



WOMAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA: PREVIEW

Moon, 66 Questions (Selini, 66 erotiseis)

+ Q&A with writer-director Jacqueline Lentzou

Jacqueline Lentzou's short films have been winning prizes on the international festival circuit for some time. *Moon, 66 Questions* is her debut feature; its subtitle is *A Film About Love, Movement and Flow (and The Lack of Them)* – an appropriately enigmatic title for a film that holds so much of itself at bay.

The film is set in the present, but opens with grainy camcorder imagery of seemingly inconsequential scenes and moments, date-stamped with months and years in the late 1990s. On the soundtrack is a conversation in which one female voice tells another that she is returning home after years away, to care for her estranged father, found collapsed and dehydrated in his car. We never learn where protagonist Artemis has been or what she's been doing in the time between leaving home and her arrival back in the bosom of her family, nor what, exactly, caused the 'communication problems' between her and the older relative she's returned to care for: a man she addresses by his forename, Paris, and refers to as 'a favourite uncle' but who indeed appears to be her father. Artemis (Lentzou's regular collaborator Sofia Kokkali) is a taciturn presence, although she records a diary that plays as voiceover over footage from those mysterious videotapes, which we gradually realise are Paris's own past attempts to document a private life. She cannot talk to Paris (Lazaros Geôrgakopoulos). In private, though, she pretends to be him. We watch her dragging her inert legs across the marble floor, drinking his whisky and shakily smoking his cigarettes, and in one standout scene acting out both roles in the recreation of an argument between Paris and her teenage self. The cause of Paris's illness, which contorts his body, sends tremors through his hands and renders him almost mute, is given as, variously, MS, a stroke, a birth defect and, as Paris's awful brother-in-law sniffs, 'something that came later'.

Artemis's extended family lends a grotesque levity to proceedings, acting as a kind of chorus to the quiet drama playing out between father and daughter. They attend Paris's physiotherapy en masse, sipping liqueurs and smoking from ivory cigarette holders as they leer at his attempts to walk. Later they will jeer and laugh at the hapless Eastern European women who are interviewed for the permanent position of nurse. These moments of cruelty are jarring.

Alongside the amateur video and an early planimetric shot of Paris's car, they are reminiscent of the cynical, skewering gaze of Jessica Hausner, Ruben Östlund or Yorgos Lanthimos. A sequence in which Artemis creeps down a corridor in a long-beaked plague mask suggests something more sinister yet.

But there's a tenderness to Lentzou's approach that is better revealed in small, surreal touches, such as Artemis recounting her nightmare to a pair of blond children, or joking about artificial limbs in a wheelchair salesroom, and the moments of lightness that she shares with some (presumably) old friends who appear midway through the film as if from nowhere. The film's tonal shifts are best encapsulated in a scene that sees Artemis stalling and bunny-

hopping as she tries to get her father's car out of an underground car park: it's all very amusing, until it culminates in an abrupt moment of violence. There's more, though. In the wake of that moment, rifling through the car's glove box, Artemis makes a discovery that brings both clarity and compassion, allowing her to understand finally what has so long gone unspoken.

It's typical of Lentzou's gift for showing, not telling ('I like to see things,' Artemis tells her unseen interlocutor). Typical, too, of a film in which any connection between Artemis and Paris – a burp and the resulting laughter, a trouserless shuffle across a room, entwined like a pair of dancers – comes from somewhere beyond language. A scene where Artemis must change her father's soiled underwear is powerfully moving. So too is the gorgeous, desperate hug the pair share in the film's closing moments. As the daughter clings to the father, her face buried against his neck, we can feel the cotton of Paris's shirt, the warmth of skin through fabric, the damp of Artemis's tears. I was reminded of Sandra Hüller and Peter Simonischek's climatic embrace in Maren Ade's *Toni Erdmann* (2016). Both scenes are richly tactile and vibrate with inarticulable feelings.

It's over 80 minutes into its 108-minute running time before *Moon, 66 Questions* starts to make sense. It's not an easy watch, asking that we pay attention even as its opacity and somnolence make that difficult. But the effort is rewarded. This is an important accomplishment from a gifted filmmaker with a uniquely nuanced, untethered style, and a film that lingers in the mind for days after it has finished.

