





# APPROVED FOR ADOPTION

A FILM BY JUNG HENIN AND LAURENT BOILEAU  
WINNER – ANNECY AUDIENCE AWARD, ANNECY UNICEF AWARD

IN THEATERS FALL/WINTER 2013

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**“Dazzling! Incredibly Moving!”**

- Film International

**“Rich in Emotion, Humor and Poetry.”**

- Premiere

**“A Story of Resilience and Great Courage!”**

- Le Figaro

**“Unflaggingly Honest, Beautiful and Revealing!”**

- Epoch Times

**“It’s Impossible Not to be Charmed!”**

- Variety

## APPROVED FOR ADOPTION

*Animated Documentary, Jung Henin & Laurent Boileau, France, 2012, 75 minutes*

This remarkable animated doc traces the unconventional upbringing of the filmmaker Jung Henin, one of thousands of Korean children adopted by Western families after the end of the Korean War. It is the story of a boy stranded between two cultures. Sepia-toned animated vignettes – some humorous and some poetic – track Jung from the day he first meets his new blond siblings, through elementary school, and into his teenage years, when his emerging sense of identity begins to create fissures at home and ignite the latent biases of his adoptive parents. The filmmaker tells his story using his own animation intercut with snippets of super-8 family footage and archival film. The result is an animated memoir like no other: clear-eyed and unflinching, humorous and wry, and above all, inspiring in the capacity of the human heart.





## **JUNG, co-director & illustrator**

Jung was born on December 2, 1965 in Seoul, South Korea. Adopted by a Belgian family in 1971, his given name is Jung Henin. He studied Traditional Humanities (Latin and Mathematics) at the Athénée Royal de Rixensart, before attending the Saint-Luc workshop of Brussels in 1985.

Jung then studied illustration at the Académie des Beaux-Arts of Brussels. At the same time, he pursued a course in animation at the École de la Cambre. His career took a decisive turn in 1987 after he met Marc Michetz, who introduced him to *Spirou Magazine*, enabling him to illustrate some short articles in *Spirou* and *Tintin*. He worked a few months in the workshop of Yslaïre and

Darasse, while also illustrating the covers of *Belgian Business Magazine*.

In 1991, Jung published the first of four volumes of *Yasuda* for Hélyode-Lefranc. In 1997, in collaboration with Martin Ryelandt, he illustrated *La Jeune Fille et le Vent (The Young Girl and the Wind)* for Delcourt. The Asian universe of this fantasy series was, for Jung, a return to his Korean origins. The goal of his art was to convey emotion and feeling through characters that feel present, and fantasy enabled him to reinforce the evocative side of his drawing, particularly for the protagonist Wind.

In 2001 Jung and Jee-Yun published *Kwaïdan* (3 volumes) for Delcourt. The series combined Jung's beautiful colors with the subtle poetry of the Japanese folk tale.

In 2006, still in collaboration with Jee-Yun, he published *Okiya*. More recently, Jung has published *Kyoteru*, a story of child ninjas, for Delcourt and the graphic memoir *Couleur de peau: miel (Approved for Adoption)* for Soleil.



## **LAURENT BOILEAU, co-director**

Laurent Boileau, 43 years old, worked for ten years as chief cameraman and then as chief editor on many documentary films. He started directing in 1999, participating in the series *L'Éducation en questions* (Issues in Education), produced by Mosaïque Films for France 5. In 2002 and 2003, he directed *Un collège pas comme les autres (A College Like No Other)* for Planète Future about an innovative college in Lyon.

His passion the graphic arts, and comics in particular, led him to make several films about "the ninth art": *Artisans of the imagination* (France 3, 2004), *Spirou, a renaissance* (TLM, 2004), *Franquin Gaston and company* (France 5, RTBF, 2005), *The Horses of Paper* (Equidia, 2006), *Sokal, the Art of Fine*

(France 3, 2007), *The Poland of Marzi* (TV Rennes 35, 2009).

On the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Boileau developed an animated series for RTBF and curiosphere.tv (also distributed at the Festival de Pessac). Alongside his work as a director, he has chronicled new comics for the news site actuabd.com and led the comics site of France Televisions.

## Director's Note: "The Same Cavern" by Jung

I've made comic books for twenty years now, tirelessly tackling the same themes, namely: uprooting, abandonment, identity, Asia, siblings ... My drawings are born from the desire to handle all those themes through the filter of fiction. One day, I decided not to play hide and seek with myself and started *Couleur de peau: Miel (Approved for Adoption)*, my autobiography in the form of a comic book.

