



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

*Nouvelles Vues: revue sur les pratiques, les théories et l'histoire du cinéma au Québec*

**“CULTURAL TRANSFERS: HOLLYWOOD-QUEBEC” (NO. 25, FALL 2024)**

**Special issue edited by Thomas Carrier-Lafleur (Université de Montréal)  
and Baptiste Creps (Université de Montréal)**

In her essay *Le roman sans aventure* (“The Novel without Adventure,” 2015), Isabelle Daunais notes the contrast between the international visibility of Quebec performing arts and the lesser visibility of the province’s so-called “major” art forms:

One of the most striking features of Quebec’s artistic production, about which, curiously, no one has ever written, is the very clear difference apparent in the visibility of the “major” arts – literature, painting, music, architecture and philosophy – on the one hand, and the performing arts – popular song, the circus, set design – on the other. While performing arts productions appear successfully on every stage on the planet and are recognized as completely in tune with their field (when they are not seen as models), works in the major arts have practically no impact and are not seen as important or noteworthy by anyone in what Milan Kundera called the “great context,” or the supranational context of these arts.<sup>1</sup>

This observation, which some might see as polemical, aptly highlights the modern-day lustre of Quebec’s performing arts. It also encourages us to think about the vitality and impact of one of these so-called “major” arts, first of all within Quebec but also and especially abroad: contemporary Quebec cinema.

In an article entitled “Le ‘renouveau’ du cinéma québécois” (“The ‘Renewal’ of Quebec Cinema,” 2015), Christian Poirier already took up this exercise and highlighted the unusual nature of the critical, public and academic success of Quebec cinema in the early 2000s, as seen in the work of figures such as Denys Arcand, Charles Binamé, Louis Bélanger and Jean-François Pouliot.<sup>2</sup> In a text published in *Cahiers du cinéma* in 2010, Jean-Pierre Sirois-Trahan, for his part, estimated that after years of famine, Quebec cinema, thanks to a new generation of filmmakers, was finally recovering the international favour it had lost for nearly forty years:

With the success of Xavier Dolan at Cannes and that of Denis Côté in Locarno, a whole generation of filmmakers is coming into focus. Alongside these strong-minded figures we must add Maxime Giroux, Sophie Deraspe, Myriam Verreault, Henry Bernadet, Stéphane Lafleur and Rafaël Ouellet. Internationally, where their awards pile up, we have not seen such a blossoming since the 60s (Claude Jutra, Gilles Groulx, Michel Brault, Jean Pierre Lefebvre and Gilles Carle, a generation unjustly relegated to the obscurity of “national cinemas”).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isabelle Daunais, *Le roman sans aventure* (Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 2015), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Poirier, “Le ‘renouveau’ du cinéma québécois,” *Cités* 23, no. 3 (2005): 165-82.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Pierre Sirois-Trahan, “La mouvée et son dehors: renouveau du cinéma québécois,” *Cahiers du cinéma*, 660 (October 2010): 76.

In a panel discussion in 2011, film critics and professors tried to define this “new wave” of filmmakers described by Sirois-Trahan. Côté and Dolan were mentioned again as this wave’s leading lights, alongside a third filmmaker whose style is nevertheless far removed from theirs: “This growing reputation of our cinema, while it derives from the fine reception many films have had, remains for the moment based on the hitherto unseen success of Xavier Dolan and Denis Côté, to whose names we must now add that of Denis Villeneuve: three different generations of filmmakers whose methods and sensibilities are also very dissimilar.”<sup>4</sup>

Today, it is highly likely that even a quick analysis of the situation would confirm that the hypotheses around the “renewal” and “New Wave” of Quebec cinema which were on the minds of film critics and professors in the late 2000s were well-founded. In the 2010s, Quebec cinema charmed audiences beyond its borders as it had rarely done before. Filmmakers including those mentioned above, to whom must be added, among others, Philippe Falardeau, Ken Scott, Kim Nguyen and Jean-Marc Vallée, met with even greater international success than that of their predecessors, drawing the attention of the Hollywood ogre. Quebec filmmakers, known for their intimist projects, genre films and spectacular cinema, and just as much for their television series, now appeared to be at the centre of Hollywood fashion.

