

# BIMIFF

MAGAZINE

Year 2 6th Issue

OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE  
FILMMAKER WHO GAVE  
VOICE TO AFRICA'S ROOTS  
AND THE CONTINENT'S  
STRUGGLES

6TH ISSUE  
2023

## THE INSPIRING SENSITIVITY OF THE SENEGALESE MASTER



Dear BIMIFF Magazine readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present the sixth issue of our magazine, full of inspiring and enriching content for lovers of art and culture. As co-editor-in-chief, I am honored to be able to highlight the contribution of the renowned Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène in this issue, through an article written by myself.

Ousmane Sembène is one of the most important film directors in Senegal and Africa. His life story is inspiring and deserves to be known by everyone. He attended school until he was 14, but had to abandon it to help his family. Throughout his life, Sembène worked in various professions, from fisherman to union activist. He participated in campaigns against fascism and Nazism in Italy and France during World War II. After the war, he worked as a dockworker in Marseille, France.

In the article, I present the life and work trajectory of this great filmmaker, highlighting his importance for African cinema and the history of world cinema. Sembène was the first African filmmaker to be invited to the Cannes Film Festival, and his films have been shown at important film events around the world.

With the sixth edition of BIMIFF Magazine, we have the opportunity to honor this great artist, who knew how to portray the African reality with sensitivity and mastery. We hope that this issue can inspire and delight our readers, just as Ousmane Sembène's work has delighted the world.

Sincerely,

Lucas Marques  
Co-Editor-in-Chief of BIMIFF Magazine

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# *BLACK GIRL*

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE

OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES





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# THE CHALLENGES OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH VERONIKA ESSLINGER, DIRECTOR OF  
THE FILM "THE OTHER SIDE I"

BY VIC KINGS AND RICHARD CAEIRO



# THE CHALLENGES OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING



"The Other Side I" film scene

## THE CHALLENGES OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH VERONIKA ESSLINGER, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "THE OTHER SIDE I"  
by Vic Kings and Richard Caeiro

Veronika Esslinger is an actress, director, and author with a sensitive instrument. In Berlin, she took part in film projects, television series, and short films, for which she received several awards. She studied acting in Los Angeles, at the New York Film Academy in Los Angeles and at the Michelle Danner Acting Studio. In 2019, she published the first book "Die Rolle Deines Lebens" (The Script of Your Life).

The Other Side I is a very mysterious short film. What was the process of writing this psychological thriller like?

It was a long process as the story is so diverse. The short film or the short scene between Makoto, and I was optimized for the short sequence that we show in the short film.

Elisabeth and Nicole are both complex characters with many layers that unfold as the story progresses. What was it like creating these personas alongside your co-star Makoto Renjo?

Yes, the characters are very complex and unpredictable, so of course it was a long process to analyze the characters and make them interesting in the short time you have with a short film to end the story with an open ending.

Speaking of her, what was the process of casting Makoto Renjo as co-protagonist Elisabeth?

When I met Makoto, the forest scene immediately came to mind, and one thing led to another.



"The Other Side I" film scene

Independent filmmaking is always a challenge, but you are divided into four as a director, writer, producer, and actress; must have been a really challenging task. What was the process of making this short film with so many features at once?

Because the activities were allowed to develop step by step over the years, it was of course a little easier to shoot the short film, but of course, it was also very exhausting and a challenge at the same time. However, I saw the challenge as an opportunity to expand my skills and potential.

Cinema has produced many fascinating stories throughout its history. For example, we have Christopher Nolan's "Memento", Denis Villeneuve's "Prisoners" and David Lynch's "Mulholland Drive" to name a few. What were the inspirations for developing "The Other Side I"?

I was excited about this project and enjoyed writing it from the start. I've also always been fascinated by the genre of thrillers, stories, and films that keep the viewer in suspense, and you don't expect how it will end. That fascinated me and inspired me to realize such a project.



The director Veronika Esslinger



"The Other Side I" film scene

Throughout the film, the characters break the 4th wall as if they are speaking and the audience is watching. What was the inspiration behind this technique that drew audiences even more into your mysterious thriller?

The inspiration was to create something individual and interesting. I relied on my intuition and feeling as an artist in this technique to make the story more mysterious and exciting. My team and my colleague Makoto also gave me artistic freedom, so I was able to develop it to the full.

How did your acting background help you in the production of "The Other Side I"? How was your path to becoming a filmmaker?

Of course, as an actress, it was easier to empathize with the characters, analyze them and embody them in front of the screen. I was in Los Angeles in 2020 to further develop my acting skills and used the year to attend two different schools, starting filmmaking at that stage and writing in 2018/2019.

Which artists inspire you as a filmmaker and cinephile as an actress and as a director?

As an actor/actress, I draw inspiration from Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Claire Danes, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Shia LaBeouf to name a few. David Fincher, Quentin Tarantino, Baz Luhrmann as directors.

What are your next projects in cinema, acting, producing, and directing?

I'm currently working as an actress and director on a horror film. As an actress, a TV series is in production. Another seven projects are in development. Three TV series and four films.

# *MANDABI*

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE

OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES





# AGRIOLOULOUDO

DIRECTED BY IOANNIS KOUTROUBIS



## SYNOPSIS

AGRIOLOULOUDO (Wildflower) tells the story of a recent Greek immigrant who has a hard time adapting to life in the cold lands of Canada.

**CAST:** NICK DROSSOS, SPYRO ARVANITIS, GEORGE KONTOS, KOSTAS GIANNOPOULOS, VASILI TZORTZIS

**DIRECTOR AND WRITER:** IOANNIS KOUTROUBIS

**PRODUCERS:** IOANNIS KOUTROUBIS, NICK DROSSOS

**DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY:** CESAR DELVASTO

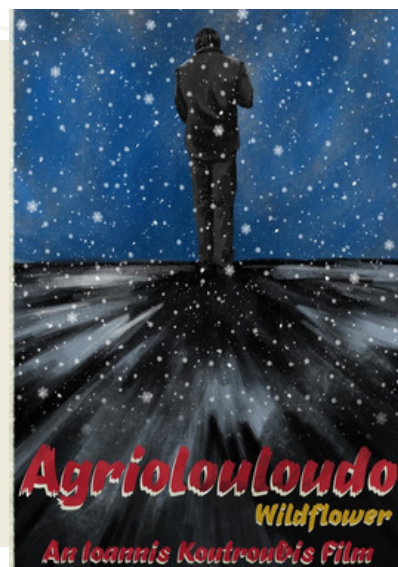
**EDITOR:** YOUSSEF YEHIA SAAD SHANAB

**SOUND RECORDIST:** JENNS PAETAU, CLIFTON DE LAIN

**ART DIRECTOR:** GRAY ENBY

**MUSIC BY:** TOM JOSEPH

**SOUND DESIGN:** GUY DESJARDINS



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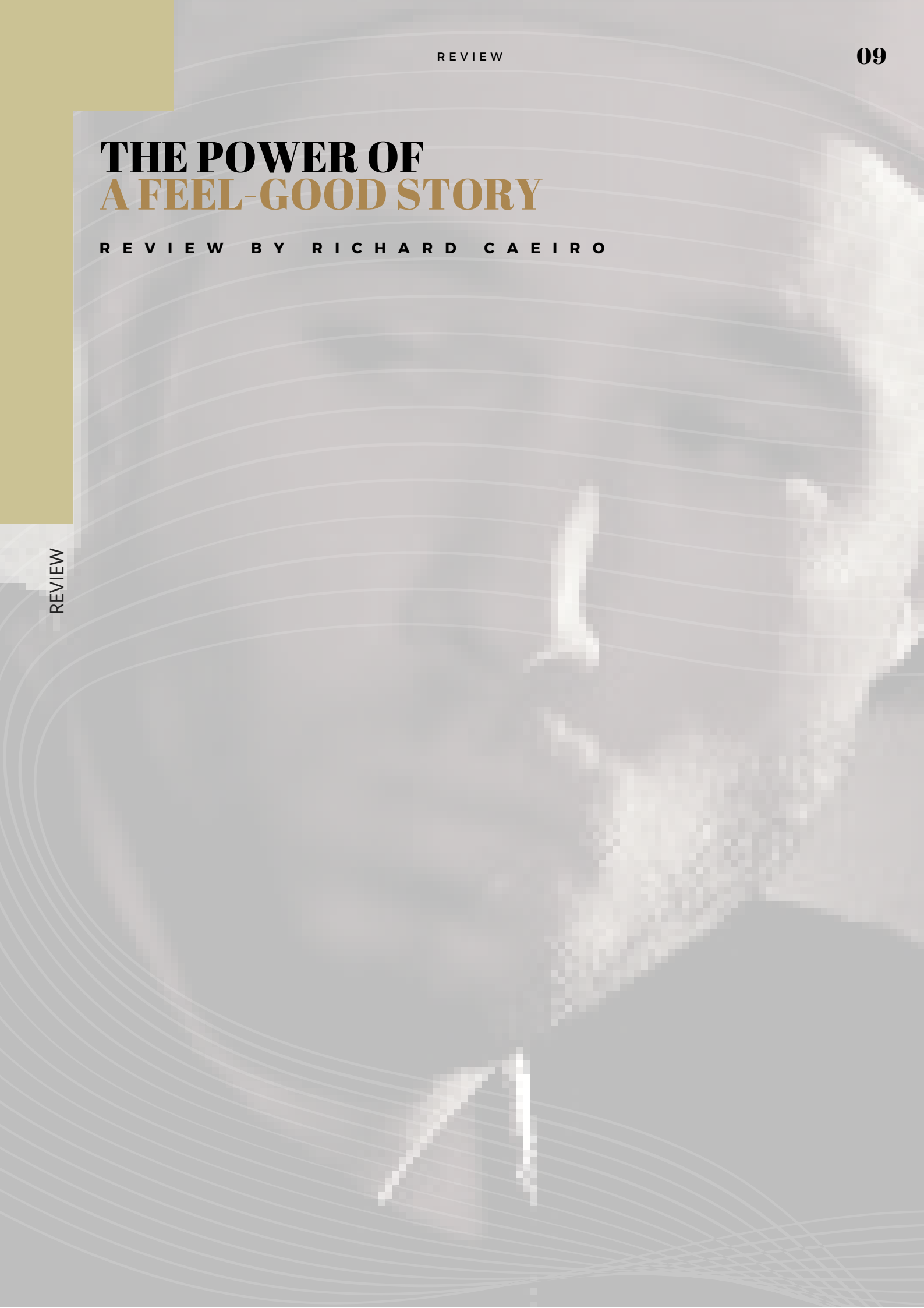
*Ioannis Koutroubis is an award-winning Producer/Writer/Director. He has won a total of 33 awards in Producing, Directing, Writing, and Cinematography. His projects have been selected for over 80 International Film Festivals. His lead Actor Youtube famous Nick Drossos recently won his fourth award for Best Acting in the film Agriolouloudo. His most renowned project Ouverture has won a total of 15 awards in Cannes, Berlin, Paris, and Rome along with several other cities including winning the International Sound Future Awards. It has acquired 10 Finalist Selections in cities like Seoul and Munich. Ouverture has gained 6 Honorable mentions in cities like London, Nice, Madrid, and Tokyo. His other Project Agriolouloudo has won 16 Awards in cities like L.A., Tokyo, Hong Kong, Melbourne, and Xania.*



# THE POWER OF A FEEL-GOOD STORY

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW



# COMPANY OF PROPHETS A FILM BY MALCOLM CARTER

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO



"Company of Prophets" film scene

## THE POWER OF A FEEL-GOOD STORY

"Company of Prophets" is a cinematic masterpiece that goes far beyond a simple story of homeless youth and a woman who returns to help them. Malcolm Carter's film is a reflection on the human condition and the complexities that surround us in our interpersonal relationships.

The plot is skillfully constructed, delving into the motivations and conflicts of each character without ever falling into clichés or stereotypes. Instead, the film presents complex human beings who carry with them the marks of their personal experiences and struggles.

Hip-hop music is a central element in the story, but it is used intelligently and organically, as a cultural manifestation of the characters and the community in which they live. But the message that the film conveys goes beyond music and hip-hop culture. It is a message of hope, unity, and love for others, which shows us that despite all our differences, we can learn to live together and build a better future.

Malcolm Carter gets it right by addressing cultural and human rights issues subliminally, through the characters and their life stories. The director captures the complexity of human relationships, showing how experiences and life experiences shape people and make them who they are.

"Company of Prophets" is a moving film that makes us reflect on our own lives and the world around us.

