



presents

THE AUCTION

A film by Sébastien Pilote

"Beautifully shot and impressively performed! Subtle and gently moving!"
– Mark Adams, **Screen Daily**

"[The Auction] cherishes the complexity of simplicity."
– Anna Tatarska, **Fandor.com**



France / 2013 / Drama / French with English Subtitles
112 min / 2.35:1 / Dolby SR-D 5.1

[Official Film Webpage](#)

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FULL SYNOPSIS

A man of few words, Gaby manages his family's farm – Buchard & Sons – on his own, despite his advancing age. With no actual sons to speak of, and his two grown daughters living far away in the big city, he spends his days tending to the animals and land that surround him, eschewing modern technology and most social interactions. When his eldest daughter, Marie, appears at the family homestead to share news that she's finally getting divorced and in desperate need of money in order to keep the home where she and her children live, Gaby's quiet life begins to unravel. In an effort to tend to his children much the way he steadfastly tends to his farm, he'll be forced to make sacrifices he never intended for the sake of those closest to him.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A man of few words, Gaby manages his family's farm alone, despite his age. With no sons to speak of and two grown daughters far away in the big city, he spends his days tending to the farm, eschewing most social interactions. When his eldest daughter, Marie, appears at the family homestead to share news that she's in desperate need of money in order to keep her own home, Gaby's quiet life begins to unravel. In an effort to tend to his children much the way he steadfastly tends to his farm, he'll be forced to make sacrifices he never intended for the sake of those closest to him.

LOG LINE

When his grown daughter returns to the family farm in desperate need of money, solitary and stoic Gaby will be asked to sacrifice everything for those closest to him.

ASSETS

Official Trailer for embedding purposes:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBRuuGqMRAs>

Downloadable hi-res images:

<http://www.filmmovement.com/filmcatalog/index.asp?MerchandiseID=360>

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

WINNER

Cannes Film Festival – Critic’s Week, *SACD Prize*

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Toronto International Film Festival

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

Festival International du Film de la Rochelle

Festival de Lima Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cine

International Film Festival Film by the Sea

Haifa International Film Festival

Ars Independent International Film Festival

Filmfest Hamburg

Namur International Film Festival

Festival International de Cine de Morelia

São Paulo International Film Festival

Thessaloniki International Film Festival

Torino International Film Festival



AN INTERVIEW WITH SÉBASTIEN PILOTE

Your film recalls a Balzac novel, *Le Père Goriot*, in which a man sells everything out of love for his daughters. Was that your creative spark, or did it come to mind during the writing process?

The spark actually came from the story of a friend who didn't want to take over his father's farm. He even made a short film about it. I also had a line from François Truffaut in mind: after a failure, he said a film about a character on the way down could not work. Of course, he never got to see how big a hit *Titanic* was! I asked myself how I could tell the story of a character who's on the way up and on the way down at the same time. That paradox was on my mind when I thought of a sheep farmer. The religious reference appealed to me, as did the idea of starting with the end of my first film, *Le Vendeur*, where we saw a factory closing. And what comes after closing is dismantling.

With all of that going on, I rediscovered *Le Père Goriot*. Reading it again, I saw just how many parallels there were with the story I wanted to tell. So I decided to go deeper into certain ideas and paraphrase that classic novel by using a few sentences and the theme of an over-delved, open paternal instinct. In a way, my film is actually a prequel, set in the boonies, to *Le Père Goriot*, which in turn is inspired by *King Lear*!

Do you have some more thoughts on the paradox in your protagonist's journey?

When I write, I set certain parameters. In the case of *The Auction*, I wanted to build a story about a downward journey that would also be a story of heroism – the story of a beautiful loser. Like the last time, I wanted to build the film around a unique character, this time by surrounding him with a constellation of secondary characters: His daughters, his ex, his neighbor, a straight-man, a joker, his accountant friend - a friend who tells him the unvarnished truth. Finally, I wanted Gaby to meet the people close to him in succession, never together, to show that he himself is dismantled in a sense. You're more creative when you have to work with constraints.

