



• Rethinking feminism: Monique Mercure and August Schellenberg in *Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour?*

The mature feminism of *Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour?*

The name says they are four, but it's actually a threesome that run La Maison des quatre inc., a small production company located on Montreal's Cherrier Street. Founded in 1977 by Louise Carré, the idea behind La Maison des quatre was to allow women scriptwriters and directors greater control over their own work.

Today, Carré, together with associates Suzanne Laverdière and Claire Stevens, head a company that's doing well, producing both documentary and fiction films by and about women, including the company's second feature film, *Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour?* (La Maison des quatre's first feature, *Ça peut pas être l'hiver on n'a même pas eu d'été*, netted Carré the award for best Canadian film out of competition at the 1980 Montreal World Film Festival.)

Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour? was originally to have been shot last summer, but was delayed a year due to funding problems. With its budget of \$1.4 million in place — financed by Telefilm, La Société générale du cinéma, La Maison des quatre and Radio-Canada — the 35mm shoot took place from Aug. 8 through Sept. 15, on location in Sorel and Montreal, with Carré directing from her own script. The film should be finished post-production by the end of

winter, and is due for commercial release next fall.

Women are the central characters in this film, as they have been in most of La Maison des quatre's productions. *Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour?* tells the story of a mother, Madeline (Monique Mercure) and her daughter, Renee (Guylaine Normandin), as they spend one last summer together. Madeline is torn between her disillusionment with marriage, the family, the world of work, and her desire for justice and some "Ideal." She naively continues to search for a "better world" to offer her daughter. Renee, just turned 20, shares her mother's lust for life and vision of a better future. As the summer passes the two women come to understand one another, and each lives out "leurs histoires d'amour."

While not explicitly a feminist film *Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour?* suggests a rethinking of feminism as Madeline comes to question the ideas of her younger years. Carré suggests that some older feminists have — or are coming to — the realization that, caught up in their politics, they might have denied, to a certain extent, that, as women, we need our love stories.

The question in the film's title is evocative but has no real answer. "Amour" here, according to Carré, is an all-inclusive term; it refers to all our loves in life — ourselves, our friends, our work. But who has taken away our love stories? And why can't we have them anymore? Carré is considering *Shall I Ever Dream of You Again?* as the title of the English version. In Carré's view, our love stories will never be as they were, but the film leaves the question open.

There is a recurrent image in *Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour?* — that of a trapeze. Monique Mercure's character, Madeline, decides to take up

trapeze, no small feat for a woman of 50. The trapeze scenes of Madeline, sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing, are woven into the film's narrative. They are signs of Madeline's courage, a woman who dares.

Carré explains that the trapeze is a metaphor for "nos histoires d'amour." In the insecurity of contemporary society, love isn't as it used to be. It isn't that love was better before, just different. People used to think there were recipes for happiness, but they didn't work, and feminism sought to point out the falsity of those so-called recipes. Left in a world where there are no formulas for happiness, a person today can only dare.

As an actress of 50-odd years, Monique Mercure had to be daring to perform her trapeze stunts. She trained hard throughout the summer. Her experience is comparable to that of her character's. Carré mentions one morning's shoot when Mercure succeeded at a trick she had never been able to do before — and was thrilled.

Making films too has been a trapeze act for Carré. She was 40 when she began. If her first feature came easily, it's been harder since. She was patronized by other filmmakers, both as a woman and as a neophyte. But, Carré points out, when it comes success feels wonderful.

For Carré movies are a part of life, an open-ended experience in our lives.

If *Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour?* has a realistic basis, Carré hopes she's been able to take the film a step further, making it larger than life. How she has risen to that challenge makes *Qui a tiré sur nos histoires d'amour?* a film to look forward to.

Meanwhile, Carré promises that her next film will have a short title.

Lost!: Cold, wet, confident

The benign artificial pool had been converted into a menacing ocean wracked by a Pacific summer storm.

An overturned sailboat bobbed helplessly in the six-foot waves and 35 mph winds.

As suddenly as it began, the storm abated. In the calm, three cold and weary actors climbed into an inflatable rowboat to be ceremoniously deposited onto the hull. The waves started again and the inflatable boat rocked and rolled around the pool.

Helen Shaver (*Desert Hearts*), Michael Hogan (*Vanderburg*) and Kenneth Welsh (*Loyalties*) star in Peter Rowe's production of *Lost!*, a true story of two men and a woman trapped inside the hull of their capsized trimaran for 74 days.

Lost! is a 90-minute Canadian film produced by Rowe's company, Rosebud Films and the CBC, with the participation of Telefilm Canada. The production budget was not revealed.

The film is scheduled for a theatrical release in spring 1986 and slated to air on the CBC in winter 1987.

Filming began in mid-September on Lake Ontario in 10° C water temperature and, from the start, cast and crew had to adapt to the constant cold and wet — almost three weeks of 12-hour days were spent on the heaving waters. By the time production moved to the artificial wave tank in Hamilton, Ontario on Oct. 3, cold, wet and windy had become a way of life.

Rowe (his first ocean-related film was *Horse Latitudes* in 1975; his latest, *Adventures On Shark Reef* (1984)) who wrote the *Lost!* script and directs the film, said he chose the principal actors with the consideration that they could handle the difficult physical conditions.

"There is nothing that we are doing that is dangerous, but there are things that seem dangerous, and seem harrowing to the actors and crew and are uncomfortable and difficult," says Rowe. "It's quite a physical film, no doubt about it."

Lost!, based on the Thomas Thompson book of the same name, is the story of Jim (Welsh), an overzealous fundamentalist missionary who, in July 1973, set sail from Vancouver to Costa Rica with his brother Bob (Hogan) and Bob's pregnant wife, Linda (Shaver).

Two weeks into their journey they capsize in a storm and the three become locked not only in a struggle to survive, but in a battle against God, nature and each other.

Adrift for two-and-a-half months, the trio faced enormous physical and spiritual challenges. Linda miscarries and dies after 34 days. Bob and Jim live to be rescued, but Jim dies two days later.

For Shaver, Hogan and Welsh, re-creating the event required physical stamina and good health.

After logging in more than 200 hours in Lake Ontario alone, they had to