

VLASTA
VRANA

RENEE-MADELEINE
LE GUERRIER

CATHERINE
DUMAS

THE ZONE

A FILM BY
SYNED SINDRAJED

DENYS DESJARDINS

INSPIRED BY
CHRIS MARKER



PRESS RELEASE

CENTAURE FILMS PRESENTS THE ZONE INSPIRED BY CHRIS MARKER WITH THE VOICES OF VLASTA VRANA RENÉE MADELEINE LE GUERRIER CATHERINE DUMAS
PICTURED BY DENYS DESJARDINS GILLES DESJARDINS JACQUELINE VALIQUETTE SOUND SYNED SINDRAJED NOMIS RUEL FELLEB ORIGINAL SCORE SIMON BELLEFLEUR
EDITING, SCRIPT, PLAY AND DIALOGUE SYNED SINDRAJED DENYS DESJARDINS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ANIK SALAS ENGLISH SCRIPT TRANSLATION OANA AVASILICHIOAEI
PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION CINÉMA DU QUÉBEC / LES FILMS DU CENTAURE WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY DENYS DESJARDINS

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PHOTO: NIKKI KAYNE / GAMBINO

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ENTER THE ZONE

by Robert Daudelin

Loosely based on the poetical and philosophical reflections of the great filmmaker Chris Marker, **THE ZONE** is a whimsical wander through the memory and imagination of characters searching for their past.

Using and giving new meaning to lost films (home movies of family and travels, news footage), the film progresses in a kind of perpetual digression that is as much dream as delirium, without ever veering away from a well-defined path.

THE ZONE, which could be aptly described as a poetic essay, belongs to the pictorial universe of lyrical abstraction, while its material richness is an unending celebration of cinema's spellbinding power.

- Robert Daudelin

Having served on the editorial committee of *24 images* and the *Journal of Film Preservation* for many years, Robert Daudelin was the co-founder (with Michel Patenaude) and editor in chief of the Montreal film magazine *Objectif* from 1960 to 1966. During this period (1963-1967), he was also assistant director to Rock Demers for the International Film Festival of Montreal, after which he became the director of the *Conseil québécois pour la diffusion du cinéma* (1970-1972). The executive director and curator of the *Cinémathèque québécoise* from 1972 to 2002 and president of the *International Federation of Film Archives* from 1989 to 1995, he was the delegate to the *San Sebastian International Film Festival* from 1998 to 2003.

SUMMARY

In search of her missing friend, MADELEINE turns to STALKER, who helps her discover a strange Zone buried in her memory. World War III is about to break out, while inside the Zone, the filmmaker Chris Marker has taken refuge in a fictional character.

Welcome to the MARKER MYSTERY!



A FILM INSPIRED BY THE WORK OF CHRIS MARKER

the best known author of unknown movies

At once a musician, writer, photographer, and filmmaker, possibly Japanese, Russian, or Cuban, Chris Marker constantly sought out to create a legend around himself. He is considered to be the pioneer of the essay film. He worked with many other directors, including Alain Resnais, Agnès Varda, and Jean-Luc Godard. Several of his films are portraits of filmmakers, such as the film on Andrei Tarkovsky, whom he filmed until Tarkovsky's death.

Chris Marker (1921–2012) died at the age of 91, exactly on his birthday, a well-orchestrated death and disappearance. He was as elusive and mysterious in life as in death, covering his tracks so that his image couldn't be seen or captured on camera. He invented characters so as to hide behind various professions and pseudonyms.

His real name is Christian Bouche-Villeneuve. Although born in Neuilly-sur-Seine, a Paris suburb, some sources claim that was Russian-American, possibly born in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and that he would have spent part of his childhood in Cuba. How can anyone be sure? Particularly since Marker added to the confusion by providing false information about himself.

The most widely known of his avatars is Chris Marker, as this is the pseudonym under which he wrote, directed and produced most of his literary and cinematographic work. His prolific output includes over forty films—a few of which are masterworks (*La Jetée* and *Sunless*)—as well as books, essays, novels, and digital installations.



