



# — DEATH DOES NOT EXIST

QUINZAINE  
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT  
CANNES 2025



A Film by Félix Dufour-Laperrière

PRESSKIT





# — DEATH DOES NOT EXIST

72 MIN

CANADA, FRANCE

2025

1.85

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FRENCH

## SCREENINGS IN CANNES

THU. MAY 15th, 8:45 AM @ THÉÂTRE  
CROISSETTE (Official)

THU. MAY 15th, 2:00 PM @ LERINS 1 (Market)

THU. MAY 15th, 5:30 PM @ THÉÂTRE  
CROISSETTE (World Premiere)

SAT. MAY 17th, 1:30 PM @ OLYMPIA 3 (Market)

## INTERNATIONAL SALES

Best Friend Forever  
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# SYNOPSIS

After a failed armed attack on wealthy landowners, Hélène abandons her companions and flees into the forest. Manon, one of her friends and accomplices, returns to haunt her. Hélène has to revisit her convictions and choices, in a valley where metamorphoses and great upheavals disrupt the natural order of things.





# A CONVERSATION WITH FÉLIX DUFOUR- LAPERRIÈRE



## What is *Death does not exist* about?

A group of young adults attack a luxurious house where a particularly wealthy and influential couple is staying. Hélène and her companions want to shake the established order. They aim to be the spark that sets fire to the status quo. But the assault doesn't go as planned—Hélène freezes at the moment of action, then flees into the forest. One of her accomplices, Manon, catches up with her and gives her a chance to reconsider her choice and take part once again in their brutal attack.

To me, it's a film about commitment—political, but also romantic and friendly. About connection, the desire to lead one's own life, and the shared responsibility we bear for our collective future.

When Hélène begins to doubt and hesitates to rejoin her companions, Manon reveals the power they now hold. A poisonous power over life and death, the capacity to provoke immense upheaval. But Hélène soon realizes that the goals of this power are beyond their grasp, that they can neither control its immediate effects nor its consequences. Her convictions are torn, and they coexist uneasily with the feelings that move her: her love for Marc; her friendship with Manon, Martine, and Rémi; her longing to live, to claim even a modest share of the world as her own.

I conceived the film as a tragic tale. A tale, because it weaves in fantastic, magical elements that reveal the characters' dilemmas, their reflections, their inner lives. And tragic, because of the impossibilities, the contradictions—sometimes painful—that run through it. I believe I've projected a part of my own doubts, convictions, and contradictions into the characters of Hélène, Manon, and the old woman—the target of the attack and Hélène's paradoxical alter ego.

## Where does this story come from, and why do you think it resonates today?

The screenplay took shape over several years, rooted in two fictional but connected starting points. First, the direct attack carried out by young people against a symbol of wealth and power. Then, the Faustian pact that binds Hélène and Manon as they cross the valley—through the powers they uncover, and the possible consequences of their actions, which they gradually explore.

It's a story about radicality, with all its contradictions, its hopes, its dead ends. A story born from deep anger, from overwhelming desires that flare up to try and shake the world into motion—only to collide with the limits of their own actions, and their own internal tensions. The characters come to realize a clear, sometimes irreconcilable opposition: the impossibility of violence, and the impossibility of the status quo.

The question of how legitimate violence is, of inequality, of commitment and radicality feels especially relevant today—at a time when established orders seem to be shifting, and when we are witnessing sudden, sometimes violent, reconfigurations in certain countries. Sadly, violence is re-emerging—or becoming visible again—in places that once believed it belonged only elsewhere.

I wrote this film thinking of my daughter and my son, projecting onto their still-open future the doubts, fears, and great hopes that I carry. I naturally let my own questions rise to the surface—my loyalties and my weaknesses, the compromises and convictions that shape my daily life. I tried to make a film that is both anxious and tender, a film about friendship, and about loyalty.

**Why use animation, and what does it make possible?**

I'm first and foremost an animation filmmaker, and the script was written with the specific potential of animated images in mind—with their requirements, and the great freedom they offer in terms of directing. I write with colors in mind, with transformations, dreamlike sequences, mental images that take shape on screen. I also write with the awareness that there will be no real bodies, no faces, no human gazes or physical presence. The credibility and depth of the characters—their ability to carry emotion, to make us relate to their dilemmas and what they experience—must be built and sustained through the tools unique to animation: movement, drawing, form, and color.

