

B I M I E F F

M A G A Z I N E

Year 1 8th Issue

YASUJIRO OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



8 T H I S S U E
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THE ENCHANTING TRADITION OF THE MOST JAPANESE FILMMAKER



Dear BIMIFF Magazine readers,

It gives me great pleasure to present the 8th issue of BIMIFF Magazine. Throughout these issues, I've had the pleasure of reviewing films by incredibly talented filmmakers. This month, we highlight the most Japanese of all filmmakers, as well as bring you analysis, superb interviews, and the best of independent cinema. I hope to continue writing for this magazine for many years to come, sharing my love of the 7th art.

In this special issue, we invite you to embark on the magic of the cinema of Ozu, one of the greatest filmmakers of all time, a unique blend of tradition and innovation that enchants cinephiles around the world. Furthermore, dive into insightful reviews, thought-provoking interviews and discover the best of the independent circuit, where rare treasures are found.

As I look to the future, I am filled with hope. A hope that BIMIFF Magazine will continue to inspire and delight its readers, taking them on new cinematographic adventures. I thank all of you, movie lovers, for making the existence of this magazine possible. I hope to continue sharing quality reviews and interviews as we explore the vast universe of cinema together.

The BIMIFF Magazine team hopes this issue will bring you joy, reflection, and discoveries. Have a great time, be thrilled, and dream about the stories that cinema has to offer.

With gratitude and enthusiasm,

Richard Caeiro
Staff writer of BIMIFF Magazine

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AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS AS THE BACKDROP FOR PERSONAL NARRATIVES

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH YANYI XIE, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "THIRTEEN HOURS".

BY VIC KINGS AND RICHARD CAEIRO



HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS AS THE BACKDROP FOR
PERSONAL NARRATIVES

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS AS THE BACKDROP FOR PERSONAL NARRATIVES



"Thirteen Hours" film scene

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS AS THE BACKDROP FOR PERSONAL NARRATIVES

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH YANYI XIE, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "THIRTEEN HOURS".
by Vic Kings and Richard Caeiro

Yanyi Xie (b.1997, Chengdu, China) is a documentary filmmaker based in Jersey City, NJ. Yanyi's works focus on topics of gender and cultural identities, some inspired by personal experience. Her works have been selected for festivals, and screened in iconic theaters Gene Siskel Film Center, Music Box Theater, and Block Museum in Chicago, IL. Yanyi also works as a freelance videographer and editor. She has worked on feature documentaries projects with Diane Quon (Minding The Gap), and Marco Williams (Two Towns of Jasper, Tulsa Burning: The 1921 Race Massacre), among others, Yanyi holds a MFA degree in Documentary Media from Northwestern University and a BS degree in Media and Cinema Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The period of COVID-19 Pandemic had an immeasurable impact individually and collectively around the world, especially for people living thousands of miles away from their core families. How did you come up with the idea to make a personal documentary about your experience as a foreign student in the US and the distance from your parents in China?

Because I just moved to a new city during the pandemic, it's hard for me to build connections with the city and surrounding communities when everything's in lockdown. I spent most of the time indoors and talking to my family on the phone. It felt natural that it would be the subject closest to my heart. And it did have a big impact on me because of the travel regulations.

Being an immigrant student and a woman in a country dominated by a patriarchal and nationalistic culture is extremely challenging, both socially and academically. What are your main drivers for focusing your documentary works on themes of gender and cultural identity?

Gender and cultural identity have been the focus in my life since I entered college. I studied them in my undergrad when I pursued a degree in Cinema and Media Studies. Naturally, they became recurring themes in my documentary work. Exploring gender identity has been important in my journey of self-discovery. As an international student in the United States, nurturing my cultural identity has served as a vital connection to my home country, allowing me to maintain a deep bond despite being far from it.

You seek to work in your career as a filmmaker emphasizing the power of personal and individual experiences within a broader social and cultural context. How would you describe the power of this approach that is both intimate and wide-ranging?

I believe that everyone's life is shaped by the cultural and political context in which they exist. Historical and societal factors serve as the backdrop for their personal narratives. When we share individuals' stories, they also reflect on the associated political issues from a broader perspective. The personal accounts evoke emotions and empathy, allowing the audience to grasp the larger issues through an intimate lens.

"Thirteen Hours" is a documentary that relies on an exceptional approach. What were your main challenges in creating the narrative and editing the footage of your parents' daily life in Chengdu with your daily life in the US?

At first, I had my parents' film daily footage each week and share it with me. We spent a couple of months discussing the footage we had each captured, including the subjects and style. Eventually, we reached an approach that is comfortable for both sides. However, during the editing process, I found myself confronted with a multitude of footage of different styles. It was a challenge to create a cohesive style and narrative from these diverse elements. Drawing inspiration from various films and artworks, I experimented and failed a lot. In the end I made the decision to use only a small portion of the footage, relying primarily on my emotional connection to the image during the editing process. Gradually, the film began to take shape and come together.



The director Yanyi Xie

How did the filming and video calls with your parents help you overcome the geographical distance between you and your family, and feel closer to home during the pandemic?

The making of the film has made me and my family closer. I can see much more footage of their lives, and it brings me closer to their life. We also talk more about the film outside of our regular catch-up. And it's great to have them in the creative process and collaborate. It felt like we were making the film together.

How did making videos of yourself in your apartment in the US help you to bring back the connection with your home in China to your current life?

I realize that despite being in different geographical locations and time zones, our daily routines at home remain quite similar. We engage in activities such as cooking, eating, sleeping, and talking to loved ones, which create a sense of shared experiences. Seeing these scenes getting edited together in the film has made this feeling of unity and stronger.



"Thirteen Hours" film scene

In addition to the difficulty of coping with the health issues that Covid-19 has brought, on a social level, xenophobia and, more specifically, Sinophobia in the US, as well as the emerging nationalism in China, have been troubling and challenging factors for immigrants and descendants of Asian people in America. How have these relevant factors been experienced in your life during this period of the worldwide pandemic?

I remember watching and reading all the terrible news in the States and in China during the quarantine, like the hate crimes targeting East Asians in the US. The inequality and hate in both societies seem to be aggravated by the global pandemic. Personally, the new "cold war" between China and the US has had a direct impact on me, starting with the airline regulations during the pandemic. And I noticed the shift of perspectives on these issues from people around me these couple of years. I feel we're living in an increasingly divergent world.

Besides these highly impactful individual social factors, you mention experiencing a disconnection from both your homeland and the US. Do you still experience this distance even after the social easing of the post-pandemic?

I have been exposed to conflicting and provocative news and voices from mainstream media outlets in both the United States and Mainland China. The attitudes projected by the media have played a significant role in shaping public opinion. It often feels as though I am caught between two worlds, with animosity prevailing on both sides. This gives me a sense of disconnection to both worlds and it's still ongoing.

Cinema is a collective media that references diverse artistic expressions and different artists. In "Thirteen Hours", the footage of you, your parents, and the social and cultural environments you are in helped to unite these two different worlds in your documentary. What were your main inspirations/references in the creation and production of your film?

I'm inspired by Chantal Akerman's News From Home and No Home Movie. I was grasped by the power of long takes of shots of daily life in her films.



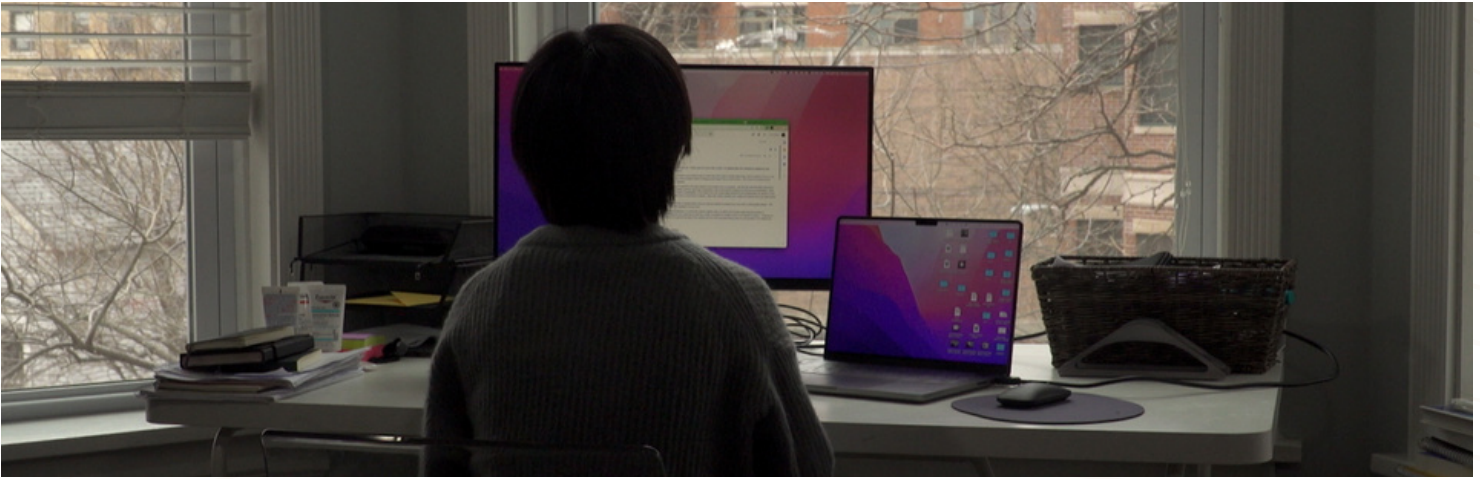
The director Yanyi Xie

What are the most significant emotions and reflections you hope the audience will experience when watching "Thirteen Hours"?

My hope is for the audience to resonate with the theme of family and the bond between a daughter and her mother. I aspire for the film to evoke universal feelings. By doing so, I aim to encourage the audience to reflect on the political disparities that exist between these two cultures in the current world. Through this emotional connection, I believe the film can evoke reflection on the complex sociopolitical landscape we navigate.

How do you see the role of documentary film in exploring personal and family issues that resonate in a broader context of social and cultural divergence, especially in a world that is increasingly polarized and inflamed with reactionary speeches?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have seen more documentaries of personal and family stories. Amid the pandemic, it's difficult to physically go out and film. In these moments when I need to take a break from the chaos of the world, I naturally turn inward and look at my own life and family. It felt as though I was capturing personal moments on a small scale, while I am also making political choices through the details and "small things" I chose to portray with the camera and put into the film. And I think these documentaries can bring people together through the shared experience in daily life, and then discover and reflect the politics within that.



"Thirteen Hours" film scene

How has the reception of your short film been inside and outside the Chinese and US film festival circuits?

Thirteen Hours mainly have been shown to people of my community, Chinese international students, and my family and my friends for now. They feel resonated because it's also their story. But it hasn't reached to bigger audience yet.

How do your academic experience and your experience as an immigrant impact your documentary filmmaking?

Because I have been feeling I'm an outsider in society for a long time, I have grown used to observing and absorbing the world from this perspective. This has shaped my way of documentary-making. And I have developed a keen eye for identifying and discovering universal elements that can transcend cultural boundaries. Another realization of mine is the contrast in political opinions between individuals from different countries. This disparity made me reflect upon these differences and develop my own views and subjectivities on a personal and creative level.



"Thirteen Hours" film scene

What advice would you like to give to students who wish to immigrate and reach new academic horizons in foreign lands? Especially in countries where the film industry is both rich and competitive, as is the case of the USA.

Be optimistic but also prepared. I have learned so much from the rich environment here, but there are sides that don't welcome a foreigner like me. It takes more time and effort to find your voice and your community in such circumstances. And every aspect of the journey will shape what artist you aspire to become.

Do you have any new film projects being produced or developed at the moment? If you do, can you talk about these new works that are on the way?

Not at this moment. I have been working freelance in the industry since I graduated last year. But I hope to start new projects of my own soon.



The director Yanyi Xie

TOKYO STORY

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



SLEEPY NIGHT ATHENS BRIGHT

DIRECTED BY CHRISTOS ARFANIS AND MARIA AGRAPIDOU



SYNOPSIS

A woman, a man, a murder in Bright Athens, or just a hallucination of a drunk Sleepy Night?

CAST: MARIA AGRAPIDOU

DIRECTORS, WRITERS: CHRISTOS ARFANIS, MARIA AGRAPIDOU

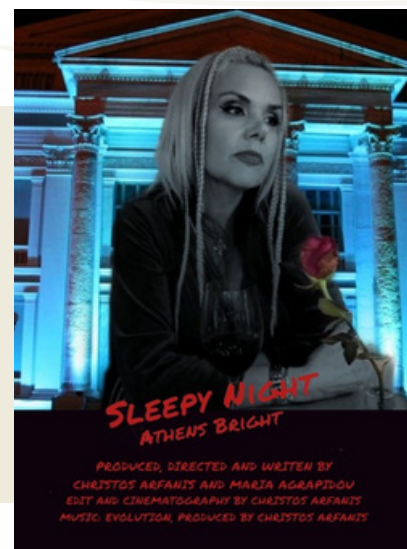
PRODUCERS: CHRISTOS ARFANIS, MARIA AGRAPIDOU

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTOS ARFANIS

EDITOR: CHRISTOS ARFANIS

MUSIC BY: EVOLUTION

MUSIC PRODUCED BY: CHRISTOS ARFANIS



CHRISTOS ARFANIS, MARIA AGRAPIDOU BIOGRAPHY:

Christos Arfanis was born on 26 February in Athens, Greece. He is a Greek filmmaker (film producer, screenwriter, film director), entertainment author/journalist, and music producer. He has extensive experience in writing articles about audiovisual media (movies and series) and interviewing various talents (actors, directors, etc.).

