THE WORLD ACCORDING TO MONSANTO

A FILM BY
Marie-Monique ROBIN

Distribution: National Film Board of Canada
With 17,500 employees, a 2006 sales figure of $7.5 billion and operations in 46 countries, Monsanto is the world leader in genetically modified organisms (GMOs), as well as one of the most controversial corporations in industrial history. Since its founding in 1901, the company has faced trial after trial due to the toxicity of its products, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polystyrene, devastating herbicides like Agent Orange, used during the Vietnam War, and bovine growth hormones, which are unauthorized in Canada and banned in Europe.

Today, Monsanto has reinvented itself as a “life sciences” company converted to the virtues of sustainable development. Thanks to its genetically modified seeds, engineered among other things to withstand Monsanto’s Roundup, the world’s bestselling herbicide, the company claims it wants to solve world hunger while reducing environmental damage. Where does the truth lie?

The World According to Monsanto pieces together the story of the St. Louis, Missouri, corporation, calling on hitherto unpublished documents and first-hand accounts by scientists, civil society representatives, victims of the company’s toxic activities, lawyers, politicians, and representatives of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Environmental Protection Agency. Based on a three-year investigation in North and South America, Europe and Asia, the film tells the tale of an industrial empire that, thanks in part to misleading reports, collusion with the American government, pressure tactics and attempts at corruption, has become one of the world’s biggest seed manufacturers. It shows how the clean, green image conveyed by the company’s advertising serves as a smoke screen for Monsanto’s quest for market supremacy, to the detriment of global food security and environmental stability.
Why a film about Monsanto?

Lots of people have asked me this question over the past three years, and my answer is always the same:

I’ve been travelling around the world for over 20 years, and I hear things all the time about this American multinational — mostly bad things, to tell the truth. I wanted to find out for myself and spent months surfing the Net. I learned that Monsanto is one of the most controversial corporations of modern times, because it has systematically hidden the extreme toxicity of its products. What about today? Is it telling us the truth about its GMOs? Can we believe it when it says that biotechnology is the solution to hunger and environmental contamination? To answer these questions, which concern us all, I set out on a mission across three continents, comparing what Monsanto says with the real world. I met dozens of eyewitnesses I hadn’t identified in advance on the Web. And I’m convinced this is no time to let Monsanto take possession of crop seeds and, by extension, the world’s food supply.

Marie-Monique Robin
Filmmaker and author
January 21, 2007

Marie-Monique Robin is also the author of Le Monde selon Monsanto. De la dioxine aux OGM, une entreprise qui vous veut du bien, which includes a foreword by Nicolas Hulot (Éditions La Découverte / ARTE Édition).
Listed in *Who’s Who in France* since 2002  
Prix Albert-Londres 1995

Freelance journalist/producer  
1999 to 2001: Point du Jour  
1988 to 1989: VI Presse, Gamma TV, Point du Jour  
1984 to 1988: France 3

**DOCUMENTARY WRITER/FILMMAKER**

- *Au pays des môres SOS*, 26 min, TF1, 2005.
  - Grand Prix, Festival international du reportage d’actualité et du documentaire de société (FIGRA);
  - Prix Buffon, Festival international du film scientifique de Paris;
  - Prix du Meilleur reportage;
  - Grand Prix and Prix Ushuaïa TV, Festival international de film écologique d’Angers.
- *Blé : chronique d’une mort annoncée*, 52 min, ARTE, 2005.
  - Prix du meilleur documentaire politique (Laurier du Sénat);
  - Prix de la meilleure investigation, FIGRA;
  - Award of Merit (Latin American Studies Association/USA);
  - Award for Best Documentary, Egyptian Cinema Critics Association Jury.
- *Escale à Cuba*, 75 min, France 3, 2002.
  - FIPA selection.
- *Violences conjugales*, 75 min, M6, 2000.
- *Petites et grandes histoires du stade de France*, 90 min, France 2, April 1998.
- *La faillite des paysans*, TF1, 26 min, 1995.
  - Prix Société, Festival d’Angers.
  - M6;
  - FIPA official selection.
- *Le plus bel endroit du monde* (Bolivia), 26 min, TF1, 1994.
  - Prix du Grand documentaire, Festival d’Angers;
  - Award for Best Foreign Documentary, Havana Film Festival;
  - Prix du jury catholique, Festival de Monte Carlo;
  - Prix MédiaVille 1995.
- *Ça n’arrive qu’ailleurs* (Peru), 26 min, FR3, 1992.
  - Prix de l’environnement Gaz de France.
  - Prix du Grand Reportage, Festival de Lagny-sur-Marne 1992;
  - FIPA official selection.
- *Apartheid dans le sud tyrol*, 26 min, France 3, 1990.
Les jacqueries du bocage, 26 min, France 3, 1990.
- Mama Coca (Bolivia), 26 min, France 3, 1990.
- La vallée des centenaires (Ecuador), 26 min, France 3, 1990.
- Cuba si, Cuba no, 52 min, Belgian, Danish and Canadian TV.
  - FIPA official selection 1990.
- Sida et révolution (Cuba), 26 min, FR3.

