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AMER

A FILM DIRECTED BY HELENE CATTET
& BRUNO FORZANI

Runtime: 90 minutes

Country: Belgium, France

Language: In French with English subtitles

Color / Aspect Ratio: 2.35

Sound: Dolby SRD

A BELGIUM – FRANCE PRODUCTION

BY ANONYMES FILMS – TOBINA FILM

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SHORT SYNOPSIS: Ana is confronted to Body and Desire at three key moments of her life. Her carnal search sways between reality and colored fantasies becoming more and more oppressive. A black laced hand prevents her from screaming. The wind lifts her dress and caresses her thighs. A razor blade brushes her skin, where will this chaotic and carnivorous journey leave her?

LONG SYNOPSIS: The title is the French word for “bitter” but this provocative and sensational debut is anything but. An oneiric, eroticized homage to 1970s Italian *giallo* horror movies reimaged as an avant-garde trance film, Hélène Cattet and Bruno Forzani’s pastiche tour de force plays out a delirious, enigmatic, almost wordless death-dance of fear and desire. Its three movements, each in a different style, correspond to the childhood, adolescence, and adulthood of its female protagonist—and that’s all you need to know. Drawing its stylized, hyperbolic gestures from the playbooks of Bava, Leone, Argento, and De Palma and taking them into a realm of near-abstraction, *Amer* has genre in the blood. Its bold wide-screen compositions, super-focused sound, emphatic music (lifted from original *giallo* soundtracks), and razor-sharp cuts make for an outrageous and intoxicating cinematic head-trip.

– New Directors New Films

CAST

Bianca Maria D'Amato, Marie Bos, Charlotte Eugène Guibbaud, Cassandra Forêt, Harry Cleven.

TECHNICAL CREW Director of Photography : Manu Dacosse Editing :

Bernard Beets Set Designer : Alina Santos Sound Editing : Dan Bruylandt

DIRECTORS' FILMOGRAPHY AMER is Hélène & Bruno's first feature.

They have co-directed 5 short films together : CATHARSIS (2001),

CHAMBRE JAUNE (2002), LA FIN DE NOTRE AMOUR (2003),

L'ETRANGE PORTRAIT DE LA DAME EN JAUNE (2004) and SANTOS

PALACE (2006).

INTERVIEW HÉLÈNE CATTET & BRUNO FORZANI

This interview was done for the International Festival of Mar Del Plata.

Can you introduce yourself?

We met in Brussels and started to work together in 2000 with self-produced short films that we made with 4 or 5 friends (the same friends we are still working with today).

What are the particular characteristics of your filmography?

With our shorts, we developed our universe and our visual and aural language inspired by the codes of the Italian crime films of the 60-70's (called Giallo) that we love. The re-appropriation of this old iconography let us talk about personal themes. Amer is the continuation of the work we started with the shorts. We made 4 self-produced shorts, a fifth one with money to test how it was to work outside our apartment (where we shot the first 4 shorts) and with a producer (that was our worst experience).

How was your approach to cinema?

Our approach was to play with Giallo with our masculine and feminine point of views. To make something which belongs to the two of us, even if we are very different. We wanted to create a graphic imaginary universe in a context of NO MONEY. So this lack of money forced us to find tricks and

pushed us to experiment different technics to create our universe. For example, we shot on diapositives which was the best and cheapest way to shoot on 35mm film. The still frame editing allowed us to make convincing SFX with no money.

What does cinema mean to you?

Experiences.

How was your approach to the film's theme?

First, our way of driving the narration is sensitive. As the theme is the discovery of the body, of desire, of sensuality, it was important for us to try to communicate the sensations of the main character to the audience, to try to make the audience understand the story as if the viewer was in the character's skin. We would like that the spectator follows the subject of the film by this sensitive driving of the story. Second, our way of driving the narration is playful. We like to play with the cinematographic tools to give the images a rich polysemic value, to have different levels of reading. So, for us, the audience has to take his place in the movie by this open way of seeing the film.

What were the challenges that you faced directing this film?

Trying to make our first feature!

What are your influences in cinema, literature or other artistic expressions?

Giallo and Italian exploitation movies of the 60-70's (and their soundtracks!). Japanese exploitation movies of the same period. Irène Némirovsky. Berurier noir. About the way of writing with subconsciousness and the association of ideas, Dario Argento's *Inferno*. About the way of writing with different levels of reading, Satoshi Kon's *Millenium Actress*. About the way of working with details, Dario Argento and Shinya Tsukamoto.

Amer has almost no dialogues and the actresses developing the main role are left solely with their bodily expressions. How was it for you working with this narrative focus?

The more important part of that work was during the casting where we had

to find people who exist without talking, who have a so strong interior universe that you can see when you film them. After, with the non professional ones (like the little girl and the adolescent) it's a kind of game : you play with their own personality, trying to catch interesting things. With the professional actors, it's a mix between technical precision and play in the precise space we offer them. At last, the big part of this narrative focus is in the preparation where you think of each shot, each sound, of the way they will be edited. So we made a big file of 900 pages with all the shots and all the different details to be sure that all we had imagined would not be forgotten because of the big amount of work that was still ahead.

Besides *Amer*, we´re also showing your previous short films which all together recreate the tone and mood for your first feature. How was it, going from one format, the short film, to the other?

One of the challenges of our feature was to keep the universe and the cinematographic language of the shorts. For us, it was the result of working nine years together with our friends, nine years of experimentations. So to keep the strength of something which worked on a short format but which would have been difficult to extend to one hour and a half, we decided to tell the story in 3 fragments, in three little stories which had their own dynamics and breaking points... and these 3 stories permit each time to renew the attention of the viewer because of their different atmospheres and situations and to tell at last a single and unique "big" story!.

What are your future projects?

A giallo in Brussels.