François PAPINEAU *Luc* PICARD

# The FIREFIES (La disparition des lucioles) (Are GOIE

A film by SÉBASTIEN PILOTE

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival Official Selection – Competition



# THE FIREFLIES ARE GONE

(LA DISPARITION DES LUCIOLES)





A FILM BY **Sébastien Pilote** 

PRODUCED BY Bernadette Payeur Marc Daigle

DISTRIBUTION Les Films Séville

### **PRODUCTION**

Corporation ACPAV inc. 1030, rue Cherrier, suite 404 Montréal (QC) H2L 1H9 514 849-2281

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### **PRODUCTION**

DRAMA
FEATURE
FICTION
COLOR

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY

Sébastien Pilote

FILM EDITING Stéphane Lafleur

PRODUCERS

Bernadette Payeur Marc Daigle

ORIGINAL SCORE
Philippe Brault

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Michel La Veaux

SOUND

Gilles Corbeil Olivier Calvert Stéphane Bergeron

COSTUME DESIGN Sophie Lefebvre

ART DIRECTOR **Éric Barbeau** 

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Robert Lacerte

COUNTRY Canada

Runtime **96 minutes** 

YEAR **2018** 

FORMAT **Digital** 

ASPECT RATIO
1:85

**VFRSIONS** 

Original French English subtitles

SOUND SRD 5.1

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Distributed by Les Films Séville, affiliated to Entertainment One and internationally represented by Seville International, it will be released in Canada in 2018.

### CAST

LÉO Karelle Tremblay

STEVE Pierre-Luc Brillant

PAUL **François Papineau** 

SYLVAIN - LÉO'S FATHER Luc Picard

LÉO'S MOTHER

Marie-France Marcotte

Summer is near and classes are coming to an end in a former industrial town on the end of a large bay.

Léo, a young and disaffected girl, meets Steve, a reclusive and aimless guitarist. Léo lives with her mother and stepfather Paul, a populist radio show host who forced her father into exile up north. Sylvain, Léo's father, is a dethroned union leader whom she greatly misses.

A stranger in her own world, frustrated and angry, it is through her budding relationship with Steve, set to the rhythm of their guitar lessons and her new summer job, that she'll be able to find some kind of comfort and ultimately take flight.



# INTERVIEW WITH SÉBASTIEN PILOTE

### BY GEORGES PRIVET (TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH)

Where does *The Fireflies Are Gone* come from? Is it an image, a word, or an idea that inspired you and gave you a particular desire to make cinema? At first glance, the film seems quite different from your previous two features, *The Salesman* (*Le vendeur*) and *The Auction* (*Le démantèlement*). Was that difference deliberate on your part?

I certainly wanted to make this film more accessible than the previous ones. I also wanted its form to resemble, or at least to have the appearance of, a popular movie. I longed for a simple and direct style that wouldn't be too lyrical. Each shot had to be as straight as possible. If the film were a novel or a story, it would be written in short, simple sentences; the style would be unadorned, but would not turn its back on metaphor or allegory. It could have been a graphic novel or a song... From the start I kept saying that the film was designed to sound like a pop song. It had to be like a little song, a kind of brief melody that vanishes at the moment it appears, haunting and fugitive. If, at the beginning, I pictured a movie that was all motion, with generous and sophisticated movement, I eventually opted for a different direction and a more head-on approach, while keeping in mind a certain ambulatory element.

But I think the most important difference that distinguishes this film from my previous ones is the mood, which here is that of a dramatic comedy. It's a film made with a smile. It may feel different, but it is still a part of my own private human comedy.

Even if Léo and Steve's relationship is at the forefront of the story, the sociopolitical background remains quite significant. Can you speak about the connection between the intimate and the social within the film?

Léo's character is stuck between two opposite father figures, so her situation can also be seen as sociopolitical. First, there's this omnipresent, populist stepfather who's some sort of false prophet, "The King of the Airwaves," a kind of flavor-of-the-month loudmouth... And on the other hand, there's the father she loves and idealizes, but who is absent. A father who went missing... There was a time when it was he who was the king, in a way. But that time has passed. Now he's a king in exile. It is Léo who says, at some point, "We're a family full of contradictions." Then, in the midst of it all, she meets a third father figure, almost a surrogate father figure, Steve — a kind of timeless character, and a third way. Here, what seemed interesting was to bring Léo to a point in the film where she confuses those three figures, and ultimately rejects them.

