

A movie poster for the film 'The Edge'. The background is a dense forest floor covered in green and yellow leaves. Two women are lying on the ground. The woman in the foreground has dark, curly hair and is looking upwards with a slight smile. The woman behind her has long, wavy brown hair and is looking down. Both are wearing dark clothing. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

LA LISIÈRE

# THE EDGE

A FILM BY GERALDINE BAJARD



## SYNOPSIS

François, a young doctor fresh out of med-school, relocates from Paris to Beauval, a new town, where monotonous rows of brand-new houses make up the residential “Beauval Heights.” François quickly becomes the target for an adolescent gang, led by Cédric and Matthieu, a charismatic leader and his associate. At the edges of the forest, they play dangerous games to beat back their boredom. Dares, provocation, seduction, anything is an excuse to break the routine.

But one of their games goes wrong.

The body of 12 year-old Agnes is found at the side of the road, the victim of a hit-and-run. The community sticks together in the face of this drama. However because of their will to dominate, Cédric and Matthieu don’t intend to simply forget the accident. Repressing their own part in the tragedy, they determine to find the runaway driver.

Suspecting François as the possible driver, they harass him with new fervor. The gang loiters in and around his house and closes in on his fiancé.

Only the 14 year-old Claire has reserves, a sign of her attraction to the young doctor. A unique friendship develops between them, but she turns out to be his downfall.

The seemingly tranquil little village is pervaded by a menacing atmosphere of suspicion and manipulation. François’ life is in danger.



## BIOGRAPHY: GERALDINE BAJARD

The Swiss born, French director, Geraldine Bajard grew up in several countries (Saudi Arabia, Morocco, India and France). She studied in Paris at the Ecole Normale Supérieure as well as theater and cinema at the Sorbonne. Afterwards, she moved to Berlin where she continued studying directing at the Dffb (German Film and Television Academy) until her graduation.

She has worked in publishing and has collaborated on *Lies and Vanities*, a musical project.

After directing short films during her studies (*Petit Conte pour enfant majeur*, *Squash*), she worked as an assistant to internationally renowned directors such as Angela Schanelec, Valeska Grisebach, Claire Denis. She has also been commissioned as a consultant for scenario on many occasions (*Lourdes*, Jessica Hausner, Official Competition Venice Film Festival 2009).

*The Edge* is her first feature film.

## DIRECTOR'S COMMENT

With *The Edge*, I wanted to get as close as possible to the “real”, observe its mechanism and bring forward the element of menace in its tiniest details. The film plays with elements of a genre film but it’s neither a crime story nor is it strictly a fantasy. I wanted to create a fiction in which the extreme aspects of realism plunge the story into an unreal and threatening universe: A fantastic atmosphere, but not the complacent kind of a bizarre or abnormal world that is fabricated with special effects.

Throughout the process of writing, shooting and editing, it was always my desire to make a film driven by sustained sensations, impressions and colors. I wished to translate the psychological dimension more by movement than by words, to create an atmosphere that becomes more and more electrically charged until it bursts into a final implosion. In what seems peaceful and normal, reason can easily slip towards insanity.

It is within this oscillation between roughness and sensuality that I tried to base the esthetic of the film. I wanted to chastely film scenes that witness the very instant that precedes drama or a moment of pain.

Part of what made me want to shoot *The Edge* was actually a desire to depict the inner world of my characters by showing what surfaces and cannot be formulated rationally and certainly not be explained by pure causality or psychological simplification. Regarding this, in my work as a director, I believe in the special power that cinema has to awaken the hidden, the palpable, without looking to verbalize; it is also interesting for me to observe characters under the yoke of interfering forces to which they must react, without actually being able to act.

### ADOLESCENCE, GAME, RITUAL

A force, an energy. That was what mattered to me by depicting adolescence. I wanted to show youth that gains the upper hand. The youngsters of Beauval have desires and clear hatred that can quickly become fatal under the power of affect. That’s where the crux is: To make the infantile

dimension of this game resonate with the audience, the casual cruelty that occurs in this passage between child- and adulthood, and its dangerous innocence. This is why the doctor character, François, gets no second chance.

Director of photography Josée Deshaies and I endeavored to render this energy in the film by shifting the frame, the rhythm and the lighting; all the while avoiding what would have made the universe seem too symbolic.

Scenes of games and ritual punctuate the story. A little like the refrain of a nursery rhyme, they had to be simple and repetitive, but each one grimmer and crueler than the last. I wanted to show the movements, the repeated gestures, the stereotypical attitudes required to participate in such games, as well as the grim aspect of systematizing these games like the adolescents of the Beauval gang do.

The use of sound and music was very important to me from the very beginning as I was writing this film. Even before shooting, the musical “moments” had been chosen and the music partly composed. The musicians from the Parisian band MRS GOOD worked with me to find a musical universe that corresponded with the adolescent universe of the film; all the while remaining true to their style of composition and contemporary, independent rock/pop sound, also influenced by 1970s.

### THE RESIDENCE

When François arrives in Beauval, he discovers a place outside of time, where the lots under construction are overwhelming the surrounding natural area. Among these new construction sites stands the “Beauval Heights” gated community: A real place that doesn’t obey the rules other than its own and absorbs its members into true lethargy.

The community is a “character” itself. It is the mother of the tension and neuroses of its inhabitants, all the illnesses that the young doctor, François, is trying to cure.

The landscape here is not a picturesque place, nor a place to get back to one’s roots. Rather it is a place where the enthusiasm to force everything into a form has extended its tentacles. Beauval has become a world worn smooth that lives in and for uniformity, having no other choice. It seems to forget and hide that fact, to ply individuals to forget themselves.

The Residence is a world in a bubble that, to me, seems to open the door to a neo-archaism of deaf brutality.



## CAST

FRANÇOIS: Melvil Poupaud  
JEANNE: Audrey Marnay  
SAM: Hippolyte Girardot  
CÉDRIC: Phénix Brossard  
CLAIRE: Alice De Jode  
SUZANNE: Delphine Chuillot  
MATTHIEU: Elias Borst-Schumann  
JULIE: Susanne Wuest  
HELENE: Pauline Acquart  
AGNES: Marie Fritel  
MARIE: Eva Poussier  
ALINE: Aurélie Hougron  
ARNO: Pierre Levavasseur  
TIBO: Charles Crespo  
FALK GREGOROVITCH: Georg Friedrich  
RASMUS VAN STRAATEN: Filip Peters  
COMMISSAR: Vincent Ozanon

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

LENGTH: 100 min / 35 mm / colour / 1:1,85  
SOUND: Dolby SRD  
LANGUAGE: French  
SUBTITLES: English

## CREW

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: Geraldine Bajard  
PRODUCERS: Tom Dercourt, Britta Knöllner, Hans-Christian Schmid  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Josée Deshaies  
EDITOR: Bettina Böhler  
SOUND RECORDIST: Olivier Dandré  
SUPERVISING SOUND DESIGN: Kai Tebbel  
MIX: Matthias Schwab  
MUSIC: Mrs Good  
CASTING FRANCE: Aurélie Guichard, Youna De Peretti  
CASTING GERMANY: Jessika Eisenkolb  
PRODUCTION DESIGN: Daniel Bevan  
COSTUME: Helena Goncalves, Jette Kraghede  
MAKE-UP & HAIR: Thomas Majorosi  
HEAD OF PRODUCTION: Bénédicte Mellac  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCTION: Jamila Wenske

PRODUCED BY: Cinema Defacto and 23/5 Filmproduktion

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF: The Post Republic,  
Digimage Cinéma, Canal+, CinéCinéma, ZDF / 3sat

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