



Review: Roche papier ciseaux

BRENDAN KELLY, THE GAZETTE 02.20.2013



Roche papier ciseaux

Three and a half starts out of five

Starring: Roy Dupuis, Samian, Remo Girone, Roger Léger, Fanny Mallette, Frédéric Chau, Victoria Zinny

Directed by: Yan Lanouette Turgeon

Running time: 117 minutes

Parental guidance: violence, one sex scene, disturbing subject matter.

Playing in French with English subtitles at Forum cinema and in French at Beaubien, Bourcherville, Colossus, Deux Montagnes, Longueuil, Marché Central, Pont Viau, Quartier Latin, St. Eustache, StarCité and Taschereau cinemas

MONTREAL - Welcome an exciting new filmmaker to the Quebec scene.

Yan Lanouette Turgeon's debut feature, *Roche papier ciseaux* — which opened the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois festival Thursday before hitting cinemas Friday — is by no means a perfect film. There are some plot twists in the second half that many will simply not buy into, and writer-director Lanouette Turgeon and co-writer André Gulluni amp up the melodrama way beyond reasonable limits.

But what I like about these two is they're nothing if not ambitious. They go for broke here, and while it doesn't all work, it's one heck of a ride. There are many brilliant moments, some of which are reminiscent of Quentin Tarantino at his best, and the film also showcases some mighty fine actors working at the top of their game,

starting with headliner Roy Dupuis but also including **aboriginal hip-hop star Samian (Samuel Tremblay) making his remarkably assured big-screen debut.** Seasoned thespian Roger Léger is also very good here.

Lanouette Turgeon says the inspiration for the movie's form was Mexican director Alejandro González Inárritu's masterwork *Amores perros*. Like that film, *Roche papier ciseaux* features a series of intersecting stories. Boucane (Samian), a young aboriginal guy, is heading south from the James Bay area — for a change of air, he says. But he makes one big mistake early on: he hooks up for a lift with Norm (Léger), a quirky gun-toting character who's clearly up to no good in the north.

Back in Montreal, Vincent (Dupuis), a doctor who is no longer working within the legit medical system, is paying the bills by toiling for the Asian mob, doing whatever dirty deeds they ask him to do, even if it involves some pretty hair-raising operations. He's becoming less and less enthused about plying his trade with these unsavoury mobsters because his girlfriend, Clara (Fanny Mallette), is pregnant with their first child.

Then there's Lorenzo (Remo Girone), an elderly Italian Montrealer who cycles around the city picking up stuff from people's garbage and is desperate to round up some cash to grant the last wish of his ailing wife, Rosa Maria (Victoria Zinny). Unfortunately, he runs into nasty, nasty crime boss Muffin (Frédéric Chau), who gives him the chance to quickly make some good money, involving a truly horrific form of illicit gambling.

So yeah, things go a little bit off the rails in the late going, but up until then Lanouette Turgeon does a bang-up job of juggling these various narrative threads, and the drama has real emotional force. Ramachandra Borcar's eclectic score contributes greatly to the atmosphere, particularly the neo-spaghetti-western riffing that neatly underlines the wacked spirit of some of the scenes in the first half.

Dupuis can do brooding and intense in his sleep, but this is a helpful reminder of just what a screen presence the guy is. Léger is terrific as Norm and Girone makes Lorenzo incredibly likable, **but the revelation here is Samian, who is an absolute natural. He looks like he's been doing this since he was a kid.**

bkelly@montrealgazette.com

Twitter: [@brendanshowbiz](https://twitter.com/brendanshowbiz)