Nurtantio Projects présente Marie Phan David Jeanmotte Clément Corrillon

L'IKIGAÏ

Un film de Gwenny Nurtantio

→EN - PRESS KIT



PRODUITYONEKO NURTANTIO MARIE-LOUISE BRUYERE WAHYUDI NURTANTIO

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ERIC CYUZUZO SYLVIE HONORE JULIEN LANQUETIN LAURA LIBERATORE

A'AN YAYAK GWENDOLINE WALLON JULIE PHAN THOMAS DE MOLINA STEPHANIE VAN OOST Clement Bernaert Marieke besson panagiota Theofilopoulou aline zygas



"MAY YOU LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES."
CONFUCIUS



Overview

"Ikigai" is a dramedy that explores four central themes:

- the search for meaning in professional life (bullshit jobs),
- stories from Asian diasporas (what does it mean to grow up as a Eurasian?),
- feminism (how do we build fulfilling relationships, beyond traditional roles?),
- neurodiversity (e.g. multipotential thinking, high potential, ADHD, etc.).

The screenplay is inspired by the book "Il en faut peu pour travailler mieux. 25 solutions pour désencombrer ma vie pro" (It Takes Little to Work Better: 25 Solutions to Declutter My Professional Life).

The cast includes well-known Belgian figures such as David Jeanmotte (presenter of Miss Belgium), Clément Corrillon (finalist of The Voice and composer of two songs for the soundtrack), and Julien Lanquetin (director at Cours Florent).

The search for meaning at work

"Honestly, it's true, your whole Generation Y, you just don't want to work anymore." (Madame, in L'ikigaï)

The concept of ikigai ("life mission" in Japanese) suggests that our ideal job lies at the intersection of what we love, what we are good at, what the world needs, and what we can be paid for. This is the essential quest of Lynn Sumarni.

Through her professional journey, moving from job to job, Lynn encounters the many realities of today's work culture – and the despair that often hides beneath it: Chantal, the burned-out worker back at the front line; Philippe and Greg, engineers stuck in bullshit jobs; the "crush" lost in brown-out; the scrum master who preaches agile methods like a gospel. L'ikigaï conveys the impression of a system running on fumes, where most of the energy goes into management rather than value creation.

Generational divides are also highlighted: on one side, the claim that "young people do not want to work anymore"; on the other, the grandma's incredulous view of Lynn's career path (including a passage inspired by the "Red Queen paradox": running just to stay in place). Beyond this critique – which also takes aim at the shortcomings of the school system as a gateway to work – L'ikigaï offers ways for viewers to reflect on their own situation.

"I dream of starting my own company and protecting the bees, but I can't.

You understand, when you drive a car like this, you don't just quit." (Chantal)

What keeps us trapped? The film shows a protagonist who steers her own course, leaves, and explores new paths. Her story encourages audiences to question social expectations and to reconnect with their own aspirations, in a way that regains the sense of the collective. By defying expectations and daring to be different, Lynn inspires courage and audacity.



Stories from Asian diasporas

Like the protest "Noir·e n'est pas mon métier" (Black is not my job), L'ikigaï argues for changing the stereotypical roles assigned to Asian characters. A'an Yayak (the father) shares: "I'm moved that for the very first time, I get to play the role of a father – and not a martial arts fighter." The father is portrayed as handsome – an important counterpoint to Western films that have long desexualized Asian men¹.

The film touches on the lived experience of a Eurasian identity. Lynn does not fit in. Wherever she goes, she feels out of place – from the school of "blonde pupils" to the consulting firm of "big men in suits." With humor, the story exposes stereotypes: "You, Asians, all look the same" (when a recruiter mistakes Lynn for Justine), her surname Sumarni constantly mispronounced ("Surimi – is that even a name?"), or the casual racism that pretends to be flattering ("It is like I get to spend an hour in Asia with a local during my lunch break," "My niece is crazy about people like you... you know, Asian women...").

