

# OUVRIER LA VOIX

ECRIT ET REALISE PAR  
**AMANDINE GAY**

BRAS DE FER PRODUCTION PRÉSENTE : **OUVRIER LA VOIX** • UN FILM ÉCRIT & RÉALISÉ PAR **AMANDINE GAY**  
AVEC : **AISS BERG • AMELIA EWU • ELEONORE • FANIA NOEL • FANNY AKA THISISKYEMIS • LAURA AKA MRSROOTS • MABOULA SOUMAHORO  
MANY CHRONIQUES • MARIE LEDA • MARIE JULIE CHALU • MERCI MICHEL • NASS • NDELLA PAYE • ORNELLA AKA LOULOU • PD B.K. LOMAMI  
RACHEL KHAN • REBECCA CHAILLON • SABINE PAKORA • SANDRA • SANDRA SAINTE ROSE FANCHINE • SHARONE • TAINA • THARA • ZINA**

# OUVRIR LA VOIX

UN FILM ECRIT ET REALISE PAR

★ AMANDINE GAY ★

2017

DURATION : 122 MINUTES

PROJECTION SUPPORT : DCP OR DIGITAL FILE

ENGLISH TITLE : SPEAK UP / MAKE YOUR WAY

PHOTO AND DOWNLOADABLE PRESS KIT AT [HTTPS://WWW.OUVRIRLA VOIXLEFILM.FR](https://www.ouvrirlavoixlefilm.fr)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION : CONTACT@OUVRIRLA VOIXLEFILM.FR

# SYNOPSIS

Speak Up / Make Your Way is a documentary about francophone black women (France and Belgium) written and produced by Amandine Gay. It is also the director's first feature film and, most importantly, the result of nearly three years of guerrilla filmmaking combined with a successful crowdfunding campaign that made the post-production of the film possible.

Speak Up / Make Your Way is a creative film that challenges the conventional codes of talking heads documentaries. Thought and executed in the form of a stimulating and intimate conversation between twenty-four black women from France and Belgium, the film begins with the day they discovered what it means to be black and a minority, and closes with their aspirations for the future. It is also a tribute to all the black artists that the director met when she was still an actress, which is why the film is punctuated by rehearsals and performances (burlesque, stage plays, etc.).





Speak Up / Make Your Way is a work centered on the experiences of black women that invites viewers to rethink the universal. Although the film addresses intersections of discrimination, it also reveals the great diversity within Afro-descendant communities, through the characters' relationship to creativity, parenthood, depression, sexuality or religion.

Speak Up / Make Your Way is also a response to the growing need for francophone black women to reclaim the narrative. The film gives the opportunity to those who are too often silenced or talked about to take control of their own representation on screen.

Therefore it is, finally and above all, a story of deeply touching and powerful women.

**IL N'Y A PAS DE CYGNES NOIRS**

**IL N'Y A QU'UNE RACE HUMAINE**

**NE ME TOUCHE JAMAIS  
LES CHEVEUX**

**IL VA FALLOIR LUTTER**

**ON NOUS A JAMAIS ATTENDUS**

**DIX MILLIONS  
C'EST LA BELGIQUE**

# BIOGRAPHY

Amandine Gay is a political author.

Following her graduation from the Institute of Political Studies in Lyon in 2007 with a masters in communication, Amandine joined the Conservatory of Dramatic Art in Paris 16 and began performing in theatre, film and television. Since 2012, she has also been working as a screenwriter and she's also been contributing as a freelance journalist for Slate.fr.

In 2014 she takes on directing with a reportage on the #BoycottExhibitB demonstrations, and that same year, she starts working on her first documentary, *Speak Up/Make Your Way*, a feature-length about francophone black women.

Most recently, Amandine authored the preface of the first French translation of bell hooks' seminal, *Ain't I A Woman*. She is currently living in Montreal, completing her second master's degree in sociology, focusing on transracial adoption.

She is a director, writer, freelance journalist and speaker. She is regularly asked to speak about afro-feminism, intersectionality and adoption at events such as the Toronto and Winnipeg Spur Festival. Students were able to hear her at the University of Edinburgh, the Université du Québec à Montréal, at UOttawa, at the University of Lausanne, at the Université Lumière Lyon 2, at the École de Recherche Graphique in Brussels, at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, etc.

You can follow her adventures in French and English on her Twitter account @OrpheoNegra or blog <https://badassafrofem.wordpress.com>







# DIRECTOR FOREWORD

Speak Up / Make Your Way is born out of my desire to occupy public space and to explain why the intersection of discriminations faced by black women in France and Belgium is as problematic as it is political.

Speak Up / Make Your Way is my response to the need for black francophone women to reclaim the narrative since we are too often silenced or presented as passive victims. This film is also a celebration of our diversity as Afro-descendants: black women born in France and Belgium, or elsewhere, from French, Belgian or immigrant parents, from all kinds of paths, faiths, sexual orientation, etc.

