



Dreams of Dust

(*Rêves de Poussière*)

Directed by Laurent Salgues



Burkina Faso, Canada, France/2006/in French/86 min.
35 mm / 1:2.35 / Color / Dolby SR

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SYNOPSIS

Mocktar, a Nigerian peasant, comes looking for work in Essakane, a dusty gold mine in Northeast Burkina Faso, Africa, where he hopes to forget the past that haunts him. In Essakane, he quickly finds out, the gold rush ended twenty years before, and the inhabitants of the wasteland and strange timelessness manage to exist simply from force of habit.

The beautiful Coumba, however, is still courageously struggling to raise her daughter after the death of her family. Mocktar will soon be fighting not only to survive, but also to provide a better future for this mother and her child.

FESTIVALS/AWARDS (Excerpt)

NOMINATED – GRAND JURY PRIZE – WORLD CINEMA - DRAMATIC,
SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL 2007

OFFICIAL SELECTION – SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL 2007

OFFICIAL SELECTION – CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2007

OFFICIAL SELECTION – INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL
NUREMBERG 2007

OFFICIAL SELECTION – DURBAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2007

OFFICIAL SELECTION – VENICE FILM FESTIVAL (VENICE DAYS) 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION – SHANGHAI FILM FESTIVAL 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION – SARASOTA FILM FESTIVAL 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION – ROME FILM FESTIVAL 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION – MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION – KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
2006

CREDITS

CREW

Written and directed by

Laurent Salgues

Cinematography

Crystel Fournier

Production Designer

Bill Mamadou Traoré

Editing

Annie Jean

Sound

**Thierry Morlaas-Lurbe, Luc Mandeville,
Stéphane Bergeron**

Original music

Mathieu Vanasse, Jean Massicotte

Costumes

Martine Somé

Produced by

**Sophie Salbot (Athénaïse), Marc Daigle
(ACPAV), and Sékou Traoré (Sahélis)**

With support from

**Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication,
Centre National de la Cinématographie (France)
– Telefilm Canada – European Union, European
Development Fund – SODEC SODEC Société de
développement des entreprises culturelles -
Québec – GAN Foundation – Film and
Television Tax Credits -Gestion Sodec– Fonds
Image Afrique du Ministère Français des
Affaires Etrangères – Fonds Francophone de
Production Audiovisuel du Sud – Canadian Film
or Video Production Tax Credit Program**

CAST

Mocktar

Makena Diop

Thiam

Rasmané Ouedraogo

Coumba

Fatou Tall-Salgues

Tidiane

Joseph B. Tapsoba

Paté

Souleymane Zouré

CAST BIOS

Makena Diop (Mocktar)

Towards the end of the 1980s, continuing his quest, he packed his bags and turned towards other horizons. In Cologne, he played the lead in Papa Seck's film, *Africa am Rhein*, and developed writing workshops. In Sarrebruck, in 1993/1994, he staged *Setnaa* or *La Cité de Ndumbelaan*, an intercultural production in three languages (Wolof, French and German). In France, he has done shows as a storyteller, developed productions, and facilitated workshops devoted to storytelling and living productions. Working with the *Racines* (Roots) association, led by journalist Catherine Ruelle, he came up with the idea of developing an original approach using words and images: Ciné-Contes.

In the cinema, he has played the lead in two films by the Senegalese director Moussa Touré, *Toubab Bi*, for which he received the Bayard d'Or (1st prize for male actor) in 1991, at the Festival de la Francophonie at Namur, in Belgium, and *TGV*, in 1997, in which he played Rambo. Then came the role of Kenza, in *Lumumba*, a film directed by Raoul Peck, one of the leading roles in *La grève des Battus* by Cheikh Omar Cissoko. For this role, he took the Award for best male actor at Fespaco 2001. He played the title role in *Une femme pour Souleymane* by Diana Gaye. In 2002, he played the lead in Zézé Gamboa's film *Le héros* which took Grand Prize at the Sundance Festival and opened the New York Festival. In 2004, along with Aurélien Recoing and Edouardo Noriega, he played the lead in *Souli*, a film by Alexander Abela (also represented by WIDE Management).

