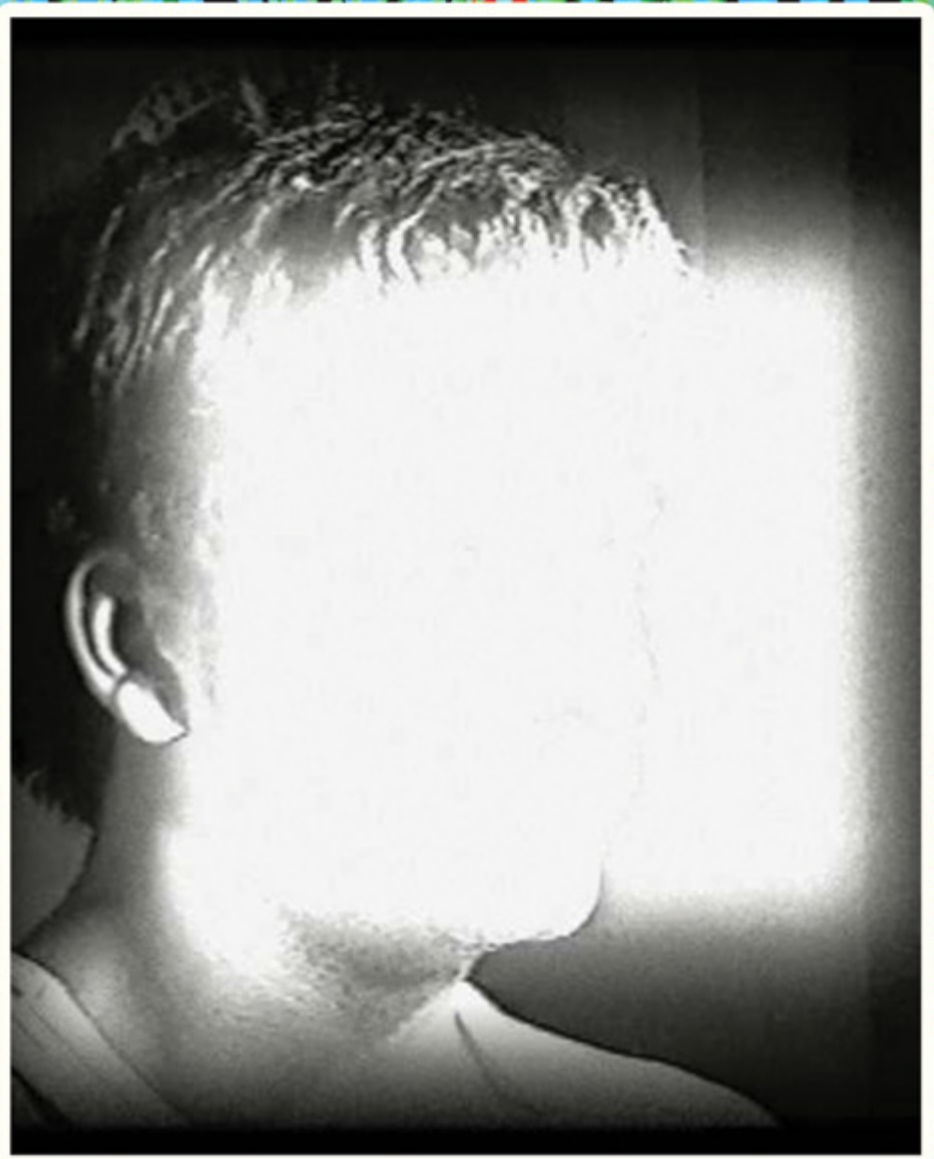


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Hooroo Jackson, Gurcius Gewdner and Maria Ricardo.

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WELCOME TO **FILM PANIC** #3

In this issue of FILM PANIC we interview five contemporary filmmakers, each of whom is creating work that is totally independent both creatively and financially. Each one of them is forging their own path and playing their own part in expanding the possibilities of the art of cinema and, in their own way, continuing the journey that began many years ago with the pioneers of the medium.

On first glance it may seem that these filmmakers have little in common, and on a superficial level this may be true, but when looking at their films side by side, considering their working methods and reading what they have to say about their concerns and interests, it becomes clear that they are all participating in creating films that are very much an expression of the age we live in. The aspirations, dreams, fears and concerns of the modern world are expressed equally by them all, the form and style in each case is quite different but they are all part of expressing the contemporary psyche and all important components of the current cinema landscape. This is especially evident when we consider how each of them has rejected the conventional working methods of industrial cinema as well as what have now become the conventions of experimental and underground cinema, and instead have found ways of making movies that are suited to their particular concerns and personalities. These are not filmmakers who have simply accepted that cinema is this or that and must be done in this or that way, they have sensed there is more still to explore and each ventured into the unknown, following a trail of their own questions. We would argue that, even though their work is rooted firmly in cine-

ma's history, these filmmakers could only be creating these films now, in this way, at this particular moment of the 21st century.

Something that is apparent and different from the majority of the work produced in our time is that not one of them uses their films to make a direct comment on society as it is now. They don't make socio-political statements, they don't condemn society and humankind, and they don't presume to know how things should or shouldn't be. These filmmakers have stepped beyond this. In an age where everybody seems to have an opinion on everything regardless of whether they know what they are talking about or not, these filmmakers are not limiting themselves to commentaries on current affairs, instead they are concerned with investigating and expressing their individual experience and perspective. Each is humble enough to admit they have no answers but strong enough to claim back their right to be their own regulating system, to be true to themselves, to address their own concerns and imaginations, to follow their own rhythms and thus finding an ability to create work that is more profound, further reaching and more potent, and offering it to the audience without imposing on their experience. This is a bold approach, subversive, urgent and important.

These are filmmakers whose work draws us into unique worlds, their films are dreams of the modern age, windows into the state of human consciousness at this moment in time that say more about what it means to be a human being living in the contemporary world than any documentary or realist drama can ever hope to. These artists are

visionaries and unlike most people in the 'art world' they have not lost sight that art is not the arena of ideas but of the imagination!

We know from our own experience of trying to screen films that stand outside of trends, genre and 20th century labels, that work of this kind struggles to find places to be seen. These are films that often slip through the gaps between art and film world categories. The labels 'artist moving image', 'experimental film', 'underground film' and 'independent film' are becoming increasingly irrelevant, and even though those working at universities, festivals, galleries, cinemas and funding organisations cling onto them with dear life, it is time to acknowledge that these categories create restrictions on the free expression of artists making movies. It appears to us that none of the filmmakers featured here worry too hard about where they fit in these categories, they all follow their own creative instincts and make the work that excites them, that is urgent, that they have to make. Their influences come from vast areas of cinema, art and beyond and they feel no shame or fault in who they are and what they create.

And this is really the important point, the key concern for us and the filmmakers featured here and maybe for the 21st century artist in general: to express oneself without shame or fear, to be true to oneself and not fit oneself into some pre-existing box, to not feel that one has to be validated by external systems, to know that you are unique, that you matter, that you are worthy of existence no matter who you are, and that what you think and what you feel is valid. You exist and it is a miracle!

Quite often when we have spoken with other filmmakers at festivals, especially

those working in the UK but we suspect it is the same elsewhere, it becomes depressingly apparent how small their aspirations are. The limited access to funding has created a system in which, rather than being inspired to create a work of art first then seeking the means to make it, the artists look at what opportunities are available and what kind of work gets funded and then create projects that fit into this mould in order to increase their opportunities to receive support. This revolting situation means that the type of work that is made and given value is dictated by funding bodies, which more often than not are run by people who are not artists and have only ever worked in these bureaucratic systems and the world of academia. It is the duty of the artist to resist and reject this system and wage a war on all forms of oppression and censorship.

So what can we do? We can start by doing everything in our power to create personal, idiosyncratic work fueled by our personal interests, obsessions, passions and fears regardless of whether anyone seems interested in what we are making or not. Secondly we can support other artists who are doing the same, seek out those who are following their own path and offer words of support, tell people about their work, interview them, give them a platform from which to speak, screen their work, and participate in celebrating all forms of creativity. This is why we started FILM PANIC, through our screenings, Facebook page and our magazine, this is our own way of celebrating artists making films both past and present.

We hope that you find interest and inspiration in the words printed in these pages.

Thank you for reading.
Daniel & Clara

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROUZBEH RASHIDI



Rouzbeh Rashidi is a filmmaker and the founder of the Dublin based Experimental Film Society. He has been making films since 2000 and his incredible output includes the production of 240 short films and 31 feature films, each one a personal exploration into what cinema is and what it means to be a filmmaker in the 21st century. His latest film *Trailers* (2016), the second part in a trilogy that began with *Ten Years In the Sun* (2015), is his most ambitious film to date, a perplexing, multi-layered sensory experience that transports the viewer into another dimension, where fragments of alien transmissions and visions of sexual rituals carried out by enigmatic figures are relayed through the portal of the cinema screen. With a runtime of three hours and a complex narrative form that at first glance might be considered to be no narrative at all, this film is one that is not easily described but that is best understood through the experience of viewing it.

His last film *Ten Years In The Sun* was a globetrotting journey across the surface of the known planet, it reached into the stratosphere but to the most part remained earth-bound; *Trailers* on the other hand is a cosmic leap into outer-space, but the vessel for this intergalactic or even inter-dimensional voyage is not a rocket ship but the cinema itself! Rouzbeh's passion and obsession for cinema manifests through every film he makes, the line between cinephile and creator fades away as he explores the medium, its technology, language and history in all of his works. *Trailers* continues and deepens these explorations, bringing in a distillation of themes familiar from science fiction, horror and pornographic films, all of which have been brewing in his earlier work.

Trailers begins in a large red cinema, we see Rouzbeh in what is now a reoccurring motif in his work, walking past the camera, into frame and out again. His presence is like that of a magician, marking the space and making clear that the arena for this ritual will be the cinema. The magician archetype is quite fitting, on the one hand it is that mythical historical figure who eventually evolved into the modern scientist, and on the other it is the theatrical stage magician creating illusions who in many ways is an ancestor of the filmmaker, present in early cinema in figures such as Georges Méliès. Either way he is the captain of this ship and the guide on this journey of magic, illusion, mysticism, science and mystery.

The prime focus for much of the film is the cinema screen itself, we see highly saturated multi-layered projections and figures in front of the screen interacting with and being affected by the images that are projected there. Sex seems to be moving to the centre of interest in Rouzbeh's films, in *Trailers* we see cold and somewhat detached sexual acts by expressionless performers. These acts, which appear throughout the film performed by several different couples, are all heterosexual, mundane, devoid of passion and lust and seem to be presenting human figures who perform the actions of male and female sex but with seemingly no real desire attached. They go through the actions as if they are alien and unknown to them, like something copied, maybe seen in a film – the act of sex may once have been of central importance to human creatures but to these figures it seems as if it is a kind of ritual without purpose, a performance severed from the sensory pleasure and maybe even from biological functions. The body seems to have become a wasteland of sorts but the inner life, the visions of the mind and the cinema screen are alive with volatile chemical and cosmic reactions – it seems to me as if this film is about creation, the old biological creation of man and woman has become defunct but another form of cosmic creation is brewing, and in the art of cinema, that marriage of science, technology and imagination, we glimpse the big bang moment with both wonder and horror at this change as it happens.

It almost goes without saying that there is nothing else quite like this film. Rouzbeh is proving to be forging his own path, making distinctly personal films that grow in ambition, skill and vision from one film to the next. You never quite know what experience you will have when sitting down to watch his films but you will always be surprised. His films are never predictable, they are alive and they give to the viewer something that is very rare in 99 percent of films being made today, they give you the possibility to participate in the experience, they challenge you on what your idea of cinema is and can be, and they make you deeply aware of the process of viewing a film. This is not to say the films are only intellectual experiences, in fact they are deeply human, organic creations filled with imagination and personal obsessions and fantasies that provoke the viewer's sensibilities on many levels, and by stepping into these mysterious worlds one is confronted with oneself. This, in our view, makes them outstanding and deeply relevant works of art.

The following text is a transcript of a conversation that we had with Rouzbeh Rashidi in November 2016 following the launch event of Film Panic Presents! in which we screened a collection of short films by the Experimental Film Society and hosted the international premiere of *Trailers*.

If you could start by telling us about the history of the Experimental Film Society, how it came about and how it has evolved and grown into what it is today?

In the late 90's, when I wanted to make films fully – as a filmmaker who committed to only making films and not doing anything else – I found it excruciatingly hard in Iran. In Tehran, where I'm from, I just couldn't find anywhere to make films that didn't necessarily belong to the mainstream, or have very concrete narratives, or purely operate on a sensory level. Not even a college, or anything; you name it, I just couldn't find it. And I was very surprised, because there were small activities here and there, but nothing concrete and condensed. Because I am a very systematic person, I wanted to go somewhere where the mission was to produce such personal experimental films, I just wanted to be part of it and work systematically under that roof. I knew about the existence of, for example, the London Filmmakers Co-op and the Anthology Film Archive and other film collectives around the world such as Lux in London. Things like this, collectives that would support, sometimes produce, sometimes distribute such works, because I always used to read about films and the history behind them and I knew these collectives and activities existed. So I said to myself, 'why not just do it yourself?'; very easily, very casually but practically as well, because I thought if I start doing it, if I planted the seed right now it might grow in the future. I had a vision basically that maybe there are loads of filmmakers like me who are wondering what's happening, why there isn't such a thing in Tehran and Iran, but none of them have enough resources, materials, or courage to just establish something from ground zero.



Experimental Film Society

So I started to pull my resources together and I started first of all to turn the storage room that I had in my house into a very small filmmaking laboratory. It was just a very small room that I turned into a darkroom for photography and for shooting. You couldn't shoot much, you couldn't shoot a full shot of an actor, just a close-up or medium sized shot because it was too small. It was also a screening space where one or two friends could sit and watch stuff on a small TV. But that idea, that there's a space you have, that you can shoot stuff, a little bit of experimental stuff, you could record sound, develop photographs, and also screen films. That kind of idea is the genesis of EFS really, a place, even a mental space rather than a physical one, but the fact that we had it felt so good. So we used to invite my friends to come round and we would do cinematic activities.

Later on I started to research what was happening around me in Tehran, and perhaps other cities, but I'm talking about the pre-internet era and we didn't even have a computer, everything was VHS, and things like this were the best technology that you could get. Film was too expensive for us, way too expensive. There wasn't any Super 8 in Iran back then; there might have been a little bit of 16mm but everything was 35mm industry standard and we couldn't access that. So I



First EFS screening, which took place at Hello Operator, Dublin, in July 2011

started to look at what was available and who was making films and I tried to contact them, but it wasn't very fruitful because they were really only interested in documentary or very mainstream filmmaking or video art where it is put in a gallery on a loop, and I didn't want any of those. I wanted something very specific, underground cinema. I wanted people like Kuchar, you know exactly what they are - they belong to a certain kind of place in the history of cinema - so I wanted those people. So basically I rejected all of those three categories, documentary, mainstream and video art. I love art and I studied it, but I didn't come from a visual art background so video art didn't suit me at all. So I kind of rejected all those and I specifically tried to respond to the history of experimental cinema, and underground cinema, and filmmakers that I loved, and draw inspiration from them and make films. And then later on I found that people at the very first stage just talk around a table, and I realised that nothing ever gets done; it's just talk around a table. All of my decisions, from the very beginning up until this moment, come from the practicality of things rather than from intellectual motivations. I have ideas like we all have ideas; we read, we watch films, we read magazines, we watch TV. We all get information, digest information, but I don't necessarily bring those into the equation of doing things. My

decisions are purely practical because I saw that it's only talk, one person has to do something, the other person has to say something, and nothing ever gets done. So later on when I invited filmmakers I told them in advance, 'Sorry, this is not a democracy, this is what we have to do, are you with me or not? Just tell me right now – we are going to make films; there is a leader, which is me, and I am going to get things done and it's for your benefit and it's for my benefit.'

And some people said 'No, no, we are not part of it' and that was fine and we shook hands and said goodbye, and some people stayed. And to my surprise, this behaviour really worked. It's very strange, you just need someone to come and tell you what to do, and some people respect it and trust you and things get done. And the fact that these filmmakers trusted me, it just gave me a fantastic feeling and also a responsibility to present their films, to make films and to help them, and to help me; so it's a mutual, wonderful feeling of collaboration.

So I operated a little bit on this basis in Iran from 2000 until 2004, we made films, we screened them, and it was very good practice for EFS and how I can run EFS. But at that point we were very young – maybe from when I was 19 until I was about 23 – so no major festivals, or any place in fact, accepted us, it was just always underground. And then when I was 23 I moved to Ireland, in 2004. And it was basically the same thing when I came here, I just didn't find anything of the historical existence of experimental cinema, it was so strange. So I came from a different continent to Europe but I saw the exact same thing, it was unbelievable. I always thought that a European country would be very established and everything would be there, all the libraries ... but it wasn't, it literally wasn't.

So my point is that this cinema, perhaps not in New York or the major cities like London – I don't know, I didn't live in any of those cities – again it's just a notion I have, but in most of the countries and cities of the world the situation is exactly the same. There isn't any kind of place that you could go and start making films, you just have to do it yourself. It's a DIY culture.

So I came here but that experience in Iran really helped me, I knew what to do, I had a formula and I could apply it but I didn't have the language, basically just a few words, so maybe for two years I went into a state of hibernation because I really needed to. I am a person very obsessed with language as well, just one language, English. I am not very good at languages but I just wanted to make this perfect, so I learnt how to read and to write in English and in those two years I didn't produce films much, just one, a documentary about, again, language, which is called *Clay*. The language school that I was going to gave me the resources to make a film because I kept talking about films and stuff, so I made a film with all my classmates. This was my only activity; I just put everything else into hibernation mode.