It is a remarkable artwork that deserves to be seen and reviewed, a source of inspiration for all of us who face our challenges and conflicts daily. It is a movie that stays engraved in the mind and in the heart, leaving a deep impression on those who watch it.

Besides the depth of the script and the quality of the direction, "Company of Prophets" is also an inspiring example of the drive and commitment that director Malcolm Carter had to make an independent film that was true to his artistic and thematic vision.

Making an independent film is a challenge in itself, as it involves facing financing, production, and distribution difficulties, as well as having to deal with tight deadlines and limited resources. But Carter was not intimidated by these adversities and remained committed to his vision.

Carter's dedication and passion for the project are evident in every scene of the film, and this is what makes it such a captivating and impactful work. Not only has the director told a powerful story, but he has also demonstrated outstanding courage and perseverance in making a film that is authentic and relevant.

In a world where filmmaking is often dominated by big studios and million-dollar productions, "Company of Prophets" is an inspiring example that art and creativity are not solely dependent on financial resources, but rather on a vision and a purpose. It is a film that not only moves us, but also teaches us about the importance of perseverance, courage, and passion in our lives.



The director Malcolm Carter

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# THE WONDERS OF CREATIVITY AND SENSITIVITY

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MELANIE EKHOLDT, DIRECTOR OF THE  
FILM "NORA'S WEDDING ANNO 1905"  
BY VIC KINGS AND RICHARD CAEIRO



Anne-Sylvie Borneret

# THE WONDERS OF CREATIVITY AND SENSITIVITY



"Nora's Wedding Anno 1905" film scene

## THE WONDERS OF CREATIVITY AND SENSITIVITY

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MELANIE EKHOLDT, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "NORA'S WEDDING ANNO 1905"  
by Vic Kings and Richard Caeiro

Melanie Ekholdt is a filmmaker and child/adolescent psychiatrist, with a strong interest in using film, art, and culture for emotionally engaged participation and professional discourse, which includes young people as part of the conversation. In the creative process of her first character-driven documentary "In love with craziness", she discovered the transformative power of storytelling. Melanie was therefore inspired to continue exploring the art of filmmaking by creating a series of experimental short films named "Dance of Sins". Henrik Ibsen's masterpiece "A Doll's House" became a big source of inspiration. She chose to bring in Nora, Ibsen's most famous theater fiction figure, as the main character in the stories, and three short movies were produced in less than one year. "Nora's Wedding Anno 1905", "A Dollhouse 2020" and "A Dollhouse 2041- A moderne Evangelium Vitae".

*Even though your film is not an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's masterpiece play "A Doll's House" per se; how was the process of writing your short film having as inspiration this timeless work by one of Norway's most famous playwrights?*

After reading the dialogue in Ibsen's "A Doll's House" a few times, I noticed that Nora used the word "wonderful" repetitively when talking to her husband. Ibsen is known as one of the founders of realism within the theatre. So I was really wondering why did Ibsen choose to include such a romantic word as "wonderful" in this drama? Maybe he more or less unconsciously understood that all human beings need to have some unrealistic thoughts to be able to dream and survive?

I then started to wonder: what could this word mean to Nora herself? What kind of wonderful dream did Nora have? Could that be a vision of a more warm and equal relationship with her partner?

Nora was both strong and impulsive; when did she choose to leave her family? What if her strengths and impulsiveness could be accepted by her new lover and their families? What if she organized a wonderful wedding with her second husband? Would some of her qualities influence the atmosphere in between the guests and the newly married couple?

All these questions were dancing in my mind when I was "binge-writing" the script on a beautiful midsummer evening.

The creative choice of having both old-fashioned and more contemporary costumes for the actors and dancers featured in the film was interesting and also bold. How did this idea come about?

I let the dancers bring their costumes themselves. The dancers were representing the souls of diverse family members and friends, both from the past and the present. So why bother about the style of the clothes?

Justin Walters, Celile Guzelce, Andreas Dahlen, and Terjes Tolleshaug's cinematography and Walters' editing are spectacular in the film. How was the process of creating such beautiful images with this big DoP team; and also putting these shots together in such a fluid rhythm with Walters' montage?

The shooting was during the summer holiday, so it was difficult to hire one team of cinematographers for both days. So I got one team for each day. I think we all got amazed by the beautiful nature of the sea these two warm summer days. And the old house "Hellviktangen" build in 1790 also helped bring in a dreamy and creative atmosphere.

Justin Walters is a very experienced documentarist editing "free style", which means just letting the creative flow follow the process. I trust him a lot and let him do the work quite independently. Maybe that is one part of the reason behind the fluid, slow-motion rhythm of "Noras Wedding".



"Nora`s Wedding Anno 1905" behind-the-scenes

Another fantastic feature of "Nora's Wedding Anno 1905" is the music composed by Andreu Jacob. How was the process of creating the soundtrack that fits perfectly with the film's ambiance?

Andreu is an extremely creative and sensitive-composer. He lets the images and the symbolism of the story inspire him and let go of any ego.

When we work together in his studio he listens with an open heart to my ideas as a director, even if I am much, much less experienced than him. He is a master of the art of film music, it is just a fantastic coincidence that he lives in the same little peninsula of Nesodden where I live as well.

Despite being heavily inspired by the "silent years" of Cinema, you opted for the use of color and also sound in the film, instead of the black-and-white of that Era (except for a few shots). How were these creative choices made?

The combination of the traditional Norwegian wedding clothes created by the very talented costume designer Daniel Steien and the fact that the house was very old gave an atmosphere of a pastime. So I never felt it was necessary to use black and white colors.

I wanted to create a wonderful musical experience, so it was never really an option to have it as a silent movie. The sound recording of the poetry reading was made a quite windy day by the sea, so it was a creative solution to degrade the sound even more to create an old movie style.



The director Melanie Ekholdt

Besides being the director, producer, and writer, you also act as the protagonist alongside actor Thorbjørn Brook Steen. How was the process of doing such different and crucial roles in the production of "Nora's Wedding Anno 1905"?

Thorbjørn B. Steen was very relaxed but at the same time involved in the character, he was going to play. We were kind of discovering Nora's new husband together during the process of filming. Maybe the fact that we followed nearly the same structure as a normal wedding it helped us feel free to play out their relationship in front of the cameras.

Thanks to the professional and sensitive dance artist Ola Helgesplass's leading style of the dancers we got some amazing free dancing movements for both Nora and Torbjørn and the dancing guests.

Being the main protagonist helped me to be a quite free and relaxed director. I had no other choice than to trust both the cinematographers and the others actors. Sometimes I was joking about this lack of instructions from the director, and said "let's do the impro-filming". I think that the impro-dancing techniques used during the shooting inspired me to do so.

This is your 3rd project as director, the other two being the documentary "In Love With Crazyness" and "A Dollhouse 2020 (Dance of Sins)". How do you see your evolution as a filmmaker in these first three projects?

What I loved about creating my first documentary was the unplanned, more unconscious part of the creative process both in the production and the postproduction of the film. My first short film was created by just bringing in the cameras during one real birthday party. The cameras were there as discreet observers, and the guests loved dancing around them. So I was quite certain that it would be possible to create a story in the postproduction. And I was actually quite interested in what the material was going to tell me.

In "Nora's wedding", I kind used the same concept. Having a celebration, but I included some more traditional scripted stories before and after the wedding party. I still wanted to have an open mind, and I feel strongly that Ibsen's Nora helped me create the short movie about her second wedding. For the next short movie in this series I call "Dance of Sins", I am gradually writing a more and more detailed script, but I still let Nora influence quite strongly both the writing process and the editing. I want to include more and more dialogues between the actors, to make the movies less experimental and more mainstream, so Nora can inspire all kinds of people, not only "art house fans".



"Nora's Wedding Anno 1905" behind the scenes

As we said previously, "Nora's Wedding Anno 1905" is beautifully crafted in terms of filmmaking. What are your main inspirations in the 7th Art as fellow filmmakers and also films?

I love Pedro Almodóvar and Quentin Tarantino for using music very actively in their movies. Lately, I have started to study Ingmar Bergman's movies, as he always has fascinating dialogues and interesting relationship dynamics.

I like science fiction films, maybe a little bit dark, like "Blade Runner" and "Matrix" because they include more than one dimension. And I love old fairytale movies like the Czech version of Cinderella from 1973 and "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" from 1937 because they make me dream.





"Nora`s Wedding Anno 1905" film scene

How does your work as a therapist inspire your creations as a filmmaker, and vice-versa?

As a therapist, I have been drawn to the unconsciousness, the fantasies, and the dreams of my patients as well as important events in their family stories. I have learned much from my patients, both about how traumatic events can influence their life, but also about growth and healing. For me, filmmaking is a medium making it possible to explore the complex interferences between traumatic wounds and healing, both in the past and presence.



"Nora`s Wedding Anno 1905" film scene

We can't wait to see your next projects. Can you tell us more about what are your next works as a filmmaker?

"A Dollhouse in Kristiana" - the fourth short movie about Nora has its premiere at Weniff (West Nordic International Festival) in February. In 1880 the name of Oslo, the Norwegian Capital was "Kristiana". I explore what happens the months after Nora left her husband Torvald and her three kids.

I am also working on a short movie in the fantasy genre. I like to play with fantasies and challenge our concepts of reality. The field of short movies is a perfect place for me to get rid of old, destructive fantasies and discover new, multidimensional realities.



Anne-Sylvie Bonnet

The director Melanie Ekholdt

# XALA

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE



OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES



# THE WHITE SCARF

DIRECTED BY ANGELA MRAD



## SYNOPSIS

A life story with its chapters, told by a white scarf and a girl.

**CAST:** ANGELA MRAD, JULIA AOUN, SABAH RIZIK, DINA FARAH  
**DIRECTOR, WRITER, AND PRODUCER:** ANGELA MRAD



### ANGELA MRAD BIOGRAPHY:

Angela Mrad is a Lebanese/Greek Director, Writer, Actress, Producer, and TV/Radio Personality. She studied at the Sainte Famille Française - Jounieh school and got her double baccalaureate, The Lebanese Baccalaureate, and the French Baccalaureate in French literature. Then at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut IESAV she majored in audio-visual and cinematographic studies. She is also the director and the writer of the award-winning short films *Feminization*, *Cross Roads*, and *The White Scarf*.

# I HAVE MANY SCARS, BUT I AM ALIVE

REVIEW BY VIC KINGS

REVIEW



# ROMANCE A FILM BY KARINE TELES

REVIEW BY VIC KINGS



"Romance" film scene

## I HAVE MANY SCARS, BUT I AM ALIVE

What is the result of the encounter of two major divas of Brazilian independent cinema, one in front of, the other behind the camera? The answer to this question comes in its purest shape: art in audiovisual format, through the film "Romance," directed and written by Karine Teles, a well-known face in film festivals in Brazil and around the world in works such as "Loving" (Gustavo Pizzi, 2018), "Bacurau" (Kléber Mendonça Filho & Juliano Dornelles, 2019), "The Second Mother" (Anna Muylaert, 2015), "The Other End" (Felipe Sholl, 2016), among many others.

The short film that had its premiere at the 2021 Rio Film Festival brings in its protagonist Juliana, masterfully played by Gilda Nomacce, a visceral and poetic force both for its poignant and intense script, as in the powerful and fluid direction of Teles, which has in its cast, its cinematography (by Pedro Faerstein), and editing (by Lívia Serpa), the biggest highlights.

In this narrative, Juliana, a journalist aware of her independence and freedom in all senses, has during an intense day back to work, a series of meetings and mismatches with lovers who, in a certain way, try to control her, or simply have her; but like running water, Nomacce's fascinating character, moves away from these possible emotional and physical captivities that aim to contain her impetus, her sexuality, ultimately, her free will.

This visual letter addressed as an anti-patriarchy manifesto finds enormous vigor in Nomacce's expressions and words, especially when acting with her cast mates. Juliana's lovers - in sequence Paulo (Bruno Balthazar), Luís (Enrique Diaz), and João (Antônio Carrara) - try to apply explicit and disguised restrictions to the woman's body, mind, and heart.

Juliana's column entitled "Receitas da Vó Pagu" (Recipes of Grandma Pagu) immediately evokes the legendary figure of Patrícia Rehder Galvão, an artist and activist who, by denying her bourgeois roots and privileges, shocked the Brazilian society of the early 20th century with her power and independence, unusual at a time when women were idealized as "beautiful, discreet and homely". Just like Pagu, Juliana brings polemics to our current society that, even a century later, still looks down on a woman who understands and enjoys her autonomy, especially when she is a mature female, who is even more stigmatized by a sexist, patriarchal, and ageist culture.

