder Philippe Baudhuin

Foley Philippe Van Leer

Music Jacques Luley

Coproducer RTBF Arlette Zylberberg, **Production assistant RTBF** Frédérique Larmagnac

Press agent RTBF Catherine Poels

Line producer Marina Festré

Production manager Françoise Hoste

Coproducer FAG André Guéret

Producers Dominique Abel, Fiona Gordon

CAST

Nattikuttuk Lucy Tulugarjuk

Fiona Fiona Gordon

Julien Dominique Abel

René the sailor Philippe Martz

Daughter Ophélie Rousseau

Son Robin Goupil

Employee Leen Derveaux

Fernande Thérèse Fichet

Achille Georges Jore

Léon Louis Lecouvreur

Georges Bruno Romy

Lola Lola Hélie

Rosalie Justine Fernandez

PRODUCED BY

Courage mon Amour Films

RTBF (Belgian television)

FAG prod

Funded by

**Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel
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et des télédistributeurs wallons

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le Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie

le Conseil Général du Calvados

le Conseil Général de la Manche

BeTV

Belgian National Lottery

The Anderlecht community

Zeo

SYNOPSIS

FIONA is the manager of a fast-food restaurant. She lives with her family in the suburbs. In a few words, FIONA is happy. Until one day...

FIONA gets accidentally locked into a walk-in fridge while closing up. She gets out in the morning, half frozen and barely alive, only to realize that her husband and two children didn't even notice she was missing.

Little by little, FIONA develops an obsession for everything cold and icy: snow, polar bears, fridges, icebergs... and one day she drops everything, climbs into a frozen goods delivery truck and leaves home. She wants to see a real iceberg.

Who has never dreamt of dropping everything and starting over, of making a wish come true or of just going somewhere else to see what it's like from there?

FIONA takes the plunge, unsettling the lives of those around her as she goes.

The three main characters of the film aren't born adventurers. They are anti-heroes who get inadvertently involved in an adventure.

Tripping over their clumsy mistakes, they never give up, always ready to renew the search for happiness and success.

THE ICEBERG is about our day-to-day heroism, our naivety, our fundamental desire for love and accomplishment. It's about all the obstacles and minor failures that dent our optimism, but never destroy it all together.

PRODUCTION NOTES

THREE AUTHORS / THREE DIRECTORS

Dominique ABEL, Fiona GORDON and Bruno ROMY

We all have a theatre and circus background. We met in the nineties during a theatre tour in Normandy. Since then we have collaborated on a number of projects for video, theatre or film. We wrote and directed THE ICEBERG, our first feature film, together. We don't have defined roles when we work together. We share all the roles, including the writing of the script. After three years of collective script writing, none of us were able to recognize who wrote what.

POETRY AND PHYSICAL COMEDY

Is it a poetic fantasy, a physical comedy or a melancholy study of love and relationships? For us it's all three. Unlike situation comedy, physical comedy isn't built around dialogue, script writing or character psychology. It looks at life from another angle. Emotions are expressed physically and the actors act with a second sense of an audience's presence. We've been influenced by the eccentric actor/directors of the silent film era. They managed to reconcile art and entertainment, making films that were inventive and refined, yet funny and popular.

If physical comedy has become rare, it's probably because it's a risky form of art. Physical clowning needs practice and experience. It can't simply be written. Improvisation feeds the script and the script feeds new improvisation. Most of all, the actor's personality is essential to the style.

THE ACTORS

Fiona GORDON, Dominique ABEL and Philippe MARTZ play the main characters, FIONA, JULIEN and RENE. In keeping with the clown tradition, they have years of stage experience in physical comedy behind them. Lucy TULUGARJUK, last seen as PUJA in ATANARJUAT by Zacharias KUNUK (Caméra d'or at the Cannes festival 2001) came especially from her native town, IGLOOLIK, to play NATTIKUTTUK, the Inuit coast guard who saves the three adventurers from the icy waters up north. The rest of the cast is made up of amateurs and acting students. Students of the KLEINE AKADEMIE, a theatre school in Brussels, play the fast food employees. For the Barfleur characters we chose amateurs from amidst the locals. The auditions were organized as theatre workshops, giving us the opportunity to meet some lovely people.