# There's a feeling as if the film works covertly; we're led to think that it's about adolescence, but in fact the film speaks to many other themes.

To me, the film is clearly not about adolescence. It is no more about adolescence than *The Salesman* was about car salesmen, or *The Auction* was about farmers and sheep. Yes, there's a way to play with the tropes and expectations of the "coming of age" story, but it would be a mistake to think of this film in that way. I did not want, for example, to make some kind of naturalistic portrait of "today's youth," representing their psychology. I was aiming for something more timeless. I wanted to use the setting to present a picture of today's Quebec, just like in my other films – a portrait of the times. So, yes, I try to do things a bit undercover. I have this idea, an intuition or image in mind, and then I build a story around it. That's how I work.

# So, beyond Léo's story, what would be the true subject of the film according to you?

I'd say it's about the pervasive, omnipresent cynicism of today, and especially about its antidote, which is love, in a very broad sense. Maybe it's also about innocence.

This may sound weird, but I think *The Fireflies Are Gone* is my most political film because I made it with the sentiment that we're heading towards a new kind of fascism. And that if there are occasional glimmers of hope, they are rare and mostly invisible.

Léo may be your youngest character so far, and the impression remains – if only because of the title of the film – that she is just as confronted as any other by the fleeting nature of things. Is this one of the themes that inspires you?

I love ends of the world, no matter how small. I love what is absent, and absences. In this case, with the idea of the fleeting nature of things, what I realized is that when a thing disappears, we were already not seeing it. It was no longer present in front of us. Either it had retreated further from our gaze, or we had retreated further from it. In English there is the idea of the vanishing point... Léo is a character who flees. In the opening scene I tried to give viewers the feeling that they were entering a behind-closed-doors kind of drama. But Léo flees from the scene. She's a character who flees unexpectedly, and by doing so she brings something into the world. That's what fascinates me with the idea of disappearance, that it is closely linked with the idea of apparition. When something disappears, we're never too far from seeing something else appear.

### What does the title of the film mean to you, and where does it come from?

Once, in movie theaters, for the Italians, a firefly was the young lady that helped you find a seat with her flashlight. An usher, somewhat like Léo... The title itself, *The Fireflies Are Gone*, comes from the allegory of the vanishing fireflies that Pasolini used in reference to the new fascism in Italy. It was in his essay "Disappearance of the Fireflies," published in the Corriere della Sera. For him, the little lights, the *luce* glowing in the night, are invisible, overpowered by the bright projectors of mass entertainment and the deafening sound of speakers. You cannot illuminate a glow in order to see it better. Under a light, the glow vanishes. Lighting can make something appear and vanish at the same time. So, I would say the title may be a key for interpretation, but not strictly so.

# Léo and Steve are an unlikely but very touching couple. Was that how you pictured them?

I wanted to install a desire in the viewer to see Léo and Steve united, against all odds. The film depends on it. An unlikely, improbable, mismatched couple, is what I used to say. I tried to create a relationship that would be as ambiguous for the viewer as for the characters themselves. Steve represents naivety and love. And I don't mean romantic love, but love in a broader sense. He is also a musician. The film is very much about music - the three ideas are inseparable for me. Steve is like a slice of innocence. His outlook is simple, even naive. I think this explains Léo's attraction. There's not a trace of sarcasm in him. He has very little ambition... He doesn't look at the world with the eyes of a snake. He doesn't judge, he's accepting. He has a tender and sincere way of looking at things and that gets passed on to Léo, in a way.

## Music plays an important part in the film. How did you intend to use it?

Serge Gainsbourg once said about Rimbaud, "In its purest state, poetry has no need for musical accompaniment... And that's what pisses me off, because I love music." (*Laughs*) Since I wanted the music in the film to be like doses of love, naivety and innocence, I had no intention of holding back. I wanted the music to feel generous. Oddly enough, I needed more courage to do this with the music than to aim for asceticism... I think it also comes from a desire to give the film a more popular feel.

### The tracklist of the film is quite impressive...

When we made a list of the pop tunes that we used, we were surprised, yes. Voivod, Michel Rivard, Félix Leclerc, Turner Cody, Rush, Arcade Fire... Plus *Crimson and Clover* by Tommy James and the Shondells! Stéphane Lafleur, the film editor, who is also a filmmaker and a musician, brought many great ideas to the table.

