

Black Medusa
Press review

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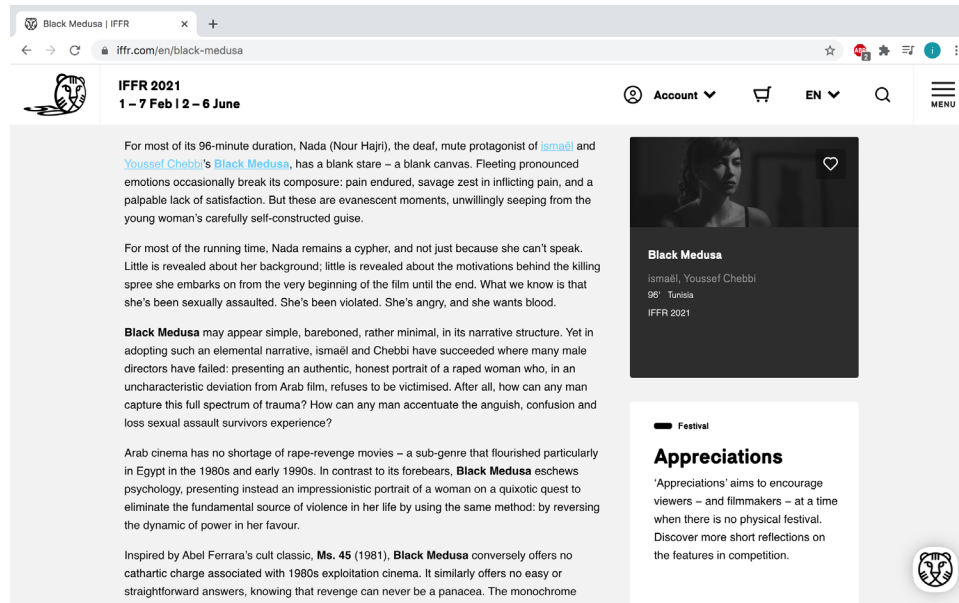
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English

Appreciations

Joseph Fahim

IFFR



For most of its 96-minute duration, Nada (Nour Hajri), the deaf, mute protagonist of ismaël and Youssef Chebbi's *Black Medusa*, has a blank stare – a blank canvas. Fleeting pronounced emotions occasionally break its composure: pain endured, savage zest in inflicting pain, and a palpable lack of satisfaction. But these are evanescent moments, unwillingly seeping from the young woman's carefully self-constructed guise.

For most of the running time, Nada remains a cypher, and not just because she can't speak. Little is revealed about her background; little is revealed about the motivations behind the killing spree she embarks on from the very beginning of the film until the end. What we know is that she's been sexually assaulted. She's been violated. She's angry, and she wants blood.

Black Medusa may appear simple, bareboned, rather minimal, in its narrative structure. Yet in adopting such an elemental narrative, ismaël and Chebbi have succeeded where many male directors have failed: presenting an authentic, honest portrait of a raped woman who, in an uncharacteristic deviation from Arab film, refuses to be victimised. After all, how can any man capture this full spectrum of trauma? How can any man accentuate the anguish, confusion and loss sexual assault survivors experience?

Arab cinema has no shortage of rape-revenge movies – a sub-genre that flourished particularly in Egypt in the 1980s and early 1990s. In contrast to its forebears, *Black Medusa* eschews psychology, presenting instead an impressionistic portrait of a woman on a quixotic quest to eliminate the fundamental source of violence in her life by using the same method: by reversing the dynamic of power in her favour.

Inspired by Abel Ferrara's cult classic, *Ms. 45* (1981), *Black Medusa* conversely offers no cathartic charge associated with 1980s exploitation cinema. It similarly offers no easy or straightforward answers, knowing that revenge can never be a panacea. The monochrome cinematography augments Nada's growing detachment from her petty prey. Killing is soon transformed from a self-validating act for enacting justice into

[LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE](#)

a mechanical obsession: a fixation that grows into her main raison d'être.

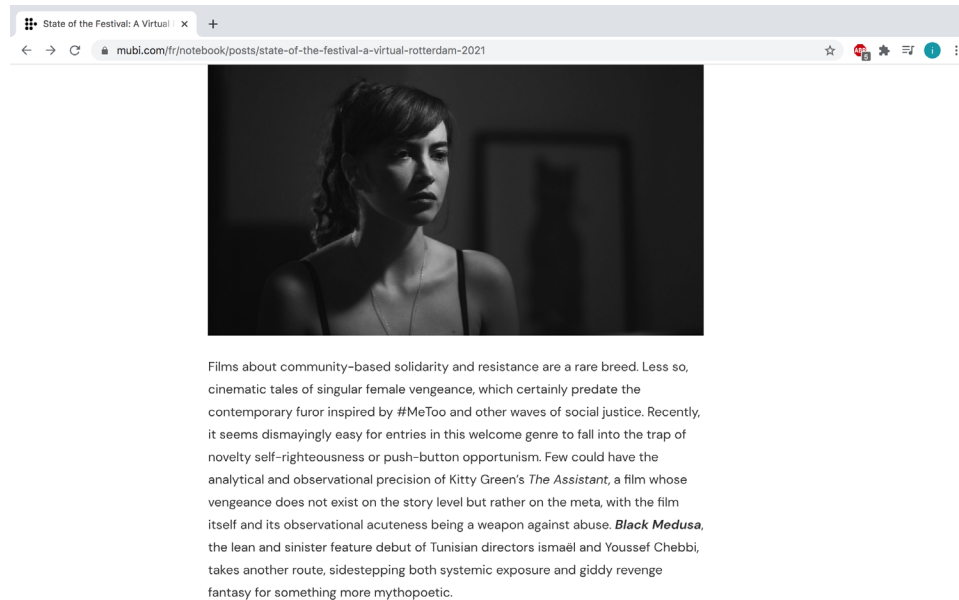
Its moral and philosophical complexity aside, there is, admittedly, a primal enjoyment in seeing Nada tearing her male victims apart. Tunisia has undeniably made strides in advancing women's rights, yet patriarchy still defines the relationships between men and women across the Arab world, both in the street and in courts of law. Black Medusa is thus a revenge fantasy for the #MeToo generation: a fable of sorts that restores to women their agency while deliberately reducing the destructive, entitled male impulse to repeated, static gestures, committed by hordes of indistinguishable, faceless men.

For the past three decades, North African cinema has mined every imaginable narrative of the subjection of women and toxic patriarchy. In injecting cinematic violence into the proceedings, ismaël and Chebbi have put a fresh, daring twist on what has recently become a dated equation; the pair have shunned the predictable, exportable realist discourse and given us the Arab rape-revenge of the century. Playful and serious-minded in equal measures, the physical rage of Black Medusa ultimately transpires into an act of defiance against a system that vigorously ascribes formulated roles for women. Even on screen.

January, 28, 2021

State of the Festival: A Virtual Rotterdam 2021

Daniel Kasman
Mubi Notebook



Films about community-based solidarity and resistance are a rare breed. Less so, cinematic tales of singular female vengeance, which certainly predate the contemporary furor inspired by #MeToo and other waves of social justice. Recently, it seems dismayingly easy for entries in this welcome genre to fall into the trap of novelty self-righteousness or push-button opportunism. Few could have the analytical and observational precision of Kitty Green's *The Assistant*, a film whose vengeance does not exist on the story level but rather on the meta, with the film itself and its observational acuteness being a weapon against abuse. *Black Medusa*, the lean and sinister feature debut of Tunisian directors ismaël and Youssef Chebbi, takes another route, sidestepping both systemic exposure and giddy revenge fantasy for something more mythopoetic.

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The film's twenty-something heroine, Nada (Nour Hajri), stunning and silent, wears her little black dress out into the evening like many of her new generation, but few employ it as she does: like a superhero's costume. In this ensemble her nighttime alter ego picks up men at bars and clubs, takes them to their place, drugs them to unconsciousness and then wreaks physical revenge. We learn little about Nada beyond a gasping glimpse of a rape that seems to have taken her voice away, and the scenes with her victims move with a rhythmic ease somewhere between ritual and dream. Told through ismaël and Chebbi's satiny, solemn imagery and clipped storytelling rather than through psychodrama, the film has little interest in, nor need of, dialog. Unlike many vengeance films, *Black Medusa* is a tale recited, not exuberant wish fulfillment or even an immersion into victimhood and subsequent empowerment.

When one of her men upsets the ritual and Nada's practice of controlled violence tips into murder, murder soon becomes a part of her; murder becomes something she cannot not commit. Throughout, *Black Medusa* resembles films by punk poet F.J. Ossang, pitched at the disjunction between reality and iconography. Shot in beautifully toned and composed black and white and accompanied by the throbbing music of Omar Aloulou that resembles a mix of doom-laden electronica and Neil Young's score for *Dead Man*, Nada prowls a nocturnal, ghost-

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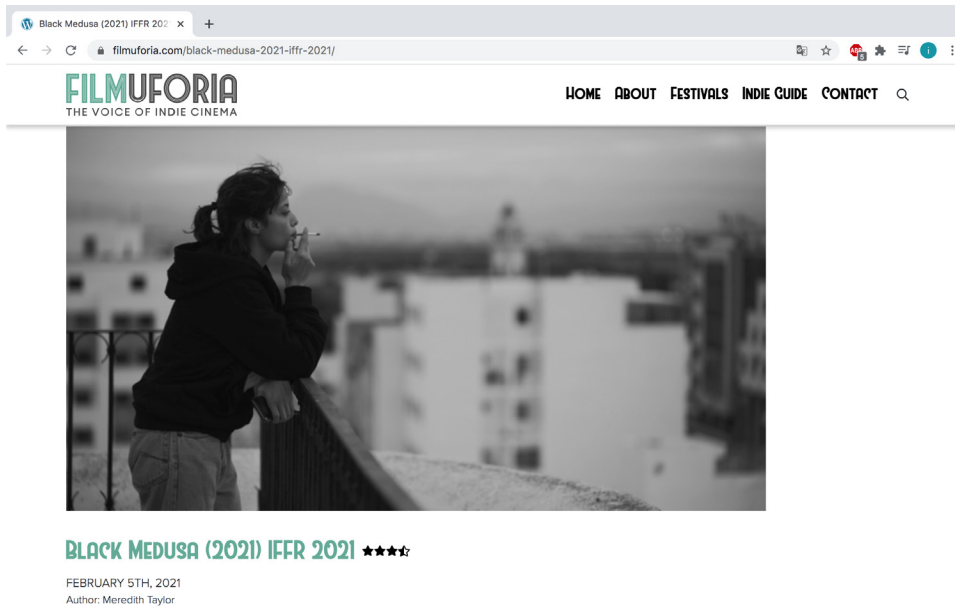
ly and very much modern Tunis. Shown as a mixture of indistinguishable bars and streams of glowering high-rises, the urban landscape evokes at once predator's amoral territory and the inhuman world that may have birthed such a predator. A glimpse of hope in the figure of a female coworker (Rym Hayouni) drawn to Nada is a tantalizing possibility for comradery, commiseration, and perhaps queer desire, but the film's tale is not of freedom from trauma or even catharsis through vengeance, but of a kind of curse for this woman, violence begetting violence, the tragic and solitary embodiment of an angel of death.

February, 5, 2021

Review

Meredith Taylor

FilmUforia



[LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE](#)

The Black Medusa Nada is in some ways emblematic of her home town of Tunis in this enigmatic fantasy thriller portrait of contemporary North African womanhood.

In this first feature Tunisian filmmakers Ismael and Youssef Chebbi are clearly supportive of their embittered main character – who chooses not to communicate verbally – investing her with the power to hit back at the male-dominated Arab society where she has grown up in the aftermath of the revolution. Nour Hajri makes for a mesmerising Nada – the aptly named Black Medusa – who modestly goes her about her daily routine before diving into the nighttime shadows to prey on unsuspecting suitors.

Nada's modus operandi is a ritual of revenge unfolding over nine. First, she poses as a sympathetic confidante to her male suitors – then she stabs them viciously, and seemingly with impunity. But her murderous behaviour soon rouses the suspicions of her workplace colleague Noura, who discovers a knife used in the attacks, and die is cast.

Underwritten characters and a slim but suggestive premise are clearly the result of the filmmakers budget constraints in a feature shot at lightening speed, and scripted in only two weeks. Enigma somehow works to their advantage here but not in the way they had anticipated with Nada serving the narrative as a beguiling counterpoint to the film's much stronger (and in some ways more interesting) character – Tunis itself, gradually emerging in the nocturnal odyssey through this intriguing capital.

