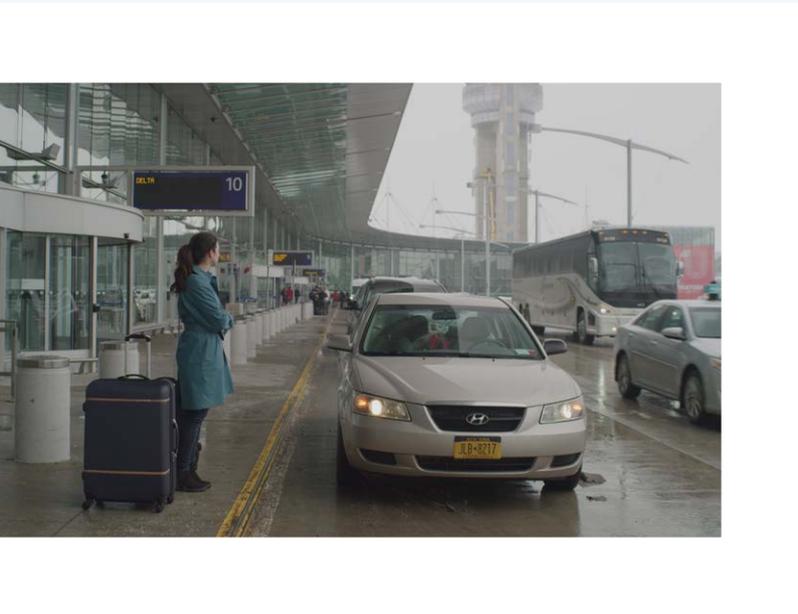




FILMOPTION INTERNATIONAL & OBJECTIF 9 PRESENT

THE JOURNEY

A FILM BY ÈVE SAINT-LOUIS



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Original title : *La Traversée*

English title : *The Journey*

Genre : Drama

Country : Canada

Language : French

Year : 2020

Length : 21 minutes 57 seconds

Picture : Color

Aspect Ratio : 16 : 9

Sound : Stereo

Format : DCP

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CREATIVE TEAM

Director and Screenwriter : Ève Saint-Louis

Producers : Max Walker, Samuel Gagnon,
Bahija Essoussi

Cinematography : Stéphanie Weber-Biron

Editor : Hubert Hayaud

Sound Recording : Alexandre Leblanc

Sound Editing and Mixing : Michel Lambert

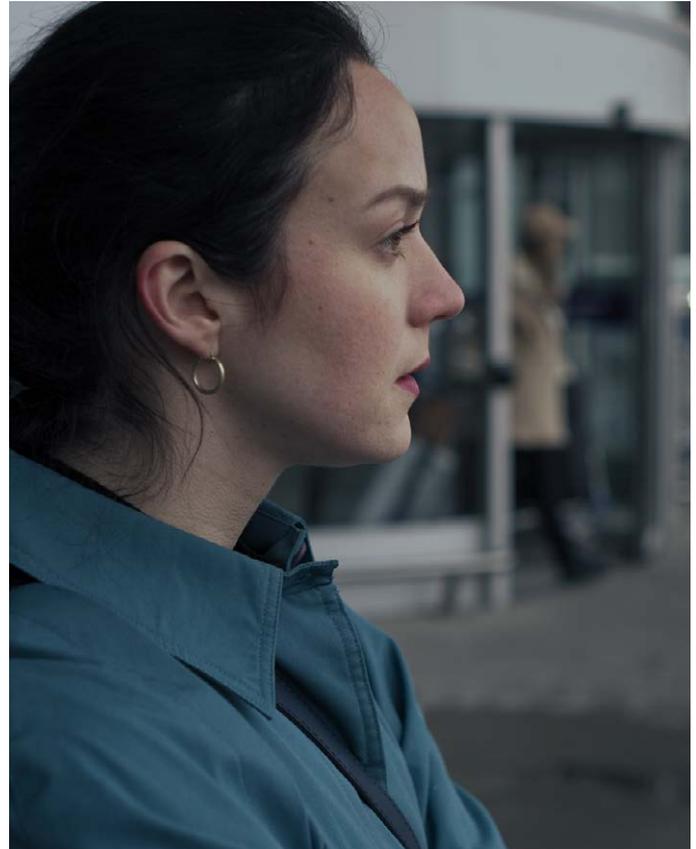
LOGLINE

The Journey is the story of a father and daughter reunion. From Montreal's airport, they will travel along a chaotic path, where their inability to find each other will unveil a complicated and toxic relationship and have them drift from their initial course irrevocably.

