

A promotional image for the film 'Viking' featuring two astronauts in space suits. They are positioned on either side of the frame, facing each other in profile. The suits are white with red accents and clear helmets. The background is a dark, red-lit interior, possibly a spacecraft, with a circular light fixture visible in the upper center. The overall mood is dramatic and futuristic.

VIKING

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2022
tiff Platform
TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



VIKING

Canada - 2022 - 104min - 35mm - 1.85 - 5.1
French, English, with English subtitles

directed by
Stéphane Lafleur

written by
Stéphane Lafleur
Eric K. Boulianne

with
Steve Laplante
Larissa Corriveau
Fabiola N. Aladin
Hamza Haq
Denis Houle
Marie Brassard
Martin-David Peters

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SYNOPSIS

The Viking Society is recruiting volunteers for the first manned mission to Mars. The goal is to form a B-team that will mirror the mission here on Earth in order to find solutions to the interpersonal problems that the Mars-bound crew is experiencing. The film tells the story of David, a high school gym teacher, who seizes this opportunity to revive his dream of becoming an astronaut and making a difference. *Viking* is a little absurd, falling somewhere between a high-concept comedy and a straight up allegorical tale. It's a story about the gap between our dreams and reality.

LOGLINE

In order to solve interpersonal conflicts among the crew of the first manned mission to Mars, the Viking Society has recruited a B-team of volunteers to mirror the mission on Earth.





CAST LIST

David
Steven
Janet Adams
Gary
Liz
Christiane Comte
Jean-Marc
Isabelle
Mr Roy Walker

Steve LAPLANTE
Larissa CORRIVEAU
Fabiola N. ALADIN
Hamza HAQ
Denis HOULE
Marie BRASSARD
Martin-David PETERS
Marie-Laurence MOREAU
Christopher HEYERDAHL

CREW LIST

Director
Screenwriters

Stéphane LAFLEUR
Stéphane LAFLEUR
Eric K. BOULIANNE
Luc DÉRY

Producers

Kim McCRAW

Casting

Lucie ROBITAILLE
Dandy THIBAudeau

Cinematographer

Sara MISHARA

Production designer

André-Line BEUPARLANT

Costume designer

Sophie LEFEBVRE

Makeup

Marie-Josée GALIBERT

Hair

Vincent DUFAULT

1st assistant director

Cédrick KLUYSKENS

Line producer

François REID

Postproduction supervisor

Érik DANIEL

Editor

Sophie LEBLOND

Sound engineer

Pierre BERTRAND

Sound designer

Sylvain BELLEMARE

Sound mixer

Bernard GARIÉPY STROBL

Colorist

Jérôme CLOUTIER

Music composers

ORGAN MOOD

Production company

Christophe LAMARCHE-LEDOUX

Distribution - Canada

Mathieu CHARBONNEAU

Sales agent

micro_scope

Les Films Opale

Sphère Films International

STÉPHANE LAFLEUR

Director and co-screenwriter biography

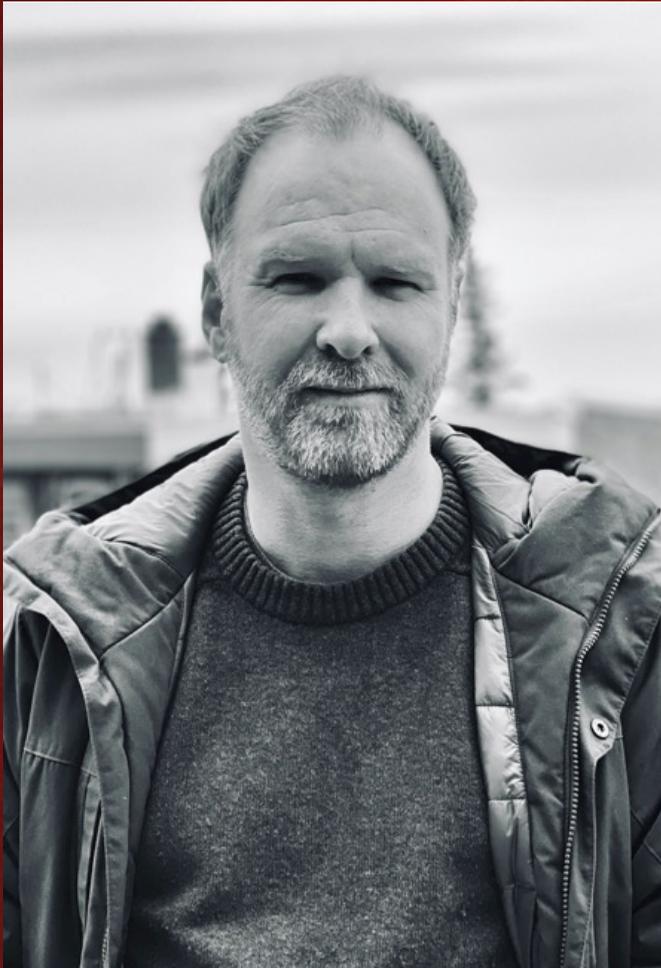
Stéphane Lafleur is a filmmaker, musician and film editor.

