

present

KUESSIPAN

Preliminary Press Kit



Script

Myriam Verreault and Naomi Fontaine

Freely inspired by the novel
***KUESSIPAN* by Naomi Fontaine**

Director

Myriam Verreault

Producer

Félice Frappier

Production

Max Films Media

PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Short synopsis

Two girls grow up as best friends in an Innu community. While Mikuan has a loving family, Shaniss is picking up the pieces of her shattered childhood. As children, they promised each other to stick together no matter what. But as they're about to turn 17, their friendship is shaken when Mikuan falls for a white boy, and starts dreaming of leaving the reserve that's now too small for her dreams.



Cast

Mikuan Vollant (16-21 years old)	SHARON FONTAINE-ISHPATAO
Shaniss Jourdain (16-21 years old)	YAMIE GRÉGOIRE
Metshu Vollant (18 years old)	CÉDRICK AMBROISE
Francis	ÉTIENNE GALLOY
Louise Vollant	CAROLINE VACHON
Claude Vollant	MIKE INNU PAPU MCKENZIE
Nukum	ANNISS DESTERRES
Uapukun Vollant	ROSELYN FONTAINE
Nishkiss (9 months)	MIKUPISHAN POIRIER
Mikuan Vollant (8 years old)	ARIEL FONTAINE ST-ONGE
Shaniss Jourdain (8 years old)	KATINEN GRÉGOIRE-FONTAINE
Metshu Vollant (8 years old)	JOE FONTAINE
Greg	DOUGLAS GRÉGOIRE
Josh	BILLY-JACK JOURDAIN
Mikuan's teacher	BRIGITTE POUPART
Writing workshop leader	MARTIN DESGAGNÉS

Crew

Director	MYRIAM VERREAULT
Script	MYRIAM VERREAULT and NAOMI FONTAINE freely inspired by <i>Kuessipan</i> by NAOMI FONTAINE published by Éditions Mémoire d'Encrier
Script Consultant	VIRGINIE BARRET
Producer	FÉLIZE FRAPPIER
Associate Producers	SYLVIE LACOSTE, RÉGINALD VOLLANT
Innu Relations Director	KIM FONTAINE
Distribution - Canada	FILMOPTION INTERNATIONAL
Director of Photography	NICOLAS CANNICIONI
Production Designer	JOËLLE PÉLOQUIN
Costume Designer	MARJOLAYNE DESROSIERS
Mentor to the actors and the director	BRIGITTE POUPART
1 st Assistant Directors	JEANNE LEBLANC, MICHEL MARREC
Casting Directors	JACINTHE BEAUDET, TOBIE FRASER, MYRIAM VERREAULT
Additional Casting Director	GENEVIÈVE HÉBERT
Makeup Artists	MARIE SALVADO, DOMINIQUE T. HASBANI
Hair	NERMIN GRBIC, ALEX VERVILLE
Location Manager	SERGINE BROUILLETTE
Set Managers	BRIGITTE ST-ONGE, SÉBASTIEN KÈGLE
Production Managers	ZIAD TOUMA, JULIE GROLEAU
Sound Recorders	FRÉDÉRIC CLOUTIER, STEPHEN DE OLIVEIRA
Editors	AMÉLIE LABRÈCHE, MYRIAM VERREAULT, SOPHIE LEBLOND
Sound Designers	SAMUEL GAGNON-THIBODEAU, SYLVAIN BELLEMARE
Sound Mixer	BERNARD GARIÉPY-STROBL
Music	LOUIS-JEAN CORMIER

Interview with director & writer Myriam Verreault and co-writer & author of the bestseller book *Kuessipan*, Naomi Fontaine.

***Kuessipan* means "For you", "Your move". Beyond its meaning in the book, what is the scope of "For you"?**

Myriam Verreault: The title echoes not only the story, but also the creative process. There was a message to transmit, somewhat of a torch handover for the film to exist. Naomi first agreed to send me her book *Kuessipan*, but she also gave me her determination and knowledge.

Naomi Fontaine: The book is not a story per se. It's a set of voices. When I wrote *Kuessipan*, I had a very clear intention: to show faces, places and moments lived within my community. The desire to move away from the generally conveyed images of Uashat mak Mani-Utenam^{*1}, those of idleness and loss of identity. *Kuessipan* is first "For you," "for them," in the eyes of the people I speak with, existing apart from prejudices.

