

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Switzerland in 1950, Léa Pool emigrated to Canada in 1975 and taught film-making from 1978 to 1983. Named "Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres de France" in 1994. Lives in Montreal.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 1978 **Laurent Lammere, portier.**
- 1991 **Rispondetemi, dans Montréal vu par...** (Montreal Sextet)
- 1996 **Lettre à ma fille**

FEATURE FILMS

- 1980 **Strass café**
- 1984 **La Femme de l'hôtel**
(A Woman in Waiting)
- 1986 **Anne Trister**
- 1988 **A corps perdu**
(Straight for the Heart)
- 1991 **La Demoiselle sauvage**
(Savage Woman)
- 1994 **Mouvements du désir**
(Desire in Motion)
- 1999 **Emporte-moi**
(Set Me Free)
- 2001 **Lost and Delirious**
(Rebelles or La Rage au cœur)
- 2004 **The Blue Butterfly**

DOCUMENTARIES

- 1990 **Hotel Chronicles**
- 1998 **Gabrielle Roy**

TV FILMS

- 1979 **Série Planète**
(nine episodes)
- 1982 **Eva en transit**
- 1997 **Femmes: une histoire inédite**
(Échos du futur-Postcard from the Future)
- 1997 **Femmes: une histoire inédite**
(Le Tango des sexes-The Gender Tango)

LÉA POOL



From isolation to communication

From Switzerland to Quebec, from feature films to documentaries, from introspection to baring all, in the space of twenty years Léa Pool has developed a cinematic universe whose evolution has been nourished by a remarkable coherence, both in its themes and its recurring images.

Assuming that there was a kinship with the cinema of Marguerite Duras from the very beginning, Léa Pool soon established an extremely coded world of her own, an interior space whose do-

main is brought to the fore by the force of the symbolic vocabulary, the almost obsessional images of trains, harbours, hotels, ambulances: objects denoting exile, movement and the unknown. Later, inscribing herself in the line of Antonioni and Wenders, she gradually freed herself from their influences to create a cinema that is as carnal as it is spiritual, strongly marked by wandering, incommunicability, the search for identity, and urgency.

Oscillating between a dream world and a firm grip on reality, Léa Pool's film-making is a constant discourse on the creation of a work or of herself, the two being closely linked. In fact in her first three films, the central character is a creator: a film-maker in **A Woman in Waiting**, a painter in **Anne Trister**, a photographer in **Straight for the Heart**. Later on, even though the artist appears on the periphery (the failed writer in **Set me Free**, who is the father of the heroine), he/she is always present, until **Gabrielle Roy**, a film marking a turning point where the film-maker finds, by means of the documentary, a more generous, freer relationship with the world. By effacing herself behind the life and work of the famous Canadian woman of letters, the film-maker has the floor. As Léa Pool herself said, "I was liberated from language, because Gabrielle Roy spoke for me."

"The work of Léa Pool, a prolific film-maker, enlarges the spectrum of the Quebec cinema by combining the themes of wandering and the search for feminine identity."

Dictionnaire du cinéma québécois

Whereas music, and that includes singing, occupies a primary role in the cinematographic work of Léa Pool, the films of her first period are very close to being silent films, words functioning only as an obligatory and chaotic passage towards the Other. The bodies do the speaking, and the language is above all visual. From **Set me Free** onwards, language is released, and a salutary fusion takes place between outer reality and the inner world.

Like a blurred photo that becomes clearer and clearer over the years, Léa Pool's universe becomes progressively more incarnate, always maintaining the same density, but with new lightness and precision. It's a rigorous journey for a film-maker who little by little has passed from isolation to communication, from expression of the non-spoken to expression pure and simple. The work of Léa Pool is the history of a film-maker who has brought herself into the world.

PRINCIPAL PRIZES

La Femme de l'hôtel: Génie Prize for best actress (Louise Marleau) and best song (Touch Me); prize for best actress (Louise Marleau) at the Chicago Festival; prize for best Canadian film at the Toronto Festival; Public Award at the Créteil Festival of Films by Women

Anne Trister: Official competitor at the Berlin Festival; Génie Prize for best photography, best song; Public Award at the Créteil Festival of Films by Women

A corps perdu: Official competitor at the Festival of Venice

Hotel Chronicles: Gold Plaque at the Chicago Festival

La Demoiselle sauvage: Génie Prize for best music and best actor; prize for best photography at the Montreal World Film Festival, best Canadian film

Gabrielle Roy: Gémeaux Prize for best documentary; prize for best biography at the Banff Festival

Emporte-moi: Official competitor at the Berlin Festival; Special Ecumenical Jury Award at the Berlin Festival; prize for best screenplay (Léa Pool) at the Chicago Festival; Jutra Prize for best actress (Karine Vanasse), best supporting actress (Pascale Bussières), best artistic direction (Serge Bureau), and special prize to Léa Pool; prize for best actress (Karine Vanasse) at the Namur Festival; prize for best Swiss film at the Swiss Film Festival; prize for best Canadian film from the Toronto Film Critics Association; prize for best Canadian film, special mention to the film and to Karine Vanasse at the Toronto Festival; Youth Prize for the direction and to Karine Vanasse at the Festival of Valladolid

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Born 1960 in Paris, Eric Fourlanty emigrated to Canada in 1974, studied film-making in Montreal, edited the cinema section of *Voir* magazine from 1986 to 2000. In 1999 published a collection of short stories (*La Mort en friche*) and *Le Violon rouge*, a book of encounters and photos on the film of François Girard. Lives in Montreal.

