

REMSTAR MEDIA PARTNERS  
PRESENT

CANNES 2009

**Quinzaine**  
des Réaliateurs  
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT

# POLYTECHNIQUE

DIRECTED BY DENIS VILLENEUVE

MAXIM  
GAUDETTE

SÉBASTIEN  
HUBERDEAU

KARINE  
VANASSE



## SYNOPSIS

Based on true events that occurred on December 6, 1989, at Montreal's Polytechnique School, the movie relates the events of that day through the eyes of two students, Valérie and Jean-François, whose lives were changed forever when a young man entered the school with one purpose in mind: to kill himself and take as many women as possible with him.

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

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The tragedy of POLYTECHNIQUE is more than a simple news item and raises more than one question. One never recovers from such a tragedy but in order to retain hope I believe we should bring some kind of meaning to it. I know that cinema can play its part in that.

There have been further massacres since then, but that depicted in POLYTECHNIQUE remains unique, engraved on our memories. It is so because of the motivation of the killer and how he proceeded to execute them: separating the men from the women in order to bring an outmoded world up to date. It brings a certain shared misogyny and the alienation of the relationship between men and women to the forefront.

Violence is a language. This man's actions mean something. He was born amongst us. Like Pierre Bourgault said so well two days after the tragedy: "We are not guilty but collectively responsible."

It is essential for me to make films that relate events that have wounded our collective soul. These events, even though they are deeply painful, reveal important aspects of our society.

With certain Scandinavian countries, Quebec is a real laboratory for the rest of the planet when it comes to the place of women in

society. The tragedy of POLYTECHNIQUE couldn't have happened anywhere other than in precisely such an evolved society. This is a painfully Quebecois film.

As much as we move on from history, we must maintain the necessary bridges. We have a duty to remember. History will repeat itself horrendously if we forget. To remain silent is to accept this recurrence.

Jacques Davidts and I listened to many witnesses of the tragedy. For most of them it was the first time they had talked about it. They showed great generosity, often great emotion, and always, complete trust. Until now no re-creation has allowed us to understand what these students went through on that day: the horror, the fear, the humiliation.

These are people of my generation and I think that sharing their pain could perhaps be an attempt to bring some degree of comfort. In order to begin the process of healing one must necessarily revisit the source of the pain.

This film is a personal gesture, an attempt to bring some sort of consolation. And this has for me all the meaning in the world.





## A WORD FROM THE PRODUCERS

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Most of the REMSTAR team members were not yet 16 years old when the sad events at Montreal's Polytechnique took place.

It would have been very difficult for us as adolescents to assess the full impact of this 25-year-old man's actions. Nonetheless, from the beginning of our lives, this man demonstrated how fragile our world is and how it can change radically from one day to the next.

That day, the lives of thousands of people changed. A black page was written in our history books.

This event, we all know, is branded on the soul of a nation. Almost 20 years later we thought it was time to show this on screen. Not for sensational reasons, far from it, but out of respect for those who have had to live with the painful memory for so long.

That is why we agreed to get this project under way when Karine Vanasse approached us with the thought of making a film based on the events of 6th December 1989. Karine's intentions were noble and it is with the utmost respect that we started to develop the production with her.

From the start, for Karine and for us, the purpose was always very clear: to pay tribute to the 14 women who lost their lives that day and also to the young people who crossed the killer's path and have had - to the best of their abilities - to forge ahead and keep on living their lives despite it all.

For us, to bring the event back to the collective memory was a way of paying tribute to these people. It is together in adversity that

people are able to overcome the greatest tragedies. That is why we wanted to make a film that would allow us not to understand but to carry this event inside us with the students who lived it. Together, we can believe that life continues, together we can believe in a better future.

Having a director of Denis Villeneuve's calibre in charge of the project was a magnificent experience. Denis was able to make this film into a vessel of hope, a film marked with poetry, despite its subject. His sensitivity and his respect for the event and its victims were crucial to a project of this scale.

In the film, Valerie and Jean-Francois's characters are inspired by a number of different students who witnessed the killer's actions: young people in their twenties who saw their life change radically in an instant. An instant that lasted 19 minutes.

19 minutes that shattered the lives of the victims' families, of the students, of the staff, and touched women of all ages.

19 minutes that changed the face of our history.

We present this film today in all humility. We are very close to this film. Not just because we worked on it for quite some time but because we have never before invested ourselves so deeply in a project. It was a great privilege to work with such a talented director, cast and crew to help pay this tribute. It is with the greatest respect that we present this film so dear to our hearts: POLYTECHNIQUE.

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## DENIS VILLENEUVE (DIRECTOR)

A key figure in the new generation of Canadian filmmakers, Denis Villeneuve has established a unique cinematic voice. His first film, *UN 32 AOÛT SUR TERRE*, played at thirty-five international film festivals, most notably Cannes, Telluride, and Toronto, and was Canada's submission in the Best Foreign Language Film category at the Academy Awards®. His second feature, *MAELSTRÖM*, won twenty-five international prizes, including the prestigious International Critics' Prize (FISPRECI) at the Berlin Film Festival in 2001. *Next Floor*, his most recent film, took home the prize for Best Short Film during Critics' Week at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival.