Women like Juliana have been seen throughout history as witches, prostitutes, salacious, unlovable, and so many other adjectives and nouns that serve only as ways to cage their pleasures, their pains, and also their selves. Even after being burned on bonfires, stoned in public squares, hanged, shot, and imprisoned, the voices and roots of these historic and eternal women have been inherited by their following generations. From suffragettes to pioneers, from solo mothers to activists, may the feminist movement and the fight against patriarchy continue with increasing strength and presence around the world.

## ROMANCE A FILM BY KARINE TELES

The empowerment of women, as well as the fight for gender equality, and the actions that condemn femicide, harassment, and misogyny, continue and will continue to figure in the next pages of human History, and it is our role, as a society, to ensure that it is no longer in the police reports that the names of cis and trans women appear, but in the headlines of achievements in the most diverse areas: from politics to sports, from arts to science, illustrating in practice the phrase "a woman's place is where she wants to be".

"Romance" closes Juliana's chaotic day with the protagonist being sieged and leashed by the kidnappers of her freedom. However, this is not the end of the character, but au contraire. "To be radical means to grab things by the root," this quote by Angela Davis paraphrased from Karl Marx is quoted by Juliana in her column, and doing justice to the Black Panther, the woman frees herself.

To the sound of Ludwig van Beethoven's 9th Symphony in D Minor Op 125, Nomacce's bloodstained visage and body appear on the screen. Bare-busted and dazed, the woman stares at the camera, which gets closer and closer to her blood-streaked face. Her fierce and serious expression takes on forms of relief as the medium close-up becomes a close-up, translating into the ecstasy of her freedom in the woman's eyes and smile.

Watching Juliana's saga I can only remember the verses of Caetano Veloso in his song "Tigresa" (Tigress) which narrates in its melodic strophes an ode to female freedom, and that in the eyes of Nomacce's and Teles' Juliana one can read that "(...) at the same time she says that everything will change/Because she'll be what she wants to be, inventing a place/Where people and nature will always live happily together/And the tigress can do more than the lion".



The actress Gilda Nomacce (left) and the director/writer Karine Teles (right)

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# OUTTA THE BOX FILMMAKING

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TERRY MILLS, DIRECTOR OF  
THE FILM "THE BEAST OF LOVE".

BY RICHARD CAEIRO AND VIC KINGS





# OUTTA THE BOX FILMMAKING



"The Beast of Love" film scene

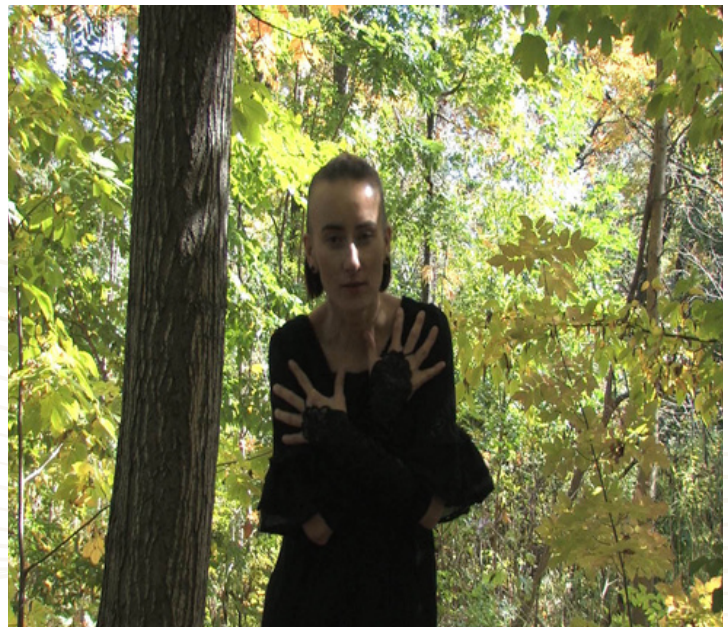
## OUTTA THE BOX FILMMAKING

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TERRY MILLS, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "THE BEAST OF LOVE"  
by Richard Caeiro and Vic Klings

Terry Mills has been in the local Toronto/Mississauga Indie Arts, Film, and Music scene for over 25 years. Terry sees filmmaking as an extension of his writing and loves to tell stories about the interaction of people. Terry has since produced more Short Films and has been involved with producing other Indie Films produced by other Artists. Terry is currently in post with his latest Indie Film, Writing Novel #2, working in animation and writing scripts.

Where did the idea for the plot of "The Beast of Love" come from, considering that the story was created by you and your colleagues, Stephen and Lincoln, in a locker room?

The idea for "The Beast of Love" plot was when Stephen, Lincoln, and I started discussing mythology and how there were Succubi that would try to steal your love and you must use a Talisman so that you can catch them and be rid of them. We talk nonsense as we are getting changed to go home it makes us laugh and distressed from the work shift.



"The Beast of Love" film scene

How was the process of producing the short film?

The process for creating this short film was as exciting as it was challenging. Writing the script, finding Actors and finding the shooting locations. We only once had a pedestrian walk in front of the camera but it was all good.

As for Costume... That was a learning curve, especially learning the Denier scale to understand the opacity for tights and picking the right costumes. We actually filmed a parallel short at the same time which, will be completed in a couple of months.

You mention that you are a writer of "People". What does this mean to you?

I mention that I am a writer of "People" meaning that I will write any kind of character as long as it fits into the story. The world is so full of amazing people; all different from each other and it really is what makes the world an interesting place. Just wish we got along better. At the same time, I don't want to be put in a box; I am me for me.

How has your experience in producing music videos and filming live performances contributed to your career as an independent director?

I started as a roadie for a Mississauga Punk band called (The) Bendecos and it was boring when you've heard the same set being played more than once so, to keep busy; I started filming them. I think my experience in the local music scene really helped my creativity and understanding of the camera



The director Terry Mills

What were the biggest challenges you faced when directing "The Beast of Love"?

Acting and directing at the same time was so much fun as it was challenging. It reminded me of being a kid again playing Star Trek outside with my friends making up stories as we went along. I was working with very talented people I trusted, they were really great to work with and I kept the "Set" fun. Perhaps, my biggest challenge was, knowing when to stop making everyone laugh. I failed haha!

What was it like working together with Jesse Arora to co-write "Tightrope Walker"?

I was currently plugging away at my still uncompleted novel when, Jessie came up to me with a half completed script and I said I would help her with it. We bantered some story ideas, there were some she didn't like and others she did. Storyline disagreements aren't personal and should never be taken as such. I know there was one scene Jessie didn't quite like but I was trying to bridge two parts together. I like teamwork and the flowing of different ideas; it's just such a cool feeling.



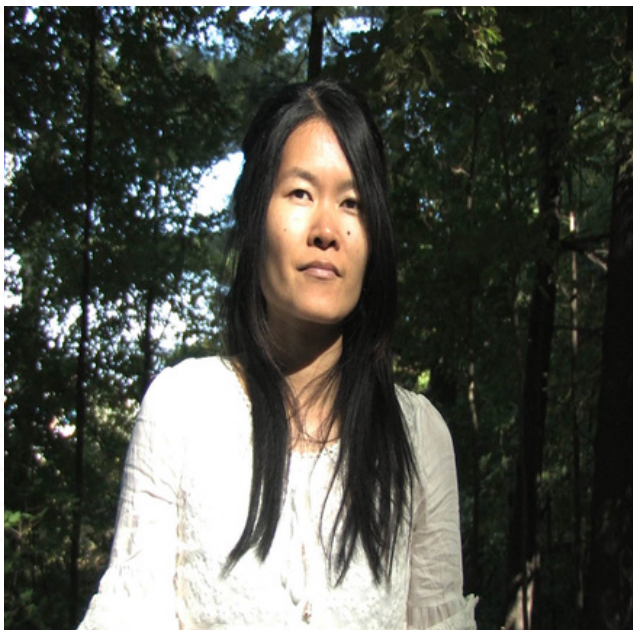
"The Beast of Love" behind the scenes

You mention that you are learning animation and developing a TV comedy series. Can you give us more information about these new projects?

Yeah... Still learning animation but like everything else practice and patience; helps. I have a few projects okay... Maybe like three right now are in development. I've almost completed the script and started the animation for a murder mystery, wrote the Series Bible and three episodes for another and the final is just whatever kind of crass and rude project. In the TV Sitcom, I hear the editing of the pilot is almost completed and they are working on music. At this moment, I kind of got voted off the island haha! It's all good, I love hearing about the updates.

What are your cinematographic references as a director and screenwriter?

Kevin from the Bendecos compared me to Oliver Stone. That's cool, I like his work. The Directorial works of Otto Preminger, Jean Cocteau, Ingmar Bergman, and Quentin Tarantino to name a few. As a director myself, I want it to be my style, my flair, no "so and so did this". Screenwriters, I'll give you two; Jean Cocteau and Stirling Silliphant; who should have totally won for "The Towering Inferno" but he already had two and it was "Chinatown" he lost against. All was fair.



"The Beast of Love" film scene



"The Beast of Love" behind the scenes

How was the process of casting actresses Anne Noble and Linda Wong to co-star in "The Beast of Love"?

Casting Anne and Linda is a story in itself. I put an ad out on Kijiji - "two actresses with little experience needed, please send resume" After A few responses then Anne and Linda sent me their CVs and I was like "No way" and I knew at once they were the ones. We exchanged emails and phone calls but when they met me in person with my wild green hair, they were really unsure of me. I'm glad they were able to overcome their uneasiness about me and I am glad I put my faith in them.

What are your projects for the future, both as a director, actor, and screenwriter?

For this year's projects, I'm writing two scripts for other filmmakers right now, one is an animated film and the other is a zombie film both of which; I am scheduled to direct. As an actor, I've had a couple of taps to see if I'm interested and I have said yes but nothing concrete yet I am doing the voice-over for my murder-mystery animated film. I'm also very busy finishing "The Beast of Love 2" and "The Clowns of Love".

# *CEDDO*

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE



OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES



# WORLD - WEARY

DIRECTED BY REZA GOLCHIN



## SYNOPSIS

A professor has lost his wife and child in a car accident two years ago. He is frustrated with life and has no desire to teach anymore.

**CAST:** ROUHOLLAH BAKHTSHAHI, MAJID DASHTPEIMA, BEHZAD JAHANGARD, ARSHIA ZEINALI, SHABNAM MADADI, MEHDI JAFARI

**DIRECTOR AND WRITER:** REZA GOLCHIN

**PRODUCER:** MOHAMMAD GOLCHIN

**PRODUCED BY:** GOLCHIN KHAZAR FILM COMPANY

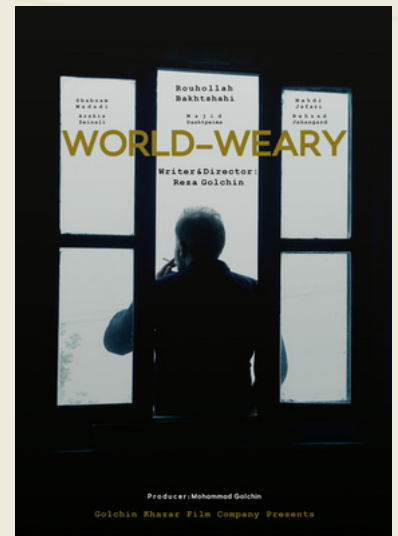
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:** SADEGH SOURI