Yet this mix of cultures is also a source of openness. The director wanted to show a family where two different languages are spoken (still rare in cinema). The film deliberately portrays wide ethnic diversity and a mosaic of languages and dialects: French, English, Indonesian and West Flemish. This contributes to the distinctly "Belgian" tone of the film. In one scene, the father teaches a Walloon word to a local Belgian, joking: "You need to integrate, Marc."

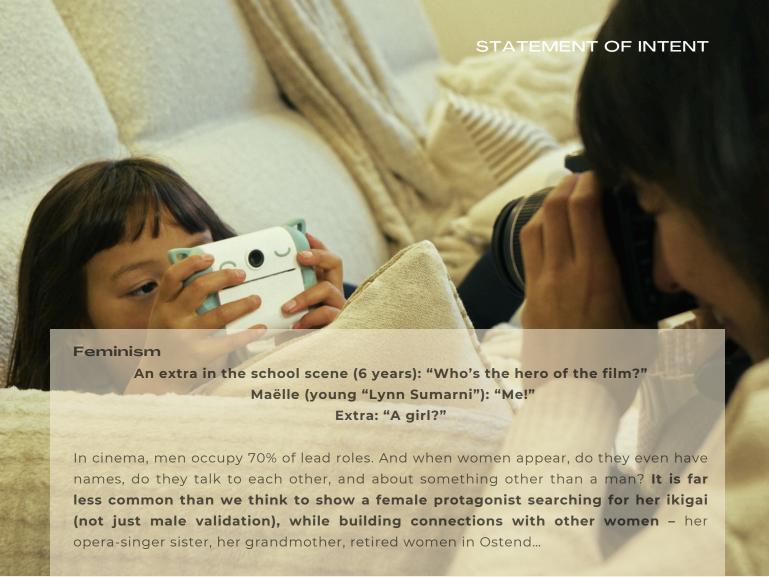
The choice of languages also allows the film to satirize corporate English, full of obscure jargon (which the director cleverly dismantles in the opening voice-over), often used to disguise the emptiness of certain jobs.

"In Africa? In the new Silicon Valley?"
(TV-presenter David, at the end of the film)

With this closing line from David Jeanmotte, L'ikigaï leaves audiences with a provocation: to challenge stereotypes and reimagine how we see the world – not only Asia, but universally.

¹ Cf. inter alia: <u>The Desexualisation of Asian Men in Hollywood</u>.





As a playful jab at the idea that women in film are mostly nothing more than a head of hair, Lynn always wears her hair messy. At the same time, appearance matters to her: as a teenager ("On my deathbed, I'll kiss my luxury bags"), as an adult ("I love fashion. Of course! My ikigai is working in it!"), and even in old age ("Your walk-in closet?"). But her sense of self is constantly at odds with conventional beauty standards (culminating in the fashion show scene).

In her visual choices, Gwenny Nurtantio was particularly attentive to escaping the male gaze – refusing to objectify characters, regardless of gender.

After her fall from a horse, Lynn meets her younger self in a surreal scene. They take pictures of each other, and the child comments: "It's blurry." A line that allows multiple interpretations. The moment asks: When I look at myself, where am I really looking at? An invitation to go beyond the surface.

Other characters also challenge beauty norms: the heavily made-up TV presenter in the final scene, or the portrait of Roland-Deepak, the man with blue hair, suggesting that by 2075, gendered approaches to beauty will have evolved once again.

² Cf. Hélène Fiche, Ce que le féminisme fait au cinéma, 2025.

³ These are the 3 questions of the Bechdel-Wallace test.

Making peace with your own image... and building love relationships that transcend patriarchy? Traditionally, couplehood is framed as a woman's ultimate fulfillment (with singleness seen as abnormal), topped off by motherhood (hence the irony of the stroller scene).