Then later on I went to college in September 2005 and I met Jann Clavadetscher who is a Swiss filmmaker. He had just moved from Switzerland to Ireland and that kind of relationship with two of us again brought back the EFS days in Iran. As long as you are two then it can start to grow again. So I met Jan and we did a two year course together, and then later on we went to another college, where I met Dean Kavanagh, and then later on I met Maximilian Le Cain. I am one of those people who's always researching - in libraries and film archives back then, and later online - who's doing what, what kind of amateur filmmakers are doing what kind of activities. So through seeking members for EFS, I found Michael Higgins and later on I

found Max. 2008-2009, was a very important period because I was going back into full production again, producing films and occasionally I had random screenings here and there at festivals. But with festivals, the way they operate is they select one film, then another film and there is no harmony of curation in these programmes, so you go and watch some films and they might be good but they don't resonate with each other, they don't compliment each other and everything gets lost. So I always really hated this sort of film presentation, to the point of even being discouraged as to why these festivals don't give me satisfaction. So I wanted to take full control of that as well. I just wanted a programme of short films that was carefully constructed and designed and the only way I could do it was with EFS. Again I thought to myself, 'why not just do it?' I could go through the festival thing but I just didn't want to, so in 2011 we started to put on our own screenings with EFS. I had enough members and I had enough friends: from Iran, from Ireland, from all over the world – back then we had members from Canada, Australia, Spain, you name it – so the archive was growing. I could go to the archive, select films, nice and easy, to test them and see if they worked together and then I could just put on the screenings. Up to now EFS has had 70 screenings all over the world, and this is ever increasing. And the quality is getting better and the way we present our films is much better. Basically that is a very brief foundation of what EFS was and is today.

You have chosen the name Experimental Film Society, I wonder if you could say a few words about what the term 'experimental film' means to you and maybe how your thoughts about that term have evolved and changed as well?

Yes, it's a very good question because I don't necessarily think I am an experimental filmmaker, I am just a filmmaker, but I just could



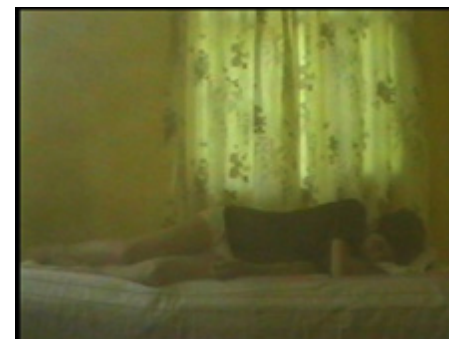
Still from *Nucleus* (2000)



Still from *Feel So Close* (2002)



Still from *Spring Day* (2000)



Still from *Etude For Oily Water* (2003)

not find any... Perhaps I can say it this way: I couldn't just say I am a documentary filmmaker or a mainstream filmmaker; the closest category I could relate to was experimental filmmaker. In the beginning I didn't even know the films I was making were experimental, I just started to... I remember I had a bunch of records, because I am very heavily into music and I collect music, so maybe since I was ten or so I started to collect records. When I was 18 I sold many of those records and I bought a VHS camera, it wasn't even a full VHS, it was called a VHSc, small tapes. So I got the camera and a tripod and I started to make films, very, very freely.

I saw things that I liked and I'd film them; always sensory. I didn't even know they were experimental films, I thought that's film, just simple, a film. And to this day I still feel the

same. I don't exactly know what they are; I really can't fully understand these categories, they are very abstract to me because it is so strange to label something experimental or narrative, because everything, as Raúl Ruiz says, is narrative. Every film in the history of cinema is narrative to a certain degree and the image always determines that, not the other way around. There is always narrative, so to me you might say that a film like *Rear Window* by Hitchcock is narrative but a film by Paul Sharits is not, but I don't believe that; they're both equally narrative, they both equally belong to the history of cinema and they are both equally made for an audience. Something like Hitchcock might get more exposure because of its format, because of the way it is made, but it is not necessarily in the DNA and genesis of those films, they both belong to anyone, anywhere and any system. So

I always believed that. Choosing the Experimental Film Society, sometimes you have to be... not wanting to say political, but clever in order to help yourself and the people around you, so I chose that name because I wanted to put out the message that what we do is different, a very simple idea from day one: this is different, it is not necessarily a mainstream film. When the audience comes to these screenings or when they watch these films, they will understand that this is something a bit different, a bit more challenging. So I thought back then that maybe Experimental Film Society was a good name. Obviously, it is film, experimental and society, because there's a couple of us. I always had this vision that it would be like a film club like Cinema 16 with Amos Vogel, or Anthology Film Archive, Peter Kubelka and Jonas Mekas or that gang, a group of filmmakers that gather together and make these films, things like this. So I always had this kind of vision and I specifically chose that name to send a message saying what we are about, but it's also kind of vague as well. It's big when you say Experimental Film Society; it covers a whole big ground of filmmaking, so that was the idea behind it.

I think we should go on now and talk specifically about your own films. Let's start right at the beginning before you were even making films; what were the first films you remember seeing that really attracted you when you were very young, and when did your love of cinema begin?

Watching films has always been a very big part of my life but back then, when I was very young and as a child, I was heavily, and still am to this day, into cartoons and animation and obviously there is stuff that we all watched on TV. So I watched those, but in Iran back then, and still, all of those films are banned and prohibited. You cannot watch them on TV, the only way you could watch them was by these guys who would bring VHS films to your house in big cases. So we al-

ways had this man coming with three or four Samsonite cases, he used to come into our house and open them out, it was like a portal, the labels of strange films, and he would explain, he was like a talking Wikipedia this guy, he'd say things like 'This is *The Shining* by Kubrick, this is a horror film in a hotel'. He would just give you things, that narration still rings in my head.

So this guy would come and explain things, and he had another case for kids with lots of colours. It was just so strange to me... I really loved that, the genesis of my cinephilia. Even as an object, this case, these synopses and these stories, even before watching the films. I loved this guy, just listening to him. So he brought loads of films, he brought Hollywood action like Steven Segal's films, to Bruce Lee to Hitchcock to Kubrick, and a little bit of, for example, art-house, to Ingmar Bergman, to Godard, and a little bit of the Far East like Kurosawa. He covered these kinds of areas. So I used to watch films, everything my parents had. I remember my aunty, she really loved films, back then she had good taste. So everything they took I would watch, I just didn't mind. But one thing that I really, really loved was Ray Harryhausen's films. I just watched those films every day. The man used to come every two weeks so I'd watch them every day, these kind of fantasy and dream-like worlds, the films that all kids love, you know. So I watched those heavily, I watched cartoons heavily but also there was a couple of films that really, really shook me. I remember when I was very young I watched *Rocco And His Brothers* by Visconti. To this day that film is one of the greatest ever made in my view. It's a very realist film, it's very long, almost 3 hours, with music by Nino Rota. So that film really captured my imagination, something that has these characters in the rain and very low-key imagery. And I didn't understand what they were saying, it didn't even have subtitles so language-wise it was just a complete blank, but just the sense of



Stills from Reminiscences Of Yearning (2011)

being in this location, these ruins of post-war Italy. At the time I didn't know but the imagery, the destructive behaviour of the character, the guys boxing, and they both fell in love with the same girl and beat the shit out of each other. So I was always wondering about

this ambiguity, layers of not understanding things; to this day I always try to bring that as well to my films, something that you see and don't fully understand but nevertheless it affects you so much. If an Italian person saw this it would have been different for them but



Still from Zoetrope (2011)

I saw this film basically as an alien, and to this day I always try to keep this concept, an alien comes to your house and brings an object from another world. I always kept this in all of my films, this unwanted aesthetic, because I didn't want it, it was forced upon me, I didn't have any choice. It was the only way I could relate to cinema. So I kept that. I occasionally watched Iranian films, but very rarely, especially films after the revolution; they didn't affect me at all. I just couldn't watch women in veils, and I always resented that somehow, because in Iran women have to wear hijab. I just couldn't watch those films. I grew up in a very open-minded family; we are not religious at all. We are not political either, but I just couldn't relate to what had been happening in Iranian society. I prefer to watch films from before the revolution, before the time that this extreme religious fanatic came to our country, so I don't have much affinity with what has been going on in Iran. So it was always like something alien, I don't call it foreign, I prefer to call it alien, something that has been transmitted with this tape. That's why to this day that I still love VHS so much, it is something that you can physically hold,

you can put it there, you can fast forward, you can wind it back and record, it is just a very intimate format, I love it.

When I grew up, when I was 18 or so, I would collect VHS tapes. I collected around 2000 VHS before I left for Ireland. It is a very specific format. Later on I did a one year course in filmmaking in Iran and I got these encyclopaedias of films and I responded to them, and would find films based on them so this cinephilia has always been there, it's a very morphed aspect of my filmmaking. It's just one thing, there's not cinephilia and filmmaking, it's just one thing. I constantly bring that into the films I make.

We have covered a bit about how you started to make films but what specifically was the first film you made?

When I was watching all these films I thought 'why not make one?' So I started to make it, but the only way of doing it back then was – well to this day even, nothing has changed – you have to go and rent equipment. This is something that is not cinematic, it is some-



Still from Investigating The Murder Case Of Ms. XY. (2014)

thing about the way I am, I just didn't want to talk to anyone or rely on anyone, or ask anyone for help, I just wanted to have my own camera, my own tripod and I would go off and shoot stuff. So I sold a couple of those records that I collected and I bought a camera and I started to record things. See things and record things, like all of us, like any filmmaker, I would use my family and friends as cast and crew. It was always these twisted narratives, very dream-like universes. Music is also very important for me. I am heavily, heavily influenced by the German school of electronic music from the 70's, people like Klaus Schulze, Tangerine Dream, or Manuel Göttsching, or Astral Temple, or Johannes Schmoelling, those very dream-like spaces and cosmos; that's very important. But also loads of progressive rock from the 70's, Pink Floyd, King Crimson, Genesis, Yes, Jethro Tull, and Led Zeppelin, who tell stories about Hobbits and ghosts, and things like that have always been there.

Later on I went through a small phase of realism with people like Bresson and Ken Loach but that was very brief. I am a person that

wants to explore things and to see if it works for me, and if it doesn't work I move on to the next phase.

So I started to make films, I started to do these things, always with these twisted narratives. There were strange things happening, and it was audio-visual, heavily audio-visual. I didn't have any sense of script and I always knew at the very beginning that I couldn't illustrate a text, I just didn't understand this process. It's the way I was and still am, and I couldn't just write something and replace it with images. For example, take one line: 'There is a window and a man comes in'. I couldn't show a window and a man coming in, I just couldn't; I had to be in the location. I have to see things and detect them, scan them, see them and film them, and later on in post-production create the final film. It might be worth mentioning that for the first two or three years I didn't have an editing suite, and like so many of us I did all my editing inside the camera. I would do one shot and then I'd have to do another shot and when the film was finished I would take the tape and play it on the TV and the film was there. It wasn't

good editing, it had loads of flaws, but I think this sense of shooting too much... Video and digital gives you this opportunity, but I think I am very linked to the history of cinema in that sense because I don't shoot much. I am very specific and very meticulous about what I want, and that comes from film because film is a very expensive material so I always had that, maybe subconsciously. I didn't know it then but now I could say that it comes from that aesthetic. For two or three years I didn't even have a computer, so later on I got a computer and I re-edited those films. And that is something that's very important... I don't do it anymore, not for the past two years, but for years whatever I made I broke down, turned into pieces and reworked. There is this wonderful Spanish filmmaker, Adolfo Arrieta, and what he does is he always goes back to his films, changes them, switches them around and makes new versions of them, just like a continuous work until he dies. Obviously I know about these things now, but back then I didn't know. So there are some conclusions from the history of cinema that we automatically arrive at, loads of other people are doing the same thing, but later when you grow up you understand 'Oh this was this, this was that'. You understand that we have a very clear vision, but back then I didn't understand why I was obsessed with destroying those films, something you made, something you screened, some people liked it, some people hated it. Fine, but I just wanted to change it and do a few more things, so for years I did that. The HomoSapiens Project comes from that sensibility, that understanding of what cinema is. Something that is an unknown field of art, that is one hundred years old, heavily technical, heavily industrial. And to this day we really don't know what it is. You have to break things in a constant state of re-invention. So that is maybe why I chose the word 'experimental' as well. There are loads of practical things but it is very important that I didn't know any of this - it is not a conscious decision. It's as if you're in the wild and you

have to survive - I look at it this way - a very basic instinct of surviving in the wild like very early humans, you have to survive in this constant state of fear, you don't know what the world is, you are just in the cave and you have to go out and hunt the rabbit and come back and feed your family. I look at cinema in this primitive way, I don't know what it is, I really don't understand fully what it is, but I try to survive it rather than be an artist. It's a very tricky word; sometimes when you say 'I am not an artist' people say 'so what are you?' but I don't like that, I prefer to be in a state of unknowing rather than be labelled. I could never say like Tarkovsky or Bresson that I'm making high art; I love those guys madly but I don't look at cinema that way. I love all cinema, everything that has been made I'll watch it, some of them are horrific in my view, some are utter masterpieces, some are ok but there is always one or more good scenes, nice things about everything. So I prefer to be in a state of not knowing and constantly being alert to discovery.

Your most recent film is *Trailers*, let's talk about your approach to making this film and the type of film that *Trailers* is compared to those first films. What are the similarities? What things are constant from when you very first started to what we can see in *Trailers*, but also how is it different from these early films?

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that at the beginning, when I started to make films, they were short films. Like any filmmaker, I made loads of short films - in fact 240 of them - but from the very beginning I knew that I needed longer durations because the very first films that I saw were features, I didn't see short films. So that feature-length format, I just loved it so much. So I always made short films but I only looked at them as sketches and practices and as tests, errors, and trials. These short films for me are essential and they needed to be done but I look at them



Stills from *Forbidden Symmetries* (2014)

as scientific research, I always tell this and I love this: I look at myself and my cinema as someone like Baron Frankenstein. You write something and you create this monstrosity, which behaves as if it were alive but it is not alive, it is just bits and pieces from different parts of cinema. And then I make a body, like the monster, and the brain is always going

wrong, my films are like that. This sense of science is there, the art is there, and the creature is there. I am always in this constant state of mind. Anyway it's just a metaphor I like to use a lot.

Short films were ok, but I started to make my first feature film in 2002, and to this day I have

made 31 feature films and none of them are exactly alike and the same. It is always changing, I tried so many different formats – I could go through them but it would take a very long time. Anyway the film that you specifically mentioned, *Trailers*, because I am very interested in science fiction and the scientific aspect of cinema, the craft and technique and skill are extremely important for me... I started with photography, I used to develop my own photographs, and how the lens worked, everything, the mechanism of cinema has always been very important to me, how you react with this machine and apparatus, everything. So science fiction again, is extremely important. In 2014 I made a film called *Forbidden Symmetries*, it is a collaborative feature film with Maximilian Le Cain and Dean Kavanagh.



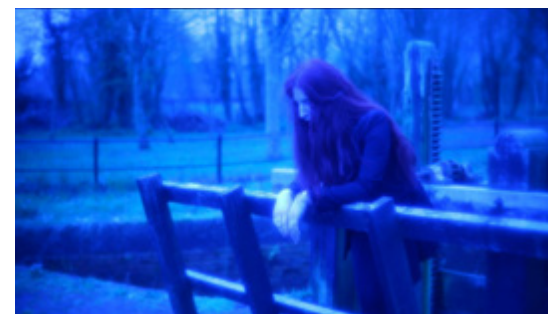
Stills from *Jean Speck (1860-1933) (2011)*

So that was the initiation of a series of works, then I made another film called *Investigating The Murder Case Of Ms. XY*, another science fiction film. I shot it in Germany in one day and added a few more scenes later on and then I edited it. And then in 2015 another film called *Ten Years in the Sun* with zero budget, again investigating the relationship between the history of cinema, science, and how you react to the machinery of cinema. Hollis Frampton says 'Cinema is a machine made of images', that one phrase, still to this day, really makes me think, and it just goes to infinity. Again I mentioned earlier to you guys about Roger Corman's *The Man With The X-Ray Eyes*. That concept has always been there, something that you can see but you just can't handle. So sometimes you block it because it is just too much truth and reality, or even lies, I don't know, I always look at cinema that way, something that can go to infinity and then back in time; I just want to test this limit. As I am sure you saw there is this in *Trailers*, where you see this whole extreme

of space, then you come back to the object and to the lives and to the different stuff, the history of cinema. There is always that, responding to this concept, what are images, how much you can assemble images and how much you can juxtapose, how much you can add colours, how much you can play with sound: the limits of this medium, because it has limitations you know, it has very defined limitations.

For example Paul Sharits went to the extreme of what celluloid cinema can be, and for instance how much flicker you can endure. But I did not want to operate in that level of gallery and I just wanted to make something even for multiplex. So *Trailers* comes from this sensibility and aesthetic, and this type of digesting what cinema is and can be, and it's about its limitations as well.

It's interesting because when we look at the films we can clearly understand how



Stills from *HSP: There Is No Escape From The Terrors Of The Mind (2013)*

those investigations are present, and how you have a quite rational and practical way of working through materials. But the thing about the films, certainly the three most recent ones, is that they are actually visionary experiences and the imagination is operating on full power, we are transported to a magical world. So I am just wondering about that side of the process, how the imagination plays into it and how these kinds of images come to you.

