



LIVING / BUILDING

a film by Clémence Ancelin

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RESUME

In the middle of the Chadian desert, a French construction company is building an asphalt road. Expat executives, African site managers and workers, live in three adjacent trailer camps during the construction period, in contact with villagers from the area who come to the worksite to seek jobs or set up shops.

The hope for a better life meets with acculturation among the various inhabitants, as the road relentlessly progresses towards the city in this wilderness where nomads still wander with their herds.

SYNOPSIS

In eastern Chad, in the middle of the Sahel Desert, a French company is building a straight asphalt road across the dry wilderness. The company has installed a worksite near the small mountain of Karaye where concrete structures are prefabricated for the road construction. Within the few square miles surrounding this hill, a variety of human groups coexist for the duration of this temporary site.

The French expats, the African managers and the skilled workers (chauffeurs, electricians, cooks, etc.) live in three adjacent base camps, each equipped with a different level of comfort. Every morning, dozens of workers arrive by bus at the worksite from the small city of Oum Hadjer, 30 miles away and return home in the evening. Makeshift merchants, from the city or from the desert, have set up shops all around the worksite infrastructures, hoping to sell meals or meager supplies.

Some villagers from the area build new huts along the road, banking on a chance to improve their living conditions, and village children make stick motorcycles to play with. Meanwhile the nomads still roam the bush with their camels, setting up then pulling down their camps, expecting nothing from the Road nor from the city which will soon become a closer reality.

INTENTIONS

When I arrived at Karaye, this place struck me as a tiny model of the world.

On these few square miles of dry wilderness lived so-called « under-developed » populations (local farming villagers or nomads with herds) who for centuries have conceived lifestyles adapted to this minimal and even hostile Sahelian ecosystem. But there were also “developed” people and “developers” (roadwork personnel, European managers from the VINCI Corporation, African managers, workers, drivers...and me). And among these distinct groups, there were the “in-betweens”; the unskilled laborers, the site guards, the small merchants, often villagers launching a commercial adventure or taking wage-paying jobs to earn their living more easily than in the village, sometimes city dwellers exiled to the desert to take a chance to find fortune. All these people were living side by side without really knowing each other.

I saw the villages perfectly integrated into the landscape, almost invisible as they were made of earth and plants which were already part of this landscape. I observed the ingenious systems of enclosures using thorny branches, the millet silos of clay (big jar-like sheds) the cooking surface atop three stones on the ground, mats to sit on, baskets, woven walls.... All this made with wood, leather, earth, millet stalks and ronier palm leaves, one of the rare plants growing in the desert.

I had living quarters at the base for the French managers, where our Western ways of life had been carefully reproduced. Little houses of red bricks with gravel paths, air-conditioning, satellite TV, sewage and running water provided a familiar environment.

Wandering between these different places, I felt I was crossing from one world to another, just by looking at the objects.

And in the middle of all this, the road was advancing, a first step towards “development” bringing new possibilities of exchange with the outside world, but also a transformation of the lives of the people of this region.

This patch of territory seemed to be a sort of world in miniature, a theme to contemplate on the evolution of the ways of human life during the past two centuries and on the notion of development.

From the self-sufficient village in the wilderness where almost nothing comes from the outside world, to the modern-day French base camp, full of food and products produced elsewhere, passing through the different indigenous populations more-or-less dependent on industrial objects, I beheld the broad gap that development creates between production and consumption, as well as the fact that contact with the basic natural elements of human life is disappearing as quickly as the standards of living “develop.”

LIVING

Observe the diversity of cultures through what constitutes the basics of a way of life. Note what is linked to vital functions (eating, drinking, sleeping or washing). Scrutinize the world of objects. Consider the village well with the same attentiveness as the communal water tap at the drivers' base, or the individual washbasin in the African manager's home; the gas stove at the French managers' base as well as the nomad's fireplace between three stones on the ground.

Visit a house in each place, showing in detail the spaces and elements necessary for vital functions. Study the objects, imagining the way a person goes to bed or cooks, according to the type of bedding or the means of food preparation at their disposal.

