

A NECESSARY COMPLEMENT : LES LEVRES BLEUES.

Due to the atypical tuning time of *Hotel Morgana*, I have chosen a French short, *Les lèvres bleues* as a complement to this Seven Chances session.

Within the usual trend of European shorts, *Les lèvres bleues*, directed by Hormoz, turns out to be a real surprise. First of all, we find ourselves with a film that is closed, with a tense surrealist atmosphere, in which an explicit sexuality dominates a scene in which animals (as in all surreal compositions) take on a protagonism that can be suffocating and lethal. Hormoz's short presents us with a family nightmare, betrayed loyalties and repressed desires, in which the ferocity of a deformed and matriarchal character stands out, confronting her surroundings and setting off a series of events with no logical cohesion.

The first shots in the film, with this violent nihilistic mother, a character that appears to have come straight from a distorted comic or close to the iconoclastic visions of Peter Jackson's worlds (take another look at *Brain Dead*, *Heavenly Creatures* or *The Frighteners*) use a certain composition of out-of-shot elements to underline an omnipresent sexuality (in one moment, one of the girls' personalities is identified by seeing her pubis) at the same time as anticipating a post-industrial degraded climax that is close, yet again, to the family hells of Mary X in *Eraserhead*.

Hormoz plays with animal violence, like the cockerel that attacks the girl, or the rabid cat, but always in a symbolic composition within the surrealist surroundings that he is trying to compose. Thinking back to the most oniric moments from Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Hormoz also plays with the icons of horror, including slime, orgasmic stabbings (in the style of Argento's *giallo*) and humiliating relationships. At the end, a visual *à la carte* game of references rounds off a nightmare of wet environs, with influences of the radical French school suggested by creators such as Roback or Gaspar Noe, with sex and an incestuous relationship as the link within the framework of neo-family power, understood through hysteria, violence and blood, in which the whole environment suffers from the rarefaction of the characters who make it up.

Les lèvres bleues is a real discovery because of its bravery and rupturing meaning. It doesn't hide its alignment with cinema of provocation, conscious of the possibility of rejection, something which Hormoz seems to sense and which possibly amuses him. The film's production places it far from the easy gag or symbolic homage : a disturbing proposal, full of labyrinthine paths leading towards the outrage of virtual behaviour, a laboratory experiment with guinea-pigs excited by sex, power and death. In twenty-five minutes of iconoclastic frenzy, Hormoz completes the hallucinations of the lost minds in *Hotel Morgana* with this feverish dream of a freak mother, at the limits of reality, a nihilistic game in which death seems to be able to dominate without allowing the characters to relax, trapped in a Chinese puzzle without any perception of the exterior.

Angel Sala (*catalogue du festival de Sitges 1997*)