

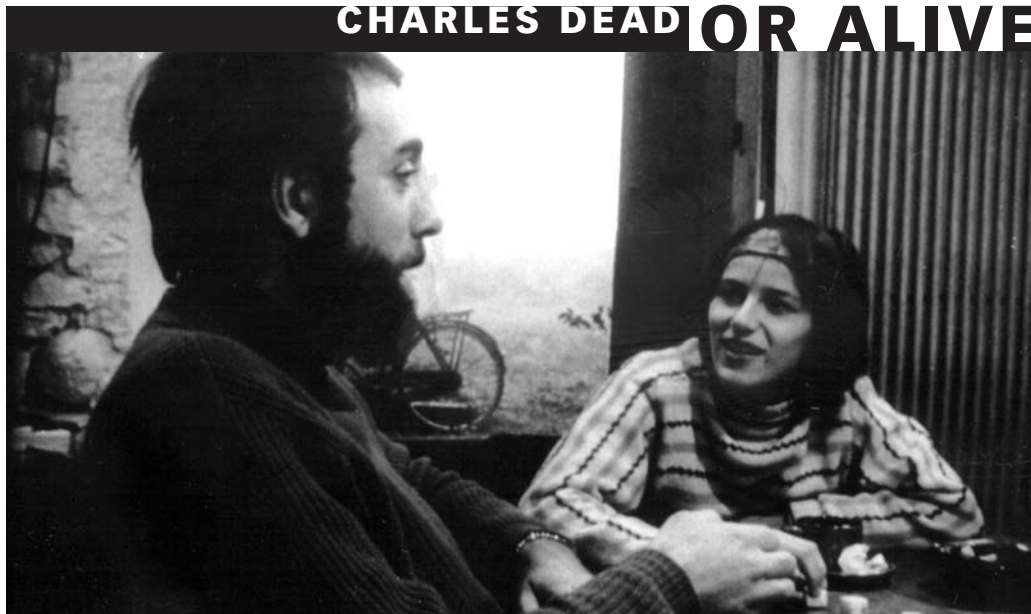
Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: Renato Berta  
Sound: Paul Girard  
Editing: Sylvia Bachmann  
Music: Jacques Olivier

Cast: François Simon, Marcel Robert,  
Marie-Claire Dufour, André Schmidt,  
Maya Simon, Michèle Martel  
and others

Production: Alain Tanner and the  
Groupe Cinq

World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French

## CHARLES DEAD OR ALIVE



1969 | 16/35mm | b/w | 94' | b/w | Charles mort ou vif

**C**harles *Dead or Alive*, Alain Tanner's first feature film, which won the Grand Prix at the Locarno Festival in 1969, is the kind of manifesto that, with other films such as *La lune avec les dents* and *Haschich* by Michel Soutter, put Switzerland on the world cinema map at the end of the 1960s. That the critics baptised the wave which emerged at this time as the "new Swiss cinema" simply reflects the fact that the "old" Swiss cinema was unknown to the cinema-going public. Today, the appeal and energy of this first film remain undiminished, magnified by the exceptional stature and presence of François Simon and the sublimely uncluttered camera work of Renato Berta. Tanner drew his subject matter from what he saw of the events of May '68 in Paris, which he covered for Swiss television. Unimpressed by the ideological pronouncements of the young demonstrators (Tanner was nearly 40 and mistrustful of the siren songs of militancy), he was more struck by the elderly people marching alongside them. The film therefore paints the portrait of an old man who decides to abandon his comfortable bourgeois way of life and live with a bohemian couple. There he rediscovers his freedom to think and his joie de vivre. As Mireille Amiel points out in *Cinéma 70*: "**Charles Dead or Alive**, which the author himself defines as a 'small-scale historical fresco' is a good example of the best of political cinema in our developed Western societies." It is also worth adding another, definitive judgement, pronounced by Jean-Louis Bory in *Le Nouvel Observateur*: "It is the most intelligent film inspired by the spirit of May '68." Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner and John Berger  
Camera: Renato Berta  
Sound: Marcel Sommerer, Gerard Rhône

Editing: Brigitte Sousselier, Marc Blavet  
Music: Patrick Moraz and the Main Horse Airline Group

Cast: Bulle Ogier, Jean-Luc Bideau, Jacques Denis  
Production: Alain Tanner in association with Gabriel Auer for SvoCiné (Geneva)