**EDITING:** ALBORZ POURSAYAD

**SOUND:** ALIREZA DARYADEL

**MUSIC BY:** SHAHRAM SHAFIEI

**SET DESIGN:** MANA PAKSERESHT



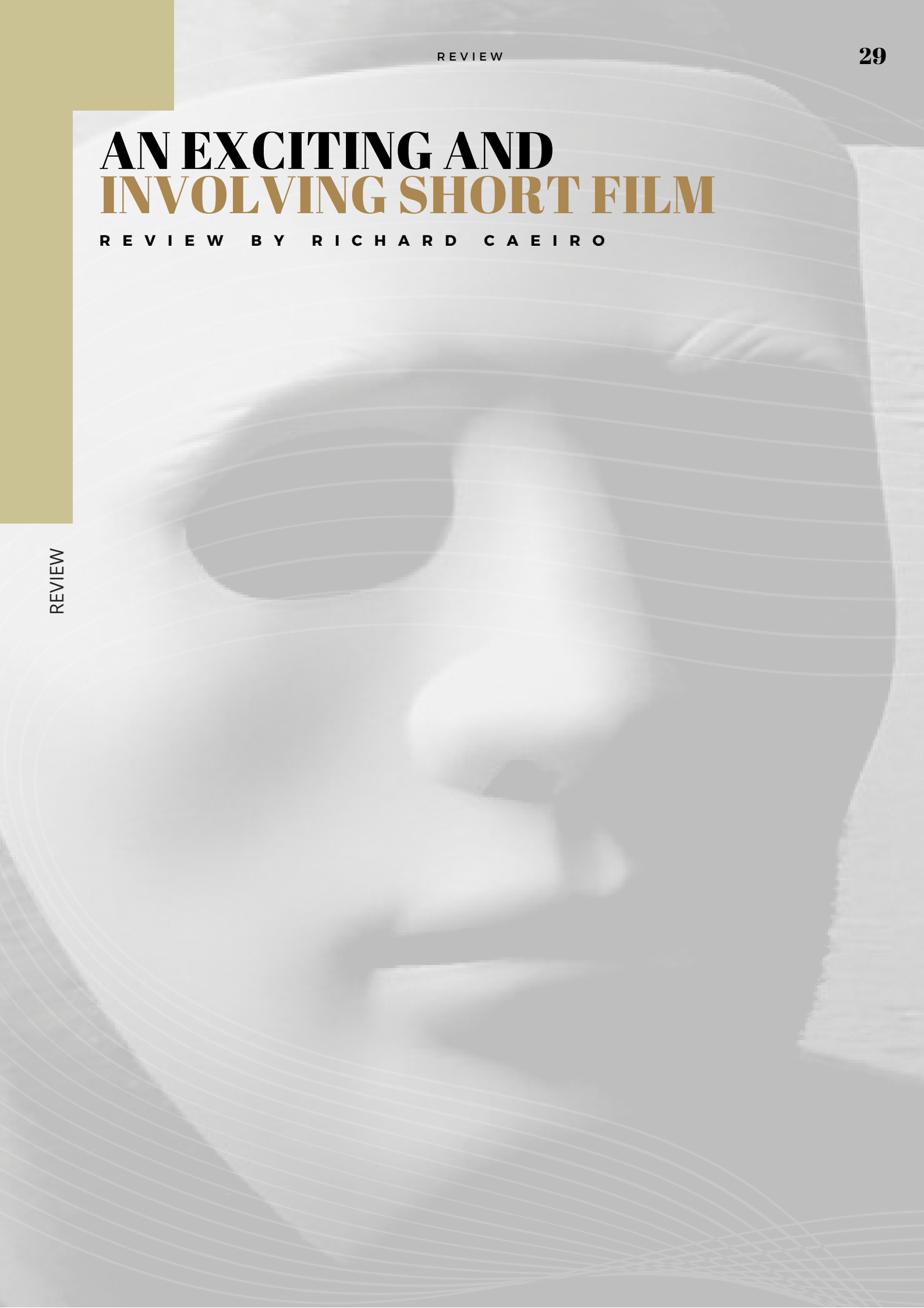
### REZA GOLCHIN BIOGRAPHY:

Reza Golchin is an Iranian director, screenwriter, and freelance photographer. His main creative direction and subjects are social issues. He holds an M.A. (Master's Degree) in Photography from the Art University of Tehran. In 2011 he became a member of the Art Faculty of Guilan University. After seven years of teaching photography at the University of Guilan (2011-2018), he was expelled from the university. After leaving university he founded the Golchin Khazar Film Company.

# AN EXCITING AND INVOLVING SHORT FILM

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW



## WHERE DID THE LOVE GO A FILM BY BILAL HUSSAIN

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO



"Where Did The Love Go" film scene

### AN EXCITING AND INVOLVING SHORT FILM

"Where Did The Love Go," directed by award-winning independent filmmaker Bilal Hussain, is a short film that manages to hold the viewer's attention from beginning to end. With influences from American crime films of the 1980s, the director presents an intriguing story that raises two important issues: the idea that no one becomes a psychopath in a day, and that education is a crucial factor in shaping who we are.

Although originally planned as his first feature film, Hussain knew how to shorten the narrative due to the COVID-19 pandemic and still told an engaging story that leaves the audience wanting more. Set in a small town where a woman mysteriously disappears, the plot involves a police investigation that leads to suspects from out of town who have been associated with a brutal murder that occurred a year earlier. Tension builds as the police strive to find the woman before it is too late.



"Where Did The Love Go" film scene

While the film may be brief, it is impactful, featuring complex and emotionally powerful characters. Bilal Hussain proves that he is a talented director, capable of creating captivating stories with strong themes. "Where Did The Love Go" is an excellent example of this independent filmmaker's work, and is worth checking out for those who enjoy crime films and suspenseful stories.

Besides being an award-winning independent filmmaker, Bilal Hussain has an inspiring biography. As a Pakistani-Canadian immigrant, he settled in Denmark and started making short films with few financial resources in 2011. Even without many funds, Hussain never gave up on his dream of independent filmmaking, and his hard work and dedication have earned him recognition in several international film festivals.



The director Bilal Hussain

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Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/amazonia\\_cinema\\_awards/](https://www.instagram.com/amazonia_cinema_awards/)



# THE BEAUTY AND DEPTH OF "BLANK SPACES"

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH ARCHIE, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING".

BY LUCAS MARQUES AND MARCELO CESAR



THE BEAUTY AND DEPTH OF "BLANK SPACES"

# THE BEAUTY AND DEPTH OF "BLANK SPACES"



"Everything" film scene

## THE BEAUTY AND DEPTH OF "BLANK SPACES"

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH ARCHIE, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING"  
by Lucas Marques and Marcelo Cesar

ARCHIE is a filmmaker who graduated from the Fine Arts Academy of China. Besides participating in several important film festivals around the world, he has won several awards in filmmaking and is currently considered one of the most influential and promising directors in China. He was responsible for the conception and production of 8 short films, with international awards.

The core strength of your film is in its choice of a common theme, which is couples' relationships, but which you bring out surprisingly. Where did the inspiration to write "The Night before the Wedding" come from?

Yes, you are right. This movie of mine chooses a theme "husband and wife relationship" that all countries in the world will understand as the core of the film, and there is another key point that I develop in this core theme, which is Secrets, I personally think that every person, every couple, every couple will have their own past and experience, and in their past, present, or future must have their own secrets, at least one secret, so Based on this idea and setting, I used the creative method of genre films to shoot the movie "The Night before the Wedding". I personally hope that this film for any country's audience can see understand, but also hope that all the audience after watching this film, will have their own ending answer.



"Everything" behind the scenes photo

The film is very focused on the characters and their relationships. How was the process of developing the main characters?

I think that the best movies in the world must be about the relationship between people. My movie only has four characters: the groom Jiaming, the bride Chenyu, Jiaming's ex-girlfriend Xiaozhou, and Jiaming's partner, the underground lover LUCY, when setting their characters, I did not set them according to the normal personality but used the social relationship of sociology to divide the characters.

Jiaming is a boy born into a wealthy family. He has no worries about food and clothing. From the information in the lines, it can be heard that Jiaming's parents are in business and are very successful. But when Jiaming was young, he was rebellious and unwilling to be controlled. He naively thought that he could get rich by working hard. Soon he realized that he could not succeed through his own efforts, so he began to become speculative, cold, deep, hypocritical, and worldly.

Xiaozhou is an orphan, diligent, hard-working, and simple girl. She is one of Jiaming's ex-girlfriends. She met Jiaming when he was down and down. And the name Xiaozhou is the girl's screen name, it's just a character name given by JiaMing because he can't remember the girl's real name, it can be seen that JiaMing doesn't care about this so-called ex-girlfriend, here, I also want to say something more: the name "xiaozhou" means "little curse" in Chinese.

LUCY is Jiaming's old classmate; she likes Jiaming, helps Jiaming, and invests in Jiaming to set up his own company. She is Jiaming's rare partner, even a benefactor, and also an underground lover, the two were originally sweet, until the appearance of Chen Yu, then everything changed.

ChenYu is a bride, and she is about to marry JiaMing. From the lines, it can be known that ChenYu is the daughter of the chairman of a conglomerate chamber of commerce. She has huge family, rich assets, and is generous, gentle, and understanding. JiaMing fell in love with ChenYu at first sight. , coupled with the romantic encounters between the two by chance many times, JiaMing believes that Chen Yu is his destined lifelong partner.

In terms of roles, each character has their own social class and background. Because of different social roles, their reactions and behaviors are also different when encountering things. I believe the audience can see the details of this logic in the film. This is what I think about the development of each character.



The director Alexandre Bertella Rodrigues

The cast of "The Night Before the Wedding" is very well together and this is visible on screen. How was the preparation of your cast?

Jiaming's actor, Chen Xi, has worked with me for more than ten years. He is an experienced film and television actor. We have formed a tacit understanding, which is the result of time and common experience. At that time, I only asked Chen Xi not to act in the way of a bad guy, but to act as a very normal man, calm, peaceful, and careful, and there is no excessive emotion on the surface. So Jia Ming needs to be played with extreme, selfish, reasonably peaceful, and even shameless behaviors, but at special times, they still need to be revealed a little. This is the sense of proportion that I need actors to achieve. Chen Xi has achieved it in this film, and the degree of completion is very high. I believe that after watching it, many audiences will have a deep impression of Jia Ming's role.

The actor of Chen Yu, Zhao Chenyu, is a very good actress. This is the second time we have worked together. I like the relaxation and naturalness of her performance, so when preparing for the role of Chen Yu, I did not specifically ask for it. Zhao Chenyu wants to be is to give her the space to be herself as much as possible. I have always thought that there are two types of actors, one is the genius type and the other is the hardworking type. Zhao Chenyu is a genius type of actor in my opinion. Simple communication is enough, without too many requirements, she is very clear about who she is, who her role is, and what the meaning of each line is.

Wang Qiuying, who plays Xiaozhou, is a stage actress. This is her first time acting in a movie. Me, I am a bit adventurous in arranging actors, because there is still a big difference between stage performances and film and television performances.

Stage performances can be exaggerated because live performances, movements, expressions, and lines can only be seen by the audience when they are exaggerated, but film and television performances need more details and a sense of proportion. Fortunately, Wang Qiuying is a very good actress. With savvy, she completed the role according to my guidance, and Wang Qiuying used her emotional expression to make the role of Xiaozhou fuller. I am very happy that I took the risk and chose her.

Cheng Cheng, who plays LUCY, is also an actress I have worked with for a long time. She is also a talented actress with experience. Cheng Cheng used to be the protagonist in many of my works. Although there are not many appearances in the movie, they are all very important. The reason for choosing Cheng Cheng to play the role is very simple: her characteristics are the type of domineering female president, vigorous and assertive, clean, sexy, and very self-aware. She has the charm of an independent character. So it is only appropriate to invite her to play LUCY.

Bringing these four actors with different personalities together to complete a play, I think it's hard not to be wonderful.

**The film is set on a wedding eve. How did you work to create an intense and engaging atmosphere for the plot?**

My personal experience is that when the characters in a story are established, real, and credible in front of the audience, their logical behavior will naturally be established, and the audience will invest in it. Therefore, the relationship between people in the film's viewpoints and desires between people will collide and form contradictions, and a tense atmosphere will naturally arise. All the key lies in whether the characters in the story are credible or not. Of course, all of this requires a reasonable design.



"Everything" film scene



"Everything" film scene

**Rain and wind are recurring elements in the narrative. How important are these elements to the story and the characters?**

You are amazing! You have noticed this point! Yes, the appearance of rain and wind elements is part of the audiovisual design of my film, in addition to increasing the real texture of the story and setting off a melancholy and gloomy atmosphere, it also implies change and imminent events. An ancient Chinese poem expresses the meaning of "The wind sweeping through the tower heralds a rising storm in the mountains". The element of wind and rain is the main element throughout the film. Many key events happened in the wind and rain, but the attentive audience will find that after watching the whole film. You only hear the sound of wind and rain, but do not see a real scene of wind and rain. This is my audio-visual design, to deliberately blur the uncertainty of the real and illusory events in the film. Give the audience more space.

**What are the main differences that you would highlight between Eastern and Western cinema?**

This is a great question. There are differences between the East and the West not only in movies but also in many artistic creations. But in general, my personal opinion is that Western expressions will be very concrete, very specific, clear, practical, and full. The Eastern expression is more relaxed, which we call "blank space" in art. For example, compare artistic creation to a math problem. Western artistic expression is mostly one plus one equals two, while in Eastern expression It is likely that one plus one equals X, and what this X is is determined by the audience, and the author does not give a specific answer.



