

PARTIZANI FILMS PRESENTS

With the voice of Pierre Niney



# MAYYA

GIVE ME A TITLE

A film by Daddy (Michel Gondry)



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A film by Daddy (Michel Gondry)

From 4 years old

France - French - 2024 - 1h01 - 1.85 - 5.1

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[www.indiesales.eu](http://www.indiesales.eu)

32, rue Washington 75008 Paris, France

+ 33 1 44 83 02 27

[sales@indiesales.eu](mailto:sales@indiesales.eu)

## INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Premier Comms

Simone Devlin

[MayaGiveMeATitle@premiercomms.com](mailto:MayaGiveMeATitle@premiercomms.com)



# Synopsis

**M**aya and her dad, Michel Gondry, live in two different countries. In order to stay in touch, her dad asks her every evening, “Maya, give me a title”. Based on her answer, he creates a short animated reply in which Maya is the hero. Michel Gondry brings to life a poetic and amusing journey that will have the little ones dreaming...and the grown-ups smiling.



MAIS NON.  
ON EST DANS  
UN FILM DE  
PAPA. TOUT  
EST EN  
PAPIER.  
REGARDE



# Interview Michel Gondry



## Was this the first time you embarked on a creative adventure of this kind?

I did similar projects with my son, who is now thirty-two years old. It was back in the days of fax machines. When he was about twelve years old I'd send him story ideas for a fantasy comic book. I'd give him three possibilities on each page and then draw the one he'd chosen. We worked like this together for over the course of a year.

## When did the idea of animated films for Maya begin?

I started with a small animated film for her third birthday. Then, I'd ask her for a title, and she'd see the result sometime later. I integrated characters from her daily life: her grandparents, her cat, her mom. I created films that allowed her everyday life to drift into fantasy. Like a bedtime story: her mom would read her the titles and dialogue, then give me feedback on Maya's reactions. What she liked, what was a bit scary....

## Were Maya's reactions always positive?

The worst was when she didn't say anything about the films. It was frustrating because she was my only audience and I'm used to getting feedback on my work. I ended up questioning her. I realize that this is not very grown-up reaction, but I needed to know that she'd actually seen the film and what she thought of it.

## Is Maya proud of these stories, these love letters from a father to his little girl?

I often told myself that even if she didn't appreciate my films at first, she would eventually feel a sense of pride when showing them to her friends because she knows they were made just for her. I think that, as she grew older, she began to understand how unique these films are. Now, she can watch them on her own, but she still likes it when her mom reads them to her. It remains an intimate moment.

### **How did Maya react when she found out you were going to share her stories with the public?**

I was a bit worried at first, but I told her it was like lending her toys to other children. I also wanted her to be involved in the filming by introducing the films, which gives a positive aspect to the experience. She will love showing them at festivals!

### **Did she take an active part in developing the stories?**

Sometimes she'd make suggestions, but the main concept was really me to telling her a story based on the title she'd given me. What made it fun was figuring out how to connect her sometimes quirky titles to adventures—like the one about the sea polluted with ketchup. The constraints fueled creativity, a bit like writing in verse, where you feel freed from the usual meaning of things.

### **Did the stories evolve over time?**

You don't give the same toy to a three-year-old as you would to an eight-year-old—so, the evolution is obvious. In my career, I made eight music videos with Björk, and each time I had to outdo myself to amaze her. I tried not to repeat myself, and I did the same with Maya.

### **Did the films also evolve technically?**

I've perfected my animation technique over the years, even though it remains fairly rudimentary. Maya also developed in her thinking, which allowed us to make more complex stories. The Covid lockdown forced me to dedicate myself full-time to these films, creating

longer and more intricate narratives. I learned and improved my technique as I went along, like how to make the characters walk in a simple yet realistic way.

### **How did you choose the films for this selection?**

I chose the most varied films as well as those that worked best together. I asked Maya which films were her favorites. I also wanted to show a sort of progression, from the early animations, which were more like «time-lapse» or sped-up sequences, to true animation.

### **How did Pierre Niney get involved in the project?**

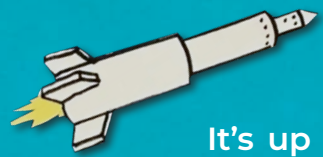
There are three reasons: he's my godson, he's incredibly talented, and he was available. He graciously agreed to take part. It felt natural because we got along wonderfully during the filming of *The Book of Solutions*. We've already planned another film, with Blanche Gardin handling the narration.