Start off with common things to produce images of the differences of lifestyle, in this area where relationships between North and South will be sensitive, but are never mentioned.

Then notice how on this piece of land a tree becomes a piece of furniture, a hat-rack or a clothes dryer, how certain spaces on the ground without precise markings are consecrated to particular activities, how one lives in the shade, under machines, trucks, concrete culverts or under the slightest tree large enough to cast a shadow.

BUILDING

Observe the formal logic and the constructive logic in the varying types of population:

- the logic of right angles, levels, long-term solidity, Western logic applied to the worksite and to the base camps
- the logic of handmade constructions using local materials, of these round huts with pointed roofs, which are rebuilt periodically in the villages
- the minimalistic logic of straw shacks, built as fast and as cheaply as possible, without a worry for how long it will last
- the practical logic of nomads, based on having to carry the elements of their entire tent-houses on the back of camels.

PRINCIPAL LOCATIONS AND PURPOSES OF THE FILM

THE NOMAD CAMPS

A camp fire flickers, cocks crow, and huddled around the flames, children pass around a kettle of water performing their ablutions. Day is dawning within an enclosure of briar branches that has protected the livestock during the night. Draped over an arched skeleton of wooden poles, a large canvas is staked to the ground like a tent. It's moving day and the family is packing up to leave this site. A drink of camel's milk before loading the animals' backs with pieces of the house and the other life necessities.



THE MOUNTAIN, A MINERAL CHARACTER

Often in the background (at various distances) the small mountain of Karaye is at once the sign of the film's unity of place as well as a sort of mineral character itself. Observing the various human groups from its vantage point (the prefabrication site, the quarry, the passing nomads, the vehicles on the road, etc.) it also becomes—through the quarry—the raw material for the road.



STRANGE MACHINES

*“The road to development depends on the development of the road.” This saying has become the motto of the Chadian government. By equipping the country with a proper road network, the authorities plan to set Chad on the path to development (...)**

With the arrival of this asphalt-paved road, one may imagine that being born and living in this desert will be a different matter in a few years. It means that health care and education will be more accessible, that people will travel more, that trade will cover greater distances, that “adventuring” to the city—as the Chadians say—will be much easier, that more and more manufactured objects will be part of daily life, and that self-subsistence, presently the norm, will become more unlikely.

But we are not there yet; we are at the moment where the world of the road, of the machine and of petrol is crossing through this rural and agricultural world without motors or electricity.

And visually, this crossing, this budding transformation, has produced strangeness in the landscape.

The children from the neighbouring villages come to watch the machines: the bulldozers that push the earth, the “scraps” that knead, crumble it and then carry it away, the diggers in the rock and dirt quarries. Filming the machines like insects, strange beetles, mantises with their own lives, their projects, nosing through the rock or stretching their necks to regurgitate concrete. Observing them like we watch bugs when we aren’t experts, trying to understand what they’re doing.

(*comment from a news report on *TéléTchad*.)



ON THE WORKSITE OF THE ROAD

Machines are everywhere. Children watch.

A little man, the foreman, comes and goes in his pick-up truck, stops there to scold a tanker driver who has obviously misunderstood what to do, turns around, makes a phone call, checks that everything is going well, telephones again, greets the workers, yells because those truck beds are only half loaded with dirt, waves his arms and shouts orders to the machinistes, telephones once more, then drives home to the African managers' base camp.



THE “ACADEMY OF GOOD IDEAS,” AFRICAN MANAGERS’ BASE CAMP

A base camp (here called a “life base”) is a common living space in the wilderness created from the means available to house the worksite employees. Fenced in and guarded, this managers’ base consists of a dozen metal shipping containers organized in a U-shape around a sturdy building serving as kitchen and laundry room. Outside is a traditional earthen oven, a communal sink, a few goats and chickens and a clothes line. To borrow a dish, one woman calls through the wire fence to another who lives on the adjacent base for skilled workers.