His first feature film, *Continental, un film sans fusil / Continental, a Film Without Guns* (2007), had its world premiere at the Venice International Film Festival in the Venice Days section and was later selected by several major international film festivals, including Thessaloniki, Göteborg and Rotterdam. The film won the Citytv Award for Best Canadian First Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival.

En terrains connus / Familiar Grounds (2011), his second feature, won the Ecumenical Jury Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival. The film travelled to more than fifteen international festivals including those in Jeonju, Shanghai, Durban and Melbourne. The film also won Best Narrative Feature at the AFI Film Festival in Los Angeles as well as the Jury Grand Prize at the Taipei Film Festival.

Tu dors Nicole / You're Sleeping Nicole, his third feature film, had its world premiere in The Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival in 2014. It also screened in over 40 film festivals including the Toronto International Film Festival, Göteborg, Rotterdam, Sydney, Los Cabos, Edinburgh and New Directors/New Films presented at MoMA.

Lafleur has edited numerous films including *Monsieur Lazhar* and *La déesse des mouches à feu*. He's also the leader of the folk band Avec pas d'casque and half of the instrumental duet Feu doux.



©Julianne Côté

filmography

2022 VIKING

Fiction, 104 min. 35mm

2014 TU DORS NICOLE / YOU'RE SLEEPING NICOLE

Fiction, 90 min. 35mm

Directors' Fortnight, Cannes International Film Festival, 2014

Toronto International Film Festival, 2014

Sydney Film Festival, 2014

Göteborg International Film Festival, 2014

Rotterdam International Film Festival, 2015

2011 EN TERRAINS CONNUS / FAMILIAR GROUNDS

Fiction, 89 min. 35mm

Berlin International Film Festival, 2011 *Ecumenical Jury Award

Taipei Film Festival, 2011 *Grand Jury Prize

Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois, 2012 *Best Screenplay

2007 CONTINENTAL, UN FILM SANS FUSIL / CONTINENTAL, A FILM WITHOUT GUNS

Fiction, 100 min. 35mm

Venice International Film Festival - Venice Days, 2007

Toronto International Film Festival, 2007 *CityTv Award, Best Canadian First Feature

Namur Francophone Film Festival, 2007 *Bayard d'Or for Best film

10e soirée des Jutra, 2008 *Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Actor in a supporting role (Réal Bossé)

As an editor

2019 LA DÉESSE DES MOUCHES À FEU / GODDESS OF THE FIREFLIES

2018 UNE COLONIE / A COLONY

2017 LA DISPARITION DES LUCIOLES / THE FIREFLIES ARE GONE

2013 LE DÉMANTÈLEMENT / THE AUCTION

2011 MONSIEUR LAZHAR



ERIC K. BOULIANNE

co-screenwriter biography

A proud native of the Charlevoix region, Eric K. Boulianne left the countryside in 2002 to pursue film studies. After receiving his B.A. in Film Studies from UQAM, he wrote, among other things, the short films *Marshmallow* and *Petit frère* (selected at the Cannes 53rd Critic's Week and screened at more than 60 international festivals).

Along with his work as a TV writer (*Les pêcheurs*, *SNL Qc*, *Web thérapie*, *Lourd*, *2017 Québec Film Gala*), he co-wrote the sequel to the popular success *De père en flic*, as well as the 2016 "Cinderella" movie, *PRANK* (selected at the 31st Venice International Film Critics' Week). In 2019, three feature films written by Eric K. Boulianne were released: *Avant qu'on explose* (nominated in the best screenplay category at the 2019 Quebec Film Gala), *Menteur* (top Canadian box-office grossing movie of 2019), co-written with Émile Gaudreault and Sébastien Ravary, and *Les Barbares de La Malbaie*, co-written with Marc-Antoine Rioux and Alexandre Auger.

