



presents

# Born To Be Here

A film by H  l  ne Magny and Pierre Mignault  
produced by Nathalie Barton



**Born To Be Here** is the story of Sabine, Darlyne and Chison, three first-generation Quebecers struggling to affirm their identity. Caught between their immigrant parents and Qu  bec society, both of which fear assimilation, these teenagers face special obstacles in defining who they are. What is their identity? How do they see themselves – in their own eyes, and in the eyes of those around them?

Their honest, forthright and affecting stories offer a whole new vision of what it means to be a Quebecer.

**PRESS KIT**

# Born To Be Here

A film by Hélène Magny and Pierre Mignault  
produced by Nathalie Barton

---

*Québec, Canada, 2008, HD Digital Video, Color, Stereo, 52'*

<b>Researched and Written by</b>	Hélène Magny Pierre Mignault
<b>Directed by</b>	Pierre Mignault
<b>Narration and Interviews</b>	Hélène Magny
<b>Camera</b>	Denis Bourelle Pierre Mignault
<b>Sound Recording</b>	Gilles Turcotte Lynne Trépanier Catherine Van Der Donckt
<b>Editing</b>	Stéphanie Grégoire
<b>Sound Editing</b>	Benoît Dame
<b>Mix</b>	Jean-Pierre Bissonnette
<b>Original Music</b>	Marc-André Paquet (Mes Aïeux) Éric Desranleau (Mes Aïeux)
<b>Line Producer</b>	Catherine Drolet
<b>Post-production Director</b>	Ian Quenneville
<b>Production</b>	Nathalie Barton

Produced by  
**InformAction**

*with the participation of*

Canadian Television Fund  
created by the Government of Canada and the Canadian Cable Industry

Government of Québec  
(Film and Television Tax Credit - Gestion SODEC)

SODEC  
Société de développement des entreprises culturelles – Québec

Government of Canada  
(The Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit)

*With the collaboration of*

Radio-Canada  
*and*  
RDI

# Born To Be Here

A film by H  l  ne Magny and Pierre Mignault  
produced by Nathalie Barton

## Long Synopsis

**Born To Be Here** looks at the daily lives of three teenagers in the Saint-Michel district of north-end Montreal. All are first-generation Quebecers, of Arab, Asian or Haitian descent. We accompany them on their quest for identity, a quest in which they face obstacles their classmates don't have to contend with. Caught in the middle between their immigrant parents and Qu  bec society, both of which fear assimilation, the Quebec-born children of immigrants struggle to establish their place and identity. But what is their identity? How do they see themselves – in their own eyes, and in the eyes of those around them?

This is the story of Sabrina, Darlyne and Chison, three high school students who are at the crucial age of trying to forge a sense of their own identity. We watch as they live, grow and ponder these issues over the course of a year, at home in their families and at   cole Joseph-Fran  ois-Perrault. They speak openly of their fears and dreams, their frustrations and their love of Qu  bec. Born here and educated in the French public school system, they have grown up with Quebec cultural values and demand to be recognized as an integral part of Qu  bec society, which nevertheless persists in viewing them as outsiders.

**Born To Be Here** is a film about cultural clashes and integration, about being torn between two worlds, about obstacles met and overcome, about questions and possible answers. It's a film about the new face of Qu  bec as seen through three insightful adolescents, and it shows that, more than ever, cultural pluralism is something all Quebecers will have to come to terms with in affirming their identity.



# Born To Be Here

A film by H       Magny and Pierre Mignault  
produced by Nathalie Barton

## Filmmakers' Statement

Why did we make **Born To Be Here**? Because we were struck by these young first-generation Quebecers who say they are caught in the middle in the cultural clash between their immigrant parents and the society in which they live. With so little mingling between Qu      's cultural communities and *les Qu      s de souche* – old-stock Quebecers – these children face wrenching choices in deciding who they are.