MV: This transfer would then take place with the actors, who are practically all Innus of the community and non-professionals. They would embody characters very close to them and prove in turn that they, too, could be part of this world.

It's difficult to imagine that the film could be done elsewhere than on the North Shore.

MV: When I visited Uashat for the first time, I fell in love with the people and I immediately understood that it was necessary not only to show them, but more importantly that they take the high ground. I have never seen them at the movies or on TV. They were invisible in the image we have of Quebecers. I was convinced that others could fall in love with them. But to do that, you had to do everything onsite.

NF: There is also importance to the North Shore. There is this vast territory, the river as wide as a sea, the seasons...then there is the reserve which is a contained, restricted place. This narrowness of space however brings a closeness between people within all of its beauty: solidarity, mutual aid, interdependence of the community.

MV: The word "reserve" has a negative connotation, but basically, what defines a reserve? It's its people. And I wanted to show this place through the lives of people...

NF: Hence the distinction that must be made between the reserve and the community. The reserve is the place. The community is people. There is a real barrier, a demarcated boundary between the reserve and the town of Sept-Îles that encloses Uashat and separates it from Mani-Utenam, which is 15 minutes away by car. However the community transcends that.

¹ The Innu community is divided into two distinct places: Uashat, landlocked southwest of Sept-Îles on the edge of the bay and Mani-Utenam, 20 km east, perched on the cliff, overlooking the St. Lawrence River.

Naomi, who were you talking to when you wrote *Kuessipan*?

NF: To Quebecers. I grew up in Quebec City from the age of seven years old and they had a distorted image of my nation. I wanted to say, "I'll show you my grandmother's face." Afterwards, I realized that the Innu recognized themselves in the book and that recognizing oneself in a literature was positive, important and a pleasure.

Myriam, what was your point of entry into the book?

MV: Naomi's style is very descriptive, without being too overbearing. I saw everything. There is this phrase that has had an immense effect on me: *I wish you knew her, the girl with a round belly*. I knew her, I understood her and I felt all the love the writer had for her. I identified with someone who wasn't me and I could imagine myself living on the reserve, wanting to go out, but also wanting to stay there. There are many things that are very misunderstood about the Innu, such as the fact that girls have children early. There is something simple in the way Naomi describes it, in the "why not" that shatters our prejudices.

The book is remarkable in its evocative power, but it is not a literal narrative. How did you transform the content of the book?

MV: First there was this research trip where we settled there for two months in the summer of...2012!

NF: We had a summer trip. We spent a lot of time with people, on the beach, around a fire, we went out a lot...

MV: For me, this trip was an eye-opener. It took away the common idea that the Indigenous are people we have to feel sorry for. I had fun and partied with them. I had great ambitions to write the first version of the script that summer, but I did not write a single line (guilty laughter). I felt like I was playing hooky. There was too much to learn, to assimilate. However, the writing process had already started just by living with them.

What direction did the co-writing take?

MV: After determining the outline of the story together and what we wanted to say, I took on the day-to-day writing, but Naomi established herself as the guardian of the culture and spirit of the project. The process was long, it was easy to get lost. She brought me back to the basics of what we wanted to do. And she fed my writing by sharing other ideas and new images through long conversations on the phone where we just chatted about life.

How did the story come to life?

MV: We wanted to show the life of the Innu through the eyes of a girl (Mikuan), but at the same time create a story that could happen elsewhere. To say "here is *one* Innu" is different from saying "here are *all* the Innu", which is impossible and not as impactful on a dramatic level. From impressions collected on the North Shore and strong images from the book, we imagined these two friends, Mikuan and Shaniss, who carry within themselves two opposing yet complementary forces: wanting to leave versus wanting to stay. It was already

a transgression, because these characters are not in the book strictly speaking. Consequently, the more the script advanced, the more we moved away from the story of the book, but without losing its spirit.

NF: When we talk about the Indigenous, we tend to put everyone in the same basket. We had to be able to see the multitude of possibilities. Hence the importance of developing other characters like Metshu, Mikuan's brother, their parents, their grandmother, or even Shaniss' boyfriend.

There were several versions of the script, a lot of refusals. What was gained over the rewrite and what was lost?