Lynn, while trying to fit this model, also faces several failed romances. Marriage lingers throughout: she works in a bridal shop, and even walks in a wedding dress herself, remarking: "In Asia, it is bad luck to wear a wedding dress before you are engaged."

The film also sketches alternative models of parenting. From childhood, the father embodies non-stereotypical roles: he paints his daughters' nails, cooks, cleans. One of the final scenes suggests that Lynn will have built a partnership where father and mother roles are completely redefined – a thought-provoking conclusion.



Neurodiversity

Here, the focus is on recognizing that difference doesn't only come from gender or origin, but also from how we think. Neurodiversity covers the autism spectrum, intellectual and emotional giftedness (like Miyuki, IG), multipotentiality (like Lynn), ADHD, dys disorders, etc.

L'ikigaï hints at these differences with subtlety, raising awareness without stereotypes: in the Scrabble scene, or when counting candies at Saint Nicholas, the characters embody everyday versions of neurodiversity, far from the extremes of Rain Man.

By naming her multipotential character, Lynn unlocks new possibilities and creates a path that fits her far better.

L'ikigaï seeks to bring the idea of multipotentiality into the spotlight, inspiring audiences to imagine new ways of being.



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

GWENNY NURTANTIO, THE FILMMAKER WHO FINISHED HER FIRST FEATURE FILM IN JUST ONE YEAR, SHARES HER BEHIND-THE-SCENES SECRETS

"Director? This is my 13th job," says 30-year-old Gwenny NURTANTIO, who will release her very first feature film L'ikigaï in January 2026.

"Before that, I went from intern to manager, from fashion to pharma. At Solvay VUB they told me that with a business engineering degree, I could do anything. They weren't wrong." Given this background, it's no surprise that her film explores the meaning of work, and that she chose to title it life mission (the Japanese meaning of ikigai).

"I learned filmmaking thanks to a cat called Jipitee"

Taking unconventional paths has always been her way of doing things. July 2025.

Just a few months after publishing her third book, "Il en faut peu pour travailler mieux. 25 solutions pour désencombrer ma vie pro" (It Takes Little to Work Better: 25 Solutions to Declutter My Professional Life), co-written with her sister Yoneko and their mother Marie-Louise BRUYÈRE. That day, as usual, the family is brainstorming – their favorite activity. Coming up with new ideas is what they love most.

"What if we made a film? A film! Let's adapt "It Takes Little" for the big screen. Wow! I already have so many ideas rushing through my head!" The month of July was spent dreaming together ("Who do we cast as actors?" "Where do we find a horse?" "What if we ask a finalist from The Voice to compose the soundtrack?").

In August, Gwenny set herself an intensive training bootcamp, her trademark way of doing things. In just one month, through YouTube tutorials and endless "Chat Jipitee" conversations (her pet name for ChatGPT), she learned the jobs of screenwriter, director, director of photography, camera operator, gaffer, and film editor. (She could build on skills she already had in styling, choreography, and storyboarding.) "Shooting with kids and animals? I only later found out that it is supposed to terrify me."

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INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Multipotential and gutsy: making a zero-budget film

"By making L'ikigaï, I found the ultimate job that matches my multipotential character: combining my passions for writing, photography, dance, and music. What is amazing about creating a film is how many artistic and technical dimensions you can bring together in one project. And even administrative – that's what my sister Yoneko would add. She took charge of the legal side and officially became the producer. She did a remarkable job, because we really are talking about a 'zero-budget' film."

Applying for a subsidy? "No way, we didn't fit into any boxes. Imagine saying: 'Hi, I have no film degree, no short films to my name, but I learned everything on YouTube and my dad thinks my script is amazing." No, she would have to prove herself differently.