It was important for me to talk about adoption, especially international Korean adoption. I have experienced abandonment, denial of my Korean origins, the self-destruction, and connection to another culture in the Far East – Japan – a country I could be proud of and the historical enemy of South Korea. Beyond those, there were also issues of biological and adoptive mothers and integration with my new siblings, accepting my diversity and the reconstruction of my sense of self.

I regularly receive very touching letters from readers thanking me for doing this book, but also from adoptive parents who understood their children better after having read it. A doctor even told me he would refer to my comic book.

I didn't expect such a response from readers. Cinema is another medium, without a doubt more compelling than the comic because it's a team effort. However, I'm not alone in front of my drawing paper anymore. I have to deal with third parties: technicians, producers, over 150 people in total. I have to ensure that all groups are heading in the right direction. Finally, the course has been held and the baby is beautiful, it is really wonderful! I do not regret having temporarily exchanged my pen and my brushes with a camera.

The tools are different but it's the same story. I'm still in my favorite field, exploring the same cavern that is the endless search for identity, in constant development, in progress.

The film *Approved for Adoption* sometimes takes us further than my graphic novel. The movement, the voices, the sound effects, the music and the narration contribute a strong emotional charge. This film was conceived in compliance with the codes of storytelling in cinema, but the autobiographical dimension of this adventure led us to shake certain habits and find our own path, our own identity. The mixture of real footage, 3D animation, and 2D drawings makes this film a singular object. This is the background that determined the form.

The material is real and it was difficult to completely fix things on a storyboard. Everything remained in motion, until the end. A film, whose main subject is the search for identity, could not be quite like any other. Neither could its creation.

Nevertheless, the final result is for everyone and has the goal, through its universality, of touching hearts...

Jung

# A discussion with Jung – March 2012

## Looking for your mother

As a teenager, I was attracted to mature women and mother figures. The quest for my identity was tied to the quest for my biological mother. My adoptive mother wasn't so gentle, having had a very strict childhood herself. When I talk about it with my sister Coralie, she says she was pretty harsh with her as well and that she was strict with all her children in the end. However, as an adopted kid, I was feeling differently, more intensely I guess. I came into this family needing a lot of affection. Adoptees tend to victimize themselves and when you're young, you don't even realize it.

## Drawing as a therapy

I could have played music or written novels. I chose comic books because the cartoon's world was for me an easy mode of expression: you just needed a sheet of paper and a pen. It feels right for me to draw and tell stories but not exclusively. I am naturally gifted at drawing and I found out along the way that I had a story to tell... When I was fifteen, I discovered the comic series *Jonathan* by Cosey. This comic struck me with its emotional power. It's also the story of a quest for identity: An amnesiac Swiss finding himself in Tibet while searching for his past. It opened new perspectives for me at a time when I wasn't feeling well. I built myself a drawing workshop in a stall, in the garden, and spent all summer there. For sixty days, I was truly happy. Drawing allowed me to have an imaginary world and to create another life for myself. I created an imaginary love for my biological mother and drawing was a therapy then.

## Koreans abandoned

Working on my graphic novel *Couleur de peau: Miel (Approved for Adoption)*, I read a lot. I tried to understand why so many children were abandoned in Korea. As a kid, I didn't understand. It's one of the reasons why I blamed my birth country. It's cultural. Separation is part of Korea's history. North and South Korea of course but even before there was the Japanese occupation for three decades. The Korean people went through a lot. Families still live in pain from that separation.

## Graphic novel

I always thought that if I had to tell my story, a comic book would allow me to stand back and make it less alarming. I wanted to avoid sordid realism, which is part of many biographies. The best way to embrace my story and introduce it to the reader was through irony. From this came the dialog with the kid I once was. This gap was very important to me, as allowed for some emotion. Comics allow this mix of genres.

## From comic book to screen

First, Laurent Boileau wanted to make a documentary about my return to Korea. We didn't speak about cinema at the time but television. We met several times and the idea of the big screen came up. The point wasn't to stick to the graphic style exactly as it was difficult to have two reading levels in a motion picture so we went for a literal adaptation instead.

## An organic process

I cannot separate the book and the film. It's the same story and continuity. The film is the sequel to my two books and I am actually preparing a third comic for the circle to be complete. With cinema, the final result is curious and has its own identity. Very often, we like or we dislike an adaptation from a comic book: here I think there is a totally different artistic perspective, more radical.