"Everything" film scene

The film also has a hint of suspense. How did you work cinematographically and audibly to create moments of tension in the story?

Follow the expression of the lens language as much as possible, and use the lighting color to match the photography composition to tell the story. When the plot of the film appears desperate and lost, I will not hesitate to use cool colors to cover the entire picture. When the characters are angry or excited, I will choose red, when there are conflicts; I will naturally outline or splice cool and warm colors on the main body of the characters to emphasize the feelings of the characters in the film at this time. The rhythm of the music and sound effects is the key because this factor directly affects the emotions of the audience. When the characters appear when the mood fluctuates greatly, but the behavior does not fluctuate much, I like to use the camera's "Time-lapse photography" or "Posterize Time" to express a person's inner activities. Several methods cooperate, and the tense moments and sense of the story are highlighted.



"Everything" film scene

"The Night Before the Wedding" is a very intimate and emotional film. How do you hope the audience will relate to the story and the characters?

I only have one hope, if this movie is played in front of audiences in any country in the world, audiences can understand it. As for the result, I don't have extravagant hopes. I believe that audiences can give their answers and opinions. I think the charm of the movie lies in this. Because only movies that can discuss debates will make the audience never forget it.

The film has been well-received by critics and audiences alike. How has this reception of your film been for you and the cast?

To be honest, my team and I learned that BIMIFF and the judges and audiences in many countries in the world like this movie. We are delighted from the bottom of our hearts. This is the power of movies. We come from different countries and have different cultures, have different languages and habits, do not know each other, and are not familiar with each other, but because of the movie, we can chat, communicate, and like each other, which is a wonderful thing. I'm very touched and very grateful.



"Everything" film scene

"The Night Before the Wedding" is a film of great depth with great aesthetic care. What are your cinematic references, both for the film and for your filmmaking career?

When I was younger, because I liked Zhang Yimou's films, I started working in the film industry when I was growing up. During my growing up, the films of Jiang Wen, Kar wai Wong, and Johnnie To had the greatest influence on me. Foreign filmmakers like Stanley Kubrick, Alfred Hitchcock, Christopher Nolan, and the Brazilian director Fernando Meirelles have always been the benchmarks of my career. It is difficult for me to say who or which film has influenced my films, because the works of these masters, as well as shooting techniques and artistic expressions, lens language, and audio-visual design, were like a seed buried in my heart when I was very young. More than 30 years have passed, and they are already in my body, which has grown into a towering tree, blossoming and bearing fruit, inseparable from each other.



"Everything" film scene

What advice would you give to a starting filmmaker in such a competitive field as the audiovisual world?

I am only forty-one years old, and I am still a student studying in the film world. I can't suggest anything, but I would like to share two keywords with all the filmmakers who are just starting who read this article. The first keyword is: "Be yourself". No matter whether there is anyone in this world who can understand you, no matter how the world changes and how fierce the competition in the film and television industry is, you must insist on being yourself, understand what you want to shoot, clarify what you want to express, and must have your point of view and style. You must know that the world is so big, there are so many people, and it changes so fast, no matter what you are, you are unique!

The second keyword is "enjoy loneliness". I think that a good creator must be lonely. Only loneliness can make people think independently. Only loneliness can make people concentrate. Only a lonely filmmaker can bear the praise of everyone. Please believe that loneliness is the first step for God to achieve a person.



"Everything" film scene

What are your plans as a director for your next projects? Is there a genre or theme you would like to explore in future films?

I hope I can make more types of movies, and through movies, I can focus on youth, the heart, life, and the world. I hope I can also make "The Dark Knight", "Everything Everywhere All at Once", and "Cidade de Deus" that I will never tire of watching. Classic works, I am very, very eager to understand the world and life through the power of movies. I hope that my work and I can go all over the world, to meet more friends, and at the same time be known and liked by more friends. I love movies! I love you guys! I love BIMIFF!

# *GUEL WAAR*

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE



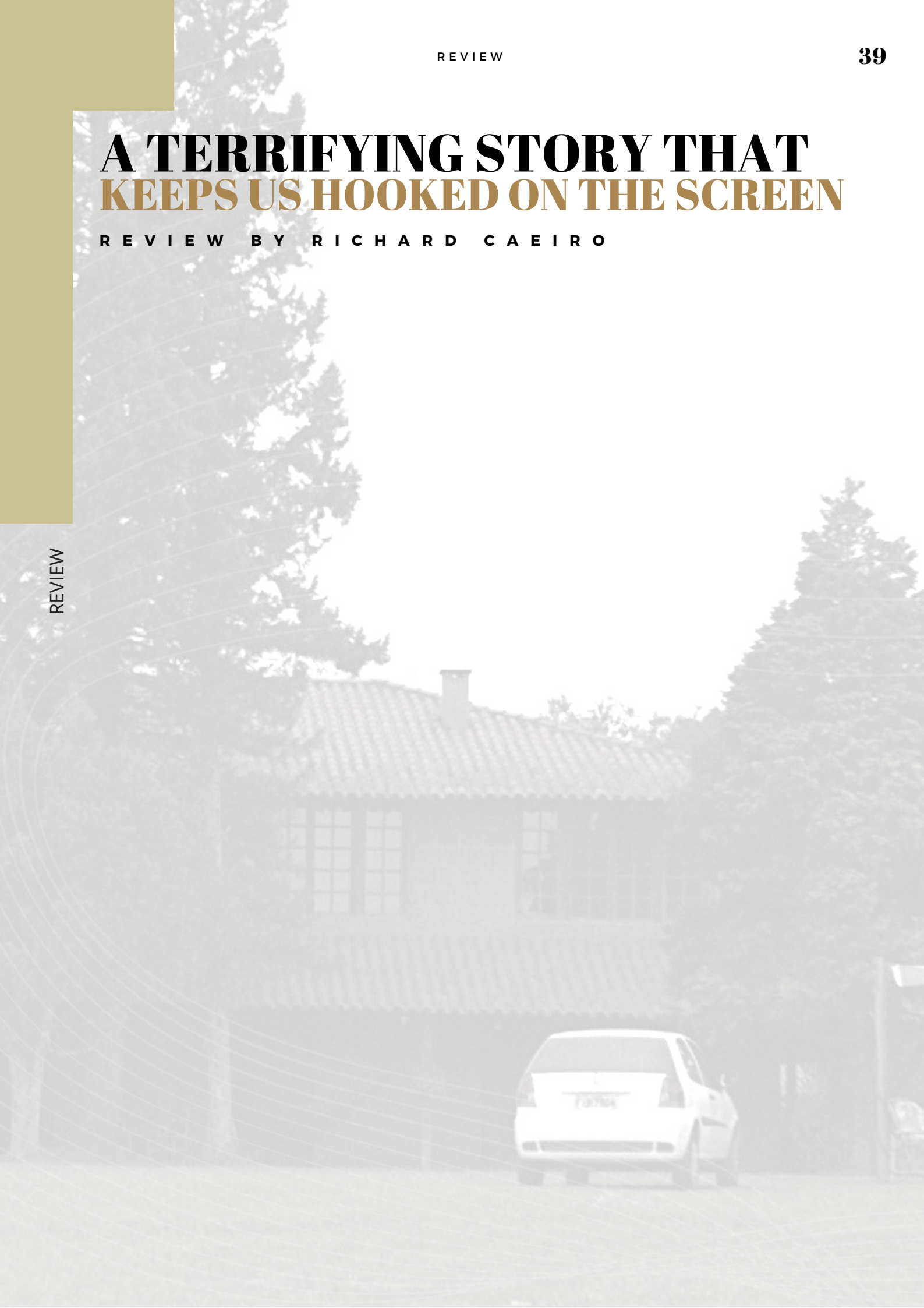
OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES



# A TERRIFYING STORY THAT KEEPS US HOOKED ON THE SCREEN

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW





# THE GUESTHOUSE A FILM BY FERNANDO TOSETTI

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO



"The Guesthouse" film scene

## A TERRIFYING STORY THAT KEEPS US HOOKED ON THE SCREEN

The film "The Guesthouse", directed by Fernando Tosetti, presents an involving and intriguing plot, with elements that recall the great classics of horror cinema. From the very beginning, we are introduced to a happy couple who decide to stay in an idyllic country house. However, the exaggerated sympathy of the host, as well as the prohibition of access to one of the rooms of the house, leaves us on the alert, since these are common elements in horror films.

A strong point of the film is the soundtrack, which plays a key role in creating and reinforcing the tense and frightening atmosphere that permeates the story. In addition, the director skillfully uses the fake jump resource, surprising and misleading the viewer at various points in the movie. The editing is well constructed and the pace is well balanced, which keeps the viewer focused on the screen throughout the entire projection.

In the end, we find out that the girlfriend and the host work together, with her attracting men to be murdered by him. Although the motive for these murders is not completely clear, the film does remind us of the classic "Hellraiser," in which the female character is tasked with luring men so that another character can be fed. This parallel is interesting, as both films feature female characters playing key roles in the plot, and both explore themes such as seduction and betrayal.

As the film ends, it is impossible not to be reminded of Jordan Peele's "GET OUT", as both films feature black boyfriends as victims of a white female. However, while "GET OUT" is a social horror film that uses elements of racism to create fear and tension, "The Guesthouse" focuses on more classic elements of horror, such as suspense and mystery.

In addition, the film can also serve as a wake-up call to people who use apps to rent apartments by the season. The story of the characters that are first attracted to a cottage through an application and become victims of a serial killer is a frightening and realistic possibility that is sure to make many viewers rethink their safety when using these services.

In conclusion, "The Guesthouse" is a film that deserves to be seen, especially for those who enjoy the suspense/horror genre. With a well-constructed story, an engaging soundtrack, and a constant suspense atmosphere, the film holds the viewer's attention from beginning to end.



The director Fernando Tosetti

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# PLUG 卍 PLAY

DIRECTED BY LAURENCE FORTIN GAGNON, THOMAS MA



## SYNOPSIS

A cyberpunk story of the times, reflecting on disparity; and the lengths that those will go to get an inch above the rest - No matter the cost. An age-old game, remixed for the new era. The question of the next generation's role in modern society, cast in a revealing cold new light.

**CAST:** SERGIO OSUNA, AVERY FANE, LAURENCE FG, LORI O'CONNELL, CHRIS OLSON, NICK WONG, KEVIN NAVIA, MICHAEL PALMER, ROLANDO MALDONADO

**DIRECTORS:** LAURENCE FORTIN GAGNON, THOMAS MA

**WRITER:** AVERY FANE

**PRODUCERS:** AVERY FANE, LAURENCE FORTIN GAGNON, STEVEN HU, WILLIAM LEUNG

**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** DALE SHIPPAM

**EDITING:** ANDREW MAZOLENY

**SOUND EDITING:** ANDREW MAZOLENY, YUNG-SHENG TSENG, SURAJ SAVKOOR, WARREN HALL

**MUSIC BY:** RABBIT JUNK



*LAURENCE FORTIN GAGNON. AVERY FANE AND THOMAS MA BIOGRAPHY:*

*Laurence Fortin Gagnon is a Québécoise filmmaker, actress, and producer. Thomas Ma is a film director. Avery Fane is a Canadian filmmaker, writer, and actor from Vancouver, BC. He brought in directors Laurence and Thomas to produce the cyberpunk short film Plug 卍 Play.*

# *FAAT KINÉ*

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE

OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES



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# LATIN AMERICA FILM AWARDS

LATIN AMERICA FILM AWARDS was made with the intention of creating a new scenario for independent filmmakers from Latin America and all around the world.

The festival, just like the films, is completely independent. We do not have any kind of sponsorship or assistance from any government, and therefore registration is charged. It's the only way to keep the festival alive and at a high level.

The films will be evaluated monthly by competent and awarded cinema professionals. The best film of each month will be shown on our website.