NO = Next Opportunity

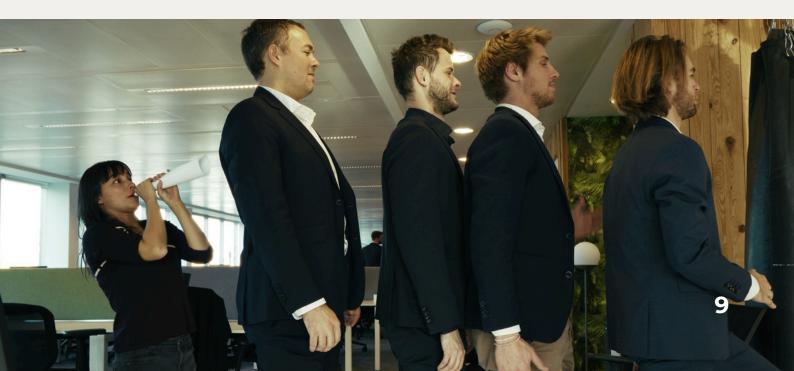
The whole family rallied around the project: their mother Marie-Louise handled production management, script supervision, and even handled the clapperboard, while their father Wahyudi NURTANTIO took care of logistics.

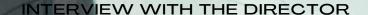
"You could say every family member had about ten different jobs on this film." They also reached out to their network: people supported the project by offering catering, treating extras with goodies, providing locations for next to nothing... Brands like Maison Dandoy, Kidywolf, and Drink a Flower pitched in.

"What I learned: make it simple for people to help you. Not big sponsorship contracts, but effortless contributions that add up."

More than 150 people were involved, including about a hundred actors and extras.

Among them: Gwenny's "70+ buddies." "They're authentic rebels," she laughs. From old friends of the singer Arno, to women returning to ballet at 40 and Fabienne, the policewoman who poses nude in my life drawing class... their stories fascinate me. And they're so future-oriented! Nothing nostalgic about them. I connected with them far more easily than with thirty-somethings."





Playa del Oostende

Well, "more easily" is relative. Understanding each other is another matter: "It took me 12 years to really become bilingual in Dutch. After Chiro, immersion programs, and studying at VUB, I thought I was ready to settle here. Mwahaha." West Flemish turned out to be more exotic than Polish – she didn't understand a word – and this inspired a scene in *L'ikigaï* about the "aangespoelden" (literally "stranded", people who live in Ostend without being born there).

"I came to Ostend because of Covid; I'd only been here three times before. I quickly checked Google Maps and bought straight away, without even visiting the city. There was a train station, so everything would be fine. But above all, I had decided not to wait until retirement to live my dream of living by the sea." That's the film's message: choose to live a more intentional life now.

"This city brings me luck," says Gwenny. And it shows: how many directors are gifted a double rainbow on shooting day, over a suddenly deserted beach? "Thank you Ostend! And also thanks to Stefan Tanghe, Li Li Chong, director Dominique Deruddere, and Arne Quinze!" [the artist behind Rock Strangers, those giant orange sculptures on the seafront, shaped like oversized soda cans] "I absolutely had to let the protagonist dance at the foot of this monumental tribute to the so-called "stranded". It's a work I identify with, one that never leaves you indifferent. You love it or hate it. And Arne's happy about that. L'ikigaï is the same. A film critic told me: 'People will walk out of the theater. It's daring and audacious.' This is not a vanilla-ice-cream film that pleases everyone. And that suits me perfectly."

So, a "Film 2" soon?

And doing it again? "Making L'ikigaï was beautiful, grueling, and intense. I had so many adrenaline highs and impostorsyndrome moments – like on day one, when I pressed OFF instead of ON. At the end of the scene I just pretended and said: 'That was good, but let's do another take.'"

All four family members hit low points too. The film pushed them beyond themselves, and while working with family is what Gwenny loves most, it also created some very heated tensions. After the shoot she began therapy, which helped her recover from the experience – the film itself was probably already a form of therapy after her professional wandering. That process strongly influenced the editing: the laments were cut, leaving an optimistic film, free of selfpity, with a protagonist who moves forward.

