

To the attention of the Honorable Awards Board of the  
National Prize of Sciences and Arts, Mexico

Dear Madams and Sirs,

it is with great pleasure and conviction I am addressing this Board to endorse the nomination of Paul Leduc for the 2012 edition of the Premio Nacional de Ciencias y Artes.

I have been an admirer of Leduc's work twenty years ago, when I was introduced to *Frida, naturaleza viva* within the framework of a PhD seminar on National Cinemas offered at the University of Iowa, USA. Since, this film has been a reference point for me and within my professional career as a film professor and scholar. *Frida* is not just -- and by far -- the most beautiful cinematic portrayal of a great Mexican artist, but an accomplished masterpiece, which establishes a unique consonance with the figure, the art, and the universe of Frida Kahlo. Rarely has a film so deeply impressed me and, at the same time, provided me with such meticulously and precisely rendered information about the life and the oeuvre of an extraordinary painter and of an anti-conformist woman. As a feminist scholar, I have a particular passion for this film, which I consider both a carefully calibrated representation of gender politics in Mexican society and an intelligent exploration of personal and intimate aspects of Kahlo's life, never falling into cultural stereotypes or hagiographic tones.

Yet it would be highly limitative to praise Leduc's vast and diverse corpus mainly on account of the film that has made him world-famous and appreciated. Indeed, my admiration for Leduc's films regards first and foremost their focus on historical events and characters, as well as on socio-political issues. For more than four decades Leduc has been narrating and documenting the history and the culture of his beloved country, denounced the problems and the scandals of present-day Mexico and other Latin American countries, and brought attention to the devils of globalization. Very few filmmakers may vaunt a filmography as geo-culturally diverse as Leduc's, a character which perfectly fits within what Suzana Pick has correctly described the "continental project" of the Latin American Cinema.

Last, but not least, I would like to praise Leduc as one of most prestigious and coherent representatives of independent cinema. Leduc's flawless militancy in this jeopardized sector of film production and marginal area of film consumption stands as a necessary complement to the many lessons that the films of this preeminent Mexican filmmaker have taught. Leduc's commitment to independent cinema constitutes an example for new filmmakers not ready to compromise with the dictates global film industry.

I salute this nomination as a long-due tribute to a true artist, who honours Mexican cinema and his country.

Rosanna Maule  
Associate Professor, Film Studies  
Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema, Montreal, Canada