BASE CAMP FOR THE SKILLED WORKERS

About 20 small, red-brick houses with sheet-metal roofs. The base is not enclosed and has no guard. Outdoors are two showers and a communal faucet, also used by the make-shift shop keepers and the villagers. The woman who lent the dish goes back home to resume her cooking.



THE VILLAGES

Clay huts and straw roofs, spaces marked out by millet-stalk barriers, a communal well, enclosures for the livestock, a palaver tree. A woman weaves a partition from millet straw around her property. In the central square of the village, children pretend to ride motorcycles. Two sticks tied together in a T shape make for a seat and handlebars as they run in circles imitating the noise of a motor.



THE "SULTANATE," BASE CAMP OF THE FRENCH MANAGERS

A dozen rectangular red-brick houses, with communicating gravel pathways at right angles. A large building in the middle includes a kitchen and dining room. Outside, a vegetable garden: basil, salads, maize and the conscientious gardener. The whole camp is enclosed with a fence and is guarded. The night guards make the rounds in the base at nightfall. One of them is listening to his portable radio.



THE PREFABRICATION AREA

At the foot of the mountain lies a square fenced area, surrounded by hundreds of concrete modules, cylinders, cubes and slabs. Inside, about 100 workers. Metalworkers bend iron rods, others assemble reinforcement framework with these rods using a wire and a pair of pliers at each angle. Form-workers prepare huge, metallic boxes for molding concrete. Everywhere at the prefab site, the workers' lives rub shoulders with their working lives. Laundry dries, roosters wait to be eaten in the wheelbarrow, tiny fireplaces smoke in every corner, the bent iron rods are used to hang out laundry. At break time, some have a nap in the shade of the concrete culverts stacked up outside.



THE SHOP HUTS

Along the worksite roadways, rows of straw huts have mushroomed. With large branches tied together for support, partition screens and roofs of millet stalk matting finish the structures, each holding the next one up. They serve as shops and restaurants during the day, and the shopkeepers sleep inside at night. They sell flour, cigarettes, tea, sugar, soap, spices, various and sundry objects, some clothes and plastic flip-flops. A group of women do the cooking. Others come from the village to sell chickens, dried meat or dead wood for the fire.



PROCESSES

STRUCTURE

The notion of time passing, punctuated by moments of the day, mealtimes, work, rest, dawn, sunset, night. The film slides from one place to another, sometimes following someone, sometimes changing geographical angles, sometimes by analogy between the gestures or situations, or through an association of ideas.

MULTIPLICITY OF THE ORDINARY

A film of gestures, of atmospheres, of attention brought to everyday things and to the world of objects. A film without a main character and without a continuous flow of words. Where we don't always understand everything that is said (the dialogues are succinctly subtitled). Where we observe situations and people who are working, resting, or just occupied.

ENCOUNTERS

The film is punctuated with brief encounters with the inhabitants of each of these worlds. Questions on lifestyles and habitat, and/or the road being built. From the worksite foreman who thinks : "The road is so important: when we arrived here it could take you up to three hours to drive 40 km; now it takes 30 minutes. You aren't so tired, the cars last longer, you respect your appointment times," to the nomad herdsman: "if you want I can tell you that it's to develop the country, but for us, we now have to settle far from the road.... we who have livestock get nothing from the road; if a camel or a goat goes toward it, he is run over by a car or truck...the road is pretty dangerous for us," and passing by the villagers and shopkeepers who are each hoping for different things from this road.

MEANS OF LOCOMOTION

In the same manner that we observe how one sleeps, we observe the way one gets from one place to another in this area. Vehicles of all sorts, carts, women on the backs of donkeys loaded with wood, scooters, cars, buses jam-packed with passengers, trucks, men walking, women walking loaded with their merchandise, horseback riders, etc.



THE CONTEXT

The geostrategic issues of military territorial dominance surrounding the road works, could have provided the substance for an entire film unto itself, but I chose to make another film, in and around this worksite in the middle of an African desert.