## **A hybrid animation story**

Technique served the story. We didn't start thinking about using the super 8 family archives and 3D or 2D animation combined with real footage to make a hybrid. Each element of the film became natural and normal and was at some point the best medium to tell the story. 3D was just a foray at first and France Televisions helped us to shoot a pilot and launch the wider project. They offered us their graphic studio in Nancy, with director Jean-Luc Desmond, for the trailer. Jean-Luc mentioned the 3D creation with a 2D aspect on screen. The result convinced us even though it presented a technical challenge. First I really needed to adapt my style to the technique. The 2D aspect on screen with 3D creations can be uncomfortable to look at. Fortunately, we had a team who did well with the 2D aspect, close to my drawing style.

## **The return to Korea**

I was scared to go back to Korea. In hindsight, I could have done it alone first. When we left, we expected a lot because the project was to be based around it. We scripted a couple of scenes, but I am not an actor. In fact, nothing much happened. I wasn't surprised: it was impossible to get real introspection with twenty people around me. Only a few shots were left in the final film. I think if I went back alone, I would have had the same feeling. You think about going back and finding your own self. But really the question I was asking myself was about the Korean perception of me. A distance grew between us. I don't speak Korean anymore. I don't know the Korean culture. I went back realizing that that the grass wasn't greener over there.

## **The narration**

I spent a long time writing the narration. For the animated part, that was clear. But linking the return to Korea to the animation was a challenge. The whole film was shaped by the right voiceover and I spent many sleepless nights writing and thinking about it. Finally, my wife gave me the key. She told me she still saw me like a little boy living in his imaginary world and searching for his mother. It came back to the graphic universe and that became the connection.

## **Family's reaction**

In my books, my comments were harsh – more bitter than in the film. My family handled them well. My mum told one of my sisters that I was right to write the books. The comic books are subjective but I respect the facts, always. I invented nothing and none of my family members protested. We actually shot the last scene – the drawer one – at my mother's. We even ended the film on her.

## CREW

Artistic/technical director : Jean-Jacques Lonni  
Assistant director : Thierry Czajko  
Assistant director (Korea) : Sanghoon Lee

### Executive Production

francetélévisions signature - Filière Production  
(Nancy) – La Station Animation (Arles)  
2 Minutes Animation (Angoulême) – Dreamwall  
(Charleroi) – Nadasdy Film (Genève)  
Amopix (Strasbourg)

Graphic author : Jung  
Lead storyboarder : Alexis Madrid

### Character Creation

Character design : Éric Briche  
Modeling : Samuel Chauvin  
Modeling (extras) : Olivier Druart

### Backgrounds

Creation of color backgrounds : Olivier May  
Lay out : Agnès Jon de Coupigny

### 3D Animation

Prop design : Olivier Auquier  
Animation supervisor : Christophe Devaux  
Special Effects : Joël Bazsalicza  
Compositing/Rendering : Mauro Carraro  
Émilien Davaud

### 2D Animation

Animation supervisor : Zoltan Horvath  
Animation stand supervisor : Cyril Renaudin

### Live Action Unit (South Korea)

Director of photography : Remon Fromont sbc  
1st assistant : Anne-Françoise Bersou  
Sound engineer : Dan Vanbever

### Post-production

Chief editor : Ewin Ryckaert  
Conformation/calibration : Michaël Cinquin  
Sound effects : Philippe Van Leer  
Sound editing : Quentin Collette –  
Matthieu Michaux  
Mixing : Philippe Charbonnel

Original Music : Siegfried Canto  
Original music and performance : Little Comet

## CAST

Narrator : William Coryn  
Jung's mother : Christelle Cornil  
Jung's father : Jean-Luc Couchard  
Jung (8 years) : Arthur Dubois  
Jung (17 years) : David Macaluso  
Cédric (8 years) : Maxym Anciaux  
Cédric (17 years) : David Murgia  
Coralie (5 years) & Gaëlle (5 years) :  
Alayin Dubois  
Coralie (8 years & 16 years) : Aaricia Dubois  
Gaëlle (14 years) : Cathy Boquet  
Catherine (7 years & 10 years) : Jazz Marlier  
Valérie (3 years) : Mahé Collet  
Carole & Valérie (12 years) : Pauline Souren