What determines identity? One's ethnic origin, nationality, language, family, society? All modern nations are grappling with this question. How do we define ourselves through our history – our collective history and our individual histories? That's what this documentary seeks to understand, through the experiences of Sabine, Darlyne and Chison, three students at a multi-ethnic high school in the Saint-Michel district of north-end Montreal. The film follows them for an entire year, at school and at home with their families. These kids are fighters and winners; they have their eyes firmly fixed on the future and don't judge or blame anyone for the exclusion they feel. Their honest, forthright comments help us discover the reality of young Quebecers who are born here and grow up with mainstream cultural values but whose parents often remain ghettoized. Getting to know these kids might teach us more about who we are too.

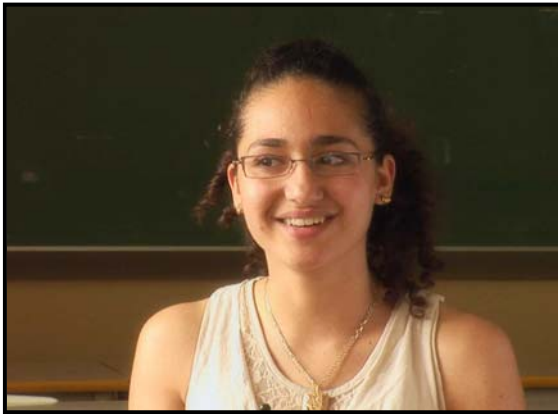
Over the course of the year, we shared in their reflections on integration and Qu       identity – theirs and ours. By coincidence, the filming took place during a year that began with the reasonable accommodation crisis and ended with Montr      -Nord on the verge of riot. So the subject couldn't be more topical. Instead of the stereotypes that are fuelling the controversy in the media and dividing Quebecers, **Born To Be Here** proposes a unifying vision. We will reach out to these youngsters who are Quebecers linguistically, culturally and by birth but who are still viewed as "the other." In the film, we want to get close to them, to include them, to give them a chance to help us understand what they're experiencing and feeling. Because, like all our children, they are Qu      's future.

# Born To Be Here

A film by H       Magny and Pierre Mignault  
produced by Nathalie Barton

## The Participants

### Sabrine Tourki :



Seventeen-year-old Sabrina is of Tunisian origin and is very candid about the difficulties she faces in her quest for identity. "With your parents, you have to justify your 'Qu        ' decisions, and with Quebecers, you have to justify your 'Tunisian' decisions. You're basically caught in the middle, neither one nor the other." Torn between the traditional Tunisian values inculcated by her parents and those of the society in which she lives, Sabrina is struggling to define her identity and assume her difference.

### Darlyne Antoine :

"I live in Qu      . I act like a Quebecer. I live as a Quebecer. So I'm more *Qu        * than Haitian." Darlyne, at age 16, is experiencing the same family tensions as Sabrina, but affirms her Qu       identity more strongly. "It's a fact; it's something you basically just have to accept." With her perceptive view of Qu       society and her upbringing as a child of immigrants, she is quite an extraordinary person.



### Chison Cam :



Chison laughs at his parents' stereotypes. "When I was in elementary school, my parents told me: you're Chinese, you have to be good in math." And he was at the top of his class in math, but also in French, a language his parents don't speak. "It's very hard to communicate with my parents. They don't understand me, and I

really don't understand them." At age 16, his quest for identity is already settled. "I'm neither Chinese, nor Québécois, I'm just human." Nevertheless, during the year of filming, thinking about identity raised numerous questions for him about roots, ethnic origin and family traditions.

# Born To Be Here

A film by Hélène Magny and Pierre Mignault  
produced by Nathalie Barton

## Filmmaker Biographies

For 30 years, from 1975 to 2005, Pierre Mignault was a career journalist with Radio-Canada, first in Toronto, next covering the Québec Assemblée Nationale, and then in Montréal, where he worked for *Le Téléjournal / Le Point* news program. As a videographer, he has directed several feature reportages and short Canadian and international documentaries, which allowed him to develop his documentary approach.

For ten years, Pierre Mignault also taught ethics and techniques of journalism at Radio-Canada, here in Canada. Since 2004, he's been doing training workshops and editorial supervision in developing democracies, specifically in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti.

