

## Alain Guiraudie

Je cherche quelqu'un

16 March – 15 April 2023

A residential building in Clermont-Ferrand – an immeuble. It's dark; in some apartments the lights are on, in others there's obviously no one home. The light behind one window is blue. Was it this detail that made Alain Guiraudie stop and press the release on his camera? His interests as a photographer are clearly diverse, and he doesn't necessarily need a discernible reason to take a picture. But this image, *Immeuble Clermont-Ferrand* (2021), also has an important context. Guiraudie is well known as a filmmaker, and his latest film, *Viens je t'emmène* (*Nobody's Hero*, 2022), was shot in Clermont-Ferrand. An apartment block with multiple tenants plays an important role in the story; it is there that the lonely Médéric lets a young man of Arab appearance into the hallway one evening, after which he is forced to justify his decision to the neighbors, and generally goes from one predicament to the next.

As a filmmaker, Guiraudie's work is often perceived as comedy. And his films are gay, or at least they very often tell the stories of gay people. In *L'inconnu du lac* (2013), for example, which brought him to prominence, the banks of a lake become the scene of a promiscuous sexual roundelay. Guiraudie prefers to make films about ordinary people. He's a regionalist, and if a France profonde still exists, then it can perhaps be seen in his work. Take the tractor salesman Armand in his 2009 film *Le roi d'évasion*: a burly guy who meets men in parking lots and insists on getting hard without the help of any artificial aids – anything else would be dishonest, he thinks. Texts on Guiraudie often mention that he was inspired by George Bataille, the philosopher of the transgressive. But he is influenced as much, if not more, by the comic heroes of mainstream cinema; people who don't always know how to deal with their desire. The sex worker Isadora in *Viens je t'emmène* is another such case – a femme fatale in red, but fatal, too, for herself.

How is the complicated humanism of Guiraudie's films translated into his photographs? There are motivic echoes of the precisely composed images his slapstick often depends on, like the naked man standing in a field before a ruin in *Homme nu devant une ruine Tourcoing* (2018). The link is even clearer in *Homme dans la végétation* (2018) – it shows a man almost disappearing into the greenery around him, again latently picking up the motif of cruising. Comedy comes from conflicts, and from accidents, and sometimes from a gust of wind, as in *Bateau chemise au vent Bretagne* (2018). But Guiraudie's photographs also show him simply to be a contemplative observer with a taste for half-lit nighttime scenes. Not everything has to serve as starting point for a story, or a dramaturgic idea for further development – and not every moment has to produce a gag. It's almost as if we were seeing him taking photographs as an exercise to give his restless spirit a rare opportunity to pause. That every image also holds the potential for excess is likely due in part to the medium of photography itself.

Bert Rebhandl

Alain Guiraudie was born in 1964, the son of a farming family in Villefranche-de-Rouergue in the southwest of France, where many of his films are set. His film *Stranger by the Lake* won the Best Director Award in "Un Certain Regard" at the Cannes Film Festival, as well as the Queer Palm. In 2014 he published his debut novel *Ici commence la nuit* (P.O.L. Éditeur, Paris), which was translated into English as *Now the Night Begins* in 2018 (Semiotext(e), Los Angeles). His most recent novel *Rabalàire* was published in 2021 (P.O.L. Éditeur, Paris). An excerpt of it was translated into English in May magazine (issue 21).

"Je cherche quelqu'un" is the first exhibition by Alain Guiraudie at Galerie Buchholz. During the exhibition, Guiraudie's most recent feature film *Nobody's Hero* (*Viens je t'emmène*, 2022, 100 min.) can be viewed upon request at Fasanenstraße 31.

## Films

- 1990 *Heroes Never Die* (*Les héros sont immortels*, 13 min.)  
1994 *Straight Ahead Until Morning* (*Tout droit jusqu'au matin*, 11 min.)  
1997 *La force des choses* (16 min.)  
2000 *Sunshine for the Poor* (*Du soleil pour les gueux*, 55 min.)  
2001 *That Old Dream That Moves* (*Ce vieux rêve qui bouge*, 51 min.)  
2003 *No Rest for the Brave* (*Pas de repos pour les braves*, 104 min.)  
2005 *Time Has Come* (*Voici venu le temps*, 93 min.)  
2009 *The King of Escape* (*Le roi de l'évasion*, 93 min.)  
2013 *Stranger by the Lake* (*L'inconnu du lac*, 100 min.)  
2016 *Staying Vertical* (*Rester vertical*, 98 min.)  
2022 *Nobody's Hero* (*Viens je t'emmène*, 100 min.)