Did you do any research?

The best ideas come to me in the field. That's why I take the time to meet the extras one-on-one and listen to their stories. In recent years, the number of sheep farms in my region, Saguenay-lac-Saint-Jean, has declined drastically. And the family farm in general is in danger in Quebec. Many farmers have crushing debts. A sheep farmer can never leave home. He's a prisoner on his farm.

You cast Gabriel Arcand in the role of Gaby, and he's an actor often associated with hermit and loner characters.

I knew him from the films of Denys Arcand and Gilles Carle, especially *Les Plouffe*, and I knew he was a very accomplished actor. When I offered him the part, he suggested I take my time and mentioned some American actors he thought would be appropriate, like Harry Dean Stanton. And that pleased me, because we were thinking along the same lines. So we did some screen tests. I wanted a very American actor, a manly man. In the script, I described Gaby as a "wise, world-weary old black man," a reference to Jack Kerouac. I thought of Gabriel Arcand because he's so photogenic, with great eyes. I figured if I could make him smile, I'd be home free! He came to the set very fit and tanned, because he'd been working in his garden all summer.

Was he familiar with raising animals?

He spent a few days at a sheep farm before filming. He needed to know how to catch a sheep! Gabriel had some reticence about the manual labor aspect, but he wanted to be believable. When you work with an actor of that caliber, you feel like you're working with a bareback stallion. All you have to do is give him proper guidance, and anything becomes possible.

His character breaks down and cries twice.

Gabriel Arcand is a very "Actors Studio" kind of actor. When he breaks down, he really breaks down, a bit like Gilbert Sicotte did on the set of *Le Vendeur*, and it takes some time before he can come back to the here and now. I wanted him to break down like a man who isn't used to crying. Quietly. I do like melodrama – films like *The Bicycle Thief*, *The Son's Room*, *The Bridges of Madison County* – but I prefer not to mention it when I'm developing a project because it's seen in a negative light, but I just hate not making people cry. Moving people is my way of being generous. I get up and cross the ballroom to ask them to dance. I like being generous. It's why I wanted to make a well- rounded film, a mainstream film.

You filmed on location, including a sheep farm.

I met a farmer whose property had an abandoned house next door. We completely redid it. We filmed Normandin's herds, in Saint-Coeur-de-Marie and Hébertville. It looks like a single herd. It isn't easy to direct sheep. If one of them jumps in a lake, the rest will follow and the shepherd has to jump in to save them from drowning! We lost hours that way. The herd wandered kilometers away just when we were about to film and there was nothing to do but wait for them to bring the animals back. Fortunately, the crew members learned to work with them!

Where did the many extras for the auction scene come from?

Some are farmers. There are some members of my family. My mother brought all kinds of people! There was also an actor, Normand Carrière, cast against type. He looks like a real farmer. A little like François Paradis in *Le Vendeur*, he tells the story of his tragedy with a smile. When he says he needs to rest, he's paraphrasing Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*: "We shall rest." Everything he's going through foreshadows what will happen to Gaby.

You obviously enjoy blurring the lines between fiction and reality.

It's like Rousseau's English garden in *The New Heloise*. It's a created garden, yet we sense no human presence. Everything is tended but appears natural. I like it when Gabriel Arcand has to show a boy how to handle the sheep, even though he doesn't really know how, and in real life the young actor is a farm-boy. To be honest, I make fiction so that I might be allowed to make documentaries one day. Documentary film, not television. My heritage is in direct cinema. To me, *Pour la Suite du Monde* by Pierre Perrault and Michel Brault is the most beautiful fictional film ever.

The beauty of Gaby's daughters, played by Lucie Laurier and Sophie Desmarais, takes them out of the rural world.