Stylistically brave in its striking black and white beauty and eclectic soundscape the film makes for a slow and sinuous study of the nighttime antics of urban Tunisians in a voyeuristic expose of this classic coastal city with its ancient medinas and modern architectural flourishes and broad palm-fringed boulevards that will eventually lead to Carthage and Sidi Bou Said.

The directors meld Noir and Giallo styles satisfyingly in a memorable revenge thriller that serves as a sophisticated showcase to a siren-like

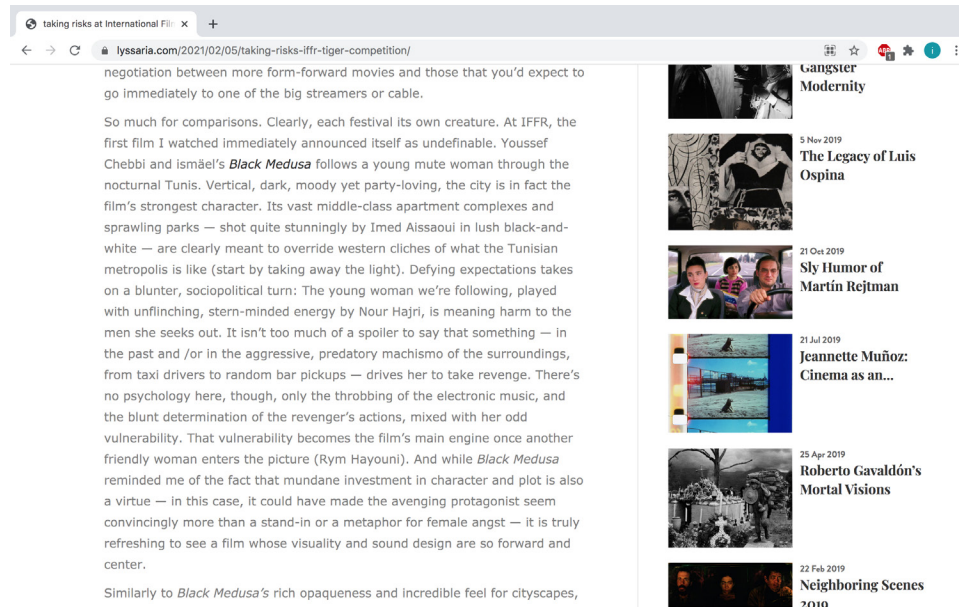
capital city and a serial killer on a voyage of discovery to liberate herself from the past.

February, 5, 2021

Taking Risks

Ela Bittencourt

Lyssaria



Youssef Chebbi and ismaël's *Black Medusa* follows a young mute woman through the nocturnal Tunis. Vertical, dark, moody yet party-loving, the city is in fact the film's strongest character. Its vast middle-class apartment complexes and sprawling parks — shot quite stunningly by Imed Aissaoui in lush black-and-white — are clearly meant to override western cliches of what the Tunisian metropolis is like (start by taking away the light). Defying expectations takes on a blunter, sociopolitical turn: The young woman we're following, played with unflinching, stern-minded energy by Nour Hajri, is meaning harm to the men she seeks out. It isn't too much of a spoiler to say that something — in the past and /or in the aggressive, predatory machismo of the surroundings, from taxi drivers to random bar pickups — drives her to take revenge. There's no psychology here, though, only the throbbing of the electronic music, and the blunt determination of the revenger's actions, mixed with her odd vulnerability. That vulnerability becomes the film's main engine once another friendly woman enters the picture (Rym Hayouni). And while *Black Medusa* reminded me of the fact that mundane investment in character and plot is also a virtue — in this case, it could have made the avenging protagonist seem convincingly more than a stand-in or a metaphor for female angst — it is truly refreshing to see a film whose visuality and sound design are so forward and center.

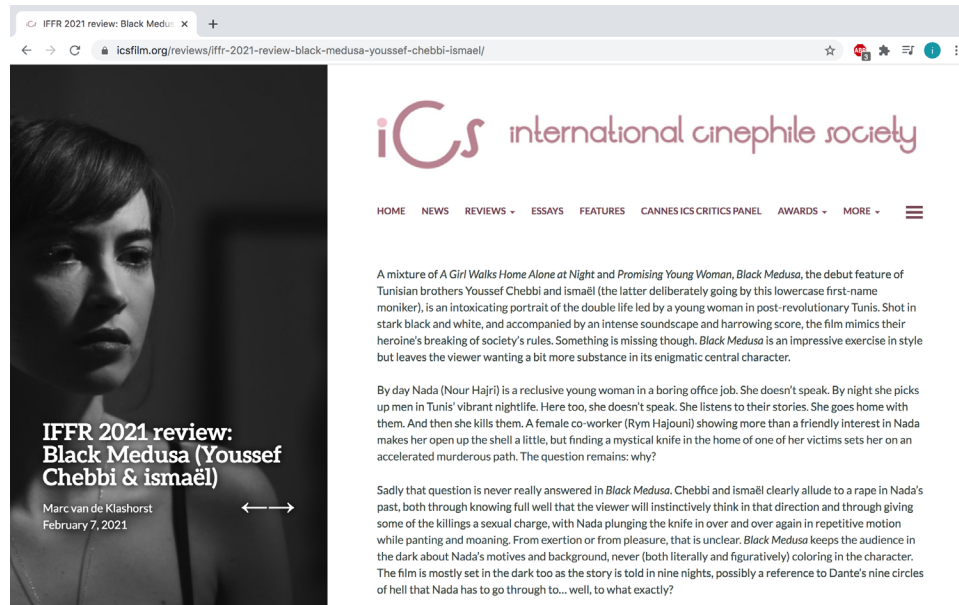
February, 5, 2021

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Review

Mark van de Klashorst

International Cinephile Society



A mixture of *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* and *Promising Young Woman*, *Black Medusa*, the debut feature of Tunisian brothers Youssef Chebbi and ismaël (the latter deliberately going by this lowercase first-name moniker), is an intoxicating portrait of the double life led by a young woman in post-revolutionary Tunis. Shot in stark black and white, and accompanied by an intense soundscape and harrowing score, the film mimics their heroine's breaking of society's rules. Something is missing though. *Black Medusa* is an impressive exercise in style but leaves the viewer wanting a bit more substance in its enigmatic central character.

By day Nada (Nour Hajri) is a reclusive young woman in a boring office job. She doesn't speak. By night she picks up men in Tunis' vibrant nightlife. Here too, she doesn't speak. She listens to their stories. She goes home with them. And then she kills them. A female co-worker (Rym Hajouni) showing more than a friendly interest in Nada makes her open up the shell a little, but finding a mystical knife in the home of one of her victims sets her on an accelerated murderous path. The question remains: why?

Sadly that question is never really answered in *Black Medusa*. Chebbi and ismaël clearly allude to a rape in Nada's past, both through knowing full well that the viewer will instinctively think in that direction and through giving some of the killings a sexual charge, with Nada plunging the knife in over and over again in repetitive motion while panting and moaning. From exertion or from pleasure, that is unclear. *Black Medusa* keeps the audience in the dark about Nada's motives and background, never (both literally and figuratively) coloring in the character. The film is mostly set in the dark too as the story is told in nine nights, possibly a reference to Dante's nine circles of hell that Nada has to go through to... well, to what exactly?

Not allowing us any insight into its protagonist, *Black Medusa* over time becomes a frustrating watch. Chebbi and ismaël give precedence to atmosphere and breaking with the general aesthetic of North-African cinema, drawing sharp lines on a highly contrasted canvas and adding deep, unfocused close-ups and an almost oppressive sound

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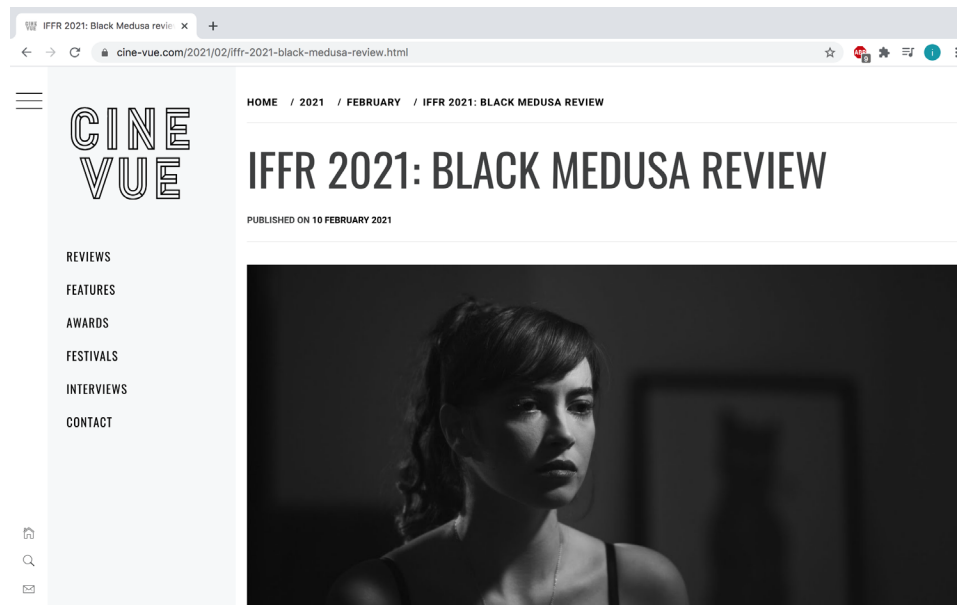
design (incredible work by Amal Attaia) to instill unease into their audience, entrancing them like the titular Greek Gorgon. A puzzling voice-over telling the story of a man who finds himself in a deep hole he cannot get out of adds to the deliberate fog of mystery Chebbi and ismaël conjure up, hiding the substance missing from Nada. Despite an impressive look and feel to the film, Black Medusa remains a somewhat unsatisfactory experience that raises more questions than it answers.

February, 7, 2021

Review

John Bleasdale

Cinevue



Nada (played with resolute sternness by Nour Hajri) is a young woman who leads a double life. By day she works for an online company; at night she scours the bars and clubs of Tunis for men who want to take her home. There are plenty. Once she has someone hooked, she drugs them and, once they are helpless, sexually assaults them violently. Told over nine nights, we witness Nada, become increasingly violent, even as the attention of a female colleague hints at a possible redemption.

With *Black Medusa*, directors ismaël and Youssef Chebbi have produced a beautiful and slick piece of genre cinema. Imed Aissaoui's cinematography shows off night time Tunis as a modern city that still has its hinterland of wildness. The dance clubs and bars through which Nada wanders – usually seen at a distance or through layers of glass – have something of Tony Scott's vampire cult classic *The Hunger*, and the premise has a similar amoral if not actively immoral queasiness to it.

We see a brief and horrifying flashback to what presumably was the inciting incident to Nada's nightly prowls, but with the antagonist unknown and the dreamlike nature of the scene it's impossible to sympathise as much with Nada as *Black Medusa* seems to require. As an avenging angel or femme fatale figure, Nada is presented as a figure of contained empowerment. Her mutism, which she navigates around with an app, is also – somewhat problematically – tied in with her campaign of violence. Is it because she has been 'robbed of a voice' that she must take revenge?

Ultimately, we are witnessing a perpetrator of sexual violence and then homicidal violence have at it, but without the sense that the men, aside from being men, are in any way culpable and deserving of their fate, which is how it differs from the obvious point of comparison: Emerald Fennell's *Promising Young Woman*. And yet as morally confusing and confused as *Black Medusa* is, it retains a deadly hypnotic charm. This is helped significantly by Omar Aloulou's score and Amal Attaia's sound design which morphs from a kind of electric trance to a deep melancholy.