Maria Agrapidou was born in Athens. She speaks 6 languages. She graduated with honors as a Dental Surgeon from a University based in Iasi, Romania, with the title Doctor Medic Stomatology. Furthermore, she worked as a dentist at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games and Athens 2004 Paralympic Games. Agrapidou is the author of the children's book "The masked students".

A VISUAL REFLECTION ON CULTURE AND IMPERMANENCE

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW



AMERICANS IN JAPAN A FILM BY JOHNNY VONNEUMANN

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO



"Americans in Japan" film scene

A VISUAL REFLECTION ON CULTURE AND IMPERMANENCE

"Americans in Japan," the latest documentary from renowned director Johnny Vonneumann, is a captivating and visually stunning cinematic experience that overlays images of the United States with footage of Japan, highlighting the comparisons and contrasts between these two distinct countries. With a simple premise, we follow the journey of six Americans who travel to Japan, but the film transcends the mere travel narrative, offering a deeper perspective on the cultural and historical relationships between these two nations.

What makes "Americans in Japan" such a remarkable work is the skillful way in which Vonneumann uses overlapping images to convey deeper meanings. The superimposition of pictures of the two nations can be interpreted in many ways, from a mere exploration of cultural differences to a confrontation between historical legacies and the aftermath of World War II. Each viewer can find their interpretation, adding layers of meaning to the film.

It is interesting to note that both the United States and Japan are known for exporting entertainment to the world. This similarity is explored through the contrasting imagery, suggesting a deep connection between the two countries beyond apparent cultural distinctions. This connection can be interpreted as a message of unity and cultural exchange, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, the overlapping images can also be seen as a symbol of the impermanence of culture. The movie reminds us that cultures are always evolving and changing over time. As mentioned in the synopsis, Japan was forced to rebuild itself after World War II, and this reconstruction influenced its culture in significant ways. Similarly, the United States has also experienced cultural changes over the years. Therefore, the juxtaposed images can be interpreted as a visual representation of this cultural impermanence, a reflection of how cultures are in continuous flux and evolution.

Johnny Vonneumann, with his impressive background in the film industry, once again demonstrates his mastery in creating engaging documentaries. His unique style, which he refers to as "documentary opera," combines carefully selected images with an evocative soundtrack, creating a sensorial rich experience for the audience. His cost-effective approach, which uses footage shot on personal trips and searches for inspiration before creating a cohesive narrative, demonstrates a deep understanding of all aspects of filmmaking.

"Americans in Japan" is a testimony to the power of cinema as an art and cultural communication form. Johnny Vonneumann presents us with a work that invites reflection on the relationship between the United States and Japan, on the differences and similarities between the cultures, and the changing nature of cultural identity.



The director Johnny Vonneumann

AMERICANS IN JAPAN A FILM BY JOHNNY VONNEUMANN

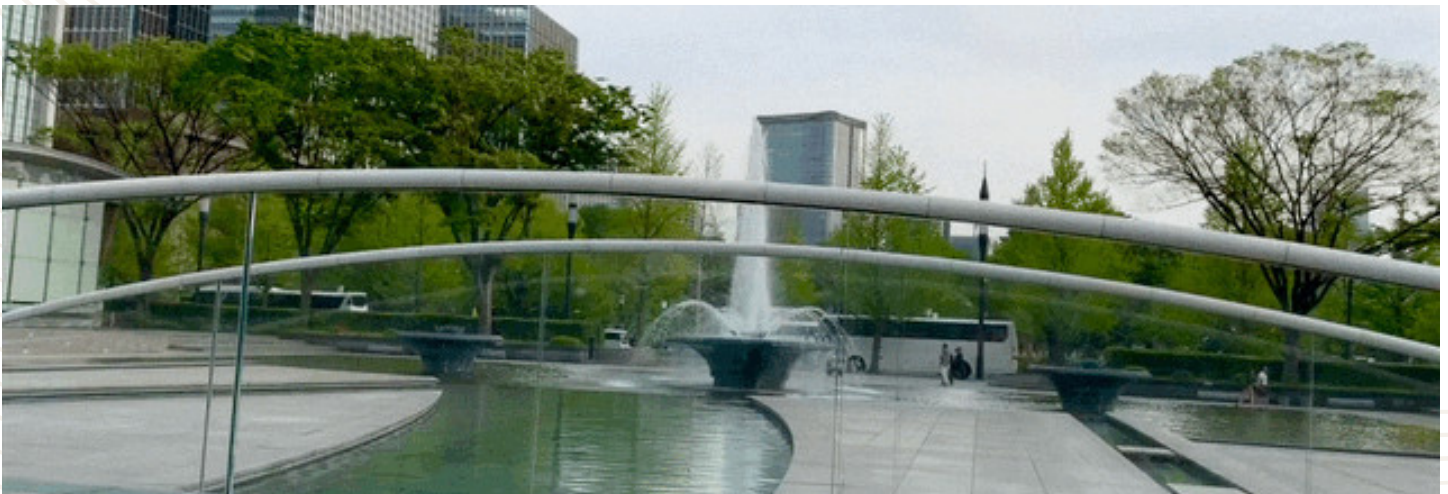
Through his visually stunning approach and sensitive narrative, Vonneumann encourages us to contemplate the complexities and nuances of these relations, sparking a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and the potential for connection between seemingly distinct nations.

The director's biography adds another layer of value to "Americans in Japan." Winning over 75 awards to his credit, Vonneumann is an experienced and talented filmmaker whose previous work demonstrates his ability to explore complex themes in creative and innovative ways. His approach of waiting and reflecting before bringing his footage to life ensures that every moment captured on his trips is carefully selected, resulting in a cohesive and engaging narrative.

It is worth mentioning the zero budget with which Vonneumann operates. By using his travels as the basis for his films, he not only reduces production costs but also infuses his work with an authentic sense of discovery and passion. His dedication to providing imagination and hard work rather than financial resources illustrates his commitment to film art and the ability to create something extraordinary with the means available.

"Americans in Japan" is a significant contribution to the documentary genre, offering a unique insight into the United States-Japan interaction and the cultural dynamics between the two countries. Through its layering images, the film invites us to explore the impermanence of culture and the importance of understanding and embracing differences. Johnny Vonneumann, with his technical skill and artistic vision, has established himself as an acclaimed director, and his latest work further solidifies his place as an experienced and insightful storyteller.

"Americans in Japan" is a film that stands out for both its striking aesthetics and its thematic depth. It is a cinematic experience that not only entertains but also provokes deep reflection on the intricacies of both culture and international relations. Johnny Vonneumann once again proves himself to be a visionary filmmaker, offering audiences a work of art that transcends borders and defies expectations. It is a cinematic journey not to be missed by all those who appreciate the power of cinema as a form of cultural exploration and human connection.



"Americans in Japan" film scene

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EXPLORING THE TRANSCIENCE OF LIFE

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CALEB MADISON ALEXANDER SHORT,
DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "FELL AWAKE".
BY LUCAS MARQUES AND RICHARD CAEIRO



EXPLORING THE TRANSCIENCE OF LIFE



"Fell Awake" film scene

EXPLORING THE TRANSCIENCE OF LIFE

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CALEB MADISON ALEXANDER SHORT, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "FELL AWAKE".
by Lucas Marques and Richard Caeiro

Caleb Madison Alexander Short is a graduate of film production and philosophy from Bard College, with time spent abroad at Oxford University as a student of screenwriting and philosophy of human nature. He is a filmmaker & actor from Austin, Texas, currently based in New York City.

How did you come up with the idea of exploring the transience of life in "Fell Awake"?

"Fell Awake" began with a dream, an actual dream in the night. Studying abroad in the philosophy of human nature and screenwriting at the University of Oxford in the fall of 2018, I was writing a feature film about the transient nature of life and our place in it — whilst riding the tube I had a thought about New York, and wrote it down in my notes — it was more or less verbatim to the monologue of the Mother in the Kitchen in "Fell Awake".

It wasn't until I returned to Bard College in Upstate New York, where I lived in the town of Tivoli — that the idea for "Fell Awake" truly struck. The thing is — it wasn't an idea — it was a dream, actually.

I experienced a dream in which there was a party thrown at my home, in which I fell and hit my head, and in which, in the very same dream, I went to sleep, and I awoke the next day to the very same house that I was living in, the one in which the dream took place.

I was under the impression, in this dream state, after having fallen asleep and woken up, that, as every other night in my life had seemingly gone, I was back in "reality." And yet, everything in my life had changed. My parents had moved into my college home, and I walked around the college town in which I lived looking for answers. It wasn't until I found a friend of mine by the train tracks who turned to me and spoke the very same truth that Elias here's from his friend at the end of "Fell Awake" that I realized I had died, in said dream, and that I was now in Limbo.

This became my reality. Every hour felt like a living hour. At some point, I did wake up within this second day of my dream back to my normal life. I was stirred by the vivid memory and imagery of this dream. I walked to the post office to send something, still out of sorts, and realized all at once that this very dream was a film waiting to happen, a film that needed to be made, a film that could be my thesis at Bard — I took a pen, and 7 outgoing mail information cards, and wrote down the entire plot of my dream, and what would become my film.

I spent the next 2-3 months arranging post-it notes on a wall with the building blocks of the story, when and how each narrative beat would happen. In my writing process — I sought to utilize archetypes of each character — the American mother, the American father, the friend, and the love interest, to heighten the reality, creating a weird new world.

What was the biggest challenge you faced directing and acting in "Fell Awake" at the same time?

The biggest challenge was first in finding the courage, or maybe the gall, to put myself in that position. I went through an intensively thorough casting process with every character in the film. For Elias, I sought a quiet performance that the audience could identify with as the singular voyeur walking through this world.

Ultimately, after much deliberation, I cast myself as Elias. It was a decision that made the film that much more personal, as is often the case with many filmmakers' first works.

The challenge came also in the intensive requirements asked of me as both director and actor. The only solution for this was pre-production. I hand drew 265 frames of a storyboard so that my DP had an immediate visual reference at all times of what I was looking for. I rehearsed with the actors the way many would for theater — we agreed on beats and cadences, such that I knew what they were bringing to set. Of course, they made amazing discoveries once we were on set too. But in a surreal, and somewhat theatrical film such as this one — I was also happy with this choice. Finally, the challenge of managing the stress of running a set whilst acting was very involved, but I had a very trusted crew and AD who knew what they were doing, and any stress from shooting — I tried to channel into the energy of the character of Elias.



"Fell Awake" film scene

How did you develop the story and characters in the film?

Primarily, I was simply translating the experience of my dream. In my effort to develop the characters, I sought to heighten the theatricality of their intentions through the vehicle of archetypes i.e. Joseph Campbell — a depiction of the American mother, the American father, the love interest of a man in his youth who draws him in so deeply, the comfort and challenge of a trusted friend, the college world, and more. I also trusted my actors to not float on these themes but fully embrace them, again, with a kind of theatrical intentionality. There's an intensity, a gleam, a sharpness in all of their eyes that I am so proud of, as they embodied not only people but ideas. They were piercing in their roles.

What is the message you hope the audience will carry with them after watching "Fell Awake"?

I want "Fell Awake" to serve as a reminder to the audience that life is uncanny.

In that uncanny valley are a total mystery and total beauty. I think we often become too accustomed to this life, we stop questioning the absolute absurdity of our experience. This is not to say that life is absurd, or without meaning. Rather, life overflows with meaning, and sometimes we become far too accustomed to considering what we know to be the end of the story, or further, that what we know just is "normal." It never is.

In getting close to death — in the experience of my dream from which "Fell Awake" sprung — in having to consider the course of my life within this dream — I was brought deep into the uncanny valley of considering my own experience, and I hope in viewing Fell Awake, and in contemplating mortality, relationships, and memory, the audience will feel encouraged to do the same.



"Fell Awake" film scene

How has your background in film production and philosophy influenced your work as a filmmaker?

I completed a separate thesis in philosophy while in college, considering the works of Aristotle, Emerson, Heidegger, Lao Tzu, and the Existentialists – titled "Orientation of the Soul". I constructed a contemplative framework for how the human being relates to the external world, forms an identity, and most importantly – finds meaning – which I assert is the motivating principle of the human condition, surpassing the pursuit of happiness and other desires.

There was no intentional infusing of philosophy in *Fell Awake*, but my work in philosophy deeply influences how I see the world, it makes the bed of my uncanny valley... so to speak.

Do you believe that the message of "*Fell Awake*" can help people face their own fears and insecurities about the changes inherent in life?

I would deeply hope so! Realistically, the path to that conclusion through viewing *Fell Awake* is not a consideration to go with the flow, but more specifically, a sheer acceptance of the inevitability of change and mortality. In Martin Heidegger's work "Being and Time", he considers that the human being is "thrown" into existence, falling through a life of unknown variables, falling toward the only inevitability that is its own death. In the total and utter acceptance of human beings' inevitable death, to Heidegger, then the human being can truly live. Elias faces the stark reality of his own death, but he understands and accepts it, hopefully, our audience can be encouraged to do the same.



"Fell Awake" film scene



The director Caleb Madison Alexander Short

How was the creative process to develop the subjective perspective of the character Elias in "*Fell Awake*", especially considering the scenes where the characters interact with him, breaking the fourth wall and creating a sense of complicity between the viewer and Elias?

This is a wonderful question. My answer would simply be that I wanted in every way to heighten the intimacy between the viewer and the material, to dissolve the separation between the audience and the screen; to utilize camera techniques and narrative tools to put the audience into the shoes of Elias.

I was deeply inspired by one of my favorite living filmmakers Darren Aronofsky, who in his film "Mother!" spoke to the same intention in his work, and said: "There were only 3 shots in the film, close up, over the shoulder, and point of view". This method, alongside Darren's intense rehearsal process, inspired many of the choices I made in "*Fell Awake*".