TRICKS AND EFFECTS

THE ICEBERG is a sea movie. When we weren't freezing in the ice-cold Gattemare bay, we were in a garage (our make shift studio) near the port. We used retro-projections (like Hitchcock) with fans and buckets of water to simulate wind and sea spray. The whole crew took part. Everyone had his bucket of water to throw, his petrol lamp to swing, his bit of rope to jiggle and pull... We also used the "cache-contre-cache" and "day for night" techniques, opting for visual tricks rather than digital effects, just for the pleasure of making home made special effects, as Méliès and the other cinema pioneers might have done.

EDITING

THE ICEBERG is mostly composed of sequence shots. When a long sequence shot works from beginning to end it's a joy. When it has a flaw it's a nightmare, especially if the flaw is right in the middle of a 2 minute-long shot. It's like a spaghetti noodle. Once you start sucking one in you have to keep going till the end. Luckily, a shot's effectiveness also depends on what comes before and after, the general rhythm and so on. In the end, 12 weeks of editing for 150 shots was not the luxury it seemed to be at the beginning.

FROM BRUSSELS TO BARFLEUR

Our story begins in Brussels, travels through Flanders then lingers in Normandy before taking to the high seas. We shot a lot of footage in Barfleur (one of the last natural ports in France) and Gatteville - le-Phare, famous for its beautiful lighthouse. For six weeks our crew (about thirty people) lived and worked there. The people from both villages gave us a very warm welcome.

OUR FIRST FEATURE

COURAGE MON AMOUR FILMS is the production company founded by Fiona GORDON and Dominique ABEL to produce their films. Those three words, "Courage mon amour", resume the spirit of its first production. The Belgian French community (la Communauté française de Belgique) and the Flemish Audiovisual Fund (het Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds) were the first to provide us with funding. They financed 75% of the film. Bruno ROMY's region (la region de Basse-Normandie, les départements de La Manche et du Calvados) provided additional funding. The Belgian TV channel RTBF and the French production company, FAG PROD joined us as co-producers. Last but not least, we received extra support from Belgium's National Lottery, Be TV (Belgian cable channel) ZEO (a Belgian production company) and the Anderlecht community. Nevertheless, making this film with 750 000 € was a challenge.

PRODUCTION LOG

August 14 2003

We are in our rehearsal space in Brussels. FIONA is pretending to swim on the floor. Philippe is drifting in his yacht. He's sitting in a cardboard box, steering with a broom and going "boot boot boot..." There's always something ridiculous about our rehearsals. Any kid the world over could be doing the same thing only we've been doing it very seriously for 14 hours straight.

August 15 2004

We've been working on L'ICEBERG for 4 years and we've finally finished the script and scraped together the strict minimum to do the film.

August 29

It's the night before the first day of shooting. We can't believe it. We're off! It's as if we've just taken off in a spacecraft on a mission to build a house on the moon. If we've forgotten the hammer or the monkey wrench it's too late, we'll have to do without!

August 30

Day 1, all is well. At the end of the day we hurry down to the beach to do some tests: we film Le TITANIQUE (our sailboat) at sea from the beach at dusk. Never again will we have such good weather and beautiful light. The tests end up in the film. A week later, the mini DV used for filming "the making of" is swept off the pier in a gust of wind along with the costume designer's (Claire's) knitting. We manage to save the knitting.

A week later, le TITANIQUE crashes into some lobster traps but it doesn't sink. Luc, our night watchman, happens to repair boats in his spare time.

4 weeks later, after 6 weeks in Normandy the crew is on its knees. Shooting at sea is exhausting. The ocean can be wild and you're humbled in its midst, as any local fishermen can tell you. We learnt a lot: that the tide rises and falls, sometimes as much as 6 meters, twice a day. When we were filming the boat at quay, the first takes were 3 meters higher than the last ones! The sea currents are strong and it's not always easy to face the camera. We swallow a lot of salty water and it's cold (rarely above 16 degrees). But it's beautiful; the Norman sky is constantly changing.

October 9

2 weeks in Belgium, mostly in Brussels. Everything should be simpler, but in a big city, everything is complicated. We'd lost the habit of getting out our maps and calculating traffic jams to get to a meeting on time

.