It's a good question because I don't control the film at all, it controls me. This is something that really needs to be said and the reason I am saying it is because it's all being created within the process. I started to work with these devices and cameras and lenses and filters; I am a very technical person, just having a studio and playing with things. There is this wonderful Spanish filmmaker, José Val del Omar, and he sees cinema as a laboratory, that's what it is, you surround yourself by gadgets, objects and things and you start to kind of play with them and magnificent results will come; and you don't know exactly, but you are just like this medium, there is another dimension and you just open this portal and it comes through you to this other portal... It's a scientific medium but it also goes through you, you have to pass on your attribution to this energy as well. And you always get that, it is something very mystical and strange, perhaps ancient even. I don't know what it is. It's very important, I really don't know.

In a way, I think you are allowing that vision to come through and are able to answer it because you have been working with a craft and developing techniques. If you didn't have the skills to actually express that thing, it wouldn't go anywhere.

Absolutely, totally, and the portal wouldn't even be open if you didn't have this skill. You need the skills, but I am not saying everyone should go and be extremely technical, you don't necessarily have to have this, you can do it by narrative, by script, there are loads of ways, but it's just the type of film I'm making. I really don't want to discard other types

of cinema as well. It is just one means of expression and there is other magnificent, valid cinema out there as well. I just want this to be clear – that there are so many different cinemas and all cinema... one type of cinema is like this, and it can be like anything else, and they are both equally amazing and magnificent and they can open portals, different portals as well, for you to travel within this imaginary fictional realm. And I think it is all fiction. Personally speaking, I don't believe documentary can exist, everything is fiction, everything is subjective, it goes through you. You are not just some CCTV somewhere, you have a say about things, you play them along, switch them around so that once you do this you are telling it. You know, I hate this word storytelling. Because you express something perhaps, or you tell something, or you share your experience, some of these are more fictionalised, and you could say perhaps they are close to a story, but some of them are very audio-visual and sensory, so you have to kind of engage with them in that sense. It's like what Béla Tarr said, 'Every single story has been told'. There aren't any more stories for us, so we have to understand the world based on this audio-visual sensory level of cinema, and what that does is it gives you three hours of extreme black on white, or ten minutes or... they all have different sensibilities, each person, each filmmaker has a unique way of saying things so I think it is very important to understand.

For me it has always been extremely technical, and about engaging the history of cinema, science fiction... I love horror and science fiction so much. There are always these elements of terror, unknown sources of terror; like David Lynch's films, there's this sense of terror but you don't know where it comes from. There is always this sense of dread and unease and being terrorised or hunted by some beings and stuff in my films, this sense of anxiety and alienation. Obviously I am an immigrant as well, I could have made a film

simply about this, but... perhaps *There Is No Escape From The Terrors Of The Mind* is a response to what immigration looks like. It's very much a manifestation of those thoughts, but I just couldn't make a film about being an immigrant in Ireland. To me this is the most stupid thing to do ever. I might get loads of awards at festivals, but you have to be very honest with what you do. This is what I am, I am not a likeable person most of the time, and my films are like that. I don't necessarily think, to be honest, that films should give pleasure. Sometimes you have to torture the audience, sometimes you have to offend them, sometimes you have to provoke them, sometimes you have to entertain them, it's just a collection of emotions and feelings. Like us. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes we are sad; films operate in exactly the same way, because it comes from you, from your mind, and films are like this. But there is this notion that sometimes people think it always has to be about hard narrative, it always has to be about entertainment, it always has to be about commenting on some socio-political issues – no, it doesn't. It's just as if you have a friend, you see him sometimes, sometimes he pisses you off, sometimes he loves you. It's like this, it's like a very strange, complex person, or being, or it. I don't know what it is. A collection of emotions, feelings, and thoughts.

Can we talk a bit about how you work with your performers because I think that the use of performers is quite important in your work. We've talked about your exploration of technology but actually when we look at your work the performers are really quite central in many ways.

Again, if you want to talk about the fact that I have made so much, I think that there are periods, each different from the other. My early films, especially in two or three of them, I was really responding to a Bressonian and Bazinian kind of cinema, this austere sense

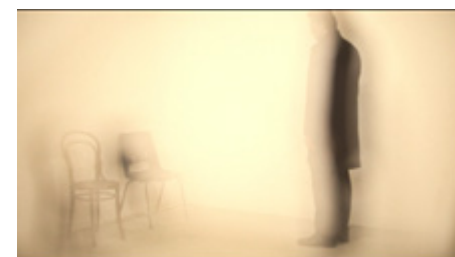
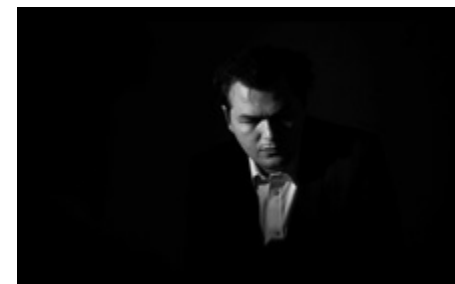
of direction and limitation of camera, and kind of rehearsed almost direction for the actors, synchronised sound. This kind of, not realism – because I never made films like that, I never constructed reality – it's always heavily fictionalised, heavily juxtaposed. So for those I used non-professional actors and very flat acting, again, those films were heavily influenced by Bresson, Dreyer. Then later on I discarded that – not discarded – I just moved to a different phase and I started to work with a form of essay film. I started to work with the footage that I had gathered in Iran – three or four feature films came out of that, going back through the footage, working something from it like a séance basically, to see what the footage could offer. So I played with people like Chris Marker or Jean Rouch, Chantal Akerman, because she has done loads of video installations, going back to the old footage and bringing them back to the gallery. Then later on I moved on from that because I got a little bit of funding from the Arts Council and I started to make films in response to people like Philippe Garrel or – what's the best way to describe it – a bit more advanced from the earlier stages, not necessarily that the films are better or worse, but a bit more advanced, more of a controlled environment. And then, maybe in 2011, it was a time when I specifically collaborated with James Devereaux, and I brought him to Ireland, and we decided we were going to make a series of feature films because I always loved these intense friendships or relationships between actors and filmmakers, like DeNiro and Scorsese, Federico Fellini and Marcello Mastroianni, Akira Kurosawa and Toshiro Mifune. They went through decades of films; I really wanted to do that for myself and I did it in a very short period of time, in four years. We produced seven films so I am glad – of course Scorsese and DeNiro did eight so we have one more to go! It was about the extreme limit of improvisation because I didn't write any script for them. I brought James over, I didn't tell him anything, and I had funding as well,



Still from *Closure Of Catharsis* (2011)

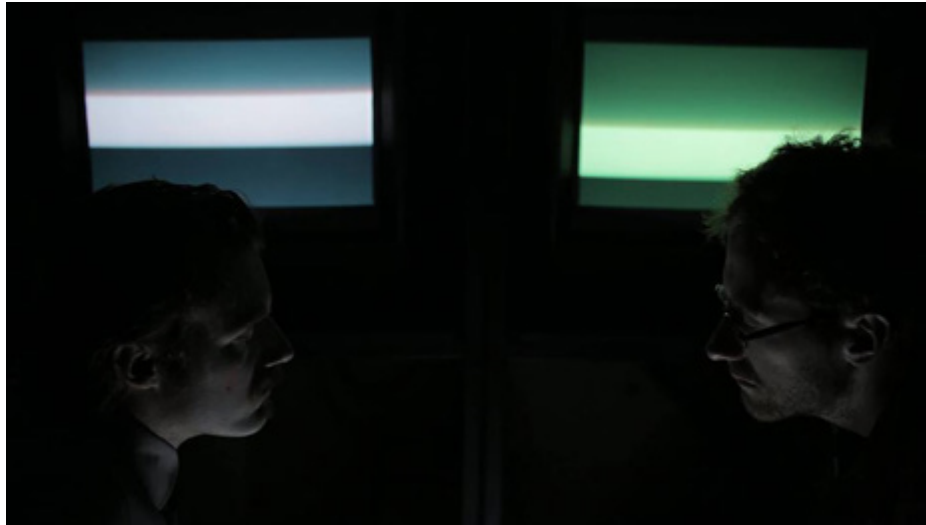


Still from *Boredom Of The Disgust & Monotony Of The Tediousness* (2013)



Two stills from *He* (2012)

so it had to be more structured but I just took risks. I told him one hour before the filming, this film is about suicide, I am talking about a film called *He* (2012). It's a very important film for me. I wanted to make a film about



Still from *Ten Years In The Sun* (2015)

suicide because I lost two of my dear friends who unfortunately committed suicide and they talked to me about it, and I knew they would do it. So I had loads of information in my head but we didn't write anything down, but I kind of used that as a point of departure and I worked with him, I told him what they told me, and I left him to his own devices. I am very much like John Cassavetes, you don't direct the film, you create an atmosphere and that atmosphere directs the film itself. The role of the director is to create this strange, bizarre, unusual atmosphere, this chaotic thing, and each person has a different approach. So I created the very strange thing for James, I put him into that atmosphere and I set the camera and he started to talk and act and every ten minutes I stopped him and gave a little bit of direction, but it's very important for me to just trust someone and to give them full control of what they can be. We made a two-hour feature film with *He*. So I think it is an extreme way of making films, not having a script, but also working with language as well, because it is two hours of talk and dialogue and monologue. I had made three films before that, I tested this. I made

a film called *Closure Of Catharsis*, which was a film made in response to the Remodernist Manifesto, about just one guy, for two hours on a bench in a park, just seeing things and talking with the audience and reporting. I layered the film with ambiguity, cut to some very strange scenery but his voice is always there so there is this layering. I made another film called *Boredom Of The Disgust & Monotony Of The Tediousness* about this actor who is in this house, and he is obsessed with the history of cinema, and he talks about methods of acting and what cinema is for him, but at the same time we see loads of images physically, in the house, being projected behind him. He's not always aware of them, sometimes he's aware, sometimes he understands them, sometimes he doesn't see them. And then I made *He*. So this series of films is very important, but also with each actor or performer I create this atmosphere and put them in these situations and they start to respond. I really give them full creative freedom, sometimes I demand things, but at the end it is really about... if you have full control of one aspect, which is the technical camera and sound, you can be a bit more play-



Stills from *Ten Years In The Sun* (2015)

ful with the other aspects. It's always about this combination, you have to have control of maybe 75 percent, and 25 percent of random and chance and things like this, I really want to use this formula. Sometimes I change the edges of things but it is always this combination. For me shooting has more improvisation and playfulness than editing, editing for me is completely mathematical, very structured, very thoughtful; I always had this. I don't play around, I don't improvise on editing, it is very logical. And the way I work with actors and performers is like this, I give them full creative control, I give them whatever they want, and they respond to that and then I bring it to the edit and I treat it as mathematics, something very mathematical, so that improvisational thing has enough attribution to give me creativity in post-production.

When you say that your editing is very mathematical, do you mean that for example for each film you will think up a specific way or a structure for how you will approach the editing?

For each specific film I always try to come up

with a singular solution.

Like a formula?

Like a formula, yeah. For each film it's different, and also I am very obsessed with numbers and duration, because I love music you know, I have a series of shots there and I go back to the next one and the duration of shots, I work with numbers a lot. Sometimes I even cut based on numbers rather than the visual side, it's very strange, but there is always a combination; if there's a five minute shot in there I have to use another five minute shot somewhere else, so it is kind of harmonious, almost like Bach, there's something very baroque to it as well. It's a very mathematical kind of editing. Sometimes I see that there is a need, that the image has ran out of energy, but the formula says to me that it has to go a little bit longer. Sometimes I do it, so I don't mind just keeping it, sometimes I have to be shorter, I don't know. It is just a combination of these two, but mostly it is very logical, rigidly structured. In production I'm very open; if there is a volcano erupting or something going on I don't cut it, I try to film it. Anything might happen, so I try to be very responsive, because the way we work and make films – we don't have money, we can't demand anything, we cannot be like Kurosawa in *Ran* and order hectares of land to be painted green, we can't do this. So we have to be open to life and we can salvage material from life and bring it back. But in editing it is just us and a laptop most of the time, we can be godlike, we can be very rigid and demanding.

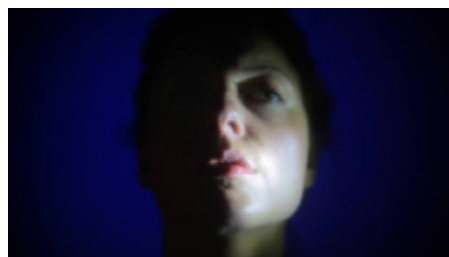
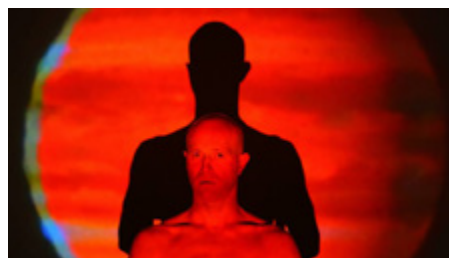
So on Trailers what kind of formulas and solutions did you find for the edit?

For *Trailers* a great deal of the film was shot in the studio, and that created a very strange unity in the footage so the editing was actually not too hard. It wasn't time consuming, I did it very fast, maybe one and a half months, two months maximum for polishing

and stuff but somehow it is just very magical, and I love it when this happens. You shoot stuff, shooting for me is not magical I must say, it is a very practical thing, it is the very flesh of the movie you know, it's not poetic for me, but editing always is. I start editing and things just flow, I can bring things from the timeline and see that they really work, so I just chop them down and put them together, it really creates itself. Sometimes I am even – and maybe it is very stupid, and it could even sound like a crappy, religious statement – but I am almost in a state of trance, but you can be in a state of trance even by listening to very noisy music... but the film gave me this feeling, so I was just doing things, I don't remember so much now but I was so much into it that it really helped me. I am really cautious of not sounding like some crappy spiritual guy, I hate these things... I really love Tarkovsky but he has this kind of religious side to his films of God and man and this stuff, but I don't want to go into that, but it really was something very strange; I can't explain it, and it's in the film as well. And even now I have seen it twice since it was finished, because you are always an audience yourself of your film, it's very important to realise this, you are always an audience as a creator, but it really surprised me. I kind of assembled the film as a mutant, that changes itself as it ages. So eventually we die and the films exist, but they will die because civilisation will collapse as everything, but it could be billions of years, I don't know. But the fact that you created this thing that could operate in its own right and that has loads of views in it as well, I think it's something very wonderful.

Tell us how the sound and music comes about, especially how it was for *Trailers*.

Ten Years In The Sun and *Trailers* are heavily connected. Basically, I planned to make a trilogy. I've made two parts of it so far, and they share many tactics and technical and audio-visual approaches. For these two, I want-



Stills from Trailers (2016)

ed to play with the idea that we as a civilisation were just like an aircraft, they all have black boxes, and if something happens, an unfortunate situation or circumstance, they would go back to that black box and find out what has happened and what caused this collapse, what caused this unfortunate event. This idea is so strange to me: you go to the black box, you hook it up to the computer and you get information about passengers, of humans, or faults. So I thought to myself 'why not just bring this into the cinema?' A specific race or species of aliens lived, memorised, and gathered information into this hard-drive or box and then they were wiped out, extinct, finished. But another civilisation could come and just try to tune into this box, to this strange entity, not necessarily fully



Still from Trailers (2016)

grasping what it is, not necessarily fully understanding what it's all about, but kind of tuning, like a radio. You turn this knob and you get some frequencies you don't understand. And I used loads and loads of different languages in *Trailers*, Armenian for example. Some of them are extinct languages, I don't understand them but I used them. Some linguist might understand some of it, but that person wouldn't understand the other parts; there are so many, it's impossible, maybe only a supercomputer could understand all of it, but even then I fragmented the narrative so it doesn't make sense. So we can never fully grasp it. I really want to play with that idea and also that thing that Gilles Deleuze said: 'Bring something incomprehensible to this universe, something into the art, something that you can't fully grasp, there is always a mystery!' So I tried to play with that and I wanted to create the sound like a radio, a giant cosmic space station radio, something that has all these frequencies going on all around the cosmos and sometimes you can tune in to it and you hear voices from the past and strange dialogue or sounds, and everything. That's how the idea of the sound came

about.

I recorded loads of sound and I gathered loads of sounds and I heavily, heavily processed them in post-production. There isn't a single line of sound that hasn't been processed, the frequencies have been changed. I always try to put my stamp on whatever I do, like, 'this is me, I did this!' I have a problem with being objective: it doesn't exist, you have to process and 'subjectivise' whatever you do. I tried to tune in to this strange device we have, and we try to understand what it is. There are similarities between that alien race and us, and there are these grotesque, burlesque sexual things and the whole world is falling apart; there are strange creatures from the past, and then suddenly it cuts to this supercomputer talking with lights. And there are loads of references to the history of cinema. Like sounds from different films that I used, from Jess Franco, from Mario Bava, from Jean Rollin, like all this strange horror cinema, the music echoes back from those films. Because I really think that when you watch a film, where do they go after? It is like a food: you eat, you digest and you defecate. Images



Still from *Homo Sapiens Project 157* (2013)

are like this as well, you know, you see them, you consume them, some of them must go out of your system and some of them get stuck in your system as well.. It's the same thing. So with *Trailers* I wanted to play around with this, how to digest images, how to comprehend the image. Is it really comprehensible, or is it just something very strange, a talisman from the past that you don't understand? The whole film is this black box and each person can tune into it and can get information. There's loads of information, loads and loads of information, loads and loads of scenes, sounds. It's full-on, a three-hour wall of sound and a sea of images; it's a very immersive experience.

