



THE WILD ROOTS

A SHORT FILM BY NICOLAS MILLOT

PRESS KIT



LOGLINE

A hunter goes deep into an uncanny forest, tracking down the reason for his friend's death.

SYNOPSIS

Adam, a young hunter, is convinced that a danger lurks in a forest plagued by strange phenomena. But when one of his friends is found dead, this fear becomes a certainty. Adam decides to return to the woods, determined to find the source of this threat.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In *The Wild Roots*, the forest is like an old house deserted by humans. It seems to be haunted, not by a presence or by some ghosts, but by the memories of its former occupants. Unlike a stone house, this house is alive.

What happens to a forest when it is left alone? Does it continue to grow, impassive, in a dreamless sleep, or does it remember us, keeping a feeling of bitterness? Can it grow angry? These are the questions that the protagonists of *The Wild Roots* ask themselves as their story explores their fear and the theme of Belonging. How can we still feel connected to something we no longer understand?

Underneath its horrific aspects, *The Wild Roots* is, above all, a tale about the difficulty for contemporary humans to find their place within a nature that seems more and more like a stranger to them.

If there is indeed an ecological aspect to the story, I wanted to approach this question from a different angle than the catastrophic or post-apocalyptic scenarios that I am used to seeing: that of Man seeking his place again in a house that was his, a long time ago.

Nicolas Millot



APPROACH

Nicolas Millot's first short film within the MARA collective, *The Wild Roots* is the result of a project put together by a small team of special effects artists.

The story takes place at the end of autumn in a forest of Haute-Marne (France), in the middle of rich and dense vegetation. Filming in a wet and difficult-to-access environment quickly proved to be a major challenge, and one that was in keeping with the film's purpose:

Like the main character, the technical team found itself confronted with a complex and changing environment, requiring the shoot to adapt to its rhythm, even if it meant postponing certain scenes. The desire not to degrade or alter the forest encouraged the team to remain small and versatile, using only light equipment.

At this time of year, the forest is full of life: many birdsongs, deers and wild boars. In order to transform it into an eerie and deserted place, Jérémy Louis, composer of the original music, worked hand in hand with the director throughout the production, altering the sounds naturally found in the woods, mixing them with string instruments, in order to bring to life the forest fantasized by the film's character.



MARA

ARTIST COLLECTIVE AND PRODUCTION STUDIO



Founded in 2022 by Nicolas Millot, Alexandre Gredzinski and Michaël Larue, the MARA collective aims to bring together different artists and image technicians around common projects. Strange and otherworldly images, dreamlike or nightmarish, MARA wants to bring ambitious visions to life by providing support, both in terms of equipment and sharing knowledge. The studio, based in Montreuil (France) is divided into two parts: a workshop (painting, sculpture, moulding, assembly, digital special effects) and a film set.

The Wild Roots is the first short film produced by MARA. An animated film (*DANTE*, by Alexandre Gredzinski) is currently in post-production, as well as a second short film scheduled for the end of the year.



NICOLAS MILLOT

WRITER / DIRECTOR

After a degree in special effects and 3D animation, Nicolas Millot began his career in post-production on films such as *The World's End*, *Interstellar*, or *Ex Machina*. Fascinated by the world of the imagination and fantasy fictions, he also directed several music videos and experimental shorts.

With Alexandre Gredzinski and Michaël Larue, he founded the MARA collective in 2022, with the ambition of combining their experience in the field of special effects with more personal and ambitious projects.



ANTHONY MARTIN

LEAD ROLE

Performer and screenwriter, Anthony Martin plays Adam, a hunter in search of answers who sets off into the heart of an eerie forest.

Anthony began his career at a very young age in front of the camera and played many roles on television. As a versatile actor, he has since played the lead role in short films of various genres (*Monica Volvo*, *Washout*, etc.) and has appeared in several feature films (*La famille Bélier*, *Francofonia*, *Les tirailleurs*, etc.), in parallel with his work as a screenwriter.



JEHANGUIR BYRAMJEE

SUPPORTING ROLE

Actor, writer and director, Jehanguir Byramjee plays the role of Roland, a grieving man, too afraid to return to the woods.

Jehanguir started acting more than 15 years ago at Alain Simon's Théâtre des Ateliers. He played in Denise Bonal's *Les Pas perdus*, Henrik Ibsen's *La maison de poupée*, and since 2019 has been playing the role of Azhar in Valérie Castel-Jordy's *La Traversée du Azhar*. He has since played numerous roles in short films produced by the G.R.E.C. and the Fémis, and also on television, notably in season 8 of *Engrenages*.





F.A.Q.

QUESTIONS FOR THE WRITER/DIRECTOR

Where does the story come from?

I have always been interested in the question of the place of Man in his environment. I have often thought that we use the term "nature" wrongly, as it is commonly used to refer to what is not human. I think this distinction represents our difficulty to include ourselves in the rest of the living. However, ecological crises remind us more than ever that we belong to a complex ecosystem, and it seemed important to me to try to address the issue of dissociation. I thought the forest as a character with which the film's protagonists would have a conflicting relationship, but also, deep down, a desire to renew the ties that unite them.

Why did you choose genre cinema (fantasy/horror)?

I believe that fantasy fiction is a great way to directly address our fears, our anxieties, our aspirations. In my opinion, one of the clearest way to the unconscious is the imagination, which is why tackling the modern theme of ecology and the human relationship with its environment made sense in a fantasy film. It allows to talk about complex feelings in a way that more realistic fiction can't, as well as, I hope, formulating new imaginations as sources of inspiration.

Who did the special effects?

All special effects were handled by the MARA collective. The creature's costume, supervised by Alexandre Gredzinski, was made using latex and natural elements such as bark and moss. Apart from the main actor filmed on a green screen, the final scene was entirely digitally created by a team of three people (Caroline Collinot, Corentin Provost and myself). The shooting took place in Manuel Cam's studios in Paris.

How is hunting approached in the film?

The film does not aim to pass judgement on the practice itself, but uses it as a medium to better illustrate the conflict between man and his environment. For the sake of consistency, the team was accompanied by Olivier Oliveiracruz, president of the local hunting association, to supervise and guide the main actor, but also to provide the necessary equipment and advice to the whole team.



TECHNICAL INFORMATIONS

Production

MARA
Manuel Cam Studio

Written And Directed By

Nicolas Millot

Executive Producer

Solal Cohen

Director Of Photography

Michaël Larue

Art Director

Caroline Collinot

Sound Recording

Gauthier Hammer

Special Effects Supervisor

Alexandre Gredzinski

Visual Effects Supervisor

Emeric Meissirel-Marquot

Original Score

Jérémy Louis

Country Of Production

France

Date Of Completion

2022

Format

Digital

Ratio

2:39:1

Duration

13 mins 59 secs

Genres

Fantasy, Horror, Drama

USEFUL LINKS

Website And Stills

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Social Network

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