October 15

Back to the seaside, this time in Flanders (La Panne) with its large, flat coast and vast, Flemish sky. This is where we learn how to direct seagulls. Fish and waffles work well during rehearsals, so well that when it's time to film they aren't at all hungry and nothing will get them back.

October 21

End of the shoot. 12 hours per day for 45 days is too much. We'll never be able to thank the crew enough...

December 6

The editing begins with Sandrine DEEGEN. The photography (Sebastien KOEPPPEL) is beautiful. But will it make a film? We don't know. We begin discovering the problems. There are quite a few, but at this stage, we see a lot of solutions. The anxiety comes later when the remaining problems don't have solutions.

January 21

Little by little, we forget the shoot. Regrets for lost scenes disappear. A new story emerges. We give ourselves two days to re-shoot a few scenes and strengthen our choices.

March 14

The sound. Dominique, who is deaf in one ear, runs from one studio wall to the other. He wants to fully appreciate the stereo.

July 3, already!

Still not finished...details and more details... but our log has come to an end. Anyway, we should hand the writing over to you...

BIO/FILMOGRAPHIES

Fiona GORDON is Canadian. Born in Australia in 1957, she lives in Brussels.

Dominique ABEL is Belgian. Born in Thuin in 1957, he lives in Brussels.

In 1980, Fiona GORDON graduated with a BFA from the University of Windsor, Canada and Dominique ABEL graduated with an Economics degree from the Université de Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

From 1980 to 1982, ABEL & GORDON studied movement and theatre in Paris with Jacques LECOQ, Monika PAGNEUX and Philippe GAULIER.

In 1989, Fiona and Dominique moved into an old tram factory in Brussels where they now live and work. They have 4 visual comedy shows to date (LA DANSE DES POULES, L'ÉVASION, POISON, HISTOIRE SANS GRAVITE). They've toured the shows worldwide.

In the nineties, they began making short films.

1994 MERCI CUPIDON (13' - 35mm - color) co-directed with Bruno ROMY, awarded at the Namur FIFF, the Mons Festival d'Amour, the Vendôme Festival in France.

1997 ROSITA (13' - 35mm - colour) awarded at the Namur FIFF, Media 10/10 Namur, Avanca Portugal, Donne in Corto Barcelona & Rome.

2000 WALKING ON THE WILD SIDE (cm 13' - 35mm - colour) Awarded in sixteen festivals in Europe and the US.

From 2003 to 2004, they toured with LA DANSE DES POULES in 15 cities in Brazil, performed at the Festival d'Avignon with their new show, HISTOIRE SANS GRAVITE and toured in France with all their shows.

From 2004 to 2005, they made their first feature, L'ICEBERG/THE ICEBERG, (84' - 35mm - color) written and directed with Bruno ROMY.

BRUNO ROMY was a math teacher, a supermarket manager, a clown, a theatre technician. Then he decided to make films like...

1987 LA FIANCÉE (19' - video - color)

1988 TWENTURIE (3 shorts - 3' 30'' - video - color)

1989 LE VISITEUR (52' - video - color)

1990 DIALOGUES D'AUTOCHTONES (50' - super 8 - color)

1991 VERSION ORIGINALE (5' - video - color)

1992 VROUM (4' - video - color) "création Européenne" award at ESTAVAR 92

1993 LA POUPÉE (17' - 35mm - b&w) Awarded at Cork, Clermont-Ferrand, Vendôme.

1994 MERCI CUPIDON (13' - 35mm - color) Co-directed with ABEL & GORDON. Awarded at the Nauru FIFF, the Mons Festival d'Amour, the Vendôme Festival in France.

1997 WATER CLOSETS (4' - 35 mm - color)

for the group LES ELLES Boucherie Productions)

1997 LE BAR DES AMANTS (90' - 35mm - color)

2001 MARNIE (7 shorts - 3' - video - color) Written and directed with Jacques Luley, Isaac Azoulay and Fiona Gordon

2002 LA REINE DE L'IODE (20' - video - color)

2002 LES PORTRAITS DE CAMILLE' (12 shorts 26' - video - color) 12 portraits of technical high school students

2003 JE SUIS LUNE (18' - 35mm - color) Prime à la qualité CNC

2005 L'ICEBERG (84' - 35mm - color)