



At the beginning

When I was a kid, my parents read me lots of stories, coming of age stories, the classics, like Grimm's and Anderson's fairy tales...Most of these stories take place in a forest and have kids who are all alone in the middle of the forest, without their parents, and they discover new things. I think I wanted to tell my own fairy tale.

The Forest

I grew up in a region called Les Landes and there are mainly pine forests... so I felt a special connection to this type of tree, the kind that's tall and thin with branches just at the top. And one day I came across some photos of the giant sequoias in Yosemite Park, or Muir woods, and I really fell in love with the trees in these forests. Because they are like pine trees, but 100 times bigger, and the feeling you get when you're in these forests is almost like being surrounded by dinosaurs. The trees are so tall and the forest is so dense that you have no reference point and you don't know where in the world you are.

Atmosphere

Winter, I don't know where that come from, I don't know why I wanted to set the story in a forest during the winter. I think that I just love snow and so I wanted to have fun playing with snow in my film.

I think there's a really different kind of feeling in winter, with a different kind of sound and atmosphere.

Snow is really important in the film because in the beginning, the snow breaks the tree trunk that falls and wakes up the little character who is sleeping under another tree. Once he is outside, he discovers snow, so he eats it and experiments with it.

Characters

Physically they aren't like anything else either, they are probably most like trees, long and thin, but they don't look like any particular animal. A very simple face can show a large range of expressions with just two little pearl eyes and a gigantic mouth.

And so that was the inspiration for the characters' language, I didn't want their language to be recognizable by their voices or their accents. I didn't want people to know what city or country they were from, I didn't want these characters to seem like human beings. When they play in the snow, they don't play like we do, with snowballs and snowmen, they eat the snow, they have their own games.



Colors

The background was really an accident. I took a lot of pictures of the country, of the city, really of everything that was around me. And by saturating the pictures and maximizing the contrast, I got some very abstract images with splashes and splashes of color, and lots of interesting textures to work with in photoshop to create a misty atmosphere. What I really wanted was to create an abstract landscape, sometimes without any perspective.

Music

I really love Michel Korb's music. I really wanted to work with him on this film because I had noticed his music in other films. And the first trial he did became the movie's theme! Right from the beginning he really knew what I wanted, and what I was expecting and I think, he really had a feeling for the film.

Meanings

It's a story about adolescence, about the unique passage from childhood to adulthood. And then something happens, and one of them becomes a tree, he grows up, and the other one stays a child. Maybe now is not his time, he'll grow up later.

Later in the film, the character leaves his home in the forest to go to the lake and look at what he swallowed and see if he can identify it, and figure out who he is and what happened. There is a snowstorm that represents a tormented feeling inside him. And when he sees his reflection in the lake and comes back to the forest, he seems more serene, he has realized something while he was at the lake. And then it stops snowing, and he becomes a tree. The snow was there to make him grow up and he doesn't need it anymore.

