

LES FILMS DE L'AUTRE
PRESENTS

Forests

A SHORT EXPERIMENTAL DOCUMENTARY BY SIMON PLOUFFE



ORIGINAL TITLE

Forêts

FILMING LOCATION

Canada

LANGUAGE

Innu-Aimun

SUBTITLES AVAILABLE

English · French

APPROX. RUNTIME

15'

STAGE

Post-production

DELIVERY

Summer 2021

ROUGH CUT LINK

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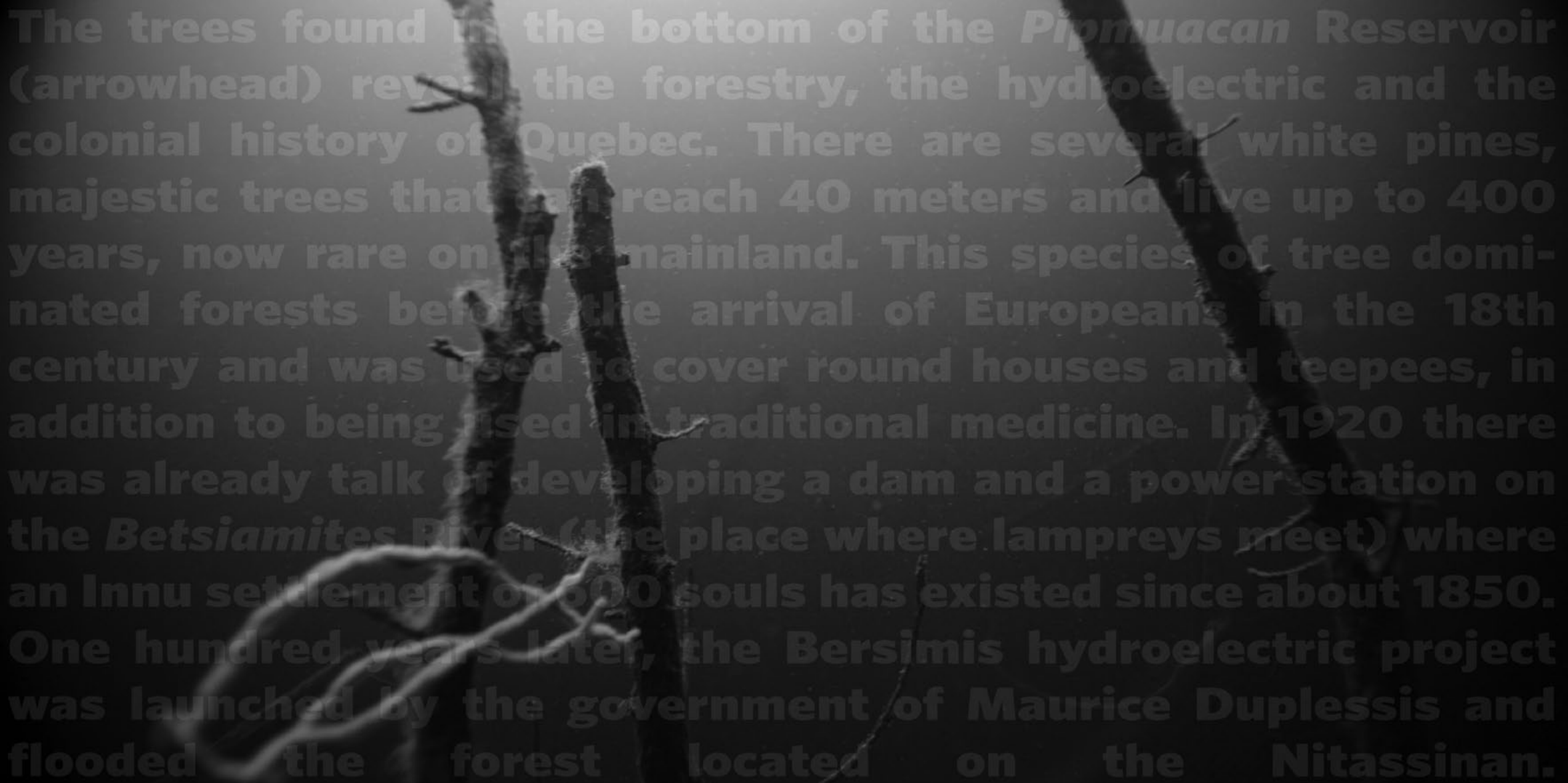
PRODUCER

Les Films de l'Autre (Québec, Canada)

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The trees found in the bottom of the *Pipmuacan* Reservoir (arrowhead) reveal the forestry, the hydroelectric and the colonial history of Quebec. There are several white pines, majestic trees that can reach 40 meters and live up to 400 years, now rare on the mainland. This species of tree dominated forests before the arrival of Europeans in the 18th century and was used to cover round houses and teepees, in addition to being used in traditional medicine. In 1920 there was already talk of developing a dam and a power station on the *Betsiamites* River (the place where lampreys meet) where an Innu settlement of 600 souls has existed since about 1850. One hundred years later, the Bersimis hydroelectric project was launched by the government of Maurice Duplessis and flooded the forest located on the Nitassinan.

