

# Adèle's blue



## The original color

For the last two weeks I've been putting off taking the floor on *La vie d'Adèle*, and for good reason. Since I wrote the book that was adapted, I've been going through a process too vast and intense to be correctly described.

It's not only about what Kechiche has made.

It's a process about the repercussions of our acts, about writing a silly story one summer as a 19 year old and to arrive at... "this," today.

It's a process about speaking and passing on Life, Love and Humanity as an artist, in general. It's a process about myself and the path I chose.

So, yes... an indescribable feeling about repercussion is passing through me. About standing up and speaking, and where it can lead to.

What interests me is the banalisation of homosexuality.

I didn't make a book in order to preach to the choir, nor only for lesbians. Since the beginning my wish was to catch the attention of those who:

- had no clue
- had the wrong picture, based on false ideas
- hated me/us

I know that some of us are in another fight: keeping things out-of-the-norm, subversive. I'm not saying I'm not ready to defend that. But first off, I'd like that myself, those that I love, and all the others, would no longer be:

- insulted
- rejected
- beaten up
- raped
- murdered

In the street, at school, at work, with family, on holidays, at home, because of our differences.

Everyone had the opportunity to interpret and identify freely with the book, but I really wanted to clarify my intention with it, once again. But it also served to tell a story of how a romantic encounter happens, how a love story builds, collapses, and what remains of the love that was awoken after a breakup, a mourning, a death. This is what Kechiche was interested in.

Neither of us had a militantly activist intent. Nevertheless, quickly after the publication of *Blue Is A Warm Color* in 2010, I became aware of the fact that talking about a minority, whatever it is, contributes to supporting its cause (or the contrary), and it totally exceeds us.

## Gradiation from the Comic till the Movie

Kechiche and I met before I allowed for the adaptation of my book; this was over two years ago. I always had a lot of affection and admiration for his work, but above all this it is this encounter which pushed me to trust him. Since day one I stated that I had no intention of taking part in this project, that it was his movie. Perhaps this is what pushed him to trust me in return. Nonetheless, we met several times afterwards. I remember the copy of the *Blue* he was carrying: there was no space left unmarked on the pages; it was filled with scribbled notes. We talked a lot about the characters, about love, pain. Life, basically. We talked about losing our Great Love. I happened to have lost mine one year earlier. When I recall the last part of *La Vie d'Adèle*, I find the salted taste of this wound.

For me this adaptation is another version / vision / reality of the same story. One couldn't possibly annihilate the other. What came out from Kechiche's film reminds me of the little rocks that mutilate our flesh when we fall and scrape ourselves on the asphalt.

It's a movie clearly *Kechichian*, with typical characters of his creations. Therefore, his heroine has a personality far from mine. But what he developed is coherent, justified and fluid. It's a master stroke.

Don't go and see it hoping to feel what passed through you while reading *Blue*. You will recognize some tones, but you'll also find something else there.

Before seeing the movie in Paris, I had been warned pretty insistently that, «It's freely inspired, okay? Oh my, it's very freely inspired.» I was already expecting the worst. At the Quat'Sous Films office all of the rough arrangement of the scenes were pinned up on the wall. I blinked in surprise, observing that the two-thirds of it were clearly following the progression of *Blue*'s scenario. I could even recognize the shots, backgrounds, etc.

As some already know, tons of hours had been shot, but before Kechiche made the final cut, he removed part of the middle. Yet, being the writer of *Blue*, I still recognize my book in it. It's with a beating heart that I recognized all the North of France, where I come from, exactly how I tried to transpose it into my images. I watched Kechiche finally getting it "real". And given the introduction of this column here, you can easily imagine what I could have felt watching these shots, scenes, and dialogues, with actors whose features identical to my drawings passing before my eyes.

So, whatever you might hear or read in the media (who too often seek to get down to basics and easily eclipse some stuff) I restate here that indeed, *La Vie d'Adèle* is the adaptation of a comic book, and that there is nothing wrong with saying so.

## About the banging

About the banging... Yeah, about the banging... Since it's been on the lips of everyone who saw the movie... It is above all useful to clarify that in a three hour movie, these scenes only fill a few minutes. If people talk this much about it, it is because of the director's visual bias.

I consider that Kechiche and I have contradictory aesthetic approaches, perhaps complementary. The fashion in which he chose to shoot these scenes is coherent with the rest of his creation. Sure, to me it seems far away from my own method of creation and representation, but it would be very silly of me to reject something on the pretext that it's different from my own vision.

That was me as a writer. Now, as a lesbian...

It appears to me that this was what was missing on the set: lesbians.

I don't know the sources of information for the director and the actresses (who are all straight, unless proven otherwise) and I was never consulted upstream. Maybe there was someone there to awkwardly imitate the possible positions with their hands, and/or to show them some porn of so-called "lesbians" (unfortunately it's hardly ever actually for a lesbian audience). Because - except for a few passages - this is all that it brings to my mind: a brutal and surgical display, exuberant and cold, of so-called lesbian sex, which turned into porn, and made me feel very ill at ease. Especially when, in the middle of a movie theatre, everyone was giggling. The heteronormative laughed because they don't understand it and find the scene ridiculous. The gay and queer people laughed because it's not convincing at all, and found it ridiculous. And among the only people we didn't hear giggling were the potential guys too busy feasting their eyes on an incarnation of their fantasies on screen.

I totally get Kechiche's will to film pleasure. The way he filmed these scenes is to me directly related to another scene, in which several characters talk about the myth of the feminine orgasm, as... mystic and far superior to the masculine one. But here we go, to sacralize once more womanhood in such ways. I find it dangerous.

As a feminist and lesbian spectator, I can not endorse the direction Kechiche took on these matters.

But I'm also looking forward to hearing what other women will think about it. This is simply my personal stance.

Whatever it may be, I don't see the movie as a betrayal. When it comes to adapting something, I believe that the notion of betrayal should be reconsidered. I lost the control of my book as soon as I gave it away to be read. It's an object meant to be handled, felt, interpreted.

Kechiche went through the same process as any other reader, he entered it and identified in a unique way. As the author, I totally lose my control on that, and it would have never crossed my mind to wait for Kechiche to go in any particular direction, since he made it his own, from a story that didn't belong to me as soon as it was sold in a bookstore.

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## The Palme

This conclusion in Cannes is obviously wonderful and breathtaking.

As evoked in my introduction, all that is passing through me in the past few days is so insane and disproportionate that I wouldn't know how to translate it for all of you.

I remain absolutely overwhelmed, amazed, and grateful for these circumstances.

Last night I realized this is the first time in Cinema's history that a comic book had inspired a Palme d'Or movie and this idea petrified me. It's a lot to carry.

I deeply wish to thank all those who appeared surprised, shocked, disgusted with the fact that Kechiche had no words for me when he received his Palme. No doubt he had good reasons not to do it, just like he certainly had good reasons for not making me more visible on the red carpet in Cannes (even though I crossed the whole country to join them), for not receiving me - at least for an hour - on the set, for not appointing someone to keep me informed about the production between June 2012 and April 2013, or for not answering my messages since 2011. However, to those who warmly reacted, I wish to tell them that I don't feel any bitterness. He hasn't mentioned it in front of the cameras, but the night of the official screening in Cannes, a few witnesses heard him tell me «Thanks, you were the starting point» while he strongly held my hand.

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