In the months to come, three other feature films he co-wrote will be released: *Farador* (in which he also has the lead role), *Viking* and the adaptation of the best-selling novel *Le plongeur*.



©Fred Gervais-Dupuis



STEVE LAPLANTE

Role: DAVID



© Marily Clark

Steve Laplante graduated in acting from the National Theatre School of Canada.

Since then, he has participated in nearly thirty theatrical productions, working with renowned stage directors such as Wajdi Mouawad (*Littoral*), Maxime Denomé (*Orphelins*), Denis Bernard (*Coma Unplugged*), Olivier Choinière (*Ennemi public*) and Frédéric Blanchette (*Trahison*).

Steve is a regular face on Quebec television, participating in several popular series such as *Les invincibles*, *Aveux*, *Le Gentleman*, *Mirador* and *Faits divers*. He will soon be seen alongside Evelyne Brochu in the upcoming series *Chouchou*. He gained a lot of attention lately, receiving four nominations at the 2022 Gémeaux Awards, for his roles in series *Léo*, *Pour toujours plus un jour*, *C'est comme ça que je t'aime* and *Après*.

His most recent film projects include Monia Chokri's *Babysitter* as well as Louis Godbout's *Les tricheurs*. Cinephiles will soon discover him in the leading role of Stéphane Lafleur's feature film *Viking* as well as in *Coco ferme* by Sébastien Gagné.

On top of being an established actor, Steve Laplante's writing skills have also given us some great projects. Among others, we can mention the series *Tu m'aimes-tu* and *Léo*, which he co-wrote.

LARISSA CORRIVEAU

Role : STEVEN

Larissa Corriveau is a multi-talented artist. Actress, writer and director, she is well known for her career in theater and for her three collaborations with Denis Côté.

In 2019, she made a remarkable film debut in Denis Côté's *Répertoire des villes disparues* (Official Competition, 69th Berlinale); her interpretation of the fragile and mystical Adèle was unanimously acclaimed by the critics, who named her «revelation of the film». She was nominated for this role at the Gala Québec Cinéma in 2019. In 2021, she once again impressed cinephiles with her role as Solveig in *Social Hygiene* by the same filmmaker. This year, she can be seen in Denis Côté's new feature film *Un été comme ça* which had its world premiere at the Berlinale in mid-February. She also completed the shooting of Stéphane Lafleur's next feature film, *Viking*. In addition, Larissa has made several television appearances in such shows as *Plan B*, *Leo*, *Marche à l'ombre*, *Unité 9*, *Toute la vie*, *Le 422* and *District 31*.

Larissa is also the founder of the production company La Demeure where she writes, directs and produces short films and music videos presented in many festivals around the world.



© Lawrence Fafard

FABIOLA N. ALADIN

Role : JANET ADAMS



© Anne-Sophie Coiteux

Fabiola Nyrva is known to TV viewers for her roles in *Sans rendez-vous*, *M'entends-tu*, *Entre deux draps* and *Rue King*. In films, she played the role of Janet Adams in *Viking*, Stéphane Lafleur's new film, and Claire in *Feu rouge*, a short film by Sophie B. Jacques. Passionate about improvisation, she has distinguished herself in several leagues, notably in the Punch Club and LNI shows. Also a singer, she was a choir member in the play *Sylvie aime Maurice* presented at Théâtre La Licorne in March 2017.

HAMZA HAQ

Role : GARY



© Randall Ross

Hamza Haq stars as Bashir ‘Bash’ Hamed in the acclaimed CTV/ NBC medical drama *Transplant*, for which he earned a 2021 and 2022 Canadian Screen Award for Best Lead Actor. Named one of Canada’s Rising Stars by The Hollywood Reporter in 2017, Hamza was recognized with a Canadian Screen Award nomination in 2018 for his portrayal of Raza Ali in the CBC drama *This Life*.