They are the princesses from *Le Père Goriot*, who frequent the fine salons of Paris. As in *King Lear*, they reveal themselves to be different from what we see on the surface. The film's structure is very meticulous. There's a kind of symmetry. After the introduction, we see Marie's arrival and she leaves a large void when she leaves. In the second half, Frédérique is announced, but first there's a void, because she takes her time arriving,

then there's the exit. We also see the two daughters in exactly the same spot on the balcony. I wanted their presence to be strongly felt even in their absence.

In your short film, *Dust Bowl Ha ! Ha !*, and in your two feature films, you take an interest in father figures, powerless providers. On that subject, Gaby proclaims, "To be happy, a father always has to give."

That line comes from *Le Père Goriot*. I don't know why, but I find that kind of character interesting, whether in literature or film. I'm touched when I see a man cry. The idea for *Dust Bowl Ha! Ha!* came to me when I saw a trade union leader crying on television. Seeing a man fall is like watching a statue crumble.

Unlike the vast majority of Québécois filmmakers, you live hundreds of kilometres from Montreal, in the Saguenay, and you make your films there.

Filmmakers are like sponges: they absorb everything they see. The cities of northern Quebec, like Arvida and Alma, started as boomtowns and because I live in that environment, I ask myself what happened to these boomtowns. What I do is related to what I like about American movies that have some distance from Los Angeles. I've got all this territory to work with. And yet it doesn't cut me off from the audience. Even though it was completely rooted in my region, my first film touched people in India, Greece, California, everywhere.

You readily admit to have some classic filmmaking ideals.

It seems that today everybody is eager to blaze trails, machetes swinging wildly, through the thickets of innovation, off the beaten path. And voilà, the beaten path is empty! The world is turned upside down. In recent years, the filmmakers who've impressed me most have been the Coen brothers and Clint Eastwood. People look down on a classic style, but it appeals to me. Likewise, there's some snobbery against rural people, old downtowns and tradition, at least in North America.

You've said that every time a film deals with the end of something, it touches you. Why is that?

I run on nostalgia but I wouldn't want people to think my film is simply about the end of the rural way of life. I could just as well have made a film about a cobbler selling his workshop. I'm nostalgic for past glories in our cities, countries, films, major studios.

In your film, it's said that "you don't sell a farm, you pass it along."

I heard a farmer say that. My film talks about the impossibility of passing it on, about the end of the line. The chain is broken. We no longer transmit our knowledge to our children; we leave them to reinvent the wheel. When that happens, we naturally have the feeling of reaching our own end.

You are a defender of tradition. One piece of evidence: you shot the film in 35mm.

And I'd like to make my next one in 70mm! I filmed in 35mm because the image quality is so much better. Video is not up to the task. It's a little sad to be starting out at a time when cinema is dying. *The Auction* is the last 35mm film to be developed by Technicolor in Montreal. We're witnessing the disappearance of a world of knowledge, when there has never been anything more beautiful than John Ford's *The Searchers*, which was filmed in

70mm Vistavision. Filming in 35mm is almost a religious experience. To me, it's the high mass of filming.

You don't hesitate to use Catholic imagery.

And yet churches and religions aren't very interesting to me. Even so, in Quebec we threw the baby out with the bathwater. It seems to me we jettisoned some beautiful traditions.

Interviewed by Michel Coulombe



CREW BIOGRAPHIES

SÉBASTIEN PILOTE, Director & Screenwriter

Sébastien Pilote was born in 1973 in Quebec's remote Saguenay region, where he still lives and makes films. The director's first short, *Dust Bowl Ha! Ha!* (2007), was inspired by the closing of a factory in the region. It was selected for the Locarno and Toronto film festivals, and won awards in Barcelona and Montreal. The film also made the prestigious top ten at the Toronto international Film Festival and won the award for best short or medium length film from the Association Québécoise des critiques de Cinéma.