World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French



1971 | 16/35mm | b/w | 128' | La Salamandre

**T**he **Salamander** brought Alain Tanner acclaim and his first public triumph. Presented at the Cannes Film Festival in the "Quinzaine des réalisateurs" section in 1971, the film made the world aware of the abrasive tone and energy of the new Swiss cinema, with Tanner as its emblematic director. The scenario derives from Tanner's experience as a journalist/reporter for Swiss television between 1965 and 1968. **The Salamander** begins with a succession of enigmatic images of the kind very much favoured by today's TV reconstructions: a man is shown cleaning his gun; the gun goes off; furtively, a woman's face appears. What is happening? On this mysterious opening, which serves as a pretext, Tanner builds a metaphorical scenario: two men, a journalist and a writer, throw themselves into the investigation to find out the truth about this woman. Each uses his own weapons: documentary research in one case, boundless imagination in the other. But gradually, both courses of action prove futile. As it turns out, the encounter with their subject, Rosemonde, ruins their studied efforts to discover the truth, and the emergence of a trio of free, critical individuals supersedes the cold, laborious exercise in truth-seeking. The beauty of the film lies in its capacity to make sense without ever hammering the message: reality outruns all efforts to grasp it, the thesis of all modern cinema since *Citizen Kane*, to which **The Salamander** is a kind of Swiss response. Played by Bulle Ogier, Rosemonde is still a definitive incarnation of post-1968 freedom. Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: Renato Berta  
Sound: Marcel Sommerer  
Editing: Brigitte Sousselier

Music: J.S. Bach, arranged by Arié  
Dzierlatka. Interpreted by: François  
Marthouret, Josée Destoop, Juliet  
Berto, Anne Wiazemski, Pierre Holdener

Cast: Josée Destoop, François Mar-  
thouret, Juliet Berto, Anne Wiazemsky,  
François Roulet and others

Production: Alain Tanner, Groupe Cinq  
World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French

## RETURN FROM AFRICA



| 1973 | 16/35mm | b/w | 113' | Le retour d'Afrique

**A**n ode to liberated speech and to the power of words, “those one speaks to others, those one speaks in silence”, Alain Tanner’s third film is inspired by a poet and a poetic text which deeply affected him as a young director: *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal*, written in 1939 by Aimé Césaire. A poem extolled by the Surrealists, this seminal flow of anti-colonial thinking by the West-Indian-born poet is the bubbling spring which inspires the gestures and words of the film’s main character, Vincent (François Marthouret), a 30-year-old from Geneva. Weighed down by the monotony and boredom of his life as a well-off westerner, he sells all his possessions and decides to leave for Algeria with his fiancée. The subject is clearly that of escape from one’s place of belonging, a Rimbaudesque theme dear to Tanner, which is here directly linked to the Third Worldist discourse of the 1960s and 1970s. But the strength of the film lies in the way it turns this thinking on its head: on the eve of their departure, chance circumstances prevent the couple from leaving. Instead, they decide to pursue their dream of escape by living hidden away in their empty apartment. Again, Tanner shows that it is the inner mileage travelled that matters, not the arrival at a destination; the posing of a question rather than the answer. As the director says at the beginning of the film: “Speaking words can be an act in itself, it can also be a substitute for action.” This is an important precept for the understanding of Tanner’s cinema: poetry is a form of action, and having it in mind, reciting it, can help to give a new shape to reality: in the film’s final scene, the couple decide to have a child. Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner, John Berger  
Camera: Renato Berta  
Sound: Pierre Gamet  
Editing: Brigitte Sousselier

Music: Patrick Moraz  
Cast: Olimpia Carlisi, Philippe Léotard  
and others

Production: Citel Films, Geneva,  
Action Films, Paris, SSR Geneva

World Rights: Yves Peyrot  
Original Version: French

## THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD



1974 | 35mm | colour | 120' | Le milieu du monde

Like **Return from Africa**, **The Middle of the World** is a film about couples and the way people experienced life in the early 1970s. It is also Tanner's most theoretical work, the film which most explicitly sets out his attitudes as a director. The previous film integrated content (the crisis of the contemporary individual) and form (a distancing effect achieved through the words spoken by the characters and the camera movements accompanying them), whereas **The Middle of the World** makes a sharp separation between the story of a difficult love affair and a strict, sometimes rigid form, which constantly shatters the apparent naturalism of the plot and the film's realistic effects. The film begins with a voice-off: "This film was shot in 1974 in a time of normalisation", then "This film tells the story of an Italian café waitress and a middle-world engineer over a period of 112 days." The cartoons indicating the dates of the various events (there are many gaps in the story), Patrick Moraz's musical interludes, the landscape shots, which are out of kilter with the order of the seasons and the events of the story: all are signs of an unusual didactic approach in a work which manages to conceal its demanding intentions behind the form of the film. But this strong Brechtian flavour is also explained by the political dimension of the film. Tanner has probably never identified the enemy so pointedly as here: shady, male-chauvinist, provincial politicians, narrow-minded denizens of bistros. In opposition to this social tackiness, which is all-pervasive, Tanner proposes liberation by the cinema and its language: putting a distance between the reality represented and the spectator enables the latter to exercise his critical consciousness, performing what contemporary critics defined as "the work of the spectator". Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner and John Berger  
Camera: Renato Berta  
Sound: Pierre Gamet

Editing: Brigitte Sousselier  
Music: Jean-Marie Sènia  
Cast: Nicolas, Myriam Mézières, Jean-Luc Bideau, Myriam Boyer, Rufus,

Dominique Labourier, Roger Jendly, Miou-Miou, Jacques Denis, Raymond Bussièrès and others  
Production: Citel Films, Geneva,

Action Films, Paris, SFP SSR  
World Rights: Yves Peyrot  
Original Version: French