No doubt the international and academic success of *Incendies* (Denis Villeneuve, 2010) opened the door to Hollywood for this generation of filmmakers, before Philippe Falardeau’s *Monsieur Lazhar*, released a year later. Films by these artists are regularly honoured at the Oscars and the Golden Globes, while the Hollywood Critics Association named Denis Villeneuve “filmmaker of the decade” and paid tribute to his films *Prisoners* (2013), *Sicario* (2015), *Arrival* (2016) and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), each a Hollywood success. A filmmaker like Jean-Marc Vallée, for his part, stamps his style on his cinema, with films such as *The Young Victoria* (2009), *Dallas Buyers Club* (2013), *Wild* (2014) and *Demolition* (2015), and on his work in television, with the HBO series *Big Little Lies* (2017) and *Sharp Objects* (2018). As with Villeneuve, Vallée’s style imbues his work and established itself as a model for the broad Hollywood context.<sup>5</sup> Another point in common between these two filmmakers: they both have the ability to make films whose artistic stamp dominates and which have a spectacular quality, often with a fairly small budget by Hollywood standards. This is generally true for every one of the filmmakers in this internationally-lionized generation whose contours we have just outlined.

Was this infatuation with Quebec cinema on the part of Hollywood limited to the period beginning in the late 2000s? To answer this question, it would appear to be necessary to study in greater depth the history of the relations between the world of Hollywood and the artistic sphere in Quebec. Today Hollywood has attracted numerous Quebec talents to its industry. This can be seen, apart from those filmmakers already mentioned, in the migration of talented people as diverse as the production designer Patrice Vermette, the costume designer Renée April, the colourist Maxine Gervais, the director and camera operator Stephen Campanelli, the director of photography Yves Bélanger, the producer Roger Frappier and the actress Sophie Nélisse. While

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Bilodeau, Bruno Dequen, Philippe Gajan, Germain Lacasse, Sylvain Lavallée, Marie-Claude Loiselle and Jean-Pierre Sirois-Trahan, “Table ronde: le renouveau du cinéma d’auteur québécois,” *24 images* 152 (2011): 14-22.

<sup>5</sup> When the British filmmaker Andrea Arnold directed the episodes of the second season of *Big Little Lies*, this influence had nefarious consequences for her artistic freedom. The series’ producers did not hesitate to short-circuit Arnold’s style in post-production in order to imitate the aesthetic and editing that Vallée had developed for the first season, giving rise to a wave of discontent in the film community. The hashtag “#ReleaseTheArnoldCut” exposed the injustice, whether contrary to the principle of artistic freedom, which she experienced. On the topic of this controversy, see Aisha Victoria Deeb, “#ReleaseTheArnoldCut is trending after female Director of Big Little Lies was sidelined,” *Mashable* (15 July 2019), <https://me.mashable.com/culture/6102/releasethearnoldcut-is-trending-after-female-director-of-big-little-lies-was-sidelined>.

today the extent of this movement to “Tinseltown” is unlike anything seen before, artists leaving Quebec for Hollywood is nothing new and in fact has numerous precedents. We could mention, for example, the case of the director Mack Sennett, who was born in Quebec and moved to Hollywood, yet preserved family ties in Quebec after spending most of his youth in the province. The same is true of two other Hollywood silent-era and golden-age talents, the actress Norma Shearer and her brother Douglas, a famous specialist in special effects and audio research who spent a large part of his career with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). The Shearer siblings made the Montreal-Hollywood transition after a period of time in New York for Norma. Pauline Garon, Geneviève Bujold, Suzanne Cloutier and Fifi D’Orsay are some of the other Quebec actresses who, not without success, can be found throughout the history of Hollywood. In the case of actors, the French-speaking Quebecer Henri Letondal achieved success there, while the English-speaking Quebecer Glenn Ford became a famous star in classical Hollywood cinema. This gives an idea of the lasting influence of Quebec artists on the Hollywood film industry.