Above all, Gwenny feels immense gratitude for each of the 150 people who came to help. Special mention goes to lead actress Marie Phan, who literally lights up the screen in her first-ever film role. She had already been dazzling on stage as Esmeralda at the Théâtre du Parc; here she is a revelation as Lynn Sumarni.

After the shoot, the four of them swore: "Never again! We'll never make another film!" But Gwenny laughs: "I know us. Of course, we've already started a file called... Film 2."



INTERVIEW WITH THE MAIN ACTRESS MARIE PHAN

"IKIGAI" GIVES BREATHING SPACE"

How would you describe Lynn?

She has an insatiable hunger — always searching, always questioning. She works, she thinks, she doubts... but underneath all that movement there is a simpler urgency: to breathe. She refuses to give up her freedom, even when it wears her out or leaves her isolated. She is a bit like a tightrope walker: always off balance, yet always moving forward.

What was your reaction when you first read the script?

It hit me hard. Lynn is me, she is my friends, she is so many people today. Her journey mirrors the failure of our school system and the wider world of work — structures that so often drain our energy, dull our minds, crush our curiosity. And then suddenly, here was a script that dared to say it, moving from laughter to tears. And beyond that, it offered a path — not a miracle cure, but a compass: L'ikigaï. This film gives us courage to follow our own ambitions and restores depth to our vast, 'super multi-potential' selves that education and society too often flatten with intellectual poverty, numbness and meaningless overload.

Any memorable anecdotes from the shoot?

The chase scene with the manager! André and I were sprinting full speed, while in front of us Gwenny was filming handheld, Clément was running backwards with the boom, and Marie-Louise was steering them both so they would not trip. We should have all collapsed in a heap, but somehow we pulled it off. That moment sums up the film: wild energy, a team giving everything, and a little miracle at the end.

And then there is the role of Miyuki, Lynn's sister, played by my real sister, Julie Phan. Sharing that experience with her was pure joy. The last time we had performed together, we were still children.

INTERVIEW MARIE PHAN

How was the shoot itself?

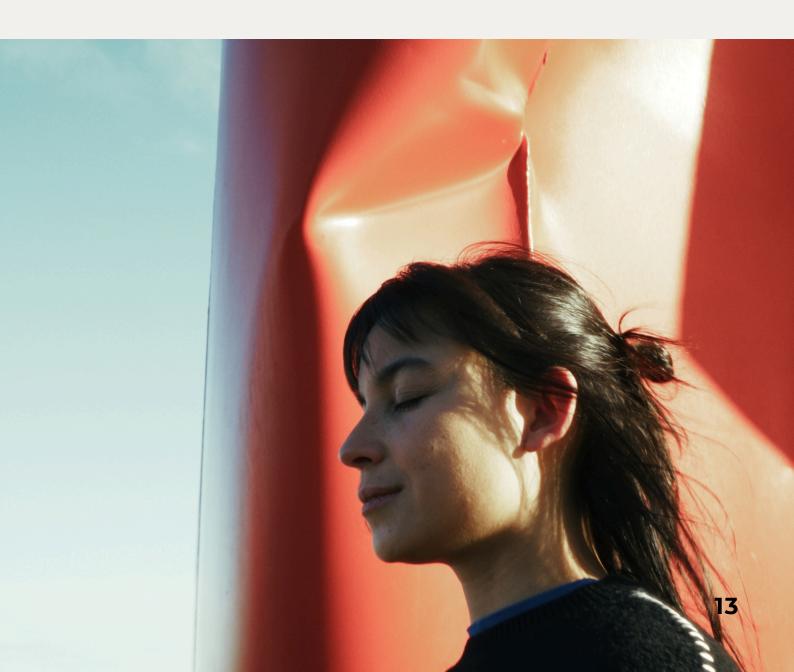
It was my very first time on a film set, and the first for Gwenny and Yoneko as directors too. We were all nervous, all finding our way. But the Nurtantio family ran everything with precision, care, and enormous kindness. It all flowed with striking fluidity.

Your best memory?