MV: What was lost was my idea of making a more impressionistic film, in paintings. There has been a shift to something more narrative, in the American sense. Thanks to the refusals...or rather, because of the refusals, I think that led me to develop the depth of each character. I was uninhibited about the idea of the traditional narrative mode and I lost my fear of doing something conventional. Places and people were so invisible that they brought on a new dimension.

Did the voice-over begin immediately?

The voice of Mikuan who was present in the first versions was cut to allow us to think by imagining concrete actions. I brought it back during the production phase, which allowed me to return to the book when writing the script. So we moved away from the book during the script, to come back to it at the end with a clear idea of what to take out for the voiceover. It happened naturally, because we had respected the spirit of the book.

The voice-over adds to the film like music and provides a key to understanding Mikuan and the Innu both affectively and intuitively.

NF: Myriam's images not only add a layer to the sentences taken from the book, but enhances their meanings. I had my own images when I wrote them, and now they are generating others that are compatible. The narration bits are a nice reminder of the book.

MV: The voice-over brings poetry, but at the same time it is very rooted in reality through the evocative power of Naomi's words. It has a purpose, since Mikuan is a writer in the making who imagines her world with words.

Beyond the story of a fusal friendship put to the test, the idea of freedom takes several forms in the film, whether it is freedom in relation to the reserve or in relation to others, and aspirations for the future.

MV: I remember a phone interview during my scriptwriting stay. From her office in Montreal, the reporter asked me what struck me most in the Innu way of life. At the same moment, I was watching a 10-year-old girl ride a four-wheeled all-terrain vehicle on the beach without a helmet on. I replied: freedom. While living there, I felt this freedom that expresses itself as a big "fuck you" to rules, laws, and borders...

NF: There is no word for "freedom" in Innu. We must have known the confinement to get an idea of what freedom is. One way to express this idea in my language would be "end of confinement". The opposite of the reserve, in a sense.

MV: I tried to stage moments of life that transcend the confinement of the reserve. The opening scene embodies that. We see Mikuan and Shaniss as children, fishing for capelin, on the beach, at night.

Mikuan's quest for freedom is not meant to deny her community. But maybe more of this "confinement"?

MV: Mikuan is an Innu in 2019, proud of her roots, but who asks questions that go beyond her cultural identity. She wonders if she can make an impact on things, whether she can make a difference in her own life, and also on a larger scale. These are universal questions. Shaniss has similar questions, but her choices are different. She starts a family at a young age, she loves where she lives and she does not want to leave. We see their different point of views through their discussions.

Children populate the streets, the reserve, life. And the level of drama they experience is the one that is normally experienced as an adult. There's a scene where Shaniss says, "Sometimes I feel like we're old."

NF: Children are at the heart of everything. They enjoy a lot of freedom; they play outside without much stress. The counterpart of this freedom lived at a young age is that they learn things more quickly. Drama and death are part of their everyday lives.

Social problems are present in the background, but never in a complacent way. They do not stifle the light or the momentum of life. How did you combine that?

MV: The art direction does not lie or embellish anything. The environment is on par with reality and leaves traces of poverty visible. The bright tone comes from the way of filming, of framing. Our gaze shifted to people, not to the details of the scenery, nor to the harshness underlying certain scenes. Yes, the characters live in situations of idleness, but it is from them that the light emanates.

In the staging, the word was to follow the actors and not the other way around. To give them freedom and avoid locking them into rigid dialogues or giving them specific marks on the floor, so they feel comfortable in their acting. Our director of photography Nicolas Canniccioni and his lighting director Denis Lamothe worked hard to figure how to film in almost 360 degrees.

The acting is overwhelming with truth.

NF: If I was certain about something, it was that Myriam was going to find good actors in our community. The Innu are very close to their emotions. Their acting comes naturally. We are playful!

MV: No one had professional acting experience. My approach was therefore to work with where they were in life. And to find people whose life and personality were as close as possible to the characters. Sharon Fontaine-Ishpatao was chosen because she *is* Mikuan. The audition consisted of a two-hour conversation where we talked about her life. I could not believe it, but I felt like talking with my character. Sharon was very reluctant at first. She is not an extrovert. The casting director had to run after her to convince her to come test. Same thing for Yamie Grégoire, who plays Shaniss. There were moments of brilliance in

her tests, but there were also a lot of failures. She is not a professional. For a conventional film, I would have looked elsewhere. However, her spirit embodied Shaniss and it's that very thing that I wanted to put on screen.

So, once the cast was found, there was still a lot of work to get to this level of acting. How did you go about it?