# And on top of that, Philippe Brault's beautiful original score really stands out...

Quite early in the shoot I started thinking about Philippe Brault's score in terms of something that would be almost too much, too powerful and a little off-track with the tone of the film. I wanted magic like in the cinema of the 1950s. Philippe was inspired by a section of Wagner's "Tristan and Iseult," and by Bernard Hermann, especially the swelling love theme in *Vertigo*. Philippe Brault overcame an enormous challenge, a frighteningly tall order. Philippe's music in the film delivers a huge dose of love.

## How did you work with your main actors and how did you choose them?

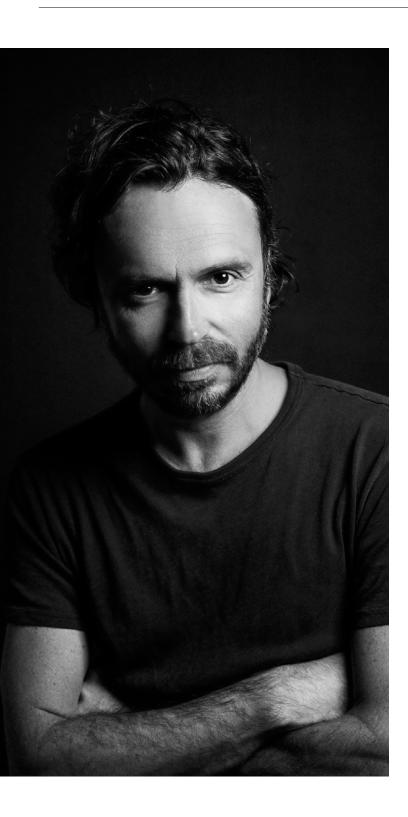
I thought Karelle was a natural actress, very intuitive - she's been an actress since she was a young child, so I didn't want to mess with her gifts, but rather to keep them as intact as possible. I picked the actors for what they are, or, let's say, what they appear to be. Character roles can sometimes be great, but other times they seem superfluous to me. There are times when you have to know how not to intervene - just be present, just try to capture the gift of freedom that they have.

I discovered Karelle through my 14-year-old daughter, Romane. I had seen her play small roles in films, but I really first noticed her when Romane, who followed her on TV, told me about her. Just like my daughter, I was struck by her presence. Then I saw Anne Émond's film, *Our Loved Ones* (*Les êtres chers*).

In the case of Pierre-Luc, when I shot *The Auction* I regretted not having given him a bigger role, but I told myself we would catch up someday. I have the same feeling now about Marie-France Marcotte, whose role as Léo's mother had to be remain somewhat in the background, because that was important for the story and what I wanted to say. But when I saw what she could give me, I started having regrets. I had chosen Luc Picard and François Papineau, but for a while I considered switching their roles. This seemed exciting, but then I went back to my initial idea. I think that sometimes, contrary to what we think, choosing to typecast, or take a less original path, can be the best and most difficult choice.



# **SÉBASTIEN PILOTE**WRITER AND DIRECTOR



Sébastien Pilote was born in Quebec's Saguenay region, where he still lives.

In 2007, his short film *Dust Bowl Ha! Ha!* featured in competition at the Locarno Film Festival and won a prize at the Festival of New Cinema (FNC) in Montreal. Selected for TIFF's Canada Top Ten, it was also awarded the prize for best short fiction film by the Association québécoise des critiques de cinéma (AQCC).

In 2010, he directed his first feature film *The Salesman* (*Le vendeur*), which was shown in competition at the Sundance Film Festival. The film won awards at numerous festivals and enjoyed a successful theatrical run at home. After having won the FIPRESCI Award (Turin, Mannheim and San Francisco), *The Salesman* received the Gilles-Carle Prize for best debut feature and the Luc-Perrault Prize of the AQCC for best Quebec feature of the year.

His second feature, *The Auction (Le démantèlement)*, was selected for the International Critics' Week at Cannes, where it won the SACD Prize for Best Screenplay. It also received the Best Feature Prize at the Trophées francophones du cinéma of 2014. The same year, the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) honored the film with its award at the Turin festival. *The Fireflies Are Gone* is his third feature.