How did your own personal experience influence the approach to the transience of life in "*Fell Awake*"?

I did not seek to translate my personal experience in any intentional way. The dream I had, of course, took from the fabric of my personal life, and I took from that dream in creating the film. The film is the life of a side of my subconscious, as is the nature of a dream.



The director Caleb Madison Alexander Short

What are the next projects you are working on for the future?

I am wrapping post-production on a surreal comedy short film titled "Shadow of a Pale Moon" about a man discovering his younger self via an overlap in the time-space continuum and, in a comedy of errors, taking him to find his recently separated girlfriend to get back with her.

I am in development on a hyper-visual surreal short film titled "Kew Gardens" about a motorcycle biker and AA attendant going through a, quite literal, metamorphosis.

I am also developing a 5-minute short film called "The Kiss", about a young man at a bus stop in the middle of nowhere... stuck between a kiss and a hard place.

What are your cinematic influences and how are they reflected in your film "Fell Awake"?

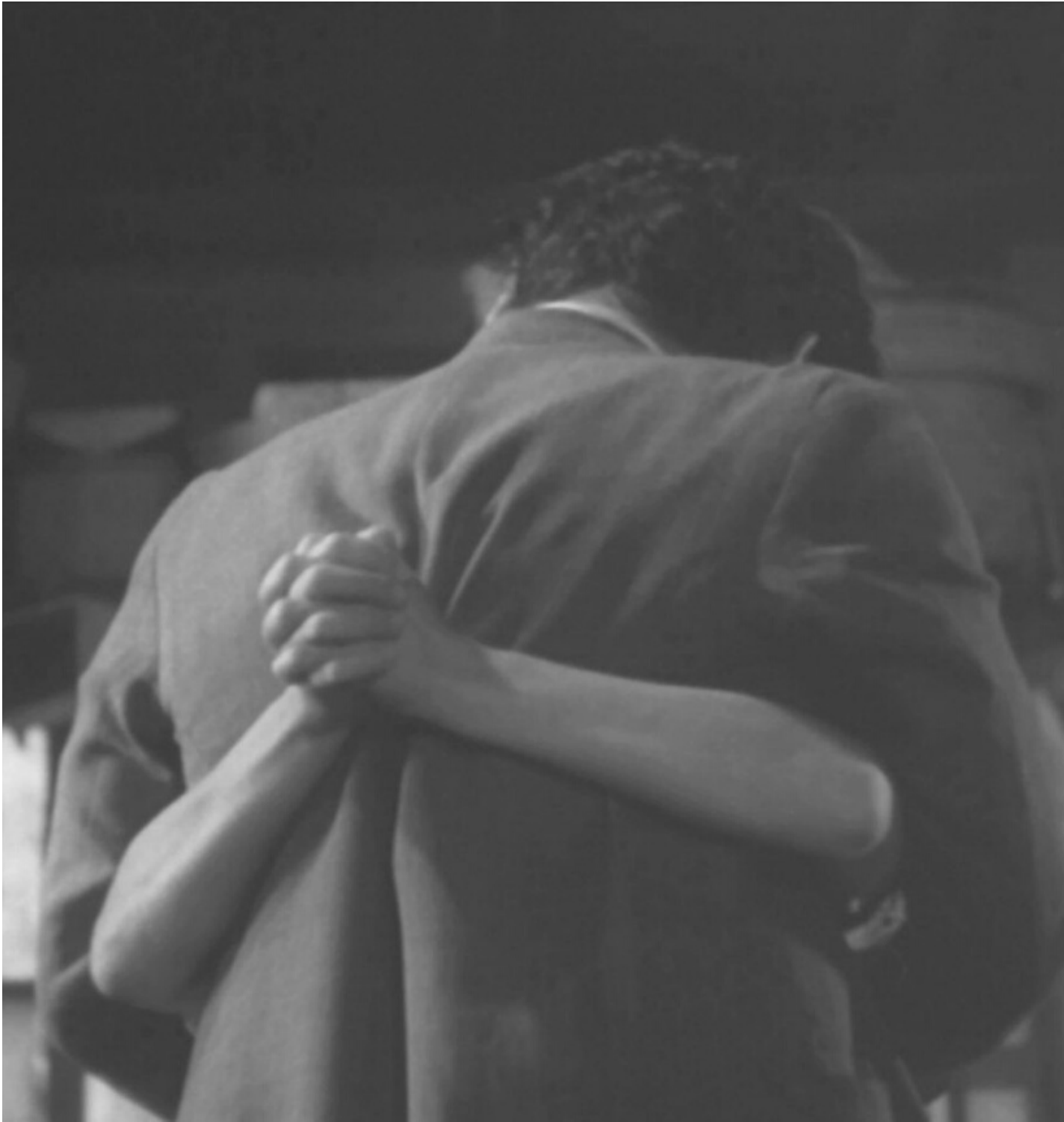
Per montage in editing, voice-over, music, and choice to allow the influence of philosophy in cinema, I was inspired deeply by Terrence Malick. Per the use of the camera, leaning into dramatic intensity, creating a surreal world via heightened characters and archetypes, and performances, I was inspired deeply by Darren Aronofsky. I was also inspired by the choices in lighting by the visionary Nicholas Winding Refn. I am also inspired in unconscious ways that I am not directly aware of referencing, but swirl in my subconscious, from Jean Luc Godard, Stanley Kubrick, and Charlie Kaufmann.



"Fell Awake" film scene

A HEN IN THE WIND

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



H A N D W R I T T E N

D I R E C T E D B Y S I N A H A D A D I



SYNOPSIS

A Writer (Mehdi Ranjbar) is writing a story about the relationship between a Boy (Mehdi Hosseini) and a Girl (Farzaneh Faraji).

CAST: FARZANE FARAJI, MEHDI RANJBAR, MEHDI HOSSEINI
DIRECTOR, WRITER, AND PRODUCER: SINA HADADI
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: REZA PORHASHMI
ASSISTANT CAMERA: SABER BAHADORIFARD
SOUND ENGINEER: AMIR HAJIAN
EDITOR: ARMIN HEMMATI
STAGE SECRETARY: ALI ROSTAMI
STAGE MANAGER: ENSIEH EBRAHIMI
1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: MAEDE EMDADI

Writer & director : Sina Hadadi



Mehdi Ranjbar

Farzaneh Faraji

Mehdi Hosseini

Handwritten

Assistant cameraman: Saber Bahadorifard Cinematographer: Reza Porhashmi
 Sound engineer: Amir Hajian Editor: Armin Hemmati Assistant director: Maede Emdadi
 Consultant and stage secretary: Ali Rostami Stage manager: Ensieh Ebrahimi



SINA HADADI BIOGRAPHY:

Sina Hadadi is an Iranian filmmaker and cinema student who graduated from Azad Film Institute, This film was Sina's first film as independent work. Handwritten was shot in just one night. And the group's equipment was very limited due to the low budget. The experience of making Handwritten made the director think only about his ideas and stories and how to turn them into cinema art.

THE CASUALTY OF ENCOUNTER

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR

REVIEW



I WAS BORN FOR YOU BEFORE THERE WAS A WORLD

A FILM BY LUCAS MARQUES

REVIEW BY MARCELO CÉSAR



"I Was Born For You Before There Was a World" film scene

THE CASUALTY OF ENCOUNTER

When we go out for a walk, whether on a tourist trip or even in our city, we never predict what is going to happen. The act of stepping into the unknown is the most beautiful act of the human journey on Earth. Thus, humankind has discovered lands, cures, recipes, and their peers.

"I Was Born For You Before There Was a World": a medium-length film directed by Lucas Marques, watched by me in 2019 touches me deeply for dealing sensitively with this casual encounter.

The film begins with the "calls" of the seagulls so present in the city of Porto in Portugal. A B&W photograph fills our eyes with a panoramic view of the beautiful city, with the Douro River, which rises in Spain and flows down to Porto and the city of Vila Nova de Gaia. It is a beautiful river and with these initial frames, the film already captures you through these first scenes. The sound of the seagulls transports you to that city, especially for those who have already had the pleasure of visiting it.

This is how the first 58 seconds of the film go, the city of Porto is presented through splendid panoramic shots. The beauty of what is shown on the screen is framed by the sound of an adagio, we are presented with what seems to be a statement from two young women, who describe themselves, in a unique enchantment, as if nothing else existed in the world but the meeting of these two individuals.

A scene of seduction and sexual entanglement invades the screen and we are introduced to these two characters before the title appears on the screen: "I Was Born For You Before There Was a World". 1 minute and 30 seconds of pure poetry. A true ode to art cinema, here you dazzle with all the richness, care, and delicacy of this filmmaker who orchestrates sound, image, and poetry. The film is just beginning.

Throughout the story, the two characters, brilliantly played by actresses Júlia Moraes (Geovana) and Vitória Raciane (Nico), dialogue in complicity with those who have known each other for a long time. The chemistry between the actresses is unquestionable. In the dialogue, the impossibility of the continuity of the love moment, Fernando Pessoa's poetry, which gives the film its title, fills these spaces. The two meet by chance on the streets of Porto and one of them is leaving to study at an Art School in Paris.



The director Lucas Marques

I WAS BORN FOR YOU BEFORE THERE WAS A WORLD A FILM BY LUCAS MARQUES

The way of telling the meeting between these two characters is permeated by statements and dialogues as if we were in a fiction story and at the same time a documentary. A break from formalism in cinematographic language. The director reminds us of the French Nouvelle Vague films, with sudden cuts, the camera wanders through the environment, without any pretension of establishing an angle or a position. The subject matter covers personal issues and the story is a patchwork in the lives of these characters.

At 10 minutes into the film, amidst quotes from Sartre, underground culture, and Philippe Garrel, the two learn each other's names: Nico and Geovana. But as Geovana herself, libertarian and independent, mentions: What do the names matter, right?

Nico refuses to leave that room, the screen explodes with the return of the adagio, the streets of Porto appear again, and a succession of works by Caravaggio, Botticelli, Victor Meirelles, and Nouvelle Vague appear trying to show us that maybe only art could take care of that moment. In the representation of the senses, the director "plays" with the film itself: a clapperboard on the scene - action.

La grande finale, the recognition of the meeting of two souls, which throughout the film you don't even remember if they are two women or two men, or a man and a woman. It is a story of a chance meeting of two beings who love and fall in love in a unique moment of belonging. A universal tale. The farewell, the remote possibility of the continuity of this moment, and in a magnificent way the director breaks the fourth wall and Geovana tells us the final sentence: She is not going to enter.

Where will she not enter, my friend? They have already entered and opened the doors of our hearts: "I Was Born for You Before There Was a World".



"I Was Born For You Before There Was a World" film scene

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CINEMA AS A TOOL TO DENOUNCE AND FIGHT AGAINST ORGAN TRAFFIC

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH YOLANDA BELVIS, DIRECTOR OF THE
FILM "LATIR AMARGO".

BY VIC KINGS AND LUCAS MARQUES



CINEMA AS A TOOL TO DENOUNCE AND FIGHT AGAINST ORGAN TRAFFIC



"Latir Amargo" film scene

CINEMA AS A TOOL TO DENOUNCE AND FIGHT AGAINST ORGAN TRAFFIC

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH YOLANDA BELVIS, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "LATIR AMARGO".

by Vic Kings and Lucas Marques

Yolanda Belvis is an actress with over 10 years of experience in film and television. She has won the "Best Actress Award" 7 times at various film festivals and has received over 10 "Best Actress" nominations. In 2022, she debuted as a writer and director with the short film "Latir Amargo", in which she received 8 awards for "Best Director", from a total of over 40 awards, 40 nominations, and 100 official selections at film festivals around the world. She is currently starring in a few feature films.

How did you come up with the idea to address the topic of organ trafficking in "Latir Amargo"? How did you drive the narrative to make it intense and emotional?

The idea arose while I was writing the story. It's a story mainly about how easy it can be to kidnap someone and the suffering that families go through. However, because I only wanted to be inspired by true stories within a story, I kept changing the initial story as I wrote it, giving more strength and intensity to it. We drove the narrative intensely and emotionally by applying fears, those that anyone who sees themselves in that situation can feel.

In the case of the mother, it was the horror, suspense, and above all, telling real stories as inspiration such as the sale of organs, kidnappings, and other real plots that we always have heard about on the news. And in some way to be able to denounce some of the problems that we live in world society and we are not aware of it until it is our turn.



"Latir Amargo" film scene

What were the main challenges you faced in directing and playing the main character in the film?

Having to direct and act at the same time was not easy. Because you had to be aware of all the details, lights, art, timing, sound, and cinematography, thanks to the help of Aniez Atlas whom I had as my second in command, offering his help at all times as assistant director, especially in the moments when I had to act.

The good thing about this challenge is that I could make and remake it to my taste. I am demanding, and from the shooting to the post-production, which was very long, we made many changes until we got what I more or less had in mind from the beginning. It was hard, but thanks to the great team behind and in front of the cameras, I could fulfill my dream of being a director and, at the same time, star in this story, because I wanted to do something more intense as an actress. But I admit that doing both things was not easy at all.

How did you choose the cast for "Latir Amargo" and what did you look for in the actors' performances?

As soon as I wrote the story, I imagined the characters. Two of them were very clear to me, and they were: Aniez Atlas and David Crivillé. Besides being an actor, David is my son, and I knew since we have worked a lot together that he would give his all in this role.

The rest of the cast was decided with rehearsals, which made it even clearer to me that I loved them as actors because, with guidelines and rehearsals, we were able to reach that dramatic point, where it was not necessary to simulate their tears. After all, they emerged for real. And what I was looking for was all feeling, so I'm proud of each one of them.