LOGLINE

Eastern white pines lying under the waters of a hydroelectric reservoir on an unceded Innu territory turn into flames. This enigmatic exploration, between water and fire, testifies the climate emergency.



SYNOPSIS

In a timeless and dark environment, barely perceptible particles move in slow motion in front of the lens. The camera moves slowly, as if we were weightless. More the camera travels, the more we notice the shape of the silhouettes becoming trees; conifers, black spruce, tall pines.

Slowly the image becomes clearer with a slight orange light. It becomes more and more obvious that we are submerged, under water. And the forest is lit by the rays of the sun which pierce the surface of the water.

Until this moment, no sound was perceptible, only a dull presence of the dam in the distance which suggests a feeling of confinement. Muffled percussive sounds are heard at irregular intervals and become more and more present and recognizable. Then, crackling sounds gain momentum, to become those of a growing forest fire.

At this moment, the image is colored with orange and reddish hues, transforming into an appearance of a flaming forest. This fire seems to be out of control and is devastating the boreal forest. The image of submerged tree debris resembles brands of twirling fires mixed with an Innu language voice which brings the history of the place alive.



NOTE ON TREATMENT

This short documentary immerses us in a mysterious and denatured universe, which allows us to meditate on the impact of the industrialization of natural resources, in addition to questioning our relationship to the environment. It touches on the themes of the transformation and capitalization of the forest by the human being, as well as the distancing and disconnection that he maintains with it. **Forests** attempts to reflect this feeling of strangeness, maintained within this relationship of domination between humans and nature.

Forest under water · this environment with a sacred character, because of its historical load, is documented with respect and an aesthetic concern that pays homage to it. The evolution and alternation between black and white and colors, between darkness and light, between abstraction and realism is supported by a sensitive approach to the location.

Forest on fire · the metaphorical evocation of devastating forest fires avoids using archival images or filming these destructive events. This film opts for formal exploration, since the images shot in the reservoir eloquently evoke, through its moving particles and vivid colors, a forest in the throes of flames. The evocation of fire also goes through the sound treatment.



ABOUT PIPMUACAN

The underwater forest images were shot in July 2020 on the Côte-Nord, in Quebec (Canada), in the Pipmuacan Reservoir. This name means arrowhead in Innu. It has been a mecca for hunting, gatherings, but also clashes between nations for hundreds of years.

In 1953, under the Duplessis government, this traditional territory was flooded to make way for the first hydroelectric installations in remote territory. The vestiges of the last century of an Innu fort were then submerged under more than 250 feet of water from the Betsiamites River.

The trees found in the bottom of the Pipmuacan Reservoir reveal both the forest history, but also the colonial history of Quebec. There are several white pines, these majestic trees that can reach 40 meters and live up to