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Contact email: [latinfilmawards@gmail.com](mailto:latinfilmawards@gmail.com)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/latinamericafilmawards/>

# R U N A W A Y

## DIRECTED BY ISHTIYAK AHMAD ZIHAD



### SYNOPSIS

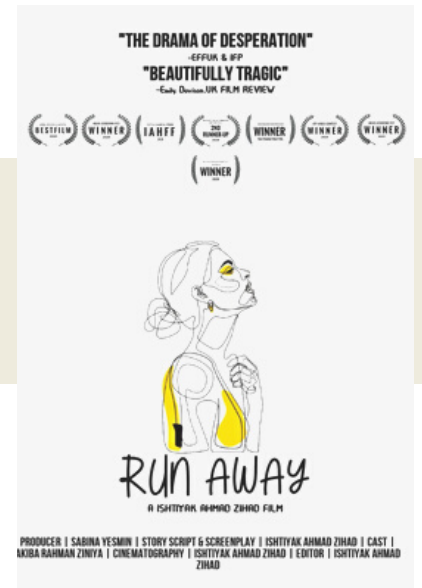
On the day of the pandemic of coronavirus in Bangladesh, the story of the movie revolves around a Bangladeshi garment worker. At home, she has a mother, a younger sister, and a restless father. Can a garment worker go to her mother who lives in the village? Can she buy red clothes and shoes for her sister? Or not!

**CAST:** AKIBA RAHMAN ZINIYA

**DIRECTOR, WRITER, AND CINEMATOGRAPHER:** ISHTIYAK AHMAD ZIHAD

**PRODUCER:** SABINA YESMIN

**EDITOR:** AKIBA RAHMAN ZINIYA



#### ISHTIYAK AHMAD ZIHAD BIOGRAPHY:

Ishtiyak Ahmad Zihad is a young filmmaker currently studying Film and Media Studies at Kazi Nazrul Islam University. Ishtiyak made his first experimental short film "God Gift". This construction journey, which started with god gift, has now come to a halt in "Chaya Moricher Bone" - this one-take short film is based on the story of Bangladesh's liberation war. Earlier, Ishtiyak had made a short film for television and OTT, "Biral Tapassya". "Run Away" won 12 awards at Film Festivals held in Bangladesh, India, the USA, England, Turkey, and Brazil.

# EXPRESS YOURSELF: THE FUN AND JOY OF MAKING MOVIES

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MEG POVEROMO & KEVIN BLACK,  
DIRECTORS OF THE FILM "FLOWERS FOR AUTUMN".

BY LUCAS MARQUES AND VIC KINGS



EXPRESS YOURSELF: THE FUN AND JOY OF MAKING MOVIES

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AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MEG POVEROMO & KEVIN BLACK, DIRECTORS OF THE FILM "FLOWERS FOR AUTUMN".

by Lucas Marques and Vic Kings

Meg Poveromo is an American producer, director, writer, editor, and actress from Florida. As the owner and founder of Unemployed Idiots Film Productions, she writes and produces her films with a youthful vibrancy meant to attract viewers with their relatable glimpses into all of life's nuances.

Kevin Black is an American filmmaker from Pennsylvania. He graduated from the New York Film Academy for Film Production and Capital Area School for the Arts for Theater. Kevin has proven himself as a talented and prolific writer, writing for Miami's best-rated musical in 2020 Santa's Christmas Storybook.

**How did you, Meg Poveromo & Kevin Black, decide to share the direction of the film "Flowers for Autumn"? How was the working dynamic between the two of you while directing together?**

**KEVIN:** The working dynamic between me and Meg was quite easy. We expressed ourselves and allowed ourselves to give space while blending both visions together. Working with Meg feels like a party that you need a VIP pass to get into, more than it feels like work. Filming days are filled with laughter, despite some stressful moments. Continue rolling out the red carpet for us because this is just the beginning, honey.

**MEG:** We knew we worked well together after Kevin helped co-write the second part of Toxic Shock, my two-part web series that I made in 2022. I realized it was so easy to work with him because we basically just share the same singular brain cell... And I can't say that about just anyone. The amount of ideas we come up with on the spot is ridiculous and we're able to just whip through everything easily due to our similar visions. We picked out our own scenes to direct and took turns for the most part.



The co-director Meg Poveromo



Can you tell us more about the story that inspired the film's narrative?

MEG: So, I was at my day job, which is a bakery in this little Italian market, when someone left me a random chocolate bar on the counter after I stepped away for a couple of minutes. Fast forward about two days later, my manager handed me an Amazon package that had my name on it with the store's address below. I was so confused. I was like, "did I accidentally mail my amazon order to my job's address?" and then I'm like "no, because how in the world would I accidentally do that?". So, I opened it there in front of everyone, and pulled out a box of roses (the same ones in the film) with a note that read: "I hope you enjoyed the chocolate from the other day! Text if you liked these roses. From, your secret admirer".

Of course, he put his number on there too and I thought it was kind of creepy so I posted a picture on my social media story saying something like "wtf kind of creep murderer has been sending me anonymous packages to my job???" and had people call the number. I told my sister and she made a huge deal about it and called amazon, yelling at them until they told her the person's name who sent it. It turns out it was just the guy who worked at the restaurant next door. My co-worker went over and showed him the screenshots of me calling him a murderer and he was so taken aback. He was just shy. I felt so bad. But I also thought it sounded like a great thriller concept. So, I met up with Kevin and we wrote the whole thing.



The co-director Kevin Black



"Flowers for Autumn" film poster

What are your cinematographic references while directing, scriptwriting, and producing? How would you describe the style and genre of "Flowers for Autumn"?

MEG: When we first started writing *Flowers for Autumn*, we thought about making it a horror film, but then we couldn't stop adding jokes. It became a dark comedy/thriller real quick. I think that most of the material I produce can't really fit under one genre, and that's because I don't like to keep myself inside a box. I'm inspired by such a variety of different movies and styles and I'll always just want to combine everything together. Sometimes I'll plan to make a film like *Silence of the Lambs*, but then think of making characters like *Napoleon Dynamite* and then I'll want to color grade it like *Wes Anderson*. I feel like *Flowers for Autumn* is a good balance between funny, creepy, beautiful, and disgusting.

KEVIN: Making our first thriller was a little bit of a goal since we're so goofy together. We realized that we couldn't stop making jokes despite trying to go down the serious route. The film ended up being a good mixture of both. We want to challenge our writing abilities by trying the horror genre and completely going darker.

The cast of *Flowers for Autumn* is very well-matched, how was the casting process for the actors? What was it like working with the ensemble cast of the film?

KEVIN: I went to school at New York Film Academy for Film Production because I wanted to be able to incorporate myself into my own projects, and I know Meg feels the same way about acting in hers. The casting process for everyone else was interesting because the number of people auditioning for this project was overwhelming. We had so many to choose from. As a production company, I wanted to give opportunities to new actors as well, and working with them was awesome because I love making new connections.

MEG: I loved the cast! Kevin and I had so much fun going through and watching all the auditions. It was very hard to choose the main characters because everyone who sent us a tape performed the roles so differently from the next. Everyone also got along great and had a good attitude, which made the shoot go by quickly and easily. I remember a set in my earlier directing days where the actors I cast hated each other and the awkward tension in the room almost made me rethink my entire career path. I'm so happy this was not one of those times.



"Flowers for Autumn" film scene

What do you hope viewers will feel and think after watching "*Flowers for Autumn*"?

KEVIN: I hope that they will be left in shock so they can rewatch it and find little details that they might've missed out on the first time around.

MEG: I love a movie where you can't tell what's coming next. I also love movies where after watching you think, "what in the world did I just watch?" and I hope viewers feel the same way after watching *Flowers for Autumn*.



"Flowers for Autumn" film scene

As directors, what is your creative process? How do you work with your team to turn an idea into a completed film?

MEG: I like to go all out. I brainstorm the craziest ideas I can and then ask myself how to incorporate them into a story... or even make them the storyline itself. A lot of things that happen in my films are inspired by weird situations I've been in, and a lot of my characters are based on people I've interacted with in real life. I avoid worrying about budgeting until the first draft of the script is done. I like to pour my wildest ideas into the script without thinking about the price of anything, and then revise it with more realistic alternatives.

KEVIN: Before I write, I always think about how I want the movie to end first. Then, I work my way backward. I ensure that I have a set of eyes to read the finished product. Once they finish reading, I ask for honest feedback and it helps me really polish the script. I really care about the perspective of the audience, so the reviewing process is a very important step for me to take. With that being said, it's equally as important for me to stay true to my art, and not let all of the feedback completely influence my work.

How did you work together to develop the plot and characters of the film? Did you two have different ideas that contributed to the final story during the screenplay's development?

KEVIN: Our ideas are very similar. We both knew right away that we wanted two female leads. #femaleenergy

MEG: I think the only plot idea we sort of debated on was making the person who sent the roses a crazy female stalker who was in love with the main character. We kept going back and forth between that concept and the plot we ended up using, during the planning stages. However, we were still able to jot down ideas we wanted to happen throughout the storyline no matter the outcome. We ultimately knew that we wanted two female leads, (because we can all agree that too many male-centered movies get boring fast) and we knew we needed to make one of them crazy.



"Flowers for Autumn" behind the scenes

How did you approach creating the tense and mysterious atmosphere that permeates the entire film? Was there a specific technique or method that you used to build the tone?

KEVIN: Everything was thought out. From the color scheme to the music. We wanted to play with the viewers' emotions by making this thriller bright and happy, yet super dark.

MEG: I want to point out the amazing singer/songwriter, Aries Cookie, who wrote and performed her song "Touch My Skin" specifically for Flowers for Autumn. It really brought out the mood and made the whole product come together. Being able to have it flow so well throughout and using the right color-grading techniques in the post did the trick.

What was the biggest challenge you faced when directing "Flowers for Autumn"? How did you overcome it?

KEVIN: Amanda, our actress who played Shannon, got into a horrible car accident that temporarily damaged her face. Thankfully, she survived, and her face healed. This accident paused production for a couple of months, but we felt that her safety, healing, and mental health were a priority.

What was the most rewarding part of the process of making "Flowers for Autumn"? Was there a specific moment when you knew that the film was taking shape and would be a success?

MEG: The most rewarding feeling ever, is always when I get to see others acknowledging something that I put my heart into. We held a premiere for Flowers for Autumn, and I felt so supported seeing so many people show up to watch something that I made. I love hearing the audience laugh, gasp, applaud and overall just seeing everyone's reactions makes me so happy.

KEVIN: I would say the specific moment that I knew would be memorable was when we were filming Shannon and Hunter's second interaction. The dialogue was so simple yet so funny and it felt the most natural to make... Maybe too natural. \*wink\*



"Flowers for Autumn" film scene

Do you have any advice for young directors who want to pursue a career in cinema?

KEVIN: I am a young director! Call me if you'd like to invest in our films.

MEG: What Kevin said! But also, I'd say a good piece of advice is to not let the fear of sounding annoying hold you back from getting what you want.

Do you have any future projects in mind? Is there anything you would like to explore in your next works?

MEG: I recently started writing a feature-length lesbian dramedy that I'm already so excited about. I also have some short films and sketches to write in between. I really want to collab with more people and play around with more genres.

KEVIN: "Wolfie" is my latest short film that I just wrapped up directing and producing. It's an LGBTQ drama about a struggling couple who adopt a dog in hopes to bring them closer together.



The co-director Meg Poveromo



"Flowers for Autumn" film scene

What message do you hope viewers will take with them after watching "Flowers for Autumn"?

MEG & KEVIN: If there's any message to be taken away from Flowers for Autumn, we guess it would be to not show interest in someone by mailing anonymous packages to their job. That is clearly always creepy.

# THE RISE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

REVIEW BY LUCAS MARQUES

REVIEW



# THE RISE OF OIZYS A FILM BY SAMARA BONFIM

REVIEW BY LUCAS MARQUES



"Rise of Oizys" film scene

## THE RISE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

"Rise of Oizys" is a film of great sensitivity and depth that portrays the anguish and challenges faced by people living with Bipolar Disorder in contemporary society. Directed by the filmmaker Samara Bonfim, the film is entirely narrated by the director herself and includes archive images and footage shot by the filmmaker herself.

Through a personal and intimate look, the film shows how difficult it is to deal with the ups and downs of bipolar disorder and how this can significantly affect the lives of those who live with this condition. Samara Bonfim skillfully conveys the feeling of isolation and incomprehension that many people with BPD face in society, at the same time highlighting the importance of talking about the subject and making people aware of the reality of these individuals.

One of the great qualities of the film is that it does not limit itself to portraying only the personal experience of the director.

Samara Bonfim manages to broaden the discussion and show how society as a whole needs to learn to deal with bipolar disorder. She highlights the need for family members, friends, health professionals and society itself to be informed and aware of the disease so that they can help people with BPD deal with their challenges and have a more balanced life.

Another strong point of the film is the way it approaches the theme sensitively and respectfully. The director does not try to romanticize or dramatize the condition of bipolar people but rather shows the complex and multifaceted reality of the disease. Through a human and empathetic look, the film leads us to reflect on the importance of empathy, understanding, and welcoming towards people who live with mental disorders.

