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FRÉDÉRIC GARCIA

Writer and creator of the Netflix series *Mortel*, filmed in Le Havre

Le Havre offers a wealth of settings and atmospheres...

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You're a 30-year-old screenwriter. What was your background ?

Coming from the Paris suburbs, nothing predestined me for the audiovisual professions. After graduating with a degree in American literature and cinema, I went on to do a master's in audiovisual production at the INA (Institut National de l'Audiovisuel). After two and a half years working for a short film and advertising production company, I got the urge to write my own stories. It was only after developing a project with a scriptwriter that I went on to train at Femis in Paris – École Nationale Supérieure des Métiers de l'image et du Son – and then realised my dream of making a career out of it. That's when my career took off.

The Mortel project was born. A series for teenagers. Why ?

I started writing this story back in 2009. Mortel came about because I met a producer who wanted to offer a fantasy series to Netflix. I never thought of it as a series for teenagers. We just create interesting characters and stay true to the story we want to tell. The very contemporary music and the aesthetic make this series a pop object that appeals to 13-25 year-olds. We're also asserting the series' French identity through the absence of American-style good guys or bad guys, the use of voodoo and, of course, the settings.

How do you explain the choice of Le Havre ?

The series shouldn't be identified as taking place in a specific city. Le Havre offers a wealth of settings and atmospheres, with interesting suburban architecture, typical French housing estates, but also magnificent forests and wide open spaces. It's easier to shoot on real sets here than in the Paris region. Our production manager had already filmed in Le Havre and I fell in love with the town, its inhabitants, the local extras and the team that hosted the shoot. Season 2 will last three and a half months : it will show more of the city's maritime atmosphere. See you in November 2020 !