With no narrator and no educational discourse, the film steps through the different elements of its drama: episodes of the work on the site, scenes of life in the wilderness mixed with the media coverage that already accompanies the construction of the road.

At night, a guard on the French base is listening to his portable radio: a report on a great project of road construction in the Congo and the potential of “economically opening up” the rural zones involved, for the benefit of the populations within...

Two drivers' wives are watching a propaganda-type musical clip on television: “Idriss Déby and Development.” To the rhythm of music, road machines, tanks, oil pipelines, saluting dictator, crowds dancing and saluting, shots of automobile traffic, etc.



VISUAL RHYMES

The Millet Mortars

On the edge of the road, the villagers crush the grains of millet into flour on a large slab of stone, producing, over years of rubbing, oval-shaped hollows in the rock. These holes are called millet mortars.

Later we find these mortars, present in large numbers on the mountain, either alone or in rows of several dozen. The rock has eroded. The mortars are ancient and full of dirt or straw, allowing us to imagine that the mountain used to be inhabited long ago, and that the women crushed their millet in the same way that the women of Karaye still do on the millet stone on the edge of the Road.



Weaving Metal, Weaving Straw

Anatole, the metalworker, ties together iron bars, forming mesh structures to be encased into concrete slabs for reinforcement. Haoua, a village woman, ties millet stalks together to make modular enclosures which protect her house, family and livestock from the hyenas that roam at night around the village.

Modular constructions in two different working dimensions: one from traditional artisan building principles and the other based on assembly-line industrial manufacturing.

The weaving concept, widely used in the area, reappears several times during the film (nomad women braiding trays from ronier palm leaves, a worker weaving together a small coal hotplate out of wire).



CREDITS

Directed and filmed by Clémence Ancelin

Sound recording Mallah Méllé Boukar / Clémence Ancelin

Editing Laureline Delom

Interpreter, boom and translator Mallah Méllé Boukar

Sound editing Nicolas Joly
(Sound edited at Tohü Bohü, Paris)

Sound mixing Samuel Mittelman

Color correction François Miens
(Color corrected at OneMoreProd, Paris)

French subtitle verification Frédéric Le Ganghnon / Chérif Yacoub

English subtitles Lynn Couty

This film was accepted for in-residence editing
by Périphérie, Centre of Cinematography, in partnership
with the French Department of Seine-Saint-Denis

Co-production L'Outil and Fin Avril © 2011

117'

Color 1,78

HDCam

Distinctions : Official selections 2012



INTERVIEW by JEAN JACQUES RUE

Journalist, Distributor (Parasite Distribution) and Film Programmer (Utopia).

Jean Jacques Rue : Clémence, could you tell us about your career so far? And how did you come to shoot your first feature-length documentary in Chad?

Clémence Ancelin : I come from the world of visual arts. I first studied fine arts, and then cinema. Until now I only made videos that never lasted over 15 minutes, which I wrote, filmed and edited, for exhibitions in different places, sometimes for art expos, sometimes not. I left for Chad in June 2009 to visit my companion, who was working on part of the huge worksite for the road leading from the capital, N'Djamena, to the city of Abeche near the Sudanese border. I had a little video camera and started to explore around the French base camp where we were staying. During my wanderings I discovered that in the space of a few square miles in the middle of the Sahel Desert, there were all sorts of extremely different people living side by side, with lifestyles that illustrated the North-South relations in a nutshell.

JJR: So it was written little by little?

CA: Yes, in fact, during that first month there, since I didn't have an interpreter or a car to get around in, I started to film the people in the shops just in front of our living quarters, small merchants from the village who built lean-to shops or restaurants, cooking for the hundreds of workers stuck out there in the middle of nowhere, or selling cigarettes, soap, flip-flops, whatever. So I saw that these sheds were just screen-like partitions made by tying and weaving millet stalks together, that these same panels were attached to the wire fencing that enclosed the French « life base » quarters. I learned that these panels were bought from the nearby villagers, so I decided to go see how they were used there...

