



Production still: Pinelopi Gerasimou © Anja Kirschner

Moderation

Anja Kirschner

2015, DCP, color, 149 min., English. **Producer** Anja Kirschner (London, Great Britain), Theo Prodromidis (Athen, Greece). **Commissioned by** Polyeco Contemporary Art Initiative, with Nomas Foundation and Beirut. **Written and directed by** Anja Kirschner. **Screenplay** Maya Lubinsky, Anna De Filippi. **Director of photography** Dimitris Kasimatis, Mostafa El Kashef. **Production design** Kleio Boboti. **Costumes** Alkistis Mamali. **Sound** Dimitris Kanelopoulos, Max Schneider, Giuseppe Di Lascio. **Music** Dracula Lewis. **Sound design** Kostas Fylaktidis, Stefanos Konstantinidis, Vasilis Zlatanov. **Editor** Anja Kirschner, Smaro Papaevangelou. **World sales** LUX. **With** Maya Lubinsky (May, the director), Anna De Filippi (Ray, the screenwriter), Aida El Kashef (Aida, the Egyptian actor), Michele Valley (Michele, the Greek actor), Giovanni Lombardo Radice (Johnny, the Italian actor), Adham Zidan (Ehab, the Egyptian producer), Stavroula Siamou (Patricia, the L.A. producer), Areti Seidaridou (the oracle), Giorgos Valais (Waste management executive), Pauline Hugué (Paul, the production designer), Laura Riccioli (Angelica, the Italian screenwriter).

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Moderation, set in Egypt, Greece, and Italy, revolves around a female horror director and her screenwriter, whose latest collaboration is haunted by encounters with its 'raw material' and the escalation of conflicting desires.

Faced with the disintegration of their project, the director becomes more and more drawn into conversations with the actors she has cast, who reflect on the way horror traverses the affective and material realities of their lives on and off screen. As the movie horror increasingly crosses the threshold between reality and fiction, lo-fi special effects are combined with HD camcorder, Skype, and mobile phone footage to heighten the sense of immediacy and interplay between fictional, factual, and genre elements.

Moderation references and pays homage to the horror cinema from cold-war Europe, Infitah-era Egypt, and post-junta Greece, neither naturalistically representing lived experience nor sublimating it by recourse to the irrational. Rather, the 'irrational' is used to externalize and to de-subjectify what haunts the protagonists, in order to reground the possibility of rational agency operating at its limits.

Moderation was inspired by tendencies within horror cinema that can be thought to relate to situations of rupture and reaction, from post-war Japan, cold-war Europe, Infitah-era Egypt, post-junta Greece, to sub-prime mortgage crisis USA.

What the films I was drawing on have in common is that in them "horror" seeps through the limits of rational analysis, connecting it materially and affectively to the trauma of the recent past and its repression and reactionary stabilization in the present.

Departing from this material I have been asking myself if critical recourse to the horror genre could constitute an actual revolt of reason, in a desire to ultimately prevail, albeit in a heightened and by then barely legible state.

The result is *Moderation*, which seeks to answer the question through the prism of the filmmaking process itself.

Anja Kirschner

Anja Kirschner, born in 1977 in Munich, is an artist who lives and works in London and Athens. Her narrative films create genre hybrids from pop culture references, factual research, and literary sources. She studied at the Slade School of Fine Art (London) where she graduated with a B.A. in Fine Art (1998–2002), accompanied by a foreign study scholarship at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2000/01). In 2011 she received the Jarman Award (with David Panos). Her films have been widely exhibited internationally. *Moderation* is her first feature film.

Films

2003: *Supernumeraries* (21 min.). 2006: *Polly II - Plan for a Revolution in Docklands* (30 min.). 2008: *Trail of the Spider* (co-directed by David Panos, 54 min.). 2009: *The Last Days of Jack Shepard* (co-directed by David Panos, 56 min.). 2010: *The Empty Plan* (co-directed by David Panos, 78 min.). 2011: *Living Truthfully Under Imaginary Circumstances* (co-directed by David Panos, 33 min.). 2012: *Ultimate Substance* (co-directed by David Panos, 34 min.). 2013: *An Exchange For Fire* (co-directed by David Panos, 13 min.), *Uncanny Valley* (co-directed by David Panos, 10 min.). 2015: *Moderation*.