

28 TFF

TORINO FILM FESTIVAL

Thursday, December the 2nd, 11:00 am, readers Club

Torino 28

Conferenza stampa di Shekarchi/The Hunter by Rafi Pitts.

The value of questions

I substantially made a movie of questions and the central matter is: who's the hunter and who's the prey? This is the question which is overall descriptive of my Country: who's hunting who? I didn't want to answer this question, I don't think this is a filmmaker's job if not they'd be politicians! I wanted to question to raise an issue. I come from a Country where authority tells you what to do, what to believe in: making film meant offering the audience different points of view to think about, even if authorities don't like this.

The Hostility of Authority

Getting the authorization for shooting was very hard and I think we managed only because it was during elections and the censorship commission had the impression something might have changed. We filmed during the elections understanding something very important. We started off as a group in rage against the asset of things but we hadn't realized many others felt the same way too; that's what we've learned from the riots and upturns going on in those days.

Jungle and Alienation

The first part was filmed in Teheran, while the second in the forest of Northern Iran 500 kilometers North of the Capital. I was fascinated by how Teheran looks like Los Angeles, the freeways, the traffic, the urban plant... all expressions of the Shah's will. My objective was to work on the landscape, urban and forest, in such a way I could convey the feeling of complete isolation of human kind. Therefore the first and the second part of the movie can be both considered jungles. In the City as in the forest the character wanders surrounded by local population (people in one case, trees in the other) however always by himself. Isolated by stress in the city as much as by stillness in the forest; the character moves within a labyrinth, he can't get out, stuck right in the middle, condemned to walk on one path only, which is paradoxical in a Labyrinth.

Sound as dialogue

We've worked a lot on the soundtrack to render the character's feelings of isolation and alienation: as in the city there's no traffic noise, in the forest there's no sound of dry leaves; these specific sounds are mixed with some sort of background noise of waves, muffling the rest increasing the estrangement of man. The work on sound is fundamental to me, to the point that when I get asked why there aren't many dialogues, I answer noise represents the dialogues in this story. It's something like what Bresson said on the evocative power of sound.

A director's National identity

It's hard to say what an Iranian director is. I'm a director and I'm Iranian just like Kiarostami, Panahi, Makhmalbaf who maybe are better known around the world. We're all from Iran and we're all directors, moreover we're individuals different from each other, even if it's hard – it's the hardest thing for a filmmaker – to maintain your personal identity. We're all influenced by international film nevertheless we're all single individuals who carry their own film sensibility. I believe the concept of National film is misleading. Is Cassavetes, for example, more European or more American in his way of making film? and Luc Besson? I believe the strength of film, besides all the cultural influences, is fundamentally human emotion. Symbols can have cultural codes while feelings are universal. This is the beauty of art, it's freedom.