JJR: Yes, what is amazing about this film is that we really feel the keen observation of objects, spaces, ordinary things, and that this careful scrutiny is just as important as words.

CA: I have often felt when I've visited ethnological museums such as Quai Branly in Paris, that they don't show objects that speak to us, that bond us with the culture that is represented. They show lots of masks, colourful magic costumes with feathers, weapons of war, and so forth, things that would make us say: "Oh how bizarre they are, how different from us!" But they rarely show the rake, the gardening hoe, the sack, the gourd, the cooking pot, the basket, the pillow, in short, the ordinary objects which could make us feel closer to them, and think "Oh, look, they do it that way...." And I felt like filming objects used for the basic and vital necessities of life.

JJR: It's true that we see very different worlds rubbing shoulders in your film, the nomads, the villagers, the workers, the French and African construction managers, but you don't seem to show them as necessarily opposing each other: you place them side by side. There are parallels, links and bridges, contrary to many other documentaries that show, often with a basic, dualistic viewpoint, a world that is dying and another that is coming into being....

CA: That was indeed one of the most important challenges of the film, to avoid just walking in with a judgment in my pocket, and to show that it is not a question of who has taken the road for development as opposed to the others, because in Chad, they're not in that type of binary configuration.

For example, at the beginning of the film when we pass from the visit of the nomad camp to the road works in the desert with the workers who kill the goat to prepare the meal, our idea was precisely to show that these workers, the artisans of development dressed in blue and fluorescent yellow, are also people who know how to live in the desert, that is to kill, to gut and cut up a goat, and to cook it on a fire of brush wood they have gathered there, exactly as the nomads and villagers do.

JJR: On the other hand, the nomad herdsman in the car with the driver is discussing the great differences that exist between the city dweller and the people living in the desert...and at the same time they are both there and are talking together.

CA: That interview is one of the most beautiful presents of the shooting because I obviously didn't understand anything during the conversation in Arabic in the car between my assistant Mallah and Annour, the nomad herdsman. As it happened, Annour had been sent by his family to study the Coran in N'Djamena for two or three years when he was younger, so he was quite aware of the different ways of life and also of the way city dwellers perceive nomads and vice-versa, and he felt like talking about that. It brings something quite essential to the film, in regards to the way one sees another: I see you like this, you see me like that, though actually it's more complicated....

JJR: And throughout the film, we are with all these very different people, all shuffled together, who are each expecting very different things from this road.

CA: Yes, between the nomads who see the road as rather dangerous because their livestock can be run over by a vehicle, and the worksite manager who sees the road as speed, cars less damaged and appointments honoured, not to mention the village woman who has no idea what it may change, we find an criss-crossing multitude of viewpoints.

JJR: We were speaking before about certain ties and similarities between the lifestyles of the nomads and of the workers. However, it appears to me that the French site managers operate quite differently from the others; they don't use local products or materials and have a shuttle that runs over 400 miles a week to bring food from N'Djamena, isn't that right?

CA: Yes, like in Europe where most products travel 6000 miles before being eaten because shrimps from Denmark are peeled in Morocco before arriving at our local supermarket, the French living quarters are supplied by a shuttle that brings products from France and from the capital. I asked David to speak about this shuttle because it points out the fact that the more living standards are "developed," the farther the geographical distance widens between production and consumption of the food...and also, the more we lose our capacity to produce our own food, to the point of no longer knowing how to obtain it, neither to kill an animal, to milk a cow, nor to grow vegetables!

JJR: To come back to the road, the road to development that is, in the film, we see the villagers who are suddenly banking on the road in hopes that it will improve their living conditions...What do you think of that?

CA: I admit that I arrived with a certain degree of mistrust about this road, which was going to disturb these almost totally self-sufficient vernacular ways of living, without motors and without electricity. I think it is pretty extraordinary to have managed to invent a lifestyle adapted to this ecosystem which is very minimal, even downright hostile. And this life is based on very few materials: basically wood, leather, dirt, ronier palm and millet straw for weaving and fastening, millet being also the principal food

staple in the region. And I found in this great beauty and noblesse. Rather quickly, naturally, as I spent time among the villagers, I realized that these living conditions are also extremely rough, that there is not always enough to eat, that there are problems to get potable water, access to health care, access to education, etc. To give you a concrete example, in Chad, people die very often from haemorrhoids or from things we consider rather harmless.