MV: We selected two candidates for each role and we organized workshops with the help of Brigitte Poupart, who came to Uashat before shooting and during a good part of the production. She found all sorts of tips to unwind them. Then she hosted acting workshops, which allowed me to observe them with a little hindsight. We repeated this a lot. They were allowed to say the dialogue in their own way.

In production, we shot with two cameras to capture the most reactions possible and I allowed very long shots without cutting so as to let situations exist and capture their essence.

The racism of Caucasians vis-à-vis the Innu is never mentioned in the film, except perhaps in the bar. You mention of one that would exist with regard to the Caucasians through the quarrel between Shaniss and Mikuan, when she announces that she wants to go to study in Quebec City with her new boyfriend Francis, a white man.

MV: I personally do not see it as racism toward Caucasians, but mainly fear about "the others". There is a real collective anxiety about survival as a population. They have a destiny of resistance. They are less than twenty thousand, not eight million; French-speaking Quebecers should be able to understand this reality of minorities and the issues of cultural loss that come with it. Between protecting the people's cultural wealth and identitarian closure, where can a healthy line be drawn? Although the movie tackles the subject within a small community, it remains a timeless, universal, complex and topical one. And what I love about Mikuan and Shaniss' argument is that they are both right.

NF: When Myriam arrived in the community, she was immediately accepted because of her attitude. An attitude of respect, openness, but also casually withdrawn, not haughty, super "chill".

MV: So, racism exists, it's no surprise. What struck me was that Caucasians and Innu are literally neighbors, in Sept-Îles. By simply crossing the other side of the street, we can either leave or enter the reserve. People rub shoulders without talking to each other. The love story between Mikuan and Francis reveals this silent proximity and its complexity.

Mikuan and Francis share things, apprehensions, and the passion of writing and music. Their universe is not so far from each other, but at the same time, it is. They cannot ignore cultural differences, especially with the weight of history. To defend her boyfriend, Mikuan reminds Shaniss that "Francis did not steal anyone's land". In spite of himself, Francis bears the burden of collective guilt.

How do you make use of the music and why choose Louis-Jean Cormier?

I wanted the original music to be melodic and culturally untainted. Innu music is very present in the film, as well as the music that Mikuan listens to, which is a pop music of her time. The original music should rather illustrate the interiority of Mikuan with taste and with a real emotional charge.

Félice Frappier, the producer, had met Louis-Jean and thought of him to compose the music, since he is from Sept-Îles. When she informed me of his interest, I was skeptical. I had a lot of respect for this artist, but I feared that this is perceived as a simple publicity stunt or that his participation eclipses the performance of non-professional actors. But these fears were not justified. The script touched him and he put himself to work. In addition, the interest of Louis-Jean also came from the fact that he comes from Sept-Îles and he knows very well the reality of the reserve that he impacted his childhood.

I asked him to find singular sounds with unconventional instruments. I've always liked retro electronic sounds and Louis-Jean has embraced a whole new style with disconcerting ease. The great strength of his composition is to subtly introduce the main melody in the head of the audience without imposing thunderously at the beginning of the film. This is the first time he composed the music of a fiction film, but I have the impression that will not be his last...

The controversies around *Slav* and *Kanata* raised questions that would be hard to ignore in this interview. But it seems to me that the nature of the film, its way, becomes its own answer.

NF: For *Kanata*, Lepage, whose work I really enjoy, has lost something. He deprived himself of a meeting. What we criticized was the fact that he did not include indigenous people in one way or another.

MV: You have to make a difference between criticism and censorship. Those who reported the words of each other did not make this important distinction. Instead of hearing the substance of the criticism, some preferred to shout censorship.

NF: Nobody asked Myriam to come to our house and make a movie. Nobody stopped her either. She made that decision. She wanted to show our lives, our dreams, our suffering. There was a certain way that she had to go about it. She did it with respect, she did it *with us*, as equals. At the end of the day, it is an individual issue that each artist should ask themselves about their own legitimacy to speak.

MV: To do that without them, it would have been like entering someone's house without knocking or taking your shoes off, going to the kitchen and straight for the fridge! I could not have done that and I never even thought about it either. On the contrary, I made this film to meet "the other". Doing it without his consent would not have made sense. It is like this saying I love: "It takes two to tango". And I would add that it takes two to dance the Makusham! This film would not have seen the light of day without the Innu artists' enthusiasm and interest. When creating in collaborations with others, there has to be consent from all parties. Just like any relationship.