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Laurent Salgues

Laurent Salgues was born in France on September 13th 1967. After a master's in audiovisual studies at l'École Supérieure d'Audiovisuel (ESAV) in Toulouse, he perfected his screenplay writing at the Conservatoire Européen d'Ecriture Audiovisuelle (CEEAA) and at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). From 1992 to 1996, he directed three short subjects ("Eternité moins cinq", "Camilio" and "La femme à l'ombrelle"). Since 2003, he has been a screenplay writer for television and film. "Rêves de poussière" is his first full-length feature film.

A few words from the director

Rêves de poussière (Dreams of Dust) is a stationary quest, the interior journey of a character who finds himself by going away to lose himself. It is a simple story of letting go of one's ego. The characters are castaways from the shipwreck of life, marooned in a gold mine where everything seems possible but nothing is achieved. Happiness is too far away, out of reach. They are all carrying a burden: a heavy past, a child on their back or a sack of stones. In this way they all echo the main character, Mocktar Dicko, who arrives carrying a suitcase but also the guilt he feels for the death of his little girl. Essakane is a makeshift gold mine located in the far north of Burkina Faso. It is the perimeter of the film. This space anchors the story line. It is the setting for a contradictory atmosphere, a mixture of hope and despair. "Sahel" is a word of Arabic origin meaning "shoreline". On this shore, Essakane seemed to be a kind of port, where people dream in vain of setting off for happiness. The characters contemplate the vast desert as others might look at the sea. They live according to their own rhythm, with a predilection for suspended moments, for all the floating seconds where it seems everything can still change. In some ways, styles of cinematography can be defined as much by what one shows as much as what one refrains from showing. In *Rêves de poussière*, I went for a very pared-down form, with no sophisticated framing or camera movements, by simplifying the actors' gestures, so as to distribute glances and telling pauses within the dialogues. The work on colour was very significant, but it took on meaning by bleeding much of the colour out. The same applies to the soundtrack and music. We were facing the void to express the characters' inner worlds: closed in an endless space whose bars were wind and dust, they became prisoners of themselves. Only the faraway horizon lets a few mirages appear from time to time, a few impossible dreams.

PRODUCER BIOS

Marc Daigle

Marc Daigle is one of the founding members of ACPAV (l'Association coopérative de productions audio-visuelles – Co-operative Audiovisual Production Association). Since ACPAV's founding in 1971, he has worked with the association as a producer. He has produced films by some of the leading lights of the 1970s generation of directors Jean Chabot (*UNE NUIT EN AMERIQUE*, 1974), Jean-Guy Noël (*TU BRULES,... TU BRULES...*, 1973; *TICUL TOUGAS*, 1976; *TINAME*, 1987), Paul Tana (*LES GRANDS ENFANTS*, 1980; *CAFFE ITALIA*, *MONTREAL*, 1985; *LA SARRASINE*, 1991; *LA DEROUTE*, 1998), Hubert-Yves Rose (*LA LIGNE DE CHALEUR*, 1989). He has

also worked in partnership with Bernadette Payeur, in particular on Pierre Falardeau's films (*LE PARTY*, 1989; *OCTOBRE*, 1994; *MIRACLE A MEMPHIS*, 1999; *15 FEVRIER 1839*, 2000) and Bernard Émond (*LA FEMME QUI BOIT*, 2001). He also worked on documentary film with Suzanne Guy (*L'ANNEE QUI CHANGE LA VIE*, 1992 and *DU COEUR A L'AME AVEC OU SANS DIEU*, 1996), in a team alongside Bernadette Payeur with Jean-Claude Coulbois (*UN MIROIR SUR LA SCENE*, 1997), Guy Parent (*LES NOUVEAUX ALCHEMISTES*, 1999) and Edgar Soldevilla (*DANS L'ESPRIT DE NORMAN BETHUNE*, 2002) and currently with Sylvie Groulx (*GABRIEL GASCON, UNE VIE, UN SIECLE*, currently underway); these latter films in partnership with producer René Gueissaz. He has continued his feature-film work with Paul Thinel's *LES IMMORTELS*, 2003, with Sophie Salbot/Athénaïse *REVES DE POUSSIERE* by Laurent Salgues, 2006, his first coproduction experience.

Sophie Salbot

After her work with the Les Films de la Plaine production company, securing the production of several feature films, including the films by Idrissa Ouédraogo "Samba Traoré" (Silver Bear – Berlin 1993), "Le cri du coeur" (Official Selection – Venice 1994) and Kini & Adams (Official Selection – Cannes 1997), Sophie Salbot founded her own production company, Athénaïse. This company has the aim of defending and supporting cinema that enriches us with a sensitive knowledge of others, whether they are nearby or faraway – a cinema that provides us evidence of the world's unity in its rich cultural diversity, with its contradictions and its tensions.