One of the things that was interesting on seeing the film a second time was that scenes were happening in a different place to where I remembered them happening. Things that I thought were going to happen earlier in the film actually occurred much later. Structurally it was different to how I remembered it from the first experience and I really feel like it is a film that actually you could watch ten times and

each time would be a totally different experience.

I would hope so. If this happens I will be very happy because I designed it this way, as a mutant; something that is constantly progressing or maybe regressing, I don't know, there are both ways.

Constantly in flux.

Yes, changing, absolutely, changing, changing, changing. I think that the mission of art is not necessarily to progress, sometimes you have to go back, to those pioneers of cinema, Lumière, Porter, Méliès, go back to the origins, see what was happening there, and then come back. I don't believe that artists should necessarily be progressive; they could be regressive as well. I made a film called *Jean Speck* about this man who opened the very first cinema in Zurich. He was a shoe seller, and he decided to be a cinema owner but he made a tremendous contribution towards cinema. I just love these pioneers so much, especially Méliès. Perhaps if I was going to go to a desert island I would choose Méliès,

I don't know, or Buster Keaton, but again it would definitely be from the silent era, someone who just experimented with this medium, who gave it all, destroyed his life and put it out there. They all had tragic endings you know, very sad lives. So with *Trailers* I wanted to go back to the origins, to Lumière, Méliès, to all those guys, and then go also to the future as well. Something with this balance. And when you said it looks different, I am happy because even for me it functions the same, I can't control it, it is like a wild child now, out in the world doing little things. Hopefully it will behave, I don't know.

I think this idea is present in so many of the things that you are saying but in the experience of the film as well, where the work exists in a dimension of non-linear time. It's like all the events of the film are superimposed on each other and rather than travelling horizontally through the film, it is more like we take vertical jumps, it is like we are time-travelling.

Yeah, yeah absolutely.

Your next film, what do you think will be the next project?

I always have two or three projects to work on, but again, since 2008 when I started to make films as my main practice, I just went through loads and loads of different phases, but now since *He, Terrors Of The Mind, Ten Years In The Sun and Trailers*, I came to the point where I really need a budget unfortunately, because I have done so much, I ran out of tricks within the world of underground and experimental cinema and I am not really one of those people who would enjoy repeating themselves, like Woody Allen who is always the same, he would enjoy it, that's fine. I like some of them, I resent some of them, but I cannot be that kind of filmmaker. My films are always different to each other, there must be a sense of evolution in my films, which doesn't mean



Poster for *Homo Sapiens Project 200: The End Of An Era - Entertaining The Invalid*, coming soon.

the film is good, but for me it has to be that. So I need a bit more of a controlled environment, a bit more of a budget, a few more resources to play with, actors and actresses, a bolder situation, where I want to use bolder subjects and behaviours.

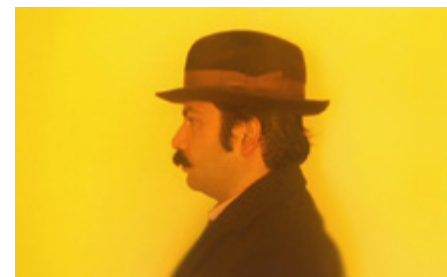
So there is this film called *Phantom Islands* that I am hoping to make in Ireland but it requires a very big budget. Then there's another film which is the third part of the trilogy after *Ten Years In The Sun* and *Trailers*. It's another kind of epic science fiction, with very similar ideas but in a much more controlled environment with loads of back projection and green screen and things like this, and this one will have some sort of dialogue as well, with interaction between the actors, but not much, it will be heavily fragmented. So these two are perhaps my next move. But I want to see how I can, if I get funding that's fine but if I don't get funding, I have to find

ways to get some sort of in-kind support but basically I need support. It's very important to mention this, because I'm just a little bit tired of going and doing these zero budget films; I've done 31 feature films, 3 of them are supported, fully funded, but I cannot do any more zero budgets. I could do some small collaborative projects with members of EFS, that's fine, where I contribute 20, 30 minutes, or maximum 40 minutes of things and that's fine, those films are very nice, I really want to keep them going. But for my own personal projects I need support. I really reached that point and I don't mind waiting. Because I have done so much I can focus my time on screening those with the EFS structure, so I just have to wait and see what happens.

And what is coming up in the future with EFS?

The last two years have been very good for us in terms of screenings, occasional funding and things like that so I really want to keep it going. We are planning a series of retrospectives of EFS works in Ireland next year, where I want to show loads and loads of projects that we have produced in a compressed amount of time, some time before the summer. I also want to help other members of EFS such as Atoosa Pour Hosseini, Esperanza Collado, Maximilian Le Cain and Michael Higgins to do a series of expanded cinema events. My time is always used up because I have lots of other projects as well as EFS. I am looking forward to collaborating with The Underground Film Studio next year and I think this will be a very interesting joint collaboration. As always, I am looking for new countries and new territories to explore. We had a series of events in Iran in 2015, and I want to do another series of events there. We have very good connections with Latin America, so hopefully we can do more stuff there. There's also an ongoing project in Europe, where I want to show films in major European cities. So these things are always on the table.

We are also working on this book called *Luminous Void*. It's a project that I have been working on with these ideas about EFS and filmmaking over the past five or six years, since my English allowed me to express myself freely. We have enough material to publish a book, and next year we're going to do a crowdfunding for it, so hopefully by the summer or the end of the summer we'll be ready to publish. The book will cover loads and loads of aspects of EFS such as practical aspects and ideological aspects from each filmmaker. There are two comprehensive interviews with each of the members, where they fully express themselves. There are also invited guests, friends of EFS, who will be contributing to the book. And the book will also include lots of images and practical information about EFS and the friends of EFS. It will be a very good collection of ideas and images and information.



Rouzbeh Rashidi (born in 1980, Iran)

Filmography

Feature Films:

Trailers (2016 | 180 mins)
Ten Years In The Sun (2015 | 148 mins)
Poetics (2014 | 62 mins)
Conditions (2014 | 61 mins)
Hypothesis (2014 | 60 mins)
Investigating The Murder Case Of Ms.XY. (2014 | 61 mins)
Mutual Admiration Society (2014 | 62 mins | made with James Devereaux)
Forbidden Symmetries (2014 | 97 mins | made with Dean Kavanagh & Maximilian Le Cain)
HSP: There Is No Escape From The Terrors Of The Mind (2013 | 120 mins)
Weird Weird Movie Kids Do Not Watch The Movie (2013 | 86 mins | made with Maximilian Le Cain)
Circumcision Of Participant Observation (2013 | 116 mins)
Theory (2012 | 99 mins)
Persistencies Of Sadness & Still Days (2012 | 240 mins | made with Maximilian Le Cain)
He (2012 | 122 mins)
Boredom Of The Disgust & Monotony Of The Tediousness (2012 | 95 mins)
Structures, Machines, Apparatus And Manufacturing Processes (2012 | 93 mins)
Bard Is A Thing Of Dread (2012 | 61 mins)
Indwell Extinction Of Hawks In Remoteness (2012 | 61 mins)
Praxinoscope (2012 | 82 mins)
Hades Of Limbo (2012 | 82 mins)
Jean Speck (1860-1933) (2011 | 70 mins | made with Jann Clavadetscher)
Immanence Deconstruction Of Us (2011 | 70 mins)
Filmore (2011 | 60 mins)
Tenebrous City & Ill-Lighted Mortals (2011 | 66 mins)
Cremation Of An Ideology (2011 | 62 mins)
Closure Of Catharsis (2011 | 110 mins)
Zoetrope (2011 | 73 mins)
Reminiscences Of Yearning (2011 | 90 mins)
Bipedality (2010 | 68 mins)
Only Human (2009 | 72 mins)
Light & Quiet (2008 | 67 mins)

Short Films:

Entity Of Haze (2010 | 12 mins)
Woodpecker (2010 | 13 mins)
Nonessential Recall (2010 | 17 mins)
Anatomy Of Man (2008 | 4 mins)
Nightfall (2008 | 11 mins)
Now And Forever (2008 | 18 mins)
Emptiness (2008 | 10 mins)
Strand (2008 | 36 mins)
Grey (2008 | 8 mins)
Shingle Beach (2008 | 5 mins)
Friends (2008 | 5 mins)
Damp And Misty (2008 | 9 mins)
Day's End (2008 | 4 mins)
Stillness (2008 | 8 mins)
Harmony With You (2008 | 26 mins)
Drowned Fish (2008 | 20 mins)
First Alley (2008 | 7 mins)
History Of Cinema (2008 | 33 mins)
Theory NTSC (2008 | 31 mins)
Theory PAL (2008 | 47 mins)
Bra (2007 | 4 mins)
The Blight (2007 | 6 mins)
Rosita (2007 | 4 mins)
Last Vision (2007 | 4 mins)
Flooded Meadow (2007 | 7 mins)
Dusk, Ravens (2006 | 4 mins)
This Year (2006 | 2 mins)
Clay (2005 | 17 mins)
Etude For Oily Water (2003 | 12 mins)
Smile In The End Of Summer (2002 | 7 mins)
The Wind (2002 | 10 mins)
Chair And Cigarette (2002 | 10 mins)
Aftershock Of Old Memories (2002 | 8 mins)
The Man's Beautiful Wife (2002 | 16 mins)
Dark Ripples (2002 | 17 mins)
Feel So Close (2002 | 3 mins)
I Like You More Than I Like Painting (2002 | 6 mins)
Shabby Nights (2001 | 16 mins)
Spring Day (2000 | 5 mins)
Nucleus (2000 | 8 mins)

In addition to the works listed here, Rouzbeh Rashidi has also created the **Homo Sapiens Project**, an ongoing series of personal experimental video works initiated in August 2011 for both online and screen context. You can find out about it at www.homosapiensproject.tumblr.com

Find out more about Rouzbeh Rashidi's films at www.rouzbeh Rashidi.com

Also find out about the Experimental Film Society at www.experimentalfilmsociety.com

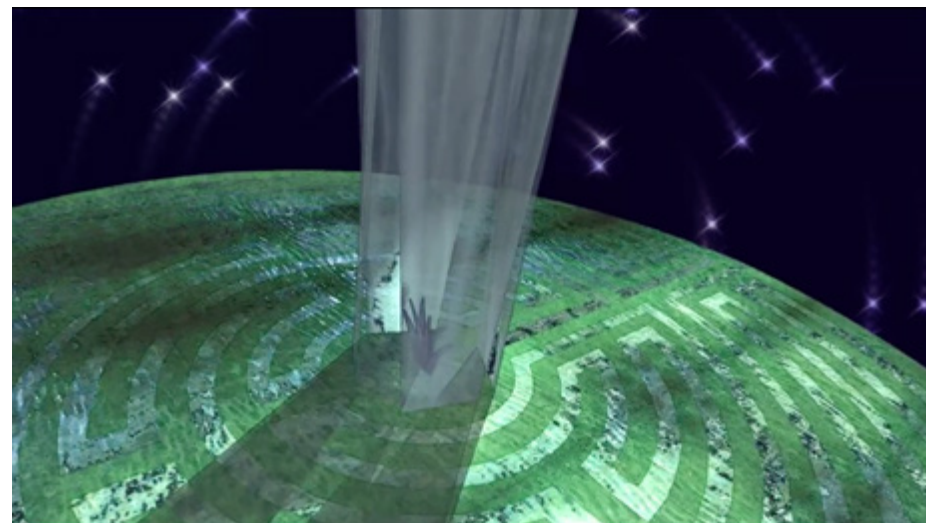
AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID FINKELSTEIN

Back in 2013 we were running the London & Porto Underground Film Festivals. That year we received over 900 submissions, we saw a great variety of films that were being created by filmmakers and artists from around the world, working in all manner of forms and styles. A lot of the films sent to us could be assigned to existing and well trodden categories and genres but every so often a film would startle us for its originality and personal vision, it would electrify our senses and leave us hungry for more. David Finklestein's 18 minute film *Epistolary Fusillades* was one such film. Since then we have kept in touch with David and about a year ago he wrote to us with news about his first feature length film *Suggestive Gestures*.

Suggestive Gestures takes us on a mysterious journey to the centre of a dream-like labyrinth created from vivid computer-generated imagery accompanied by a hypnotic score and drifting poetic voices. This colourful and layered film is like some lost artefact from the early days of computer animation, the images seem to unravel before our eyes as we are swept along with the musical momentum of the narrative flow. Described by David as a 'landscape' which concerns itself more with the expression of an unconscious voice rather than the telling of a story, it is no doubt a journey of the mind, an inner journey in which fragments of information, thoughts and memories half-forgotten or half-remembered drift into view then fade away again as we move on steadily along the path to an ever-nearing centre.

Born from a series of performed improvisations between David and actress Cassie Tunnick, *Suggestive Gestures* uses words as gesture or words as images which conjure on the screen and in the mind of the viewer a string of associations which shoot off in all directions. Nothing can be pinned down or fixed to a single point of view, the world of his films is fluid and ungraspable and the meaning is not within the images but within the experience of the images. This is precisely what we find so exciting, aesthetically beautiful and enticing, the film draws us in but then the journey we take through this labyrinth is entirely our own.

In January 2017 we'll be screening *Suggestive Gestures* as a part of Film Panic Presents! in Portugal, David will be attending the screening to present the film. The following interview was conducted via email.



Still from *Suggestive Gestures* (2013)

Can you start by telling us a bit about your performance group Lake Ivan, its history and the kind of work that you create?

I began making experimental performances in 1982. I made visually oriented theater pieces, inspired by the great period of New York experimental theater I grew up seeing in the 1970's: such artists as Meredith Monk, Elizabeth LeCompte, Robert Wilson and Richard Foreman. I began to focus exclusively on completely improvised performances around 1992, and at that time I began to develop my own theory and technique of improvisation. I have always made my living as a musician playing for dance classes, which means that I am paid to improvise music every day. My application of the principles of music improvisation to performance and later to film flowed naturally from my job.

When did you begin making films and how did this move from live performance to video come about?

I began to change from making performance

work to making films in 2000. I was excited by my discovery of the core principles of improvisation, but at the same time, I was frustrated that the texture of my improvised live shows was all the same: everything had a fluid, constantly changing form. I wanted to be able to create a counter-dynamic against all of that fluidity: a layer of the work which was meticulously analyzed and constructed, to work against the fluid spontaneity of the improvisation. Video provided a natural way to accomplish that.

Could you talk us through the process of creating your films, what is the starting point and how does that lead you to such a striking and unique final film? Is there any written prep or discussion/direction at all before the improvisations start or do you all go in blank?

The improvisation technique I use does not depend on deciding any of the content or the form of the piece ahead of time. On the other hand, it depends very much on the actors being able to master the technique of how



Still from *Epistolary Fusillades* (2010)

to harness their intuition in order to translate their moment-to-moment consciousness into words and gestures.

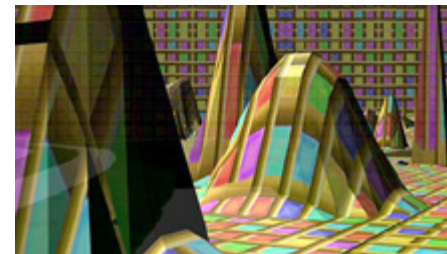
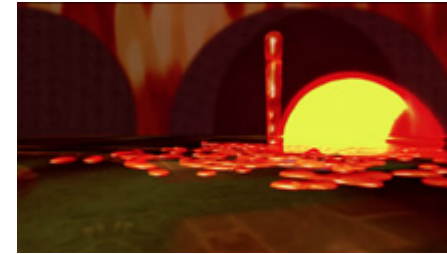
I have boxes and boxes of videotapes of improvised scenes. When I begin a new film, I look through these tapes to find a scene which I find so striking that it makes me excited enough to want to spend almost a year turning it into a film (In the case of *Suggestive Gestures*, that was two years.) The second stage of the process is for me to listen to the improvised text many, many times, and compose a musical score. The complete soundtrack for the film, music mixed with dialog, is finished before I make any images. The images are the last layer to be added, and like the music they are a way for me to interpret the text and to bring out the strong underlying unity which is always undergirding the apparent volatility of the improvised performance.

Could you tell us something about the music and sound and how you go about creating it?

Since I am a musician by profession, it is really fun for me to compose music for my films. I try to capture the underlying rhythm, texture, and emotional quality of each part of the spoken dialog. I perform all the parts myself, using a MIDI keyboard and the program Reason.

Do you still do live performances or has this given way to video now? How does the experience of creating a live work differ for you than creating a video work and what do you get from each of these processes that the other can't supply?

I don't do too many live shows anymore. I have mainly done them as a way of introducing a film program, to give the audience an idea of the kind of improvised dialog which



Stills from *Suggestive Gestures* (2013)

is the basis of the films. I think the films are much more artistically successful than the improvised performances by themselves, so I now consider myself a video artist.

I am interested in how you use language as gesture rather than for fixed meaning, the words seem to be used almost like music and while watching the films they cascade, flow and drift in and out of focus, I wonder if you could say a few words about this and your use of language?

In my feature film, *Suggestive Gestures*, I focused more intensely on language as rhythm, texture, and feeling rather than words which

convey ideas, thoughts or stories. I considered this film to be in a somewhat different form than my shorts, a form I called a "landscape" improv. The idea is that different moods and "energy states" pass through the two actors, and that these moods are turned into language, so that words are used, as you said, almost as music. It is like watching the weather change in a landscape. This idea is of course directly inspired by Gertrude Stein and her revolutionary idea of a "landscape play." In my other films, there is more of a balance between ideas, stories, feelings, and an abstract use of words.

Would you say there is any kind of therapeutic dimension to the process of creating your films? Does the improvisation lead you to uncovering things about yourself that are maybe hidden from view by the rational mind?