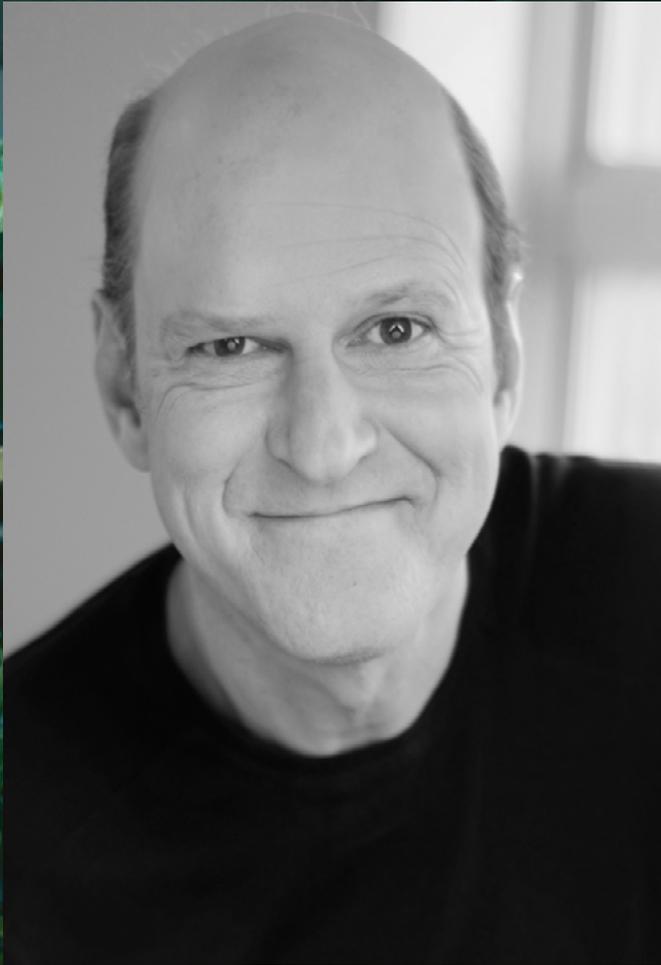
Hamza recently appeared opposite Margaret Qualley in the IFC feature *My Salinger Year* which opened the 70th Berlin International Film Festival in February 2020, and has had supporting roles in *Bon Cop*, *Bad Cop 2* with Colm Feore, *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan* directed by Xavier Dolan and Darren Aronofsky’s *Mother!*. He will appear in the upcoming independent films *Delia’s Gone* with Marisa Tomei and Stephan James, the quirky romantic comedy *With Love and a Major Organ*, written by Julia Lederer and based on her play by the same name, as well as the French Canadian comedy *Viking*.

In 2020, Hamza was honored as Playback’s Breakout Star of the Year, and was a recipient of RBC’s Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards. He spoke at TEDxTORONTO Fall digital event series ‘Uncharted’ in 2021, using his public platform to speak on issues important to him, including refugees’ rights, racial injustice, and combating stereotypes.

Raised in Ottawa, Hamza is the youngest of four siblings born in Saudi Arabia to Pakistani parents and has called Canada home since he was nine years old.

DENIS HOULE

Role : LIZ



© Andr anne Gauthier

Denis Houle's career in the TV and film industry stretches over forty years. Since the beginning, he has played a number of roles on the stage in various theaters in Montreal.

He was part of more than thirty TV series, including *Six degr s*, * crivain public*, *Nous*, *Minuit le soir*, *C.A*, *Toute la v rit *, *Les beaux malaises*, *Marche   l'ombre* and *Karl et Max*. From 2006 to 2014, young audiences appreciated him for his colorful character of Mr. Craquepoutte on the show *Toc toc toc*. Denis was awarded the G meaux for best male performance in a supporting role in a youth series in 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

On the big screen, he can be seen in *Karmina* directed by Gabriel Pelletier, *La peau blanche* directed by Daniel Roy, *La grande s duction* directed by Jean-Fran ois Pouliot and in *Continental, un film sans fusil* and *En terrains connus*, both directed by St phane Lafleur.

micro_scope

the production company

micro_scope is one of the most important film production companies in Canada.

Founded in 2002, the company mainly focuses on the development and production of innovative and accessible feature films. Led by producers Luc Déry and Kim McCraw, micro_scope strives to make sure each of the company's films reaches its full potential.