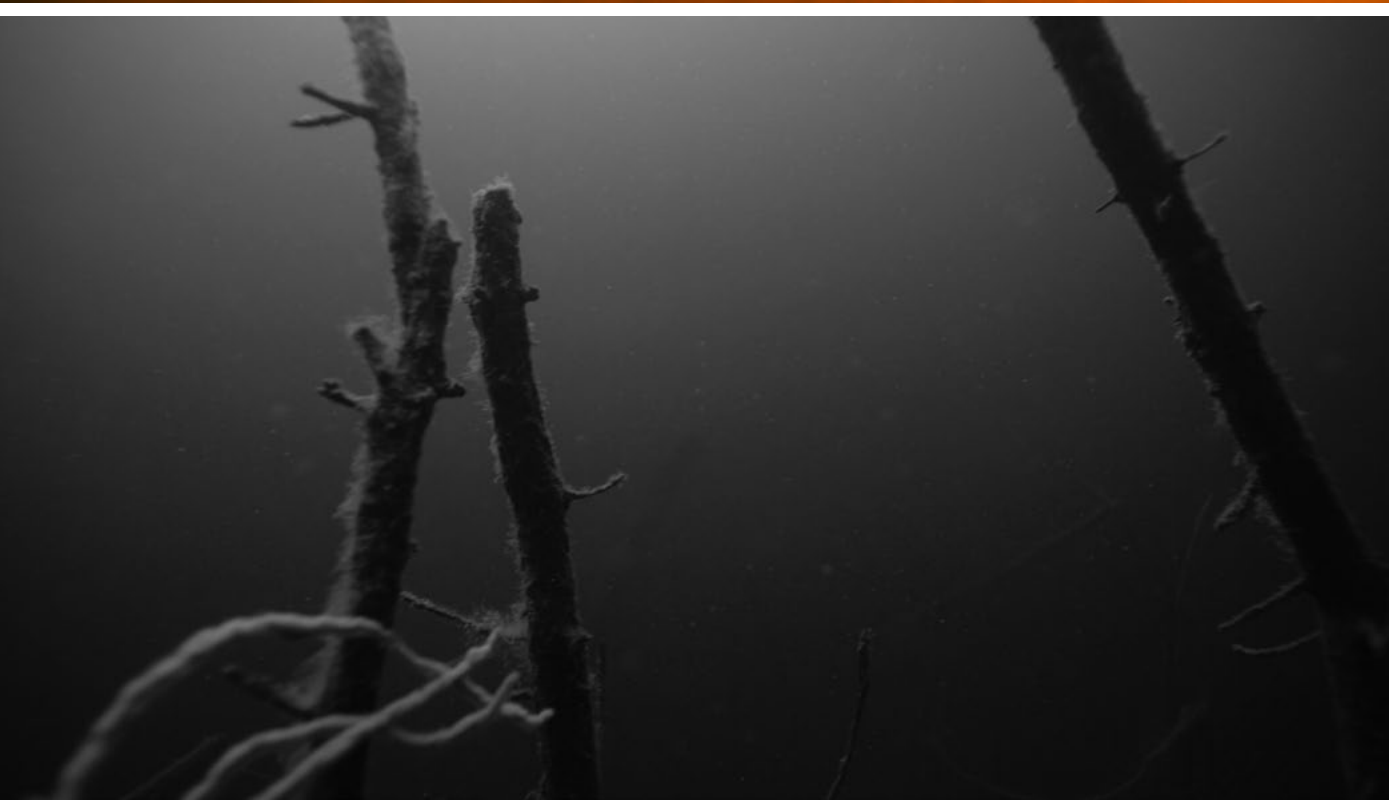
400 years, now rare on the mainland. This species of tree dominated the forests before the arrival of Europeans. It was used to cover round houses and tipis, in addition to being used in traditional medicine. In addition, white pine was exploited by England for the construction of warships in the 18th century.

Traditionally, some indigenous peoples practice a “culture of fire”. They use it both to preserve open environments and to maintain the undergrowth to prevent too much brush making them susceptible to fires, in addition to favor the production of small fruits. This knowledge has been weakened and is in decline today, attributable to colonization and, incidentally, to an interruption in the transmission of ancestral knowledge to indigenous populations.



SIMON PLOUFFE

Simon Plouffe lives and works as a filmmaker-producer in Montreal. His experience in sound leads him to explore sonic universes in his films. *Others' Gold*, has been shown at RIDM, Dok.Fest Munich, Guadalajara, Big Sky. *Those Who Come, Will Hear*, has won the Jury Award in Ann Arbor, the best documentary in Ficwallmapu Chile and Best Sound at the Gala Quebec Cinema in 2019. He is currently developing a feature documentary on blindness caused by armed conflicts and also finishing a short experimental doc on an underwater forest in a hydroelectric reservoir.



FILMOGRAPHY

2022-2023	THE EYES DON'T SEE DOCUMENTARY	Teaser link
2018	THOSE WHO COME, WILL HEAR 77 MIN DOCUMENTARY Distributor · Les Films du 3 Mars	Premiered at the 56 th Ann Arbor Film Festival, Jury Award at Ann Arbor, Iris for Best Sound, Best Documentary at Ficwallmapu Chile. Theatrical run in 11 theaters
2011	OTHERS' GOLD 60/52/45 MIN DOCUMENTARY Distributor · Vidéographe	Premiered at RIDM, Merit Award for Storytelling at MIWFF, Silver Lei Award at Honolulu Film Awards. Theatrical run in 4 theaters Broadcasted on Radio-Canada and RDI

ABOUT LES FILMS DE L'AUTRE

Les Films de l'Autre is an artist-run center whose mission is to support formal research and the freedom of creation in independent cinema and to encourage the emergence of strong, original and diversified voices. The organization occupies a unique place in the Quebec film landscape by bringing together about 40 filmmakers who act both as producers and directors of their works. Les Films de l'Autre has a production infrastructure whose main objective is to support the production of auteur films through the services and training offered to filmmakers who are able to produce their films.

The last four productions:

- *Prière pour une mitaine perdue* (2020) · Jean-François Lesage
Best Canadian Feature at Hot Docs
- *Une femme, ma mère* (2019) · Claude Demers
Grand Prize for Best National Feature at RIDM
- *Jongué, Carnet nomade* (2019) · Carlos Ferrand
Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award GGArts
- *Nitrate* (2019) · Yousra Benziane
FIPRESCI International Critics' Prize