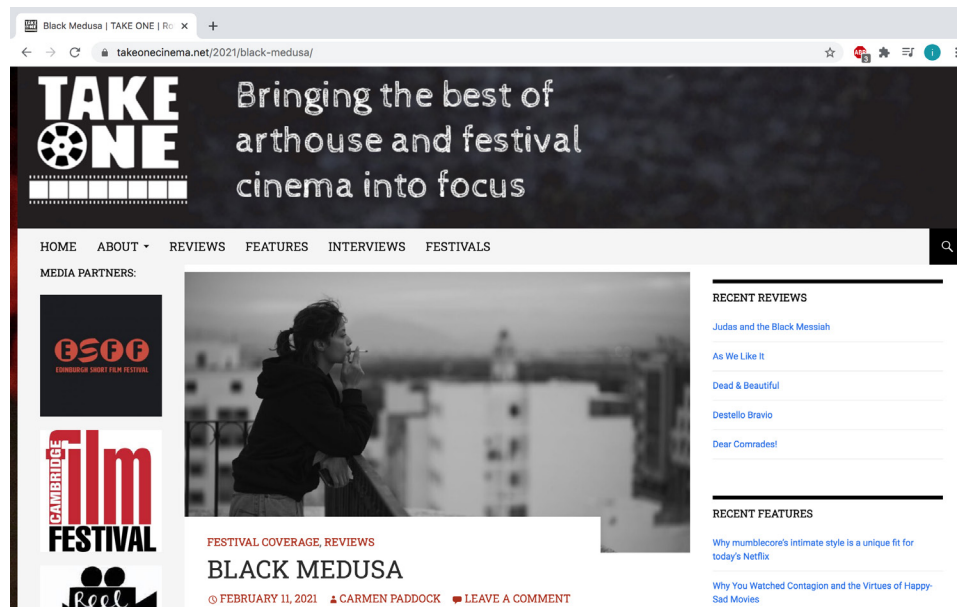
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February, 10, 2021

Review

Carmen Paddock

Take One Cinema



Every night is the same story: find a man looking for an easy target, let him tell you about himself, and then make him a target instead. BLACK MEDUSA feels a strong companion to PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN, but ismaël and Youssef Chebbi's film is less concerned with teaching men a lesson than Nada (Nour Hajri) leading them to increasingly violent ends. Some avenging angels do not want the lesson to see the morning.

Styled as "a tale in nine nights," the film morphs genres as it uses the geography of Tunisia to contrast Nada's diurnal and nocturnal existences. Nada is at times a film noir femme fatale, at others a lurid serial killer in something out of giallo cinema. Violence and sex sit on a blurred spectrum; many close-ups of Nada's face during her murders and the rhythms of bludgeons and stabs could be mistaken for lovemaking, were her all-too-human reactions to blood dead not giveaways at the end. The outbursts and aftermaths are sudden, and the acts are protracted.

Tunisia is a striking backdrop for the events. Nada's monotonous day life is shown alongside soulless office buildings and an unforgiving capitalist existence, and at night a wilder, more celebratory mood takes over. The black and white photography enhances this world's shadows and ambiguity and the ambiguity of Nada's vigilante actions.

While there is a deliberate mythic edge to the tale, enforced by Nada's own metatheatrical awareness of the Medusa symbolism and the introduction of a mythic weapon, BLACK MEDUSA grapples with how people and identities are absorbed or dissolved in trauma, violence, and the vulnerability of love. What is owed to our saviours and those we save, and how do we reckon with taking fate in our hands?

Nada can be seen as the face of many, but Hajri's performance and the directorial duo's script ensure she remains human, as prone to error and injury as her victims. This fallibility ups the stakes as the film veers course and raises new questions. Not all can be answered, but had it tried to offer a verdict it may not leave such a mark.

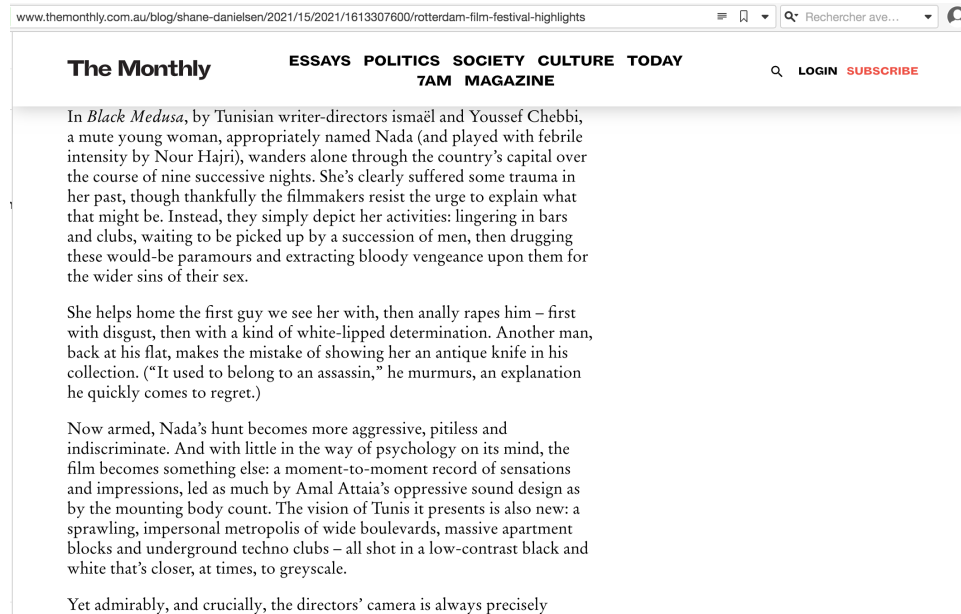
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February 11, 2021

Rotterdam Film Festival highlights

Shane Danielsen

The monthly



www.themonthly.com.au/blog/shane-danielsen/2021/15/2021/1613307600/rotterdam-film-festival-highlights

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In *Black Medusa*, by Tunisian writer-directors ismaël and Youssef Chebbi, a mute young woman, appropriately named Nada (and played with febrile intensity by Nour Hajri), wanders alone through the country's capital over the course of nine successive nights. She's clearly suffered some trauma in her past, though thankfully the filmmakers resist the urge to explain what that might be. Instead, they simply depict her activities: lingering in bars and clubs, waiting to be picked up by a succession of men, then drugging these would-be paramours and extracting bloody vengeance upon them for the wider sins of their sex.

She helps home the first guy we see her with, then anally rapes him – first with disgust, then with a kind of white-lipped determination. Another man, back at his flat, makes the mistake of showing her an antique knife in his collection. (“It used to belong to an assassin,” he murmurs, an explanation he quickly comes to regret.)

Now armed, Nada's hunt becomes more aggressive, pitiless and indiscriminate. And with little in the way of psychology on its mind, the film becomes something else: a moment-to-moment record of sensations and impressions, led as much by Amal Attaia's oppressive sound design as by the mounting body count. The vision of Tunis it presents is also new: a sprawling, impersonal metropolis of wide boulevards, massive apartment blocks and underground techno clubs – all shot in a low-contrast black and white that's closer, at times, to greyscale.

Yet admirably, and crucially, the directors' camera is always precisely

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Yet admirably, and crucially, the directors' camera is always precisely where it should be. Even during extended takes (and the best of these, an impromptu killing spree on the fifth night, is as potent and unnerving a sequence as I've seen in some time), there's an economy and assurance to the *mise en scène*, which, together with Hajri's stern command of the screen, elevates this simple story to a kind of waking nightmare, at once anguished and abstracted. As a revenge fantasy, it's about a hundred times better than *Promising Young Woman*, since unlike that film it actually has the courage of its (admittedly extreme) convictions. I can't wait to watch it again.

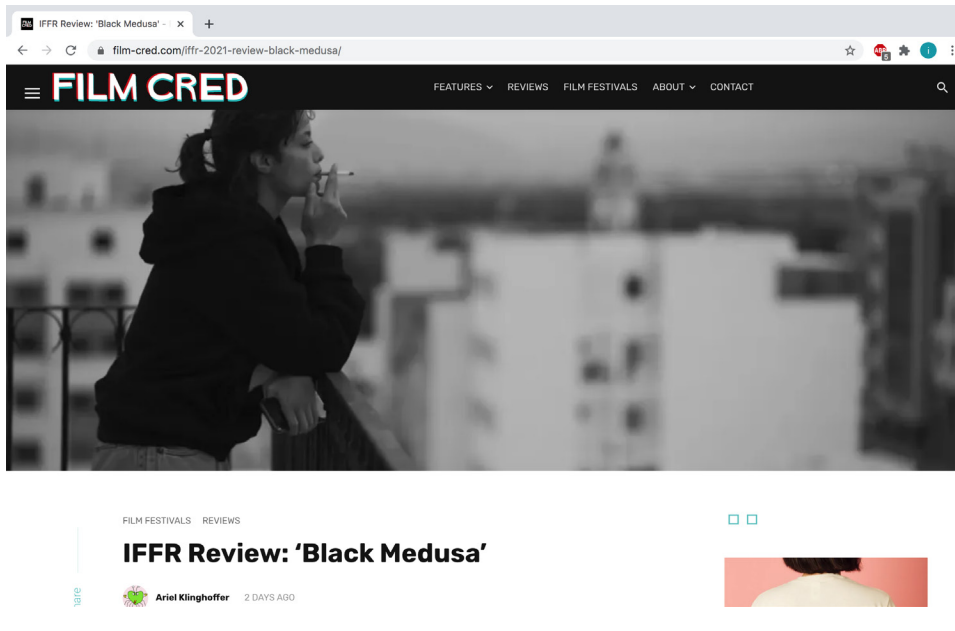
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February, 15, 2021

IFFR Review: 'Black Medusa'

Ariel Klinghoffer

Film Cred



In the beginning, the tale was cold. She is born like this, one of three winged succubi with venomous snakes for hair whose gaze can turn those who share it to stone. Her wrath, it seems, is not created, but inherited. Then, Ovid tried his hand, and it goes like this: she is beautiful — so beautiful that Poseidon takes her for throws of passion in Athena's temple. She endures punishment out of envy, with her long locks turned into stone. Poseidon gets away unscathed.

In 2021, Youssef Chebbi and ismaël reconstruct the archaic myth once again with the modern twist in the form of a psychological thriller, set against the backdrop of a black and white Tunis. Told over the course of nine nights, *Black Medusa* is a novel iteration of the classic rape revenge tale whose complexities outperform its predecessors within the genre. Each night, Nada (Nour Hajri) carries out her modus operandi of frequenting different bars or clubs so as to lend herself as a confidante for any man eager to tell his story. This ritual inevitably ends in a macabre fashion, climaxing in some shape of torture and eventual murder.

What sets *Black Medusa* apart from something as similar and as current as *Promising Young Woman* is that this never feels like a personalized narration; instead, Nada's actions take part in the treatment of a cycle of abuse propagated in Tunisia, as the antecedents to her vengeful actions are never depicted on screen. The film takes a systemic view of sexual abuse, which is only underscored by the fact that Nada never speaks, and it is revealed that she is mute by choice; to communicate with her victims or Noura — the young woman she meets through her job as a video editor — Nada uses the text to speech ability of her phone, stripping her of an actual voice. Her silence is a product of her own volition, sidestepping the narrative of victims who remain quiet by some outside force.

What is most singular about this film, if we consider it through the lens of a rape revenge, is that it doesn't seem like it's trying to be radically feminist, or even feminist at all. The narrative scope that is void of any personal attachment with Nada removes the culpability one might feel for sympathizing for her male victims. In nearly all of the cases, Nada

[LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE](#)

drugs her victims, and in some of those cases, she consummates the evening by sodomizing them with physical objects, like a broom, for instance. In this breath, the film loses its feminist edge simply because I believe that using rape as a revenge for rape is very deleterious to survivors themselves and the original brutality is not rectified.

As the nights progress, however, Nada's actions take on various permutations, and her methods are never reproduced to an exact degree. Matters become more difficult as well with the development of her relationship with Noura, when Noura becomes more and more conscious of how Nada spends her nights. Therefore, the detachedness of the story attenuates over the course of the film, and it's in this arc between the two women that Nada is given a sense of individuality.

On a technical level, it is so clear how passionate these directors are about filmmaking. Both ismaël and Chebbi take advantage of saccadic shots, extended takes, and intense alternating shots of different scenes to bring the notion of disarray and panic into fruition. In tandem with the audiovisual aspects of the film, the complexities of the story will inevitably leave the audience questioning the different elements at play. Ultimately, the story is audacious in that it is a societal criticism that doesn't seek to pigeonhole. The judgment falls into your hands.