All of micro_scope's 25 feature films have distinguished themselves in the most important film festivals in the world, notably in Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Locarno, Sundance and Toronto. Among them, *Incendies* (Denis Villeneuve) and *Monsieur Lazhar* (Philippe Falardeau) have been nominated for an Academy Award as Best Foreign Language Film.

selected filmography

2021 DRUNKEN BIRDS – Ivan GRBOVIC
TIFF : Platform – Official Competition
Represented Canada in the Best International Film category at the 2022 Oscars

2020 MY SALINGER YEAR – Philippe FALARDEAU
Berlinale : Opening Night Film

2017 ALLURE – Carlos & Jason SANCHEZ
TIFF
Busan International Film Festival

2015 MY INTERNSHIP IN CANADA – Philippe FALARDEAU
Locarno International Film Festival : Piazza Grande
TIFF: Mention Best Canadian Feature Film

2014 YOU'RE SLEEPING NICOLE – Stéphane LAFLEUR
Cannes : Directors' Fortnight
TIFF

2013 GABRIELLE – Louise ARCHAMBAULT
Locarno International Film Festival : Piazza Grande
Audience Award

2013 ENEMY – Denis VILLENEUVE
TIFF : Gala Presentation
San Sebastian Film Festival : Official Competition

2011 MONSIEUR LAZHAR – Philippe FALARDEAU
Nominated in the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 2012 Oscars
Locarno International Film Festival : Audience Award / Variety Piazza Grande Award
TIFF : Best Canadian Feature Film Award

2010 INCENDIES – Denis VILLENEUVE
Nominated in the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 2011 Oscars
Venice Days : Best Film Award
TIFF : Best Canadian Feature Film Award

A CONVERSATION

between Stéphane Lafleur
(director/screenwriter)
and Eric K. Boulianne
(screenwriter)
about *Viking*.

August 2022.



STÉPHANE

I'd say what first inspired *Viking* was an exhibit by photographer Vincent Fournier. It showed astronauts lost in the desert. There was something both poetic and vertiginous about these images. I later found out that the people in the photos were part of Martian simulations in the desert. The concept of "make-believe" while following a strict protocol seemed like an interesting premise for a film. Then I saw a documentary about the Voyager interstellar probes, and I learned that a double of the probes was kept in a laboratory. It allowed them to fix some mechanical problems that occurred in space. I wondered what would happen if you did the same thing with humans. I started writing the first draft and after a while, I realized that there were endless possibilities. The story could have gone in so many directions. That's when I asked if you wanted to write the film with me.

ERIC

I was really into the idea of tackling the infinitely great in an infinitely small way. Presenting a groundbreaking experience for mankind, while ultimately following ordinary people who argue about pointless details. Even in space, daily life must be boring sometimes. Everybody can fight about sugar cubes or whatnot, even astronauts. This keeps us somewhat humble in regard to our place and the complexity of "existence." I read your first draft of the script during the pandemic, at a time when we all realized how absurd our lives could be. I immediately wanted to work with you on this project. I think one of the first things we agreed on is the concept of dreams and disappointment, expectations versus reality.

STÉPHANE

Exactly. The gap between what we imagined and how things are actually. The importance of following your obsessions to their conclusion in order to get them out of your system (which ironically is one of the reasons why I make movies). David needs to get closer to his dream, even though it's

not quite the “real” thing. I love to begin writing without really knowing what it’s about. The themes reveal themselves organically later. For instance, this story is also about wanting to be somebody else, pretending to be somebody else.

ERIC

Yes, in as much as it allows you to escape your “condition.” David is a gym teacher who feels like he’s not where he should be, who wonders what’s the point of it all. By playing aerospace engineer, John Shepard, he thinks he might finally make a difference, by proxy. We can all relate to this desire to be “something or someone else,” to matter. There was also a meta quality to the project. Pointing a camera at people playing other people, in staged situations – it’s also about filmmaking, in a way. It was fun to think about and to deconstruct. It stimulated the part of me that, ever since I started making movies, has always wanted to take Hollywood clichés which everyone is familiar with, and to subvert them in order to create something original. In a way, *Viking* is the science-fiction film we all have in our heads.

STÉPHANE

I wanted it to be the “B version” of those sci-fi movies you talk about, just as David is the “B version” of John Shepard. It goes back to the idea of wanting to be someone else or something else. Making a Hollywood-type film, but without the big budget. I like that in *Viking*, the concept itself reflects that reality, without becoming a parody. Our geographical and cultural relationship with the United States, with the American Dream, is always there in the background.

