

# Interview with Nicolas Clauss

By Jim Andrews

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*Jim Andrews: What is your relation with Durieu, Schmitt, Jean-Luc Lamarque, servovalve, and Jean-Jacques Birgé, Nicolas? How long have you known them?*

Nicolas Clauss: We all know each others except for servovalve whom I haven't met, I only know his work which is quite interesting. Frederic is a friend, we met a few months after I saw a CDROM called "Alphabet" that he co-authored with Jean-Jacques Birgé, then nearly nearly 3 years ago he taught me a few basics for Director and finally we co-founded what became his own site now: [LeCielEstBleu](http://LeCielEstBleu), a few months before I got my own space, [flyingpuppet.com](http://flyingpuppet.com). I met Antoine last year at a party at Birgé's and Jean-Luc Lamarque about the same time.

In 1999 I came back from oversea after a trip of 6 years (from India to Korea and Australia), I had a few show in France then and decided to see what was possible with computers. Then I saw in an exhibition the cdrom [Alphabet](http://Alphabet), I was amazed, I asked around me and someone told me it was done with a software call Director. I got the software and started working on it like crazy for 3 months (beginning of 2000). A cdrom of mine came out of these 3 months (called "voyages") and then I contacted one of the author of "Alphabet", Murielle Lefèvre (Dadamedia) who really liked what I'd done, and we started working together on a project I did about dance (with drawn dancers in Flash under Director). Murielle introduced me to the programmer and co-author of "Alphabet", Fred. We became very close with Fred and in 2001 we started LeCielEstBleu.

During that time Fred introduced me to Jean-Jacques and we became friends. I knew him by name since I had some CDs he made with his band "Un Drame Musical Instantané", a band playing creative music that had made over 25 records. It was very exciting for me to work with a musician whose music I had known for over ten years. Jean-Jacques is probably in France The multimedia musician. He made some multimedia works as well under his name with Antoine ("Machiavel" which is excellent and based on 111 video loops and "Carton"). JJB comes from Cinema, he made a few movies.

When we work together I bring the pictures and first idea and then we go back and forth between my pictures and his sounds. We've been working together for a year and half now.

*What are your own concerns that are distinct from what you see them being interested in?*

I believe my approach is more of a painter's approach. I'm not interested by code. Let's say I see myself as a painter using Director like a writer would do with the use of word processing software. I feel I could use another medium tomorrow if I wanted (which would be different of course).

*Some of your recent work such as "Before the Night" and "The Sleepers" involves an interesting notion of interactive cinema, to me. Do you think that's an accurate characterization? What are your aspirations with that type of work?*

Yes and no. I would say interactive motion picture more than cinema which I'm not sure can be interactive. It is something new of it's own kind between experimental movie and painting. My aspiration with it is to experiment with the space between video, interactivity and painting and I find it very exciting.

*Your site is flyingpuppet.com. In Lingo, one may "puppet" sprites. I remember seeing the word "puppet" on Antoine's site also concerning his "avec determination" project. Why is your site named "flyingpuppet.com".*

...and the PuppetTool by Durieu. "Flying Puppet", "flyingpuppet", I still don't know how to write it and am not sure why I picked up this but I didn't think of the lingo word "puppet".

*I see that you have recently collaborated with Jean-Luc Lamarque on a work in the Pianographique site called "Sudden Stories". How did that go?*

Basically we used Lamarque's code to make our own pianographique with Birgé. We wanted to make a musical drama that players would use slowly. I normally don't appreciate complex interfaces (I'd rather use the mouse only) but it was challenging to do something very different from what's on flyingpuppet. Jean-Luc is quite open to various styles and collaborations which is good.

*I note that you, Antoine Schmitt and Durieu all seem to share an interest in programming motion. Is this something you talk with them about?*

Yes, sometimes. I sometimes call them to get some Lingo tips. I guess I know 1% of what they know about programming.

*What other concerns and interests do you share with Schmitt, Durieu, servovalve and Jean-Luc Lamarque?*

French fries in Belgium and interactivity with Fred, a dear friend with Antoine (Jean-Jacques Birgé) but probably much more.

*You all use Director and are artist-programmers. How did this come about?*

I don't see myself as an artist-programmer. An artist certainly, but not a programmer. This being said, Director allows inks like Photoshop allows which Flash doesn't.

*What do you do for a job?*

I'm a full time artist and, yes, make a living out of it mainly through commissioned project like [Cinq-ailleurs.com](http://Cinq-ailleurs.com) or with workshops.