And well, with the children, I told them stories so that they understood the reality of how cruel life can be. While with adults, simply in the rehearsals they already did what I wanted the first time, simply saying the feeling they wanted them to show. It has been a pleasure working with all of them, my great cast of actors: David Crivillé, Aniez Atlas, Xavi Garrido, Félix Pérez, and Jacqueline Crivillé.



"Latir Amargo" behind the scenes photo

What is your perspective on the current situation of organ trafficking around the world? What do you believe authorities and society can do to combat these crimes?

It's a delicate topic. Well, unfortunately, it is not a topic that we see continuously in the news, although we are all aware that this crime exists. When a person is about to die and already decides whether to donate their organs or not in case of death, what happens is that criminals can take their lives, and possibly we will never know. In Mexico, for example, through friends, I know that there are places where it is scary even to go out.

Money is a big problem in our society; we don't know what we are capable of to live or to be able to extend the life of our loved ones. I have my doubts if during the pandemic, not seeing our dead, our relatives when you were going to bury them, even when they were alive, they said goodbye to them, but they did not let you be there... if you had already entered the room because I could not accompany my relative until the moment his soul left his body? I have many doubts about what they did with many people, and if it was not for something more macabre... but the truth will never be known.

What is certain is that money moves mountains. And that any person who had the option of extending the life of a person they love, would do it... How far would they be willing to go? Hence the phrase I decided to leave on the poster of the short film is: "When you can lose what you love most"... Well, power can make us very dangerous.

For the question "What can the authorities and society do", the answer is: to denounce publicly, and influence more in the news of these events, because unfortunately little is said, practically nothing since many of them are only suspected but there is no evidence obvious... but we would be more alert to the real dangers that surround us, and especially defenseless children, who trust anyone they do not know. Being able to deceive them until they get hold of them, be it for any issue, and be it organs, pimps, or prostitution... I see little children go out into the streets alone and you see how there are kidnappings in all parts of the world, and that people never heard from them again... People of all ages disappear. It's deeply sad for their families, and we should insist that we see more in the news so that they are more careful.



"Latir Amargo" behind the scenes photo

In 2013, UN rapporteur Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo produced a study pointing out that the biggest victims of organ trafficking are often poor, unemployed, and with a low level of education. On the other hand, the increase in trafficking occurs precisely because of the world's scarcity of organs for transplantation. It is possible to see in this data a direct correlation between predatory capitalism and policies of alienation and disincentive to work and education for the economically disadvantaged population in several parts of the world. How do you see the role of the arts, especially cinema, in denouncing crimes supported by elitist governmental administrations?

Well, I agree with Prof. Joy N. Ezeilo. My personal opinion and studies and stories lead me to the same place. The long list of hospitals to be able to transplant organs is long; I have friends waiting for kidneys who have died without being able to have that opportunity. Friends who did not have a tremendous economic status... and I often wonder what would be of them if they had. If they had had the opportunity to pay those dates in advance... that vital time. If someone important has that needs and enough money to buy whoever.... I'm sure they would have gotten that organ in time, legal or not... but it would have been in time. Although, as I repeat, it is my opinion and I cannot prove it.

Well, unfortunately, all this is not talked about in society, nor on TV, they only talk about what they want us to know. And distract our minds with other problems. Going back to the end of your question, it is, as my short film has reached many parts of the world, and many festivals, but as soon as I sent it to human rights festivals, perhaps they treat it as fiction or they didn't like it... also festivals with themes of psychological problems, since in one way or another it affects us at the moment we want to save a life. Still, in no festival of this type, it has been selected. So I realize what society believes, that everything is fiction as long as it is not up to one to suffer it in their flesh.

Thus what I have tried in this short film in some way is to denounce events that occur in society but that we are not aware of, and I insist they are not even heard in the news... because some control them from the highest.

How was the research process for the film? Did you have contact with people who went through this situation?

It was an idea that came to me while I was writing the story because I had heard about it in some documentaries, and known as those who could never have their organs transplanted. What happens in my film are different stories that I wanted to put together in my film, from never trusting whom you think you know, to the suffering experienced by families who suffer from a disease and who depend on the life of another and vice versa. , the one who does not have any problems in his life, but he has to live through hell. Families will never know where the bodies of their loved ones will be. Children and adults who disappear all over the world... but no one ever heard from them again. News of missing persons... but there is never talk of organs.

As I have commented in previous answers, the truth is hidden behind money and global corruption. Although it is my personal opinion that I get from all the information that I have since I have consciousness, and that unfortunately, I cannot prove.



The director Yolanda Belvis

The film shows the emotional and psychological consequences of organ trafficking in a family. How did you approach this theme sensitively and realistically?

Mainly the film was going to deal with kidnappings, missing persons, who appear or not... but from my knowledge regarding people who wait for organs and do not arrive, it occurred to me to integrate it as one more problem that society suffers but is not talked about, then I already learned more stories as I have commented and countries that suffer in silence as I commented before.

To understand the subject, I had to put myself in the shoes of who needs it, and how far I would be willing to go if I had a chance for love and despair. I felt sore, but if I had the slightest possibility of saving a person who is the most important thing in my life?... what would I do?...? From there I sought to feel in my skin what someone could long for and they had the chance to do it, not because he was a murderer, nor because he was unbalanced... But because life put him at a point where if I'm not with you I die... and if I can make you live?... Would I do the impossible?...

On the other hand, I felt the despair of the other... the one who doesn't know that his life is in danger, the one who doesn't know that other people also suffered what he is about to suffer... I live it with despair, life death, not knowing where they went, what happened... if they're still alive... Despair and suffering that all the people and relatives of the disappeared person experience constantly. My fears of knowing if my children go out to play... will they come back home? If they will be fine if someone can kidnap them? Fears that, as I have said from the news from nearby towns, and or schools, where they have tried to kidnap the children and they have denounced, without going any further, the school where my son attends.

Luckily the girl they tried to kidnap ran away and they couldn't. But how many cases are there in which they never appear... In Spain, we have the case of the Alcáser girls, although it is believed that it happened for other reasons. I was also inspired by another case in Spain involving a child, although in this one, the kid appeared deceased at the end. What I have tried without involving families, or feelings, mixing stories and creating one, in which reality is not much further from fiction.



"Latir Amargo" behind the scenes photo

The film's soundtrack is very impactful and contributes to the dramatic charge of the story. How was the choice and production of this essential aspect of the story?

I had heard very good things about my musician and composer Víctor Muñoz. I told him about my project, and he liked it. I mostly let him get inspired by himself, to see if he could feel what I felt on my skin watching my movie set to music. He made me a first without any direction, to his musical taste. It was beautiful, but it didn't make me cry, which was what I needed to know that I was transmitting what I needed, so my partner asked me to set guidelines, times, and types of music to see if we could find common ground... suspense, more piano, drama, etc...

I suffered a lot in post-production, there were even moments when I was about to throw in the towel. But I only had to tell him what I liked so that the composer in his next proposal would make me cry, vibrate, and feel what I needed, making only small changes in time. And I will never forget the emotion that he made me feel, because I thought that making his first version according to his taste, would have nothing to do with what I asked for, but it was a surprise and I was still able to verify and confirm how professional he is. Since he showed me that with the guidelines I gave him, he was capable of doing what others wanted to feel. So I couldn't be more proud to have had him on my team, since he got exactly what he needed.

Do you believe the film can help raise awareness about the seriousness of organ trafficking and encourage the fight against this crime? What is the main message you want to deliver to your film's audience?

I thought so. And not only regarding this crime but, above all, in protecting our little ones from the possible problems that exist in life, being more attentive to any situation. The film had its preview in the same town where it was filmed, there was press, radio... and despite saying on numerous occasions that it was a way of denouncing events that happen in society, I think that people finally saw it as some more fiction I have the pleasure of reporting that during the first screening in a theater, there were children, children between 4 and 10 years old, and whose parents thanked me for having seen it because now their children had more doubts and would trust fewer people you don't know. People told me they had goosebumps while watching it.



The director Yolanda Belvis

But despite all the good reviews received, I think the vast majority saw it as something fictional and not as possible causes in real life. From there I leave for the record that no festival of human rights or mental psychology, they have even selected it for me among more than 100 official selections and more than forty awards that this short film has won nationally and internationally.



"Latir Amargo" film scene

We are aware of the huge success the film has been having at film festivals winning several awards; but how was the reception of the public and critics with "Latir Amargo"? And finally, after this success, do you have new film projects on the way?

Oops, it seems I preempted your question in the answer to the previous question. All I know in terms of criticism, opinions, even the opinions of directors of festivals where it did not win... is that it has been one of the best stories that have transmitted a lot of sensitivity in their skins. As I said before, goosebumps, even from people who don't have children, I know they've seen it three times, at different festivals, and it made them emotional over and over again. They have come to ask me to do the second part and everything that the end could not be like this. Who knows if one day I will be able to reach someone who wants to produce this story as it deserves, some executive producer who wants to convey what I feel, what I suffer with this story, and what exists but is not spoken... If there were possibilities for executive producers, I would be willing to even make a long story about it, who knows if with another ending starting from this one... But it took me a lot of time and effort, looking for sponsors and even so I lost money because despite the award-winning festivals, there aren't many economic prizes and one cannot reach what one would have longed for the most.

In my case, being able to reward my entire team would have been the most beautiful of all this production. And consequently, having obtained a second project, or who knows a feature film about this same story but with more means and more equipment, since many of them, were low-budget films, I had to do myself as a producer, makeup artist, art... among others, as you know of director and protagonist. But it is a very difficult world, although you never know.

I have written another story, very different... this time a comedy, but I wait for the moment to be able to produce it and shoot it. It is an LGBT+ story, with irony, but with real social issues as well. From what it seems but is not... or from what you criticize but people are the same... What life itself has been, but nobody criticizes themselves, so it seems easier to point out than morality itself.

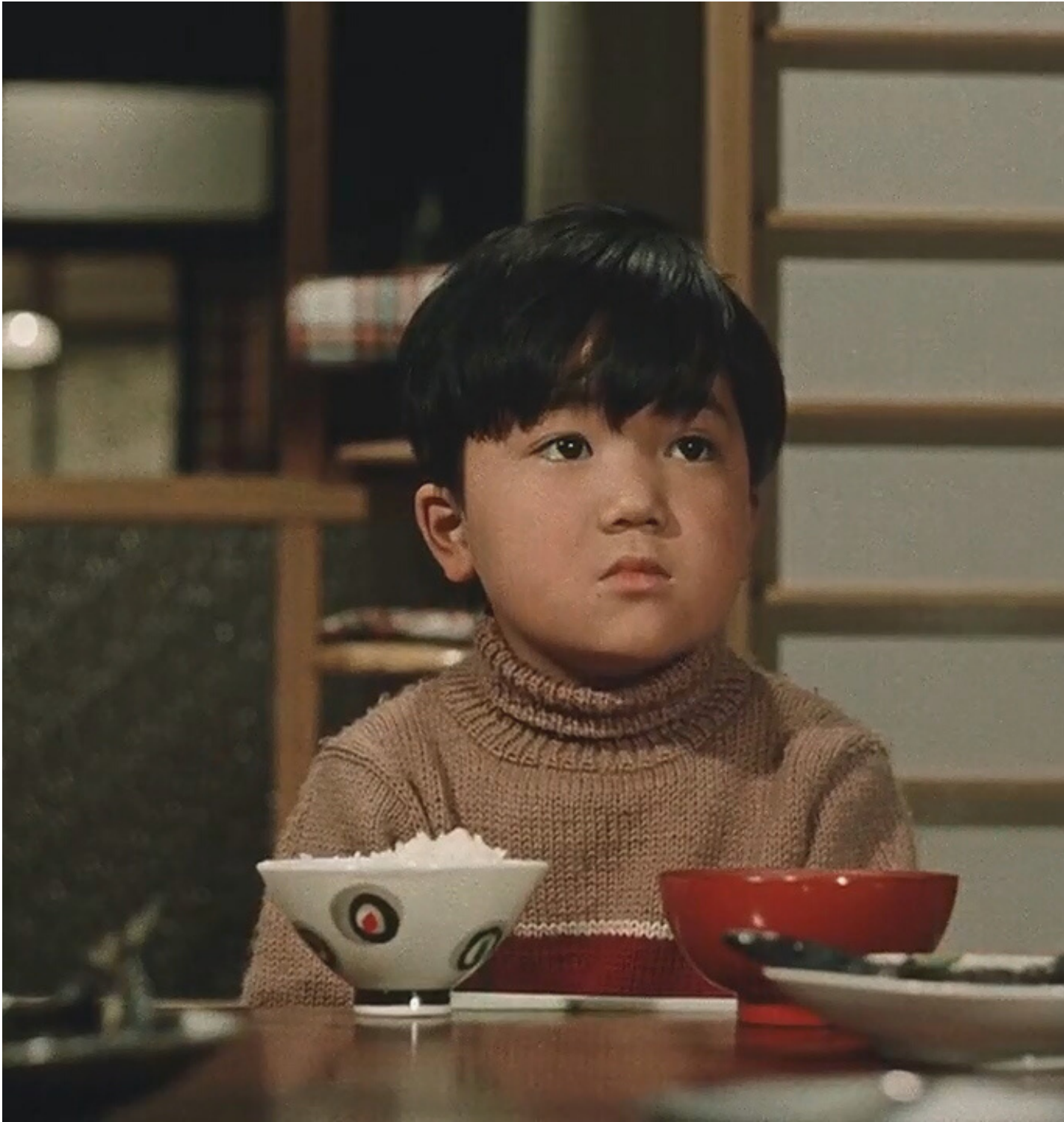
Waiting for the moment to be able to produce it and/or think about the good results in a second part for Latir Amargo, but in a feature film. And I hope I can count on those who supported me from the beginning, and gave everything to make this story come to life. My great team of "Latir Amargo", and forgive me for the publicity, but if it was the great work of each one of them, I wouldn't be writing for this precious magazine that has allowed me to give this interview. So, mainly, I would like to thank:

Pol Ribes, the sound engineer who did a masterful job, in which each moment is marked by the amazingly balanced sound; Iñaqi Gorráiz, my director of photography, did a wonderful job; Alejandro Fábregas who was the sound engineer on set, pending any sound throughout the shoot; Pau de los Reyes, the colorist and editing assistant helped me after two more colorists who had gone through different problems that arose; Mayte Ibarra, a stupendous voice imitator in Spain who managed to make his voice in the news as real as in life itself; Víctor Muñoz for his great work as a musician and soundtrack for "Latir Amargo"; Fíguls as second assistant editor; Aniez, because the main idea was to create it together and without him, it would not have been possible to create and produce my story, since his encouragement and his work as an assistant director, editor, and protagonist have been the most for me. And of course, to all my cast of actors that I have mentioned before in other questions and to all of them who believed in me, and supported me, sponsors and collaborators who wanted "Latir Amargo" to have a place in this world.