ERIC

It really sounds high concept, the way we talk about it, but one of the things that makes me proud is that those ideas are not overly present when you watch the film. There is a lot of humor and the character arc of David is very engaging. His psychological journey, his struggles, his existential

issues are very “human”. Ultimately, once you get past the intellectual premise, it has kind of a reality TV/Big Brother dynamic, where we enjoy watching these characters interact in a closed environment, getting to know them, noticing their flaws, relating to them. I’m glad you succeeded in making a heartwarming, funny movie out of a slightly abstract idea, with actors who brilliantly walked a tightrope between absurdity and sincerity.

STÉPHANE

It was fun to write the film with Steve Laplante in mind for the part of David. I’d been wanting to work with him for a long time. He’s a great dramatic actor who also has amazing comic timing. And he has this likeability which makes it easier to follow the character in his delusion. I’d seen Larissa Corriveau on stage and in the films of Denis Côté. She’s a chameleon who disappears in every role. She has this enigmatic quality that we wanted for Steven. Then I met Hamza Haq, who is better known in English Canada. He was interested in acting in French and in doing comedy, so he jumped on the opportunity to portray Gary and he does an amazing job. Fabiola N. Aladin (Janet) was a wonderful discovery during the casting process. She really impressed me, adding a dimension to the character that wasn’t on the page. I was also thrilled to reunite with Denis Houle (Liz) and Marie Brassard (Christiane Comte), whom I had worked with in my early films. They’re both always fantastic. It’s amusing that you mentioned reality TV. We’re in an era of extreme voyeurism. People are constantly watching the lives of others on social media, on television. As a screenwriter, do you feel like you’re competing with “reality?”

ERIC

I mean, if you think of some highlights in *The Bachelor* or *Love Island*, you’re like, “how can I top that?” Same thing with those Twitter or Facebook fights that make you want to

sit back and watch while eating popcorn. But I still believe that the audience is into storytelling, and it's up to us as artists to find surprising angles. Our tools are structure, drama, poetry, visuals. It's a challenge to tell a story properly, with emotions, stakes for the characters, memorable cinematic moments... But when it all clicks into place, it's THE BEST. I think you wanted to try to do something more narrative in the storytelling sense, while maintaining your "loose," poetic approach.

STÉPHANE

It's true that I always follow my instinct when I write my screenplays. I build them around some key moments, without worrying too much about the plot. But I felt like *Viking* needed a clearer narrative progression and I knew that if we worked together, you would improve that element. Your more methodical handling of story structure truly improved the initial proposition. It took me out of my comfort zone. It was fun to play with some "classic" tropes. I think the blend of our styles took the basic concept to the next level.

ERIC

Totally! We make a great team. Like Riggs and Murtaugh (who's Mel, who's Danny? No one knows). It also took me out of my comfort zone because this was a more "visual" screenplay than what I'm used to writing. You knew what kind of images the film would feature. There were also a lot of details about sound design in the stage directions.

STÉPHANE

Making a science-fiction film was a longtime dream (even though I'm not sure *Viking* entirely qualifies). I got to pay tribute to some of the filmmakers that have influenced me, while attempting to make it my own. It's by far my most ambitious project, so it was important to have a great support system, starting with Kim McCraw and Luc Déry, who have produced all of my films. After *Tu dors Nicole*, Luc told me I might be ready for a larger-

scale project. I don't think he expected me to go to Mars (laughs). It was a huge challenge for André-Line Beauparlant (visual design) and Sophie Lefebvre (costume design). Just crafting the space helmets was a major undertaking, which involved several departments. I also wanted to keep things as "analogue" as possible. Cinematographer Sara Mishara shot the film in 35 mm. We built a scale model for the exterior shots of the station instead of using CGI. Even the images of planet Mars are the work of a visual artist, Yonkers Vidal, who worked with liquid substances filmed in macro mode. It was really exciting to use more old-school methods to do things we'd never done before. I mostly always work with the same crew, which is like a band. And each film is a new album we create together. This was the first time I collaborated with someone on the screenplay, and I think you just joined the band (laughs).

ERIC

(laughs) Thanks for the opportunity. I think it's a great album. Can't wait to go on tour.

STÉPHANE

I'm glad we had this conversation.

ERIC

I'm glad we had this conversation.



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