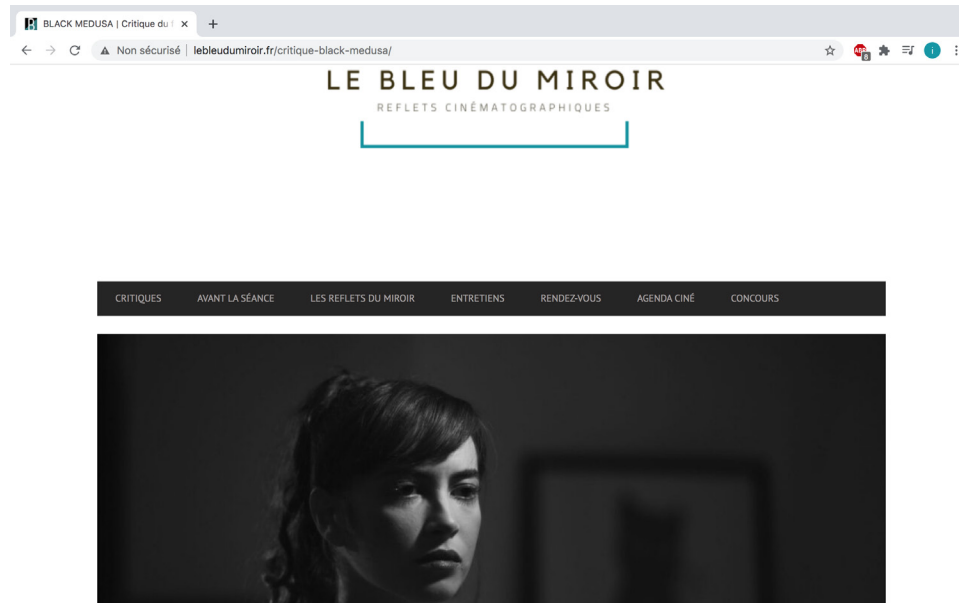
February, 25, 2021

French

Critique

Florent Boutet

Le bleu du miroir



[LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE](#)

Les premières minutes de Black Medusa, co-réalisé par Ismaël et Youssef Chabbi, nous laissent croire que nous nous trouvons dans un conte. Une voix de femme raconte une histoire, celle d'un homme tombé dans un trou très profond, sans qu'il se rappelle comment il en est arrivé là. Un carton nous annonce alors que cette histoire va nous être racontée en l'espace de neuf nuits, autour d'un même personnage, Nada, jeune tunisienne énigmatique. C'est une femme éminemment duelle : ses journées ressemblent à une stase où elle existe très peu.

Monteuse vidéo dans une petite société, elle est très effacée. Elle ne se révèle que la nuit par la sauvagerie qu'elle affiche une fois qu'elle a réussi à appâter un homme dans un bar. Le mode opératoire est toujours le même, elle se laisse aborder, elle leur laisse consommer son verre dans lequel elle a introduit une drogue, avant de se laisser conduire chez ce supposé amant d'un soir. Elle agit en prédatrice, rivalisant d'ingéniosité pour faire subir à ses proies d'horribles sévices, comme on peut le voir lors du tout premier meurtre particulièrement graphique.

On ne quitte dès lors pas vraiment le domaine du conte, mais celui-ci devient très noir, à l'image de la photographie, l'œuvre de Youssef Chabbi lui-même. L'image est si sombre qu'on peine par moments à distinguer l'action dans le plan, on aperçoit tout juste Nada accomplir son méfait, et disparaître avant que la nuit ne cède sa place au jour. Les réalisateurs opèrent un mélange des genres qui peut être déstabilisant de prime abord, on passe le jour d'une chronique sociale assez classique à une sorte de giallo qui pousse jusqu'à l'horreur la nuit, avec des aspects presque érotiques, surtout quand intervient le second personnage féminin Noura. Leur relation ambiguë permet d'apprendre plus de choses sur Nada. C'est pas ce biais notamment qu'on apprend la nature de son handicap. Le fait que se dévoile la surdité du personnage assez tard fait reconsidérer les premières scènes nocturnes. Nada évolue dans le silence, et communique très peu à cause de cela.

LA NUIT DE LA CHASSEUSE

L'irruption d'un couteau ancestral, qui devient l'objet de prédilection de Nada pour ses crimes, apporte une dimension presque ésotérique

au récit. Il gagne par son entremise une épaisseur supplémentaire, acquérant à la jeune femme une dimension presque mystique, voire même mythologique. Les motivations du personnage ne sont pas l'enjeu véritable du film. Noura parle des secrets de son amie, de sa face cachée, on pourrait parler de ses pulsions de meurtres qui se réveillent la nuit, orchestrés avec grand soin comme nous l'avons vu, selon un schéma bien établi. On devine un besoin de régler ses comptes avec les hommes, la nuit séparant drastiquement son univers féminin de celui du « camp opposé » qu'elle chasse sans répit. Bien qu'il soit question à un moment de la police, enquêtant sur cette mystérieuse serial killer sévissant la nuit à Tunis, cet aspect est vite balayé pour disparaître. Si Black Medusa navigue entre les genres, il n'est pas un film policier, et il échappe au réel, basculant de nouveau complètement dans le conte une fois le décompte des nuits atteignant sa fin.

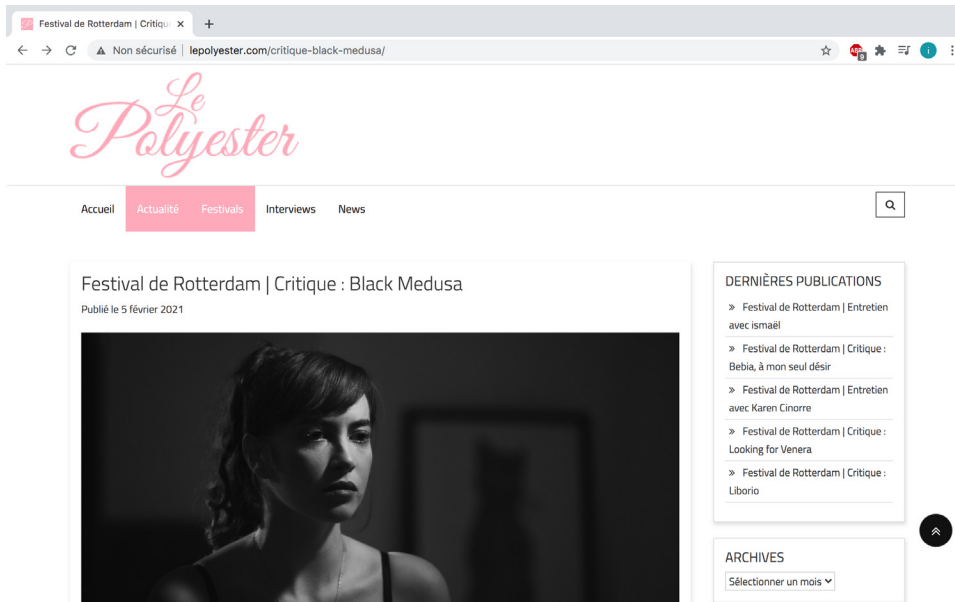
Il ne reste plus alors qu'à attendre la conclusion de la belle voix qui reprend le récit du conte entamé, dévoilant l'absurdité de la vie, par l'entremise de sa petite histoire mélancolique et triste. Si le titre est facilement analysable, entre Méduse et Veuve noire, il ne faut sans doute pas trop intellectualiser non plus le déroulement de l'intrigue. La beauté du conte est aussi dans sa simplicité, dans ce qu'il contient de primal et de terrifiant.

Si le film est bien structuré, sa charpente en neuf parties étant un excellent fil conducteur, il manque parfois un peu de rythme, et on regrette que l'aspect diurne de l'histoire soit un peu sacrifié pour plonger tout entier dans la nuit. Il faut féliciter néanmoins l'excellent travail des deux auteurs, tant au niveau du montage que de la lumière, car si leur histoire tient debout c'est avant tout grâce à leur excellent travail plastique. Ils ont su magnifier la beauté de leur actrice, Nour Hajri, l'enveloppant dans des ténèbres qui la rendent hypnotique et incroyablement fascinante.

Critique

Nicolas Bardot

Le polyester



Collaboration des Tunisiens ismaël et Youssef Chebbi (lire notre entretien), *Black Medusa* est présenté comme une réinterprétation du mythe de la Méduse à l'heure de #MeToo. Le long métrage débute comme un conte : « il était une fois » – avant de dérouler son histoire qui aurait un pied dans le réel et un autre dans l'imaginaire. *Black Medusa* est un beau film de nuit, un beau film sur Tunis, ou plutôt sur l'envers nocturne de Tunis. Comme un double, un négatif, où les règles du jour n'ont plus cours. Nada déambule dans une nuit d'un noir profond et l'on n'entend plus que ses talons, comme ce personnage de *La Féline* qui rentre chez elle avant de prendre le bus. A la différence près que Nada n'est pas ici soumise à une menace extérieure : ce sont ceux qui croisent son chemin qui devraient être terrifiés.

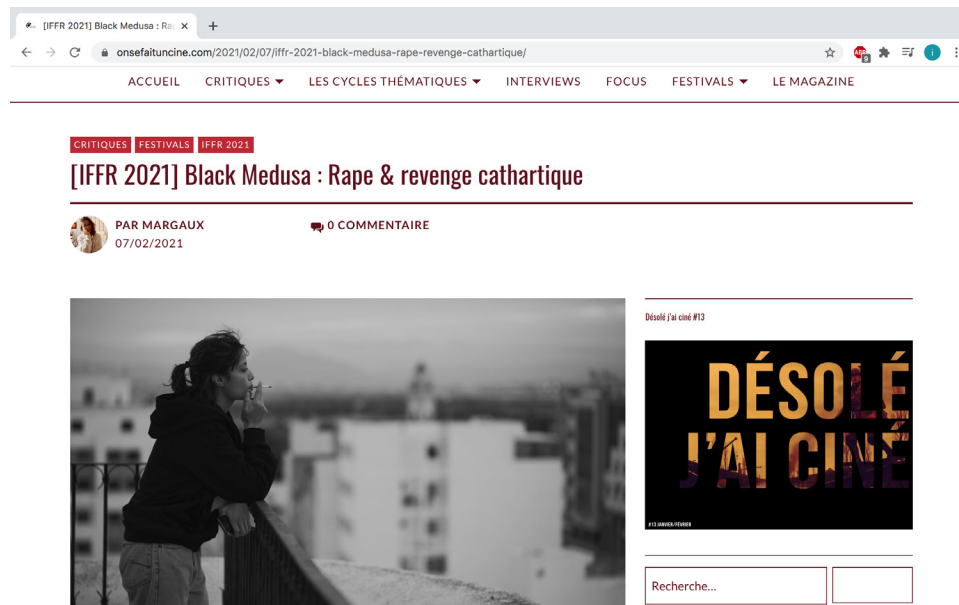
On pense, en voyant *Black Medusa*, à *Dirty week-end*, le roman culte de la Britannique Helen Zahavi, dans lequel une jeune femme qui n'en peut plus se décide à dézinguer tous les hommes qui la maltraitent. Si ismaël et Youssef Chebbi ont collaboré avec leur compatriote Ala Eddine Slim avec qui ils partagent un goût du mystère, *Black Medusa* nous a davantage évoqué ce qu'une Ana Lily Amirpour pouvait raconter dans *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*. Son héroïne était une ombre de la nuit se vengeant des mauvais hommes. Ce sont tous les deux des films de genre dont on peut facilement faire une lecture politique, des films où le noir et blanc est une porte vers un monde parallèle, des films qui réactualisent la figure du vampire.

Si Nada n'est pas à proprement parler un vampire dans *Black Medusa*, le film emprunte des motifs vampiriques. Solitaire et mélancolique, Nada est une figure mythologique, une allégorie, en tout cas un être humain juste en pointillés. Et lorsqu'elle parle, sa voix robotique sort d'un téléphone. L'atmosphère du film, son approche sensorielle, son trip rock industriel, semble aussi être un lointain cousin de Claire Denis. *Black Medusa* réduit au maximum : sa ligne narrative est ultra-épurée, le film ne délivre pas de contexte, n'apporte pas de flashback, ne fait pas de psychologie. Cette ingénieuse soustraction nourrit le séduisant mystère de ce film dont vous devriez entendre parler.

Rape & revenge cathartique

Margaux

On se fait un ciné



Il est certain que le mouvement #MeToo a donné un nouveau souffle beaucoup plus puissant à un cinéma résolument engagé et tourné vers la femme. Cependant, il existe bien nombre de pays où le patriarcat a encore la dent très dure, notamment les pays nord-africains. La Tunisie est en pleine transformation et tout comme l'a été La Belle et la meute en 2017, Black Medusa s'inscrit dans cette envie de donner la parole aux femmes victimes de viol.

Nada est une jeune femme qui mène une double vie. La journée, elle travaille dans une agence de graphisme. Totalement muette, elle ne communique que très peu avec ses collègues et se fait très discrète. Une fois la nuit tombée, elle se transforme. Apprêtée et maquillée, elle arpente les boîtes de nuit et les bars à la rencontre d'hommes qu'elle raccompagne chez eux avant de les tuer sauvagement. Cette femme d'ordinaire solitaire finit par se lier plus ou moins d'amitié avec une nouvelle collègue, Noura qui n'est évidemment pas au courant de sa double vie. Entre temps, Nada découvre chez une de ses victimes un couteau ancestral et mythique qui la plonge petite à petit dans une spirale de violence incontrôlable.

