

3 Continents Nantes 2005

By Gönül Dönmez-Colin

Spring 2006 Issue of KINEMA

FESTIVAL DES 3 CONTINENTS NANTES 2005

The 27th Festival of 3 Continents in Nantes (22-29 November 2005), a pioneer in France for exploring unknown film industries around the world has been hard pressed in recent years to find virgin territories as the world has come to resemble a global village. With the success of the Afghan program last year, Libya was on the agenda for 2005 but to negotiate with Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi did not prove to be such an easy matter. Ivory Coast was the replacement, a tiny film industry that nonetheless gave us perhaps the most erotic film to come out of Africa, Désiré Ecaré's 1985 classic, *Visages de femmes* (*Faces of Women*).

From Turkey, *Meleîn Düüü* (*Angel's Fall*), perhaps Turkey's first incest story told in a minimalist, reflective mode was part of the competition that included eight films from Asia, two from Latin America (*Play* by Alicia Scherson and *Mi major enemigo* by Alex Bowen Carranza, both from Chile) and one from North Africa (Tunisian Nacer Khemir's *Bab'Aziz*).

Among the Asian films, Taiwanese Tsai Ming-liang's *Tian bian yi duo yun* (*The Wayward Cloud*), which more appropriately is called *La Saveur de la pastèque* (*The Taste of Watermelon*) in French, a film that uses the medium of porno to comment about our dried up world projected a time of drought in Taipei, unlike in previous films of the director where it rains incessantly, water drips everywhere or even gushes through flats in desperate apartment buildings.

From Uzbekistan, the only CIS country whether national film industry is triumphant over Hollywood, *Orzi Ortida* (*The Teenager*), a coming of age film in an environment of insecurity and uncertainty was realistically emotive in describing the young protagonist's routine life that seemed to run in circles.

Chemman Chaalai (*The Gravel Road*) by Deepak Menon Kumaran from Malaysia also focused on the pains of growing up in societal circumstances that limit free movement. In this film, an intelligent young girl from a rubber estate where higher education is unthinkable for women is faced with obstacles from many angles when she pursues her dreams, to the point of being accused of selfishness.

Café Transit by Kambozia Partovi (the scriptwriter of Jafar Panahi's *The Circle*) from Iran depicted the tribulations of a widow who chooses an independent life when she is left alone - an unthinkable idea for her circumstances. Her conservative brother-in-law wants to take her as a second wife to 'save and protect' her and the family honour, which, as a woman she represents. Life gets further complicated when a melancholy Greek truck driver falls in love with her.

In the New Looks section, started the previous year, films that try to explore new territories, cross borders or question the concept of cinema by standing somewhere along borders were showcased. Particularly worthy of mention is an Afghan film by a very young woman from Herat who has something to say and is determined to say it. *Se Noghta* (*Three Dots*) is focused on a young widow whose struggles for survival lead her to an Iranian jail. Naturally, the filmmaker Roya Sadat had several difficulties shooting this film. Finding an actress to take part was the hardest part. The woman who accepted did so only because she desperately needed the money. The three dots of the title, Roya informed us, were for the things she could not say.

In the same section, from Tadjikistan, where filmmaking came to an end with Independence, Safarbek Soliev's *Taqimi Intizori* (*Calender of Wait*) was pure *cinéma vérité* about a day in a small village in the mountains, which was an obvious microcosm for a new life post-Soviet and post-civil war.

In the section for documentary competition, three of the eight entries were from Iran. Mohammad Shirvani's *Reyisjomhur Mir Qanbar* (*President Mir-Qanbar*) about a 75-year-old poor villager who has persistently tried to become the President of Iran and Tan Pin Pin's *Singapore GaGa*, a personal journey through modern Singapore were interesting works.

Tunisian cinema, perhaps the most prolific among the Maghreb countries was honoured in a historical retrospective, highlighting the works of its first filmmaker, Samama Chikly (*Zohra*, *Ain el-ghazel*, 1922 and 1924, respectively), Sadok Ben Aicha's existential piece *Mokhtar* (1968), Nouri Bouzid's scandalous film, *Rih Essed* (*Man of Ashes*, 1986), Ferid Boughedir's *Halfaouine, Asfour Stah* (*Halfaouine, Boy Of The Terraces*, 1990), not to forget the works of exceptional women talents of the country, such as the award-winning *Samt el-Koussour* (*The Silences of the Palace*, 1994) of Moufida Tlatli and young Raja Amari's totally scandalous and totally delightful, *Satin rouge* (*Red Satin*), which turns societal mores deviously up-side-down.

Brazilian Realism in the Fifties, with classics from Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Humberto Mauro and nine others; Treasures of the Cathay Film Company; B Films; History of Brazilian documentaries were some of the other sections that often put the audience in a dilemma as to which films to choose.

References

AWARDS

Golden Montgolfier (Best film): *Meleîn Düüüü* (*Angel's Fall*)
by Semih Kaplanoglu (Turkey)

Silver Montgolfier (ex aequo): *Un Jour Parfait* (*A Perfect Day*)
by Joana Hadjithomas and
Khalil Jooreige, (Switzerland-Lebanon) and
Sayonara Midori-chan
by Tomoyuki Furuyama (Japan)

Special Jury Award: *Chemman chaalai* (*The Gravel Road*)
by Deepak Menon Kumaran (Malaysia)

Best Director Award (Tribute to Jacques Demy): Tsai Ming-liang, for *Tian bian yi duo yun* (*The Wayward Cloud*, Taiwan)

Best Actress: Mari Hoshino for her role in *Sayonara Midori-chan*

Best Actor: Ziad Saad for *A Perfect Day* by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige

Public Prize for fiction: *Play* by Alicia Scherson (Chile)

DOCUMENTARY SECTION

Golden Montgolfier: *The Cheese and the Worms*
by Kato Haruyo (Japan)

Public Prize: *Toro Negro*
by Pedro Gonzales-Rubio and Carlos Armella (Mexico)

Author Information

Gönül DÖNMEZ-COLIN is an independent researcher and writer whose publications include *Women, Islam and Cinema, Cinemas of the Other: A personal Journey with Filmmakers from the Middle East and Central Asia, Cinema of North Africa and the Middle East* (ed.); *Turkish Cinema: Identity, Distance and Belonging* (Reaktion Books), and *Routledge Dictionary of Turkish Cinema* (2014).