## JONAH WHO WILL BE 25 IN THE YEAR 2000



1976 | 35mm | colour and b/w | 110' | Jonas qui aura 25 ans en l'an 2000

Together with **The Salamander**, **Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000** is Alain Tanner's best-known film, and the one which has almost permanently fixed his directorial style in the consciousness of the public: a mixture of seriousness and humour against a backdrop of social criticism, a sweet-and-sour utopia of characters given over to their thoughts and fantasies in a world which is not always designed with them in mind. However, this judgement of the film and its director carries a risk of misunderstanding. As Serge Daney has written in an article which is basic reading for this film <sup>(1)</sup>, **Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000** in no way expresses an unambiguous left-wing point of view and does not crystallise the social struggle in the name of comradesly nostalgia. Although the film records the states of mind and dreams of the 1968 generation without their violence or hatred, the intention is definitely not to paint a reassuring picture and turn the militants of yesterday into likeable figures. The aim is to reveal the secret, generally concealed wounds of a series of individuals sufficiently inured to the social order not to engage in open conflict. The eight characters featured in the film (their names all begin with "Ma...", possibly an allusion to "Mao") fight with their own weapons, which are rarely political but derive from their childhood, an area of boundless freedom and playfulness which the system cannot tame. This praise of the indomitably childlike quality of the 1968 generation is one of the morals of the film: "**Jonah...** is a didactic film with no lesson to teach, an encyclopaedic film with no conclusion", a film of freedom. Frédéric Bas

(1): "Les huit Ma", in *Le cinéma et le monde*, 1; *Le Temps des Cahiers 1962-1981*, P.O.L., Paris, 2001, pp. 184-189

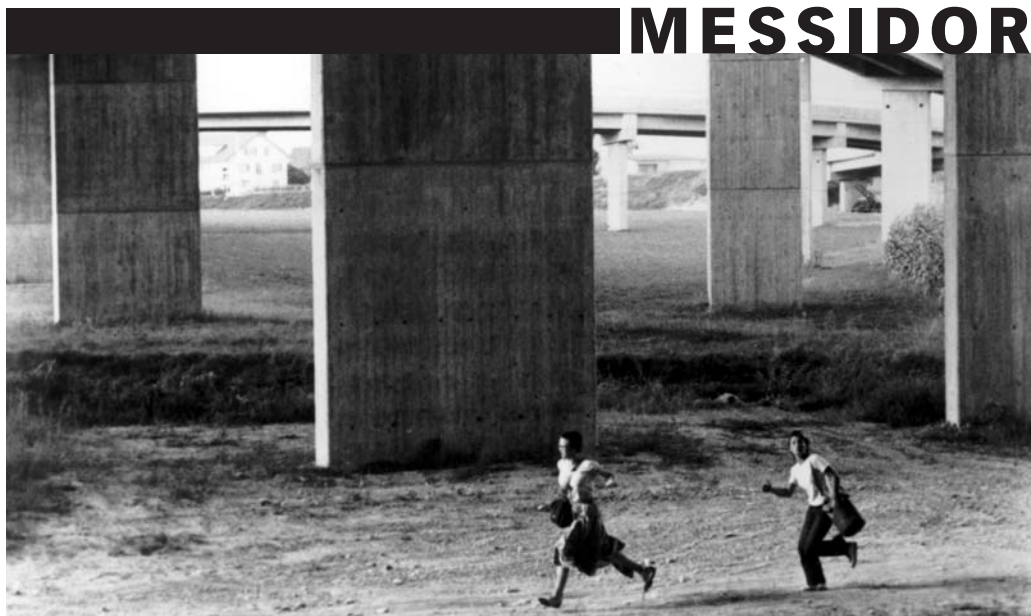
Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: Renato Berta

Sound: Pierre Gamey  
Editing: Brigitte Sousselier  
Music: Arié Dzierlatka

Cast: Clémentine Amoroux,  
Catherine Rétoré and others  
Production: Citel Films, Geneva,

Action Films, Paris, SSR  
World Rights: Yves Peyrot  
Original Version: French

# MESSIDOR



| 1979 | 35mm | colour | 130'

A project initially entrusted to Maurice Pialat, who had already begun to film it under the title of “Meurtrières” (see the special edition of *Les Inrockuptibles* devoted to Pialat), **Messidor** is based on a crime story which hit the headlines in France in the 1970s: two adolescent girls run away and go on a criminal spree which ends in their deaths. On the face of it, this subject is remote from the world we associate with Tanner, since a violent story of this kind and its social background would seem to impose the realistic, even naturalistic form always shunned by the Swiss director. Moreover, Tanner is instinctively averse to filming physical violence. “Killing a person”, he says, “is generally a gratuitous special effect.” Consequently, of all Tanner’s films **Messidor** is the only one in which someone dies of non-natural causes. It is also Tanner’s most sombre work, characterised by a despair unmitigated by his usual verbal and situational humour. This is because Tanner accepted the project only on condition that he could recast the original idea and use this violent story as a vehicle for more personal preoccupations: the limits of freedom (already treated in his previous film) are here related to the girls’ frantic flight in the Swiss countryside. What interests him is the possible sully of this place of excessive peace and quiet, now transformed into a field of experience and criminal fun-and-games by the two characters. Many people have not forgiven Tanner for the shot in which one of the girls defecates in an Alpine meadow after exchanging caresses with her partner. In the course of the film, the idyllic Swiss countryside – valleys, cows and mountains – transmutes into its opposite: the heavy police presence weighs on everything, killing all desire. This is the first film to mark a break in Tanner’s relationship with Switzerland.

Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner based on  
*La voie sauvage* by Daniel Odier  
Camera: Jean-François Robin

Sound: Alain Lachassagne  
Editing: Brigitte Sousselier  
Music: Arié Dzierlatka

Cast: Trevor Howard, Mick Ford,  
Bernice Stegers, Odile Schmitt  
and others

Production: L.P.A. Phénix-Paris,  
Slotint-SSR, Geneva  
World Rights: Yves Peyrot  
Original Version: French

## LIGHT YEARS AWAY



| 1981 | 35mm | colour | 110' | Les Années-lumières

**L**ight Years Away is an adaptation of the novel *La Voie sauvage* by the Geneva-based writer Daniel Odier. For Tanner, this film was an opportunity to return to a subject which transcends political and ideological frontiers. In the past, Tanner had entertained a “desire for the Atlantic, the wind, other places”, no doubt an expression of the *Zeitgeist* of his youth. The result was a film mixing realism and fantasy. As on previous occasions, Tanner embarked on a voyage on the margins of the social “circle”, but this time with greater technical and financial resources. Tanner’s desire to go to sea is affirmed on several levels in the film: the choice of Ireland as his location, the use of English in the original version, and above all the metaphorical use of myth and legend. The film is essentially the account of an intense relationship between father and son.

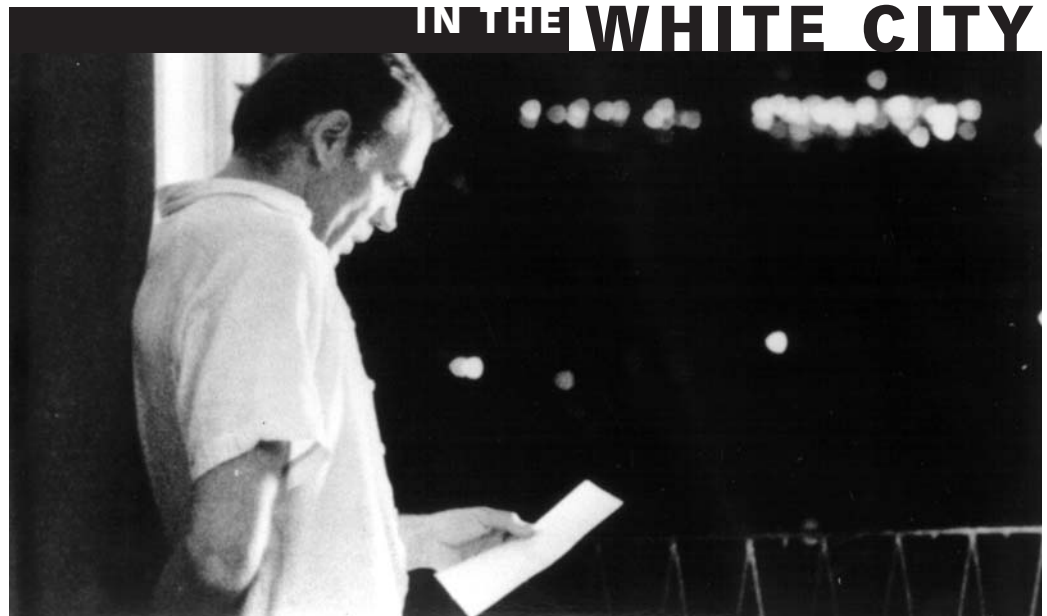
“Tanner implies, with great sensitivity and insight, that true life is always an inner process of experience... in a film that seems to pulsate with love and care for life. Its beauty, its gravity (which never comes at the expense of humour) is more gripping than the most brilliant dialogue of his earlier films.” Bruno Jaeggi

Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: Acacio de Almeida  
Sound: Jean-Paul Mugel

Editing: Laurent Uhler  
Music: Jean-Luc Barbier  
Cast: Bruno Ganz, Teresa Madruga,

Julia Vonderlin and others  
Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,  
Metro-Film, Lisbon

World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French,  
German, Polish



1983 | 35mm with sequences in Super-8 enlarged to 35mm | colour | 107' | Dans la ville blanche

