

28 TFF

TORINO FILM FESTIVAL

Wednesday, december the 1st, 5:30 pm, Massimo 1

Torino 28

Jérémy Gravayat presents *Les hommes debout*

The Gerland quarter

I've been working for about ten years on exile and immigration: at a certain point in my research, I was looking for an abandoned and dismissed industrial location which could represent these issues. The environment in the Gerland quarter of Lyon appeared rather significant, even though I didn't know it directly. I spoke about my project to a director, friend of mine, who told me in the past he was part of a militant group, which backed up the workers during the strike in 1972 in which a hundred Maghreb workmen had finally crossed their arms, therefore he knew those situations and those places very well, moreover was willing to show them to me. He showed me his rolls of film too, which represented a sort of political flayers, thought as advertising to raise funds for the movement. In the end I wound up staying there for about a year.

Working on the material

In the movie I use different formats and recall archive material exactly because it describes moments of rupture and continuity throughout history, not only in Gerland but also in other places and situations. These are universal elements thus, using the means I had available, I wanted to show how life is a cycle in which people reach different positions. I believe film must combine different elements, among which archive material. I love working on traditional film, I like Video too, this is the reason why I didn't want to miss any media.

A story on two levels

The character opening and closing the movie, the young man, is made strong by the speech in his scenes; He's not a professional, yet a neighborhood boy. There are two levels to the story, the first one is about him meeting the old workman. Six ours of film shot in which he told me about his life just like he would've done with his own son; that's why he liked the idea it was going to be a young man telling it. The young man's words start a second level story. He's very happy to take part in the movie too, because his father lived a similar experience.