In his first feature, *Le Vendeur* (2011), Pilote told the story of a car salesman on the verge of retirement. His business is hurting after the closing of the local pulp and paper mill, and his life is transformed by tragedy. *Le Vendeur* was shown in the official competition at Sundance, and at more than 60 other festivals around the world, including Thessaloniki, La Rochelle, Palm Springs and Los Angeles.

The film won three FiPreSci awards – in Turin, Mannheim and San Francisco – as well as the Gilles-Carle award for best first film from Quebec and the Quebec film critics' award (Association Québécoise des critiques de Cinéma). It was also named in Canada's top ten list in Toronto. In Quebec, *Le Vendeur* was enthusiastically received by critics and was very successful at the box office. The star, Gilbert Sicotte, one of Quebec's most respected actors, won a Jutra for best actor and an award in Mumbai, where the film earned the jury prize.

In the same vein as his previous films, Pilote's next film, *The Auction (Le Démantèlement)* (2013) revisits one of the director's favorite themes, fatherhood, and continues his sympathetic artistic approach. The story is centered around sheep farming and stars Gabriel Arcand.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

GABRIEL ARCAND (Gaby)

Gabriel Arcand is a founding member of la Veillée, a theatre company formed in 1974. He was its executive director until 1982, co-artistic director from 1982 to 1989, and again executive director from 1990 to 1992. He acted in the company's productions and since 1992 has served as an artistic consultant.

He has played several landmark film roles for directors such as his brother Denys Arcand (*Le crime d'Ovide Plouffe*, *The Decline of the American Empire*), Francis Manckiewicz (*Les portes tournantes*), Louis Bélanger (*Post-Mortem*), Manon Briand (*La turbulence des Fluides*), Philippe Falardeau (*Congorama*) and, in 2012, Claude Gagnon for *Karakara*, in which he played the lead role. His television credits

include *Annie et ses Hommes* from 2007 to 2009. Gabriel Arcand has won two Jutra awards, one for *Post-Mortem* in 2000 and another for *Congorama* in 2007, as well as Genies for *Le Crime d'Ovide Plouffe* in 1984 and *The Decline of the American Empire* in 1987. He also won the Gascon-Roux award for his work in the title role of *Tartuffe*, in a production directed by Lorraine Pintal and staged at tnM.

GILLES RENAUD (accountant friend)

Gilles Renaud has done just about everything in the theatre: production assistant, manager, director, director of the acting program at the National Theatre School (1987-1991), instructor and actor. He appears on television regularly (*Musée Eden, Prozac, Mirador, Nos étés, 7e round, René Lévesque, Cover Girl, Temps dur, Grande Ourse, Le cœur découvert, Les machos, La vie, la vie, etc.*), and has acted in nearly 30 films, including *Y'en auras pas de facile* (Marc-André Lavoie), *Le Poil de la Bête* (Philippe Gagnon), *Cabotins* (A. Desrochers), *Route 132* (Louis Bélanger), *Trois Temps Après la Mort d'Anna* (Catherine Martin), *Cadavres* (Erik Canuel), *Roméo et Juliette* (Yves Desgagnés), *Cheech* (Patrice Sauvé), *Bon Cop Bad Cop* (Erik Canuel), *La Vie Secrète des Gens Heureux* (Stéphane Lapointe), *Le Survenant* (Erik Canuel), *Gaz Bar Blues* (Louis Bélanger), *Le Sexe des Étoiles* (Paule Baillargeon) and *La dame en Couleur* (Claude Jutra). On stage, he has appeared in nearly 100 plays including *Bonbons Assortis* (Théâtre du Rideau Vert), *Monsieur Bovary* (tnM), *La fin de la civilisation* (théâtre de Quat'Sous), *Pour Adultes Seulement* (Théâtre de Quat'Sous), *Quai Ouest* (Espace Go) and *Les Emigrés* (Compagnie Jean Duceppe).

