

LES FILMS DU 3 MARS presents a Brompton Films production

a film by Yan Giroux

based on the novel by David Clerson

My

Son

Came

Back

to

Disappear

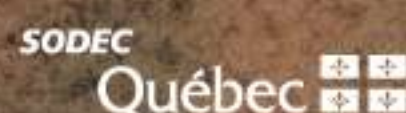
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Marie-France Marcotte

Francis La Haye

With MARIE-FRANCE MARCOTTE, FRANCIS LA HAYE, ISABELLE GIROUX Cinematography OLIVIER LABERGE Production design and costumes GENEVIÈVE BOITEAU
Makeup and hair CHANTY TANG TREMBLAY Sound SIMON LACELLE, YECINE MELIANI, MARIE-PIERRE GRENIER, BRUNO BÉLANGER Editing ALEXIS VIAU
Original Music MARC-ANTOINE BARBIER Color Grading WILLIAM ALBU Assistant Director GABRIELLE GINGRAS Poster Design MATHIEU JACQUES
Produced by LOUIS-EMMANUEL GAGNÉ-BROCHU and YAN GIROUX Original Work DAVID CLERSON Screenplay & Direction YAN GIROUX



Conseil des arts du Canada Canada Council for the Arts



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specs

My Son Came Back To Disappear, 80 minutes, fiction

production date **2025**

production country **Canada (Québec)**

original language **français**

crew

directing **Yan Giroux**

producers **Yan Giroux (Brompton Films), Louis-Emmanuel Gagné-Brochu (Déjà Vu)**

writing **Yan Giroux**

cinematography **Olivier Laberge**

sound recording **Simon Lacelle, Yecine Meliani**

art director **Geneviève Boiteau**

makeup and hairstyling **Chanty Tang Tremblay**

editing **Alexis Viau**

sound design **Marie-Pierre Grenier**

sound mix **Bruno Bélanger**

color grading **William Albu**

music **Marc-Antoine Barbier**

starring **Marie-France Marcotte, Francis La Haye**

logline

After years apart, a woman living alone in the forest is troubled by the sudden return of her estranged son. Against her will, she must accompany him on his final journey.

synopsis

My Son Came Back to Disappear is the eponymous adaptation of David Clerson's novel. This impressionistic film tells the story of Suzanne, whose isolated life in the forest is disrupted by the sudden return of her estranged son Mathieu, whom she hasn't seen for so many years. Day after day, she is burdened by Mathieu's desire to return to the peat bog—a hidden place in the forest haunted by their shared memories of the past. At first, she resists, unwilling to show him the path but finally gives in and leads the way. As they get nearer, mother and son weave a fragile bond – if only for a moment. Despite her deep love, Suzanne cannot keep her son from his final journey.



interview with Yan Giroux, director

Q: What first sparked your desire to adapt David Clerson's novel?

After my first feature, I went through a creative lull. While in Mexico, I cracked open *My Son Came Back to Disappear* (2023) by my longtime friend David Clerson. The impact was immediate. His relationship to landscape felt unlike anything I'd come across in recent Quebec literature: thick, sticky, stripped of any romantic lyricism. It wasn't the kind of majestic nature you look up to admire, but a crawling, teeming one you notice when you lower your gaze. I didn't think of adapting it right away. But a few months later, the realization became inescapable: this book had everything—a pair of characters, a clear cosmogony, a raw, organic energy—that could form the foundation for my next movie. I could already picture the film taking shape, and I immediately saw the potential to self-produce it.

Q: You chose to produce this film outside the traditional funding system. Why take that risk?

In cinema, the process can be excruciatingly long. Years can pass without ever stepping onto a film set. But when I look at filmmakers like Denis Côté or Robert Morin, I'm reminded there's another way: to make films born of desire rather than capital. I joined forces with a young producer, Louis-Emmanuel Gagné-Brochu, who's 27. I brought a bit of funding; he brought an eagerness to produce and a sharper grasp of the administrative side. This intergenerational partnership shaped every stage of the project. We began writing in January 2024 and were shooting by September. That speed kept the film close to its original impulse.

Q: Did David Clerson contribute to the screenplay?

He gave me total freedom yet remained a generous collaborator throughout the process. I threw a thousand ideas at him—some wildly removed from the end result—and he simply said, "I trust your vision." He understood that a new work would emerge from his and never treated the novel as a sacred text. Still, I wanted to stay true to its spirit. That happened quite naturally, since we filmed on the very land that inspired him (the site of his family cabin). David even guided us through the forest to find shooting locations, and he plays the naked father in the peat bog!

Q: What moved you most about this story?

I was struck by the way David uses nature to reflect on death. He puts the human at the heart of the living world, as one organic element among many. It's the cult of the composted body! I wanted to move beyond the binary notion of life and death as two separate realms. When you look closely at nature, you realize those states are far more porous and intertwined than we'd like to believe. That cycle—life, death, rebirth—flows through the entire film. The bogs, symbolic thresholds between worlds, hold perfectly preserved bodies two thousand years old, while mushrooms recycle death into life. I loved how all this could inhabit the story without didactic explanations or heavy symbolism. It's fiction, yet there's something observational, almost documentary-like, in how we film the real.

I was also fascinated by the mother-father-son dynamic, which unfolds in a strange and unsettling sense of time, free of sentimentality. The film leans more toward tragedy than drama, carrying a faintly mythic dimension.



Q: Your films often focus on outsiders. What draws you to such characters?

