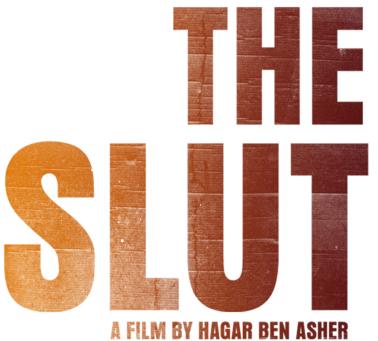


A FILM BY HAGAR BEN ASHER





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# **SYNOPSIS**

Tamar, 35 years old, a beautiful young woman, lives alone with her two daughters. She can't restrain her sexual appetite and gives herself to several men of the village. Shai, a young man, just came back in the region to handle his dead mother's assets, but as he meets Tamar, he decides to stay. They soon fall in love, but will Tamar be satisfied with only one partner?

# **DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

Desire, passion, absence. Perhaps these are the simple things that motivate us to act. If we wish to grasp ahold of them, then we structure them into a form, we shape them into words. I will not aspire to describe my characters as either highly self aware, nor too shallow. I assume there is neither a definite good, nor is there a definite bad. There is neither an ultimate victim, nor is there an unconditional victimizer. Violence is an integral element in what might be called love, as love is a core component in violence.

A meeting between two people, as a reflex, forms a conflict. In that first moment, the end is already present. Tamar and Shay understand the potential of their relationship as being a trigger for fulfilling their true desires - not necessarily in the way they would imagine, but the wishful release will indeed appear.

The film is not about sex or relationships, but the heredity of violence, depression, self-hatred and self-destruction. Their specific relationship, which is guided by all these forces, is eventually responsible for Tamar and Shay's submission to their dark inclinations, fears and their necessity to please. Therefore, the question of freedom needs to be evoked. The film wishes to ask whether achieving freedom is a result of shedding social codes, such as the morality and the banality of the "family cell". Freedom probably exists in territories where the boundaries are faint and undefined - as the soil and the animals function in the film -where there is no distinctive line between the domesticated and the wild.

The sex scenes, in their entire variety, do not aim to reflect upon the narration of cinematic eroticism, but to push the viewer to a physical edge. Filling the void between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, their forced intimacy is frustrating, making the indifferent viewer feel guilty, before finally leaving them alone.

But above and beyond all directing methods the film tells the story of Tamar and her daughters, Shay and his horse, and the path they will all take towards learning how to love.









#### THE TOPICS

For several years now, I have been searching for deeper questions to ask concerning fundamental topics such as love, sex, family, motherhood, victimizing, guilt and probably more, to delve into the ambiguities lingering around these themes. Gathered through hazy portraits of a nebulous woman, man, relationship and landscape, I think I was using the cinematic platform, with its dramatic and aesthetic palette, to explore these themes in a more profound manner.

## **ESTHETIC CHOICES**

In order to guide the working process onto a certain aesthetic track, each scene was treated as if it should stand on its own. Searching for the perfect way to translate the main emotion directing a scene into shots turned out to be the greatest challenge. Gathering the emotions into images, and then the images into a theme. It is as if imagining two opposing gestures in the same movement. Even though my cinematographer and I had discussed, all along the process, the basic rules regarding our aesthetic language, I think we did so in order to feel safe enough to toss them aside...

### **ACTING**

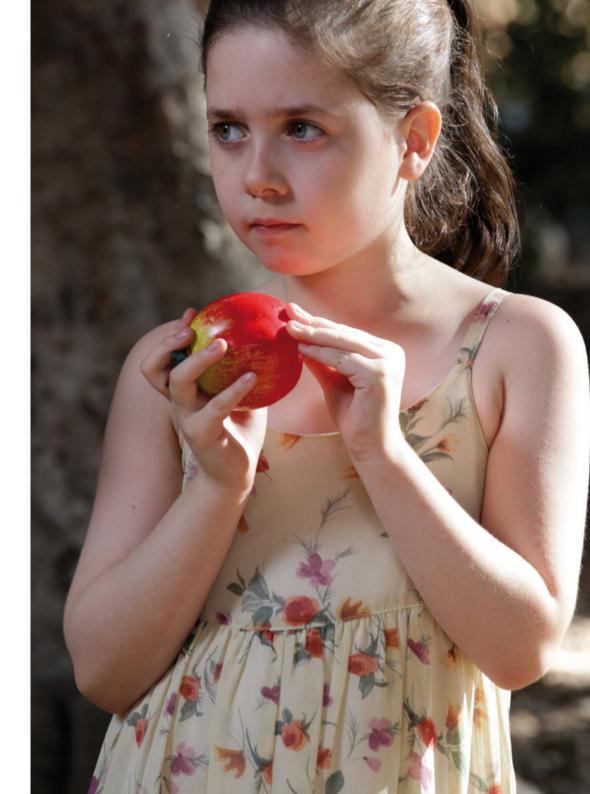
The question of acting in my own film is yet unresolved in my mind. I have some thoughts on the matter though. It was not a decision taken from the first steps of creation. When we began "officially" working on the film, I auditioned many for the part, some were far better actresses than myself. And yet...

Perhaps, deep down, I thought it was the best for the film. Perhaps it was fear. Perhaps it was confidence. Perhaps I just couldn't resist the will to tackle all aspects of the film.

#### THE VILLAGE

The film sketches a monochromatic portrait of a village, of the land, of the wind in the leaves... Of lives of frustration and of life in bloom. The characters exist in a bleak and limited territory with no horizon. The day to day routine, which is the characters' wicked obstacle, detains the rhythm and movement in the cinematic time structure. Stuck between poetics and obstinacy.

I wish to think of this place as an undefined territory, for several reasons. I believe that this kind of story does not depend upon a where or a when. The brutality of human nature occurs within the soul, regardless of the physical location. I think that the abstraction of a forsaken lot centralizes the attention towards the characters' inner being instead of social motivations. I aimed for the story to be told almost as if it were a fairy tale.





## **CREDITS**

Director HAGAR BEN ASHER Screenplay HAGAR BEN ASHER MAREK ROZENBAUM, TRANSFAX FILM PRODUCTION **Producers** BENNY DRECHSEL, ROHFILM GMBH Director of Photography AMIT YASOUR ASAF KORMAN Editor **Art Director** SHUNIT AHARONI Sound Design RONEN NAGEL Sound Mixer YISRAEL DAVID BAR HADAS Casting **Costume Design** LI ALEMBIK In association with RABINOVICH FUNDATION, TORINOFILMLAB, WORLD CINEMA FUND, ZIGOTA FILMS, SUNDANCE, CHANNEL 10, CINÉFONDATION,

# **CAST**

Tamar HAGAR BEN ASHER
Shai ISHAI GOLAN
Rami ICHO AVITAL
Yair YOAV LEVI
Doron TZAHI HANAN
Mika STAV YANAI
Noa DARIA FORMAN