I wanted to try to reproduce these interrogations in the film. When we see the sequence of Khadidja, the village woman crushing her millet every day of her life on a stone slab, which is a job as noble as it is long and physically tiresome, she tells us: "In the next village they have motorized mill. Me, too, I'd really like to have one...What do you think of that?" We are truly in the thick of this tension between the image of this sort of lost paradise in which the men are part of the world around them without harming it, and the reality of just how hard this life is in the desert.

JJR: I'd like to talk a bit about how you chose to present your sequences, because what is unique in this film is that we feel that time passes slowly, but the rhythm seems rather high-paced.

CA: During the editing, we tried to install real moments of contemplation while observing the objects and the people doing things and conversing. We are not necessarily trying to understand everything that happens and we have plenty of room for letting the mind wander. Then suddenly a moment of speaking comes up and brings new elements to nourish the following moment of contemplation. At the very beginning of the project I was saying that I wanted to propose an "observation walk," something rather slow and idling giving the impression of being there in the midst of moments of living. I wanted the viewer to feel time passing, but also to sense a rigorous sort of underlying structure, for example with these moments of observing quite different houses, each house regularly echoing the ones seen before, or the interviews where each person describes how he or she lives, or the different points of view on what the road will bring.

JJR: Another thing that intrigued me was the way the interviews are shown, very calm and stable, very static. Did you happen to think of these as a sort of breathing?

CA: I wanted to film the individuals in their own natural bodily postures, in their own settings, and to try to have real moments of established discourse with them, constantly in keeping with the idea of proposing a walk, a walk punctuated with encounters. Since the conversations were often translated through my assistant, Mallah, for I do not speak Arabic, I asked a lot of questions before, and then I asked the people to answer everything in one go, as they liked, and when that worked, which was not always the case, we recorded long sections. And some of them actually seized this opportunity to speak out for themselves, like Tahir, who runs a café for workers, who began to speak of intelligence and of money without having brought these subjects up beforehand. For Anatole, the ironworker, for instance, this moment was important for him. He asked me to come back two days later so he could write what he wanted to say. And because of this, I decided to film him in a more solemn pose. And then often, except for when we were out in the wilderness, the settings were pretty noisy because of the generators, the machines, the lorries, the birds or the neighbours in the village. So we had to find quiet places in the houses or to move away from the activity and wait for the best time to shoot; that may account for the fact that the speaking seems deliberate and posed.

JJR: If I may allude to glorious documentary makers, we can feel in you a sort of love of the gestures of working that evokes the works of Alain Cavalier, for example.

CA: I don't exactly know what to say to that: I am touched that you speak of Alain Cavalier because I

really like this man, and yes, I also like shooting the motions of human's hands working. In this film, we see a lot of hands weaving, because these are very important gestures in the village and in nomad camps as well, making sacks, baskets, mats to sit on and even water pouches for carrying liquids... I was struck by how the road worker fastening iron rods together seemed to use the same sort of repetitive gestures as the woman tying together bundles of millet straw to make fencing. The man does this to send his salary to his family who live 400 miles from there; and the woman does it to protect her children and goats from the hyenas that steal into the village square at night.

JJR: In the film we often see recurrent shots of the mountain. What does this mountain mean to you?

CA: When I started to write the film, I often thought of Stromboli, by Rossellini. I had read a beautiful text by Alain Bergala on this film where he said that the volcano was the third character in the film, a presence that came to perturb the relationship of Ingrid Bergman and the young fisherman.