And finally and especially thanks to the Bimiff Team, for this opportunity and all the festivals in the world that have made us grow and go further with this story, hoping that it will reach many more hearts.

GOOD MORNING

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



MY SON

DIRECTED BY SAHAR MIRZAEIANFAR & KAMRAN MOHAMMADI



SYNOPSIS

A man suspects his wife and decides to punish her for adultery, but...

CAST: MAHAN ALIPANAH, MALIHEH RAHMANI, HESAM HOSSEINI

DIRECTORS, WRITERS, PRODUCERS: SAHAR MIRZAEIANFAR, KAMRAN MOHAMMADI

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVOOD AMIRI

EDITOR AND SOUND DESIGNER: ALIREZA ZARINCHE

SOUND RECORDER: MERAJ SOLEYMANI

FACE DESIGN AND MAKE-UP: SAHAR MIRZAEIANFAR

MUSIC BY: KIARASH HOSSEINI



SAHAR MIRZAEIANFAR & KAMRAN MOHAMMADI BIOGRAPHIES:

Sahar Mirzaeianfar is an Iranian filmmaker and make-up artist, born in 1984. She started her career with make-up, then she studied writing and started making films. Their first film is called BLOOD, which received many awards.

Kamran Mohammadi is an Iranian filmmaker, born in 1994. He started his career as an actor in the theater. He then became an assistant director and started studying directing. Then he made his first film.

DMITRI FROLOV'S VANGUARDIST MASTERPIECE

REVIEW BY LUCAS MARQUES

REVIEW

DREAMS OF THE PAST A FILM BY DMITRI FROLOV

REVIEW BY LUCAS MARQUES



"Dreams of the Past" film scene

DMITRI FROLOV'S VANGUARDIST MASTERPIECE

As an avid admirer of Dmitri Frolov's work, I have been privileged to witness the blossoming of his cinematic genius over the years. At the various film festivals I have had the pleasure of producing; his films always stand out for their authenticity and genuine passion for true cinema. They evoke a nostalgic beauty and poetic essence that transport me back to the films that made me love the seventh art. Even as a Brazilian filmmaker, it is always a delightful experience to connect with a director so far from my homeland, but so close thanks to the power of cinema.

"Dreams of the Past" is a cinematographic masterpiece dedicated to the centenary celebration of the Russian Civil War's end. Set in the final days of the summer of 1917, a crucial moment when Russia and the world stood at the crossroads of two eras, the film explores themes of peace, love, and war. Little could the characters foresee the profound changes ahead, a reflection that strangely resonates with our current reality and the state of events in Russia. The film's visual style belongs to the realm of mockumentary experimentalism, captivating the audience with its immersion in the depiction of events.

To ensure maximum authenticity in the on-screen narration, Frolov chose to shoot on 16mm and 35mm black and white negative film.

To ensure maximum authenticity in the on-screen narration, Frolov chose to shoot on 16mm and 35mm black and white negative film. The use of hand-held cameras and the development of the material in hand-held spiral tanks further accentuated the verisimilitude of the film as a whole.. This meticulous attention to detail creates a truly immersive experience, effectively transporting the audience back in time to the tumultuous events of the narrative.

Dmitri Frolov, born in Leningrad in 1966, has emerged as a filmmaking force to be reckoned for. He refined his skills at the Institute of Cinema and Television, graduating in 1990. Starting his career at LENFILM studios and later migrating to the independent production company STV, Frolov worked alongside numerous visionary filmmakers as a director of photography. Even before the advent of the Perestroika in the early 1980s, he began directing his films.



"Dreams of the Past" film scene

DREAMS OF THE PAST A FILM BY DMITRI FROLOV

Today, he stands out as one of the leaders of the Russian cinematic avant-garde in the post-perestroika era, challenging boundaries and experimenting with aesthetics, giving the milieu a new visual language.

It is worth noting that Frolov shoots exclusively at "Svema," the film production company of his choice. Despite the factory's Soviet past and the lack of distribution of his films, he remains faithful to this unusual choice. When asked about his reasoning,

Frolov explained that only "Svema" possesses the unpredictability and non-uniformity of emulsion, giving life to characters and even seemingly inanimate objects, allowing them to convey genuine emotions. The Svema Production Association, a Soviet and Ukrainian Company specializing in the manufacture of photographic materials, serves as Frolov's chosen vehicle for capturing the essence of his artistic vision.

"Dreams of the Past" is a tribute to Dmitri Frolov's unparalleled mastery of the motion picture medium. Through his bold experimentations, he creates a deep connection with the audience, arousing emotions and provoking reflections. With each frame, Frolov skillfully weaves a tapestry of filmmaking brilliance, engaging viewers in an era filled with historical significance. This film is a tribute to the power of dreams, and the irresistible charm of cinema.



The director Dmitri Frolov



The director Dmitri Frolov acting in "Dreams of the Past"

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REGAINING YOUR VOICE THROUGH ART

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH LYUWEI CHEN DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "STEEL MAGNOLIA".

BY VIC KINGS AND RICHARD CAEIRO



REGAINING YOUR VOICE THROUGH ART

REGAINING YOUR VOICE THROUGH ART



"Steel Magnolia" film scene

REGAINING YOUR VOICE THROUGH ART

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH LYUWEI CHEN DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "STEEL MAGNOLIA"
by Vic Kings and Richard Caeiro

Lyuwei Chen is an award-winning documentary filmmaker who graduated from New York University with her master's degree in News and Documentary. She has worked as a documentarian at TV stations and film production companies in the US and China. Her work focuses on social issues and family dynamics. Committed to non-fiction storytelling, she wants to make compelling documentaries to touch people worldwide.

Heather Liteer is a very talented actress, having worked with award-winning directors such as Darren Aronofsky (*Requiem for a Dream*) and Jane Campion (*In the Cut*), yet over the years she has often been overlooked and stereotyped in her roles. How did the idea of making a documentary about her come about?

The idea came about when I met Heather and got to know her story and watched her one-woman show "Lemonade." Her passion for acting and her relationship with her mom resonated with me. As a documentary filmmaker, I have been thinking about the changes in women's position in society and the way they perceive themselves within the context of societal and cultural changes. *Steel Magnolia* is not just Heather's personal story. Every woman, and perhaps even most people, can relate to her experience and feelings. Even though she has been stereotyped because of her role in the film *Requiem For A Dream*, through her performances in her one-woman show "Lemonade" and her efforts in creating WOeRD to support other women artists, she has regained her voice. Her unyielding spirit and great passion for her acting career and her courage in overcoming these obstacles moved and inspired me.



The director Lyuwei Chen

STEEL MAGNOLIA's cinematography and editing are outstanding highlights of your documentary. How was the process of producing your short film?

Working as a one-person band allowed me to express my ideas and feelings through the production of Steel Magnolia. Before rolling my camera, I had already decided that I would weave Heather's life story with her one-woman show and her films, using cinematography and editing not only to narrate her story but also to convey her emotions and feelings. Actually, when I started this program, I wasn't too concerned about whether or not I could take care of the cinematography and editing by myself. All I was thinking about was how to tell her as-yet untold story of her life as an actress, a daughter, and a fighter.

Besides being a director and producer, you also handled the technical areas of your film, working as director of photography and editor. What was it like for you to have so many roles at the same time?

It was fun, although I also faced challenges wearing so many hats during the production. I like working as a one-person band, although I also enjoy working collaboratively with a big crew like I had when I made my music documentary Duet. On that film, I worked with other talented people, six cinematographers, three animators, and two composers, located in different places around the world-- the US, France, and China. I used different mindsets in these two very different circumstances. Working as a one-person band did provide me with some advantages, however. For example, sometimes I could do the editing while filming because as an editor I knew what I would cut and as a cinematographer, I knew when I needed to move around.



"Steel Magnolia" film scene



"Steel Magnolia" film scene

Regarding the technical aspects, can you tell us more about the directors who inspire you as a filmmaker?

Prof. Marcia Rock, my mentor at NYU, inspired me the most when I wanted to improve my professional skills and pursue my master's degree in documentary. I watched her personal documentary, Dancing With My Father, before enrolling in the program at NYU. It enlightened my way of thinking about finding my own voice in personal narration and my focus on family dynamics. Documentarian Nanfu Wang and her film I Am Another You inspired me to think about my relationship with my subjects and my motivation behind rolling my camera. Film Director Ang Lee also influences me in understanding my own cultural background and in linking my background with Western society.

The underground entertainment scene in New York is very well explored visually in your short film, further accompanied by Heather Litter's dynamic and sensitive narrative. How was the research process for your documentary?

Actually, Heather Litter was one of the most famous underground performers during the 1990s. She got her nickname Jessica Rabbit when she worked in Jackie 60, a well-known underground club in New York in the 1990s. I interviewed Heather, watched archival footage of underground theater and shows from that period, and talked to artists and performers who were actively working in the underground entertainment industry.

Your film deals with breaking down stereotypes and regaining hope through art. How do you view the often predatory and exploitative nature of the film industry, especially concerning women?

That's a really good question. I asked Heather the same questions during the interview. As a documentary filmmaker, I articulated my answer through my film.

I think Heather's story not only talks about the nature of the film industry but also brings up women's issues, especially how women view themselves and how they can use their own voices against being stereotyped.

In your film, the actress Heather Liteer comments on the difficulty of breaking free from stereotypes to maintain and grow her career, especially after years of working with characters similar to the one in *Requiem for a Dream*. How do you see the revival of a career within the highly competitive US film scene?

It's not easy and demands perseverance and luck. Heather is still on her way to success and has lots of struggles. But that's the meaning of *Steel Magnolia*, which doesn't focus on whether or not one is successful in reviving one's career but concentrates instead on her feelings and spirit given the fact that she has been portrayed as "that girl on the other side" for decades. The question is how she will create a new path for herself in her middle age and how she will reconcile her current self with her younger self concerning making what turned out to be vital decisions in her earlier career.

The play *LEMONADE* has an enormous poetic force, which brings in Heather Liteer's lines, movements, and expressions, a feeling of rebirth and overcoming that blossoms from pain. How do you observe the power that independent art has to change lives and raise hope?

All forms of art have the foundation of communicating beyond boundaries and raising hope for people. Heather described herself and "Lemonade" in *Steel Magnolia* as "Phoenix coming out of flames" and I admire the power of rebirth and revival. Having a second chance after a painful experience is like seeing a light after walking alone through the darkness at the end of a tunnel.



"Steel Magnolia" film scene



The director Lyuwei Chen

STEEL MAGNOLIA melancholically and delicately breaks the glamorous image we have of actors who live in big movie centers like New York but who also often have to work alternative jobs to survive in a society that is mostly characterized by economic inequality and constant financial instability. What do you hope the public and critics will perceive with your documentary?

I hope they will obtain different perspectives and hear different truths when they look at the issue or get to know Heather's story.

Still on this matter, how has *STEEL MAGNOLIA* been received by the audience and the film festivals?

It has been well-received and has won awards at film festivals, like International Manhattan Film Awards, Cannes International Shorts, and the New York International Films Infest Festival. In April 2023, Heather curated her own film festival and used *Steel Magnolia* as the opening film.

STEEL MAGNOLIA is a film of great courage and sensibility, being a narrative of strong social reflection, but also of singular and pure beauty, characteristics that are very well summarized in the title of your work. What is it like to make independent films as a non-white woman in such a complex and difficult market as the 7th art in the US?

This is an interesting question, thank you for bringing it out. I have to admit that being an independent filmmaker is not easy. And I didn't think too much about the fact that I am a non-white female documentarian when I held the camera. All I wanted to do was to tell untold stories and communicate with my subjects with respect and honesty. I like complicated characters and issues and I realized that I have the flexibility to transform complex and difficult situations into powerful and pure stories.



The actress Heather Liteer

You have an M.A. in News and Documentary from New York University. How has your academic experience contributed to your career as a documentary filmmaker?

My academic background is interdisciplinary. I started learning the piano when I was three from my mother, who's a music professor, I cultivated my interest in telling non-fiction stories from my journalist dad, and I found my passion in visual art on my own as a preschool kid. Before studying at NYU, I did my undergraduate degree and first master's degree in music editing and musicology (for films, TV, and radio) at the Communication University of China and I have also worked at TV stations and universities. However, studying News and Documentary at NYU was a life-changing experience for me. I started to realize that I have spent years combining my knowledge and experience together and now have found an expressive outlet in documentary filmmaking. The academic experience at NYU provided me with a vital opportunity to see myself as a filmmaker and to link my past to the present and my future.



The director Lyuwei Chen

Your documentary work focuses mainly on social issues, family dynamics, and personal perspectives. How do you perceive the power that fiction and non-fiction narratives have to be social tools of critique, change, and reflection?