Comment peut réagir une victime de viol ? De milles façons possibles. Nada quant à elle s'est engouffrée dans la violence. Une violence qui la suit depuis des années et qu'on entrevoit dans une scène où le viol est suggéré par Nada coincée contre un tronc d'arbre et le bras d'un homme qui s'enfonce dans sa gorge. De longues minutes insoutenables qui laissent aisément deviner le traumatisme qu'elle a subi. C'est décidé, l'homme est une cible à abattre par tous les moyens. Une proie facile quant on voit l'aisance avec laquelle elle les attire. Il faut dire que ça fait rêver, une belle femme et qui ne parle pas de surcroît ! Les hommes défilent devant elle et se ressemblent : se bourrant la gueule à ne plus tenir debout, grossiers et persuadés d'avoir le monde à leur pied. Tout bascule lorsque Nada découvre un magnifique couteau chez une de ses futures victimes, qu'elle décide de garder après avoir assassiné son propriétaire avec.

Alors qu'elle sombre petit à petit, c'est l'arrivée de cette autre femme dans sa vie qui l'aide. Un esprit de sororité se met rapidement en place

LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE

entre les jeunes femmes qui va même sortir Nada de son mutisme. Elle tente même de la sortir de cette spirale de violence dans laquelle elle est tombée... sans grand succès. Pas de happy ending ou de leçon moralisatrice, juste le portrait d'une femme qui a besoin de cette violence pour garder la tête hors de l'eau. Est-ce que tuer tous les hommes qui croiseront son chemin est la bonne solution ? Le film ne la juge jamais sur ce point.

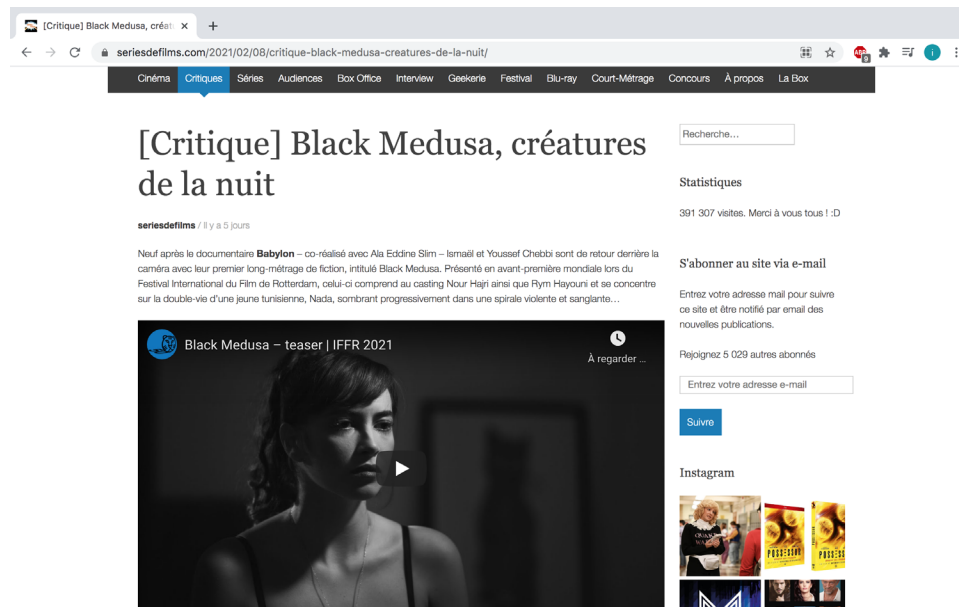
C'est sur un magnifique noir et blanc que Black Medusa dépeint une femme forte et blessée par la vie. Sans aucune fioriture et à travers quelque chose d'extrêmement dépouillé et simpliste, c'est un magnifique rape & revenge qui se dessine sous nos yeux. C'est violent, bouleversant et révélateur d'un mal-être bien présent et pourtant si bien caché que les réalisateurs nous exposent sans prendre de pincettes.

7 février 2021

Créatures de la nuit

Romain Derveaux

Séries de films



Neuf après le documentaire *Babylon* – co-réalisé avec Ala Eddine Slim – Ismaël et Youssef Chebbi sont de retour derrière la caméra avec leur premier long-métrage de fiction, intitulé *Black Medusa*. Présenté en avant-première mondiale lors du Festival International du Film de Rotterdam, celui-ci comprend au casting Nour Hajri ainsi que Rym Hayouni et se concentre sur la double-vie d'une jeune tunisienne, Nada, sombrant progressivement dans une spirale violente et sanglante...

Avec *Black Medusa*, Ismaël et Youssef Chebbi détournent les codes du film noir pour nous proposer une réappropriation moderne du mythe de la méduse – figure mythologie devenue à travers les époques le puissant symbole de rage et de pouvoir – nous proposant ainsi une plongée âpre et brute dans un univers trouble où s'entremêlent vengeance et violence.

Flirtant entre réel et imaginaire, ce que renforce une narration empruntant le chemin du conte, le long-métrage se concentre sur le parcours ravageur d'une anti-héroïne aux deux facettes : réservée la journée, prédatrice la nuit. Tel un spectre arpentant les rues désertes et vides de Tunis, Nada fait office de créature ténébreuse, traquant son ennemi mortel. *L'Homme*. En période post #MeToo, cette inversion des valeurs et ce dézingage en règle du patriarcat résonne avec force, d'autant plus qu'artistiquement et structurellement, l'emphase est mise sur la noirceur, où la nuance est aux abonnées absentes tout comme un quelconque sens de la moralité.

C'est donc un tableau lugubre que nous peignent Ismaël et Youssef Chebbi avec un récit divisé en neuf chapitres, chacun représentant une soirée de 'chasse' de notre principale protagoniste. Un choix scénaristique leur permettant d'éviter le superflu et de tailler dans le vif du sujet même si ce parti-pris limite quelque peu les enjeux du film. Ainsi, en restant volontairement flou quant au contexte ayant mené Nada à faire de la gente masculine sa cible prioritaire – un point qui ne sera abordé que lors d'une scène imagée et perturbante – la volonté affichée est de jouer la carte de la nébulosité. Si au départ cela peut surprendre, on se laisse progressivement immergé dans cet univers opaque où l'être humain est brossé selon son côté primal, bestial. Alors que Nada s'enfoncé

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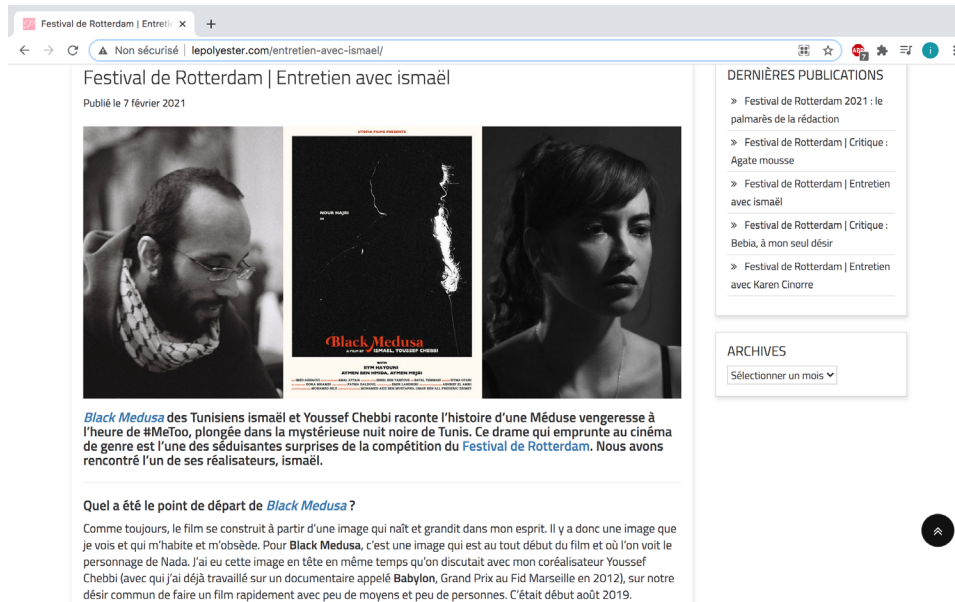
petit à petit dans les ténèbres, sa quête obsessionnelle l'emmenant sur un chemin de plus en plus brutal, Black Medusa gagne en intensité. Notre ange de la vengeance se mue en meurtrière et s'engage vers un point de non-retour alors que les victimes s'enchaînent.

Distillant une atmosphère à la lisière du fantastique et se rapprochant du giallo Black Medusa intrigue et ne laisse clairement pas indifférent. Ce qui fait la qualité de ce conte baroque, allégorie d'une société froide et obscure, est l'alliance d'une réalisation léchée et d'une direction d'acteur maîtrisée. L'idée de tourner en noir et blanc sert le scénario car embrassant ce concept de navigation en eaux troubles avec notamment le soin porté par Imed Aissa au niveau de la photographie, ce dernier jouant habilement avec les contrastes, oscillant entre ombre et lumière. Un effet de style qui fonctionne, couplé à la mise en scène inspirée d'Ismaël et Youssef Chebbi, qui puise dans l'architecture de Tunis pour renforcer l'aura surréelle de leur œuvre. Les gens y déambulent telles des âmes en peine, leur ombre se projetant sur la façade de ces bâtiments immenses et le bruit de leur pas retentissant dans un écho fracassant à travers les rues – désertes – dans la ville.

Une ambiance glaçante décuplée par l'interprétation envoûtante de Nour Hajri, qui porte le film sur ses épaules et magnétise l'écran dans la peau de Nada, réussissant à faire transparaître la dualité de son personnage, crépusculaire. Entre calme olympien – instillant un certain malaise – et accès de rage, l'actrice parvient à capturer l'essence de la créature de la nuit qu'elle incarne pour un résultat captivant.

8 février 2021

Entretien avec ismaël Nicolas Bardot Le polyester



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL lepolyester.com/entretien-avec-ismael/. The article title is "Festival de Rotterdam | Entretien avec ismaël" and it was published on February 7, 2021. The main image features three panels: a portrait of Ismaël, the film poster for "Black Medusa" (directed by Ismaël and Youssef Chebbi), and a portrait of the character Nada. Below the images, the text reads: "Black Medusa des Tunisiens ismaël et Youssef Chebbi raconte l'histoire d'une Méduse vengeresse à l'heure de #MeToo, plongée dans la mystérieuse nuit noire de Tunis. Ce drame qui emprunte au cinéma de genre est l'une des séduisantes surprises de la compétition du Festival de Rotterdam. Nous avons rencontré l'un de ses réalisateurs, ismaël." A sub-header asks "Quel a été le point de départ de Black Medusa ?" and the text below explains that the film was inspired by a specific image of the character Nada, which the director and co-director Youssef Chebbi had seen in a previous project, "Babylon", which won the Grand Prix at the FID Marseille in 2012. The article mentions their shared desire to make a film quickly with limited resources, starting in August 2019.

LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE

Quel a été le point de départ de Black Medusa ?

Comme toujours, le film se construit à partir d'une image qui naît et grandit dans mon esprit. Il y a donc une image que je vois et qui m'habite et m'obsède. Pour Black Medusa, c'est une image qui est au tout début du film et où l'on voit le personnage de Nada. J'ai eu cette image en tête en même temps qu'on discutait avec mon coréalisateur Youssef Chebbi (avec qui j'ai déjà travaillé sur un documentaire appelé Babylon, Grand Prix au Fid Marseille en 2012), sur notre désir commun de faire un film rapidement avec peu de moyens et peu de personnes. C'était début août 2019.

Je me suis donc mis à rédiger un court scénario début août et je l'ai passé à Youssef. On a travaillé ensemble sur une version finale et on a décidé de tourner le film dans la foulée. Deux mois et demi après on entamait le tournage qui n'a duré que 12 jours et où on était moins de 15 personnes sur le plateau. De façon organique si je puis dire, toute l'équipe a été emportée par un désir viscéral et violent, comme le personnage de Nada. D'une certaine manière, l'énergie de Nada nous a contaminés et guidés.

A quel stade du projet avez-vous décidé de tourner le film en noir & blanc et pouvez-vous nous parler de ce choix esthétique ?