**In the White City** was a turning-point in Tanner's career as a director. Bringing him renewed public acclaim, which he had not enjoyed since **Jonah Who Will Be 25...**, it also marked a change in his aesthetic approach. Although escape and the desire for solitude had always been key Tannerian themes, they had previously been developed on a left-wing foundation and characterised by conversation and playful fantasy, a paradise of puns and facetious remarks in which his characters were at home. There is nothing of the kind in this film, the most striking aspect of which is its silence, stark poetry and sombre melancholy. The Swiss director must have been inspired by his younger days in the merchant navy in imagining this portrait of a sailor (sublimely acted by Bruno Ganz) who abandons everything to merge body and soul into Lisbon. At the beginning of the film, Ganz remarks to a barmaid that the clock in her bar is not indicating the right time. She replies: "The clock is right. It's the world that is wrong." And it is with this sense of the world being out of joint that the hero lives his urban solitude, using his cine-camera to record fragments of reality which he sends to his wife, moving around at random as if he expected to be caught up by reality, to be absorbed into it. With **In the White City**, Tanner affirms his reputation as a great director in physical, territorial terms, as the chart of his hero's emotions and the topography of the city gradually flow together and merge. As if the sailor's mad dream is simply to become Lisbon.

Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: Bernard Zitzermann  
Sound: Jean-Paul Mugel

Editing: Laurent Uhler  
Music: Terry Riley

Cast: Hugues Quester, Myriam Mézières, Jean-Philippe Ecoffey, Betty Berr, Marie-Luce Felber, André Steiger, Teco Celio and others

Production: Filmograph SA Geneve, MK2 Paris  
World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French

## NO MAN'S LAND



1985 | 35mm | colour | 105'

**N**o Man's Land, Tanner's ninth full-length feature, is an adventure story – not an adventure in the conventional sense that it sets out to be entertaining, but that it tells the story of four people trying to fulfil their most basic desires in life.

A group of young people meet up regularly in a nightclub situated in a former customs house on the Swiss-French border, as a means of escape from their drab lives. **No Man's Land** is an "in-between" film. Between staying and leaving, between Paul and Jean, about friendship, between Paul and Madelaine, Jean and Mali, Jean and Lucie, about love. Between Paul and his route of escape, Jean and his territory, Madelaine and her music, Mali and her exile. A sparse, beautiful film as a philosophical reflection on and a poetic, atmospheric representation of human homelessness. "Alain Tanner has taken up and rearranged his recurrent topics: the state of suspension, a wavering between the home that we seek and the urge to flee combined with the inability to actually go to the station and board a train; the necessity of work and the hope of one day escaping the constraints of work; the yearning for distant lands, the unknown, the other, which in the end turns out to be more of the same old thing and is thereby an anticipation of the inevitable return."

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Screenplay: Myriam Mézières  
Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: Acacio de Almeida

Sound: Joaquin Pinto  
Editing: Laurent Uhler  
Music: J.S. Bach, interpreted by  
Nell Gotkovsky

Cast: Myriam Mézières, Aziz  
Kabouche, Benoît Régent  
Production: Garance, La Sept Paris,  
Filmograph SA, Geneva

World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French



1987 | 35mm | colour | 110' | Une flamme dans mon cœur

Until **A Flame in My Heart**, the question of sexual desire, though touched on in many of his earlier films, where it clearly affected the characters' identities and relations with the external world, had never previously been tackled head-on by Tanner. His characters had entertained all kinds of relationships, but their more intimate aspects were always conveyed by suggestion. The absence of the human body in the sexual act can be explained as a defensive reaction against a "purely visceral" cinema, in which – according to Tanner – directors "go overboard". "For my part, I need the external world, reality." With **A Flame in My Heart**, Tanner proves that it is possible to talk about the world and sex without losing anything in this respect. Tanner is indebted to Myriam Mézières for this new physical dimension to his film-making: after a stormy relationship with a tyrannical lover, Mercedes throws herself into a new affair with a journalist, but her longing for the ultimate experience comes up against the normality of her companion, who remains off-puttingly detached. Her subsequent drifting is reminiscent of that of the sailor in **In the White City**. In hindsight, **A Flame in My Heart** has a kind of symmetry with **The Salamander**. It presents the same portrait of a free, almost feral woman – engine of desire in a world without desire – and ends on the same note of solitude. The difference between the two characters, apart from the stunningly present naked body of Myriam Mézières, is that while Rosemonde embodied a joyful, triumphant freedom (see her final smile), Mercedes is a resistance fighter in a desperate world: "To be stripped of all hope, that is how to be free of care, to be at peace," she says. Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: Patrick Blossier  
Sound: Jean-Paul Mugel

Editing: Laurent Uhler  
Music: Arié Dzierlatka

Cast: Jean-Louis Trintignant, Laura  
Morante, Jacob Berger and others  
Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,  
MK2, Paris

World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French

## THE GHOST VALLEY



| 1987 | 16/35mm | b/w | 105' | La vallée fantôme

**P**aul is a roughly 50-year-old film-maker. He writes a script as if writing were his profession and then sets out to seek a lead actress. His inability to find one must have its reasons. Perhaps there are too many stories, too many images, too many actresses, too little calm and no ultimate necessity. Paul spontaneously bins his script. Then there is Jean, straight from film school, whom Paul rather superfluously employs as his assistant. One day, on a discarded photograph, Paul discovers Dara, an Italian actress he had known and admired and who has been absent from the screen for a long time. He instructs his assistant to find her. Paul and Jean become obsessed with their quest of returning Dara to the world of fiction and acting. To achieve this they must come to terms with feelings, confrontations and dreams. Paul once again ascends to the valley where he can rediscover for himself the fantasies that had abandoned him.