"The Rise of Oizys" is a moving and enlightening film that has the power to speak and alert the audience about the reality of bipolar people in contemporary society. By portraying a personal experience, but also highlighting the need for social awareness, the film plays an important role in broadening the discussion about mental disorders and offering an empathetic and human look at such a complex and relevant issue.



The director Samara Bonfim

# *MOOLAADÉ*

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE



OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES



# OH!

DIRECTED BY DIOGO HOFFER



## SYNOPSIS

Nara's (35) marriage has become boring and so is her life. One day instead of going to work she decides to walk around the city and ends up in her childhood neighborhood. She meets Lucia (56), and they spend the day together having delightful conversations that will mess around with both of her desires and shake things up.

**CAST:** KELZY ECARD, NIRLEY LACERDA, PEDRO HOLLANDA

**DIRECTOR:** DIOGO HOFFER

**WRITER:** BRUNA BARBOSA

**PRODUCED BY:** GARBO FILMES

**PRODUCER:** CLARA VIVES

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:** RAFAEL MACHADO

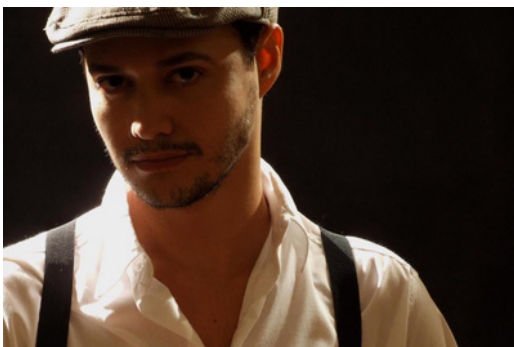
**SOUND DESIGN AND EDITING:** ALEXANDRE ASSMANN

**ART DIRECTOR:** SABRINA TRAVENÇOLO

**COSTUME DESIGN:** RAFAEL FREITAS

**SOUND:** JOÃO LIMA

**MAKE-UP DESIGN:** ANA BEATRIZ GOMES



### *DIOGO HOFFER BIOGRAPHY:*

*Diogo Hoffer is a Brazilian award-winning filmmaker and journalist. With his student short film "Oh!", produced by Moedor Filmes, Diogo won awards and honorable mentions in Brazilian and International film festivals, such as Café com Cinema - Jovens Realizadores (Minas Gerais/Brazil), Royal Society of Television & Motion Picture Awards (Kolkata, India), and AIMAFF (Athens, Greece). The film "Oh!" is also selected for BIMIFF's 23rd Competition.*



# CAMP DE THIAROYE

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE



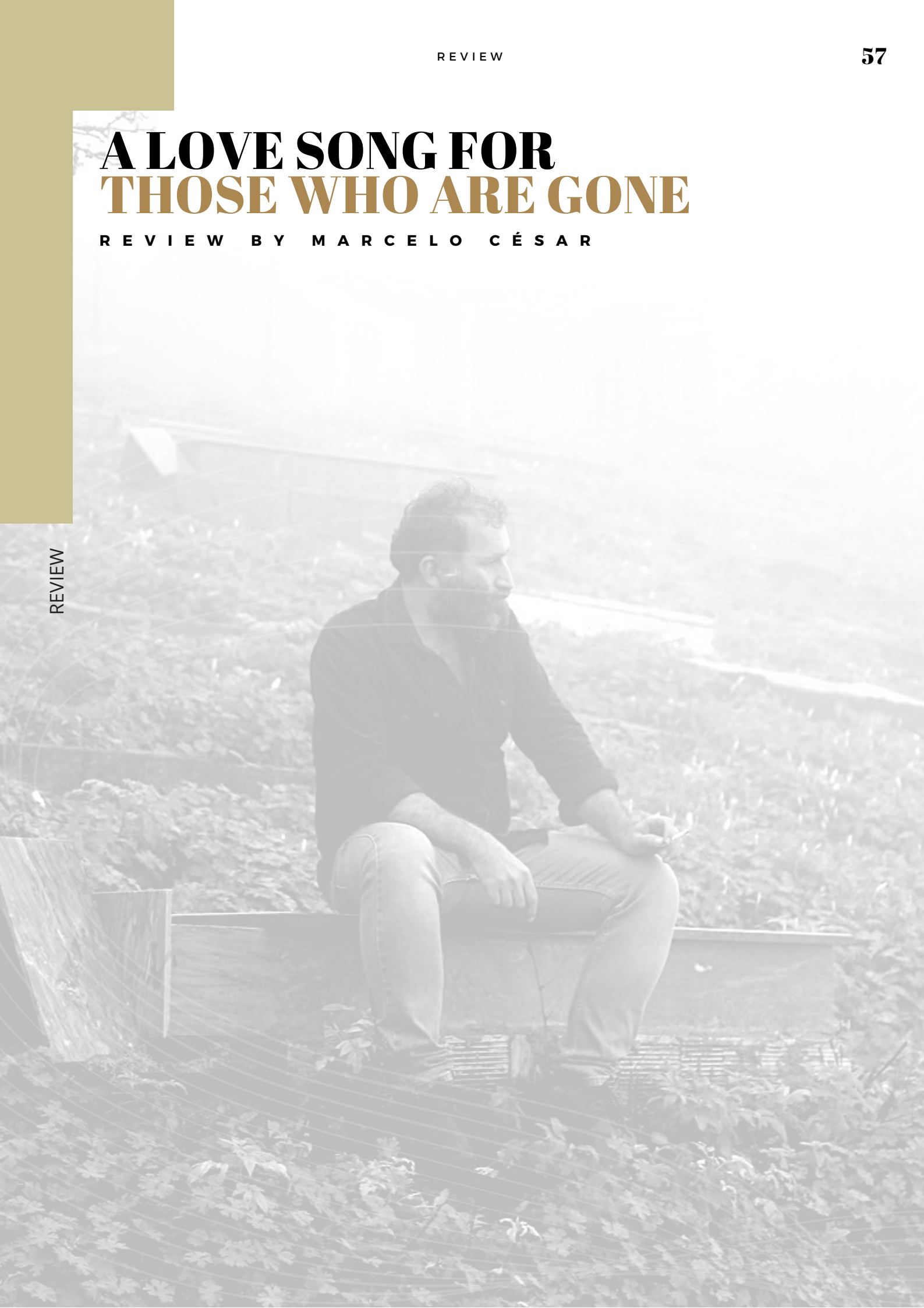
OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES



# A LOVE SONG FOR THOSE WHO ARE GONE

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR

REVIEW



# WORLD-WEARY A FILM BY REZA GOLCHIN

REVIEW BY MARCELO CESAR



"World-Weary" film scene

## A LOVE SONG FOR THOSE WHO ARE GONE

A teacher lost his wife and son in a car accident two years ago. He is frustrated with life and has no desire to teach...this is the trigger for the wonderful feature film by Iranian director and screenwriter Reza Golchin. One more film from the Islamic Republic of Iran brings back memories and feelings of the physical loss of loved ones. How many times we don't wake up in the night to the voices of those who are no longer here? It is sad when upon awakening we realize that it was only a dream.

In the seventh minute of the film, we discover that our character is a teacher in a rural school of extreme simplicity. The teacher sleeps with his head on the table while one student watches the others studying and doing their school exercises. An inspection of the school by a supervisor and a photographer reveals that the children are not being taught as they should be and that the classroom is in terrible condition. Yet the children do not want the teacher to be replaced.

He is requested to grant forgiveness to a person who is in jail, who surely is the cause of the accident that killed his loved ones, and he, the teacher, is relentless in condemning the perpetrator.

The presence of a man with disabilities is constant in almost every scene around the school, this man wanders around the teacher. This character shows us that life goes on, even under adverse conditions.

The director presents us with a scene in three layers: in the foreground the teacher's back in observation, in the background the man with disabilities dancing, and finally in the background, what seems to be a funeral procession.

Perhaps this scene is the most symbolic for me: the need for the continuity of life even with a tragedy in the background. And this is a reason for the teacher's reflection at that moment. This lonely man wanders between smoking a cigarette and a teahouse always reflecting on his life. The setting is countryside, with lots of grazing sheep, abundant vegetation, mist, and a sometimes wet road. The film's cinematography seems to have been created so that simultaneously with the enchantment of country life you feel the anguish of loneliness and of not forgiving the universe for what has happened. The professor is exiled in this limbo.



"World-Weary" behind the scenes

## WORLD-WEARY A FILM BY REZA GOLCHIN

At 54 minutes into the film, there is a scene that is all the synthesis of the professor's suffering. He accidentally runs over a sheep cub with his motorcycle and goes on a painful run with the cub on his lap. The feeling I get is that he is trying to save his own family who has perished in a similar situation. The excellent actor Rohollah Bakhtshahi conveys an emotional charge that manages to touch our hearts powerfully.

The teacher collapses from exhaustion with the cub on his lap, and a mist takes over the scene. A song that sounds like a religious chant fills this dolly shot, which in my opinion would go into the history of cinema as one of the most beautiful scenes in recent times.

The turning point for our "hero" begins when he talks to a doctor at a party one night at the house of a stranger who takes him in after his motorcycle presents a mechanical defect. This motorcycle runs through the entire film sewing the character's comings and goings, sometimes she takes in a needy person, sometimes she runs over a cub, and finally, it breaks down in the place of a new beginning. Fate always comes our way with possibilities for redemption. Sometimes it is necessary to break to repair...

Director Reza Golchin and producer Mohammad Golchin have my greatest appreciation and affection for this work they call World-Weary. Poetry in film form. A small masterpiece.

### About the director:

Reza Golchin started his career as a photographer. He holds a Master's Degree in photography from Tehran Art University, and he was a professor at Guilan University. He directed a few documentary short films: such as Dollhouse (2018) and Twilight (2018). In his first feature film - "Anima" (2020), Golchin addresses existential crises through a young photographer, who decides to travel to the mountains, in the interior of Iran, in search of a lover from his youth.



The director Reza Golchin

# HOW MANY WITCH HUNTS DO WE STILL HAVE TODAY?

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH JAYCE LANDBERG, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "THE STORY OF TITUBA: HAPPY 4 U".  
BY VIC KINGS AND RICHARD CAEIRO



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by Lucas Marques and Richard Caeiro

Jayce Landberg is a Swedish Guitar player, composer, music producer, multi-instrumentalist, lyricist, poet, novelist, photographer, and filmmaker. Landberg was born in Switzerland in 1987 and grew up between Stockholm, Sweden, the Swedish countryside as well as Switzerland. He attended Uppsala University as well as Stockholm University and graduated with a Master of Arts degree as well as a Bachelor of Law.

*How did you come up with the idea to tell the story of Tituba, a character so little explored in the Salem Witch Hunt story?*

It so happened that after seeing a documentary about the Salem witch trials, I got intrigued by her persona as well as the injustice surrounding her. I was touched by the simple fact that she is one of the few, if not the only one that made it out alive. The idea ruminated in my head for several years until I decided to write a song about her journey; "Happy 4 U". The movie is basically based on that song.

*What was the historical research process like to recreate the context, production design, and characters of the 1692 Salem Village?*

There was quite a lot of research involved. I managed to get hold of a copy of the original transcripts from the actual trials for instance. The interrogation is based upon those transcripts and the questions present in the film are all genuinely accurate, down to Tituba's answers and recollection. As far as the production design goes, I rented an old wooden church designed as a 17th century church but built in the 1800s. Costume wise, principal costumes including mine and Tituba's were designed by my partner Lina Ellenberg while I did the hunt for others. We also shot at interesting outside locations reminiscent of that era.



Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden (left) and director/actor Jayce Landberg (right)

*How important is it to explore the figure of Tituba as a strong and inspiring character for postmodern feminism?*

Tituba is a real historical character who existed at a time when women and especially women of her ethnicity were perceived as anything but the equal of white men. Against all odds she managed to manipulate and outsmart a jury consisting of just that, "allegedly" educated magistrates as well as her own master, reverend Parris himself, who in fact was a failed businessman.

The film presents different versions of Tituba's story, how did you choose to approach this fragmented narrative?

Tituba recounted her story very thoughtfully. She was clearly very intelligent and knew what to say to win over their sympathy and thus save her own life. As a writer and director, I chose to draw an analogy between her tale and the imaginative of what could be meant between the lines. The effort was to present that visually by way of sarcasm and irony. One could argue that the visual, parallel version that occurs simultaneously as she tells her tale, is my interpretation, or at least my rendition of her account.