I would use the word "spiritual" before I would use "therapeutic." For me, improvisation can be a way to integrate my body, emotions, intuition, and my mind, and also to connect to another person, to the world, to history, and to various unseen forces at large in the universe, so I think it is a practice which is akin to meditation. This of course is not the primary focus, which is to make a certain kind of very alive experience for the film's viewers.

I have read somewhere that your dream project would be to make a film adaptation of Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, can you tell us a bit about that?

I've actually completed two sections of that project already, my shorts *Earth And Moon in Love* and *The Two Fauns*. I love Shelley's language because it is so strange, convoluted, and so over-the-top that it is almost campy, but at the same time the poem is incredibly beautiful and also politically revolutionary.

What movies, art, music and books have influenced you?

I mentioned above some of the theater artists who have been my strongest influences. In film: Paradjanov, the Kuchar brothers, and Tarkovsky would be just a few. I loved Ulrike Ottinger's surreal spectacles and also her documentaries. I have extremely eclectic musical tastes, ranging from Handel to Chopin to Talking Heads and electronic dance music of many types, and all of these varied sounds find their way, at times, into music I write for my films. My favorite authors would include Harold Brodkey, Colette, Samuel Delaney, Don DeLillo, amongst many others. I already mentioned the primary influence of Gertrude Stein. I don't take as much conscious pleasure in painting and drawing, and I rarely go to galleries or museums, but I think a lot of visual art influences me in an unconscious way, since I have ended up making visual and verbal references to visual artists in many of my films, including Warhol, Joseph Cornell, and Bruegel.

Something I would really like to hear from you which would be of a personal interest to us and our own work but I would think to readers as well, is your advice and tips for working with improvised performance, anything that you can say from your experience that you think may be good to pass on.

There are over 40 pages of theory about improvisation on my website (lakeivan.org), so if you get me started on that topic, I could go on for a year! Just to pick one idea out of a hat: improv beginners often get into trouble because they don't know how to handle their "inner critic," that inner voice which can come up with thousands of negative things to say about us while we are in the middle of performing an improv. For me, it's all a matter of understanding how to interpret that voice.

Whatever kind of criticism your inner voice seems to be saying ("this scene is too long, too boring, too cliché...") you should treat it as if what the voice is really saying to you is "go deeper into what you are doing." An improv scene should always be structured by going deeper inside, not by avoiding feelings and jumping around from idea to idea.

What projects are you working on currently?

I'm working on a short with the working title *Miraculous Aqueduct*, which is based on an improv I recorded with actor Ian W. Hill. The Acueducto de los Milagros does make an appearance at one point in the film.

What contemporary films and filmmakers are you currently interested in?

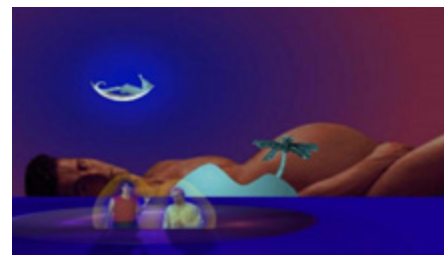
I'm always interested in what Mike Kuchar comes out with. Despite having made films for over 50 years, he is making his most adventurous, assured work right now. I recently came across some fascinating work by Orit Ben-Shitrit. M. Woods is making beautiful and brave work. Everything Ryan Trecartin does fascinates me. There are many contemporary film and video makers whose work I find exciting.



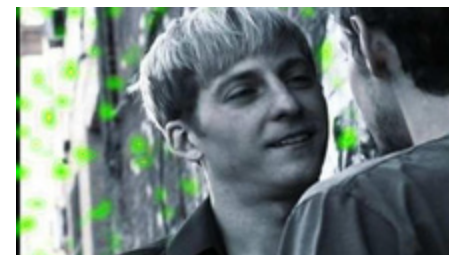
Still from *Earth And Moon In Love* (2004)



Still from *Two Distinct Courses Of Action* (2006)



Still from *Reproductive Technology* (2008)



Still from *The Two Fauns* (2011)



David Finkelstein (born in 1960, USA)

Filmography

Recording Device (2016 | 24.5 mins)
The Linen Closet (2016 | 22 mins)
Privy (2015 | 20 mins)
Suggestive Gestures (2013 | 75 mins)
Invincible City (2012 | 21 mins)
The Two Fauns (2011 | 18 mins)
Epistolary Fusillades (2010 | 18 mins)
Marvelous Discourse (2009 | 21 mins)

Burning Arc (2009 | 10 mins)
Terrifying Blankness (2008 | 30 mins)
Reproductive Technology (2008 | 25 mins)
Wrested Variations (2007 | 7.5 mins)
Two Distinct Courses of Action (2006 | 24 min)
Agnus Dei (2006 | 9 mins)
Electrical Fields (2006 | 12 mins)
Display Devices (2005 | 25 mins)
Lovely Academic Slaughter Houses (2005 | 27 mins)
All Love Is Sweet (2005 | 10 mins)
Earth And Moon In Love (2004 | 21 mins)
Born In Mid-Flight (2004 | 34 mins)
Radiant Emanators (2003 | 19 mins)
Lake Ivan Exists. episode #30: The Artificial (2002 | 29 mins)
Lake Ivan Exists. episode #47: Mardi Gras (2002 | 29 mins)
Lake Ivan Exists. episode #37: Starfield (2001 | 29 mins)
Lake Ivan Exists. episode #21: The Bathroom (2000 | 29 mins)

Find out more about David Finkelstein's films at www.lakeivan.org

AN INTERVIEW WITH TOBY TATUM



Still from *Mental Space* (2014)

Toby Tatum's films exist in an ethereal space just beyond the grasp of the physical world, they seem to capture those mysterious moments when something is seen out of the corner of one's eye in the shadows of the trees on a bright hazy summer's day, or in the light bouncing on the water of a bubbling stream. These short films, which rarely exceed ten minutes in length, are windows into parallel dimensions, a wood between worlds mostly unpopulated by humans, a dimension where time seems to stretch and warp. An eternity is contained in the drop of a leaf and a world can start and end with a breath of wind. After watching a few of his films in a row one may start to suspect that these worlds are occupied by sprites, dryads and subterranean creatures, and that just out of sight something is watching back from the undergrowth. These are beautiful films, somehow familiar but mysterious and strange, which once entered will call you to return again.

We recently had the pleasure of screening a programme of nine of Toby's short films as a part of Film Panic Presents! in Portugal, the following interview was conducted by email before the event.



Still from *Monsters* (2013)

There is a tradition in experimental cinema of landscape films, do you see yourself working in this tradition? Are there any works of this type specifically that have informed your own work?

I'd say that it is probably painting and writing that has influenced my recent work, rather than film. Certainly the Romantics have cast their spell on my work. They sensed a sentient mystery abiding in nature. Mary Shelley wrote, in her preface to the revised 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* "It was underneath the trees... That my true compositions, the airy flights of my imagination, were born and fostered... I could people the hours with creations." I've long been fascinated by Mary Shelley and her *Frankenstein*. I also love the mythology of the Villa Diodati (where Mary Shelley first dreamed up the idea, in response to Lord Byron's ghost story challenge, in the haunted summer of 1816). I also absorbed a heady dose of Romantic painting whilst at art college. Turner's numinous fogs, that hypnotised me during visits to the Tate, have lingered long in my imagination and have

still yet to dissipate. Also I regularly visit the exotic realms painted by Henri Rousseau, his jungles are all the better for being imaginary, as well as the spellbound landscapes of Max Ernst. Early J.G. Ballard stories, which I devoured, explore similar regions. Their titles alone are wonderful, like *The Drowned World* or *The Crystal World*. My films *Monsters* and *The Green Mind* drew deep from these rich sources. David Lewis-William's book *The Mind In The Cave* directly inspired my film *The Subterraneans*. The book looks at the Palaeolithic painted caves of sites like Lascaux, suggesting that the animals ranging across the walls hover on a threshold between worlds. He considers that these caves are gateways to the underworlds of altered states of consciousness. On my desk I have a black and white photograph of an unearthed Olmec head. The image appears to document the rediscovery of a vast dormant consciousness, awakening from its slumber from underneath the fronds of a potent over-heated jungle.

The other tradition that comes to mind when watching your films is that of vi-



Still from *The Secluded Grove* (2012)

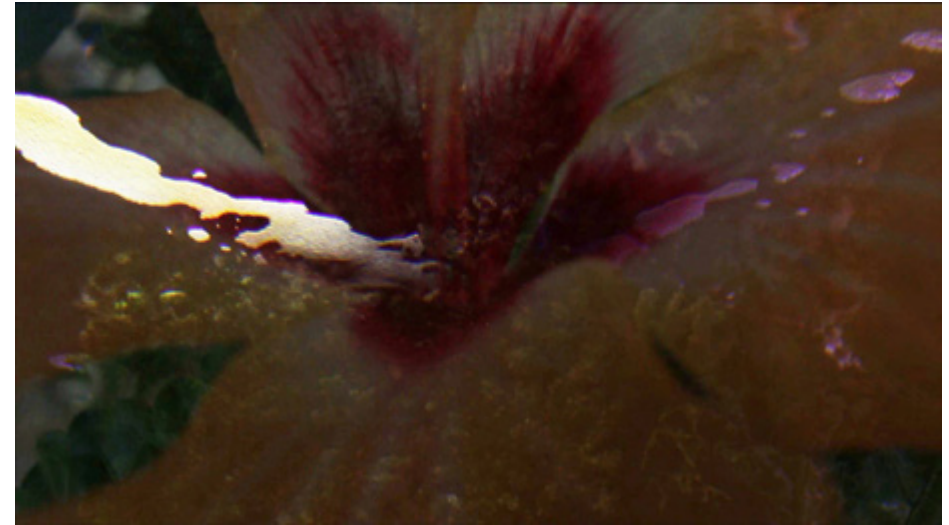
visionary art, some of the titles of your films indicate maybe an inspiration of dreams and visions, could you talk about these ideas in relation to your work?

The improbable fantasias of *A World Assembled* & *Mental Space* were direct attempts to evoke scenes that correspond to the inner workings of the visionary imagination. I am drawn to the associative drift of moments and ideas that takes place in dreams, how things can segue into one another without being jarring. When my film *Mental Space* cuts from an underwater flower to an introspective tiger, I'm trying to establish an imaginative connection between images rather than a specific causal link. The images flow after each other as if part of a stream of consciousness, a drift of thoughts and ideas. I've begun to trust the dream-logic which seems to be guiding my work.

I have read in another interview that one of your films was specifically inspired by a dream, could you talk about your relationship to dreams, do you regularly remem-

ber them? How have they inspired your filmmaking?

I do sometimes remember my dreams, some of which have been so vivid as to spill out into the waking world. For years I had a recurring dream of a huge ruined house. Visiting the house again and again over subsequent nights I noticed that the house formed the backdrop for numerous dream narratives, its dimensions morphing and collapsing in response to deep unconscious promptings. Sometimes the interior would take on the appearance of a twisted labyrinth of enfolding staircases and lurching floors. At other times events would be staged outside in the surrounding gardens, where the dramas would play out in the perfumed shadows cast by the rose covered walls. Years went by before I visited this house again although I did return there fairly recently. As a child I had a powerful dream of my father where we had some awful falling out. The strange thing was that on waking I still held these dream events against him, and acted as if they were real for quite a long period. The two versions



Still from *Mental Space* (2014)

of him had merged together. I'm not sure I ever managed to untangle the fact from the fiction. Years later we made a film together, where I got him to play out this imagined version of himself. I do think the phenomenon of people appearing in each other's dreams is interesting, as if the dreamer has cloned or re-appropriated a version of that person. It also suggests that people might have some kind of existence outside of themselves.

Could you describe your working process, how your films are conceived and what the process is from the initial idea and inspiration to the final piece?

Sometimes it seems to me as if I am on some sort of mission, or that I'm labouring in service to a vision that must be given form. At other times it feels as if the work may be a kind of obscure folly, a wilful madness. I liken the practice to a desert flower, growing in inhospitable soil without much in the way of water or nutrients but still producing a rare flower once a year.

The music plays a major part in drawing us into the worlds you create on screen, could you talk about how the music is created and how your collaboration works with the composer?

The films are enriched by the music Abi Fry lends to them. Her sounds carry their own messages, which deepen and complicate the reading of the film. Together we're trying to use the transformative magic of cinema to conjure a phantasmagoric world. The soundtrack plays a siren song, an auditory spell that lures people toward the mirages on the screen. I'm not entirely sure where she finds her sounds. The field recordings that intertwine with the music in *The Toby Tatum Guide To Grottoes & Groves* suggest aural trickery. She plays numerous instruments and has considerable mastery over the elements of production. She lives on the Scottish Isle of Skye, in an isolated cottage. No road leads to this secret croft, you have to trek across marsh and mountain to get there. Animals abound and nature rages unchecked. I liken Abi to a Prospero figure. Her isle is full of nois-



Still from *The Green Mind* (2013)

es. Sounds from her surroundings creep in to the music, chill north winds were funnelled through the chimney into the soundtrack for *The Golden Age*. In other work she has used a musical saw. I saw this once, it looked like it housed a strong potential for terrible damage.

All your works have running times of under fifteen minutes but I watched all your films back to back in a single sitting, it was a wonderful experience to be immersed into the world that you have created on screen so I was wondering if you have also considered making longer works or even feature length films?

I'd like to make a longer film, or at least am open to it. A reservoir of unseen footage has accumulated over the years. I think a Leviathan might be stirring down there in the depths of those brimming hard-drives. If a film is to be found down there it may well prove to be the grand unwatchable folly or a grotesquely enlarged curate's egg.

You live and work in Hastings, a place associated with pre-Raphaelite poets and painters. It's an interesting place, we lived there for a while and created a few films in the woodlands and on the beach, we found it a very cinematic and inspiring place, I'd be interested in hearing your thoughts about Hastings and how this particular landscape has shaped your work.

I live near an ancient, overgrown wood. Standing by my window I look out over this green horizon and imagine the line of trees gradually approaching. As I listen carefully I think I can hear the slow creak of branches as this wood steadily advances, moving quietly through the suburban streets. I see buildings lost to foliage and cars embraced by roots. I look forward to the secret whisperings of the approaching leaves.

What contemporary films and filmmakers are you currently interested in? What are you working on at the moment and what projects and screenings do you have coming up?

In 2011 I curated a film show called *Underground Worlds*, which drew inspiration from the secret networks of caves that underlie the shopping arcades and chip shops of Hastings. I was also keen to learn more about underground networks of film-makers, of disparate figures working in the shadows on largely unrecognised personal projects. The process of sending out the call for entries was like stirring a pool of dark water and I had no idea what would rise to the surface. One of the films submitted was a work called *The Indeserian Tablets* by the American artist Peter Rose. I loved the film instantly, seeing it as a documentary beamed from a parallel universe. Its arrival immediately seemed to justify the show. Also, on the DVD he'd sent Peter had included a short audio-visual introduction to the work. In this he talked about his ideas as he wandered through a wood

before entering a seemingly vast cavern, where his voice boomed and reverberated. In our e-mail exchanges I mentioned Lewis-William's book *The Mind In The Cave* to him and he responded that he was a long-term devotee of the book and that he even participated in his own *The Mind In The Cave* society. He alluded to frequent nocturnal revels. I was later on inducted into his club and am proud to be an honorary member. I remain an admirer of his work too and am keen to see where he travels next.

In terms of my own work I have been collecting material for a possible film for over a year. As the mountain accumulates its peak recedes from view. I imagine the form of this unwieldy beast will be revealed to me at the appropriate time but until then I'll keep on searching.



Toby Tatum (born in 1974, United Kingdom)

Filmography

- The Toby Tatum Guide To Grottoes & Groves* (2015 | 10:05)
- Mental Space* (2014 | 06:43)
- Monsters* (2013 | 03:02)
- The Green Mind* (2013 | 03:10)
- A World Assembled* (2013 | 03:03)
- The Secluded Grove* (2012 | 04:24)
- The Subterraneans* (2011 | 04:37)
- The Golden Age* (2010 | 05:34)
- The Sealed World* (2009 | 05:42)
- Crime Scene* (2007 | 08:49)
- Between Two Men* (2005 | 08:03)
- The Void* (2003 | 04:56)
- Heavy Smoker* (2002 | 06:53)
- Terrain Vague* (2000 | 18:21)
- Girl with a Suitcase* (1999 | 11:48)

Find out more about Toby Tatum's films at www.tobyatum.com

AN INTERVIEW WITH HOOROO JACKSON

Hooroo Jackson's first feature film *Aimy In A Cage* is the story of a young girl imprisoned in a house with her oppressive and dysfunctional family while the world outside is ravaged by a virus epidemic. Aimy fights and struggles to maintain her freedom as her family sets about a mind-altering procedure that they hope will bring her into their control.

Aimy In A Cage is a wild and expressionist cartoon-like film, with a relentless children's-TV-style delirium that bombards the viewer with kaleidoscopic images and chaotic carnivalesque music. It is hard viewing in places, it makes a commitment to taking us into the world as experienced by Aimy and it honours that commitment through to the end. Drawing on a great variety of cinematic and media influences, this is a film that could only have been made at this point in time: in a post-MTV world by an artist who has grown up in an age of internet, home video and cable TV. The result is a personal and striking work of cinematic expression.

This unique film has divided audiences and critics alike, *Aimy In A Cage* seems to have stirred up some strong reactions and harsh criticisms, more than likely this may be due to the fact that on first glance the film has all the stylistic signs of being a quirky indie film or oddball comedy, but in truth it is nothing of the sort. It is a work of cinematic therapy in which a dark neurosis erupts to the surface and cracks the genre and film conventions apart. To go into it expecting to be bounced along in a light-hearted digestible tale will no doubt leave one disappointed and frustrated and there is nothing that seems to rile people more than having their expectations unmet. Not only does *Aimy In A Cage* reject your expectations, it goes one step further and attacks them as being just another form of oppression.