TRANSLATION

John O'Brien, Basel

LÉA POOL

Alphabet Primer

[...] Ambulance

When I arrived in Quebec, in North America, the sound of an ambulance struck me; it was not related to a personal memory. For me it's an image of the search for something deeper, further on, something between death and life. Whether it's heading for a hospital or a hotel, the ambulance is linked to urgency, to transition. It is an element of the unknown, injury, loss of autonomy, transformation. It is the passage from a state of suffering to what is in principle a state of healing.

[...] Blue

The colour of the Quebec winter. I've made nearly all my films in Montreal, always in winter. It's also a colour that can symbolise the lack of communication, of keeping your distance. It's a world that's emotionally cold but moving in the direction of greater warmth, awareness of one's body, of the other person. Little by little, people speak to each other and touch each other more, even if it's only to hit someone!

[...] Corporeality

At the end of my adolescence I had the impression that the body was like a social envelope, without any relation to what one is inside. It was impossible for me to reconcile the two. In my first films, there's a voice that says one thing and a body that says something else. To me the body is complex, but not tortured. I like forms and movements that are purified, stripped bare, essential, so as to extract the body from the everyday world, enabling it to regain a free space, without contingencies. Body language is what is the least directed. That's why I choose actors who can express what I have to say with their bodies.

[...] Desire

In all my films there is a space being two beings to be filled in. It is not a desire that can be achieved; it's always difficult or impossible. It produces a film space that's much too vast, so you film this desire that is always circulating. When you film two bodies making love, there has to be a space between them to allow light to pass through. My desire in film-making is to fill a vacuum. This is the essential feature of my creative work.

[...] Dreams

In practically all my films there are dreams, a moment where there's a level of consciousness other than reality. This is especially so in my first works, where I filmed the interior landscapes of people as much as their reality. The more I advance, the more they become flesh and blood. Before, my films imploded, now they explode!

LÉA POOL

> continuation 1

[...] Exile

It's possible that exile to Quebec has led to a more questioning attitude than if I had remained in Switzerland. Exile is feeling oneself inadequate, not living in one's own space, experiencing a discrepancy between who you are and the image you project, and even between you and yourself. This state of exile is what interests me. Everybody is a bit exiled. The work to be done is to find the missing bridges and become as complete as possible. Basically it's belonging. That's what we wish for our children.

[...] Insanity

I'm not really interested in the frontier between sanity and insanity. What I portray is not a clinical insanity but the consequences of persons following something through to the very end. They slide towards very disturbed zones. At a given moment, I feel this fear that I could start sliding too, or that some of the people I'm close to might slide that way. At the same time, I'm fascinated by people who explore these zones of fragility.

[...] Island

An island like that of Montreal gives me a feeling of security, because it has a precise contour, it's a place that can be circumscribed. This is linked to problems of identity, of not knowing one's limits or frontiers. To define my personal space has been an extremely hard task.

[...] Intimacy

As a film-maker, I'm interested in those rare, precious moments. People spend a lot of time giving the impression of communicating. My films show above all human solitude, so that if there are encounters, I want them to be decisive. They're stolen moments; they never happen through words.

[...] Kibbutz

I'm the daughter of a survivor of the Holocaust, and at the age of 17 I went to a kibbutz during my first trip outside Switzerland. Jewishness is present in my films, but it is subjacent. The themes of identity and exile tie in with Jewish concerns, and as I make very personal films, it would be difficult to eliminate that particular aspect. It's a part of my memory, my personality.

[...] Mother

The need to be seen and recognised by my mother is probably the motor of my creative work. This search for maternal love gradually moves into feminine love, the love of a woman, to a love that is a priori equal in **Lost and Delirious**, a love that no longer needs to pass via the mother or the maternal figure. A film isn't a form of therapy, but I have the impression that I have become able to love better and be more just in my relationship with my daughter, and with my mother as well. **Set me Free** is dedicated to them.

LÉA POOL

> continuation 2

[...] Narration

For me there was no correspondence between a story told in images and sounds and one narrated by a text. I wasn't able to make my characters speak except by silence or a voice-off. I liked a certain kind of film that used the voice-off, so it gave me the desire to make my own films too.

[...] Port

A port, a home base – once you call it that, it becomes a bit reductive. To me, a train is a point of departure, a non-place, whereas a port is a place of anchorage, arrival, a harbour. It's the orderliness of a home, of belonging, of a successful outcome. We're really in a symbolic vocabulary here...

[...] Quebec

I've made almost all my films in Quebec, and I'm not sure that I would have been a creator if I had remained in Switzerland. It's an integral part of my personality. Even though it has diminished, this juncture between my Swiss origins and my life in Quebec will always endow me with a certain effortless originality, a different point of view. It would be the same if I returned to Switzerland.

[...] Switzerland

It's the country of my origins, my past. Many of my films are Swiss co-productions; Switzerland has become a partner in my creative activity. On the other hand, my films aren't rooted in a particular social or political reality. They have the texture of Quebec, and a European sensitivity. I've never defined myself by a country.

[...] Train

A train is a very cinematographic place. In my opinion it's not only a psychoanalytical value, but a very emotive one as well. Switzerland is a country of trains, and when I left, it was by train. That was where I tore myself away from my mother. It was the same with my father, I saw him for the last time standing on the platform. If I have something overwhelming to show, there will surely be a train. But I don't say to myself: "I've got it, I'm going to put in a train!" It's an unconscious part of my creative work.

