

Félix Dufour-Laperrière's second feature-length film, *Archipelago*, is the first animation to ever be presented at FRAMES of REPRESENTATION. In a collaboration with Dufour-Laperrière's team of artists and animators, *Archipelago* continues the Québécois filmmaker's exploration of places and displacement – following works such as *Transatlantique* (2014), which, like *Archipelago*, was also presented at the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Taking the form of a travelogue along the Saint Lawrence River in Canada, and to the multiple islands that lay next to its running water, this rich, communal, and multiform composition merits its place within this year's FoR theme of *(Re)Imagining*.

*Archipelago*'s overflowing visual language – sometimes radiant, at other times austere – offers a variety of perspectives from which one could choose to interpret it. Forms, shapes, colours, words, faces, landscapes: Dufour-Laperrière's use of mixed media, which includes archival footage, approaches a collective past with fluidity, multiplying its existence through the crafts and minds of twelve artists and animators who have seemingly been given a creative *carte blanche*. For the viewer, however, *Archipelago* is a voyage that feels tranquil and coherent: a philosophical conversation on dislocation, periphery, and community that develops throughout the course of the film. Reusing reels from a descriptive and rather arrogant piece of French TV journalism on the Saint Lawrence River, Dufour-Laperrière reimagines a journey and provides a non-factual – or rather, *afactual* – response to an imposed discourse, one inherited from an outworn modernism. Instead of facts, the filmmaker privileges metaphors; rather than descriptive images, he relays subjective interpretations of his animators and listeners.

Indeed, peripheries remain at the core of *Archipelago*. Shaped by a meditative and contemplative process, Dufour-Laperrière's *peripheries* (the term deriving from *peri* and *pherein*, which together translate as the 'act of carrying around' from ancient Greek) not only carry the viewer through dense narration, but also bear the weight of the encountered places, whether drawn from reality or imagination, as well as their histories, peoples, crafts, and the societal baggage that comes along with them. As such, *Archipelago* delivers a sharp political and historical criticism, although always with a touching bashfulness, ceaselessly providing a space for refreshed and elastic forms of temporality. And as it embodies the reimagined Saint Lawrence River as a murmured female presence, narrator Florence Blain Mbaye's voice – mostly soothing, at times resentful – is omnipresent but never intrusive, personal but never exclusive.

Putting aside the voyeuristic apparatus of live-action filming, Dufour-Laperrière empowers forgotten forms of transmission: (hi)stories through oral exchanges, identities through dialogue, existence through fabulation. The film's familiar refrain 'Tu n'existes pas' ('You don't exist') repeats a seemingly more rational counter-voice, ultimately proven wrong by the reality of what the viewer and listener come to see and hear: a mere oral existence, but an existence nonetheless, an intangible form erased and replaced in our memories by the tyranny of realistic images and texts.

Partly an invented nonfiction and partly a journalistic fiction, *Archipelago* expands notions of history, community, and belonging on screen. Here, Québec is both a place and a state of mind, and *Archipelago* a generous invitation to pause and take part in it.