## DON CARMODY (PRODUCER)

Don Carmody has been producing films for more than 30 years. As vice-president of production for Canada's Cinepix (now Lionsgate Films), he co-produced David Cronenberg's early shockers *SHIVERS* (aka *THEY CAME FROM WITHIN*) and *RABID* as well as the popular comedy *MEATBALLS*.

Starting his own production company in 1980, Carmody went on to produce the smash hits *PORKY'S AND PORKY'S II* amongst numerous other successes.

His credits include *JOHNNY MNEMONIC* with Keanu Reeves, *THE MIGHTY* with Sharon Stone, *STUDIO 54* with Mike Myers, the Academy Awards® Nominated *GOOD WILL HUNTING* with Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Robin Williams, *IN TOO DEEP* with L.L. Cool J, the cult hit *THE BOONDOCK SAINTS* with Willem Dafoe, *THE THIRD MIRACLE* with Ed Harris and Anne Heche, *GET CARTER* with Sylvester Stallone, *THE WHOLE NINE YARDS* with Bruce Willis and Mathew Perry, *THE PLEDGE* directed by Sean Penn and starring Jack Nicholson, *3000 MILES TO GRACELAND* with Kevin Costner and Courtney Cox, *CAVEMAN'S VALENTINE* with Samuel Jackson, *ANGEL EYES* with Jennifer Lopez, David Mamet's *THE HEIST* with Gene Hackman, and Danny DeVito, *CITY BY THE SEA* with Robert De Niro and Frances McDormand, *WRONG TURN* with Eliza Dushku, *GOTHIKA* starring Halle Berry, Penelope Cruz and Robert Downey Jr., *RESIDENT EVIL* based on the all time bestselling video game and *RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE* starring Milla Jovovich, *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13* with Ethan Hawke, Laurence Fishburne, Gabriel Byrne and Maria Bello, *LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN* with Bruce Willis, Josh Hartnett and Morgan Freeman, and *SILENT HILL* starring Radha Mitchell and Sean Bean.

In 2002 he was co-producer of the hit film musical of *CHICAGO* starring Renée Zellweger, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Richard Gere, which won seven Academy Awards® including Best Picture, three Golden Globe Awards, Including Best Musical or Comedy and the Producers' Guild of America Golden Laurel Award for Best Picture as well as many other awards and citations around the world.

## KARINE VANASSE (VALÉRIE)

Karine Vanasse arrived on the scene in LÉA POOL'S 1999 coming-of-age drama *EMPORTE-MOI*, and quickly became a favourite of critics and audiences alike. For her performance, Karine earned a special mention at the Toronto International Film Festival, was nominated for Best Actress at the Berlin Film Festival, won Best Actress at the FilmCan Festival in Saskatchewan and the Festival of Francophone Films at Namur, and took home the Jutra for Best Actress.

Subsequent featured big screen credits include Céline Baril's *DU PIC AU COEUR*, Charles Binamé's *UN HOMME ET SON PÉCHÉ*, John Duigan's *HEAD IN THE CLOUDS*, Yves Simoneau and Francis Leclerc's *MARIE ANTOINETTE*, and Alexis Durant-Brault's *MA FILLE, MON ANGE*.

Karine has also appeared in several television shows, including the dramas *2 Frères*, *Un Homme mort*, and *October 1970*, the TV movie *Killer Wave*, and the educational youth show *Les Débrouillards*, for which she won a Gemini award. Other accolades include a second Jutra win and a Genie nomination for *UN HOMME ET SON PÉCHÉ*, two Metrostar nominations and a Gemini nomination for her supporting role in *2 Frères*, an Actra award for *October 1970*, and a third Best Actress Jutra nomination for *MA FILLE, MON ANGE*. Karine also was awarded the Best New Artist prize at the Gala du Femmes du Cinéma, de la Télévision et de la Video de Montréal, and was named Woman of the Year by *Châtelaine* magazine.

*POLYTECHNIQUE* had long been a passion project for Karine Vanasse when she brought the idea to make the film to REMSTAR. She served as a producer on the film and plays one of the three leads.



## SÉBASTIEN HUBERDEAU (JEAN-FRANÇOIS)

An accomplished and prolific TV actor, since his debut in 1995, Huberdeau has appeared in high profile series such as: *Talk Radio*, *Jasmine*, *Gypsies*, *Tag*, *Willie*, *Tribu.com*, *Virginie*, *Histoire de famille*, *Sophie Paquin* and *La Job*. For four years he played the role of Antonin in the popular series *Le Monde de Charlotte*, and most recently appeared as the enigmatic Martin Belzile in *Nos Étés*.

Equally at home on the big screen, Huberdeau appeared in NOUVELLE-FRANCE by Jean Beaudin and in SÉQUESTRÉ by Paul Houle. A stunning performance in Johanne Prigent's L'ÎLE DE SABLE resulted in a nomination for Best Male Performer at the 2000 Gala des Jutra. Further credits include YELLOWKNIFE, LES INVASIONS BARBARES, LE DERNIER TUNNEL and LA BELLE BÊTE.