[...] Urbanism

Montreal is a very inspiring place to film. I've always loved its run-down side, going down to the harbour, the abandoned factories. In **Savage Woman Nature** is there, but it's cut in two by a dam. Then **Gabrielle Roy** opened up great spaces for me. **Lost and Delirious** also applies to the forest, and my next film will be made in Costa Rica, in the middle of a tropical forest.

LÉA POOL**> continuation 3****[...] Visual**

As I had difficulty at the beginning to communicate my universe in words, I gave preference to the visual aspect. An image had to express the maximum by itself. My scenarios are always born of an image, a bit in the style of Duras. This reference has remained. What was satisfying in the film about Gabrielle Roy was that it managed to speak for me. It was an ideal encounter.

[...] Youth

All ages of life are represented in my films, but the child and the adolescent are the motors. My desire to make films has come from an adolescence that wouldn't end; it's a side of infancy that doesn't want to become adult. From film to film, I've reflected on characters between childhood and adolescence, until the moment comes when I decide to make a film about them.

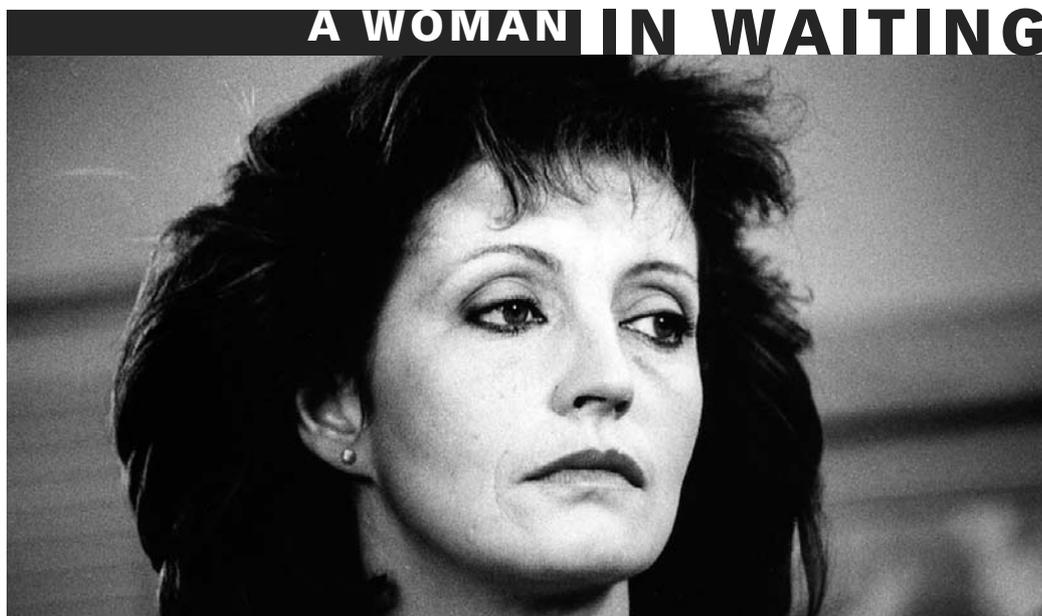
Script: Michel Langlois, Léa Pool,
Robert Gurik
Camera: Georges Dufaux

Editing: Michel Arcand
Sound: Serge Beauchemin
Music: Yves Lafférière

Cast: Louise Marleau, Paule
Baillargeon, Marthe Turgeon,
Serge Dupire

Production: ACPAV

“Creation is also nourished by handi-
caps. My universe, expressing itself
badly in words, is first expressed
by images, then bodies and finally by
music. When there are words, it’s a
standpoint about the film, a reson-
ance chamber, another manner of
speaking.” Léa Pool



| 1984

| 35 mm

| colour

| 89'

| Original title: La Femme de l'hôtel

Into a Quebec cinematography nurtured by the “cinéma direct” of the 1960s and 70s, **La Femme de l'hôtel** brought the fresh air of pure fiction, free from all social contingencies.

After an 18-year absence from Montreal, a woman film director returns to film a story of a female singer slowly drifting into insanity. At the hotel where the crew is staying, the director meets a woman whose destiny seems to have inspired the one she has imagined for her heroine. A fragile friendship arises between the two women, where the reality of the one becomes closely entwined with the fiction of the other.

In a dreamlike atmosphere recalling that of *Last Year at Marienbad* – in a Nordic version bathed in bluish winter light – Léa Pool combs a feminine world marked by memory, inner exile and creation, and establishes a purified style, a play of mirrors between fiction and reality, reason and insanity, a film in the film and in the eye of the spectator. Of all these multiple levels of consciousness, which one is the most real?

Airy and secretive as a silent-film star, Louise Marleau embodies, with a remarkable sobriety, this “woman in waiting”, who has seen it all. Beside her, Paule Baillargeon, playing the troubled film director, an earthling attracted by the void, and Marthe Turgeon, an actress playing her own life, take up the slack. Between these three poles, Léa Pool composes, decomposes and recomposes the portrait of a woman who is a prisoner of herself. “Touch me,” says the theme of the film: one could not say it better.