I'm rather docile by nature; I function well within structure and rules. Confronting freer beings allows me to question my own domestication and, in a way, undo it a little. I'm fascinated by people who step outside the system. That was true in *Elegant*, my documentary about the band *Chocolat*, and again in *For Those Who Don't Read Me*, about the life of poet Yves Boisvert. In *My Son Came Back to Disappear*, Suzanne's son Mathieu embodies that same radical freedom. He returns possessed by a force that defies social codes. Observing such beings both nourishes and challenges me, even if I couldn't live with that kind of wild abandon.

Q: The film hinges on two central performances. How did you find Marie-France Marcotte and Francis La Haye?

Casting was a very rewarding process, but ultimately Marie-France and Francis formed the right duo: generous yet mysterious. For Marie-France, this was her first film role. She fascinated me and still does: her face captures light in extraordinary ways, and her entire body tells a story. She brought silent dignity and independence to Suzanne. This mother isn't defined solely by her son. When he returns, she doesn't rush into his arms. She resists, proud, despite her love. Francis La Haye plays Mathieu with a restrained intensity: a fragile yet stubborn man clinging to his final crossing. His background as a dancer gives him a rare presence on screen.

Q: Visually, you chose the 4:3 format with rounded corners. What led you to that choice?

The 4:3 ratio allowed us to work with verticality and rethink the characters' relationship to space. I wanted them to appear small yet central; at once crushed, transcended and magnified. It's a way of examining the tension between human beings and nature. The rounded corners evoke slides and Suzanne's analog photographs. Rather than a cropped slice of reality, the frame becomes a small window through which we glimpse a world that feels both intimate and timeless.

Two visual touchstones guided my cinematographer Olivier Laberge and me: *Come and See* (1985) by Elem Klimov and *Godland* (2022) by Hlynur Pálmason.



Q: Sound plays a crucial role in the film, which unfolds within a richly crafted sonic landscape.

Marie-Pierre Grenier, my longtime collaborator, sculpted a forest of sound unlike any other. I often say that the image speaks to the brain, while sound speaks to the body. Beneath apparent stillness, there's constant murmuring: roots, water, insects, memories. We wanted the audience to feel that invisible process of decay and renewal. Composer Marc-Antoine Barbier (*Choses sauvages*) added a subtle, almost organic score that breathes with the wind and moss.

Q: The film is short and open to many interpretations. Was that deliberate?

Yes. The novel never tries to explain everything, and I wanted to preserve that quality. To let the viewer invest their own meaning. With so little dialogue and so few time markers, you're compelled to feel rather than understand. At first, I thought I'd return to my early style: long takes, stretched runtimes, an immersion in landscape. Because I was self-producing, I assumed I'd rediscover that freedom and that it would all come naturally. I shot much of it that way. But in the editing room, I was taken aback: that approach just didn't fit this story. I realized my attachment to duration had become a kind of posture, something I imposed rather than something the film required. At the outset, I imagined a two-and-a-half-hour work that would let time seep in. But progressively, through repeated cuts, a new, shorter, denser rhythm emerged. That's how the film's leaner form was born. It marks, I believe, an evolution in my filmmaking. I've changed, my cinema has too, and I had to accept that this project called for a different pulse than my earlier work.



Q: You often talk about the joy of making and the importance of craft. How did that spirit carry through on set?

We were a small, devoted crew. Everyone brought immense talent and care to their department. I'm very proud of the aesthetic experience the film offers, both visually and sonically. Working with younger collaborators like editor Alexis Viau and producer Louis-Emmanuel reminded me of the exuberance of my beginnings. This film kept me alive and a little naïve. Making cinema this way—fast, free, handmade—is pure joy.

Q: Any final thoughts?

Though the film feels somewhat timeless, I still see it as rooted in the present. Its love for the bog, for the fragile beauty of wetlands, is a statement against the economic interests that keep encroaching on such ecosystems. And whether in its nature or its people, the film expresses a deep affection for everything that flourishes on the margins.





Yan Giroux

director, writer, producer

Yan Giroux independently produced his documentaries between 2007 and 2012, allowing him to develop his vision, which would later grow with more resources and ambition in his fiction short films. In addition to being recognized locally, his shorts have been showcased in several international festivals, including Sundance Film Festival. His first feature film, *For Those Who Don't Read Me* (2018), won several awards at the Gala Québec Cinéma.

filmography

MY SON CAME BACK TO DISAPPEAR, 80 min, Fiction, 2025

STANDARDIZED PATIENT PROGRAM, 23 min, Fiction, 2022

FOR THOSE WHO DON'T READ ME, 107 min, Fiction, 2018

LOST PARADISE LOST, 25 min, Fiction, 2017

MI NIÑA MI VIDA, 18 min, Fiction, 2013

SURVEILLANT, 17 min, Fiction, 2011

JULY 14 IN MARSEILLE, 86 min, Documentary, 2012

ELEGANT, 84 min, Documentary, 2009

CUBANOS, LIFE AND DEATH OF A REVOLUTION, 82 min, Documentary, 2007

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Les Films du 3 Mars (F3M) is an international sales company and distributor dedicated to championing Quebec and Canadian auteur cinema, both at home and around the world. Since its founding in 2005 by forty-five filmmakers, F3M has tapped into the expertise and creativity of its team to promote and disseminate its members' works. A leader in the distribution of feature-length auteur documentaries, F3M has built a strong track record both in theatres and on the festival circuit. Its catalog also includes carefully selected fiction features and short films of all genres.

[Watch the trailer](#)