Speak Up / Make Your Way is a political portrait of black women in francophone Europe, revealing the complexity and diversity of our lives and identities. Beyond personal anecdotes lie the political issues that black women have to face. That's the reason why I chose the form of a conversation through intertwined narratives so that my experience could be nuanced and enriched by that of other black women.

Speak Up / Make Your Way is my way of celebrating the history of black women resistance, who, since marooning, through creolity, pan-africanism, negritude and afro-feminism have always invented tools enabling them not to be silenced. This film is for those who fought before us and a testimony to those who will come after us.

Amandine GAY



# PRESS COVERAGE

**Buzz Feed**, *January 15, 2017*

"Everyone should watch *Speak Up / Make Your Way*, and ask themselves the right questions and try to understand black women, their difficulties and their experiences. Thirdly because it will give, I hope, big and great ideas to other like Jennifer, Christelle, Kadiatou, Mélody, Sarata, Dolores, Ndeye, Francine and so on, who wish to reclaim their voices. With this film, Amandine Gay has shown us the way, and it is now up to us to seize this opportunity and tell beautiful or less beautiful things to the next generation."

*December 21, 2016*

"26 times that women made 2016 suck less: 10. When the director and scholar Amandine Gay presented her inspiring/informative documentary *Speak Up / Make Your Way*, about black women linked to European colonial history in Africa and the Caribbean, who are too often invisible. "

**Playlist Society**, *January 13, 2017*

"This is one of the great achievements of Amandine Gay's film: to be powerful and beautiful. We've sometimes seen documentaries here and there weakly piling testimonies, to such an extent that we ended up wondering by which miracle they had eventually landed on screens instead of keeping to a (not dishonourable but more adapted) television broadcasting.

*Speak Up / Make Your Way*, deserves the big screen, because it looks the part."

**Mediapart**, *January 7, 2017*

"It's a rare film in the French artistic landscape, and perhaps the first of its kind." In *Speak Up / Make Your Way*, Amandine Gay shows French and Belgian black women for two hours."

**Les Inrocks**, *December 21, 2016*

"Invisible, hypersexualised, or discriminated against, twenty-four black women testify to the racism in France and Belgium, resulting in" *Speak Up / Make Your Way*, a touching and lucid Afro-feminist documentary showing how deep racist clichés run."



**Libération**, *December 16, 2016*

"*Speak Up / Make Your Way*, a luminous and uncompromising Afro-feminist documentary."



**L'Express**, December 13, 2016

"In her documentary *Speak Up / Make your way*, the director and activist Amandine Gay gives the floor to black women of France."

**Le Monde Afrique**, December 7, 2016

"The privilege to be oblivious of one's own skin color. Have you ever thought about it?"

**Bondy Blog**, December 17, 2016

"It is a creative documentary, because to me, there is currently a real problem. We are in a very difficult political context that leads many racialized artists in France to let politics take over creative license, as if they forbade themselves to be audacious in their aesthetics, because they need their political message to be heard."

**Ballast**, January 6, 2017

"Once my intentions were validated by the interviewees, I considered the form of a big conversation about our experiences, which was the best way to show that if we had in common our minority status, we're also an extremely heterogeneous group. I thought of adding a voice-over to connect all these experiences and also talk about mine, but in the process it worked autonomously: the girls are clear in what they say. But I wanted to clarify: "A film written and directed by Amandine Gay" because it is an extremely written project, beforehand and through montage. I am not at all in agreement with the illusion of "direct cinema" nor with the concept of a "fourth wall" in theater. I like plays where the audience is brought up on stage, and the artifice is visible. It's all about assuming clearly one's subjectivity."

# ARTISTIC SHEET

With AISS BERG – AMELIA EWU – ELEONORE – FANIA NOEL – FANNY aka THISISKYEMIS – LAURA aka MRSROOTS – MABOULA SOUMAHORO – MANY CHRONIQUES – MARIE LEDA – MARIE JULIE CHALU – MERCI MICHEL – NASS – NDELLA PAYE – ORNELLA aka LOULOU – PO B.K LOMAMI – RACHEL KHAN – REBECCA CHAILLON – SABINE PAKORA – SANDRA – SANDRA SAINTE ROSE FANCHINE – SHARONE – TAINA – THARA – ZINA

# TECHNICAL SHEET

**Production** : Bras de Fer Production

**Director** : Amandine Gay

**Director of photography** : Enrico Bartolucci

**Sound** : Enrico Bartolucci

**Additional camera** : Coralie Chalon

**Editing** : Enrico Bartolucci

**Calibration** : Valentin Damon @Les machineurs

**Sound mixing** : Karim Berraf

**Film poster**: Luc Serrano



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