SYNOPSIS

After a year away from home, Chantale, who now lives and studies in Paris, returns to Quebec City, to spend the Holidays with her mother and sister. Against all odds, her father, with whom she has a contentious relationship, has offered to pick her up at the airport and drive her there. Hesitant about seeing him again, she accepts his offer nonetheless.

The Journey, tells the story of their reunion: a path strewn with obstacles, where nothing goes as planned. As night falls and the Father deviates from the planned route, Chantale will be faced with the hold he has on her, and will need to take action.



DIRECTOR'S INTENTIONS

In *The Journey*, Chantale's homecoming sets the stage for a relationship where unease and the burden of the past predominate, and where silence rules. I aim to show that parentage does not ensure closeness and that it's possible to feel like a stranger even amongst family. I decided to show a less common version of a father figure, one of a man overwhelmed by his own reactions, who does not find it in himself to act like an adult protective of his daughter. I chose a female character who rebels against abuse in her own way and, in the end, has to make a choice.

For *The Journey* to be as authentic as possible, it seemed important to locate its action in Quebec. I gave preference to locations that can capture the imagination of those from far away, and seem familiar to others who live closer by.



Her father being late, a falling night, road deviations, winter, the countryside, each serve as obstacles increasing the dramatic tension. The car scenes and the endless road amplify the unease and the failure to communicate that have set between the characters. I hope the audience feels the abyss between them. Although sitting in the same car, they are actually miles apart.

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It seems essential to evoke suspense in the viewer, like the one Chantale is experiencing, never spectacular, just ordinary. Rather, her anguish comes from being subjected to her father's moods, never knowing which way the wind will blow.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

How did you come up with the idea for this film?

I started writing this film when I felt the need to express myself on the father-daughter relationship, which I find fascinating and largely untapped in cinema. This sentence from Maurice Maeterlinck's play *Intérieurs* [Interiors] has very much inspired me: "They believe that nothing will happen because they have closed the door, and they don't know that something always happens in souls and that the world does not end at the doors of houses."

I hoped to bring the audience to a place where an outsider may not enter, namely the very fabric of a family. I wanted to question the repercussions of a conflicting relationship and psychological abuse on a child, once she has become a young adult.

I wished to explore anxiety and its devastating effects, but also the limits which push an individual to take action towards his own survival.

Why choose *The Journey* as a title?

The word has several meanings. First, there is motion which sharpens one's instincts and senses. Then there is the physical sensation of being traversed by the unknown, not yet lived nor anticipated. Next, there is Chantale's deep-dive into her inner self. And last, lays the road she has left to travel.



What do you find interesting in the theme of family relationships?

In fact, it is what we dare not say about it. It is a rich, complex, universal subject of which I wanted to explore some unspoken and mysterious aspects, that is, what underlies the dialogue and what are the wounds that we bear. What I find interesting are the certainties and taboos surrounding the family core. There is a strong belief you should forgive your family everything and defend it as if it were a sacred space. But then, what happens when such a relationship becomes toxic and to what point must it be endured? It was important for me to translate into images the idea that parentage does not guarantee intimacy, and that sometimes family can feel like strangers.

How did the locations influence the film?

Situating the film's action in Quebec, during winter, seemed essential. In this cold season people isolate, stay indoors. Breathing changes and light is rare. These phenomena cause the tension I sought to explore. I chose the roads and restaurant to match the film's reality without artificiality, and chose the sets so that their sobriety would not embellish the relationship between Chantale and her father. The house was the hardest character to pin down, to find. I wanted a place that could represent the Father's den, filled with objects and history, with a lowered ceiling weighing down on the characters and creating a sense of enclosure.

Why did you choose to write, direct and act in your first film? How did you accomplish this and what does this challenge represent?

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It all started with the urge to write that story, followed by the wish to bring it to the "big screen" myself. Well aware of how demanding theatre directing could be, I knew full well directing for cinema would require considerable work. So, the thought of acting in it as well, made me hesitate and leave the issue open for a while. During that time, I drew inspiration from directors who combined both roles, and convinced myself to do the same.