### KARELLE TREMBLAY (LÉO)



Despite her young age, Karelle Tremblay is already recognized as one of Quebec's most promising actresses. Her role in François Jaros' short feature *Oh What A Wonderful Feeling* attracted attention at the International Critic's Week in Cannes in 2015. That same year, her performance in Anne Émond's *Our Loved Ones (Les êtres chers)* earned her a place as one of four Rising Stars in Canadian film at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Her performances in features like Mathieu Denis' Corbo, Podz's Miraculum, and Alexis Durand-Brault's The Heart is What Dies Last (C'est le cœur qui meurt en dernier) have made her one of the most sought-after young actresses in Quebec. On television, too, she is a must-see for her regular appearances in series like Unité 9, 19-2 and Jérémie. Karelle Tremblay is inarguably one of her generation's most prominent talents.

# **PIERRE-LUC BRILLANT** (STEVE)



Both an actor and a musician, Pierre-Luc Brillant has developed a rich and varied career on stage as well as in cinema and television.

Nominated for a Jutra Award in 2006 for hismemorable turn in Jean-Marc Vallée's feature *C.R.A.Z.*Y., his performances have contributed to many of Quebec cinema's recent successes, such as Lyne Charlebois' *Borderline*, Yves Christian Fournier's *Everything is Fine* (*Tout est parfait*) and Sébastien Pilote's *The Auction* (*Le démantèlement*). In addition to his work in television (*C.A.*, *La Galère* and *Au secours de Béatrice*) and on stage (*L'Opéra de Quat'Sous*, directed by Brigitte Haentjens, and Philippe Lambert's *Midsummer*), Brillant pursues his passion for music by playing in the group Les Batteux-Slaques, as well as in a musical duo with Isabelle Blais. His performance as Steve in *The Fireflies Are Gone* gave him a rare opportunity to combine his passions for acting and music.

### LUC PICARD (SYLVAIN, LÉO'S FATHER)



Whether as an actor or a director. Luc Picard is one of the most important figures in Québec's cultural scene. Revealed by Pierre Falardeau's films Octobre and February 15, 1839 (15 Février 1839), this graduate from Montreal's Conservatoire d'Art Dramatique quickly became associated with a topical, social type of cinema deeply rooted in the real, an association he futher developed with roles in Bernard Émond's 8:17 PM Darling Street (20 h 17 rue Darling), Robert Favreau's A Sunday in Kigali (Un dimanche à Kigali) and Alain Chartrand's Summer Crisis (La Maison du pêcheur). His leading roles in TV series like District 31, Omerta: la loi du silence and Simone et Chartrand confirm a popularity amplified by the films he has directed: Audition, Babine, Ésimésac and Cross My Heart (Les Rois Mongols). As a result, Luc Picard remains one of the most acclaimed figures in the québecois landscape of the past quarter century.

FRANÇOIS PAPINEAU

(PAUL, LÉO'S STEPFATHER AND "KING OF THE AIRWAVES")



Since his graduation from the National Theatre School of Canada in 1990, François Papineau has become one of the key actors in Quebec cinema, television and theater. Cofounder of the Momentum theatre company, he is well known by filmgoers for his performances in Louis Bélanger's Route 132, Robert Morin's Daddy Goes Ptarmigan Hunting (Papa à la chasse aux lagopèdes) and Guy Édoin's Wetlands (Marécages). As comfortable with dramatic roles (A View from the Bridge, A Streetcar Named Desire, Caligula) as comic ones (Le Barbier de Séville, Cabaret, Un fil à la patte), this veteran of the stage is also well known to the Quebec public for his performances in popular series (like the TV drama Unité 9 and the comedy franchise Les Boys) and is a dominant figure of historical theatrical productions which blend classicism with modernity, like the memorable reinterpretations of The Iliad and The Odyssey, widely praised by critics and audiences alike.

### MARIE-FRANCE MARCOTTE (LÉO'S MOTHER)



An acclaimed stage actress, Marie-France Marcotte was awarded the Gascon-Roux Prize for her role in the french adaptation of A Streetcar Named Desire, and the Académie Québécoise du Théâtre's award for Les Oranges sont vertes. Though she appears more frequently on stage than in front of a camera, she is known to the moviegoing public for her parts in films like Guillaume Lambert's Les Scènes fortuites and Érik Canuel's The Last Tunnel (Le Dernier tunnel), which earned her a nomination for a Jutra Award. Appearing also in television series like Trauma, Destinée and tribu.com (for which she was nominated for a Gemini Award), she remains especially attached to the theatre, investing herself in productions like Wajdi Mouawad's Forêts, which toured France for five years, and the cycle Le Sang des promesses which was performe in 2010 at the Court of Honour of the Papal Palace during the Avignon Festival.