Of course, I doubted myself upon the *Kanata* controversy and I questioned myself on my project's legitimacy. But what kept me going was that agreement, the pact between the

Innu that worked on the film and I, because they gave their all: their heart, their pride, their time. I could not betray that bond. I also realized that what hurt people the most about *Kanata* is more a question of exclusion than cultural appropriation. What I hear around me is “Do talk about us, but not without involving us.” And it’s only common sense that a dominant group considers that.

Production has gone to great lengths to hire local people, dozens of actors and extras, people in the technical team, to include them, to consult with them at all stages. Producer Félize Frappier forged ties with community organizations, such as the band council, and teamed up with Innu producer Réginald Vollant in Mani-Utenam. When hiring the Montreal staff, Félize and I have put in place a clear directive that we go to the Innu to make a film with them and that we have to show real sensitivity, that we have to adhere to a philosophy based on respect.

NF: Maybe the film is a form of cultural appropriation. If so, that's the best way to do it, that is to say *together*. What matters is the way. To be clear, I do not believe in appropriation in the sense it is given now. I believe in exchange, sharing.

MV: In the end, the film speaks for itself.

MYRIAM VERREAULT, co-scripwriter and director

Myriam Verreault holds a bachelor's degree from Université Laval, where she majored in film studies with a minor in history. After graduating from Cégep de Jonquière with a DEC in media arts and technology, she coordinated and directed a radio documentary series recorded in West Africa for Ados-Radio (Radio-Canada). Myriam Verreault is a co-founder of the Festival du film étudiant de Québec and of the Festival de films de Portneuf sur l'environnement. She has been a member of the board of the Spirafilm independent filmmakers' cooperative during four years. She worked also as a property master and a freelance editor from her home studio.

Myriam Verreault scripted, co-directed, produced, and edited her first feature, *WEST OF PLUTO*. The film had its world premiere as the opening film of the Tiger Award competition at Rotterdam 2009 and went on to screen at some fifty festivals around the world, winning numerous prizes. Since then, she has directed several interactive works for the National Film Board of Canada. She also edited *QUÉBÉKOISIE* a feature documentary that explores the cultural legacy of Quebec's First Nations. *KUESSIPAN* is her second feature film.

NAOMI FONTAINE, co-scriptwriter

Naomi Fontaine was born in Uashat, Quebec, an Indian reserve with a population of less than 3,000 inhabitants. Member of the Innu First Nation, she went back to her community to teach high school French after completing her university studies. In March of 2011, her first novel, which she based on her own experience, was published by Éditions Mémoire d'encrier. *Kuessipan* ("your turn" in the Innu language) went on to receive rave reviews from the critic as well as the public.

Her most recent work, *Manikanetish*, was published in 2017 by Éditions Mémoires d'encrier. The title, meaning "little daisy", also refers to the name of the Uashat school where she taught for three years. Her third and most recent novel, *Shuni* (Mémoires d'encrier), will hit the shelves in Fall 2019.

FÉLIZE FRAPPIER, producer

Félice Frappier made the leap from international sales to production with Guy Édoin's feature debut *Wetlands* (2011 Venice Critics' Week, TIFF, Busan). She then produced *Another House* by Mathieu Roy (Public Award and Best Actor at the 2013 Montréal WFF), Mathieu Denis's *Corbo* (2014 TIFF *Discovery*, Canada's Top Ten, 2015 Berlin *Generation*, Goa), and Guy Édoin's *Ville-Marie* (2014 Cannes Cinéfondation L'Atelier, TIFF *Special Presentation*, Rome, Tallinn, Goa, Santa Barbara) starring Monica Bellucci, Pascale Bussièrès, Patrick Hivon and Aliocha Schneider. In 2016, she was awarded the *Prix de la Relève Vincent Gabriele 2016* by the AQPM (*Association québécoise de la production médiatique*) for most successful business woman in the media industry

She is currently setting up financing for her next project with Sophie Deraspe (***Sunbathing in Hell***) and Guy Édoin (***Frontières***) and is in development with Mathieu Denis and Dinara Drukarova.

RÉGINALD VOLLANT, associate producer - 1960-2018

Réginald had an undeniable gift to bring people together and forge ties between nations, which he did until the very last moment.