\*\*\*

Hélène Magny was editor, researcher and interviewer at Radio-Canada for 17 years. She also worked on public affairs programs for radio and television such as *Présent National*, *Sans Frontières*, *Le Point* and *Les Grands Reportages*.

In 1990, after receiving an award from the Quebec Federation of Professional Journalists (Federation Professionnelle des Journalistes du Québec), she went to the Amazon in north-eastern Brazil to direct a feature radio documentary about the assassination of landless peasants, for the Radio-Canada program *Dimanche Magazine*.

For seven months in 2003-2004, Hélène Magny directed two United Nations regional Radio Okapi stations in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As editor-in-chief, she accompanied Congolese journalists in their work and was able to see for her eyes the enormous impact this radio has on the Congolese population. This marked the start of the documentary ***Shock Waves***, released in 2007.

\*\*\*

In 2005, Pierre Mignault and Hélène Magny established CINÉDIT Productions, their Montreal-based documentary production company.

In 1999, the two filmmakers directed their first documentary, ***Le Sentier du Milieu***, which describes the quest of a man from Quebec who became a Buddhist monk in Burma. Following his progress along the middle path, we

discover the role Buddhism plays in maintaining the social and political order in Burma, a country inaccessible to most foreigners.

**Shock Waves**, their second documentary, produced in 2007 by InformAction, follows three journalists of Radio Okapi in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country whose record of human rights violations is among the highest in the world. Those journalists constantly risk their lives in order to denounce the extreme abuses of power to which the civilian population is subjected. In a land where silence is imposed at gunpoint, *Shock Waves* provides eloquent testimony to the struggle for freedom of expression and democracy in a war-torn nation.

**Shock Waves** won two awards: *Film Most Likely to Change the World Award* (Detroit Docs International Film Festival 2007) and the *CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) Award: Prize for best Canadian documentary on international development* (Hot Docs 2008). It was also nominated for *Best Documentary: Society* at the Prix Gémeaux 2008 (The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television).

**Born To Be Here**, produced by InformAction too, is their third documentary.



# Born To Be Here

A film by Hélène Magny and Pierre Mignault  
produced by Nathalie Barton

## The Production Company

**InformAction**, founded in Montreal in 1971, produces single documentaries and mini-series on social issues, international affairs, art, world cultures and human rights. Many have won awards and all are distributed internationally.

**InformAction** produces on a regular basis for Canadian prime-time television (Radio-Canada, CBC, Télé-Québec, Canal D, TV5, Artv, Bravo) and has done several successful international coproductions, in particular with France. Several projects are currently in development with La compagnie des taxi-brousse.

Latest titles include **Shock Waves** by Pierre Mignault & Hélène Magny (*Film Most Likely to Change the World Award @ Detroit Docs 2007, CIDA Award for best Canadian documentary on international development @ Hot Docs 2008*), **A Dream for Kabul** by Philippe Baylaucq and **Afghan Chronicles** by Dominic Morissette, both coproduced with the National Film Board of Canada, **American Fugitive: The Truth about Hassan** by Jean-Daniel Lafond (*Hot Docs 2006, Marseille 2006, FNC Montreal 2006, Dubai 2006, DocuDays - Beirut 2006*), **The Magic Touch** (3 *Gémeaux Awards* 2005, including *Best Cultural Documentary*), **Lifelike** by Tally Abecassis (3 nominations at the *Gemini Awards* including *Best Science/Nature Documentary*, Vancouver VIFF 2005, Hot Docs 2005, SXSW 2006), **The Genocide in Me** (*Best International Feature @ Staten Island 2006; Finalist for the Pierre and Yolande Perrault Award 2005 – Best emerging documentary director – and for the Ruth and Alex Dworkin Award for Tolerance 2005, Finalist for the Golden Sheaf Award for Best Point of View Documentary 2006*).

InformAction was founded by Alain d'Aix, Jean-Claude Bürger and Nathalie Barton, who still run the company. Nathalie Barton, producer, was documentary representative and member of the Executive of the Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec from 1994 to 2002.