Dès le départ, l'image que j'ai vue était en noir et blanc. Et puis il y avait aussi le désir de filmer Tunis en noir et blanc depuis des années maintenant. Une ville qui n'a pratiquement jamais été filmée en noir et blanc. Il faut dire aussi que j'ai un attrait prononcé pour le noir et blanc et les formats d'images désuets comme le 4/3 (qui l'est moins ces dernières années et revient un peu en vogue) ou le 1.66 avec lequel nous avons filmé Black Medusa. D'ailleurs, j'ai toujours rêvé en noir et blanc.

Le noir et blanc possède un côté brut et tranchant qui convient à l'univers du film. Un aspect métallique comme la lame d'un couteau. Nada est tout le temps sur la lame d'un rasoir entre l'ombre et la lumière, il fallait rendre ça visuellement et nous avons donc opté avec notre direc-

teur de la photo Imed Aissaoui d'éclairer en low-key, technique utilisée dans les films noirs, qui sont par ailleurs une inspiration importante pour le film.

En quoi selon vous le cinéma de genre vous a-t-il permis d'avoir une perspective politique particulière dans Black Medusa ?

En effet, l'envie première a été de faire un film sur une anti-héroïne, ou même une anti-super-héroïne, libre et marginale. Nous nous sommes mis à faire le film de la même façon, libre et marginale. Convoquer le cinéma de genre dans ce contexte a été pour nous l'occasion de le malmener quelque peu, ou disons, d'en renverser les schémas, de le regarder un travers un prisme inédit, le contextualiser dans un espace et un temps inhabituels. Par exemple, le film noir. Habituellement il s'agit de figures virilistes pour qui la femme fatale n'est qu'un moyen pour arriver à sa rédemption. Ou dans le cas du rape and revenge, on assiste généralement à la transformation de la victime en bourreau avec pas mal de relents de morale chrétienne.

Or, ce qui est important à souligner dans le cas de Black Medusa, c'est qu'il n'obéit pas, pour le moins que l'on puisse dire, à ces schémas, mais les subvertit en quelque sorte. Il n'y a aucun point de vue moralisant ou psychologisant. Nada est un être singulier au-delà du bien et du mal. L'inquiétude ou l'intranquillité sous-jacentes dans le film viennent de ce parti-pris de mise-en-scène : troubler la réalité en troublant les codes du cinéma.

Quel.le.s sont vos cinéastes préféré.e.s et/ou celles et ceux qui vous inspirent ?

Il y en a tellement. Mais si je ne devais en citer qu'un, je n'hésiterai pas : Antonioni.

Quelle est la dernière fois où vous avez eu le sentiment de découvrir quelque chose de neuf, de voir quelque chose d'inédit à l'écran ?

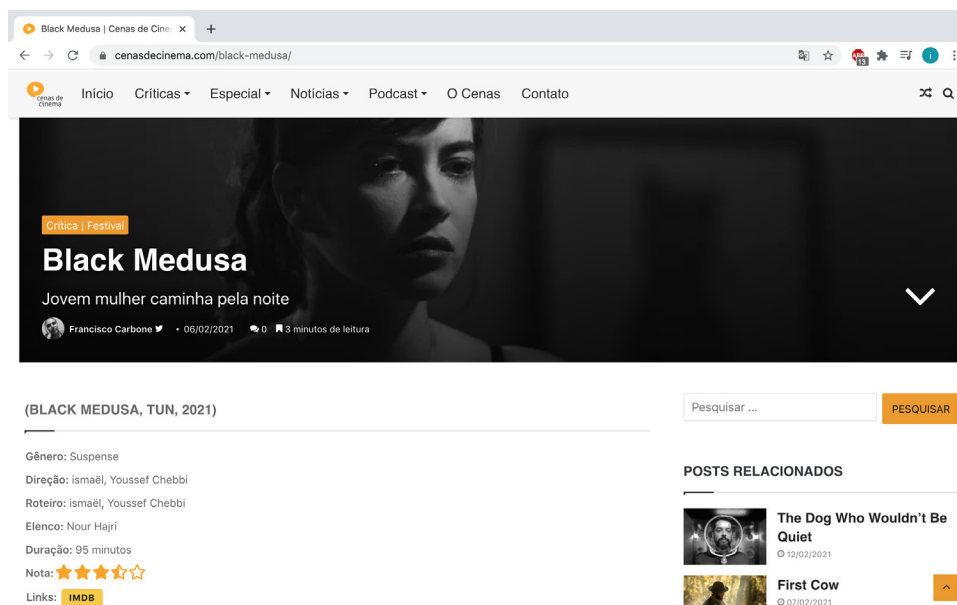
An Elephant Sitting Still de Hu Bo. C'est le premier titre récent qui me vient instantanément à l'esprit.

Portuguese

Jovem mulher caminha pela noite

Francisco Carbone

Cenas de cinema



Black Medusa | Cenas de Cinema

cenasdecinema.com/black-medusa/

Início Criticas Especial Noticias Podcast O Cenas Contato

Black Medusa
Jovem mulher caminha pela noite

Francisco Carbone • 06/02/2021 • 3 minutos de leitura

(BLACK MEDUSA, TUN, 2021)

Gênero: Suspense
Direção: ismaël, Youssef Chebbi
Roteiro: ismaël, Youssef Chebbi
Elenco: Nour Hajri
Duração: 95 minutos
Nota: ★★★★★
Links: [IMDB](#)

Pesquisar ... PESQUISAR

POSTS RELACIONADOS

The Dog Who Wouldn't Be Quiet
12/02/2021

First Cow
07/02/2021

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Dirigido por ismaël e Youssef Chebbi, Black Medusa é um experimento de contemplação diante da violência sofrida pela mulher. Com um jogo antônimo, onde Chebbi registra a escalada de ferocidade em uma série de crimes cometidos por uma jovem contra homens que só querem usá-la e descartá-la, o filme nos coloca como testemunhas oculares de atos hediondos, reforçados por um espectro machista que influencia o olhar. “e se, ao contrário do assédio e do extermínio contínuo perpetrados por homens a mulheres, víssemos um quadro oposto?”, e a partir daí elaborar uma discussão sobre a violência sistêmica.

Com uma elaboração imagética que remete ao noir que o austríaco Fritz Lang perseguiu em sua carreira, com os tons de preto e branco responsáveis por sublinhar nos personagens o que os roteiros deixavam nas entrelinhas, Aqui, ainda mais que nos tradicionais filmes policiais dos anos 40 e 50, somos convidados a acompanhar as desventuras de uma jovem mulher, que verbaliza pouco porém não se furta em agir. Ela segue nessas sombras propostas pela produção em busca do próximo movimento, enquanto esbarra nos acasos que a obrigam a refazer sua rota, e empregar cada vez mais ênfase em seus ataques.

Os passos da protagonista pela cidade vazia nos remete a uma produção recente, Garota Sombria Caminha pela Noite, onde a postura de suas intérpretes delimitam as trajetórias de seus filmes, o tanto que eles denunciam e sua mensagem a reverberar dentro e fora dos respectivos longas. Aqui porém não há o elemento fantástico a acrescentar camadas metafóricas a um painel muito concreto – Black Medusa abre e se encerra com uma parábola de um homem caído em um buraco, e esse é o elemento de artifício que o filme apresenta em sua discussão formal; todo o resto é uma construção apenas do campo do possível.

O roteiro também escrito por ismaël e Youssef Chebbi se vale de elipses na produção, e isso é um dos acertos do cômputo final. Como em um processo de embriaguez ou de ingestão de substâncias alucinógenas, o filme se vale desses lapsos de tempo para não preencher nossa memória, deixando-a livre para elaborar como a protagonista aborda ou concretiza seus ataques. A partir do encontro de uma faca milenar na casa de uma de suas vítimas, e posteriormente suas ações quando a

empunha, suas abordagens se tornam um pouco mais claras, afastando seus propósitos de meros castigos a assassinatos nada elaborados, dando sua conotação sem premeditação.

Além desse encontro com o artefato, também muda uma chave na protagonista sua gradativa união com outra personagem feminina, que chegará ao ápice quando ela se ferir e precisar de ajuda, revelando assim o lado obscuro da personagem para além dos olhos do público. que vai deflagrar um processo persecutório na mesma, acentuando um suspense na narrativa que até então não tinha muita presença. Black Medusa tem essa característica, sua moldura sugere algo que não é absorvido pela montagem, até o momento certo, quando o filme libera ao mesmo tempo inúmeras chaves de entendimento de gênero que se conflitam, e reorganizam a produção.

A reboque de um acertado movimento hollywoodiano que pede equiparação de oportunidades na frente e atrás das telas, Black Medusa, através da exploração de sua personagem mitológica – aquela que, na Grécia, transformava em pedra aqueles que a fitassem – estabelece uma nova configuração para o desejo feminino e seu direito à voz, ao poder decisório de seus atos. A protagonista do filme não reivindica a barbárie, mas a primazia de poder tomar pra si um lugar que é dado aos homens pelo simples fato de nascerem nesse sexo, e a mulheres não – ela é dona de seu caminho, e o abrirá independente de quem se colocar à sua frente.

Um grande momento
O encontro com a faca

Fevereiro 6, 2021

Sete destaques do Festival de Roterdão

Manuel Halpern

Visão

Visão | Sete destaques do Festival de Roterdão

visao.sapo.pt/jornaldeletras/cinema/2021-02-09-sete-destaques-do-festival-de-roterdao/

JL ASSINAR LOJA

CINEMA
09.02.2021 às 18h06

MANUEL HALPERN

O feminismo foi uma das palavras de ordem desta edição de Roterdão. E houve dois filmes que abordaram a questão de forma bastante radical- Black Medusa é uma espécie de The Driller Killer tunisino. Tal como no filme de culto de Abel Ferrara estamos perante uma serial killer que mata os homens com quem priva. Ela deixa-se abordar, ouve as suas histórias e depois espeta-lhes repetidamente e ritmicamente uma faca, penetrando-lhes o corpo, como quem consuma o ato. Uma obra ousada numa Tunísia sobrevivente da Primavera Árabe que reivindica uma modernidade social. Próximo no conceito está o filme americano Mayday, de Karen Cinorre. Num ambiente onírico, um grupo de mulheres enche-se de artimanhas para atrair militares com o objetivo último de provocar a sua morte. Obras eventualmente polémicas mas sobretudo densamente metafóricas.

DESTAQUES

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BLACK MEDUSA (2021) | Trailer Oficial | Nour Hajri, Rym Hayouni
A regarder ...

O feminismo foi uma das palavras de ordem desta edição de Roterdão. E houve dois filmes que abordaram a questão de forma bastante radical- Black Medusa é uma espécie de The Driller Killer tunisino. Tal como no filme de culto de Abel Ferrara estamos perante uma serial killer que mata os homens com quem priva. Ela deixa-se abordar, ouve as suas histórias e depois espeta-lhes repetidamente e ritmicamente uma faca, penetrando-lhes o corpo, como quem consuma o ato. Uma obra ousada numa Tunísia sobrevivente da Primavera Árabe que reivindica uma modernidade social. Próximo no conceito está o filme americano Mayday, de Karen Cinorre. Num ambiente onírico, um grupo de mulheres enche-se de artimanhas para atrair militares com o objetivo último de provocar a sua morte. Obras eventualmente polémicas mas sobretudo densamente metafóricas.

Fevereiro 9, 2021

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Mais uma miúda com potencial

Jorge Pereira Rosa

C7nema



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL c7nema.net/critica/item/93980-black-medusa-mais-uma-miuda-com-potencial.html. The main image is a black and white portrait of Carey Mulligan. Below the image, the title "Black Medusa: mais uma miúda com potencial" is displayed, followed by the author "Por Jorge Pereira Rosa" and the date "6 de Fevereiro, 2021". The main text of the review begins with "Num ano em que 'Promising Young Woman' (Uma Miúda com Potencial) – com Carey Mulligan no protagonismo – faz furor na época dos prémios com a sua narrativa de vingança no feminino, numa era pós #MeToo e #TimesUP, a Tunísia leva ao Festival de Roterdão 'Black Medusa', primeiro filme de ismaël e Youssef Chebbi, no qual acompanhamos Nada, uma mulher que durante 9 noites 'caça' homens na noite de Tunes, num verdadeiro ritual de massacre do sexo masculino, qual SCUM Manifesto, qual quê." To the right, there is a section titled "OUTRAS CRÍTICAS" with two entries: "BLISS: O MUNDO É UMA SIMULAÇÃO ABORRECID" with a 4-star rating, and "BIPOLAR: FÁBULA ABSURDISTA PELAS ESTRADAS DA CHINA E DA ALMA" with a 4-star rating.

[LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE](http://c7nema.net/critica/item/93980-black-medusa-mais-uma-miuda-com-potencial.html)

Num ano em que “Promising Young Woman” (Uma Miúda com Potencial) – com Carey Mulligan no protagonismo – faz furor na época dos prémios com a sua narrativa de vingança no feminino, numa era pós #MeToo e #TimesUP, a Tunísia leva ao Festival de Roterdão “Black Medusa”, primeiro filme de ismaël e Youssef Chebbi, no qual acompanhamos Nada, uma mulher que durante 9 noites “caça” homens na noite de Tunes, num verdadeiro ritual de massacre do sexo masculino, qual SCUM Manifesto, qual quê.

As suas motivações não são claras e a sua misandria vai exponencialmente ser manifestada, dia a dia, homem a homem, cada vez com mais violência e menos critério, como que dizendo ao espectador que não há inocentes num regime opressor. É nas entrelinhas periféricas da ação que vamos encontrando algumas pistas e respostas, todas ligadas a uma sociedade que, mesmo depois da sua Primavera Árabe, continua num registo de poder patriarcal e normalização de ações entre dominantes (homens) e dominados (mulheres) – com o piropo constante, a objetivação e o engate forçado a serem apenas pequenos (grandes) sintomas de uma doença bem mais grave, incrustada igualmente através da religião.

“Black Medusa” revela também ser uma viagem à Tunes contemporânea com uma visão moderna da sua vida noctívaga e que contrasta com uma sociedade que vive o dia de forma tradicional e enraizada no estereotipo do lugar destinado a cada género na sociedade. A própria personagem de Nada – como a sua cidade e país – mostra também ela ter uma vida dupla, passeando de dia por entre edifícios estatais, espaços de arte ou trabalhando pacificamente, até que de noite veste uma nova capa e parte para a sua missão de extermínio.

Esteticamente elaborado com um recurso frequente a imagens pausadas, que nos oferecem fotogramas estáticos “do real” ensaiado, “Black Medusa” é carburado num preto e branco entre as sombras e a luminosidade, sendo invariável falar em influências do cinema noir e no poder de atração das suas femmes fatales. A isto, a dupla de realizadores acrescenta um toque giallo que transcende-se numa sonoridade imersiva e sufocante, que funciona como alto contraste com todo o

silêncio que a protagonista carrega, que reflete igualmente as mulheres do seu país. (ver a cena abaixo do filme, que serve de alegoria para isso mesmo).

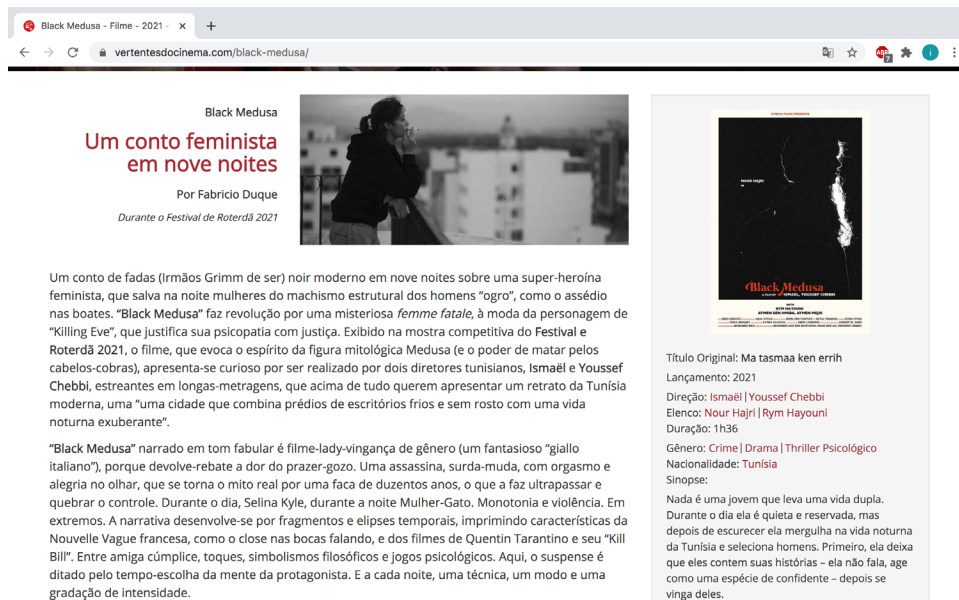
Na verdade, não foram raros os momentos em que “Promising Young Woman”, “Nurse 3D” e até o filme que acelerou o discurso de vingança no feminino nos anos 70 (I Spit on Your Grave) vieram à cabeça, tal como traços da negritude estilizada, importada de Jim Jarmusch, Frank Miller e F. W. Murnau, que Ana Lily Amirpour aplicou no seu fabuloso “A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night”. E talvez – inconscientemente – essa seja mesmo a maior influência deste filme.

Fevereiro 13, 2021

Um conto feminista em nove noites

Fabricio Duque

Vertentes do cinema



The screenshot shows a webpage for the film 'Black Medusa'. The browser address bar shows 'vertentesdocinema.com/black-medusa/'. The page features a title 'Black Medusa' and a subtitle 'Um conto feminista em nove noites' by Fabricio Duque. A small image shows a woman in a dark setting. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text in Portuguese, followed by a synopsis in Portuguese. To the right, there is a poster for the film and a list of technical details in Portuguese.

Black Medusa

Um conto feminista em nove noites

Por Fabricio Duque

Durante o Festival de Roterdã 2021

Um conto de fadas (Irmãos Grimm de ser) noir moderno em nove noites sobre uma super-heroína feminista, que salva na noite mulheres do machismo estrutural dos homens “ogro”, como o assédio nas boates. “Black Medusa” faz revolução por uma misteriosa *femme fatale*, à moda da personagem de “Killing Eve”, que justifica sua psicopatia com justiça. Exibido na mostra competitiva do Festival e Roterdã 2021, o filme, que evoca o espírito da figura mitológica Medusa (e o poder de matar pelos cabelos-cobras), apresenta-se curioso por ser realizado por dois diretores tunisianos, Ismaël e Youssef Chebbi, estreantes em longas-metragens, que acima de tudo querem apresentar um retrato da Tunísia moderna, uma “uma cidade que combina prédios de escritórios frios e sem rosto com uma vida noturna exuberante”.

“Black Medusa” narrado em tom fabular é filme-lady-vingança de gênero (um fantasioso “giallo italiano”), porque devolve-rebate a dor do prazer-gozo. Uma assassina, surda-muda, com orgasmo e alegria no olhar, que se torna o mito real por uma faca de duzentos anos, o que a faz ultrapassar e quebrar o controle. Durante o dia, Selina Kyle, durante a noite Mulher-Gato. Monotonia e violência. Em extremos. A narrativa desenvolve-se por fragmentos e elipses temporais, imprimindo características da Nouvelle Vague francesa, como o close nas bocas falando, e dos filmes de Quentin Tarantino e seu “Kill Bill”. Entre amiga cúmplice, toques, simbolismos filosóficos e jogos psicológicos. Aqui, o suspense é ditado pelo tempo-escolha da mente da protagonista. E a cada noite, uma técnica, um modo e uma gradação de intensidade.

Título Original: Ma tasmaa ken errih
Lançamento: 2021
Direção: Ismaël | Youssef Chebbi
Elenco: Nour Hajri | Rym Hayouni
Duração: 1h36
Gênero: Crime | Drama | Thriller Psicológico
Nacionalidade: Tunísia
Sinopse:
Nada é uma jovem que leva uma vida dupla. Durante o dia ela é quieta e reservada, mas depois de escurecer ela mergulha na vida noturna da Tunísia e seleciona homens. Primeiro, ela deixa que eles contem suas histórias – ela não fala, age como uma espécie de confidente – depois se vinga deles.

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O longa-metragem mantém até o final a aura não moralista. De não romantizar e/ou sentimentalizar as justificativas da personagem principal Nada (que em árabe, língua falada na Tunísia, também quer dizer “Clube”). Ponto positivo. Até porque nenhum assassino após uma sequência de mortes recebe o insight conservador da culpa. Em uma fotografia em preto-e-branco, “Black Medusa” quer retirar a distração da preocupação do tempo, fazendo com que seja atemporal e deslocado. O processo dela não é convencional. Ainda que motivada, ao acordar, com a necessidade de “banir vidas”, protegendo todos aos moldes de um “Minority Report”, de Steven Spielberg, Nada não é afoito, tampouco tem urgência. Ouve as histórias de seus “escolhidos” (mesmo com o

[LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE](#)

problema de mudez-audição), concorda com eles, desempenha o papel esperado de confidente e se comporta como um ser comum e frágil. O espectador pode encontrar semelhanças com o curta-metragem “Para Minha Gata Mize”, de Wesley Gondim, exibido em 2018 no Festival de Brasília do Cinema Brasileiro. Nada cria assim em sua cabeça uma sentença. Um “sinal verde”. Um estereótipo generalizado.

Como já foi dito, “Black Medusa”, que no título original traduzido literalmente significa “O que se chama estar nu”, é um grito revolucionário. De que só com radicalidade serial killer haverá a liberdade das mulheres não serem mais objetos sexuais (“serventes” aos homens). Uma “limpeza” de uma “raça” que impede seres femininos de exercer suas plenitudes existencial e de não mais se preocupar se serão abusadas. De um jeito ou de outro. Apenas por terem “ouro mágico” entre as pernas. O filme também pode ser um pedido de desculpas de dois homens diretores que apoiam o poder total dessas Amazonas em ascensão.

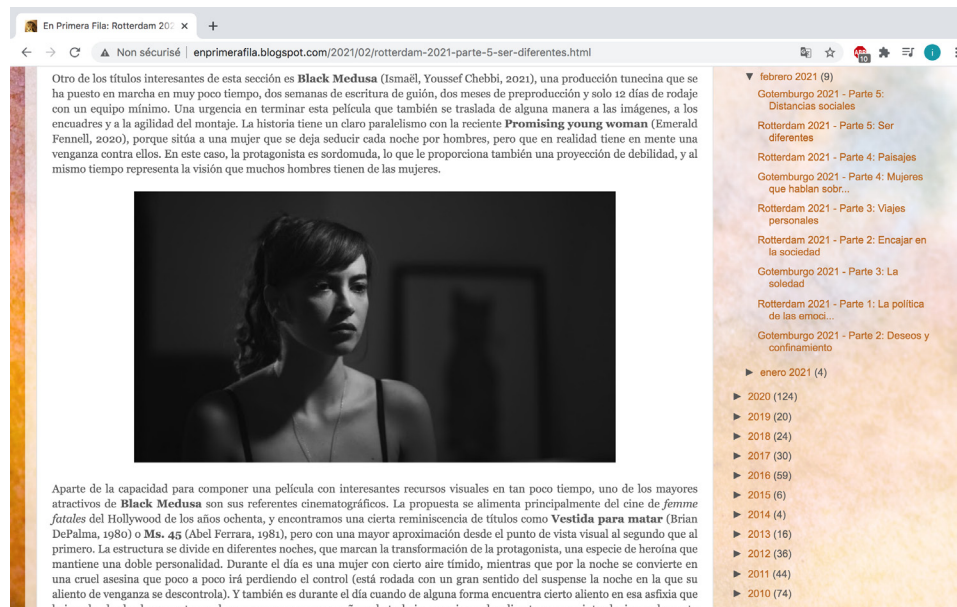
Fevereiro 13, 2021

Spanish

Rotterdam 2021 - Parte 5: Ser diferentes

Miguel A. Reina

En primera fila



Otro de los títulos interesantes de esta sección es **Black Medusa** (Ismaël, Youssef Chebbi, 2021), una producción tunecina que se ha puesto en marcha en muy poco tiempo, dos semanas de escritura de guión, dos meses de preproducción y solo 12 días de rodaje con un equipo mínimo. Una urgencia en terminar esta película que también se traslada de alguna manera a las imágenes, a los encuadres y a la agilidad del montaje. La historia tiene un claro paralelismo con la reciente **Promising young woman** (Emerald Fennell, 2020), porque sitúa a una mujer que se deja seducir cada noche por hombres, pero que en realidad tiene en mente una venganza contra ellos. En este caso, la protagonista es sordomuda, lo que le proporciona también una proyección de debilidad, y al mismo tiempo representa la visión que muchos hombres tienen de las mujeres.