I believe that I have the mission to give voice to the voiceless. If my films can make some small changes in society, then all my work and my beliefs are meaningful.

What are your upcoming film projects?

I just finished a music documentary called Duet. It's a story about the well-known Chinese-American musician Bright Sheng and his pianist daughter Fay Fay. It's now in film festivals and will premiere in Nov. 2023 in New York.



"Steel Magnolia" film scene

EARLY SUMMER

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



THE FASCINATING EXPERIMENTAL WORK OF INNOVATIVE GREEK DIRECTORS

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW



SLEEPY NIGHT ATHENS BRIGHT A FILM BY CHRISTOS ARFANIS AND MARIA AGRAPIDOU

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAIRO



"Sleepy Night Athens Bright" film scene

THE FASCINATING EXPERIMENTAL WORK OF INNOVATIVE GREEK DIRECTORS

"Sleepy Night Athens Bright" is a very short, but incredible and thrilling experimental film that will leave you baffled by the power of editing and experimental cinema. Directed by the talented Greek directors Christos Arfanis and Maria Agrapidou, the film incredibly plays with space and time, presenting several simultaneous events.

Arfanis is an experienced Greek filmmaker, film producer, screenwriter, film director, entertainment author/journalist, and music producer, who has extensive experience in writing audiovisual articles and interviews with various talents in the entertainment world. His ability to communicate with other artists and his experience in various aspects of filmmaking certainly contribute to the quality of his work.

Agrapidou has a very different professional background, having a degree in stomatology and working as a dentist for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games and the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games. In addition, she is the author of the children's book "The masked students" and speaks six different languages. Her ability to face challenges and deal with pressure certainly contributes to her ability to deal with the creative challenges of experimental cinema.

Experimental cinema has been a constantly evolving genre over the years, and Arfanis and Agrapidou are examples of artists who are always looking for new ways to express their ideas through film.

In "Sleepy Night Athens Bright" they tease the viewer and create a mysterious and tense atmosphere that makes us doubt whether the woman, the man, and the possible murder in Bright Athens are real or just a hallucination of a night's sleep.

The film's frenetic, fast-paced editing keeps us in suspense, and the filmmakers' ability to play with the viewer is remarkable. In addition, the use of old film filters in the image gives the production a nostalgic and stylized air, making it stand out even more among other works of the same genre.

In summary, "Sleepy Night Athens Bright" is an exciting and intriguing cinematic work that will stir our emotions and leave a long-lasting impression on our minds. Both Arfanis and Agrapidou are experienced and talented directors who bring a unique and valuable background to the world of experimental cinema, contributing to the constant evolution of the genre. If you are a fan of experimental cinema, you definitely can't miss this incredible Greek film.



The directors Christos Arfanis and Maria Agrapidou

ZERO COORDINATES

DIRECTED BY NIMA VALIBEIGI



SYNOPSIS

As two nazi's general are trading the canes of power they realize that hitler is dead and of the general refuse to trade the cane of power to the other and the second general tries to get them.

CAST: SALEH SHAHBAZI, ALIREZA FIROOZI, ATEFEH R.FARAHANI

DIRECTOR, WRITER & PRODUCER: NIMA VALIBEIGI

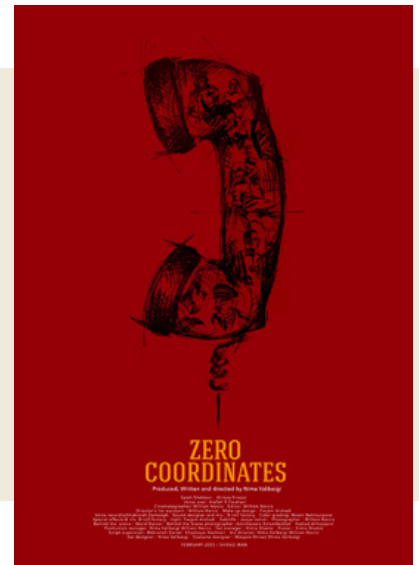
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY & EDITOR: WILLIAM NARCIS

MAKE-UP DESIGN: FARJAM ARSHADI

SOUND DESIGN, VFX & MIXING: B-ROLL FACTORY

ART DIRECTORS: NIMA VALIBEIGI, WILLIAM NARCIS

COSTUME DESIGNER: MARYAM KHOLGHI SHIRAZI, SHIMA VALIBEIGI



NIMA VALIBEIGI BIOGRAPHY:

Nima Valibeigi is an Iranian filmmaker born on May 22, 1993, in Fars, He began his way as a theater actor at 7 years old and he kept doing that for about eighteen years. In 2017 he directed his first film "Wound", a symbolic surreal film that has received the award for Best Independent Film and numerous other recognitions. His film "Wild Red/Bloody Alpaca" also won many awards.

LATE SPRING

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



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HER OTHER SIDE

DIRECTED BY ANAMIA FRIAS



SYNOPSIS

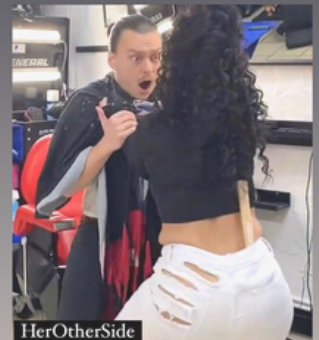
While getting his hair done in a barbershop, Christian (Lucas Hogan) will have a last meeting with his ex-girlfriend Julia (Jennifer Brea).

CAST: LUCAS HOGAN, JENNIFER BREA, THOMAS GUNNZ, SHAMARI KEENE

DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER: ANAMIA FRIAS

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: MOUSE

CINEMATOGRAPHER: JANE DONOVAN



ANAMIA FRIAS BIOGRAPHY:

Anamia Frias is a director producer, and writer. Her first film "Why Me" won the award for "Best Experimental Short" at Madrid Arthouse Film Festival. The short RUN won the award for "Best TV/Web Series". RUN was also selected as a semi-finalist in various festivals. Anamia holds a bachelor's degree from The Los Angeles Film School for Digital Filmmaking. In her creativity as a writer/director, she enjoys making impactful content in order to change the world to a better place.

CHALLENGING SEXISM AND MISOGYNY IN IRANIAN CULTURE

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SAHAR MIRZAEIANFAR & KAMRAN MOHAMMADI, DIRECTORS OF THE FILM "MY SON".

BY LUCAS MARQUES AND VIC KINGS



CHALLENGING SEXISM AND MISOGYNY IN IRANIAN CULTURE



"My Son" film scene

CHALLENGING SEXISM AND MISOGYNY IN IRANIAN CULTURE

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SAHAR MIRZAEIANFAR & KAMRAN MOHAMMADI, DIRECTORS OF THE FILM "MY SON".

by Lucas Marques and Vic Kings

Sahar Mirzaianfar is an Iranian filmmaker and makeup artist born in 1984. She started her career with make-up, then she studied creative writing and started making films. Her first film is called BLOOD, the short film received many awards in film festivals worldwide.

Kamran Mohammadi is an Iranian filmmaker and actor born in 1994. He started his career as an actor in the theater. He then became an assistant director and started studying directing. Kamran made his first film BLOOD, co-directed by Sahar. The duo is now among the judges of DMOFF.

What was your main motivation to tell this particular story in the film "MY SON"?

We aimed to point out the misogyny and wrong laws in the patriarchal society and also point out the lack of education and awareness of children by parents and schools.

How did you work to portray the culture of sexism and misogyny present in Iranian society, and how do you think the film can contribute to the debate about these issues?

We believe our film can contribute by challenging the unfair laws that exist in Islamic society.

How was the casting process to choose the main actors for the film? And how did you work with them to create the characters and their relationships?

Before making any film, at the time of writing, we often choose the actors we want, but considering the special role of mother and son in this film, considering the type of culture of the Islamic country, this choice was very difficult and precise. Long after casting, rehearsals took place to get the right feel between our actors.

The film deals with sensitive and controversial issues, such as domestic violence and sexual abuse. How did you prepare to deal with these issues in "My Son"?

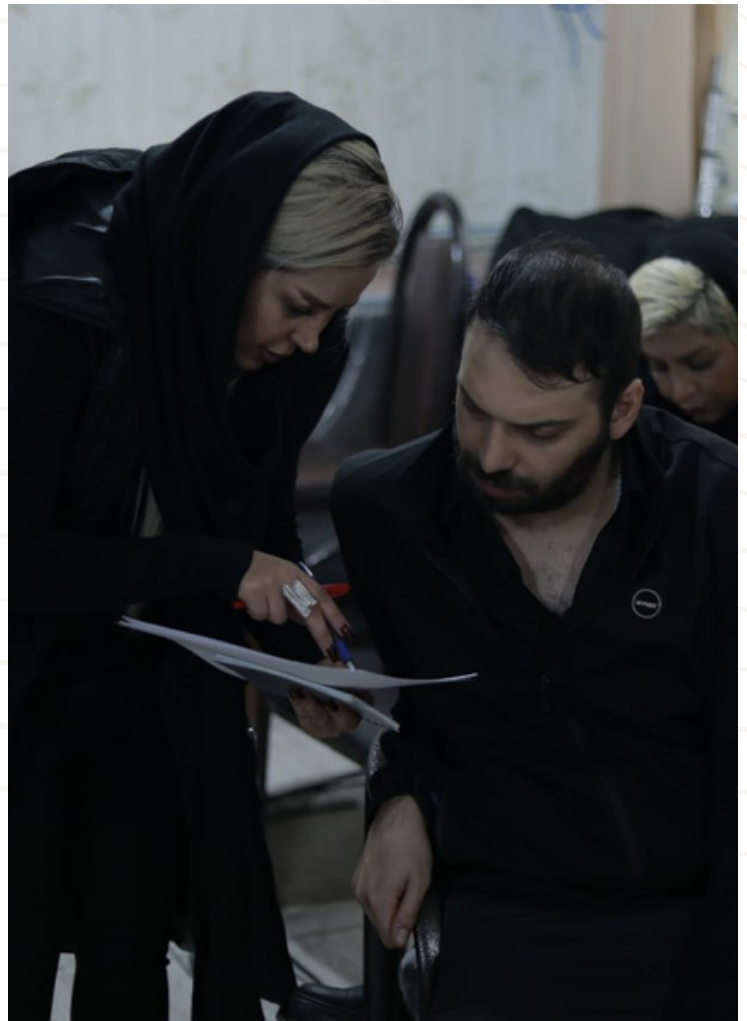
Our concern is making films that show our society's problems and have something to say so that we can inform our audience in this way.

How do you evaluate the reaction of the public and critics to the film, both in Iran and other countries? And how do you expect the film's message to be received by the general public?

Unfortunately, this film will never screen in Iran due to the country's laws and audits, but we received good reviews abroad. The film's content made the viewers think, and even though the film was disturbing, the message of the film was clear. It has been passed on to viewers.



"My Son" film scene



The co-directors Sahar Mirzaeianfar and Kamran Mohammadi

The film provides a clear critique of Iranian laws that place women at a disadvantage compared to men. How do you see the possibility of changes to this legislation in the future?

Unfortunately, there are unfair and illogical laws that I don't think will change soon. But all of us in Iran are waiting for the old rotten laws to change.

The ending of the film is very surprising and impactful. How was the decision-making process to reach this conclusion for the story?

While writing the script, we considered several endings and we wanted to shock the viewers with all the judgments they had about the role of the mother while watching the movie by ending the movie in the shortest possible time.

The couple's son, who is the main character in the film, has a complex and challenging emotional road. How did you work to explore and develop this journey in the film?

As we said, we were very strict in choosing the boy's character and we put him in difficult emotional situations during rehearsals so that he could communicate with his complex character in the film.

How do you believe the film can help broaden the discussion about femicide and violence against women in other parts of the world?

By broadcasting this film and being seen in festivals, we want to tell men and women that both are equal and no law allows a man to kill his wife and child under the pretext of owning her and her child. We all the women of the world should be behind each other.

Iranian cinema is known for its artistic quality and its ability to address relevant issues. How do you evaluate the role of cinema in Iran concerning culture and society?

Iranian cinema is a cinema of censorship, and many artists convey their message and society to the people despite severe censorship.

We hope that one day the censorship in cinema and our society will be removed, so freedom of expression can be granted. Despite this severe censorship, Iranian cinema has made great progress in the world.



"My Son" film scene



"My Son" film scene

As in the case of your previous film, BLOOD, also awarded here at BIMIFF, with MY SON you bring to the screen extremely relevant political and social issues. How is it to work with this cinema of denouncement and confrontation in a society so taken by restrictive laws that have as their basis the restriction of freedom, especially for women?

We are completely independent and not related to any organization, and as we mentioned before, all these issues are the concern of our society, and it might be interesting for you to know that our films are not allowed to be broadcast in Iran under any circumstances.

Middle Eastern cinema has several artists who have in their filmography and background, the combat against repression and censorship. Can you highlight some of these filmmakers that have influenced and still influence your filmmaking?

What a good question, at this moment I cannot introduce anyone better than Mr. Jafar Panahi to answer this question.

Jafar Panahi is the director of the films: Closed Curtain (2013), Taxi (2015), Three Faces (2018), and No Bears (2022).



"My Son" behind-the-scenes photo of the film's crew

The role of women in Cinema has gained incredible notoriety in recent years, especially by the recognition of works directed, written, and produced by cis and trans female artists in renowned film festivals. In Iran, how do you perceive this rise of women filmmakers?

Fortunately, I must say that in recent years more value is given to the women of my country in art, and I hope it will get better.

How do you analyze the importance of film festivals and exhibitions of independent cinema for narratives of political-social criticism, as is the case of the short film MY SON?