What was it like working with a cast that includes experienced actors as well as new talent?

For the part of Tituba, I could only envision Anna Osadcha portraying her. Anna plays Hope in the "Truth or Dare" trilogy which I'm currently working on and which is partly released on Prime Video. She was very interested by the whole story and the character of Tituba altogether, given that it's based on true events. Again, she has that sensitivity, that spark and mystery in her gaze. Niall Balfe who plays the magistrate interrogating Tituba comes from a different theatrical background. When I do the casting, I seek for personalities, not necessarily actors, and the artistic display resulting from that gives the whole production a certain flavour to it.



"The Story of Tituba: Happy 4 U" film scene



The actress Anna Osadcha (left), the director/actor Jayce Landberg (center) and the costume designer Lina Ellenberg (right)

The film addresses issues such as racism, misogyny, and power abuse. What message do you hope the audience will take away with them after watching "THE STORY OF TITUBA: Happy 4 U"?

My hope is that people will be able to see an analogy between the atmosphere that was prevailing some three hundred years ago with a lot of what is going on today in the world. My intent with this film is to address the notion of injustice and social corruption.

How was the title of the film chosen?

The film is based on my song "Happy 4 U" from "The Forbidden World" album which I recorded with singer Göran Edman (ex-Yngwie Malmsteen) on vocals, while handling almost all instruments myself. Lyrically, the song was inspired by the evil deeds of Reverend Samuel Parris and his unjustified acrimony against Tituba and Native American people as a whole. The acronym "Happy 4 U" aka "Happy for you" entails that the narrator feels glad and relieved for Tituba, happy that she was the only one who managed to survive this mass hysteria.

The ending of the film leaves some questions open. Do you intend to explore Tituba's story in other productions?

Historically, no one is certain of what happened to Tituba after her trial. The historical accounts stop at her being released from jail and sold to an unidentified man, a character I play in the film. Naturally, this leaves some questions open and a lot of room for interpretation of what occurred next.



"The Story of Tituba: Happy 4 U" film scene

How do you think the story of Tituba can dialogue with current political and social issues?

There is a whole lot of satire present in the movie, an attempt at social criticism. Nowadays critical thinking is on the verge of collapse, which is a very dangerous thing when you think of it. We often take any mediatic "truth" for granted and any form of questioning can be detrimental. Some are also very quick to judge and cast the first stone, even though what they are judging is merely a mirror projection of their own doing or repressed ideology. With this movie, I hope to evoke at least some thoughts. Many times, mass confusion could only be one step away. Ask yourself, how many witch hunts do we have today that take place in other forms?



"The Story of Tituba: Happy 4 U" film scene

What are your next projects as a filmmaker?

We just finished shooting the third and final part of the "Truth or Dare" trilogy, also starring my costar, Ukrainian actress Anna Osadcha. The film is over one hour long and is currently in postproduction as of this interview. In the meantime, following my accreditation to this year's Cannes Film Festival, I intend to attend the ceremony and spread some word about Tituba and the current project.



# THE BETRAYAL

DIRECTED BY ABRAHAM LOPEZ



## SYNOPSIS

A highly dramatic and emotional short about cheating, relationships, and moving on. Will (played by Rob Shiells from Canberra, Australia) faces difficult times when his long time girlfriend Maggie (played by Kenzie Phillips) confesses she has been cheating on him with his best friend and is now pregnant with his baby.

**CAST:** ROB SHIELLS, KENZIE PHILLIPS, KEVIN LAM, LILY GEORGIA

**DIRECTOR, WRITER, CINEMATOGRAPHER:** ABRAHAM LOPEZ

**PRODUCED BY:** GREEK GOD ENTERTAINMENT LLC

**EDITOR:** VIVIAN BARTON

**CASTING:** TALISA MALHAS

**SOUND:** NATALIE MOORE, GREG JAMES

**SET DESIGN:** LILY GEORGIA



### ABRAHAM LOPEZ BIOGRAPHY:

*Born and raised in Los Angeles, CA, Abraham has always been around business his entire life. Since he was a child he wanted to become an actor and later in his life he had a change of interest but still pertaining to the entertainment industry he wanted to follow in the footsteps of his god mother and become a producer. After graduating high school, Abraham studied and attended Columbia College Hollywood to get his BA in Cinema/Television. After college Abraham then founded and is owner of A Greek God Entertainment LLC. He has worked on major TV series and produced some musical artists.*

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## FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE TO THE WORLD

MAZ is an 18-year-old Educational Institution that has been a great source of artists, discovering the most diverse talents in the areas of Cinema, Theater, Modeling and arts in general in the countryside of Minas Gerais/Brazil.

We have more than 300 awards in film and theater festivals and over 400 graduated artists who have been conquering incredible spaces inside and outside of Brazil in Cinema & Theater Competitions and Fashion Runways!

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## Our contact informations:

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# *EMITAI*

A FILM BY OUSMANE SEMBENE



OUSMANE SEMBÈNE: THE FILMMAKER WHO GAVE VOICE TO  
AFRICA'S ROOTS AND THE CONTINENT'S STRUGGLES



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Director Jean-Luc Godard

Senegal is a country located on the west coast of Africa. Senegal's history goes back more than a thousand years when the first agricultural communities settled in the region. During the following centuries, Senegal was influenced by various empires and kingdoms, including the Empire of Ghana, the Empire of Mali, and the Songhai Empire.

In the late 15th century, the region was invaded by European colonial powers, including Portugal, France, and England. In 1854, France established a protectorate in Senegal, which later became part of the French colonial territory in West Africa.

Senegal achieved independence in 1960, becoming a democratic republic. Since then, the country has undergone a series of political, social, and economic changes, including the adoption of a new constitution in 2001 and the strengthening of the economy in recent years.

Senegalese cinema has a long history, dating back to the 1960s when filmmaker Ousmane Sembène released his first film, "Borom Sarret" (1963), which is considered the first film produced by a sub-Saharan filmmaker. Sembène is widely recognized as the father of African cinema, and his films address social and political issues relevant to the continent.

Born in 1923 in Ziguinchor, Senegal, Sembène has dedicated his life to producing films that portray the reality of Africa, exploring themes such as the struggle against colonialism, African identity, and social and political issues on the continent.

Unfortunately, Africa has been the target of many damaging stereotypes throughout history, which have been perpetuated by many media outlets and a variety of cultural sources.

These stereotypes have a significant negative impact on how people perceive Africa and Africans, as well as how Africa is portrayed and treated in many areas of a global society.

One of the most common stereotypes is the idea that Africa is a homogenous and uniform continent in which all cultures, languages, and people are the same. This is untrue, as Africa is a diverse continent with more than 50 countries, over 1,500 languages, and countless cultures, traditions, and customs. Unfortunately, this stereotype is still perpetuated by many media outlets and even by some people who travel to Africa and see it as a single country instead of a diverse continent.

Ousmane Sembène was one of the most important advocates for a more accurate and fairer image of Africa. He has fought throughout his career to end the misrepresented view that many people have of the continent, often represented as a place of poverty, hunger, and conflict.

*In his films, Sembène has addressed issues such as colonialism, racism, discrimination, corruption, and oppression. He used his art to give voice to ordinary people and tell stories that were often ignored or minimized by mainstream media.*

*Sembène believed that cinema was a powerful tool to challenge dominant narratives and give voice to marginalized peoples. He worked tirelessly to produce films that portrayed African life authentically and positively, showing the richness of local cultures and traditions, as well as the diversity and complexity of African nations.*

*His career as a filmmaker began in the 1960s, when he had already established himself as an important writer, having published books such as "Les bouts de bois de Dieu" and "Ô pays, mon beau peuple!" In 1963, Sembène released his first short film, "Borom Sarret," which became a milestone in the history of African cinema. With this film, Sembène inaugurated a narrative style that would be followed by many African filmmakers: short but intense stories about the daily life and struggles of Africans.*



Scene from the film "Vivre sa Vie".

Throughout his career, Sembène produced a series of critically and publicly acclaimed films. "Mandabi" (1968), for example, is a social satire about Senegalese bureaucracy that, despite being made more than 50 years ago, remains relevant today. "Xala" (1974), another outstanding film by Sembène, deals with corruption in African elites.

The film Xala, directed and adapted by Ousmane Sembène, is a sharp, humorous critique of Senegal's political and economic elite. Through the story of businessman El Hadji, who becomes impotent on the day of his wedding to his third wife, Sembène paints a picture of the corruption and selfishness that plague the country's ruling class.

Thierno Leye is the protagonist, and his resemblance to the iconic president of Senegal at the time, Léopold Sédar Senghor, is no mere coincidence. The choice of actor is strategic, for Sembène wanted to make a political criticism from a more human and personal point of view, approaching the minutiae of interpersonal relationships, cultural elements, and the social workings of the country.



Director Jeff Barnaby

The author denounces the hypocrisy of the Senegalese elite, who fight for the country's independence, but, once in power, act in a corrupt and selfish way. The scenes with El Hadji running after traditional healers are comic and at the same time desperate, as the protagonist sees his empire crumble as his money runs out and his impotence persists.

El Hadji's wives are another highlight, representing different generations of a changing Senegal. Their children are raised between the country's past and modern mentality, in search of new wealth. El Hadji's past actions have serious consequences for him, who ends up humiliating himself to regain at least his erection, showing what it means to "be a man" in the sexist and, under our contemporary eyes, the absurd culture of Senegalese society.

The final sequence of the film, with the beggars and cripples gathered in the house of the ex-member of the Chamber of Commerce, is a typical scene of a Buñuel film and displays an exciting class conflict, with a suggestive closing that can take on the air of tragedy depending on the interpretation of the spectator.





Scene from the film "The Colony"

Xala is a masterpiece of African cinema, which deals with universal themes in a specific and unique way.

My first experience with Ousmane Sembène's cinema was through the film "La Noire de...", released in 1966. The film tells the story of a Senegalese immigrant who becomes a maid for a bourgeois family in France and revisits with sadness the events that led her back to her former colonizing country. Diouana, a young Senegalese woman is transformed into a maid who performs all sorts of domestic functions for the couple who hired her, without being paid. The film addresses the relationship of exploitation, cultural obliteration, and African identity present in the relationship between the colony and the metropolis. The use of classical narrative, allied with the influence of the French Nouvelle Vague, is one of the film's strong points. The director manages to generate identification with the character by using off-screen speech, which brings us closer to the protagonist's thoughts, doubts, and restlessness.

Besides this, the non-linearity of the narrative with successive flashbacks establishes previous events in the protagonist's life and enriches the plot.

There is no doubt that Ousmane Sembène is a seminal figure in African cinema, whose impact has transcended generations and borders. His work, committed to denouncing social and political injustices, as well as to preserving African culture and identity, continues to inspire and influence filmmakers across the continent. With a unique aesthetic and political approach, Sembène has paved the way for other African voices to be heard in cinema, challenging Western hegemony and contributing to the construction of authentic and plural African cinematography. It is only fair to recognize his importance as a pioneer, artist, and activist, and to celebrate his legacy as a source of inspiration and guidance for new generations of filmmakers in Senegal and Africa.

Sembène was not only the first African filmmaker to gain international recognition but also one of the first to tell African stories through African perspectives. He portrayed the lives and struggles of ordinary people, addressing issues such as inequality, colonialism, and independence. He used film as a tool to educate people and inspire social change.

His contribution to the black community was significant because he highlighted the importance of a positive and accurate representation of African culture and black people in the cinema. He strived to portray the humanity of black characters in his stories, helping to challenge negative stereotypes and promote self-esteem and pride in the African community.

His work continues to inspire African and Afro-descendant filmmakers around the world.

Other notable Senegalese filmmakers include Djibril Diop Mambéty, who directed the film "Touki Bouki" (1973), which is considered a masterpiece of African cinema, and Mansour Sora Wade, who is known for his documentary films that address topics such as Senegalese culture and traditions.

In recent years, Senegalese cinema has continued to evolve and grow, with more emerging filmmakers producing films on a wide variety of subjects. Some of the most recent films include Alain Gomis' "Félicité" (2017), which won the jury prize at the Berlin Film Festival, and Mati Diop's "Atlantique" (2019), which was the first film directed by an African woman to be selected for the main competition at the Cannes Film Festival.

Senegalese cinema is valued not only as an art form but also as an important tool to address social and political issues in the country and Africa as a whole.



Scene from the film "Rhymes for Young Ghouls".



Director Jeff Barnaby

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