In the specific case of *Death Does Not Exist*, animation became a precious tool to bring in the fantastic—the sweeping transformations, the ravenous animals, or those brought back to life. Animated imagery also allowed for the depiction of violence and its consequences, whether handled with restraint or head-on. In this spirit, the settings were crafted and colored with great care, as they act, in many ways, as an extension of Hélène's psyche—a visible manifestation of her inner world.

The artifice of animation makes it possible to give form to Hélène's dreams, desires, and fears. It's a poetic choice—one that allows for a certain freedom in how people, places, and emotions are portrayed and brought to life.

**The film contains some very graphic scenes. Why did you choose to show violence so directly?**

Some events in the story are indeed violent. Without turning it into spectacle, I wanted to convey—at a few very specific moments—the full force of that brutality, its power to disrupt, the shock it provokes in those who endure it, and in those who inflict it.

**Animals play a prominent role in the film. What do they represent?**

The animals embody the ideas running through the film. The hummingbird is fragile, elusive, and precious. The songbird catches its breath, comes back to life—and with it, hope. Coyotes and sheep take on the roles of predator and prey, locked in an endless chase. These animals also bring to the film a sense of physicality—flesh, muscle, flight and pursuit, a raw and instinctive drive to stay alive.

**Can you tell us a bit about how the film was made?**

The entire film was hand-drawn on a graphic tablet, twelve drawings per second. Special care was given to the coloring process, using painted colors on paper. The goal was to create a sense of closeness between the characters and the spaces they inhabit, and to tie the legibility of the image to the characters' movements and emotional journey. I was interested in exploring a productive tension—avoiding the automatic separation of character and background, and instead cultivating a graphic connection between the two, a dynamic relationship. This idea also links the abstraction of the flat color fields seen at the beginning and end of the film.

**What would you like spectators to take away from the film?**

A few emotions, and a few questions—about the importance of honoring the bonds that shape us, that make us free; about the sometimes tragic, sometimes necessary, sometimes unsolvable nature of commitment; about the need to protect what makes life possible and the world livable. I also hope viewers will enjoy discovering a form of direction that's a little different—one that fully embraces the possibilities of animation, its bold and deliberate choices, especially in the use of color.

# — BIOGRAPHY FÉLIX DUFOUR- LAPERRIÈRE

Félix Dufour-Laperrière is a filmmaker, screenwriter and producer. He cofounded Embuscade Films in 2013. After *Transatlantic* (documentary, 2014), *Ville Neuve* (animation, 2018) and *Archipelago* (animation, 2021), he releases in 2025 his fourth feature film *Death Does Not Exist* which will have its World Premiere in Cannes Directors' Fortnight.





# FILMOGRAPHY

## FÉLIX DUFOUR-LAPERRIÈRE

2021	<i>Archipel</i> – IFFR Competition & Annecy Contrechamps Jury Award
2018	<i>Ville Neuve</i> – Venice Days
2015	<i>Transatlantique</i> – IFFR



# CAST

<b>Hélène</b>	Zeneb Blanchet
<b>Manon</b>	Karelle Tremblay
<b>Marc</b>	Mattis Savard-Verhoeven
<b>Old Lady</b>	Barbara Ulrich
<b>Child</b>	Françoise L.
<b>Martine</b>	Marie B.
<b>Rémi</b>	Félix Dufour-Laperrière

# CREW

Director	Félix Dufour-Laperrière
Screenplay	Félix Dufour-Laperrière
Editing	Félix Dufour-Laperrière
Sound Design	Olivier Calvert, Samuel Gagnon-Thibodeau
Sound Mix	Hans Laitres
Original Music	Gabriel Dufour-Laperrière
Production	Embuscade Films, Miyu Productions
Producers	Nicolas Dufour-Laperrière, Félix Dufour-Laperrière, Emmanuel-Alain Raynal, Pierre Baussaron
Country	Canada, France
French Distributor	UFO Distribution
Canadian Distributor	Maison 4:3
International Sales	Best Friend Forever

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