Script: Léa Pool, Luc Caron
Camera: François Bouchard

Editing: Léa Pool
Sound: Pierre Grou

Music: Philippe Chevalier
Cast: Luc Caron, Céline Lacoste

Production: Les Productions Strass,
National Film Board

"I'm a Quebec film-maker, this is clear to me; I've made nearly all my films in Quebec by choice. When I arrived in Montreal in 1975, this search for a national identity by the people of Quebec was stimulating. It gave a meaning to my own questions." Léa Pool



| 1980

| 16 mm

| colour

| 62'

| Original title: Strass Café

Fully assuming her filiation with the director of *India Song*, Léa Pool sets the scene of her own universe, a phantom world where characters with indistinct identities wander around. There is talk about an encounter that you never see, and the city you do see evokes an imaginary place, even though it's completely banal.

A woman talks, alone. She speaks to us, to herself. Another woman is mute, also alone. Is it the same one? Perhaps. There's a man. Or is it a man? A city, night, a deserted bar. A couple is dancing a slow tango. It all resembles Duras, but it isn't.

If the images of this first feature film only resemble a shadow of the sharp look that Léa Pool will later take at the world, the narration, spoken by the film-maker herself, among others, possesses real assurance, to the point where it virtually constitutes an explanation of the text of the films to come, a starting point for the themes the director was to develop later on.

Script: Léa Pool, Marcel Beaulieu
Camera: Pierre Mignot
Editing: Michel Arcand

Sound: Richard Besse
Music: René Dupéré
Art direction: Vianney Gauthier

Cast: Albane Guilhe, Louise Marleau,
Guy Thauvette, Lucie Laurier

Production: Films Vision 4, National
Film Board

"It's an important part of my identity to have lived with a father who was stateless, completely out of step, who never found his anchorage. This is something I carry within me to a remarkable degree." Léa Pool



| 1986

| 35 mm

| colour

| 103'

| Original title: Anne Trister

Carried by the aesthetics of the 1980s, **Anne Trister** is a poignant and melancholy film about the confusion of feelings and the initiatory path followed by a young woman in search of herself.

After the death of her father, a young Swiss painter leaves her lover and departs for Montreal, where she meets a woman who is a child psychologist. Somewhat fearful yet attracted by the unknown, she forms a friendship that becomes increasingly intense, troubled and disturbing.

After the phantom cities that are the setting for **Strass café** and **La Femme de l'hôtel**, this time Léa Pool anchors her story in Montréal, a place with devastated spaces where the young woman reconstructs herself, little by little. Filmed as never before, the Quebec metropolis is treated as a character in its own right, a moving reflection of the heroine's search for her identity.

Anne Trister is the rupture with childhood, the confrontation of a dreamed life with real life, a tentative approach to plural sexuality and an unequivocal affirmation of the visual power of Léa Pool's film-making. It is a spellbinding film, just like its superb theme song, "Je t'écris de la main gauche" by Danièle Messia.

Script: Léa Pool, Marcel Beaulieu,
inspired by Yves Navarre's *Kurwenal*
Camera: Pierre Mignot

Editing: Michel Arcand
Sound: Luc Yersin
Music: Osvaldo Montes

Art direction: Vianney Gauthier
Cast: Matthias Habich, Johanne-Marie
Tremblay, Michel Voïta, Jean-François
Pichette

Production: Les Films Télécène, Ciné-
maginaire, Xanadu Film

"In *Strass Café*, the woman narrator, talking about one of the characters, says, 'Neither man nor woman, with the heart of a child.' There's something of this in *Straight for the Heart*. My aim goes beyond biological identity. If one were to make a dissection of people, right down to what is most fundamental about them, I don't think there would be any great differences between men and women." Léa Pool



| 1988

| 35 mm

| colour

| 92'

| Original title: A corps perdu

Taking her inspiration from the universe of Yves Navarre, Léa Pool here touches what are virtually the fundamental questions of her work: the masculine and the feminine; love in need of being reinvented: creative work, nourishing and tyrannical; insanity as an enlightener; the fundamental solitude of every human being and the need for communication.

Put to the test by a photo report made in Central America, a photographer returns to Montreal to find that the woman and man with whom he had been living for ten years have left him. Crushed, the traveller seeks to find them in a city that he rediscovers by photographing it. In the course of his wanderings through the city, he meets a young deaf-mute with whom he has a soothing relationship, but one that is inadequate to challenge his whole life.

Rarely has a menage à trois been shown with so much lucidity and clarity. Far from any provocation, tabloid vulgarity or – on the contrary – yielding to the temptation of a utopian view, Léa Pool films with a sorrowful precision the desire that circulates among three persons who can live neither together nor apart. An extremely dense film, **Straight for the Heart** is carried along by the lyricism of Osvaldo Montes' music and the strong yet fragile presence of Matthias Habich, an exceptional actor whom Léa Pool has described as embodying the masculine element that she carries within her.

Script: Léa Pool, Laurent Gagliardi,
Michel Langlois, from a short story
by Corinna Bille

Camera: Georges Dufaux
Editing: Alain Belhumeur
Sound: Dominique Chartrand,
Alain Belhumeur

Music: Jean Corriveau
Art direction: Vianney Gauthier
Cast: Patricia Tuslane, Matthias
Habich, Roger Jendly, Michel Voïta

Production: Cinémaginaire, Limbo
Films, National Film Board

"I've long wanted to prove that I'm capable of making images. In *Straight for the Heart* there was the photo, in *Anne Trister* the painting and in *Savage Woman* the dam. There has always been a visual element that I've depended on to make up for my fear of lacking something to say. You have to know how to let things take their course at a given moment. If you wish to control too much, you end up being controlled." Léa Pool



| 1991

| 35 mm

| colour

| 100'

| Original title: La demoiselle sauvage

Marked by the desire of the film-maker to return to (make a film in) Switzerland, **Savage Woman** is the most minimalist of Léa Pool's films, a painting, stripped to the point of asceticism, of a woman who is a prisoner of herself.