"... a cinematographic essay on self-doubt and how to confront it, on the danger and averting of failure, but for all this an essay without didactic cumbersomeness. The way Tanner succeeds in denouncing the surfeit of film images while employing visual means himself, albeit full of suggestive power, sending forth his alter ego in a struggle for artistic survival, is indeed admirable."

Hans-Dieter Seidel, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: Hugues Ryffel  
Sound: Jean-Paul Mugel  
Editing: Lauren Uhler

Music: Michel Wintsch  
Credits: Marie Gaydou, Jean-Philippe Ecoffey, Denise Péron, Roger Jendly and others

Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva, CAB Productions, Lausanne, Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French

## THE WOMAN FROM ROSE HILL



| 1989 | 35mm | scope | colour | 95' | La femme de Rose Hill

**S**he comes from an Indian Ocean island and ends up in a small village in Canton Vaud: her name is Julie; she is black-skinned. Chosen from an agency catalogue, she has just married Marcel, a local farmer. Marriage does not cancel out distance, and, in this land of snow and frost, Julie's main problem is the cold.

"Tanner is a question-mark-shaped artist; you sense his satisfaction when he poses disturbing questions intending to shake his audience out of their everyday apathy. He tries to explain: 'There was a time when I could not care less about the plot, the traditional way of telling a story. Here, too, I initially summarised the narrative in thirty pages, then I met Marie Gaydu, the actress who plays Julie, who had never been in a film before. For her, for Jean-Philippe Ecoffey, Denise Person, Roger Jendly and the others, I wrote a real script. As you can see, I am making progress.' Tanner is changing, then, but he is still less interested in story-telling than in the characters and the atmosphere in which they engage with one another.

For Tanner, the aim is not to please a large audience, but to lend his focus, his angle of seeing things, to a small number of friends, to let them in on his truth." Pierre Montaigne, *Le Figaro*, 22 November 1989

Script: Alain Tanner  
Camera: José Luis Gomez Linares  
Sound: Jean-Paul Mugel  
Editing: Monica Goux

Music: Arié Dzierlatka  
Credits: Francisco Rabal, Angela Molina, Dominic Gould, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi and others

Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva, Tornasol Films SA, Madrid, Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French, Spanish

## THE MAN WHO LOST HIS SHADOW



1991 | 35mm | colour | 100' | L'homme qui a perdu son ombre

**W**hen you no longer have any ideas, when you have forgotten why you are doing things, you are like a man who has lost his shadow, Antonio tells Paul. Antonio believes that Paul has lost his shadow. An old Andalusian communist back home after a long exile in France, Antonio provides shelter for Paul, who turned to him for help after getting himself sacked by the newspaper he was working for. According to Antonio, Paul is someone who believes everything can be set right – what goes on in the mind and in real life with other people. Paul embarks on a journey of the mind, but life catches up with him. Or rather, women catch up with him: Anne, his present partner, and Marie, an earlier one, are on his trail. Farce or tragedy? Neither, says Paul: there's no need for anyone to get killed in this story. But it does end with a death. When Antonio disappears, he takes with him a whole historical era, that of social utopias. Paul has lost his shadow, but not the way Antonio thought: Antonio himself was Paul's shadow.

"A director as physical as Tanner cannot just swallow and accept Jean Baudrillard's proposition in *L'Échange symbolique et la mort*: the presence of death as a segregated and neutralised phenomenon which gives our period its obsession with and illusion of immortality. It is because he himself is haunted by a sense of absence that Tanner wants to restore a presence to what is human. The subject of **The Man Who Lost His Shadow** is based on an *idée fixe* closely associated with the feeling of exile and travel. Nothing is more beautiful than to see his camera physically embracing people, the sea, the passing of time, in the passion that starts singing in the streets with the gusts of wind and brown dust that carry Antonio away. This song might, if further amplified, give us a film that has nothing more to prove." Amina Danton, *Cahiers du cinéma* 1992, No. 451

Script: Myriam Mézières  
Camera: Denis Jutzeler  
Sound: Henri Maïkoff  
Editing: Monica Goux

Music: Arié Dzierlatka  
Credits: Myriam Mézières, Juanjo Uigcorbe, Félicité Wouassi

Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,  
Nomad Films, Brussels, Messidor  
Film, Barcelona

World Rights: Alain Tanner  
Original Version: French

## THE DIARY OF LADY M.



| 1992 | 35mm | colour | 108' | Le Journal de lady M.

Lady M. gives up everything in order to follow a man, Diego, who takes her on a journey without destination. The journey begins in Barcelona, his home town. On the way, she learns that he is married to a black woman and has a child. M. cannot cope with the subsequent parting and invites Diego, his wife and their child to share her life in Paris. In this unconventional and difficult set-up, M. strikes up a tentative rapport with Diego's wife. Diego eventually leaves both women, who themselves later part company. M. ends up alone again.