Passionate about the land, his language and culture, he always fought for the rightful coexistence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who share the same territory. Jack of all trades, he spent his life involved in various sociocultural activities and organizations, as well as artistic ones (Director of radio CKAU, Director of the Innu Nikamu festival, Producer at Terre Innue (founder), and much more).

As a producer, the feature film ***Mesnak*** by Yves Sioui Durand (2011), earned several prizes and more recently, Kevin Bacon Hervieux's ***Innu Nikamu : Chanter la résistance***, won best documentary at the 2019 Gala Québec Cinéma.

It is also in Myriam Verreault's ***Kuessipan***, through his involvement as associate producer, that we saw another proof of his desire to contribute to inclusive and meaningful projects. Réginald always lead his projects with an unfailing love for life, his people and his community. He passed away August 6th, 2018.



SHARON FONTAINE-ISHPATAO, actress

Sharon Fontaine-Ishpatao was born in Uashat and pursued her post-secondary education in visual arts at Cégep de Sept-Îles. As a multidisciplinary artist, her artistic approach consists mostly in exploring one's identity, a theme to which she blends elements of pop culture in a playful manner, while also mixing absurdity to social engagement. Produced by the Wakoni Mobile (a non-profit-organization that aims to combat isolation and suicide among First Nations youth, while developing artistic, technical, social, and professional skills), her short documentary *De face ou de profil* was selected by many festivals: she earned the Coup de Coeur Télé-Québec award of 2015's edition of the Montreal First People festival and *Best documentary* at the Festival du Film Étudiant de Québec (FFEQ 2016). In fall 2018, she began her studies in theater at Quebec city's Université Laval.

Sharon stood out in auditions with her undeniable sensibility, landing her the part of Mikuan, *Kuessipan*'s leading role

YAMIE GRÉGOIRE, actress

Yamie Grégoire grew up in Uashat and currently attends Manikanetish high school where she is part of the improvisation team. Determined, ambitious and moreover a writing enthusiast, she would like to pursue her studies in the cinematographic field. Yamie plays the role of Shaniss, Mikuan's best friend since childhood.

CÉDRICK AMBROISE, actor

Cédric Ambroise comes from the Uashat mak Mani-Utenam community and attended the Manikanetish high school. He is an accomplished self-taught musician (guitar and piano) who had the opportunity to showcase his talent by recording a few songs with the Wapikoni mobile in the summer of 2017. Earlier that year, Cedrick also took part in an actor's workshop with director Myriam Verreault and author Naomi Fontaine. This new experience gave him the right tools to stand out and acquire the part of Metshu, Mikuan's older brother.

ETIENNE GALLOY, actor

In 2011, a bromance blossomed between Etienne and screenwriter Éric K. Boulianne. That is when the adventure began, first taking them to Cannes with the short film *Petit Frère* (2013), then to the Venice International Film Festival with the feature *Prank* (2014) and Baie-St-Paul with the most recent movie, *Avant qu'on explose* (2019).

To create. This is his mantra. Etienne is driven by his profound love for the art of film and does not hesitate to dive head first into inspiring projects that strike a chord with him.

Etienne plays Francis, a teenager from Sept-Îles who becomes Mikuan's love interest.

CAROLINE VACHON, actress

Originally from Uashat, Caroline Vachon has been a dedicated early childhood educator for the past 10 years. In the fall of 2017, she took part in Kuessipan's audition process and her natural talent was rewarded with the role of Louise Vollant, mother to Mikuan and wife to Claude Vollant.

Caroline is a wonderful addition to the cast, as her real life husband of 20 years also plays her on-screen partner.

MIKE INNU PAPU MCKENZIE, actor

Also originally from Mani-Utenam, Mike Innu Papu McKenzie studied in Uashat and Chicoutimi before coming back to Uashat mak Mani-Utenam in the 1990s to host at the community radio station. He later worked as a student life facilitator at the reserve's high school, while also doing construction work.

In 2007, Mike produced and directed a comedy (in both movie and audio format) titled *Innu Papu (Laughing Innus)*, in which he also starred. Being very involved in the community, he has been working in the Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam (ITUM) Band Council and has already completed two mandates as a political adviser.

Myriam Verreault, Kuessipan's director, acknowledging the fact that his rich and diverse background would make him the perfect candidate for the role, offered him the part of Claude Vollant, Mikuan's father.