This is a film about the fight for creative freedom and the complex web of images, forms, behaviours and language that one must dismantle in order to move towards this goal. This film feels like the first step on a journey, it stirs all the obstacles and oppressive forms to the surface and shakes them apart. Aimy fights to express herself even if it means submitting to insanity, she won't behave how her family wants her to behave and in equal measure the film is fighting too, it also won't behave how you want it to behave, it screams in the face of oppression and the result is a deranged cinematic spectacle not quite like anything you will have seen before.

The following interview with Hooroo Jackson took place via email in November 2016.



Production still from *Aimy In A Cage* (2016)

***Aimy In A Cage* is based on a comic you wrote as a teenager, how does the film differ from the comic? What do the performances and language of cinema reveal or express that the comic doesn't and what was lost in translation?**

The first step was the source material and screenplay went out the window. I had a clear sense how to make it work, and what would lose the picture, and that was never in jeopardy. What was at risk was the connectivity, narrative glue. I mined the source material for the cinematic elements, turning a story I knew inside out into a sensory experience. There was some grumbling about my last draft, that I cut out too many expository elements, and maybe they were right. A lot of my decisions were to spare the boredom where my 400th view in the edit bay would still be interesting, and so I did cut all the boring explanations. In retrospect this was an incredibly indulgent choice, but in my defense

I did not see myself as a storyteller but as a ringleader. For this reason the film is far better on successive viewings, like a song where you need the anticipation so the pieces really sink in. What I found is that the mass audience and I have a differing agenda that only converges in the manner that this is a movie, and *isn't it so movie-ish?* At the same time my intention with this picture was to do something that had never been done before. I had full creative control and a budget to lend it a certain scope, and a cast to lend it a certain credibility.

How did you come to cast Crispin Glover and what was it like working with him?

I wouldn't say necessarily it's a chess game, because that implies it's a match, but I think that we're both contrarians, and troublemakers who wish to disappoint our mothers. There was a point that his choices would be pushing against the reality I created, as in

really, really pushing against it (although he always had the instinct to make it work). You don't know what you are getting so when he showed up on set in a pimp outfit, I was mortified. I think his contrarianism shifted as he realized that creating tension requires this contrarianism, and acting wild in a wild world does not create tension... so he reeled it back and adjusted with straighter choices. A lot of Crispin Glover fans have seen *Aimy In A Cage*, and point out that it's a different, subtle performance for him, and a couple have ranked it pretty highly, although it's not one of his miracles like Willard, I think one day we could do that. I love Crispin Glover and the last we spoke he offered to be in both my next films, one as the brutal scottish bounty hunter, where we spoke of Bill the Butcher, and two, the butler Mr. Cucumber where we spoke of Lurch from *The Addams Family*, an entire film that he would be hovering in the background without a single line of dialogue.

Allisyn Ashley Arm is fantastic, she never falters in her commitment to the performance, you can see she is fully embodying the character. Can you talk a bit about working with her and what she brought to the role?

As she was a Disney starlet, it was almost stunt casting. *'What if Hannah Montana starred in a David Lynch film?'* A teenage girl who screams, cries, and is tortured for two hours. Yet I don't mean to undersell her performance as a gimmick. I tend to run the cameras, and know that whatever my cast does will be fantastic. I did not want to get in her way. Some actors crave that, some want the freedom. I believe Allisyn Ashley Arm has a genius IQ, and the fact she was 17 makes me wonder what hidden process of physics caused such a perfect alignment of actor and character. The whole experience of making this was somewhat mythic, and I think it comes through on screen, where the



Production still from *Aimy In A Cage* (2016)

experience of watching it, and remembering watching it are entirely different experiences. It's a bullet that doesn't bleed out until the next day. During my re-cutting, I kept saying *'it's mythic'*. Seeing Allisyn as Aimy Micry, watching the raw footage, it's iconic.

I am really interested in hearing about the process of shooting this film, can you talk us through it? How long was the shoot and did you shoot in one continuous block? How many people were involved? What is your approach to directing actors?

This was a crew of thirty, over a four week shoot. For an ensemble production, with about fourteen cast members, and one chaotic, scrambled scene after another, it was absolute insanity to make this my first film. We filmed it chronologically, so that I could watch it unfold like theater. There was some



Still from *Aimy In A Cage* (2016)

grumbles that chronological isn't the Hollywood way of doing things. I came into this over and over again, *'This isn't the Hollywood way of doing it, you know'*. It's like, where do you think you are? Who do you think you're dealing with? It was made out of pocket, I could shoot whatever I wanted, there is no imaginary Hollywood god watching from the clouds... And yet still this is exactly how people operate. It is scary, I'll just say. I really despise any kind of filmmaking elitism. *'You realize FCX sucks, right?'* It just shows how incredibly out of touch filmmakers are.

The editing is also very interesting, it moves from moment to moment in more of an associative way rather than attempting to construct a linear reality, it's not quite a stream of consciousness but it evokes that sense of the flow of thoughts. I like how you attack the flow with abrupt interruptions, as if we are inside a mind that can't quite settle – how did you approach the edit and how much did it evolve and change throughout post-production?

Aimy In A Cage's experimental, associative editing, I think it's by far its most important component. This kind of sprawling editing is strangely only coming through blockbusters now, and of course, youtube vlogs. So experimental editing is viable, just not in the way film historians expected. I just deeply connect with how aggressively and messily the more expressionistic editors do it. I love how Oliver Stone brought it to the early 90's under the guise of the gen X wave, so you had these epic, prestigious pictures like *JFK*, *Natural Born Killers*, and *The Doors* with incredibly bold editing. I would kill to work on that scale. Yes, my experience editing *Aimy* was no picnic, though, because I ran into that Hollywood mindset constantly. *'What do you think you're doing? You've ruined your film.'* The thing is that when you find yourself an outsider, facing off against an ideology that is so ingrained that its victims would not even consider themselves ideological, then you're in troublesome territory. An interesting remark on the editing was that *'he just barely makes it work'*. Like they needed to add that caveat to it working. So yes I broke the

rules for film editing, except I really didn't. It's just a different, completely viable way of seeing, and it's a lost forgotten artform. Still you get the high society ladies fanning themselves and saying 'how *ghastly*.' Interestingly enough, the themes of *Aimy In A Cage* are in exact alignment with this struggle, an underdog at force with the mechanics of an overriding, oppressive system. This is also why whenever I kept running into the Hollywood mindset, I took it very personal.

The music and sound are really great, it abruptly jars in and out, at times working with the images and sometimes in defiance of them as if it is following its own narrative flow. It's very playful and one of the things that gives the film such an amazing cartoon-like quality, tell us about your approach to creating the soundtrack.

It is hard to describe the process of sound and music because it's completely intuitive. I just know when it works or doesn't. There is really no objective measure to this, except when my assistants would change cues or show me ideas, I could not understand why they thought that worked. I think there is something to sequencing sound and music that works in the same way as writing or painting. To give up the editing and placing is really giving up a lot of your voice, and I don't think I could do that. It's the same with letting someone else operate the camera, which I did and I regret it. I think a director should operate.

The film was self-funded but had a pretty substantial budget for a self-funded film, can you talk about how you raised the money and if you are planning to self-fund your next projects? If not, how do you think this may affect your creative process?

I was 27 and I was incredibly impatient to

make my first film, and you can't question these things, but I did not appreciate just what I had. In retrospect, I was in a position to have god-like financial powers, then today I could have been financing two or three *Aimy In A Cages* per year. It's a mind trap to think about parallel paths. There is a point though in life where the stars align and your talents click and then converge with reality in such a way that you become a megalomaniac. I am very, very lucky I got to do this, but it's disturbing to consider just how rich I could have been, with the insanity of the cryptocurrencies boom, where I was a whale in such a way that I actually *influenced the market*. I had essentially given up being middle eight figures rich to produce *Aimy In A Cage*.

As for corporate funding, despite two nightmare experiences, with awful executive meddling, I hold to it that I'm a viable, commercial director and waiting for the right team who understands that I can do something big, and that the more avant-garde elements of *Aimy In A Cage* were specific to this project. The main difficulty would be adapting my ideology and that is where you get in tricky territory. You see, with my failed Hollywood experience, I would not cross the director by committee line. Everyone dreads this, and everyone will face it. It's a rite of passage to see the hacks take over your project. Now in both my and their defense we managed to get 90% there and it almost worked. The funny part though was the peer pressure, 'C'mon, we know better than you, we read *Save The Cat*.' Which I might've fallen for had I never made a film before... except I have, and I am painfully aware how during the filmmaking process, everybody wants your job and thinks they know better, *and they don't*. I worked hard enough to know my value, and that's their loss, not mine.

Which artists, films and books would you consider the key influences on your work?



Still from *Aimy In A Cage* (2016)

On *Aimy In A Cage*, I was influenced by Roman Polanski's apartment chamber trilogy (*Repulsion*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Tenant*). I was inspired by Peter Greenaway's layered architectural works, Ken Russell's bombastic, immature films that are also fiercely intelligent, Kubrick. Every critic said Terry Gilliam and David Lynch, which I'll take, but I tend to see that comparison as a shorthand for 'incomprehensible but I like you, so I'll give your film a pass'... and I think *Aimy In A Cage* is fairly thought through and logical. You mentioned cartoons, and we have a *Sponge Bob* and *Ren & Stimpy* vibe going which I'm extremely proud of, being a millennial.

In 2013, I ordered Jane Campion's *Sweetie* from Criterion and they accidentally sent me *Sweet Movie*, and Dušan Makavejev quickly became a towering figure in my life. Pasolini, Jodorowsky, Żuławski. I am influenced by these enfant-terribles, and the thing about these eastern european or Jewish directors is they carry the trauma of upheaval of post WW2, and their works carry this heavy, inherited or experienced trauma. So I am aware of just how silly it is in the context of *Aimy In A Cage* which has been called a bratty tum-

blr SJW film. I think this is precisely why the viewers and critics have been so mystified. There was no cultural conflict or upheaval to produce this. The sense is what the hell is this suburban kid ranting and raving about, in the prosperous Obama-era?

What I have essentially created is an assault, an angry, countercultural, revolutionary work fallen on deaf ears; a ranting and raving treatise to an apathetic audience. The film is anti-ideology, and this is exactly why the response has been so violently opposed to it. This is why I am so proud that Crispin Glover took part in it, and Gabby Tary, the dreadlocks granny, who fired missiles in communist Hungary. I am marching to my own ancient muse, and I believe it's inherited.

It's possible that *Aimy In A Cage* was just a few years too early, and that all at once, one day, people will come to it. As for the influences, keep in mind that not a single one of those directors ever produced at this budget, and at minimum they had about ten to one hundred times my budget. So how every critic's review was constantly name-dropping is an achievement on this budget, but again one

that carries little to no weight for modern audiences.

What contemporary films and filmmakers are you currently interested in?

I think the film festival culture has been hijacked by the rich kids. This is now my direct experience. When I speak of the ideological pandering that is now a requirement for a film to be received, then you see, the culture is not receiving art but propaganda. So in my view A24, the middling films for rich kids brand, is more dangerous as the blockbusters, which do not come with any added self-esteem boost. It is strange that the blockbusters have become more genuine, in terms of their direct ideology, and are somehow more progressive than the art films. My variable is sincerity, thoroughness, and the visual language. Why the hell is it that *Batman v Superman* and *Suicide Squad* are these bombastic, sensory feasts while the art house is full of these wide, medium, close-up bores? This is also my experience, how I, a lunatic, guerilla, anarchist filmmaker went a lot farther with the mindless action film producer than the art house producer. The one saw my ability to bring spectacle, and saw some Luc Besson dimension of humor and characterization, whereas the other complained that the script was not feminist enough, and that we needed a scene where the women kill all the men, because girls rule. So I will just say that films like the *Swiss Army Man* and *Turbo Kid* are disgraceful, and taking up spots in the culture once reserved for Jarmusch or Spike Lee... It's all just a symptom of this era's embarrassing privilege and conformity.

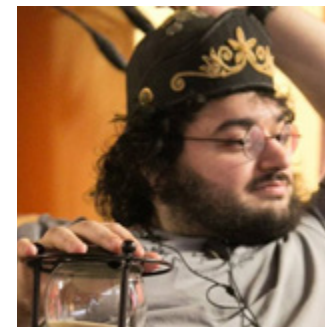
What projects are you currently working on?

I'm a writer now and releasing four books in the next year, that should serve as proof that I'm a commercial, viable voice. I hold out

hope that one day some very smart people will discover what I'm doing, and help me produce them. I have not yet decided whether to use the Hooroo Jackson name, which might be too great of a name and put the audience on some defensive. I also recognize that film people are not readers so I will get no crossover audience, and that readers would be incredibly turned off seeing some Hollywood douchebag invading their medium. Still, part of the reason I've moved into writing is that my literary ignorance puts me at a tremendous advantage in the marketplace. With film, when you're quoting Pasolini or Żuławski, then you've damned yourself to failure. With novels, my influences are Roald Dahl, or Lewis Carroll, and so when you're channelling these wonderful and accessible writers, it's clear to me it's going to be a different story. Not that writing is any picnic. Here I'm running into the same ideological issues. Imagine your teenage beta readers tearing your novel apart and using *The Hunger Games* as an example of what you should be doing. It's the same ideology I'm running into, in a different medium. The lack of free will is universal.



The cast of *Aimy In A Cage* (2016)



Hooroo Jackson (born in 1985, USA)

Filmography

Aimy In A Cage (2016 | 79 mins)

Find out more about *Aimy In A Cage* at www.aimyinacage.com

AN INTERVIEW WITH GURCIUS GEWDNER

Gurcius Gewdner's *Bom Dia Carlos* (*Good Morning Carlos*) is the story of a man who desperately needs to take a shit, there are voices in his body that tell him terrible things and he is terrified to let the shit come out the way it's supposed to. Sitting in a glowing toilet in complete despair Carlos calls his analyst for help, who, bearing a frightful grimace of terror at all times, advises him to eat fibres and go for a walk. The analyst secretly hates Carlos and wants to rid the city of such unwholesome filth, so he goes out in pursuit of Carlos in order to kill him. Carlos desperately drags himself along the streets of his city, completely consumed by his condition and unable to keep his bodily functions under control, but what can't come out one way will come out another and what follows is a festival of multi-coloured vomit and shit spewing from Carlos' mouth as he sobs, screams and contorts!

Bom Dia Carlos is a sensational short film which is as beautiful as it is disgusting, it exists in some lurid place between the home-made Hollywood of George Kuchar and the wonderfully excessive gore of Lucio Fulci. This is a film created by an artist with a great passion for cinema and all its wonderful artifices and theatrics, especially for those films where madness breaks loose and chaos reigns, where the extremes of taste are transcended and beauty and horror collide. This compact and intense 17 minute film is filled with many references to other films, everything from Fulci's *Cat In The Brain* (1990) to Żuławski's *Possession* (1981) to Zinnemann's *From Here To Eternity* (1953), it is a letter of love in which the filmmaker indulges his desire to live through and to play at making films in the spirit of those that inspire him. The glorious colours of the vomit and shit, the brilliant characterisations, the actors' commitment to their performances and the relentless beat of the tribal drums that accompany the whole drama make this film a magnificent spectacle that has to be seen to be believed and has to be experienced to be understood. Though it is hard to bring together disparate feelings of disgust, horror, relief, joy and humour, this is precisely the alchemical conjunction that this expressive film manages to deliver, it is a ritual of release as much as it is of acceptance, we have to accept it all and scream 'yes' to it all in a magnificently chaotic embrace.

In March 2017 Film Panic Presents! will be screening *Bom Dia Carlos* followed by the European premiere of Gurcius' latest feature film *Pazúcus: Ilha do Desarrogo / Island Of Vomit and Despair*, which continues the story of Carlos' mystical bodily adventures. The following interview was conducted via email in November 2016.



Still from *Bom Dia Carlos* (2015)

***Bom Dia Carlos* is a totally bonkers short film about a man who is unable to shit, please tell us where on earth did this scatological vision come from and how did you go about making it?**

Well, it came about in several ways: it's important to talk about *Pazúcus*, because I wrote the two movies as one movie only. My mission was to write a short movie, I wrote a long feature and then, after shooting, I delivered a short movie extracted from the feature. It's a huge mix of obsessions, personal obsessions and movie obsessions. The stomach part is based on a song that we did for my band Os Legais in 1999, it's not 100% clear what's happening with Carlos (and probably *Pazúcus* won't explain that clearly either, both movies are as confusing as Carlos' mind and I like it that way), but the main thing is that Carlos listens to voices in his head coming from his stomach, those voices are planning to get out and keep talking all the time about the apocalypse, and about something like a "mystical aquatic hole" that will put an end to all existence and suffocate the universe.

In *Bom Dia Carlos* you only see Carlos talking about those voices, in *Pazúcus* I will show you who they are. Our song talked about the prophecies of these stomach voices and I had always kept that in mind for a movie.