I wanted to make this mountain a sort of character as well. It served at once as a means of observing from above—seeing things from a distance—and at the same time to place the endless desert, the road and the worksite on the same level. And there was also this unchangeable mineral presence, which looks upon all these changes. This mountain is covered with oval holes which are ancient, highly-eroded millet mortars, and since it is made of very hard granite—there are no archeologists in Chad, but we can imagine that this mountain was inhabited perhaps many hundreds of years ago, and that women crushed their millet there, exactly as does Khadidja, the woman still crushing her millet near the edge of the road today. And to transform this granite into gravel for the road, right next to the old mortar holes, they are exploding the foot of the mountain with dynamite, which is obviously quite a different treatment of the stone from what the women have done to imprint these smooth, oval hollows after repeatedly rubbing grains of millet thousands and thousands of times.

JJR: And the title, which is crystal clear when we have seen the film, did it come to you immediately?

CA: Yes, the title was the first thing that came to me when I started to take walks in the bush and to observe the people, the different ways of living on the land, of organizing life around the fire, around the billiard table or even around the TV...the ways of building with different sets of logic: long-term logic, blueprint logic concerning horizontality and verticality at the road worksites and in the living quarters; hand-crafted building logic for those round huts with pointed roofs in the village, which are periodically damaged and then reconstructed; and then the nomads' dismounting logic, the folding structures, the rapid packing for the house carried on camelback to move from place to place. The title was actually my main line for writing the whole film. I had a big board on the wall with one column for "Living" and another for "Building," and I regularly made shopping lists of what I wanted to have in the film.

Paris, 19/01/2011.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Clémence Ancelin, visual artist and film-maker, born in 1981 in Tours, France.
Lives between Paris and Touraine.

Graduate of the National School of Arts in Dijon, France, in 2004, majoring in video arts, she continued her studies in cinematography at the University of Paris I while becoming a cinema projectionist.

She created videos, exposes in different show places dedicated—or not—to the Arts, sang in the show “*Eloge du Réel*” (“In Praise of the Real”) by Valère Novarina, composed by Christian Paccoud, collaborated with the experimental theatre collective “GONGLE” (www.gongle.fr), worked as a projectionist in various festivals and arthouse cinemas in and around Paris.

Since 2008, she has been a member of the Groupe Iconotexte artists’ collective (www.iconotexte.fr).

She filmed *Habiter/Construire (Living/Building)* in 2010, first feature-length documentary, on the worksite of an asphalt road being constructed in the middle of the Chadian desert.

The film was accepted for in-residence editing at Périphérie Centre for Cinematographic Creation in Montreuil, near Paris. During the editing, *Fin Avril*, production studio for cinema, video and contemporary arts creation (www.finavril.com), decided to accompany the project.

Habiter/Construire is selected for International First Feature-length Competition by the *Cinéma du Réel* festival 2012, Paris.

Clémence ANCELIN, born in Tours, France, in 1981.