"**The Diary of Lady M.** is an unfettered film, untrammelled by any set rules except the rules of a game which changes as desire enlarges its territory. The events enacted are really to do with risk, with putting oneself and others in danger, forcing a way through, living on the edge or beyond it. The person who makes the story happen is also the one by whom it is dragged to its bitter end. Her name is Myriam Mézières, but she officiates under the name of Lady M., as mistress, leading show girl, oriental dancer, amorous woman. She has an accomplice who is watching her, Alain Tanner. (...) He films this story as if he were keeping a log-book. He films the diary of the Diary. He maintains a distance in photographing his actress-scriptwriter-heroine, and he carries it off, while remaining absolutely free to follow his characters as he sees fit, thanks no doubt to his lightness of touch, filming sparingly with a reduced camera crew." Thierry Jousse, Cahiers du cinéma 1993, No. 478

Script: Alain Tanner, Bernard  
Comment  
Camera: Denis Jutzeler

Sound: Henri Maïkof  
Editing: Monika Goux  
Music: Michel Wintsch

Cast: Karin Viard, Cécile Tanner,  
Jean-Quentin Châtelain, Antoine  
Basler

Production: Filmograph SA, Noë Films  
World Rights: CAB Productions SA  
Original Version: French

## FOURBI



| 1995 | 35mm | colour | 120'

**R**osemonde has sold her story to a large Swiss private channel which buys the rights to crime victims' stories and turns them into film material. Eight years earlier, when she was 20, Rosemonde killed a man who tried to rape her. As there was no witness, the case was dismissed for lack of evidence. Kevin, a film producer, charges Paul, a young writer, with the task of writing the script relating Rosemonde's life at the time. However, she appears to be incapable of recalling her past and remains silent when Paul approaches her with the questions he needs to ask. Marie, a young actress, is then asked to visit Rosemonde and promised the role in the film if she can make her talk.

The film tells of the strange relationship between the two women – whose social and educational backgrounds are entirely different – and the friendship which gradually develops. As they get to know each other better, they realise that they are unwilling and unable to play the game proposed to them. It is the story of one person rescuing another, who in turn delivers the rescuer.

"**Fourbi** not only takes up characters and motives from **The Salamander**, 25 years on, but tentatively, in a more detached way, recaptures some of the vitality of earlier films. Once again, Tanner places his hope in those who have been wounded by life. Because he himself is a wounded child. (...) **Fourbi** is a summer ballad that unites a handful of young people whose paths – under normal circumstances – would never have crossed. Together they develop a culture of resistance."

Martin Schaub, Filmbulletin 1996

Script: Alain Tanner, Bernard Comment, Antonio Tabucchi  
Camera: Hugues Ryffel

Sound: Henri Maïkoff  
Editing: Monica Goux  
Music: Michel Wintsch

Cast: Francis Frappa, André Marcon  
Production: CAB Productions SA,  
Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: CAB Productions SA  
Original Version: French, Portuguese

# REQUIEM



| 1998 | 35mm | colour | 100'

**T**his story is set in Lisbon on the last Sunday in July, between midday and midnight. That Sunday was apparently the hottest day of the year. It was also a very unusual day, engendering hallucinations and the most amazing encounters.

Time has unravelled, dissolved in the oppressive heat. Past and present merge into one. The living and the dead meet and settle accounts. In the footsteps of the poet Fernando Pessoa, in a desolate Lisbon, between dream and reality, people from the present and ghosts from the past converse in a manner both grave and light-hearted, and shrug off their burden of regret between midday and midnight of the last Sunday in July...

"In **Requiem**, Tanner's classic frontier assumes an exclusively temporal, inner connotation. Nothing in the Portuguese city inhabited solely by symbolic figures distinguishes reality from dream, and the only demarcation line that stands out with any clarity is that between past and present. This Lisbon is a city of the soul (not of the unconscious because, as a lottery-ticket seller points out: 'We have nothing to do with "Mitteleuropa", we have soul'), but still a last landfall, a place on the edge, a land projecting into the 'beyond', on account of the ancient finis terrae imprinted on its DNA." Paola Malanga in *Filmmaker*, 1998

Script: Alain Tanner, Bernard Comment  
Camera: Denis Jutzeler  
Sound: François Musy

Editing: Monica Goux  
Music: Michel Wintsch  
Cast: Jérôme Robart, Aïssa Maïga,  
Natalie Dontcheva, Jean-Pierre Gos,

Cécile Tanner, Philippe Demarle,  
Heinz Bennent  
Production: Filmograph SA, CAB  
Productions SA, Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: CAB Productions SA  
Original Version: French