My utopia began to look possible when I received a 1500 dollars proposal from a producer to make a 15-minute movie. This budget is not the crew fee, it's the whole budget! But it's more than I was used to working with, and the proposal was very delightful: "Deliver us a movie about the fears of contemporary man and your relationship as a filmmaker/artist with the city of Florianópolis. We want you to make a horror movie, but we got this money from an arthouse project so feel free to make anything you want inside these themes. We won't read your script, just deliver us a conceptual review and the finished 15-minute movie before our deadline in four months. Good luck!" After hearing that, on the same day I began to put together the pieces of various obsessions in my mind, the first thing was that song. This proposal came out on the same week that we had dinner with Roger



Still from Bom Dia Carlos (2015)

Corman, at the time I was working with Ivan Cardoso (the director of *Secret Of The Mum-my* and *H.O. Helio Oiticica*, a 1979 movie) and Corman called him because he was passing by on a tourist trip to Rio (and later on had an event in homage to him in Curitiba, south of Brazil). I was so in love again with that kiss scene in *Creature From The Haunted Sea*, it's my favorite representation of "jealous love" in cinema, the captain kissing the girl and the jealous monster appears, that I thought: "I will mix my stomach song with Roger Corman monsters dressed up with the clothes we use when we play live with Os Legais (we strip ourselves, using only underwear and attach gay/straight porn magazines with different kinds of garbage onto our bodies). Then, to talk about "the contemporary fears of man" I put in this guy who is hearing voices and is afraid of them. In this process, I began to add more and more of some old film obsessions into the same script, movie treasures that deal with paranoia and fear, like *Cat In The Brain* and *Long Weekend*.

When I wrote this script I didn't know yet

how this 15-minute movie was going to be, I only discovered *Bom Dia Carlos* after I made the whole *Pazúcus* feature, when I was in the editing room. I only knew that I wanted the huge sequence of Żuławski-inspired dancing and vomiting in it. With the budget we had it was impossible to shoot all that I had written, so I put some more money in, Marcel put some money in, practically everyone on the crew put some money in, because almost everyone paid from his own pocket to be in Florianópolis for the twenty days of shooting for *Pazúcus*. *Bom Dia Carlos* doesn't have the monsters, they are waiting in *Pazúcus*, but it shows my respect and love for movies such as *Cat In The Brain* by Lucio Fulci (in the doctor's figure), *Last Action Hero* (the doctor's raincoat and his scary axe), *Possession* and *Pinocchio 964* of course, and *The Lair Of The White Worm* by Ken Russel (in the Witch's figure).

It's important to remember that Florianópolis is known as a city which has legendary and real witches. It's an island of sorcery, those woods in the movie are known for having real witches, hiding and sacrificing babies



Still from Bom Dia Carlos (2015)

(there are animal bones everywhere in those woods, which makes me think of gangsters disposing of bodies too) so the appearance of the Witch also talks about our relationship with the city. Carlos' inability to defecate is also about the city, more specifically about the summer traffic on the island, which gets totally constipated, every day we need to be on the streets at 6am, so we don't have to spend the whole day stuck in traffic trying to get to the beach. This movie doesn't have money investments from the city government, that's a dirty shame, I think they should be paying all the travel expenses that I will be having while promoting the movie, I am promoting the city! *Pazúcus* has more cinematic references, I will talk about them later.

Marcel Mars gives a stunning and intense performance in Bom Dia Carlos, have you made films together before and what was it like working with him?

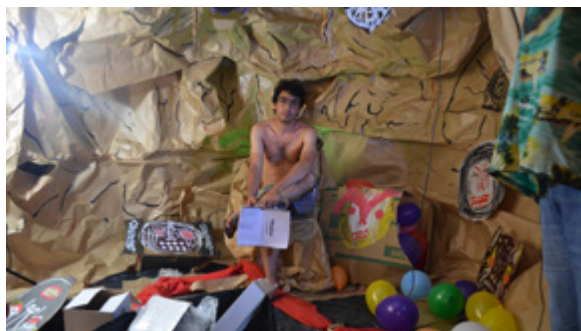
His performance is really stunning and I am so happy that we did it!! It was so fun and wonderful to make it, it's a dream come true

in several ways! Marcel is not an actor (at least, not professionally) but he's a friend and I wrote the movie for him, thinking about him doing the part, the lines, everything. One of the reasons it was so obvious and easy to choose him is because I already saw him in that situation, he was not vomiting shit, but he was vomiting, crawling and crying in the mud, a total mess. Actually his situation was so much worse than it is in the movie, much dirtier (with mud, maybe some dog shit), he tried to get close to people and people ran away from him, in the end someone with a good soul took him home alive (he doesn't remember anything). It was a New Year's Eve party where almost everyone got crazy or passed out really bad (me too). Another shocking scene that I saw that night was another friend vomiting on a sofa (it's important to say that this was not his house, and it was the favorite couch of the owner, so I was going "Oh my god, the couch!!!") and a dog entered the room coming from the street and began to eat his vomit. Before the dog finished eating he fell again on top of the dog and on the vomit, the dog almost bit him and

he got vomit all over his face. A few minutes later he got on his car and went home, he also got home safely. Terrifying scene.

Marcel shares my love of Żuławski's *Possession* and *Pinocchio 964*, so when we were shooting that vomiting and dancing sequence in *Bom Dia Carlos*, every time he hit the floor and we asked if everything was alright, he only kept repeating: "Yes!! Yes!! Yes!! I'm realising my dream, I'm Isabelle Adjani!! It's a dream, it's a dream, keep filming!!" Another important thing is that the city where we made the movie, Florianópolis, is really an island, and like almost any island, it has a bridge connecting the island with the continent, and under that bridge we have this tunnel for people to walk along on foot. It's dangerous by night but it is an incredible place to take a walk by day, you have

this wall full of graffiti on one side and on the other side you have the sea. Sometimes people kill themselves by that wonderful view. For years, since I discovered this place I always had that in mind, not suicide, but that it would be so awesome if someone did a "Possession scene" on that tunnel. I always talked about that with Marcel and when the producer said to me that he needed a movie connected somehow with the city, I thought: "Now is the time!!" Marcel has been making movies with me since 2010, he did the camera in some parts of *How To Irritate Hardcore Dandies* and he has a small part in my next feature: *Viatti Arrabbiatti*, a movie that I did before *Pazúcus*, but destiny (lack of money, actually) is making me release *Pazúcus* first. Marcel also did the photography in *Pazúcus*, in all the "Long Weekend scenes", the scenes



Gurcius Gewdner behind the scenes of *Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrogo / Island of Vomit and Despair* (2017)



Marcel Mars and Gurcius Gewdner dubbing voices

without Carlos of course, and he helped me in all the functions possible in this movie, everything you can imagine, from the effects, to sets, soundtrack, clothes, locations, everything. He learned a lot about the whole process of filming (and I did too) in 2014 while making his own movie in partnership with Geni Granado (Cleopatra herself), a movie that you definitely need to see, it's called *Cleopatra II: Tyranny Of Desire*. It's not finished yet, I play Caligula in that movie, he makes some strange deals with the Queen to get his sister and lover Drusilla back, it's more than a crossover of *Cleopatra* and *Caligula* and you find everyone who is in *Pazúcus* in this movie too. Marcel is now dealing with some things in his personal life, and probably will get back to post-production in 2017. As you can see, it's wonderful to work with him, he's a friend



Still from *Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrogo / Island of Vomit and Despair* (2017)

and the best partner in cinema I could ever dream of.

Bodily fluids of all colours and textures flow freely in every scene of *Bom Dia Carlos*, what are these vile concoctions made of?

It's an easy recipe, you can eat it if you want (it's not very good). I love colourful things, chaos and colours everywhere, so the first thing is to go to a kids party store and buy all the possible colours of food colouring. Later you mix them with sweet powder and water and put them on the fire in little stewpots, when it's done, you put them in little bottles. This mixture can survive for more than twenty-four hours, it's very good. To get different textures we also did some tests with milk and several kinds of food like rice, beans, spaghetti, corn... With those mixtures it's important to use it right away, especially for the milk. Milk goes rotten very fast, with a smell like the most terrible tortures in hell and it will make you vomit for real once you put it in your mouth. In the vomiting sequence in

Carlos there's a lot of milk, good milk and rotten milk. The bigger part of the bottles of rotten milk was thrown at his body, not put in his mouth. Everyone prepared some vomit at some moment of the shooting, but the vomiting specialist is Alexandre Brunoro, our special effects artist, responsible for the turds, the blood, the vomiting and the monsters.

Tell us about some of your influences and film obsessions and how these manifest in your own films?

I discovered cinema with a comedy group very popular in Brazil in the 60's, 70's and 80's, called Os Trapalhões. They had a TV show and always released one movie in the theaters per year, sometimes two per year. They have Terence Hill and Charles Chaplin gestural influences (they did a TV show with Terence Hill and Bud Spencer once, a bar fight scene) and their own characteristics and Brazilian comedy influences too, like Oscarito and Grande Otelo. They also have similarities with the Turkish and Italian rip-offs because they did their own versions of several international

mainstream movies, for example, their own version of *Planet Of The Apes* (*Planalto dos Macacos*), *Hulk* and *Superman* together (*O Incrível Monstro Trapalhão*) and *Star Wars* (*Os Trapalhões Na Guerra Dos Planetas*, it's their fault that *Star Wars* is useless and tedious to me, thank you so much for that). Of course I didn't know anything about those influences because I was only a kid, but they created my passion for movies and an understanding for genre cinema. All of their movies are comedies of course, but inside comedy they experimented with all the genres: western, horror, science fiction, action movies. It was always very meta-linguistic, they were always showing that the effects were fake, the walls were made with cardboard. So many years before I discovered B-movies, horror and arthouse movies they planted the seeds in me of cinema not as a re-creation of reality, but as a huge opportunity to destroy and make fun of all the myths, including cinema itself.

Later I became a music maniac. Music is cinema. Music creates images in our heads every time, it makes our body move and our heads explode in images and feelings. I was growing up, becoming a horror movie addict and every movie lead me more deeply into new filmmakers and new kinds of experiences. Finally I was totally possessed by the will of making my own movies and my head finally blew out when I discovered bad VHS pirate copies of filmmakers such as the Kuchar Brothers, John Waters, Dušan Makavejev, Pasolini, Kōji Wakamatsu, Turkish rip-offs, Shūji Terayama, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Věra Chytilová, Fernando Arrabal, Suzan Pitt, Jan Švankmajer, Jodorowsky, Roland Topor, Russ Meyer, Lucio Fulci, Richard Kern, Jörg Buttge-



Stills from *Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrogo / Island of Vomit and Despair* (2017)

reit, bands like *Einstürzende Neubauten*, *The Shaggs* and *The Residents* and also a huge group of wild Brazilian directors who created several marginal masterpieces, such as José Mojica Marins (*Coffin Joe*), Elyseu Visconti (*Os Monstros de Babaloo* from 1970, it's John Waters' style almost before John Waters) Carlos Reichenbach (*Bom Dia Carlos* is dedicated to him, he made erotic anarchist movies in the 70's), Ozualdo Candeias (*Meu Nome é Tonho, Zézero*), Edgar Navarro (*Superoutro*), Ivan Cardoso (*O Segredo da Múmia*), José Agrippino de Paula (*Hitler Terceiro Mundo*), Rogério Sganzerla (*A Mulher de Todos*), Maurice Capovilla (*O Profeta da Fome*), Andrea Tonacci (*Bang Bang*), João Callegaro (*O Pornógrafo*), Anão Chumbinho movies in Boca do Lixo and Petter Baiestorf who is from the underground cinema in the 90's and comes up whenever almost anyone was making movies in Brazil. Those movies and filmmakers totally torn



Behind the scenes of *Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrogo / Island of Vomit and Despair* (2017)

apart my mind and made me crazy hungry for the opportunity of making my own movies. A retrospective and catalog called 'Cinema Marginal: Filmes produzidos nas décadas de 60 e 70' produced in 2001 was very important for many people at the time, all those movies were re-discovered. Another important register of those movies is the book 'Cinema de Invenção' by critic and filmmaker Jairo Ferreira. Sometimes those influences appear in a very direct and intentional way, as the references I use in *Pazúcus*, and sometimes I simply don't know what's happening in my mind.

Could you talk about how you work with your performers? Do you rehearse or is it improvised?

I know how important rehearsals are, but usually we don't have the time to do it, and

even if we do it, it will be with the camera already working. The scenes with Ligia Marina in *Bom Dia Carlos* and *Pazúcus* had an incidental rehearsal because we began to shoot her scenes after 3pm and then decided to stop and begin again on the next day. It was a very happy decision, in other situations in the past I probably would have chosen to shoot everything fast and improvised to finish the scene on the same day, but in the editing room that always proves to be a mistake, I'm tired of that, so it's better to take more time and have some days out of the schedule if it's possible. There's another scene in *Pazúcus* that was shot fast and improvised and I wish I'd had at least two more days shooting, but I only had one day. It's always better to do things with more time to think and to experiment with things, without worrying about light and time. I intend to improve the rehearsals in the next movies, but I will never despise the improvised situations, that's why the camera will always be on.

It's always a delight to see the actors improvising, I love when they go further with the things I ask, especially because I trust them and I know why they are there, what they are capable of. I only work with friends, non-actors usually, but always artists in some way, people that I have total trust in and know that the experience will be an exchange, a thing that we will create together as friends, having fun (or at least trying not to suffer so much). That doesn't mean that I have known everyone that I work with for years, but it means that I admire them and identify with them, or someone that I admire brings them to the project. Usually the movie is a present for people I admire, and they are a part of their own present. *Bom Dia Carlos* is a present to Marcel and Ligia Marina, and a love letter to Carlos Reichenbach. *Pazúcus* is a love letter to everyone who is in the movie. It's like an Earth version of Paradise, you get together with some of the people you love most in

the world and spend three weeks going crazy and filming with them. Those movies became a potpourri of some of the best moments of my life.

Can you talk us through your creative process, do you work with scripts and write them yourself? How much is pre-planned and how much is developed while shooting?

I do the writing myself until now. As I said before, usually movies are born as musical images in my head or small distorted ideas, those ideas grow with time and get together with other separate ideas. And I love when I get invitations such as this one I received with *Carlos*, with some primary idea to follow. It's a good way to put together some ideas flying in my head. Some movies are born in the editing room, and because usually I have no budget, some movies take several years to come out, and when they do, they are totally different from the original idea. I still have lots of VHS material to transform into movies, things that I shot in 1999, 2001, 2003... There's a lot that is developed while shooting, I totally leave things open to that, and again in the editing room, some things I film without knowing exactly what's happening but I know it will find its way during the editing. My favorite moments are while shooting, it's when I'm totally full of despair but it's the moment when you feel that you are really enjoying life at maximum. The editing and writing are dark abysses of loneliness, those moments when you miss the filming days and hope the movie brings you to new movies to film and more wonderful people to work and live with during the process.

Tell us about Bulhorgia Productions, the different people who are involved and some of the films you have made and distribute?



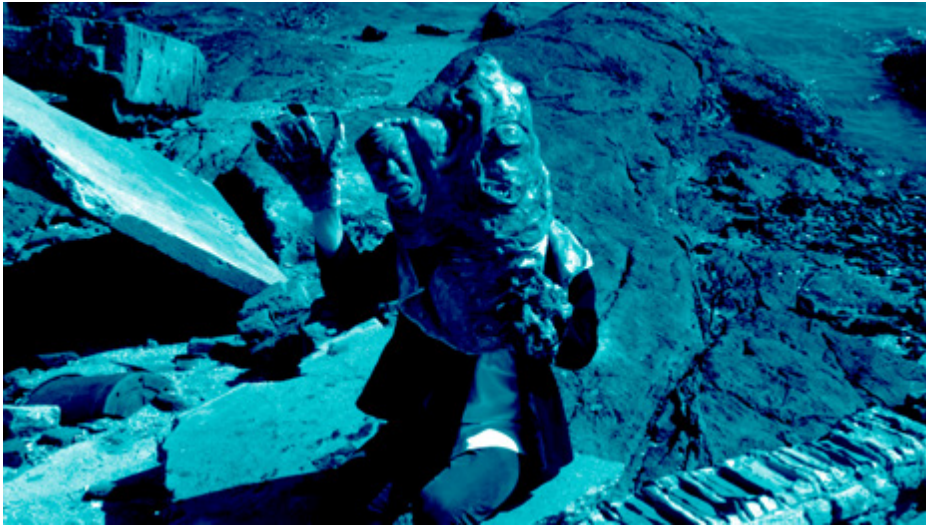
Poster and vomit bags for Bom Dia Carlos (2015)

It's the name I created to distribute my movies and music, the first time I used the name was in 1999, with a demo tape called 'Bulhorgia 2000'. Later I saw Christoph Schlingensiefel saying that he always liked to use the number 2000 or 3000 because it makes things look more pompous, for me it's the same. More pompous, more futuristic, something like those dance or funk music collections from the 90's, 'Furacão 2000', 'Dance Total 2000', those exploding names. Today people take us more seriously because we already made twenty years of film and music, but it began only as a name to pretend that we had a movie corporation. It still is, but now we have some movies to show and we intend to keep making them until we dominate all the world (or at least, to know all the world). Bulhorgia most of the time is only me trying to finish projects involving EVERYONE I know, practically. It's difficult for me to not make plans when I get close to someone, we need to make something together. The name was created with Marcius, who directed my first movie with me and who does the monster voices in *Pazúcus*, Bulhorgia is something like an orgy of people with Bulimia, also it's a different way to express the Portuguese expression: "Estética da fome vs a vontade de comer".