LUCIE LAURIER (Marie)

Lucie Laurier started her film career at a very early age with *Anne Trister* by Léa Pool (for which she received a Genie nomination in 1987). Her performance in *Love Moi* earned her a special Jury prize at the Namur Film Festival in 1990. She was nominated for a Jutra in 2007 for *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, but it was *La Grande Seduction* (Seducing Dr. Lewis), directed by Jean-François Pouliot, that brought her to the attention of audiences worldwide. Her production of *J'aimerais Pouvoir Rire* at Montreal's Usine C in 2011 earned popular acclaim and rave reviews.

SOPHIE DESMARAIS (Frédérique)

A 2007 graduate of the theatre program at Collège Lionel-Groulx, Sophie Desmarais already has an impressive list of credits. On film, she landed a series of roles in feature films, including *Le grand Départ, Les Grandes Chaleurs, Funkytown, Curling* and more recently, *Décharge*, the latest film by Benoit Pilon. She will soon appear in three new feature films: *Chasse au Godard d'Abbittibbi* (Eric Morin), *The Auctiont* (Sébastien Pilote) and *Sarah Préfère la Course* (Chloé Robichaud). Her television credits include the series *La Galère, Roxy* and *Yamaska* and appearances on the youth programs *Stan et ses Stars* and *Une Grenade Avec Ça?* She also appeared in the online series *En audition avec Simon* and *Enquête*

Romantique. She has given many well-received performances in the theatre, in plays such as *Les Muses Orphelines*, *Qu'est-ce qui Reste de Marie-Stella*, *L'Avare* (directed by Serge Postigo) and *Norway*. Today in 2010, she won the Olivier Reichenbach award for up-and-coming actors for her portrayal of héro in the play *Beaucoup de bruit pour rien*, directed by René-Richard Cyr. At tNM, she played the gentle Agnès in *L'école des Femmes* and will appear in *Yukonstyle* at Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui in April 2013.

JOHANNE-MARIE TREMBLAY (Françoise)

A graduate of the theatre program at the Sorbonne, Johanne-Marie Tremblay also studied with Jacques Lecoq in Paris and attended acting workshops with Warren Robertson, Robert Lepage and Pol Pelletier. She launched her film career in 1988 in *Portion d'éternité* by Robert Favreau and *À Corps Perdu* by Léa Pool. The next year she was nominated for a Genie for her portrayal of Constance in *Jésus de Montréal* by Denys Arcand, who then cast her in *Letetrs of a Portuguese Nun* (1990) at Théâtre de Quat'sou and again in the films *The Barbarian Invasions* and *L'âge des Ténèbres*. She was again nominated for a Genie in 1992, for *La Sarrasine* by Paul Tana. Jean Beaudin chose her for the role of Madeleine Carignan in the international co-production *La Nouvelle France*. In 2009, she appeared in Robin Aubert's film *L'origine d'un Cri*. Her television roles include the series *Les Filles de Caleb* and from 1996-1998, *Le Volcan Tranquille*. More recently, she appeared in *La Galère* (2007).



CREDITS

CREW

Director	Sébastien Pilote
Screenwriter	Sébastien Pilote
Producers	Bernadette Payeur Marc Daigle
Associate Producer	Robert Lacerte
Production Manager	Sylvie de Grandpré
Director of Photography	Michel La Veaux
Art Director	Mario Hervieux
Original Music	Serge Nakauchi-Pelletier
Sound	Gilles Corbeil Olivier Calvert Stéphane Bergeron
Wardrobe	Sophie Lefebvre
Editor	Stéphane Lafleur
Postproduction Manager	Chantal Marcotte

CAST

Gaby	Gabriel Arcand
Accountant Friend	Gilles Renaud
Marie	Lucie Laurier
Frederique	Sophie Desmarais
Francoise	Johanne-Marie Tremblay
Neighbor	Dominique Leduc
Le petit Bouchard	Gabriel Tremblay
Man from shelter	Marc-Antoine Béliveau
Leo Simard	Normand Carrière
Auctioneer	Claude Desjardins
Attendant	Pierre-Luc Brillant
Concierge	Michel Daigle