## JONAH AND LILA, TILL TOMORROW



| 1999 | 35mm | colour | 120' | Jonas et Lila à demain

Tanner was never keen on the idea of making a follow-up to the first **Jonah**, on summoning up the “huit Ma” (the eight principal characters in the earlier film) to see what had become of them. Apart from its commercial aspect (repeating the recipe of a past success!), it would be based on the stupid, naturalist idea that “film time” and “life time” are one and the same thing. But the whole purpose of Tanner’s cinema is to shatter this mirror effect, which lies behind so many of the films made nowadays. **Jonah and Lila, till tomorrow** is therefore not a sequel, but rather a musical coda, a way for the director to return to the past, not to churn it out all over again in a complacent sort of way, but to restore it to life. The film tells the story of a modern young couple at the dawn of the millennium. Jonah, just under thirty, is an apprentice film director, while Lila is a sales assistant in a music shop. At the heart of their daily life, recounted in voice-off by Lila, is the special relationship Jonah has with Anziano, an elderly film-maker who has become a writer – possibly Tanner’s alter ego. It is through Anziano that the first Jonah returns to life, his insights punctuating the film like clues, signs of the past that provide landmarks in the contemporary world, and a way of rediscovering its meaning and beauty. When Anziano dies, Jonah is left with this tenuous but rich heritage. He now has to avoid compromise with the prevailing mendacity and work out his own way of living and making films. *Frédéric Bas*

Co-directors: Alain Tanner,  
Myriam Mézières  
Script: Myriam Mézières  
Camera: Denis Jutzeler

Sound: Christian Monheim  
Editing: Monica Goux  
Music: Matthew Russel  
Cast: Myriam Mézières, Tess Barthes,

Bruno Todeschini, Louise Szpindel,  
Luis Régo  
Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva,  
Gemini Films, Paris, Messidor Films,

Barcelona, CAB Productions SA,  
Lausanne  
World Rights: Gemini Films  
Original Version: French

## FLOWERS OF BLOOD



2002 | 35mm | colour | 110' | Fleurs de sang

As its title suggests, **Flowers of Blood** belongs entirely to the physical and sensual dimension of Tanner's oeuvre – a dimension contributed by Myriam Mézières in **A Flame in My Heart** and **The Diary of Lady M**. The script in this case was written by Mézières herself, based on her own memories, and she actually co-directed the film with Tanner. Again, it is a portrait of a woman and it gives us another glimpse of an exceptional figure. Mézières comes across as an outstanding actress, offering her body and her sufferings with a rare and profoundly moving abandon. Although the action of the film unfolds over five years, charting the development of a painful relationship between a mother and her daughter, the basic principle is to draw it all together rather than follow a psychological chronology. The relationship is apprehended as a single entity: the cracks are evident, but there is not too much emphasis on the process of disintegration. The story divides into two distinct time periods, first with mother and daughter together in the same bohemian setting, then separated by society, each facing her own choices and wanderings. However, the purpose of this time division is not so much to answer the predictable question "What will become of them?" in preparation for a pointless debate on "How can a girl live without her mother?" (and vice versa), as to show the metamorphosis of a single body, a dual mother-daughter identity, which is treated in the film less as a social couple going through ups and downs than as a single female figure with two faces. The beauty of the film lies in this constant blending of the two personalities, an on-going role-play in mother/daughter boundaries resulting in a disturbing tension between incestuous bond and transfer of identity. Frédéric Bas

Script: Alain Tanner, Bernard Comment  
Camera: Denis Jutzeler  
Sound: Christophe Giovannoni

Editing: Max Karli  
Music: Michel Wintsch  
Cast: Madeleine Piguet, Julien Tsangas, Lucie Zelger,

Pauline le Comte, Julia Batinova  
Production: Filmograph SA, Geneva, TSR, CAB Productions SA, Lausanne, Gemini Films, Paris

World Rights: Gemini Films  
Original Version: French

## PAUL S'EN VA



| 2004 | 35mm | colour | 85'

Speaking of **Paul s'en va**, Alain Tanner has said that the film ploughs a "furrow long marked out" in his film-making: "the work of witness, the handing on of knowledge from one generation to the next (...), not in an educational sense, but to keep alive memory, the living thread which runs through our life-times, and which is so threatened today." The result of an encounter between the director and the 17 actor-pupils of the Ecole Supérieure d'Art Dramatique, Tanner's most recent film re-activates with a sure touch the theme of transmission, which has nourished his films since the first **Jonah**. The background is the crisis of meaning affecting the modern world, of which **Paul s'en va** makes an accurate and lucid assessment. Alain Tanner and his scriptwriter Bernard Comment plunge 17 young people into the drama of a disappearance: that of Paul B., their semiology lecturer. This philosopher/teacher has left them a few clues, some mirror exercises intended to help them gain a knowledge of themselves: following the signs in a shopping centre, going to interview a former brigadista from the Spanish Civil War, writing a theatrical farce on tower psychosis in Manhattan inspired by Alfred Jarry and his *Père Ubu*. But Paul's presence/absence in the midst of his pupils is not expressed only in these academic exercises. **Paul s'en va** is punctuated with timeless moments in which each of the 17 students reads and recites texts by authors whose names come up on the screen: Pasolini, Césaire, Céline, Guyotat... This is Paul's superego making itself heard and, through him, the desire of Alain Tanner to counter the ugliness of the world and the pessimism it inspires by calling on poetry and intelligence. Frédéric Bas