The two most moving moments: the first and the last day. On day one, filming the scene where adult Lynn meets child Lynn. And at the very end, thanking Gwenny and Yoneko with shared tears, grateful for the beauty of the journey we'd just lived together.

Why should people watch this film?

Because it gives courage. Because it reminds us we are not stuck in one box, that we can reinvent ourselves. L'ikigaï gives you room to breathe, to believe you can choose your own life — even if it feels scary. And honestly, that feels so good.



TECHNICAL SHEET

- Original and French title: L'ikigaï
- International title: Ikigai
- Director, cinematography, and picture editing: Gwenny Nurtantio
- Screenplay: Gwenny Nurtantio, based on the book <u>"Il en faut peu pour travailler mieux. 25 solutions pour désencombrer ma vie pro"</u> by Marie-Louise Bruyère, Gwenny Nurtantio, and Yoneko Nurtantio
- Music: Clément Grumberg (Stevy Lab), Clément Corrillon, Maxime Peltier (Viavai Studio), Jean-Philippe Degand, Julie Phan, Raphaël Wiltgen, Anaïs Cassiers, Lee Lebens (Mister Lee), Luc Vermeulen, Gwen Danis, Guillaume Fourmentin
- Production management: Marie-Louise Bruyère, Wahyudi Nurtantio
- Art direction: Gwenny Nurtantio
- Costumes: Gwenny Nurtantio
- Sound and sound editing: Clément Grumberg
- Color grading: Jimmy Wolf Nguyen
- Poster design: Gwenny Nurtantio and Frank Vuylsteke
- Producer: Yoneko Nurtantio
- Production company: ASBL Nurtantio Projects
- Budget: < 25.000€
- Country of production: Belgium
- Original language: French (+ Indonesian, English, and West Flemish)
- Format: Color Digital DCP 4K (4096x2160) 2.39:1 5.1 Sound
- Subtitles: EN/NL
- Genre: dramedy (comedy-drama)
- Duration: 97 minutes



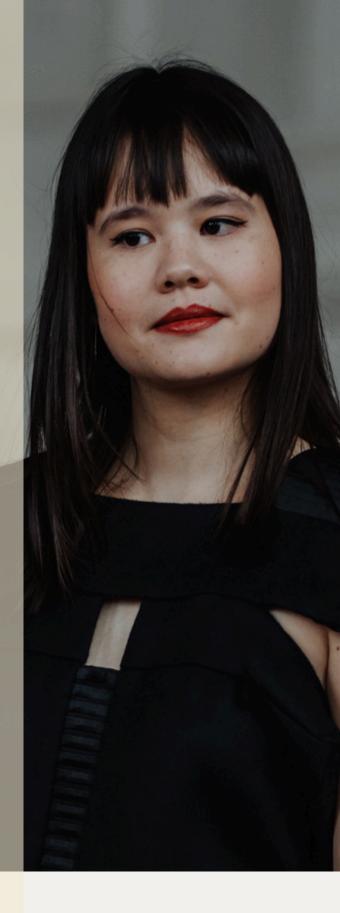
DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Gwenny NURTANTIO (1995) is a self-taught filmmaker, author, and keynote speaker.

Born in Brussels, with Sino-Indonesian roots and now happily based in Ostend ("why wait for retirement to live by the sea?"), Gwenny is a business engineer (Solvay VUB) and co-founder of Nurtantio Projects, a non-profit dedicated to promoting healthy, sustainable, and fulfilling lifestyles.

Her debut feature film, Ikigai, is inspired by her latest book "Il en faut peu pour travailler mieux. 25 solutions pour désencombrer ma vie pro" (It Takes Little to Work Better: 25 Solutions to Declutter My Professional Life). Together with her sister, Yoneko NURTANTIO, she trains organizations—from junior staff to partners—on how to transform the way they work, with a philosophy of "High Impact, Low Burn."