### BERNADETTE PAYEUR PRODUCER

Bernadette Payeur began her career producing *Elvis Gratton*, a satirical short by Pierre Falardeau and Julien Poulin. After two more *Gratton* shorts, the team went on to make the feature film *Elvis Gratton*, *le king des kings*, which fast became a cult hit in Quebec.

In 1983, she produced Léa Pool's first feature film, La femme de l'hôtel, and in 1988, Sortie 234, a short fiction film by Michel Langlois. In 1989, she renewed her collaboration with Pierre Falardeau in Le party and with Michel Langlois in Lettre à mon père (1992) and Cap Tourmente (1993). In 1992 and 1993, she produced two documentaries by Bernard Émond: Ceux qui ont le pas léger meurent sans laisser de traces and L'instant et la patience. 1994 saw the longawaited release of Falardeau's difficult feature film Octobre, which she produced. Then it was Un miroir sur la scène, a two-part documentary by Jean-Claude Coulbois, broadcast in 1995 and 1997. 1998 saw Les artisans du cinéma, a five-part mini-series by Serge Giguère and, in association with Marc Daigle, Paul Tana's La déroute.

In 1999, Payeur produced L'Erreur boréale, a documentary on Quebec's depleted forests by Richard Desjardins and Robert Monderie, as well as Elvis Gratton II: Miracle à Memphis, Pierre Falardeau's sequel to his hit film. Again with Falardeau, she produced 15 février 1839 and, simultaneously, Bernard Émond's first feature, La Femme qui boit. In 2002 she produced Émond's 20 h 17, rue Darling, and in 2005 his third feature, La Neuvaine.

In 2006, she produced Benoît Pilon's first feature, Ce qu'il faut pour vivre, as well as Contre toute espérance, the second part of the trilogy Bernard Émond began with La neuvaine and which, in 2008, was completed with La donation, again with Payeur producing. Subsequently, Émond strongly recommended a young director from the Saguenay region named Sébastien Pilote, and in 2011 Paveur went on to produce with Marc Daigle his feature debut, Le vendeur. That same year, she produced Émond's sixth feature, Tout ce que tu possèdes, as well the documentary Mort subite d'un homme de théâtre, by Jean-Claude Coulbois. In 2013, she worked again with Pilote, producing his second feature, Le démantèlement (The Auction) which was selected at La semaine de la Critique in Cannes and won the SACD prize and in 2014 won the Trophée francophone du long métrage. In 2015, Payeur meets againt with Émond's for Le iournal d'un vieil homme (Diarv of an old man). In 2016 she produces with Robert Lacerte Pilon's *Igaluit*. Finally in 2017 she completed the production of Michel La Veaux's documentary Labrecque, une caméra pour la mémoire, produced the latest Bernard Émond, Pour vivre ici (A place to live), both released winter 2018. The same year she also produced with Marc Daigle, La disparition des lucioles (The Fireflies Are Gone), by Sébastien Pilote whose release is also scheduled in 2018.

### MARC DAIGLE PRODUCER

Marc Daigle began his film career as a director, with *Colombine* (1970, short) and *C'est ben beau l'amour* (1971). That same year, he helped lauch ACPAV and decided to become a producer. Since then he has worked exclusively with the same cooperative, apart from additional contract work for the NFB between 1977 and 1980.

Marc Daigle has produced films for some of the most prominent Quebec directors from the generation that came of age in the 1970s: Jean Chabot (Une nuit en Amérique, 1974), Jean-Guy Noël (Tu brûles... tu brûles..., 1973; Ti-cul Tougas, 1976; Tinamer, 1987), Paul Tana (Les grands enfants, 1980; Caffè Italia, Montréal, 1985; La Sarrasine, 1991; La déroute, 1998), Hubert-Yves Rose (La ligne de chaleur, Directors' Fortnight, Cannes 1989). He has also worked closely with Bernadette Payeur on films by directors such as Pierre Falardeau (Le party, 1989; Octobre, 1994; Miracle à Memphis, 1999), Bernard Émond (La femme qui boit, 2000; La donation, 2008) and Benoit Pilon (Ce qu'il faut pour vivre, 2006). In 2003, he produced Les immortels, Paul Thinnel's first fictional feature. He also worked in documentary film (Suzanne Guy and Jean-Claude Coulbois pair of films, Un miroir sur la scène). He has been the president of ACPAV since 1990 and is on the board of directors of AQPM (Association québécoise de la production médiatique).