THE ORIGINS OF A TITLE

from Tarkovsky to Marker

The “zone” is an imaginary space that belongs to each viewer. Difficult to identify, this zone is the product of various sensations created by the encounter between the images and the viewer’s personal memories. It is an interior space for producing images, in which viewers create their own films.

This “zone” is omnipresent in Chris Marker’s work, particularly in his film *Sunless* (1983), in which Marker gives us an uninterrupted flow of images shot during his many travels. With no apparent connection between them, these images derive their meaning from Marker’s interpretations in a series of letters written by a fictional cameraman named Sandor Krasna (one of Marker’s pseudonyms).

In this essay film, Marker pushes the discovery of the “zone” even further by inventing another double named Hayao Yamaneko. Using a device (a video synthesizer), Yamaneko manipulates the images shot by Marker, giving them a new poetic reality. In this game of transformation, Marker develops a particular poetry around the “zone,” in which the images rediscover their memories.

Named in homage to Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky, the “zone” refers to Tarkovsky’s film *Stalker* (1979). In this film, the stalker’s mission is to guide a scientist and a writer through a restricted zone inside which unconscious desires can be fulfilled. **THE ZONE** invites viewers to enter this mysterious “zone” which they alone can know and discover by coming into contact with lost... and found images.



THE VOICES OF THE ZONE

behind the mystery of the characters

STALKER (Vlasta Vrána)

Stalker possess vast knowledge and experience of the "zone." He knows its meanders and its dangers.

Vlasta Vrána was born in 1950 in Norway. He is known for his work on *Secret Window* (2004), *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), and *Upside Down* (2012). Voice-acting credits include *Assassin's Creed*, *Splinter Cell*, *Heavy Metal*, *Heavy Metal 2000*, and *The Mysterious Cities of Gold*, documentaries and radio and TV commercials. He narrated the *Canada Vignettes* and other films for the National Film Board of Canada.

MADELEINE (Renée-Madeleine Leguerrier)

Lost in the recesses of her memory, Madeleine is ready to do anything to enter the "zone." But will she be able to get out?

Performing in various styles, in both English and French, Renée-Madeleine Leguerrier has worked with different theatre companies (Discovering Shakespeare, Buffon, Cirque du Soleil). She studied with Lilly Parker Flood, from the Actors Studio, and with the Acting Circle, in New York. She toured Scotland and Eastern Europe in *Child Lover*.

THE NARRATOR (Vlasta Vrána)

The narrator sees and hears everything, even the anxieties of the viewers. He knows how to tell the story.

Vlasta Vrána was born in 1950 in Norway. He is known for his work on *Secret Window* (2004), *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), and *Upside Down* (2012). Voice-acting credits include *Assassin's Creed*, *Splinter Cell*, *Heavy Metal*, *Heavy Metal 2000*, and *The Mysterious Cities of Gold*, documentaries and radio and TV commercials. He narrated the *Canada Vignettes* and other films for the National Film Board of Canada.

YOUNG MADELEINE (Catherine Dumas)

When young, Madeleine witnessed a man's death. This experience marks her forever.

Having a master's degree in theatre, Catherine Dumas is an actress, writer, director, and producer. Her acting training includes studying at HB Studio in New York, as well as training with various renowned film and stage directors. In television, she has acted in *Boomerang III*, *Escortes*, and *Blue Moon*.

THE SOUND OF THE ZONE

by Simon Bellefleur

Working on the original score of **THE ZONE** was a fascinating experience. Usually constrained to producing synchronized sounds and on-screen dialogue, the dissociation between the sounds and the images of **THE ZONE** led me to seek out innovative solutions for unifying these two worlds. Among other aspects, we decided to play with the acoustic space occupied by the voice by creating contrast between the narrative as the main attraction and an immersive, omniscient narration.

I was also inspired by the electroacoustic approach of Chris Marker, or rather Michel Krasna, his composer pseudonym. In particular, the EMS/VCS3 synth, which the filmmaker often used, helped me to produce the dreamlike sounds of the other world, the world of **THE ZONE**. The surround sound mixing was also crucial, since it helped bring the archival images to life by going outside the frame so as to offer a soundscape that is halfway between a realistic documentary representation and a fictional one, and that explores the soundscape of the unconscious.