Covered with blood, a young woman runs through a deserted village before fleeing into the mountains. After wandering around for several days, she falls down exhausted at the foot of a dam. An engineer who is stationed there for the summer takes her to safety and cares for her, but the fleeing woman is wanted by the police, and the noose tightens around this strange and isolated couple.

More than in the characters, who are more symbolic than corporeal, or in the intrigue, a light suspense that the film-maker hardly exploits, the heart of the **Savage Woman** is to be found in this phantasmal place represented by the dam itself, lying like an open wound between earth and sky. This concrete wall that bleeds the Swiss mountain and forms an artificial lake reflecting the raw sky is so imposing that its unreal mass crushes any attempt to escape it. The fiction suffers because of it, but the effect is gripping: never has Léa Pool gone so far into symbolism, evacuating nearly all psychology, giving a mythological dimension to this story of impossible love.

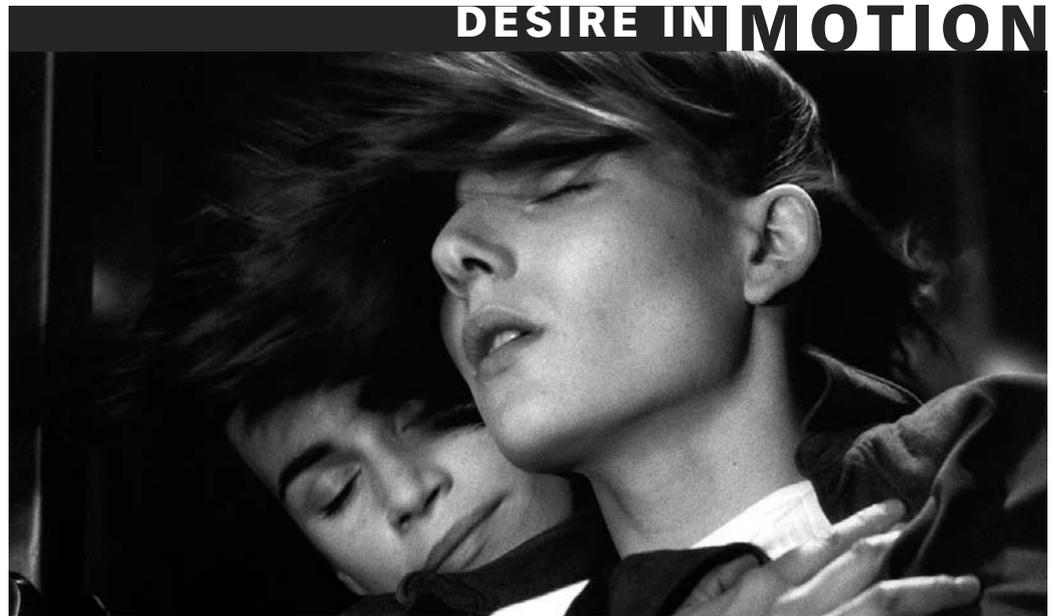
Script: Léa Pool
Camera: Pierre Mignot
Editing: Michel Arcand

Sound: François Musy
Music: Zbigniew Preisner
Art direction: Serge Bureau

Cast: Valérie Kaprisky, Jean-François Pichette, Jolianne L'Allier-Matteau, William Jacques

Production: Cinémaginaire, National Film Board, Catpics Productions

"Léa Pool trusts our understanding of the character and the screenplay. The field is quite wide, but when you emerge from it, she very gently brings us back again. She directs the actors in a very supple and very precise manner." Jean-François Pichette



| 1994

| 35 mm

| colour

| 104'

| Original title: Mouvements du désir

Filmed entirely in a train connecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada, **Desire in Motion** is nevertheless not a straightforward film. First entitled *L'Instant amoureux*, it is a meticulous, almost entomological exploration of the hesitation waltz provoked by first looks, those first flutters of emotion.

The woman is a musician, the man a computer scientist, the former French, the latter a Quebecois. She is leaving Montreal and an impossible love affair, accompanied by her daughter; he is travelling to Vancouver to join his girlfriend. In a train connecting one sea to the other, a man and a woman trace a hyphen linking two solitudes, an open parenthesis that will give this obscure object of desire and the steadily growing feelings of pleasure more than their due.

In this motionless journey to the heart of the emotion of love, it is the countryside that is moving. The protagonists for their part live suspended in the cocoon of the train, totally concentrated on the least quivers of their inner emotions. Far from isolating the two characters, Léa Pool surrounds them with a human microcosm where all ages of life are represented. Paradoxically, it is the very fact of confining her story within a closed space that makes us feel the film-maker's opening out on the world, an attitude that will be further refined in the films to follow.