I put all my energy into preparing for both roles of actor and director, and draw the clearest line possible between the two. As an actor, I set aside time slots to rehearse and visualize the scenes. I made this as a priority regardless of the pre-production stress that exists in any film.

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As a director, I did much the same and was fortunate to have an experienced Director of Photography I could lean on. When I arrived on set as Chantale, my artistic collaborator knew my intentions for the film and its overall perspective, so he could direct me as needed. My amazing team and our approach have made it possible for me to both act and direct at the same time.



What films have inspired your work?

There is *Manchester By The Sea*, by Kenneth Lonergan, for lighting and color, the car scenes, the rapport the hero has with the road, and the overall humanity of the characters.

There is also the short film *Bal de Famille*, by Stella di Tocco, which deals with family abuse. It served as a reference both to evaluate certain scenes, and to translate the tension and silence in the narrative. There is *Dunkirk*, for it's sound design which heightens the feelings of uneasiness and alertness in the audience. *Prisoners* by Denis Villeneuve for the claustrophobia entrapping the characters as night falls. The paintings by George William Sotter have also inspired me, especially those representing the light of night and the mystery surrounding isolated houses.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

ÈVE SAINT-LOUIS

Actress, screenwriter and director, Ève Saint-Louis obtained a bachelor's degree in theatre, directing and drama from Laval University in Quebec City. She then trained in theatre acting at Cours Florent in Paris in both French and English. In Quebec she acted in several plays including *Winter Funeral* by Hanokh Levin, August Stringberg's *The Dream Play* and Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*. In Paris she was part of the cast of *Merci, Cendres, Camille, Diluvienne* and *In The World Box* presented at the Avignon Festival. In Cinema she is featured in *La Plage* [At the Beach] by Keren Ben Rafael, a short film nominated for the 2017 Cesar that won the Unifrance and the France Television awards. She is also cast in Reem Kherici's feature film *Jour J* [Wedding Unplanned].

These different artistic experiences will be marked by important encounters, inspiring her to write and direct for the cinema which is how the project of her first short film *The Journey* came to be.



Chantale

In 2019 she teamed up with Objectif 9 and received Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC) funding for her first short film, *The Journey* as well as support from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ).

ABOUT THE CAST

CLAUDE LAROCHE

Improviser, director, teacher and actor, Claude Laroche is the recipient of a Gemini award for his role as Mononque Fred in the TV series *Les Bougon*. He was also named to the Hall of Fame of the Quebec National Improvisation League. Claude Laroche has appeared in the series *19-2*, *Mirador III*, *Mon Ex à Moi*, *30 Vies*, *Yamaska*, *L'Echappée*, *District 31* and in the web series *Terreur 404*. He also plays in theatre and most recently in the play *Durocher le milliardaire* at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in Montreal and the Théâtre International de la Langue Française in Paris. He directed *Il n'y a plus rien* which ran at the Théâtre du Rideau Vert in Montreal.



The Father



The Waitress

CATHERINE CHABOT

A graduate of the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Montréal, Catherine Chabot is both an actress and playwright. She wrote the plays *Table rase* [Clean Slate], *Dans le champ amoureux* and *Lignes de fuite* in which she also acted. In Montreal, she performed in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* at the Rideau Vert theatre and in *The Lovers* by Goldoni at the Theatre Denise-Pelletier. In film she starred in *Menteur* [Compulsive Liar] and in *Le guide de la famille parfaite*. On the small-screen she appeared in several series: *LÉO II*, *Il était une fois dans le trouble*, *Unité 9, O'*, and *Victor Lessard II*.

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

OBJECTIF 9

Objectif 9 is a company incorporated in 2011 which relies on the combined experience of more than 40 years of its producers as well as a catalog of more than 30 feature films in production. Most of them were in international co-productions with countries like Japan, France and the United States.

Its producers, Bahija Essoussi and Samuel Gagnon have produced several feature films, including *Kamataki* by Claude Gagnon which deserved a Special Jury Mention at the Berlin International Film Festival - Kinderfest 14+ (now «Generation»). They have also produced a few short films, including *Les P'tits Cagney* by Denis Côté, and *Outsider* by Faouzi Bensaidi.

In the last year, in addition to *The Journey* which is the first collaboration between Objectif 9 and Ève Saint-Louis, the producers also produced *Les Vieux Chums* [Old Buddies], the last feature film by Claude Gagnon as well as *Montreal Girls*, first feature film by Patricia Chica.

PRODUCTION

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