- Simon Bellefleur

Simon Bellefleur deals with everything that involves sound. He is a composer, sound designer, sound engineer, and sound mixer. For more than fifteen years, he has been collaborating on many projects on various platforms, including music, documentary and drama films, television productions, and theatre. Since for many artistic works, a large part of the narrative and emotional storyline is driven by the sound, he feels privileged to be able to dedicate his passion to sound.

IN SEARCH OF A LOST MEMORY

or how I entered **THE ZONE**

One day, I came across a collection of 8mm films that belonged to an old woman whom I didn't know. As this woman had no children, I became the sole inheritor of her film collection.

Shot in the 1960s, the reels of her collection had been well identified: Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Malaysia, Japan, China, Argentina, Peru, Brazil... In complete silence, I watched all the films, which took me on a strange tour around the world as seen through the eyes of a stranger.

I then tried to track down the mysterious "filmmaker." Once I managed to find her, I quickly understood that this woman had lost her memory, since she did not remember any of her travels, nor could she recall her films. This experience had a profound impact on me.

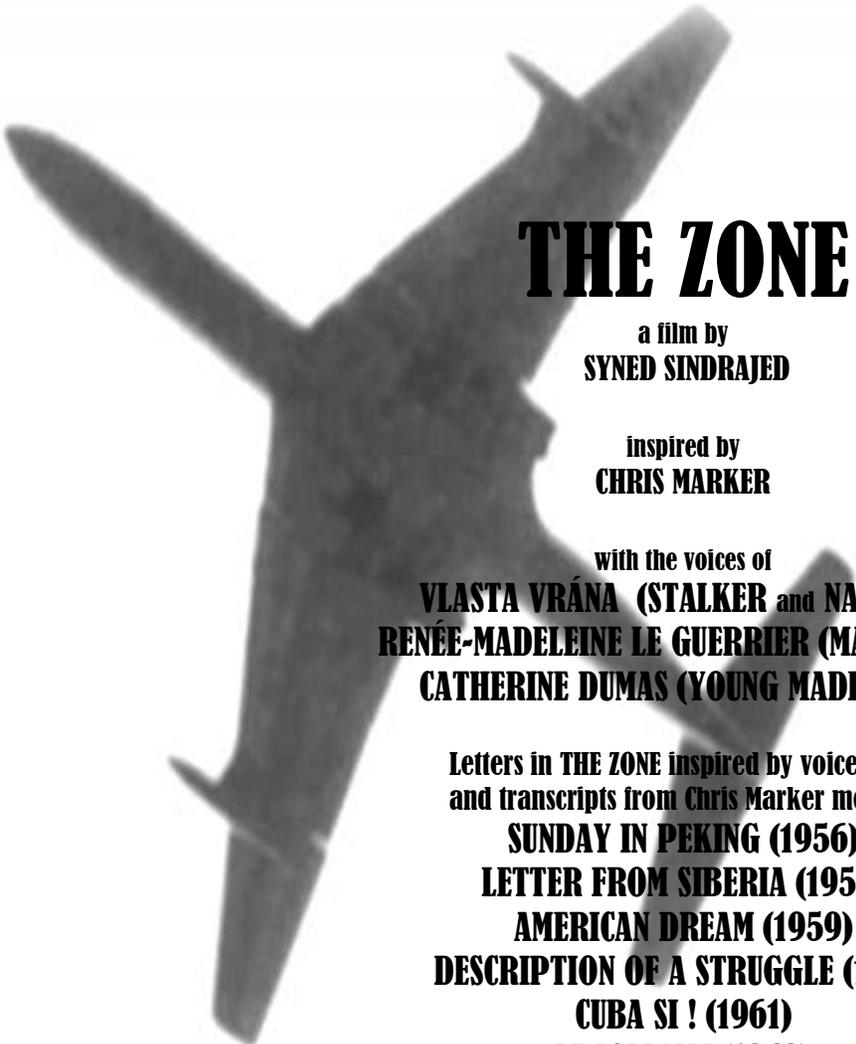
The story doesn't end there, since it began the day my father left me his 8mm camera and projector. As he travelled extensively, he filmed the world through his eyes, and after his death, I found all the 8mm reels that he shot in his life (from 1955 to 1985). In his own way, he left me his memory and like him, I became a man behind the camera.