Completing a film in just one year instead of five has earned her the title of a true "master of efficiency."



TEAM

Cast

Marie Phan - Lynn Sumarni
David Jeanmotte - The TV presenter
Clément Corrillon - Hippolyte
Sylvie Honoré - The French Teacher
Julien Lanquetin - The scrum master
Eric Cyuzuzo - Diego
Laura Liberatore - Madame
A'an Yayak - The dad

Technical Team

Screenplay, Direction, Direction of Photography: <u>Gwenny Nurtantio</u>

Production: Yoneko Nurtantio

Sound engineer: Clément Grumberg

Stage Management: Marie-Louise Bruyère, Wahyudi Nurtantio

Music

Clément Grumberg (<u>Stevy Lab</u>), <u>Clément Corrillon</u>, Maxime Peltier (<u>Viavai Studio</u>), <u>Jean-Philippe Degand</u>, <u>Julie Phan</u>, Raphaël Wiltgen, <u>Anaïs Cassiers</u>, Lee Lebens (<u>Mister Lee</u>), Luc Vermeulen, <u>Gwen Danis</u>, Guillaume Fourmentin



All Actors and Extras

Mohamed Aarab, Yves Ago, Natallia Ausianik, Nabil Bali, Alain Barthélémy, Quentin Baeyens, Joachim Beeldens, Clément Bernaert, Marieke Besson, Eden Borremans, James Braekman, Cyrielle Broutin, Florentin Brouwers, Roger Bruyère, Suzy Camerlinck, Clément Corrillon, Lore Corveleyn, Eric Cyuzuzo, Marie Dauphin, Timothée Debetencourt, Félix de Brouwer, Greet Decramer, Sylvie Degrelle, Éva Delaby, Rémi Delaby, Fred Delameilleure, Marine Delbeke, Thomas De Molina, Thibaut De Norre, André De Roy, Ann Desmet, Simon De Visscher, Eloïse d'Oultremont, Adeline Du Mortier, Philippe Eiselein, Ambre Faig, Eric Flammée, Rika Fonteyn, Adrien Fueyo-Roza, Zélie Gautier, Kathleen Gillis, Baudoin Gobbe, Mattias Godderis, Olivier Halein, Nadine Heimst, Camélia Hlimi, Sylvie Honoré, Marieke Janssen, David Jeanmotte, Christos Katsampanis, Panagiotis Katsampanis, Gyatso Kunchok, Laurent Lafuente Gravy, Eloïse Lamblot, Jonathan Lamblot, Maëlle Lamblot, Julien Lanquetin, Cédric Laurensis, Gregory Leclercq, Laura Liberatore, Gaëtan Louvet, Edwine Lukamba Roland, Fabienne Maes, Guerric Marcipont, Basma Mesbah, Catherine Michaux, Hadrien Moëllo, Simon Neys, Célia Niyibaho, Tanya Nys and her dog, Mila, Chantal Oreel, Habibe Ozdemir, Justine Péduzy, Emilie Penné, Marie Phan, Julie Phan, Lucie Piette, Madeleine Prédan, Zunzhu Qiouli, Eileen Robinson, Nicolas Rocco, Raiani Sibien, Juliette Somers Nussmueller, Hilde Tenday, Panagiota Théofilopoulou, Chloé Toumpsin, Louise Toumpsin, Delphine Valentin, Maarten Van Hecke, Stéphanie Van Oost, Noa Vandekerkhove, Véronique Vanderveken, Marc Vandeur, Linda Van Waesberge, Valérie Verbeke, Ariane Verhulst, Patricia Vermeylen, Frank Vuylsteke, Gwendoline Wallon, Matthieu Warnecke, Raphaël Wiltgen, Justine Wong, A'an Yayak, Aline Zygas.



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PRESS RELATIONS

Yoneko NURTANTIO

nurtantio.projects[at]gmail.com +32 468 09 6757

Photos and press kit available via <u>www.coachorganisation.com</u>

