

"As a professor of Francophone literatures, I grew tired of the limited and limiting 'Christopher Columbus discovered Martinique in 1493' and 'Wouldn't you like to come visit this exotic tropical paradise?' kind of videos that exist for the teaching of the French West Indies. My film studies colleague Eric Faden and I therefore set out to produce our own film which interrogates the continued French presence in Martinique. With the guidance of French-Caribbean novelists and theoreticians (who narrate the film throughout), the film seeks to complement the resistant poetic voices and texts I teach in my French classes."

-Renée Gosson
Bucknell University, 2003



Landscape and Memory's directors, Eric Faden (left) and Renée Gosson (right), are professors at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

Paysages et Mémoires: *Terre-Peuple-Histoire* martiniquais

Landscape and Memory: Martinican *Land-People-History*



a média-stylo by
Renée Gosson and Eric Faden

Paysages et Mémoires: Terre-Peuple-Histoire martiniquais

Landscape and Memory: Martinican Land-People-History

SYNOPSIS

In *Paysages et Mémoires*, the French West Indies' most renowned identity theoreticians—Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant—investigate the different ways in which France, as a colonial power, marks colonized lands and peoples. Importantly, this is one of the few films about Martinique that adopts a Martinican perspective on France's overwhelming and continued colonial and cultural presence.

The Martinican writers ask how, in a country (or a "Department") like Martinique, does a colonial power "re-map" space and land? How does it "re-map" a people's *memories and identities*? And can one resist this re-mapping?

In five different sections, the writers examine the possibilities of landscape as a repository for a forgotten past, Martinique's economic dependence on France, the recent "cementification" of Martinique, the politics of commemoration, and the possibilities for Creole culture. The film combines the writers' environmental and ideological concerns with actual footage of the island, showing the symptoms of cultural devastation (satellite dishes, advertisements, supermarkets, regression of the mangrove swamp, etc.)

Shot on location in Martinique by two independent American filmmakers, *Paysages et Mémoires* also poses questions about the documentary form. The film is called a "*média-stylo*" paying homage to French film theorist Alexandre Astruc's 1948 manifesto "*La caméra-stylo*." This manifesto urged filmmakers to develop a genre that was neither documentary nor fiction but closer to the form of the essay—poetic, fragmented, open-ended, speculative, reflexive, and subjective. Using moving images, text, sound, music, and voice, *Paysages et Mémoires* is—to use filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard's words—"research in the form of spectacle." By using this style, the film neatly reflects the structure of recent French West Indian novels, which are often themselves a *métissage* of history, narrative, documentary, and poetics.



RECOMMENDED USES AND AUDIENCES

- Colleges and Universities
- French-Caribbean Literature and Culture Studies
- French language
- Caribbean Studies
- Environmental Studies
- Postcolonial Studies
- Film Studies
- Anthropology

FILM FORMAT

- Length: 30 minutes
- Language: French and an English subtitled version

FILMMAKERS

Renée Gosson is an assistant professor of French and Francophone Studies at Bucknell University where, in addition to French language and literature, she teaches courses on the literature and culture of the French West Indies.

Eric Faden is an assistant professor of Film Studies and English at Bucknell University. His research includes early cinema and digital imagery. He has also made several experimental films that imagine what academic research might look like as a product of electronic (rather than literary) culture.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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