Catherine Wheatley, *Sight and Sound*, Summer 2022

Jacqueline Lentzou (born Athens, 1989) is an artist whose cinematic language involves discovering poetry in – seemingly – mundane premises. Her tools are word and image association, the dream-construct, intuition. She experiments with formats, durations and feelings.

Through her work she discusses non-traditional family systems, loneliness, duality and oneness, love, and most importantly, the lack of it. A London Film School graduate (2013), Jacqueline has written and directed five short films up until now, all of them having a rather successful festival career having premiered at Locarno, Toronto, Berlin and Cannes. She is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, including the Cine Leica Discovery Award by Semaine de La Critique for *Hector Malot: The Last Day of the Year* (2018).

MOON, 66 QUESTIONS (SELINI, 66 EROTISEIS)

Directed by: Jacqueline Lentzou
©: Blonde, Luxbox, Jacqueline Lentzou
Production Companies: Blonde, Luxbox
In co-production with: Greek Film Centre, ERT
With the support of: CNC - Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée, Greek Film Centre, French-Greek Coproduction Fund
Presented by: Blonde, Luxbox
International Sales: Luxbox
Producer: Fenia Cossovitsa
Co-producers: Fiorella Moretti, Hédi Zardi, Jacqueline Lentzou
Unit Production Manager (Paris Shooting Crew): Serge Desfilles
Production Manager: Anna Zografou
Location Manager: Niki Saliagopoulou
Casting: Makis Gazis
Written by: Jacqueline Lentzou
Director of Photography: Konstantinos Koukoulis
Editor: Smaro Papaevangelou
Art Director: Stavros Liokalos
Costume Designer: Eva Goulakou
Wardrobe (Paris Shooting Crew): Maria Kakosimou
Make-up: Ioanna Lygizou
Make-up (Paris Shooting Crew): Sandra Parmentier
Music: Delphine Mallausena
Music Supervision: Jacqueline Lentzou
Sound Designer: Leandros Ntounis
Production Sound Mixer: Dimitris Kanellopoulos
Mixing Supervisor: Leandros Ntounis
Sound Mixer (Paris Shooting Crew): Julien Sena
‘*Jacqueline wants to thank from the bottom of her heart [...] her script consultants*’. Nikos Panagiotopoulos, Razvan Radulescu, Paul Thomas Anderson

Cast

Sofia Kokkali (*Artemis*)
Lazaros Geórgakopoulos (*Paris*)
Nikitas Tsakiroglou (*Iakovos*)
Maria Zorba (*Artemis’s mother*)
Isavella Boulai (*Artemis as a kid*)
Elena Topalidou (*Anna*)
Kaiti Imrochori (*Kaiti*)
Nikolas Hanakoulas (*Kostas*)
Alexandros Sotiriou (*Stamatis*)
Sofia Polychronou (*Victoria*)

Greece-France 2021©
108 mins

Courtesy of Modern Films

Woman with a Movie Camera is generously supported by Jane Stanton

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Burning an Illusion + intro by actor Cassie McFarlane
Mon 27 Jun 18:00
Preview: The Afterlight + Q&A with director Charlie Shackleton
Wed 29 Jun 18:20
Seniors Premiere: Reel Stories: An Oral History of London’s Projectionists + Q&A
Tue 5 Jul 11:00
Seniors’ Free Matinee: From Trinidad to Lagos + Q&A with author Stephen Bourne
Tue 5 Jul 14:00
Art in the Making: Give Us This Day + intro
Thu 14 Jul 18:10
Silent Cinema: Phil-for-Short + intro by BFI Curator Bryony Dixon
Sun 17 Jul 13:10

Experimenta: The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies?! + live experimental music introduction by The Howling
Wed 20 Jul 18:15
Woman with a Movie Camera: The Mirror Has Two Faces + intro by BFI Events Programmer Kimberley Sheehan
Thu 21 Jul 18:00
African Odysseys: Commemorating Marikana
Sun 24 Jul 12:00-17:40
Relaxed Screening: Electricity + intro and discussion
Mon 25 Jul 18:15
Projecting The Archive: The Bay of Saint Michel (aka Pattern for Plunder) + intro by BFI curator Josephine Botting
Tue 26 Jul 18:30
Terror Vision: Blood Games
Thu 28 Jul 18:20

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