Script: Léa Pool
Camera: Jeanne Lapoirie
Editing: Michel Arcand

Sound: Christian Monheim
Music: various
Art direction: Serge Bureau

Cast: Karine Vanasse, Pascale Bus-
sières, Miki Manojlovic, Nancy
Huston

Production: Lorraine Richard, Carole
Scotta, Alfi Sinniger. Cité-Amérique,
Haut et Court, Catpics Productions

“Transposing this childhood to an-
other place, with actors who speak
differently from my family, made the
film fictional; it was no longer me,
but the life of those characters. They
had a life of their own.” Léa Pool



| 1999

| 35 mm

| colour

| 94'

| Original title: Emporte-moi

It's 1963, and Hannah, 13, lives in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood of Montreal with her elder brother and accomplice. Her father, a tormented writer, is a stateless Jew, and her mother a fragile young Quebecoise who is the financial support of the family. Touchy and forthright, the young girl explores the world, first through cinema, where she sees Godard's *Vivre sa vie*; at school, with the support of her teacher, who looks like Anna Karina's double; and through the disturbing friendship she forms with a girl her own age.

More an inner chronicle than the x-ray of an era, **Set me Free** is still today Léa Pool's most accessible, down-to-earth and generous film. By openly drawing on her own childhood memories, the film-maker leaves aside the formalism marking her first films to engage herself more closely with the tribulations of her young heroine.

Whether it's the shifting identities, social or sexual; the human relationships tensed between confrontation and tenderness; the exile that is interior (the young girl's) or geographic (the father's); or the inner wounds that shape the protagonists and set off the action: **Set me Free** is a true Léa Pool film, but we feel a new assurance in her gaze on her universe: grave and tender in purpose, light and assured in form, for a film-maker in constant evolution **Set me Free** is a film of maturity.

Script: Judith Thompson, after
The Wives of Bath, by Susan Swan
Camera: Pierre Gill

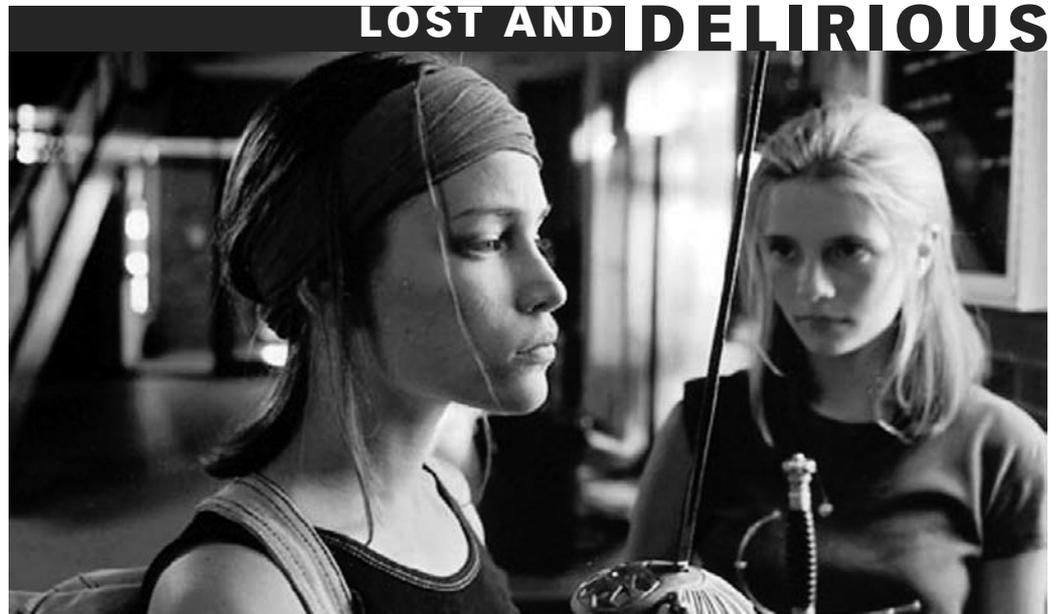
Editing: Gaétan Huot
Sound: Claude Beaugrand
Music: Yves Chamberland

Art direction: Serge Bureau
Cast: Piper Perabo, Jessica Paré,
Mischa Barton, Jackie Burroughs

Production: Cité-Amérique

"For me, film-making is becoming more like play. There will always be a certain seriousness, but it's no longer the centre. Before, I used to put my life on the line in every film; there was a desire to be up to it, to be loved. Now, I want to tell a story, and have pleasure in doing it."

Léa Pool



| 2001

| 35 mm

| colour

| 100'

| Original title: Rebelles ou La rage au cœur

Filming for the first time, in English, a scenario she did not write, Léa Pool has made **Lost and Delirious** an ode to absolute love, a film that has the audacities and errant behaviour of the adolescence it describes.

Three years after losing her mother, an adolescent girls returns to her boarding school, where she shares a room with a girl from a good family and a rebellious orphan girl, who love each other before the at first incredulous, then knowing, eyes of the new arrival. When their liaison is discovered, there is a scandal. The first girl denies everything, throwing herself into the arms of a boy, while the other girl, crazed with pain, tries to win her back.

On this seemingly rosewater canvas, the film-maker paints a portrait of an age, making no concessions and taking up, for the first time head-on, the fact of feminine homosexuality. Here again, one feels a new assurance that no longer has the need to prove itself. After the turn that started with **Set me Free**, Léa Pool moves ahead in a more accessible vein, giving full rein to intrigue and obtaining exceptional performances from the young actresses.

