

**TO EXIST UNDER PERMANENT SUSPICION**

A FILM BY **VALENTIN NOUJAÏM**



**TIGER SHORT  
COMPETITION**

INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM  
2024

## **TO EXIST UNDER PERMANENT SUSPICION**

A film by **Valentin Noujaïm**  
France, 2024

Running time: **14 minutes**  
Shooting format: **super 16 mm**  
Aspect ratio: **16/9**  
Screening format: **DCP/Digital**

## SYNOPSIS

**Claire (Kayije Kagame), a businesswoman promoting a new skyscraper office in La Défense, faces increasing scrutiny and isolation. The cold, grey offices amplify her loneliness, driving vivid dreams of setting the tower ablaze.**



VALENTIN NOUJAÏM

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In 'To Exist Under Permanent Suspicion,' I delve into the psychological aspects that the grey, concrete neighborhood of La Défense, Paris, has on its inhabitants. Inspired by AbdouMaliq Simone's work on 'compressed lives,' I wanted to explore the effects of this environment on the human psyche.

I wanted to explore and push the boundaries of genre blending. The film exists in the realm of film noir, capturing its essence as an almost-thriller while drawing inspiration from the rich history of cinema, inspired by Brian de Palma's works, I

crafted a narrative that follows a character on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Rather than adhering strictly to the conventions of a concrete narrative, the film frees itself from traditional codes and visual signifiers, creating a mysterious atmosphere and eerie feeling. It delves into a psychological layer, evoking a ghostly presence that lingers within the 'unemotional' architectural spaces of La Défense. The film employs the concept of CCTV shots to heighten the atmosphere of tension, isolation, and surveillance.

In my search for the perfect lead actress, I came across Kayije Kagame during her performance in the play 'Sans Grace,' where she portrayed Claire in Genet's 'The Maids.' The connection between Genet's play, where the maids revolt, and the themes of resistance in 'To Exist Under Permanent Suspicion' resonated deeply. Just as in Genet's work, the revolution emerges from chaos, laughter, dancing, and explosive expressions of life—elements that these neighborhoods aim to erase.



## CAST & CREW

Writer and director:	<b>Valentin Noujaïm</b>	Claire:	<b>Kayije Kagame</b>
Producer:	<b>Manon Messiant</b>		
Production company:	<b>Iliade et Films</b>		
Cinematography:	<b>Alex Brack</b>		
Sound:	<b>John Flindt Hussein</b>		
	<b>Thibaut Sichet</b>		
	<b>Maxime Roy</b>		
Editing:	<b>Valentin Noujaïm</b>		
VFX:	<b>Nicolas Pirus</b>		
Production design:	<b>Neal Hoey</b>		
Music:	<b>Space Afrika</b>		

# VALENTIN NOUJAÏM

Born in France in 1991

📷 @vnoujaim

## FILMOGRAPHY

**PACIFIC CLUB**, 2023, 16 min.

**SATURNALIA**, 2022, 11 min.

**DAUGHTERS OF DESTINY**, 2021, 28 min.

**VENUS RETROGRADE**, 2020/2021, 4 min.

**THE BLUE STAR**, 2019, 17 min.

**BEFORE SHE FORGETS HELIOPOLIS**, 2019, 23 min.



## FILMMAKER BIO

Noujaïm's practice delves into the dynamic interplay of real and imagined lives, crafting intricate narratives that transport viewers to fantastical realms inhabited by enigmatic characters. Focusing on improvised lives, compressed lives, and extinct lives, his works serve as mirrors, reflecting the complexities of power and dominance within French society. Noujaïm was a resident at Artagon (Marseille), Villa Medici (Rome) and Lafayette Anticipations (Paris).

Supported by funding organizations such as Doha Film Institute, AFAC – Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, CNAP – Centre National des Arts Plastiques, and CNC – Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée, his works have been screened internationally, including: Centre Pompidou (Paris); CPH:DOX (Copenhagen); DocLisboa; Dokufest (Prizren, Kosovo); CNAC Magasin (Grenoble); BlackStar Film Festival (Philadelphia, USA); Festival International du cinéma de Nyon.



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## ACTRESS BIO


Kayije Kagame trained as an actress at ENSATT Lyon and has carved out a number of paths in her career, ranging from the performing arts to the visual arts and cinema. She starred in Alice Diop's award-winning film SAINT OMER, which premiered in competition at the Venice Film Festival 2022, where it was awarded the Silver Lion Grand Jury Prize. Kagame was voted European Shooting Star for Switzerland at the 2023 Berlinale and was selected as one of the 'Revelations' at the 2023 Césars for her role in SAINT OMER. She directed the diptych SANS GRACE / AVEC GRACE (2019-20), co-written with Grace Seri, and INTÉRIEUR VIE / INTÉRIEUR NUIT (2022-23). In 2023, the short film NIGHT SHIFT, which she co-directed with Hugo Radi, won the Silver Leopard for Best National Short Film at the Locarno Festival and the Best Film Prize at the Concorso Film Festival.

## INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS & SALES

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