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As Cannes Film Festival opens with The Second Act whispers of controversies can be heard
By Gautaman Bhaskaran
May 16, 2024 01:21 PM IST
Even as the Cannes Film Festival opened with The Second Act on Wednesday, Quentin Dupieux whispers of a major expose in the French film industry makes rounds.
A still from The Second Act.
The 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival opened with the Second Act helmed by Quentin Dupieux. With 23 features in competition, 2007 - and six in the past four years alone - three in French director Dupieux's career is that just prolific, at least when compared to many leading men in his niche. What is more, he has also penned, shot and edited his films. Add to that, he is also the sound designer. Read also: Cannes Film Fest Un Certain Regard is gem that is treated like a Cinderella)
The plot may not be very novel- movie within a movie. It begins with a Virgo Boucolaire meeting his two close friends – Willy (Raphel Quenard) and David (Louis Garrel) – as they walk along a serene countryside chatting about Florence (Lea Seydoux, another perennial Dupieux favourite) who has gone to Willy's home to meet her husband.
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As the scene unfolds, we realise that the two men are not gals but actors starring in a film. Ditto with Florence and her father, Guillaume (Vincent Lindon). But midway, they are convinced in what they are essaying, and want to throw it away. A call from his agent saying that a leading helmer wants to cast him in his latest work seems like godsend for Guillaume.
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The Second Act to mark the Cannes's strongest and perhaps most self-aware outing. Not just in its opening scene that has Dupieux and Pandora's Box and with the current controversies sweeping the French film industry.
At a recent meeting with the media, the Festival chief, Thierry Fremaux, said: "Last year, as you know , and we had decided to organise a festival where aware of it, so this year we decided to organise a festival where we have the conviction to make sure that the main interest for all of us remains the cinema. So if there are other controversies, they do not concern us."
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He did not go into details of what he would do if pro-Palestinian demonstrations were to take place. Asked about the possibility of more media reports about sexual abuse in the French film industry, he said: "The decision work is driven by artistic criteria and no by concerns about #MeToo or other scandals. It's about the movies and whether or not they're interesting, and not about the rest. There is no reason is no ideology that guides the selection committee."
The debate arises after weeks of whispered rumours about the possibility of a sexual abuse scandal involving a publicist a major investigation into sexual abuse in France's audiovisual sector.
Last week, in statements to Paris Match, the president of the Festival, Iris Knobloch, said that when the accusations emerged they would be "studied case by case." Le Figaro newspaper has also reported that a publicist was being forced to advise if the storm hits.
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We are certainly in for some very thrilling times before the Festival ends on May 25.
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