

Clementine

(Information package)



(Synopsis / Director's Note / Production Notes / Cast and crew list)

Synopsis

A troubled man is walking around the ruins of a deserted house. Two men in striped costumes approach him. With a playful mood, they start telling him an old, sad story. The story is about a boy, wandering near the same house. It is about a photographer who finds inspiration in a certain deserted beach. About a shepherd, who falls in love with a Countess. A diplomat, who discovers the relation between table tennis and high politics. It is about staging "Othello" while planting the seeds of war. In this story, Desdemona dies. But there will always be a beautiful girl. The man can call her Clementine.

Director's Note

"Clementine" is a cinematic comment on how my own generation has witnessed the trauma of war. While we were very small children at that time, we took over the burden of the tragedy, we grew up with false feelings of guilt that did not let us blossom. The idea we have about the events is the result of two kinds of storytelling, typified by the older generation. What did really happen? Who is it to blame? How did it all begin? No one really knows, or rather he is not willing to tell us. The narration of the events has taken place by some unknown "Men in Striped Costumes" who make sure that we are still bound into a past we have barely lived. Life is like a broken tape, a record that keeps turning back in the year 1974...

I have chosen to film the story in a parabolic way, handing the freedom to the viewer, in order to put the missing pieces together. The story evolves beyond the specific place and time. Is the time the seventies? Is the place Cyprus? Beyond the sets and the costumes, there are some "alternative" clues: Marlon Brando's motorcycle, Mastroianni's sunglasses, a poster from Antonioni's "Blow-up", an album cover from the Doors and another one by David Bowie. These fragments of popular culture create a parallel place and time. They are the cinematic and musical ruins of an era. There, the dreamers find a refuge, in order to escape from their little lives on the island.

On top of that, an awkward, colonial performance of Shakespeare's "Othello" develops, with a double-faced "Iago" taking the place of the main hero. The unlucky victim, Desdemona, has the face of a mysterious Countess. The only thing we know about her is that she is married to a German Count and that she has a beautiful little daughter, Clementine. The name is taken from the old traditional song «My darlin' Clementine», turned into a western by John Ford and revived as a late anthem of Cyprus' war for independence from the British. Everything that we see is like a game of cards in the hands of the Men in Striped Costumes. But do they really exist?

From the beginning, we realize that the film is in fact the Men in Stripes' interpretation of the events. So, some things look illogical and out of place, tragedy blends into comedy. Until the performance of "Othello", the cinematic language seems conventional and at the same time broken. As we move from "Othello" into the contemporary world, the pieces start putting themselves together in order to create a new, "muted" narration, escaping the Men in Stripes' influence upon the story. In the second part, we finally enter the world of Today, where the Boy becomes a Broken Man and Little Clementine becomes a woman. Of course, even at that point, the time and the place is abstract. The only thing we see is an airport, a hotel room and some old buildings in ruins. Our hero's presence has dissolved into the traumatic past. The finale is like a long, virtual, travelling shot culminating in a way into the beginning, but in a cathartic way. Clementine's presence is the one that puts everything into place within the suffering soul of the Middle-Aged Man.

Production Notes

“Clementine”, Longinos Panagi’s first feature film is a production financed by the Cyprus Cinema Advisory Committee. It is co-produced by two private film production companies from Cyprus: Roll-Out Vision Services Ltd and FilmBlades Ltd. The film is the outcome of years of co-operation and friendship between the director and the first-time producer, Konstantinos Othonos, who is also the Director of Photography and the Editor in the film. “Clementine” is a case of an artistic journey that is realized under difficult economic circumstances. Because of the ongoing crisis affecting the island, the film was produced over a period of eight years. This long time of preparation and anticipation has left the mark on the outcome: the financial, social and psychological crisis, were finally added to the political aspect that lies in the heart of the film: the island’s ongoing division.

The limited resources were approached in a creative mood by the core team of artistic collaborators: the director-scriptwriter, the producer-director of photography and the executive producer. The script was refined in order to go into the “soul” of the story, a parable on the affects of division in the younger generations. The actors were a mixture of different age groups and artistic backgrounds. Most of them were locals, with the exception of the German actress playing the part of Clementine (Tanja Czichy-Jakober). (She met with the director in the Venice Film Festival, exactly ten years ago, when she was appearing in the film: “En la ciudad de Sylvia”). Filming took place entirely on the island, within a few kilometres, reflecting the diversity of the place and its Eastern Mediterranean nature. It was completed last summer, in the middle of a typical, local heatwave, the end of a long dry season, in a way in line with the atmosphere of the film itself. During the filming, just like the little Boy of our story, the crew took refuge under the shadows of tall eucalyptus trees, planted there by the British during the colonialization of the island in the beginning of the twentieth century. A part of the shooting, took place just meters from the buffer zone of Nicosia, between deserted, bombarded houses from the seventies.

The sets and the costumes had also a minimal feel and a flair from that period. The staging of the theatre performance within the film (Shakespeare’s “Othello”) kept the colonial character but with limited resources, a stark contrast with the “grandioso” appearance of the spectators and the music. The collaboration of the director with the composer Vangelino Currentzis is expanding over a period of nearly twenty years. They worked together on the director’s first short film: “The hill or a study for Anna”. Last summer, after the composer had finished the music for the opening ceremony of the First European Games in Baku, he started working on the music of “Clementine”. The sound design took place in Sierra studios in Athens and the coloring of the film had a sense of late, Kodak film stock. A part of the challenge was to push the old and nostalgic feel of the film into the digital. Also, to deal with the high contrast and the strong, bright, almost ruthless, Cyprus sun. In a way, we were constantly reminded by poet’s George Seferis words: “Have you ever noticed how... that thief the sun, takes our make-up off every morning? I’d prefer the sun’s warmth without the sun; I’d look for a sea that doesn’t strip one bare: a voiceless blue without that ill-bred daily interrogation”. Let’s hope we have managed...

Cast and Crew List

Director: Longinos Panagi

Scriptwriter: Longinos Panagi

Cast: Tanja Jakober, Longinos Panagi, Prokopis Agathokleous, Nektarios Theodorou, Aggelos Nikolaou, Elena Michael, Theodoros Michaelides, Paul Stewart, Marina Makris, Thodoris Pentides, Maria Karasoula, Androula Erakleous, Sergio Bertino, Alex Von Stieglitz, Thanasis Drakopoulos, Costas Demetriou.

Direction of Photography: Konstantinos Othonos

Music Composition: Vangelino Currentzis

Set Design: Andy Bargilly

Costumes: Mariza Bargilly

Sound: Giorgos Potamitis

Make-up: Alexandra Myta

Hair Styling: Marios Neophytou

Editing: Konstantinos Othonos

DIT: Panicos Petrides

Sound Engineering: Vangelis Lapas

Executive Production: Giorgos Pantzis, Monika Nikolaidou

Production Company: Roll-Out Vision Services Ltd.

Co-producers: Cyprus Cinema Advisory Committee (Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus) , FilmBlades Ltd, Longinos Panagi

Contact:

rolloutkino@cytanet.com.cy

longinospan@gmail.com