Since 2003, her practice in documentary production has led her to new forms of shared experience, new networks of artistic co-operation, investing her time and energy in Africadoc, an association geared to the development of an array of educational and training programs for young African filmmakers, in order to play a part in the emergence of a new generation of documentary and creative film.

After different documentaries and feature films for television including "Une fenêtre ouverte" (First Film Award – Vue sur les Docks, Marseille 2005) by Khady Sylla and "Tèt grenné" by Christian Grandman, "Rêves de poussière" is the first full-length feature film from Athénaïse.

Interview with Sophie Salbot

Could you provide a brief history of this production and how it was possible to secure funding for it?

When Laurent came to see me, he had a short subject project that we hadn't managed to get produced. During a journey he had taken to different gold mines in Africa, he found himself in Essakane, a gold mine in Burkina Faso. The discovery of this location was an important event in his life! A few months later,

he returned, this time with a rough draft for a feature film. Back then, I didn't see how he could obtain funding for it. He had taken part in a screenplay writers' school and we phoned each other from time to time. A year or two later, he came back to see me with his feature-film project, more developed ... and I decided to try to produce it...

The search for funding in France was both easy and complicated. It was easy, because the project secured the Avance sur Recettes and GAN Foundation funding on the first attempt. However, there were difficulties, as I did not succeed in convincing a television network, despite the interest shown by Canal+ and meetings with that network.

My initial reticence about financial backing of this project was based on the fact that since Laurent Salgues was French, I could not request funding reserved for directors from the South. Such funding seemed indispensable to me to carry out such a project. In the meantime, Laurent had married a woman from Burkina Faso, and thereby obtained Burkina Faso citizenship, I was able to make requests from certain funding agencies (The European Commission, the International Organization of the Francophonie and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

After obtaining the Avance sur Recettes, the project was retained by Ateliers Grand Nord. This was an opportunity for Laurent to meet Marc Daigle and the possibility of a co-production with Canada-Quebec was contemplated. As for me, I had a chance to meet Marc at Namur at the Francophone Co-production Forum where the project was chosen. This moment marked the real starting point for our work together. It has been a close partnership, productive and rich in human terms.

Then we were able to plan for funding and take steps to make *Rêves de poussière* into an actual film. And despite the problems, the important thing is that we were both convinced of the idea of producing this film, *Rêves de poussière*, and of the director, Laurent Salgues. We took the risk that what he was proposing would really produce worthwhile cinema.

What future do you think this film will have? Is it like the gold mine, a possibility to keep on producing films?

We mustn't have any illusions. A film made in Africa with an African cast, and moreover not grounded in any current humanitarian crisis is starting off, sad to say, with a serious handicap. I have no fears as to how filmgoers will respond to *Rêves de poussière*. This film embodies a universe that, in my opinion, can wend its way and win the public over. But the question remains, how to keep a hold on this audience interest, how to get the opportunity and the time it takes to attract an audience. In this sense, *Rêves de poussière* participation in **Giornale degli Autori** (Venice Days) is essential. I think we will have to work hard on backing *Rêves de poussière* upon its release, find operators that will give it a chance to get "settled in", call upon networks (media, associations) that can relay information on it. It will take time and require the energy of the distribution networks specialized in releasing this type of films and motivated to mobilize all

these networks. Laurent will also have to get his bags packed and travel along with his film when it is released in public.

And any nugget we are able to find, even the smallest one, will be an invitation to continue producing what is called *auteur* films, films that can speak to us of other people even when they are from far away.

Although I don't think a film exists until it has encountered its audience (which alas is certainly not always the case) the road we have travelled to bring *Rêves de poussière* to its conclusion makes me want to take off to other unique places, to record on film...

QUOTES:

“...hypnotic widescreen photography... well written and directed... Salgues' screenplay is perfectly crafted.... Viewers have a lot of time to admire [the] dazzling desert panoramas... Diop brings towering dignity to his Nigerian immigrant... Tall-Salgues makes a strong-backed heroine of mythic beauty” – Deborah Young, Variety

“The cinematography is stunning... Diop and Tall-Salgues put in beautifully understated performances...” –Amber Wilkinson, Eye For Film

“A beautiful tale...which Venice Days audiences unanimously agreed was one of the most splendid and poetic film on the Lido.” –Cineuropa