- 2004 Received **National Diploma of Artistic Expression** (DNSEP), video major at the ENSA (Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art) in Dijon, France.
Participated in the "Cyclopedias," **a cycle of exhibits in flats** in Dijon.
- 2005 Received a **Bachelor of Studies in Cinematography** in Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne)
Exhibition *Macédoine de l'écume* at the Hôtel d'Esterno in Dijon, original creation for the "Resto-Pop" of Dijon (day centre and restaurant for people marginalized and often suffering from psychiatric trouble) **following a 6-month on-site residency**.
- 2006 **Edited a DVD** *Macédoine de l'écume et autres*, produced by the ENSA and City of Dijon.
Obtained a **CAP professional certification as a Cinema Projectionist**.
Since 2006, projectionist in various Parisian arthouse cinemas.
- 2007 Went to live in Vietnam. With director Phuong Thao Tran ("Workers' Dreams" – Cinéma du Réel 2007), designed a **Workshop** for students at the Hanoi Centre for Vietnamese Youth Cinema (TPD).
Filmed *Victoria* with support from TPD and from the Hanoi Documentary Studio.
- 2008 **Selected** for *Roulé Boulé Vidéo* at the Videoformes Festival in Clermont-Ferrand, France
Sang in *Eloge du reel*, show by Valère Novarina, musically arranged by Christian Paccoud (Lavoir Moderne Parisien / Sorbonne / National Drama Centre of Orléans / Barthelemy Durand Psychiatric Hospital in Etampes, France / Théâtre du Rond Point, Paris, etc)
Exhibition *Le Château*, carte blanche for 11 artists, an original creation for the castle of St. Brisson sur Loire, France.
Since 2008, **member of an artists' collective**: Groupe Iconotexte (www.iconotexte.fr)
- 2009 Accompanied **school projects** (Paris / Nanterre / St. Ouen) with the experimental theatre company GONGLE (Gongle / Project Peter Pan) (www.gongle.fr)
Brandebourg Blvd Help Yourself, **a 24-hour marathon of theatrical and artistic events**, five actors and artists took over a soon-to-be-demolished manor house in Ivry sur seine near Paris.
First visit to Chad, began writing *Living/Building*
- 2010 In eastern Chad, filmed *Living/Building*, **first feature-length documentary** about road works in the Chadian Sahel Desert and their ramifications on the people concerned.
- 2011 *Living / Building* was admitted for **an editing residence** at *Périphérie*, Centre of Cinema Creation in Montreuil near Paris. During the editing, *Fin Avril* ® a production studio for contemporary cinema, video and arts (www.finavril.com) decided to support the project.
- 2012 *Roulé Boulé Vidéo* was programmed in *Two Days Video, Panorama of Contemporary Video*, at the Centre d'Art de l'Yonne (France).

FILMOGRAPHY

2007-2009 *Victoria* - video DV PAL 4 /3 (00:09:37)

Vietnam. A foreign woman hires a Vietnamese motorcycle guide who speaks neither English nor French, whom she follows across the country. Filmed from her point of view, the movement of the film is lulled by the voice of the puzzled guide.

2008 *Madame* - video and installation DV PAL 16/9 (00:09:51)

Original creation for the castle of St. Brisson sur Loire. The voice of a grandmother evokes a great, dreamy love. The château and its surrounding trees are filmed like a palace of memory, and a little cleaning woman is taking care of it.

2005-2007 *Roulé-Boulé Vidéo (Roly-Poly Video)* - video DV PAL 4/3 (00:11:04)

From the archer to a tattooed heart pierced by an arrow, from volcanic fumes to the cardboard clouds of a baroque opera, from two little black dolls in Communion robes to three well-trussed meat rolls, Roulé-Boulé tumbles from one scene to another like a roly-poly in video.

« The Camera-parachute: Weapon and Safeguard

Madame C. (...) refuses to admit the chaos around her and that all *this ...that there...*, is nothing but a pile of meat, bits of life, with neither head nor tail. Madame has been sniffing and snooping for two years trying to piece it together: a shape which, in spite of singular and freakish aspect of human things, reveals their coherence and ties them together in one and the same film. » Extract of "Roulé-Boulé Vidéo" by Claire Lise Petitjean.

2004-2005 *Corroyeurs de Brésil (The Curriers of Brazil)* - video and installation DV PAL 4 /3 (00:13:46)

Original creation for the Resto-Pop' of Dijon (Daytime centre), filmed on site with the users after six months in residence. The closed and drifting universe of this heterogeneous group of people on the fringes of society is fictionalized using the setting of a cruise on a ship.

2002-2003 *La mystérieuse population sub-Suzonite (The Mysterious sub-Suzonite People)* DV PAL 4 /3 (00:12:42)

False archeological documentary inspired by ancient statuettes in the shape of body parts found at the sources of the Seine River, linked to a Gallic medicinal cult and shown at the Archeological Museum of Dijon.

2001 *Soulflumine / Tabacule / Filombrile* - videos DV PAL 4 /3 (00:02:50 / 00:04:10 / 00:02:50)

Three short false documentaries on the particular social habits of a people speaking a strange language. The film scenarios were invented in French with Jérôme Mulot (scriptwriter and comic book author), then translated into a lingo of our own devising.