As we said, the cinema of our country is the cinema of censorship. Therefore, those who support independent films, whether it is a festival or a person, help the films to be seen a lot, and it is necessary to mention that one of these independent festivals is your good festival. We are familiar with your festival since 2020 and you really help and support artists a lot.

Can you tell us more about your next projects in Cinema?

We are writing our first feature film script, which has a unique story.

It's also our latest LGBTQ+-themed short film, which is currently being submitted to the Canadian Academy 2024 and will hopefully be screened at your fine independent festival soon.

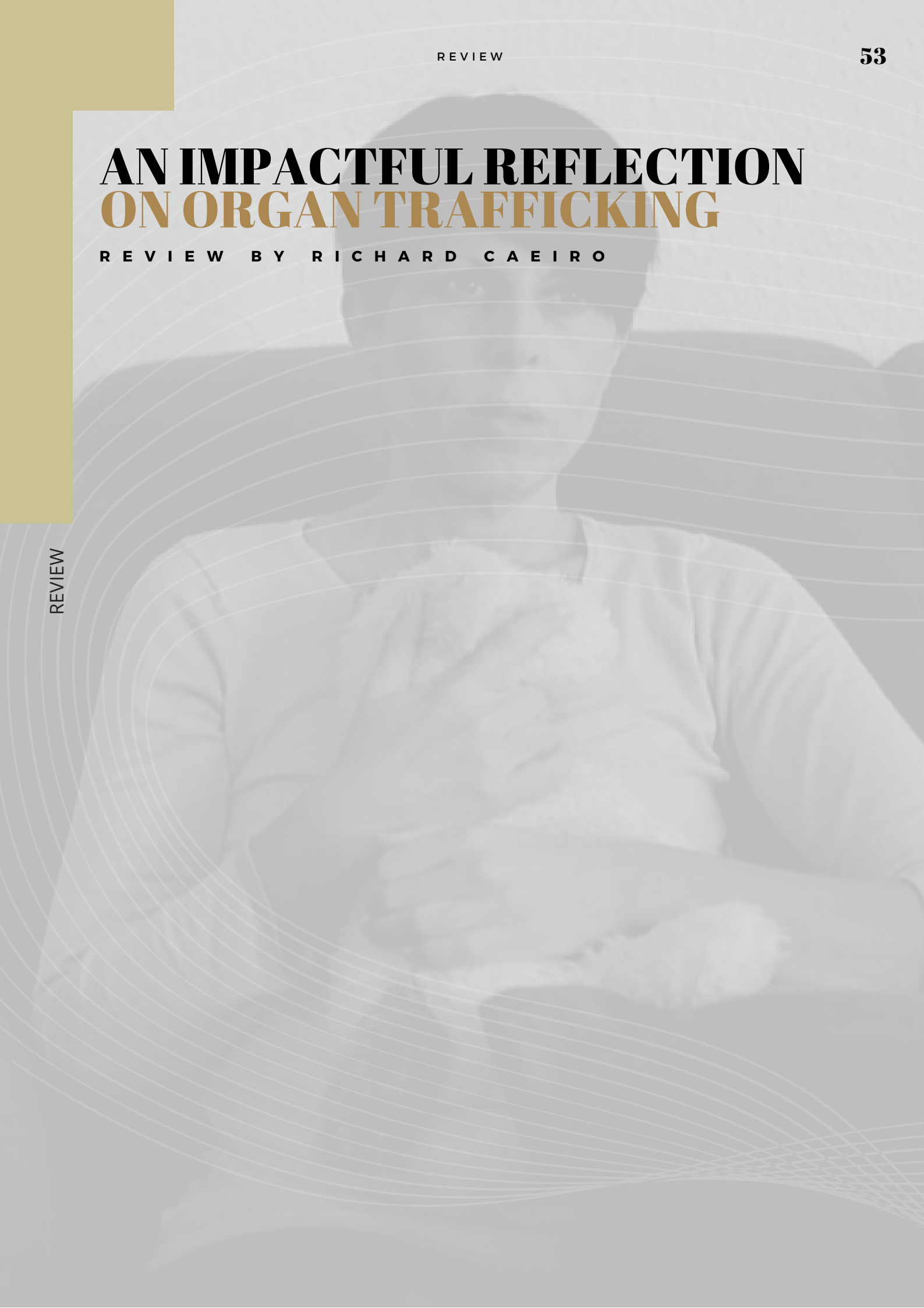


"My Son" film scene

AN IMPACTFUL REFLECTION ON ORGAN TRAFFICKING

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW



LATIR AMARGO A FILM BY YOLANDA BELVIS

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO



"Latir Amargo" film scene

AN IMPACTFUL REFLECTION ON ORGAN TRAFFICKING

"Latir Amargo" is a film that takes an impactful and disturbing approach to the issue of organ trafficking, a cruel crime that unfortunately still occurs in many countries. India, Pakistan, and China are the countries where there is the most tourism aimed at the commerce of organs for transplantation, according to data from the World Health Organization. Director Yolanda Belvis, who also plays the main character, leads the narrative intensely and emotionally, showing how a terrible situation can change a family's life forever.

The plot is told linearly, but with flashbacks that help to compose the characters' trajectory and to understand their motivations. The cast's acting is excellent, with David Criville's performance as young Jan standing out.

The film also highlights social inequality, showing how the privileged financial condition of a family can guarantee an organ transplant, while others become victims of trafficking.

In addition, the plot addresses the emotional and psychological consequences that this terrible situation can have on the affected family members.

In conclusion, "Latir Amargo" is a necessary and impactful film that alerts us to the seriousness of organ trafficking and the importance of raising awareness and combating this crime. Yolanda Belvis shows her talent as an actress, director, and screenwriter, and deserves all the praise and awards she has received for the film.

The strong and lasting message the film leaves behind is that the consequences of organ trafficking can be devastating, as is evident in the shocking ending of the story.



The director Yolanda Belvis

I WAS BORN, BUT

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



BAIT DECEPTION

DIRECTED BY KARLA BONFA



SYNOPSIS

The short film tells the story of an actress dealing with depression, a turbulent social life and a career in decrease from the perspective of her mind.

CAST: KARLA BONFA

DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER: KARLA BONFA

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, EDITOR: KARLA BONFA



KARLA BONFA BIOGRAPHY:

Karla Bonfa is an actress and independent filmmaker, winner of the JCS Crematório of Television Emmy Award 2022. Graduated in Performing Arts & Cinema in São Paulo, in the theatrical and audiovisual market in several professional productions since 2004. She won the Best Actress Award at the International Festival of Rio for the film "Boar's Road" by Jorge Neto. She produced and performed in the feature film "Doctor Edgar's Method". Karla has 38 theatrical shows in her curriculum. As an independent film producer, she attended the artistic training studio institution for 3 years, completing her theatrical training. Karla also graduated in Professional practice for TV interpretation. She was the director, actress, and producer of the films "You Must Be Crazy", "Chamariz", and "The House and the Movies". She was an actress in the HBOMax feature film "Faixa Preta - O Filme". Karla Bonfa is an actress for Sony and Globoplay productions.

A DELIGHTFUL COMEDY

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO

REVIEW



THE CASE OF THE MISSING AEBLESKIVERSE

A FILM BY CASSANDRA TITTLE

REVIEW BY RICHARD CAEIRO



"The Case of the Missing Aebleskivers" film scene

A DELIGHTFUL COMEDY

"The Case of the Missing Aebleskivers" is a charming comedy directed by Cassandra Tittle, a talented 51-year-old filmmaker who demonstrates her love for cinema and the art of storytelling. Despite some flaws in the acting of the actors, who are young and just beginning their careers, the film shines with surprising creativity and a compelling passion.

The plot revolves around cousins Jason and Inga, quirky and charismatic characters who encounter an intriguing mystery when they discover that someone has stolen their family's heirloom fish and the aebleskivers they have worked hard to make. With language reminiscent of sitcoms, the film takes us on an entertaining journey filled with twists and turns as the cousins endeavor to crack the case.

The effort and dedication of Cassandra Tittle and her team in making this project happen is remarkable. The film overflows with energy and enthusiasm, reflecting the dedication of the director and everyone involved. They came together as a family, which contributed to a joyful atmosphere and cohesive work.

Cassandra's previous experience in theater and her training at Gary Spatz's The Playground was instrumental in her exploring acting skills in front of the camera. In addition, her background work as a trainer provided her with a deep understanding of the language and art of filming a show.

All of this translates into a solid and creative direction that can lead the audience through this captivating story.

Although the actors are young and inexperienced, the love they have for what they do is undeniable. This passion is visible in their performances, even if some missteps can be noticed. It is important to remember that everyone starts somewhere, and it is encouraging to see the potential and excitement of these young talents.



The director Cassandra Tittle

THE CASE OF THE MISSING AEBLESKIVERSE A FILM BY CASSANDRA TITTLE

The sitcom language chosen for the film adds a special charm to the narrative, ensuring hilarious moments and situations that make us laugh from beginning to end. It is a bold and successful choice on the part of the director, who demonstrates her ability to explore different styles and capture the peculiar humor of the plot.

Cassandra Tittle mentions that her goal was to make people laugh, and without a doubt, she accomplished that goal with "The Case of the Missing Aebleskivers." Comedy is an art form that requires perfect timing and a deep understanding of human nature, and the director has managed to deliver hilarious moments that leave us with a smile on our faces.

As a spectator, it is exciting to see independent filmmakers like Cassandra Tittle and her team dedicate themselves to telling original and entertaining stories. These efforts deserve to be recognized and sustained because it is through support that these talented filmmakers can continue to grow and improve their skills.

"The Case of the Missing Aebleskivers" is an outstanding example of the power of passion and creativity in filmmaking. Even with its imperfections, the film captivates audiences with its unique charm and refreshing approach. It is a reminder that a filmmaker's journey is a constant evolution, and each project is an opportunity to learn and improve.

Hopefully, this film is just the beginning of a brilliant filmmaking career for Cassandra Tittle and her team. We look forward to seeing what the future holds and to following Skittle Pictures' upcoming productions.

"The Case of the Missing Aebleskivers" is a lovely comedy that demonstrates the passion and talent of an inspiring director and a dedicated team. Let this film be an encouragement to all independent filmmakers and a reminder that the love of film can overcome any obstacle.



"The Case of the Missing Aebleskivers" film scene

THERE WAS A FATHER

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



JUST ANOTHER HILARIOUS STORY IN RENO

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH NICOLAS MARIO BULLENTINI, DIRECTOR
OF THE FILM "JUST ANOTHER DAY IN RENO".
BY RICHARD CAEIRO AND LUCAS MARQUES



JUST ANOTHER HILARIOUS STORY IN RENO

J U S T A N O T H E R H I L A R I O U S S T O R Y I N R E N O



"Just Another Day In Reno" film scene

JUST ANOTHER HILARIOUS STORY IN RENO

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH NICOLAS MARIO BULLENTINI, DIRECTOR OF THE FILM "JUST ANOTHER DAY IN RENO".

by Richard Caeiro and Lucas Marques

Nicolas Bullentini is an award-winning American actor, director, producer, writer, stunt coordinator, rapper, and martial artist from Reno, NV. He trains in multiple martial arts including Wing Chun, Capoeira, Tai Chi, and Wushu plus dabbling in a few others. As a rapper, he goes by the stage name St. Nicolas - and has shared the stage with some of the biggest names in the game. He has a degree in both philosophy and psychology and likes to advocate them as much as possible in his creative art. He believes that those can be the medium that brings all people together regardless of where they are from and can help the world better understand itself and each other. He believes that art should make people feel things, and think deeply about concepts they may not have stumbled upon on their own. He hopes to continue to make art that touches on what it means to be human and explore all of the complex inner emotions that reside within all of us.

How did the idea of creating an action comedy short film with realistic martial arts arise?

I just wanted to create an absurd film that would make people laugh really. I love martial arts and old kung-fu movies, so it just really made sense to me.



"Just Another Day In Reno" behind-the-scenes photo

As independent filmmakers, we understand the complexity of being a multifaceted artist. In your case, we would like to know: what was the experience like being responsible for the script, direction, choreography, and lead performance of the short film "Just Another Day in Reno"?

It was stressful but rewarding. In my opinion, it's the most fun way to create something because it's like taking your vision and bringing it to life without it having to be passed through any filters between you and your creation. When you are only doing one part of the film, and want to convey a certain message that can be difficult. In this way, you have the final say on all things and can choose the final tone of the film.

How did you work to ensure that the film would deliver laughs to the audience while providing exciting action scenes?

This film was made with friends, so you can almost feel the laughter shine through on the screen. We had a lot of fun making the film as well and were laughing the entire time we were shooting. It's almost contagious in that way. It makes it difficult not to at least smile when seeing friends together having fun and creating together.



"Just Another Day In Reno" behind-the-scenes



"Just Another Day In Reno" film scene

How did you approach the construction of the film's funny, charismatic characters? Is there any specific inspiration behind them?

Somewhat hahaha. Reno, Nevada is full of interesting characters. I kind of just took them all and personified them into one for the lead. The other characters were just awesome actors doing things that we all thought would be funny/cool interactions with this silly lead character.

The editing of the film was appreciated for giving a good rhythm to the fight scenes. Can you tell us a little about the editing process and how you aimed to achieve this excellent result?

That was the production company Mad Wife Productions doing what they do. They do a really good job with their cinematography. I have another film that will be released sometime in 2023 that we also made together. They do a great job!

How were the rehearsals for the fight scenes in the film? What were the main challenges faced by you and your team in creating unique performances and choreography?

Rehearsals were fun. The fight choreography is always fun, but especially for a comedy. The biggest challenge I'd say is that my left foot was broken all through rehearsals and even when we filmed. I didn't know at the time, but I found out later after getting x-rays for a different injury. Life of a stuntman I guess haha.

