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POTENTIAL
FILMS

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Pictures and Press Kit available at www.potentialfilms.com

Cast

Saara... Outi Mäenpää
Tuuli... Ria Kataja
Leo... Martti Suosalo
Lea... Sara Paavolainen
Ilkka... Ville Virtanen
Uwe... Philipp Danne

Film Info

Feature Film
Technical Details
100 min, 35mm, color,
1:2,35, Dolby Stereo

Crew

Director... Petri Kotwica
Production... Making Movies Oy
Co-Production... Schmidt Katze Filmkollektiv
Producers... Kai Nordberg, Kaarle Aho, Leander Carell, Patrick Knippel, Steffen Reuter
Screenplay... Petri Kotwica
DOP... Harri Rätty
Production Design... Sattva-Hanna Toiviainen
Editor... Jukka Nykänen
Sound Design... Christian Riegel
Music... Eicca Toppinen

SYNOPSIS

Elegant, outgoing, gracious and entering middle age, Saara, a Helsinki gynecologist, is very much like the fresh snow covering her city: it looks splendid, but you have no idea what it's covering... In Saara's case, her self-assured exterior conceals a strong streak of jealousy. Saara has discovered that her husband Leo is having an affair with young Tuuli, one of his students, who also works at a martial-arts studio. Intrigued, Saara tries to find out who this girl is, and unwittingly ends up joining Tuuli's self-defense group. Little by little, Saara slips into Tuuli's life, gaining her trust and friendship. She even establishes a troubling intimacy, partly by accident, partly by design. Saara plays it by ear, now lying, now telling the truth; now manipulating, now abandoning herself to emotions she never experienced before. She creates an elaborate scenario, giving herself a false name to mislead Tuuli and a false lover to dupe her husband. She has successfully turned the tables on her husband, but is soon in danger of losing control over the avalanche she has unleashed. Saara, Tuuli, Leo, but also Leo's sister and her husband are all sucked into the maelstrom of jealousy and revenge that will leave them all scarred ...

Finnish director Petri Kotwica's (Homesick) second feature film is a gripping portrayal of jealousy and its ravages, a thriller stitched together with raw emotions, fateful coincidences and surprising psychological finesse.

WORDS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR

My journey on *Black Ice* started six years ago. At that time I got the idea to tell a story of a woman who creates a fake identity to get acquaintance with her husband's mistress. This idea kept haunting me, and the more I thought about it, the more personal but at the same time universal it seemed to me. I wanted to show, where a common enough situation can lead us when the chain of lies is not interrupted.

We rehearsed an early version of the script with the main actresses. I had the intention to spend a couple of months finishing the script. I ended up spending a couple of years with it. At that time my personal life started to resemble my movie topic.

I wanted to write the central characters as complete and believable as possible. Therefore I wrote the story as first-person prose from the point of view of each of the main characters before finishing the actual screenplay. Although the characters do not make the "right" choices in the story, I wanted the audience to be able to identify with each one of them.

This is a challenging task, since we are more or less taught to interpret drama from the point of view of one central character facing the antagonist. I often find myself enjoying works that deviate from this convention. In my opinion the polarized, often moralistic Hollywood-type dramaturgy supports our way of looking at the world from an egocentric angle.

I wanted to reject pure naturalism in the visual and dramatic dimensions of the film. I was looking for intensity both in acting and *mise-en-scène*. I decided to use thriller elements without giving up any of identifiable, character-driven drama.

We shot *Black Ice* in Cinemascope and all the picture post production was done analogically. I think this still gives clearness and depth for a film in comparison to digital technology. We used exceptionally wide angle lenses when it was necessary to get "inside the skin" of the characters.

I wanted to get rid of as much unnecessary dialogue as possible, and tried to tell the story with pictures and faces. This was possible thanks to the fantastic actresses and actors, who could translate all the philosophizing and subtext into flesh and emotions. We spent endlessly time during the rehearsal period to analyze every scene in the film.

In *Black Ice*, trust is violated in increasingly complex levels by all the characters hiding behind lies, fake identities and masks. I hope we have succeeded in having the audience momentarily identify with a character whom they have felt hate or prejudice for.

Petri Kotwica

BIO + FILMOGRAPHIES

Petri Kotwica

Petri Kotwica studied philosophy and literature at the University in Helsinki before studying directing at the Finnish Theatre Academy and the Helsinki University of Art and Design. After directing several prize-winning short films he made his feature film debut in 2005 with "Homesick".