But what to do with all these images full of memories that no one recalls? What purpose could they serve or for whom could they be of any use? The answers to these questions came to me as I re-watched Chris Marker's films, and **THE ZONE** became the means through which to share this heritage with you.

- Syned Sindrajed

According to the *Dictionnaire du cinéma québécois*, Denys Desjardins (aka Syned Sindrajed) is a "jack-of-all-trades filmmaker with a curious spirit, brimming with an overflowing love of movies that suffuses most of his films." A producer, filmmaker, screenwriter, camera operator, and editor, he has directed many films and websites, both for the private sector and the *National Film Board of Canada*. He has sat on various boards of directors, including those of *La Soirée des Jutra* and *Les Rendez-vous du cinéma Québécois* festival, and he is one of the founding members of *Québec Cinéma*.

CENTAURE FILMS is a production company founded in the early 1990s by filmmaker Denys Desjardins to support the production, distribution, and promotion of work that focuses on art and memory.



THE ZONE

a film by
SYNED SINDRAJED

inspired by
CHRIS MARKER

with the voices of
VLASTA VRÁNA (STALKER and NARRATOR)
RENÉE-MADELEINE LE GUERRIER (MADELEINE)
CATHERINE DUMAS (YOUNG MADELEINE)

Letters in **THE ZONE** inspired by voiceovers
and transcripts from Chris Marker movies.

SUNDAY IN PEKING (1956)

LETTER FROM SIBERIA (1958)

AMERICAN DREAM (1959)

DESCRIPTION OF A STRUGGLE (1960)

CUBA SI ! (1961)

LE JOLI MAI (1962)

LA JETÉE (1963)

SOY MEXICO (1965)

IF I HAD FOUR DROMEDARIES (1966)

A GRIN WITHOUT A CAT (1977)

SUNLESS (1983)

LEVEL FIVE (1996)

IMMEMORY (1997)

screenplay and dialogue
DENYS DESJARDINS
SYNED SINDRAJED

english script translation
OANA AVASILICHIOAEI

assistant director
ANIK SALAS

production director
DENYS DESJARDINS

8mm pictures (1955-1975)
GILLES DESJARDINS
JACQUELINE VALIQUETTE
ROBERT MIRON

super 8mm and video pictures
DENYS DESJARDINS

8mm transfers to HD
PIERRE McNEIL
films8mm.com

original score
atmosphere, mood and sound design
SIMON BELLEFLEUR

XILS 3 (VCS3 emulation)
Roland Chorus Space Echo
Roland Juno 106

inspired by
MICHEL KRASNA
alias **CHRIS MARKER**
EMS/VCS3, Moog Source

live sound recording and sound editing
DENYS DESJARDINS & NOMIS RUEL FELLEB

mix
SIMON BELLEFLEUR
Studio de mixage (PRIM)

on-line editing
SYLVAIN COSSETTE (PRIM)
with the help of the team at PRIM
PRODUCTION RÉALISATIONS INDÉPENDANTES DE MONTRÉAL

a film Directed, Written, Edited and Produced by
DENYS DESJARDINS

a very special thanks to
ANIK SALAS and **SIMON BELLEFLEUR**

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CHRIS MARKER ESTATE

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Québec

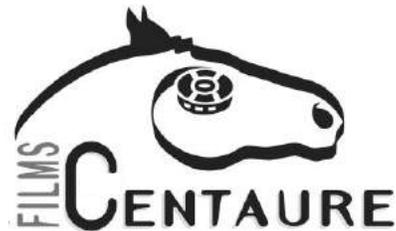
prim
AIDE À LA CRÉATION

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THE ZONE

a film by **SYNED SINDRAJED**

a **CENTAURE FILMS** production

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