### **Did you want to encourage viewers to take up animation themselves?**

It's a bit like a guide to making your own films—it's not instructional, but you can see how I did it. I like the idea of sparking creativity in the audience, just as I did with my daughter. Everyone is creative when they're young, but we learn to disconnect from it as we grow older. I try to prove the opposite, to inspire a desire to create.

### **What are the advantages of animation?**

In animation, there are no limits. You have to embrace the idea that the Earth can be a blue circle; it doesn't have to fully resemble reality or be hyper-realistic.



It's up to the viewer to fill the gap and imagine the realism in their own mind. It's the principle of naivety or innocence. Unlike some live-action films where things must closely resemble reality for the story to be believable from the start, here you know you're crafting your own reality. I worked hard to make the characters recognizable. It's like being inside my head and my daughter's head at the same time.

### **What are your influences in terms of animated cinema?**

I love certain American films, like those by Tex Avery and even some Disney classics, but my true inspiration comes from Eastern European animation. Artists like the Czech Břetislav Pojar, the Russian Yuri Norstein, and series like *Colargol* or *The Little Mole*. The Czech Republic produced cartoons for children filled with a kind of poetry that brings me immense joy. There are also great experimentalists like Alexeïeff and his wife, and Len Lye, who invented the future of imagery using the tools of their time. I often think we should follow their example to create images that transcend the screen. Artificial intelligence should be used for that, yet we mostly use it just to make life easier.

### **Do you still make films for Maya?**

I made them for six years, and I stopped a year ago. I was shocked when she told me she didn't want them anymore! I was devastated, but then she changed her mind! Although for a month, she didn't want them. I felt a huge emptiness because, being insomniac, I used to spend several hours each night making her films while listening to Russian literature podcasts. It would take me between fifteen days and a month and a half

to make an animated film. I loved drawing, animating, and listening to these incredible stories that allowed me to discover this incredible culture.

### **Which films did you show her?**

*Crin blanc*, *Zazie dans le métro*, among many others. I tried to keep her away from current broadcast cartoons that flow like water from a tap. We watched the films I loved when I was younger. I remember we watched *Big* by Penny Marshall together, and we had a blast. Her main concern is always figuring out who the good guys and the bad guys are.

### **What does she think of other animated films?**

Sometimes, Maya tells me, "I loved this cartoon," referring to someone else's, but then she quickly corrects herself, "But not as much as yours, Daddy." She's seen films like those from Pixar studios, and she asks for more sophisticated ones, but I've reached the limit of my abilities in that area. The artisanal side is important to me. I think the "sketchy" aspect highlights the story. Ideas stand out better when the finish doesn't cover everything.

### **Are you going to get back into animation sometime?**

I've never stopped. I'm currently working on a musical, and I've added animated segments like stylized, abstract fireworks, which are more interesting graphically than if I had filmed real ones. I did the same for *The Book of Solutions* with a little animated short in the middle and animated titles. I can do this anywhere with my smartphone, a board, and a small crate which serves as a flat surface to animate on, and a bottle of water which acts as a counterweight.





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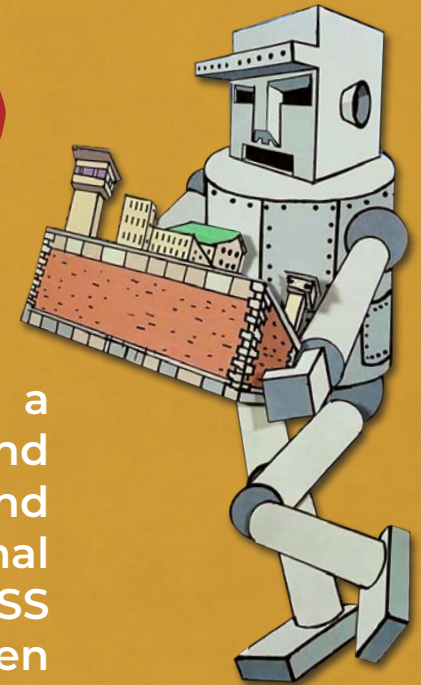
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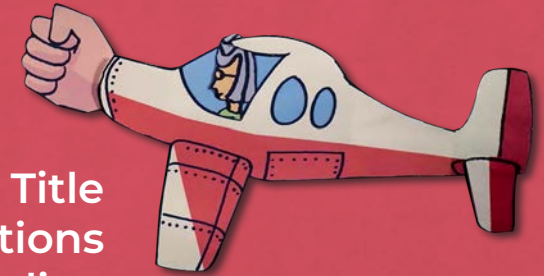