Filmography (selection)

Tunnel Vision (Tunneli, 1996) drama, 16mm, b/w, 47 min
The Helmet (Kypärä, 1998) drama, 16mm, color, 22 min
Force Majeure (Force Majeure, 1999) drama/thriller, 35mm, color, 28 min
Las Nueve Vidas (Las Nueve Vidas, 2000) comedy, 35mm, color, 5 min
Homesick (Koti-ikävä, 2005) drama, 35mm, color, 85 min
Black Ice (Musta jää, 2008) drama/thriller, 35mm, color 107 min

Awards (selection)

Tunnel Vision Jury award, Helsinki Short Film Festival 1996
Jury prize, Tampere International Film Festival 1997
International discoveries, Mannheim-Heidelberg 1997
The Helmet Jury award, Helsinki Short Film Festival 1998
Force Majeure Jury award, Tampere International Film Festival 1999

Homesick

Nordische Filmtage, Lübeck 2005: Interfilm Church Prize
The International Film Festival St. Petersburg 2005:
Best Director Prometheus Award, Finland 2006
Kristiansand International Children's Film Festival 2006:
Don Quijote Prize for best film in the youth programme
FICI, Madrid 2007: Main Award

Outi Mäenpää

Outi Mäenpää (b. 24.2.1962 Helsinki) is a graduate of the Theater Academy of Finland 1984 – 1988. She has acted in numerous Finnish films, plays and TV-productions. Internationally, she is known from films like Zugvogel and Playa del Futuro, in which she played the lead role. She has won three Jussi-awards (Flowers and binding: Female lead 2004, Pearls and pigs: Female lead 2003, The South: Female lead 2000). Mäenpää has also received two Venla-awards and numerous International Film Awards. Since 1991 she has been working in an improvisation theatre group called Stella Polaris since 1991.

Filmography (selection)

Saipuuaprinsi (2006) dir. Janne Kuusi
Playa de Futuro (2005) dir. Peter Lichtefeld
Flowers and Binding (Kukkia Ja Sidontaa) (2004) dir. Janne Kuusi. Awarded with The Finnish Film Academy Award / Best Supporting Actress
Pearls and Pigs (Helmiä Ja Sikoja) (2003) dir Perttu Leppä. Awarded with The Finnish Film Academy Award / Best Supporting Actress
The Man Without a Past (Irtolainen) 2002 dir. Aki Kaurismäki
The South (Lomalla) (2000) dir. Aleksis Mäkelä. Awarded with The Finnish Film Academy Award / Best Leading Actress Juha (1998) dir. Aki Kaurismäki

Train Birds (Zugvögel, einmal nach Inari) (1996) dir. Peter Lichtefeld. Awarded with The Finnish Film Academy Award /Best Leading Actress Drifting Clouds (1996) dir. Aki Kaurismäki
The Match Factory Girl (1989) dir. Aki Kaurismäki

Martti Suosalo

Martti Suosalo (b. 19.7.1962 Oulu) is a graduate of the Theater Academy of Finland (1983-1987). He has appeared in numerous domestic films and TV-series. He is extremely talented in transforming himself and has portrayed many well known Finnish historical people, like Jean Sibelius, Irwin and Kari Hotakainen. Suosalo became famous as part of the acclaimed Ryhmäteatteri group. Nowadays he is part of Helsingin Kaupunginteatteri.

Filmography (selection)

Back to the USSR (1992) dir. Jari Halonen
The Last Wedding (Kivenpyörittäjän kylä) (1995) dir. Markku Pölönen
Palkkasoturi (1997) dir. Anssi Mänttari. Awarded with The Finnish Film Academy Award / Best Actor / Best Supporting Actor
Gold Fever in Lapland (Lapin kullan kimallus) (1999) dir. Åke Lindman
Las Nueve vidas (2000) dir. Petri Kotwica
Rentun ruusu (2001) dir. Timo Koivusalo. Awarded with The Finnish Film Academy Award / Best Actor / Best Supporting Actor
Pearls and Pigs (Helmiä ja sikoja) (2003) dir. Perttu Leppä
Sibelius (2003) dir. Timo Koivusalo
Kalteva torni (2006) dir. Timo Koivusalo

Ria Kataja

Ria Kataja graduated in Master of Arts in Theatre and Drama, Theatre Academy of Finland 2000. She has been a freelance actress in many plays and TV-productions since the year 2000. These include series like Kaverille ei jätetä (2000-2002), Tuulikaappimaa (2003) and Kotikatu. Furthermore, she has also done numerous radio plays for Yleisradio (Finnish Broadcasting Company). Ria Kataja received the Matti Pellonpää-award in 2001. Currently Kataja is playing the lead female role in a 12-part drama series, Taivaan tulet (YLE TV2), directed by Kari Väänänen.

PRODUCTION COMPANIES

MAKING MOVIES OY (Ltd.) is a Finnish film production company based in Helsinki. Established in 1996 the company produces and co-produces fiction and documentary films for international market. The managers, founding members and shareholders of the Making Movies are Kai Nordberg and Kaarle Aho. Since 1996 Making Movies has produced two features and more than 70 documentary and short films. The films produced by Making Movies have been distributed in more than 60 countries worldwide. The feature films are Black Ice (2007) premiering in the Berlinale 2008 competition, and Homesick (2005) a prizewinner in several international film festivals. SCHMIDTZ KATZE FILMKOLLEKTIV develops, produces and markets feature films for an international audience. Located in Berlin and Halle/Saale (Sachsen-Anhalt), the company operates as an independent producer within an European network, focusing on family entertainment, genre films (horror, thriller, mystery) and European Arthouse. Due to the access to equity, SCHMIDTZ KATZE FILMKOLLEKTIV is able to cashflow projects and uses the equity's leverage effect for financing. Besides, the companies affiliate NOWTILUS is concentrating on online distribution. SCHMIDTZ KATZE FILMKOLLEKTIV is active in the European producer's network ACE and in the association Film 20.