WRITER/PRODUCER OF FEATURE STORIES
Carnets de route (with Christine Ockrent), Envoyé spécial, La Marche du siècle, Thalassa, Faut pas rêver, Reportage, Capital, Le Droit de savoir, Zone interdite, 24 Heures, Montagne, Bas les masques, Résistance.

Over 50 feature stories filmed in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, North America and the Middle East.

PRINT MEDIA
- Freelance contracts for Libération, Le Matin, VSD, Ouest France, Die Zeit, Cambio 16.

CORPORATE PRESS
Agence François Blanc and CAPA Entreprises

AUTHOR
- L’école du soupçon : les dérives de la lutte contre la pédophilie, La Découverte, 2005.
- Les 100 photos du siècle, Éditions du Chêne; 680,000 copies in 7 languages (Tachen and France Loisirs), 1999.
Yves Fortin | Les Productions Thalie

Yves Fortin is chairman of Productions Thalie. This company was founded in 1998 and very quickly became a major player in Quebec film and television. Yves’ 25-year experience in the field has yielded 13 fiction films and around 60 documentaries. The most well-known include Le sexe des étoiles by Paule Baillargeon, Clandestins by Denis Chouinard, Souvenirs intimes by Jean Beaudin, Le Marais by Kim Nguyen, Manners of dying by Jeremy Peter Allen and Les États-Unis d’Albert by André Forcier. As executive producer for Synercom Téléproductions, his documentary output includes the four renowned series Les pays du Québec, La culture dans tous ses états, Francophonies d’Amérique and Entrée côté court.

Yves Bisaillon | National Film Board of Canada

Yves Bisaillon was born in Montreal and holds a degree in Urban Planning from Université de Montréal and in Communications from Université du Québec à Montréal. After working in television as a journalist and director, notably for Radio-Canada, he joined the NFB as a producer in 1997. His work includes Raymond Klibansky: From Philosophy to Life (FIFA Award 2002), French Kiss, La Cueca Sola (best documentary at Hot Docs 2004), The Cabinet of Doctor Ferron (Gémeaux 2004 – best cultural documentary) and What Remains of Us (selected at the International Critic’s Week, Cannes 2004; Jutra for best documentary in 2005). His recent productions include Who Shot My Brother? (FNC 2005 – people’s choice), Nadia’s Journey (Caméra au poing Award at RIDM 2006) and Medicine Under the Influence (2006 Gémeaux for best science and nature documentary).

Christian Medawar | National Film Board of Canada

Christian Medawar holds a BA in communications and a master’s degree in history. His 20-odd years of experience in film encompass work in the private sector, mainly in advertising, followed by work in the NFB’s English Program, which he joined in 1990 as production manager and then line producer. In 1998, working with the French Program’s Toronto studio, he worked on the films Just Watch Me: Trudeau and the ’70s Generation and No Quick Fix. Christian joined the NFB’s French Program in Montreal in 1999 to work as line producer on such productions as Hubert Reeves: Star Teller and Bacon, the Film. He also worked on the Gilles Groulx box set. In 2003, he was producer of the interactive Web project Parole citoyenne and of the box set Michel Brault, œuvres 1958-1974 (Collection Mémoire). He is now international producer at the Quebec Studio.
A film by
Marie-Monique ROBIN

Based on a survey by
Marie-Monique ROBIN

Editing
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Arnaud MANSIR
Bernard CAZEPAT
Frédéric VASSORT

Sound
Marc DUPLOYER
Anne BOURCIER

Original music
Olivier AURIOL – Expression
Musique

Research assistant
Anne GELLI

Voices
Linda HAYES
Andreas APERGIS
Al GOULEM
Bruce DINSMORE
Leni PARKER

Sound designer and Mixer
Jérôme BOITEAU – Studio Expression

Coordinator – Sound postproduction
Isabelle DUPERE – Studio Expression

Studio shooting
Picture
Etienne CARTON DE GRAMONT

Make-up
Marie-Laure MARGNOUX

Artwork and animation
6ixdegrés

Project manager
Charles GAUDREAU

Graphic art designer
Sébastien TESSIER

Assistant editors
Elise LEYGNIER
Erwan BIZEUL

Trainee editors
Benjamin SCHREPF
Elise CARON

Line editor & Colourist
Denis PILON

Titles and credits
Serge GAUDREAU

Archives
AP Archive
BBC Motion Gallery
CBC
CNN Image Source
FOOTAGE FARM/GMP Films
GAUMONT PATHE
ARCHIVES/Collection NBC
ITN Source/Granada
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LA MAISON DE LA PUB
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Solen LABRIE TREPANIER
The World According to Monsanto

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Mirabelle BELANGER

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ARTE France
Documentary Division
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Produced by
Yves FORTIN

National Film Board of Canada
Executive producer
Yves Bisaillon
Producer
Christian Medawar

WDR
Program manager
Jutta KRUG

With the participation of
Canal D
Sylvie de Bellefeuille
Director – Original productions

LICHPUNT

La Télévision Suisse Romande (TSR) –
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Documentary films unit
Irène CHALLAND
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ERT SA
TV3

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