## MAXIM GAUDETTE (THE KILLER)

Since completing his studies in 1997 at the Conservatoire d'Art Dramatique de Montréal, Maxim Gaudette has worked widely on stage and screen.

Notable theatrical roles include Dertagnan in *Les Trois mousquetaires* by Fernand Rainville, which earned him a Masque nomination for Best Actor in 2002. He has performed in several theatres around Montreal and worked with great directors like Claude Poissant, Denise Filiatrault, Yves Desgagnés, Martin Faucher, Serge Denoncourt, Alice Ronfart and Normand Chouinard. Gaudette made his TV debut in the series *L'Ombre de l'épervier*, which he followed with roles in *Fortier*, *Grande Ourse*, and most notably *Virginie* from 1998 to 2005. He is also part of the second cast of the hit television series *Lance et Compte: la reconquête* and *La Revanche*.

Big screen appearances include L'ESPÉRANCE by Stéphane Pleszynski, IDOLE INSTANTANÉE by Yves Desgagnés, Jean Beaudin's SANS ELLE and Patrick Huard's LES TROIS P'TITS COCHONS.



## CAST

<b>Jean-François</b>	Sébastien Huberdeau
<b>The Killer</b>	Maxim Gaudette
<b>Valérie</b>	Karine Vanasse
<b>Stéphanie</b>	Evelyne Brochu
<b>Éric</b>	Pierre-Yves Cardinal
<b>Jean-François' mother</b>	Johanne-Marie Tremblay

## CREW

<b>Directed by</b>	Denis Villeneuve
<b>Screenplay in collaboration with</b>	Jacques Davidts Denis Villeneuve, Éric Léca
<b>DP</b>	Pierre Gill
<b>Production Designer</b>	Martin Tessier
<b>Editor</b>	Richard Comeau
<b>Costume Designer</b>	Annie Dufort
<b>Original Score</b>	Benoît Charest
<b>Producers</b>	Maxime Rémillard Don Carmody
<b>Executive Producers</b>	André Rouleau Julien Rémillard
<b>Associate Producers</b>	Karine Vanasse Nathalie Brigitte Bustos

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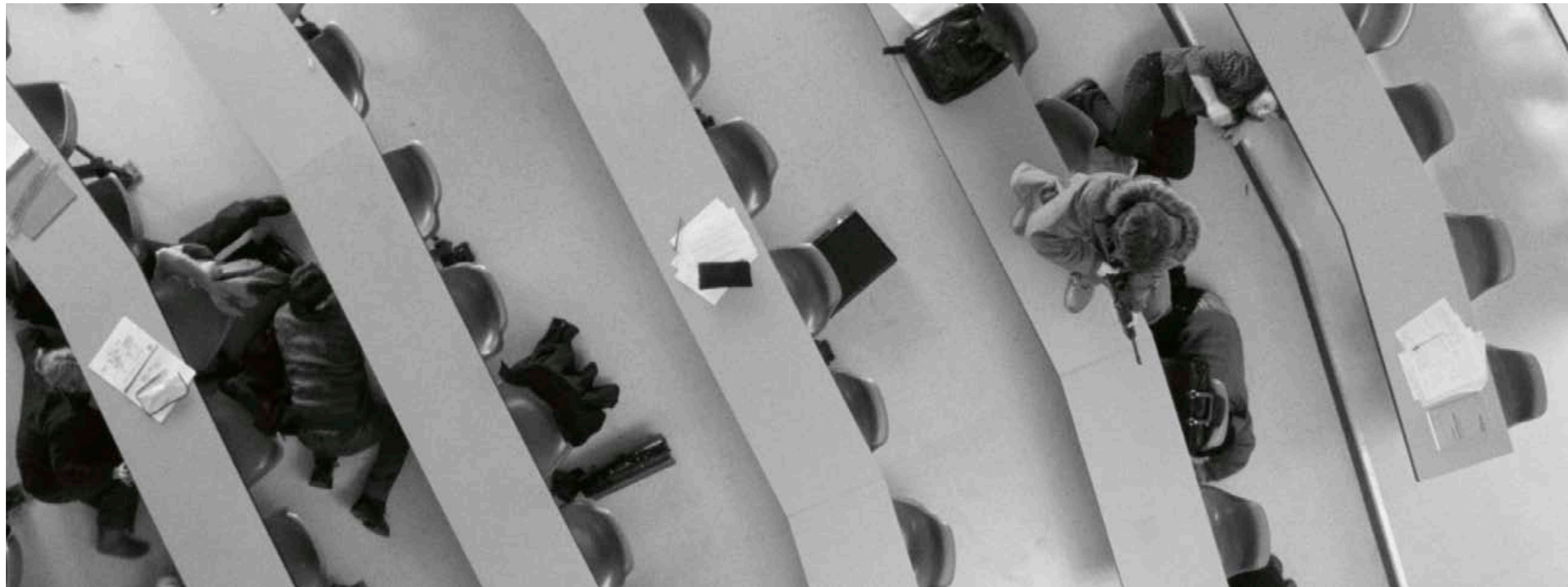
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