Through his work, Daigle is contributing to the exploration of new avenues in fictional filmmaking in Quebec.

He co-produced *Rêves de poussière* by Laurent Salgues, a France-Canada co-production presented at the Journées des auteurs/Venice Days (2006) and Sundance (World Cinema Dramatic Competition) in 2007. He produced with Bernadette Payeur, *Le vendeur* (Sundance World Cinema Dramatic Competition, 2011) and *Le démantèlement* (Semaine de la critique, Cannes 2013, et Trophée francophone du long métrage fiction 2014) by Sébastien Pilote. In 2013-2014 he produced *Les loups* third feature by Sophie Deraspe, a co-production with France (Sophie Salbot, Athénaïse), presented at the openning of the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois in February 2015 and in several festivals and having won the FIPRESCI prize in Torino (november 2015).

In 2015, he co-produced with Chantal Lafleur the canadian part of the film *Le coeur régulier* by Vanja d'Alcantara (presented in France, Belgium and Quebec spring 2016 and in Japan fall 2017). He is also associate producer on the movie *Iqaluit* by Benoit Pilon (filmed during end of summer 2015 and released winter 2017) produced by Bernadette Payeur and Robert Lacerte.

In 2017 he produced with Bernadette Payeur Sebastien Pilote's third feature *La disparition des lucioles* (*The Fireflies Are Gone*) whose release is scheduled in 2018.

### ABOUT ACPAV

ACPAV (Association coopérative de productions audio-visuelles) was born in 1971 when a number of young Quebec filmmakers – Pierre Harel, Jean Chabot, Mireille Dansereau, Roger Frappier, Marc Daigle, Hubert-Yves Rose, André Théberge and Yves Beauchemin – expressed the desire and need to create a flexible production structure that met their artistic requirements and in which they could pool their resources and expertise for the common good.

Among the more notable feature films ACPAV produced in the 1970s were: La vie rêvée by Mireille Dansereau, Bulldozer and Vie d'ange by Pierre Harel, L'infonie inachevée by Roger Frappier, Ti-cul Tougas by Jean-Guy Noël, Une nuit en Amérique by Jean Chabot, L'eau chaude, l'eau frette by Marc-André Forcier and Les grands enfants by Paul Tana.

Over the following decades, a number of other noteworthy features followed: Lucien Brouillard by Bruno Carrière, La femme de l'hôtel by Léa Pool, Le party, Octobre, and the Elvis Gratton trilogy by Pierre Falardeau, La Sarrasine and La déroute by Paul Tana, Cap Tourmente by Michel Langlois, and Bernard Émond's films La femme qui boit and 20 h 17, rue Darling. There was also no shortage of short films, including Lamento pour un homme de lettre by Pierre Jutras, and Sortie 234 and Lettre à mon père by Michel Langlois. ACPAV also produces documentaries. Among the best-known are: Caffè Italia, Montréal by Paul Tana, Ô Picasso by Gilles Carle, Ceux qui ont le pas léger meurent sans laisser de traces and L'instant et la patience by Bernard Émond, La manière nègre ou Aimé Césaire, chemin faisant and Tropique Nord by Jean-Daniel Lafond, L'année qui change la vie and Du coeur à l'âme avec ou sans Dieu by Suzanne Guy, L'Erreur boréale by Richard Desiardins and Robert Monderie, and Un miroir sur la scène, La naissance d'une messe, Un sur mille and Mort subite d'un homme théâtre by Jean-Claude Coulbois.

All this while, ACPAV has continued to produce works by emerging artists, including the debut films of Paul Thinel (Les immortels), Marie-Jan Seille (La lune viendra d'elle-même) and Sébastien Pilote (The Salesman, The Auction). ACPAV continues with Bernard Emond's All that you possess, The Wolves from Sophie Deraspe, shot at Îles-de-la-Madeleine (2013), then The Diary of an Old Man from Bernard Émond (2014), Benoit Pilon's Iqaluit (2015), Le coeur régulier from Vanja d'Alcantara (a co-production with France, 2015), Michel La Veaux's documentary Labrecque, une caméra pour la mémoire (2017), Bernard Emond's A Place to Live and Sébastien Pilote's The Fireflies Are Gone.