A movie like *Bom Dia Carlos* or *Pazúcus* is a very low budget movie, but if you see the credits you will see there are seven or eight independent movie companies and seven or nine executive producers, everyone helps with something: gasoline, light, post-production... I feel very lucky because there's always lots of supports coming from all sides, but no one had any money, so things are always simple and slow. A very important person who is directly responsible for helping me finish *Pazúcus* is the producer Cavi Borges, he is known as some kind of Brazilian Roger Corman, not because he's a producer of cardboard surreal 50's monster movies (actually

with *Pazúcus* now he is), but because he's fast and practical and has a fame for helping filmmakers to finish their low budget movies with easy and non-bureaucratic solutions. That's so wonderful and rare around here. Also since I began making movies, I joined forces with Petter Baiestorf, the king of surreal Gore comedies in Brazil and a very important influence and friend since always. Since 2003, Bulhorgia is an associate producer of almost all his movies, in association with his company, the legendary Canibal Filmes. We shared similar ideas for filming and also for distribution, so since 2006 we release in partnership our movies on DVD. The main thing that we distribute, in a totally independent way, is his movies and mine and there's a few movies from other directors.

I wish I could release more movies, but the main problem again is the same: we don't have any money, we are fueled with passion, burning passion, but no money. Some movies that we produced in the last years still don't have a DVD or Blu-ray release because of those reasons. It's common for us to sell pirate copies of ourselves, with "unofficial" copies of movies that are not released yet, such as *Ninguém Deve Morrer* (a musical western by Baiestorf in which I played a cowboy singer) or a collection of the short movies I made between 2005 and 2015, which I intend to release this year at the same time as the *Pazúcus* DVD. I love gimmicks (like vomit bags or personalised t-shirts) and DVD extras, in 2008 I released a 4-disc DVD for my movie *Flaming Nipples (Mamilos em Chamas)*, it has a 90-minute documentary, an audio commentary from a doctor's perspective and those kinds of stuff. I hope to prepare similar things for *Pazúcus*: colostomy bags, puppets, masks, and of course: turds for selling. Those who participated in the crowdfunding campaign for *Carlos* in Texas (which was another way for helping me finish *Pazúcus*) received some turds at home, turds used in the shoot, direct-



Still from Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrego / Island of Vomit and Despair (2017)

ly from the mouth of Marcel. Marcel Mars is another important element in the last years, he has helped with every movie I've made since 2010, he played several small parts and different technical functions in *Zombio 2* (by Petter Baiestorf), and his own *Tyranny Of Desire* is one of the movies I'm more anxious to see coming out here in Brazil for the years to come. It's also a Filmaralho production, another wonderful group of artists who are creating wonderful acts in Mexico right now.

I'm still thinking about how I am going to distribute *Pazúcus*, if I will do a crowdfunding campaign for pre-selling the DVDs and Blu-ray, which looks like a good idea, but I'm not sure yet how I will do it, which platform, etc... Same thing for theatrical release, I will try anything I can, as always. A message: if you are a movie producer or an exhibitor and are getting interested reading this interview, if you are looking for different options, please don't lose the chance to talk with me, I can make you very happy and with your help deliver beautiful and poetic movies into the world.

Where do you distribute and screen your films? Are there many cinemas and film clubs in Brazil that are screening your work? How has your work been received on your home turf and abroad?

Yes, there's a lot of places to screen and usually my movies do very well at festivals and film clubs, but you need to run after those spaces with perseverance, always. That takes time, energy and money. And of course, I want more, it is necessary to grow more and more. I'm always trying everything that is possible to get the movies playing everywhere, *Bom Dia Carlos* had a very good acceptance outside Brazil, I hope to do even better with *Pazúcus* (I'm always trying to be optimistic). An official distribution in cinemas is more difficult around here, you need more budget and the distributors make strange choices sometimes, thinking about "market" and what the public wants to see (in their vision). To see my movies in a theater screen I depend on the festivals, I love the movie theaters and I love even more when the movie is exhibited in unusual places like public



Still from Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrego / Island of Vomit and Despair (2017)

outdoor spaces or walls in independent places. Brazil is living a very tense political situation at the moment, a political coup and the beginning of a dictatorship conducted by business pigs, fascists and religious groups. They are destroying civil rights fast with all the strength they have, and there are many students occupying the schools as a protest and resistance against those abuses, that means that in 2016 we have a lot of occupied schools screening movies, that's very nice. *Bom Dia Carlos* was exhibited in some schools, but usually the students get in a panic because they expect a normal "horror movie", but that's exactly one of the things that I enjoy more, different expectations.

In the last few years there has been a lot of talk about the "market" being more open to "genre movies" here in Brazil, a good thing is there are more of those kinds of movies, but at the same time I don't know if this "market interest" means something for the kind of movie I want to make and watch. I want to make aggressive movies, aggression doesn't mean exactly violence on the screen, but

rethinking the way of making your movie, rethinking the narrative, transforming your relationship with the audience in an aggressive and critical way, not rebuild the clichés to please a "demand", it needs to be something else. This word "market" makes me very confused, when I am presenting a movie and someone asks me to talk about this, and I absentmindedly end up speaking about "market", I always feel kinda strange when I'm in my bed later, because I always understand this word and what this word represents as something that needs to be destroyed!! Something that needs to be and can be rebuilt by other ways and means. In my understanding of what art is to me, what makes me feel in love with my favorite directors is that for at least a small (or big) part of the audience you are not an entertainer, you're a terrorist! A juvenile delinquent and that's good, that's a dream, a victory!! Some people will love your movie and others will run from the theaters in panic, irritated or confused. So, if television and mainstream distributors are interested in genre movies, I hope that means that they want to give space and money to



Behind the scenes of *Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrego / Island of Vomit and Despair* (2017)

creative filmmakers with some kind of free eye and not publicity "auteurs" repeating boring mainstream clichés. Maybe I'm just being grumpy with that, what I really want is everybody making love and money and being happy with his own work. And of course that I also desire for *Pazúcus* to make children and families cry in despair and confusion, falling down the stairs of the shopping mall, or at home watching television waiting for the movie to end and something more comfortable to appear. But I also, as a spectator, want to see more radical and provocative movies being made by new filmmakers, there's some kind of a sense of a humor vacuum at the moment in some kinds of cinema around here. Debauchery and anarchy, which were the main symbols of Brazilian cinema, have been lost in a dark pit for some time, some of the new movies are only trying to be perfect on the visual effects and narrative, they are trying to be so serious and that sometimes can be so boring. In *Bom Dia Carlos* we have a fake axe, a paper axe... and because of that some people came to me and said: "the scatological effects are so well done, I don't

understand the paper axe, why did you do that?" Why?!! Because it's beautiful, that's why!! It's a movie, it's all a lie, we already know how a real axe is, we want to make our own fake paper axe!! It's more fun!! In *Pazúcus* we have a paper shotgun, a fake paper knife and the main reason is because it is beautiful to me, but it's also because I'm tired of those new movies trying to be so perfect in everything, on the visual effects, this is so boring, movies can be more delirious than that. On the other hand, I'm far more optimistic with the LGBT movies that are being made around here at the moment, and I think the next five or ten years will bring lots of new and radical filmmakers and movies, the conservative apocalypse that is happening around here is demanding that.

You have just completed *Pazúcus: Island of Vomit and Despair* which is a sequel to *Bom Dia Carlos*, what can we expect to see in this film?

You are going to discover more about what's happening in Carlos' head and body, he talks



Still from *Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrego / Island of Vomit and Despair* (2017)

about voices in *Bom Dia Carlos*, now you are going to hear those voices together with him. You also will see more about what's happening outside the subjective world of Carlos, you are going to meet new people, the people around him. I didn't count the minutes yet, but there's some parts of the movie that are a remake of *Long Weekend*, the Australian masterpiece from 1978. I love this movie so much, it's a serious version of the scene in *Pink Flamingos* when the jealous couple are walking in the woods and they keep repeating how disgusting and terrible nature is. When I watched this movie *Long Weekend* for the first time, the movie shocked me so much, because the suspense is so impressive and at the same time is so hilarious. "Every piece of grass will turn against you" says the narrator on the trailer, that's so demented and wonderful! You also will get more familiar with the routine of Carlos' psychiatrist, Dr. Roberto. He's still looking for Carlos, Carlos is like a god to him, he sees Carlos in all things and he needs to kill Carlos to save the world. So much pain and suffering, will Dr. Roberto finally find Carlos? Will Carlos free himself

from the voices that surround him and finally accept and liberate his filthiness turning himself into gold? And the Pazúcus Goddess, who is she? Is she going to help or does she also want to kill Carlos? Are these characters connected with each other or is life an eternal and lonely mismatch? Everyone is suffering in fear, despair, vomit and paranoia, but *Pazúcus* is a mystical and maybe happy journey through apocalypse, a celebration of hysterical and vomiting cinema. I already have a script for part II, I would love to make it and continue lost in the island of vomiting and despair. I'm excited about your screening in Portugal next year, I wish I could be presenting the movie with you guys, I think you should make a campaign to find money to bring me to Cidade do Porto, it would be so awesome, pleaseeeee... ^^

What contemporary films and filmmakers are you currently interested in?

You didn't ask about music, but music is also cinema, so... Here in Brazil my favorite sounds from the last two years are: a band called Rak-

ta, a noise record label called Meia Vida and a musical project from the city I grew up in (Joinville) called Esmectations. All those sounds inspire me and also make me very happy. New movies I can talk about: *Nova Dubai* by Gustavo Vinagre & *Branco Sai, Preto Fica* by Adirley Queirós. Those two movies have so much power, they make me walk in circles with my head full of ideas and happiness, wanting to make more of my own movies, it's a shock treatment of cinematic energy! I also loved a short movie called *Não Temos Receita* by Ângelo Sousa, it's a dirty and simple low budget rock n' roll movie, with a sense of humour and very noisy. I'm missing more movies like this one around here. These are filmmakers that I have discovered recently, there's a lot of filmmakers of my age (I'm 34) or a little older, from the underground that appeared ten or twenty years ago and continue doing fun and incredible works. And veterans from our cinema such as Edgar Navarro, Júlio Bressane, Andrea Tonacci, Luiz Rosemberg Filho and many others that are releasing exciting new movies too. I try to watch new movies from every place in the world, but I also watch too many old movies, more than new ones. My favorites around the world are new movies by veteran directors. You probably have some good new names to recommend from those Film Panic screenings... Also does *South Park* still count as something contemporary? I love *South Park* so much, they are true artists!

What's next after *Pazúcus: Island of Vomit and Despair*, do you have another film in the works?

I already have another feature movie ready that is in the same position that *Pazúcus* was three months ago: it needs money for editing and post-production. It's a gangster experimental fantasy movie called *Viatti Arrabbiati*, all filmed in an invented Italian language, something between Latin, Italian, German and Portuguese. It was shot before *Pazúcus*,

between 2010 and 2015 (actually we finished filming *Viatti* on the fifth day of shooting *Pazúcus*) but when the producer said that I needed to choose between the two projects, I chose to finish *Pazúcus* first because *Carlos* was doing very well. So I thought that it would be more clever to release *Pazúcus* first, to maintain people's connection with Carlos' adventures. It will make things easier to release *Viatti* in the future, I hope. *Viatti* is a beautiful movie, with incredible photography and probably is crazier than *Pazúcus* in some ways. It doesn't have commercial elements such as vomiting, shitting and monsters, but for sure it has other particular qualities that will create a very special movie. I have shown a demonstrative 50 minute cut that I already have to a Greek curator who likes Brazilian movies and he said that it would be awesome to transform *Viatti* into a TV series, I would love that, especially if it was with a mix of Greek and our invented Italian language of screams! My utopian dream would be to release the movie in August 2017, but I know until then I will be as crazy as a mad dog trying to show *Pazúcus* to the world! Let's see what happens! Stay tuned! :) Thank you so much for the interview.



Gurcius Gewdner (born 1982, Brazil)

Filmography

- Pazúcus: A Ilha do Desarrego / Island of Vomit and Despair* (2017 | 110 mins)
- Bom Dia Carlos* (2015 | 17 mins)
- Fantaspoo 2013: Premiere mundial de Zombio 2* (2015 | 6 mins)
- Arquivos de Gurcius: momentos de calma nos bastidores de Zombio 2* (2015 | 17 mins)
- Pastor Davi – Take completo* (2015 | co-directed with Pablo Pablo | 5 mins)
- Uptake Fear* (2015 | made with André Kapel Furman and Armando Fonseca | 90 mins)
- Pressa de te Amar* (2013 | music video for Os Pedreros | 3 mins)
- Koneko Monogatari II - As Novas Aventuras Sexuais de Chatran & El Zimmer Rumo as Profundezas do Inferno e da Solidão do Matrimônio* (1986/2013 | Masanori Hata/Gurcius Gewdner | 90 mins)
- Filmes São Seus Amigos* (2013 | 2 mins)
- Almoço na Relva* (2013 | 6 mins)
- Erivaldo: O Astronauta Místico* (2013 | 6 mins)
- La Maldicion Goiania* (2012 | 2 mins)
- Ninguém Deve Perder: A produção de Ninguém Deve Morrer* (2012 | co-directed with Petter Baiestorf & André Bozzeto | 100 mins)
- War, Warfare, War* (2012 | music video for Rotten State | 6 mins)
- O Fim do Mundo no Morrinho* (2012 | co-directed with Christian Caselli & Petter Baiestorf | 7 mins)
- Perdigotos da Discórdia* (2012 | directed the segment "O Punheteiro" | 10 mins)
- Como Irritar Hardcore Dandis: Lições Práticas Vol I* (2012 | 15 mins)
- Dez Anos sem GG Allin* (2010 | 7 mins)
- Freddy Breck Ballet* (2010 | 12 mins)
- Desejo* (2009 | made with Orchestra Zé Felipe | 3 mins)
- Dois Olhos* (2009 | made with Orchestra Zé Felipe | 9 mins)
- Tatuada* (2009 | made with Orchestra Zé Felipe | 4 mins)
- Cat Walk (for Jodo)* (2009 | 4 mins)
- A Place Called Feeling* (2009 | music video for Cassim & Barbara | 4 mins)

- A Minute Ago* (2009 | music video for Cassim & Barbara | 4 mins)
- Harpías da Capadócia* (2009 | 4 mins)
- Eu Sou um Pequeno Panda* (2008 | 9 mins)
- Vadias do Sexo Sangrento no Cine Horror III* (2008 | 20 mins)
- Delícias do Serrado* (2008 | 50 mins)
- Me Boline, Me Boline* (2008 | music video for Os Legais & Hans Konesky | 2 mins)
- Banho Gostoso: A Produção de Mamilos em Chamas* (2008 | 90 mins)
- Mamilos em Chamas* (2008 | 60 mins)
- Tudo Começou Quando Mamãe Conheceu Papai* (2007 | 7 mins)
- Dark Angel* (2007 | 3 mins)
- Amigo Imaginário* (2007 | 3 mins)
- Um Trailer em Chamas* (2006 | 6 mins)
- Clímax* (2006 | music video for MECHANICS | 3 mins)
- Dia de Ano* (2005 | 28 mins)
- O Triunvirato de Gurcius Gewdner* (2004 | 55 mins)
- Exija Gurcius Gewdner* (2004 | 3 mins)
- A população da América espanhola colonial* (2004, 15 mins)
- Nosferatum* (2003 | 9 mins)
- Poluição dos mares e oceanos* (1996 | 12 mins)

Find out more about Gurcius Gewdner's films and Bulhorgia Productions through their page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Bulhorgia

**THE
UNDERGROUND
FILM STUDIO** **NEWSLETTER**
DECEMBER 2016

2016 has been a busy year for **The Underground Film Studio**, alongside two issues of **Film Panic Magazine** we have produced three feature films, two of which (**The Kingdom Of Shadows** and **In Search Of the Exile**) are now finished and being screened, and the third (**Black Sun**) is in the final stages of post-production and due for release in early 2017.

In May we had an exhibition of video installations in Porto and presented three expanded cinema performances. We are now being represented by **Andrómeda agency** in Portugal for our expanded cinema work and have several new performances in preparation for the new year.

This Autumn we launched a new series of screenings called **Film Panic Presents!** which is a monthly showcase of contemporary underground and experimental films, programmed in collaboration with **Shortcutz Porto**. The first season will take place over six months.

We have also teamed up with the Dublin based **Experimental Film Society** for a series of events, film collaborations, co-productions and publications. This collaboration has been coming together over the past year beginning when Rouzbeh Rashidi played the character of the Inspector in **The Kingdom Of Shadows**, since then we have screened each others' work and plan to build on this collaboration further. We all believe that the survival of artists working outside of the gallery and industrial film world relies on working together and supporting each other and we are very excited to discover many common interests and ideas between us, we are certain that together we will be able to go further in bringing our visions of cinema to reality.

We have big plans for 2017! Alongside continuing our love affair with Portugal we will also be doing a series of screenings in the UK throughout March, which will begin on 28th February with a presentation about our work for **The Alchemical Landscape research group** in Cambridge, our talk is called **Mutant Cinema, Alchemy and Dreams: The Visionary Films of Daniel Fawcett & Clara Pais**. We also have several screenings around Europe planned, which we'll be announcing soon!

In January we will be releasing three films on video-on-demand:

Savage Witches (2012): a kaleidoscopic adventure in cinematic alchemy and our first collaboration which launched **The Underground Film Studio**.

Splendor Solis (2015): Daniel's epic home movie project 17 years in the making.

In Search Of The Exile (2016): a visionary cinematic experience, a doorway into a dreamworld where reality morphs and transforms before our eyes.

Keep in the loop about all these projects and more on our website:
www.theundergroundfilmstudio.co.uk



Still from The Kingdom Of Shadows (2016)



Sacrificium Intellectus I, an expanded cinema performance which took place on 14th May 2016 in Porto



Rehearsal For A Phantom Film, an expanded cinema performance which took place on 4th May 2016 in Porto



Behind the scenes of Black Sun (2017)



The first screening of Film Panic Presents! on 16th November 2016