Scrib: Pete McCormack.
Camera: Pierr Mignot
Sound: Ivan Sharrock

Editing: Michel Arcand
Music: Stephen Endelman

Cast: William Hurt, Pascale Bussi eres,
Marc Donato, Steve Adams
Production: Claude Bonin, Francine
Allaire, Arnie Gelbart

World rights: Galafilm Productions
Original version: English

Arduous treks through intractable rain forest make up the main part of the film's narrative. They become a sort of journey of initiation into the protagonist's inner state, underscored by an increasingly ecstatic array of exotic jungle images. L ea Pool leaves it up to the viewer to give weight to the various possibilities of interpretation she offers. She restricts herself to weaving hints into the narrative. Indeed, the whole film represents a fine, convincing balance between outward action and subtle allusion. In *Lost and Delirious*, it was a hawk that played the key symbolic role with which the heroine gradually came to identify. Here it is nature as a whole. *Neue Z urcher Zeitung*, 29.10.2004,

Gerhart Waeger



| 2004

| 35 mm

| colour

| 97'

The latest film by L ea Pool is based on a real event in the life of entomologist Georges Brossard. **The Blue Butterfly** is about the coming of age of a young boy and an older man who both emerge from their protective chrysalis. It is about life's fragility, about courage and redemption, and about the power of acceptance and letting go. The 10-year-old Pete is terminally ill with brain cancer. His last wish is to catch the most beautiful butterfly on earth, the Blue Morpho or the Mariposa Az ul, found only in South America. His single mother, Teresa, is determined to overcome any obstacle that stands between her son Pete and his dream. She convinces Alan Osborne, a renowned entomologist who prefers insects over people, to take the wheelchair-bound Pete to the rainforest, where they experience a life-and-death adventure that transforms their lives. Since his journey into the dark depths of jungle, Pete has been cancer-free, a mystery to the medical world and a miracle to all.

Script: Léa Pool, Laurent Gagliardi
Camera: Georges Dufaux

Editing: Alain Belhumeur
Sound: Richard Besse

Music: Robert M. Lepage
Production: National Film Board

"In America the train does not have the symbolic value it represents in Europe. Nevertheless I wanted to film a train in Arizona. After all, it's being followed by a man on a motorcycle! That's the first image I had of North America, when I saw *Easy Rider*." Léa Pool



| 1990

| 16 mm

| colour

| 75'

| Original title: Hotel Chronicles

Following the breakup of a love affair, a woman crosses the United States. We see archive footage showing immigrants disembarking at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, a feminist demonstration in Washington, ghost towns in Nevada, men and women running after the American Dream, travelling endless highways to unseen horizons: multiple images and sporadic encounters that attach themselves to the wandering woman's heels, haunting her, inhabiting her and, as she goes from hotel to motel, from the asphalt of Manhattan to the desert of Arizona, orchestrating this long journey to her inner self.

Made fifteen years after Léa Pool's arrival in Quebec, **Hotel Chronicles** takes a twofold look at this land of America: one, of a woman who has constructed her adult life there, and the other of a stranger in pursuit of reality, well hidden behind the mirage of a carefully cultivated myth. The enterprise is not to destroy this, but to put it into perspective; and this superposition of two visions gives a salutary tension to this freewheeling film, showing well that every journey is an inner one.

Script: Léa Pool, Micheline Cadieux
Camera: Georges Dufaux
Narration: Léa Pool, Ellen David

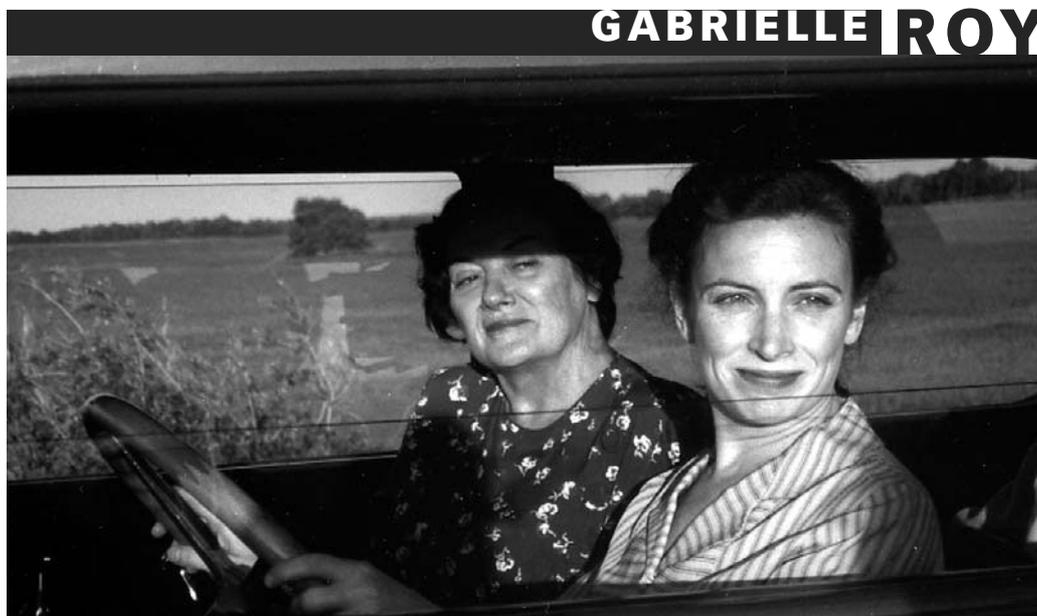
Editing: Annie Jean
Sound: Normand Dugas

Art direction: Suzanne Cloutier,
Kim Forest
Cast: Sylvie Malo

Production: Les Productions de
l'impatiente, Buffalo Gal Film

"In the documentary there is an opening-up toward people and things, an availability and a generosity that have brought me a lot. When I returned to fiction, I had served this apprenticeship in listening to others. I loved this freedom very much, and I've kept this kind of lightness."