# Michel Gondry (director) Biography

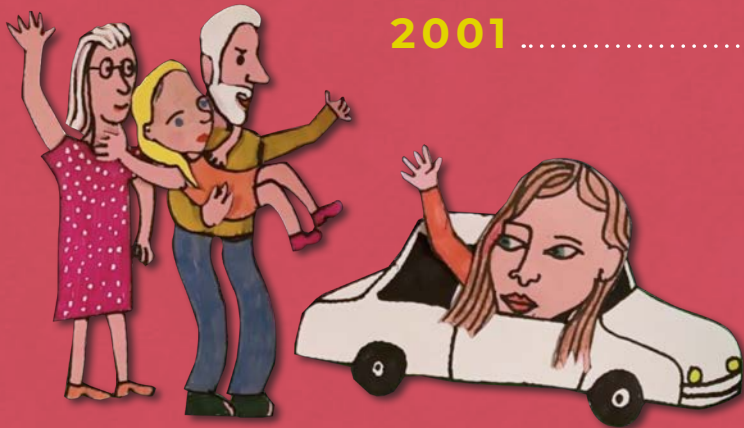
**B**orn in Versailles, France, Michel Gondry is a multidisciplinary filmmaker, screenwriter and musician. In 2005, along with Charlie Kaufman and Pierre Bismuth, Gondry won the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay for ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND, which he also directed. Several of his work has been screened at the Berlinale with THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP (2006), BE KIND REWIND (2008) and IS THE MAN WHO IS TALL HAPPY? (2014) about Noam Chomsky. MAYA, GIVE ME A TITLE is his first animated film. Gondry was a jury member of Berlinale's international jury in 2014.



# Filmography



2024	.....	Maya, Give Me a Title
2023	.....	The Book of Solutions
2015	.....	Microbe and Gasoline
2013	.....	Mood Indigo
2012	.....	The We and The I
2011	.....	The Green Hornet
2010	.....	The Thorn in the Heart
2007	.....	Be Kind Rewind
2006	.....	Dave Chappelle's Block Party
2006	.....	The Science of Sleep
2004	.....	Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
2001	.....	Human Nature





**PAMPA  
LA  
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**ET AN**

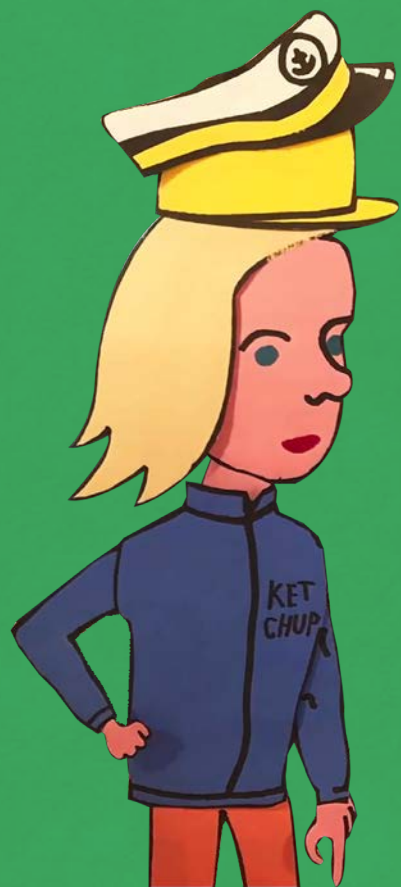


# Cast

**Maya** ..... Maya Gondry  
**Voice over** ..... Pierre Niney

# Crew

**Directed and written by** ..... Michel Gondry  
**Produced by** ..... Georges Bermann  
**Drawn and animated by** ..... Michel Gondry  
**Edited by** ..... Elise Fievet  
**Costumes by** ..... Florence Fontaine  
**Music by** ..... Jean-Michel Bernard



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## Contacts Indie Sales

Nicolas Eschbach - CEO  
[neschbach@indiesales.eu](mailto:neschbach@indiesales.eu)

Constance Poubelle - Sales & Marketing  
[cpoubelle@indiesales.eu](mailto:cpoubelle@indiesales.eu)

Sarah Delafoulhouze - Sales  
[sdelafulhouze@indiesales.eu](mailto:sdelafulhouze@indiesales.eu)

Alfred Deragne - Acquisitions  
[aderagne@indiesales.eu](mailto:aderagne@indiesales.eu)

Nuria Palenzuela Camon - Festivals & Marketing  
[npalenzuela@indiesales.eu](mailto:npalenzuela@indiesales.eu)