The hilarious scenes in the film reach surreal levels of absurdity. What were your references and influences to achieve this kind of humor in your short film?

That is a good question. I'm not sure I could pinpoint it. I feel like the film encapsulates my personality as a whole. This is just how my brain works every day haha. It is almost like putting on goggles and seeing the world through my lens. Everything is silly, and I think people should realize that and laugh a whole lot more.

What were the funniest and most challenging moments during the production of "Just Another Day In Reno"?

On the day of filming, across the street, they were doing construction with a jackhammer. Every time we turned on the camera to film that would start hammering away. Then right when we would finish so would they. It was almost like they timed it. They were not doing it on purpose, but it was certainly inconvenient however we were able to laugh about it. We just had to cover it up in post-production later.



The director Nicolas Mario Bullentini



"Just Another Day In Reno" film scene

How do you expect the audience to react when watching "Just Another Day in Reno"? What is the feeling you want to convey with your film?

I just wanted to make something to make people laugh. The world needs more of that. I'd say we hit the nail on the head with what we were trying to achieve.

Is there the possibility of expanding the universe of "Just Another Day In Reno" in future projects? If yes, what would be your ideas to continue exploring these characters and your unique style of action comedy?

I've already had a few ideas. Such as "Just Another Night In Reno" or turning it into a meta subplot within an adventure action feature film. Maybe they will come to fruition one day, or perhaps I can share them in other people's projects. Time will tell.

R U N

DIRECTED BY ANAMIA FRIAS



SYNOPSIS

After being busted for smuggling prescription opioids to inmates, a young girl is given an ultimatum by prison guards to cut them in or become an inmate.

This series will shed light on the struggles of young adults who deal with pain-related disabilities and their struggle to balance medical & daily life expenses, while big pharma pushes opioids to lower-income communities as a cure.

CAST: ANAMIA FRIAS

DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER: ANAMIA FRIAS

EDITOR: LISA BARON RAY



ANAMIA FRIAS BIOGRAPHY:

Anamia Frias is a Screenwriter, producer, and director. Her first film was "Why Me"; it won the "Best Experimental Short Film" award at The Madrid Arthouse Film Festival. The film was also selected for film festivals worldwide. Anamia Frias also directed the short film "RUN", it was selected for two film festivals. She has a bachelor's degree from The Los Angeles Film School. In her creativity as a writer, she enjoys making impactful content.

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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.

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FLOATING WEEDS

A FILM BY YASUJIRŌ OZU



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA

BY LUCAS MARQUES



YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA

YASUJIRŌ OZU: THE VIRTUOSO OF JAPANESE CINEMA

In the tumultuous year of 1903, amidst the Boxer Rebellion in China and the Russian occupation of Dongbei Pingyuan, one of the most renowned and influential filmmakers in the history of Japanese cinema emerged in Tokyo: Yasujirō Ozu. His existence and artistic production are intrinsically intertwined with Japanese society, reflecting the metamorphoses and challenges faced by the country throughout the 20th century.

Ozu began his cinematographic career during the silent film era. Throughout his career, he directed a total of fifty-three films, twenty-six of which were conceived in the first five years of his career as a director. Most of his works were produced by the Shochiku Studio, in which Ozu was initially involved in directing a series of comedic short films before turning to more serious themes in the 1930s.

A recurring theme in his work is marriage and family, with a particular emphasis on intergenerational relationships. Ozu explored the complexities of these relationships in depth in films such as "Banshun" (1949), "Bakushū" (1951), "Tōkyō Monogatari" (1953), and "Ukigusa" (1959). His cinematic approach was notable for its use of reticence, leaving many important events unrepresented visually. In addition, Ozu made use of a static camera, often positioned below the actors' eye level.



"The Blade of Penitence" film scene

After he died in 1963, Ozu's reputation continued to grow, and he was recognized as one of the world's most influential directors. His work received particular acclaim in the Eastern world, as directors such as Akira Kurosawa and Kenji Mizoguchi were influenced by his unique style. However, the dissemination of his films outside Japan occurred late, from the 1960s onwards.

Born in Fukagawa, a suburb of Tokyo, Ozu was the son of a fertilizer merchant. His educational background did not particularly stand out, but from an early age, he showed an interest in film, devoting his free time to watching movies whenever possible. After a brief period as a teacher, Ozu returned to Tokyo in 1923 and joined the Shochiku Film Company. Initially, he worked as an assistant photographer and director until he directed his first film, "Zange no yaiba" (The Blade of Penitence), in 1927. The success of this film paved the way for his career as a director.

During World War II, Ozu interrupted his film career to serve as an infantry corporal in the Japanese army. His military experience was recorded in an extensive diary, which later inspired his film scripts. After his return, he directed "Toda-ke no Kyodai" (The Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family) in 1941, which was a critical and audience success.

Throughout his filmography, Ozu explored themes such as old age, the conflict between generations, nostalgia, loneliness, and the inexorability of time. His films often bear titles evocative of the passage of time, emphasizing the circular nature of his works, much like the seasons or the alternation of the tides.

Ozu's frequent collaborators included screenwriter Kogo Noda, director of photography Yuharu Atsuta, and actors Chishu Ryu and Setsuko Hara. His works gained greater recognition from the late 1940s onwards, with films such as "Banshun" (1949), "Tōkyō Monogatari" (1953), and "Ochazuke no Aji" (1952). In his last film, "Sanma no aji" (An Autumn Afternoon, 1962), Ozu once again explored the themes that characterized his career, before he died of cancer on his sixtieth birthday.



"The Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family" film scene

Ozu's cinematography is marked by a unique style, which has earned him the title "the most Japanese of film directors". His perfectionist and eccentric approach often set him apart from his contemporaries. Ozu valued narrative economy, avoiding complex plots and excessive dialog. He preferred to portray routine and silence, inscribing his films in the tradition of *shimungeki*, a Japanese genre that deals with family dramas and more intimate comedies.

Ozu's camera was often positioned at low angles, with the operator sitting in a crouched position, giving the viewer a view similar to that of someone sitting on a traditional *tatami* mat. This visual simplicity concealed an extreme sophistication, making his films a true celebration of everyday life.

Ozu's influence on Eastern cinema is undeniable. Some directors such as Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi, and Mikio Naruse were influenced by his minimalist style and family-centered narrative. Furthermore, Western filmmakers have also taken Ozu as a master and source of inspiration. Wim Wenders directed the documentary "Tokyo-Ga", which explored Ozu's legacy. Other filmmakers such as Aki Kaurismäki, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Claire Denis, Stanley Kwan, and Lindsay Anderson have also paid tribute to the Japanese master and recognized his importance to cinema.

On the occasion of Yasujirō Ozu's sixtieth birthday, his legacy was widely celebrated at film festivals and retrospectives around the world. His films are being restored and screened again, sparking new interest in his work. Through his unique vision and delicate approach, Ozu captured the essence of Japanese society, leaving a lasting legacy in cinema.

This revival of interest in Ozu is reflected in several global initiatives. At the Berlin Film Festival, for example, a restored version of his iconic film "Tokyo Story" (Once Upon a Time in Tokyo) was screened, along with the remake directed by Yoji Yamada, entitled "Tokyo Family".

The Cannes Classics Festival presented the restoration of "The Taste of Sake" (Ochazuke no Aji), another Ozu masterpiece. And earlier this month, Venice rescued "Flower of Equinox" (Higanbana). The recognition of these films at international festivals demonstrates the lasting impact of Ozu's work and its continued relevance today.



The director Yasujiro Ozu

Throughout his career, Yasujiro Ozu knew how to capture the essence of ordinary life and portray the complexities of family relationships. His films, though seemingly simple and minimalist, reveal an emotional depth and a pearl of Eastern wisdom that transcends cultural boundaries.

Ozu has left a remarkable legacy in the history of cinema, influencing not only generations of Japanese directors but also filmmakers around the world. His unique approach, distinctive cinematic style, and ability to explore universal themes made him one of the great masters of cinema.

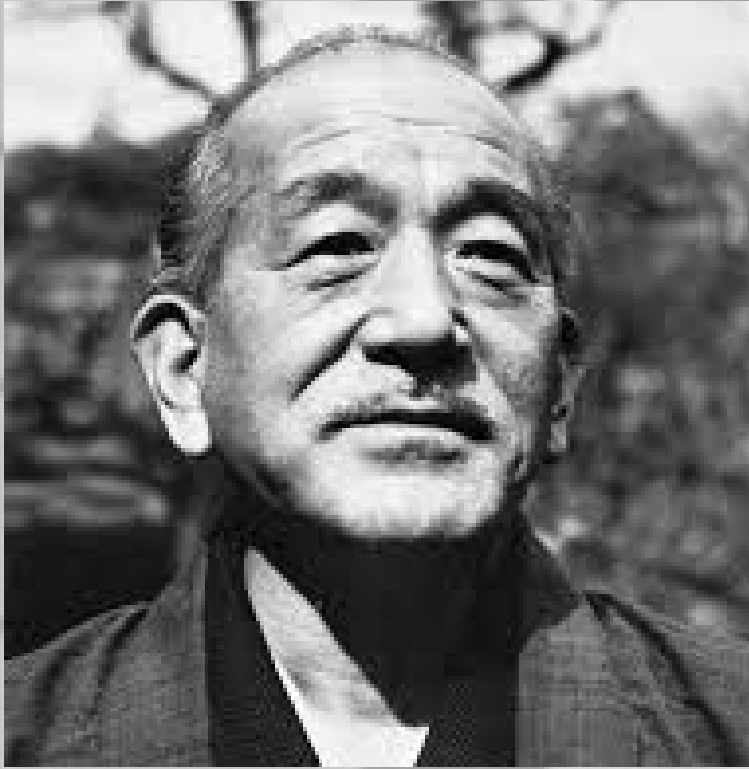
Although he departed prematurely on his 60th birthday, Ozu left behind a remarkable body of work that continues to delight and inspire viewers to this day. His unique views of the world and his commitment to portraying Japanese life and society have earned him a prominent place in the history of world cinema.

Yasujiro Ozu, the most Japanese of directors, left an everlasting mark on the seventh art and his legacy will be celebrated and appreciated for many generations to come.

Ozu, often considered eccentric and perfectionist as a director, was recognized as the "most Japanese of film directors". However, this reputation was not initially conducive to his promotion abroad, and it was only late in his career that his work began to be appreciated in the West, from the 1960s onwards.

He was reluctant to accept the transition to sound cinema, and his first film with sound was "The Only Son" (Hitori musuko). Similarly, his first color film came only late, in 1958, with "Equinox Flower" (Higanbana). However, it was in his aesthetic choice and unique style that Ozu distinguished himself.

Ozu's filmography dealt with family and social themes, exploring conformism, parent-child relationships, old age, loneliness, and nostalgia. His films were marked by a restrained narrative, avoiding excessive plot and dialog, and an emotional restraint that resonated with audiences.



The director Yasujiro Ozu

Ozu was a master at capturing the simplicity of life and enriching each sequence of his films with touches of realism and naturalism. His work stands out for the oriental wisdom that permeates his family stories, giving them a slightly dreamlike character. His films reflect a humanism that values the human being more than the existence of the divine, which is reflected in his choice to have only the ideogram corresponding to "empty" on his tombstone.

Yasujiro Ozu passed away in 1963, leaving behind an unparalleled cinematographic legacy. His filmography, composed of timeless and deeply emotional works, continues to enchant and captivate viewers around the world. Ozu remains one of the most influential and revered directors in film history, and his impact endures, inspiring future generations of filmmakers and continuing to enrich the film landscape with his unique and poetic vision.

In a world where the film industry is often dominated by big commercial productions and spectacular special effects, the work of Yasujiro Ozu stands out as a true gem of cinema.

His unique approach, refined aesthetic, and commitment to portraying Japanese life and society with sensitivity and depth are more than enough reasons to explore and appreciate his work.

To get to know Ozu's filmography is to enter a universe of subtle nuances, where every detail and every gesture tells a larger story. His films capture the essence of human existence and explore the complexities of family relationships, the passage of time, and the delicate emotions that permeate us. By decoding the small gestures and silences present in his films, we are invited to a deep reflection on human nature and the condition of life itself.

The importance of knowing Yasujiro Ozu transcends cultural and temporal boundaries. His cinema has the power to connect us with the universal essence of the human condition. His timeless stories and captivating characters engage us in such a way that we see ourselves reflected in his narratives, regardless of our background or context.

Exploring Ozu's filmography is an enriching and transformative experience. It is an opportunity to connect with a unique worldview, permeated by values such as simplicity, contemplation, and acceptance.



"The Taste of Sake" film scene



The director Yasujiro Ozu

It is a chance to discover a master of cinema whose influence extends beyond time and space, inspiring and enchanting people around the world.

As we enter the works of Yasujiro Ozu, we allow ourselves to be transported into a world of eloquent silences, meticulously constructed shots, and deeply human stories. To know this great filmmaker is to open the door to a broader understanding of cinema and the transformative potential of the 7th art.

We hope that the works of Yasujiro Ozu will continue to be celebrated and appreciated and that his legacy will endure as an inspiring beacon for future generations of filmmakers and film lovers. In a world driven by ever-changing images, Ozu's singular contribution is a reminder that beauty and depth can be found in the simplest things and the most subtle moments in life.

We hope every scene, every glance, and every pause in Ozu's films bear witness to the mastery of this great Japanese artist. And that his legacy remains a source of inspiration and learning, revealing to us the true essence of the human condition and the beauty inherent in the small moments that make up our existence. Yasujiro Ozu, the master of Japanese cinema, will continue to shine as an eternal star in the constellation of the cinematic world.



"The Only Son" film scene

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