

TRANSFAX FILM PRODUCTION & ROHFILM GMBH PRESENT



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DE LA CRITIQUE  
CANNES 2011

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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?



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## 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.





## BIOGRAPHY

Hagar Ben Asher, born in 1979, made a name for herself when her graduation film, the short film *Pathways*, won the Cinefondation prize in Cannes a few years ago. The script for *The Slut* was developed as part of Atelier in Cannes, and while Ben Asher was raising funds and preparing to shoot her film, she became famous as an actress in a TV series called «*The Ran Quartet*», and in the motion picture *Julia Mia* awarded as Best Film at the Haifa film festival 2007.



## CAST

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

## CREDITS

Director	HAGAR BEN ASHER
Screenplay	HAGAR BEN ASHER
Producers	MAREK ROZENBAUM, <i>TRANSFAX FILM PRODUCTION</i> BENNY DRECHSEL, <i>ROHFILM GMBH</i>
Director of Photography	AMIT YASOUR
Editor	ASAF KORMAN
Art Director	SHUNIT AHARONI
Sound Design	RONEN NAGEL
Sound Mixer	YISRAEL DAVID
Casting	BAR HADAS
Costume Design	LI ALEMBIK
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