Aparte de la capacidad para componer una película con interesantes recursos visuales en tan poco tiempo, uno de los mayores atractivos de **Black Medusa** son sus referentes cinematográficos. La propuesta se alimenta principalmente del cine de *femme fatales* del Hollywood de los años ochenta, y encontramos una cierta reminiscencia de títulos como **Vestida para matar** (Brian DePalma, 1980) o **Ms. 45** (Abel Ferrara, 1981), pero con una mayor aproximación desde el punto de vista visual al segundo que al primero. La estructura se divide en diferentes noches, que marcan la transformación de la protagonista, una especie de heroína que mantiene una doble personalidad. Durante el día es una mujer con cierto aire tímido, mientras que por la noche se convierte en una cruel asesina que poco a poco irá perdiendo el control (está rodada con un gran sentido del suspense la noche en la que su aliento de venganza se descontrola). Y también es durante el día cuando de alguna forma encuentra cierto aliento en esa asfixia que la invade, desde el momento en el que conoce a una compañera de trabajo, que sirve a los directores para introducir un elemento interesante en torno a la homosexualidad en una ciudad como Túnez. **Black Medusa** tiene por tanto diversas lecturas sobre la mujer en la sociedad tunecina que están muy bien captadas por dos directores masculinos.

[LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE](#)

Febrero 8, 2021

El rigor de una puñalada

Sebastián Francisco Maydana

Caligari

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying an article on the website 'caligari.com.ar'. The article title is 'El rigor de una puñalada' by Sebastián Francisco Maydana. The main text discusses the film 'Black Medusa' (2021) by Youssef Chebbi and Ismael, comparing it to 'A girl walks home alone at night' (2014) by Ana Lily Amirpour. The article notes that 'Black Medusa' is a visceral and dark noir film set in Tunisia, featuring a protagonist who is a silent and reserved woman who kills men. It also mentions that the film is part of the 'Juguetes ópticos Dispositivos de pre-cine' exhibition at the 'Poniendo al pre-cine de moda' event, which is part of the '50 Festival Internacional de Cine de Rotterdam' from the 1st to the 7th.

Artículos Columnas Entrevistas Noticias Festivales SUSCRIBIRSE Tienda

“El rigor de una puñalada”

Por Sebastián Francisco Maydana.

Túnez es retratada como una ciudad que parece despertar de noche y vegetar de día. Las serias torres cuadrangulares que albergan oficinistas grises mientras brilla el sol se contrastan con la sórdida vida (esta sí lo es) nocturna que se desarrolla en discos y bares. Nada (así se llama la protagonista) vive con el mismo ritmo. De día trabaja en una oficina del centro editando contenido audiovisual. Más tarde, recorre distintos escenarios dejándose buscar por hombres que sólo quieren saciar su apetito. Cuando finalmente están solos, los mata con precisa crueldad. Por nueve noches la acompañamos en sus asesinatos de hombres cuyo error es creerse inmunes e impunes y por eso bajan la guardia.

Una comparación obvia es con *A girl walks home alone at night* (Ana Lily Amirpour, 2014). Una chica silenciosa y reservada que sale por las noches a hacerle a los hombres lo que estos suelen hacerle a ellas, en una ciudad periférica (allí del Medio Oriente, aquí del norte de África) y en un estilizado blanco y negro. Pero ahí terminan las similitudes. *Black Medusa* es mucho más visceral, más oscura y terrible. También es absolutamente seria. No hay ningún rastro de sátirica ni comedia, y más bien tiene todos los elementos de un *film noir* de venganza donde la razón de esta parece estar oculta. Además, Nada no está sola como la protagonista de *A girl...* Noura, su nueva compañera de trabajo, sabe su secreto y mientras no lo divulgue será su cómplice.

Si siguiendo con las comparaciones, la lograda fotografía, ciertos *travellings* paralelos y la cinematografía en general recuerdan mucho al estilo indie no wave de Jim Jarmusch. Pero insistir en este tipo de paralelismos sería no hacerle justicia a la obra. *Black Medusa* es un *film* fresco y vibrante, que sabe construir climas de tensión e inquietud para llevarlos a un clímax ejecutado con el rigor de una puñalada en el estómago.

Título: Black Medusa

Año: 2021

País: Túnez

Director: Youssef Chebbi e Ismael

Foco: IFFR 2021. 50 Festival Internacional de Cine de Rotterdam. Del 1 al 7 de ...

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Hay una cuestión moral también, que no es abordada directamente sino apenas sugerida. Es la magnitud de la violencia la que fuerza al espectador a preguntarse por la necesidad de la venganza o si realmente es justo el tratamiento de sus víctimas. Qué lleva a Nada a hacer todo lo que hace. Qué lleva a Noura a protegerla. Si se trata de una afirmación de la sororidad o más bien de una crítica velada a la libertad de

LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE

la mujer. Black Medusa es decididamente ambigua en estos aspectos, y por ello mismo (y esto debe ser considerado como una virtud) invita al debate.

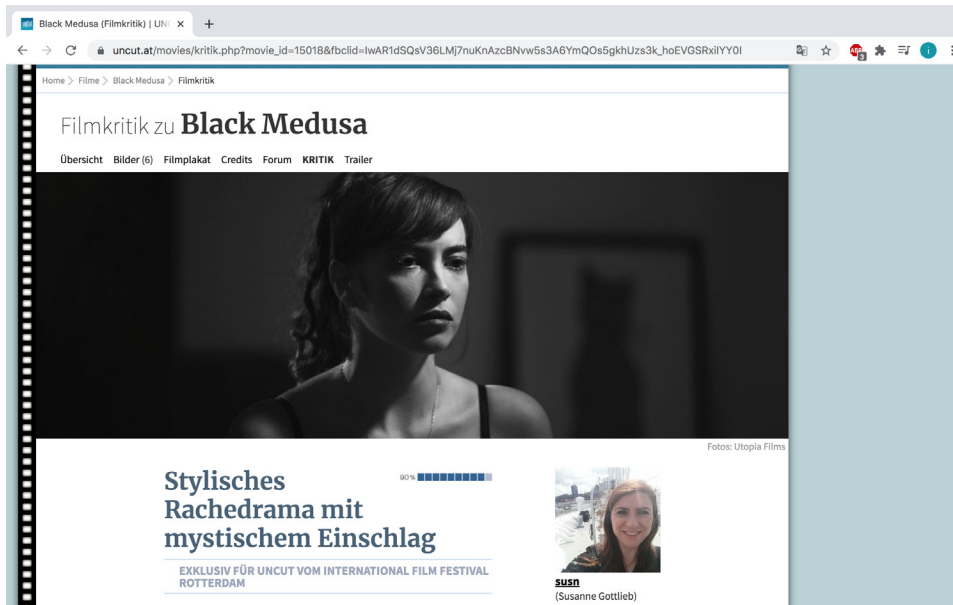
Febrero 8, 2021

German

Stylisches Rachedrama mit mystischem Einschlag

Suzane Gotlib

Uncut



[LINK TO THE ORIGINAL WEBPAGE](#)

Eine junge, hübsche Frau gabelt sich nachts in der Clubszene junge Männer auf. Sie betäubt sie mit Drogen versetzten Drinks und misshandelt, schlägt und brutalisiert sie, nachdem diese sie mit nach Hause nehmen, nur um dort ins medikamenteninduzierte Koma zu fallen. Ismaël und Youssef Chebbis Drama überlässt hier nichts der Fantasie. „Black Medusa“ haben sie ihre filmische Studie einer gegenwärtigen weiblichen Existenz im post-revolutionären Tunesien genannt. Jene mystische Medusa, deren Haupt von einem Mann abgeschlagen wurde. Deren unverschuldetes Leid in gegenwärtiger feministischer Kultur als Symbolbild weiblicher Wut und Erniedrigung durch das Patriarchat dient.

Auch die filmische Protagonistin Nada (Nour Hajri) scheint Wut mit sich herumzutragen. Vor langer Zeit hat sie dem Sprechen abgeschworen. Die nötigsten Konversationen tätigt sie mithilfe einer App. Worüber müsse man denn kommunizieren fragt sie, als ihre neue Mitarbeiterin Noura versucht, sich mit ihr via Zeichensprache zu unterhalten um sie besser kennen zu lernen. Tagsüber als Web Video Editor für ein Start-up tätig, führt sie ein zurückgezogenes, schüchternes Leben. Nachts jedoch wird sie zur Femme Fatale, die auszieht, um Männer aufzugabeln und sie ihrer Pein zu unterziehen.

Der Film observiert in seinen kühlen, schwarzweiß Tönen, in dem Minimum an Geräuschen und verbalen Interaktionen, die sich die Figuren erlauben. Nadas Stummheit agiert wie ein Spiegel zu ihren Gegenübern, die weniger an ihr interessiert sind, sondern die Abende damit verbringen in langen Monologen von sich selbst zu reden. Die junge Frau antwortet höchst mit dem einen oder anderen App-Dialog, meist sieht man sie jedoch mit frustriert-genervtem Blick. Der Film macht zunächst nicht klar, ob Nada wirklich taub und stumm ist, oder ob es ein Akt ihrerseits ist, aber es ist letztendlich nicht wichtig. Die Oberflächlichkeit, der Drang der Männer diese junge Frau erst voll zu plaudern und dann sexuelle Intimität aus der Situation zu quetschen ist eine Geschichte so alt wie jene der Medusa selber und verlangt seit jeher wenig Kooperation von Seiten der Frau.

Der Film spielt dabei geschickt mit den Genres, erinnert mit seiner

Mordserie in abstrusen Umständen an italienische Giallos, mit fantastischen Fantasie Elementen an übernatürliche Welten, sowie mit seinem polierten Kamerastil an klassische Film noirs. In diesem Mix aus Einflüssen sowie der Verlegung antiker Mythen in die gegenwärtige #metoo-Generation entsteht ein unbeschriebener, interpretationsfreudiger Raum, in dem die Figuren ihren Schmerz, ihre Aggression aber auch ihre Schuld navigieren.

Die Regisseure zielen mit ihrer Geschichte nicht auf ein Urteil ab, in dem sie Nada eine Kategorisierung umhängen. Als diese schließlich von allgemeinen Prügeln zu einem antiken Messer greift, das sie bei einem ihrer Opfer im Haus findet, geht das einher mit sexueller Belästigung, Objektifizierung und allgemeiner Frustration. Dennoch, die moralistische Gegeninstanz drängt sich der jungen Rachegöttin in Form von Noura auf, die auf einer menschlichen Eben mit Nada zusammenfinden will. Für eine kurze Zeit scheint es, als würde dies auch gelingen. Doch die Schmerzen und Sorgen der Welt, aus denen sich Nada bereits zu sehr zurückgezogen hat, werden keine Brücken mehr schlagen können.

11 Februar 2021

IFFR COVERAGE

Afterthoughts
Director ismaël & codirector Youssef Chebbi
In conversation with Delly Shirazi

Live Q/A (after the World Premiere)
Director ismaël & codirector Youssef Chebbi
& DOP Imed Aissaoui
In conversation with Delly Shirazi

The screenshot displays a split-screen view of a live stream. On the left, a YouTube player shows a title card with a tiger logo and the text: "Afterthoughts Black Medusa with Ismaël and Youssef Chebbi". Below the video, the YouTube interface shows the video title "Black Medusa | afterthoughts IFFR 2021", view count "57 vues", and date "5 févr. 2021". On the right, a Vimeo player shows a live Q&A session with four participants in a grid layout. The top-left participant is Delly Shirazi, the top-right is Imed Aissaoui, the bottom-left is a man with glasses, and the bottom-right is a man with a beard. The Vimeo interface includes a search bar, navigation menu, and video controls. The video title on Vimeo is "IFFR world premiere's Q&A".

YOUTUBE LINK

VIMEO LINK

VIDEOS

Fest Track On Sirk TV

Director ismaël & codirector Youssef Chebbi & lead actress Nour Hajri

In conversation with Tim Wassberg



2/22/21 • Fest Track On Sirk TV Video
Interview, Film Festival Coverage

Fest Track On Sirk TV
Interview: BLACK
MEDUSA [International
Film Festival Rotterdam
2021 - Virtual] - Part I

[Read More](#)



2/22/21 • Fest Track On Sirk TV Video
Interview, Film Festival Coverage

Fest Track On Sirk TV
Interview: BLACK
MEDUSA [International
Film Festival Rotterdam
2021 - Virtual] - Part II

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2/22/21 • Fest Track On Sirk TV Video
Interview, Film Festival Coverage

Fest Track On Sirk TV
Interview: BLACK
MEDUSA [International
Film Festival Rotterdam
2021 - Virtual] - Part III

[Read More](#)

LINK TO PART ONE, PART TWO & PART THREE

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This press review was selected and edited by Utopia Films