Léa Pool



| 1998

| 35 mm

| colour

| 75'

| Original title: Gabrielle Roy

With its autobiographical aspect, **Hotel Chronicles** was more of an essay disguised as a documentary. With **Gabrielle Roy**, Léa Pool plunges into the more traditional documentary, producing a sober and sensitive film about a major figure in French Canadian literature. With François Ricard, the writer's biographer, as her guide, the film-maker shows the life of Gabrielle Roy from 1909 to 1983, from the plains of Manitoba to the banks of the St. Lawrence, from her numerous journeys to her intimate wanderings, from the success of *Bonheur d'occasion* to her rejection of the media circus, and from a sacrificed personal life to the need to write.

Throughout time and beyond the continents, parallels are drawn between the universes of the film-maker and of the novelist. They are two dissimilar worlds, but both are marked by the rupture from the mother, the appeal of the wider world, the virtually tyrannical importance of one's creative work, inner exile, a sensuality tainted with mysticism and the constant need to explore the Other, this bottomless mystery.

A turning point in Léa Pool's work, **Gabrielle Roy** is a film imprinted with a new serenity. Even as she ploughs the same furrow, the film-maker directs a more detached and more generous look at her favourite themes, taking the writer's life and work as her enlighteners.

LAURENT LAMMERRE PORTIER

| 1978 | 16 mm | bw | 23'

In this short documentary film made at the end of her studies, Léa Pool sketches the portrait of a porter at a big hotel in Montreal, a simple man who divides his time between the barrenness of his private life and the outward splendour of his function. Here there are several themes that the film-maker will further develop: the hotel, a place of passage par excellence; the intimate life of social realities, linked yet dissociated; and even at this early stage, opening up to what is other, different or similar, by means of a documentary.

Script: L. Pool, S. Bouchard, A. Delorme
Editing: L. Pool

Original version: French
Art direction: Yvan Niclass

RISPONDETE MI

| 1991 | 35mm | colour | 36'

After a car accident, an unconscious young woman sees her life pass before her eyes while being brought to hospital in an ambulance. A skilfully deconstructed poetic reverie, **Rispondete mi** is one of six sketches comprising *Montréal vu par...*, co-directed by Denys Arcand, Atom Egoyan, Patricia Rozema, Michel Brault and Jacques Leduc. It shows a phantom city, the sensuality of female bodies, childhood injuries brought to light with a visual formalism and hypersensitivity of purpose: this extremely masterful short film concentrates the themes of Léa Pool's films.



Script: Léa Pool
Camera: Pierre Mignot
Editing: Dominique Fortin
Sound: Claude La Haye
Music: Jean Corriveau

Art direction: Vianney Gauthier
Cast: Anne Dorval, Sylvie Legault,
Élise Guilbault
Production: Cinémaginaire, National
Film Board, Atlantis Films

LETTRE A MA FILLE

| 1996 | video | colour | 12'

Based on fragments filmed for the series *Femmes: une histoire inédite*, **Lettre à ma fille** succeeds, in impressionistic fashion, in involving the theme of feminine solidarity in the world, from Montreal to Moscow, Rio de Janeiro to Paris, as well as making palpable the link between mother and daughter, through personal accounts such as those of Nancy Huston and Benedita da Silva.

Script: Léa Pool
Camera: George Dufaux
Editing: Dominique Fortin

Sound: Claude La Haye
Production: Les Productions Point de mire

LE TANGO DES SEXES

| 1997 | video | colour | 47'

This is another episode of the series *Femmes: une histoire inédite* and is based on the cultural conditioning of the sexes, showing little American girls participating in a beauty contest; the everyday life of a woman who sells make-up products in the middle of the Amazon forest; the contradictions of two Papuan societies, one of them scornful of women and the other putting them in positions of authority; and finally the life of Billy Tipton, a jazz musician, married and the mother of adopted children, who has always lived under the identity of a man.

Script: Léa Pool, Rina Fraticelli, John Kalina
Camera: Georges Dufaux
Editing: Dominique Fortin
Sound: Claude La Haye

Music: Osvaldo Montes
Narrator: Marie Tifo (French), Susan Sarandon (English)
Production: Les Productions Point de mire

ECHOS DU FUTUR

| 1997 | video | colour | 46'

In the last episode of the series *Femmes: une histoire inédite*, Léa Pool meets Mae C. Jemison, the first black woman to travel in space; women in Kenya fighting against the encroachment of the desert; a woman ex-minister of Papua New Guinea who defies the government she served; Russian pacifists who are members of the committee of soldiers' mothers; a section of the São Paulo police entirely composed of women; and two exiled Algerian militants, fighting the intolerance and endemic violence of their country.

Script: Léa Pool, Rina Fraticelli, John Kalina
Camera: Georges Dufaux
Editing: Dominique Fortin
Sound: Claude La Haye

Music: Osvaldo Montes
Narrator: Marie Tifo (French), Susan Sarandon (English)
Production: Les Productions Point de mire