Is it possible, then, to establish a genealogy of the phenomenon of Quebec artists in Hollywood, from the early years of it being the “Mecca of the movies” to today’s high-profile artists? And what can be said about the appeal of Quebec for Hollywood cinema,<sup>6</sup> in a film such as *Agnes of God* (Norman Jewison, 1985), for example, in which Jane Fonda carries out an investigation in the Petites Soeurs de Marie Madeleine convent in Montreal? American films which situate their stories in Quebec, or which make possible screen encounters between Hollywood stars and Quebec actors and actresses, illustrate audiences’ strong interest in the province, which also deserves to be put into perspective. Thus while our modern age leads us to examine above all the phenomenon of Quebec in Hollywood, it seems to us to be relevant to **draw up a genealogy of cultural transfers between Hollywood and Quebec.**

In this respect, for its thematic issue “**Cultural Transfers: Hollywood-Quebec,**” *Nouvelles vues* is inviting submissions which address the topics raised above. Every proposal offering new perspectives on Quebec-Hollywood collaborations is also encouraged. More specifically, proposals may address:

- Quebec artists working in Hollywood;
- American artists who have worked in Quebec;
- Quebec films with Hollywood as their topic;
- Hollywood films which have a Quebec theme;
- the history of Quebec-Hollywood collaboration.

Proposals for articles must contain a title, a brief bio-bibliographical note on the author, and a synopsis of no more than 500 words. This synopsis must delineate a body of work and advance a working hypothesis which addresses one of the approaches or topics mentioned. These materials should be sent to the three following addresses: [nouvellesvues.qc@gmail.com](mailto:nouvellesvues.qc@gmail.com), [thomas.carrier-lafleur@umontreal.ca](mailto:thomas.carrier-lafleur@umontreal.ca) and [baptiste.creps@umontreal.ca](mailto:baptiste.creps@umontreal.ca) no later than **2 October 2023**. The authors of accepted proposals will be invited to submit an article in English or French of between 45,000 and 60,000 characters, spaces included, no later than **1 March 2024**. Articles will be submitted to a double-blind peer-review process and their publication will be conditional on being accepted by at least two evaluations.

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<sup>6</sup> The “Cinéma québécois et États-Unis” (1997) special issue of the journal *Cinémas*, which took up the history of the connections between Quebec cinema and the United States, has already done the groundwork this question to a certain extent. See Louise Carrière, ed., “Cinéma québécois et États-Unis,” *Cinémas* 7, no. 3 (1997), <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/cine/1997-v7-n3-cine1500366/> (consulted 25 October 2022).

### **Bio-bibliographic Notes**

**Baptiste Creps** is a post-doctoral researcher at the Université de Montréal specialising in the history of Hollywood film form. He is the author of a dissertation entitled *Naissance d'un néoclassicisme hollywoodien* (2021) and of scholarly articles arising out of interdisciplinary research into cinema, art history, music, the history of video games and the history of new technologies. He is currently co-authoring a book on the filmmaker Jean-Marc Vallée with Thomas Carrier-Lafleur.

**Thomas Carrier-Lafleur** is a course instructor at Concordia University and at the Université de Montréal, where he holds the position of deputy director of the Laboratoire CinéMédias. His research addresses French and Quebec literature and Quebec cinema from an intermedial perspective which studies the process of transposing literary texts to the screen. He is the author of volumes such as *Voir disparaître: une lecture du cinéma de Sébastien Pilote* (L'Instant même, 2021); *Projections croisées: dialogues sur la littérature, le cinéma et la création avec Andrée A. Michaud et Simon Dumas* (Figura, 2021); *Il s'est écarté: enquête sur la mort de François Paradis* (Nota bene, 2019, with avec David Bélanger); and *L'oeil cinématographique de Proust* (Classiques Garnier, 2016). He is also co-director of *Nouvelles Vues: revue sur les pratiques, les théories et l'histoire du cinéma au Québec*.

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