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directed by

ZRINKO OGRESTA

KSENIJA MARINKOVIĆ

LAZAR RISTOVSKI

Vesna is a middle-aged visiting nurse in Zagreb. Quietly she goes about her daily life of mundane chores: babysitting for her son, helping her daughter prepare for her wedding. Out of the blue she gets a call from her husband Žarko, who left his family on the eve of the war to fight for ‘the other side’. His reappearance sends her carefully reconstructed life in a tailspin, endangering her new identity.

Vesna (Ksenija Marinković) is a middle-aged woman who works as a visiting nurse in Zagreb. Twenty years ago, she lived in Sisak, a small Croatian industrial town she was forced to leave during the war, when a violent incident almost destroyed the life of her family. In the capital, she managed to hide her identity and start anew.

Today her children are all grown up: her son Vladimir (Robert Budak) is a business man who now has a family of his own; her daughter Jadranka (Tihana Lazović,

Shooting Star 2016 nominee) has just finished her studies - she cannot find a job, but hopes to work for a government agency. Jadranka is also getting ready for a wedding with a man who is considerably older than her.

One day Vesna gets an unexpected call from her husband Žarko (Lazar Ristovski), a man who left her on the eve of the war, after which he was sentenced for war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia. They haven't spoken nor heard from each other in more than two decades, but now he wants to

reach out to her and to reconnect with his family.

Jadranka and Vladimir refuse any contact with their father, knowing that his past could bring back the stigma which they barely managed to escape not so long ago.

At first, Vesna too tries to remain distant and cold, but after years of loneliness, something in her starts to break. But when the news about Žarko's release hits the media, Vesna's past starts to creep up on her much faster than she thought.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

ON THE OTHER SIDE

The main protagonist of On the other Side is a woman named Vesna. That fact highly influenced my approach to the film. This film is seen and experienced from mostly Vesna's point of view.

This film is seen and experienced from mostly Vesna's point of view. In that sense, I tried to reduce to the minimum every form of pronouncedly director's (author's) point of view. Since this film is markedly psychological, but at the same time it has a powerful story, one of my tasks was to make sure it developed in both those directions. Psychological dimension was

particularly delicate and important: how to transfer to the screen all subtle nuances of characters and their relations in the most suggestive way? My first task was to „feel“ and recognize every flicker of emotion in every scene and record it in image and sound. While doing that, I tried to make scenes feel subjective, experienced from the viewpoint of the

character who is central in a given scene. That did not necessarily mean that I relied upon subjective viewpoint alone, but that I reached for all cinematic means of expression which could create as subjective and as personal „feel“ of the scene as possible.

Zrinko Ogresta



ZRINKO OGRESTA

Born in 1958 in Virovitica, Croatia. Screenwriter and director, professor of film directing at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb and a member of the European Film Academy in Berlin. Graduated from The Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb, Department for Film and TV Direction, January 1982.

Praised for their strong visual style, well articulated mise-en-scène and innovative storytelling, his films focus on the anxieties that lurk behind the well cultivated bourgeois facade of the characters,

using their emotional and psychological fractures to bring to light the complexes that haunt the society in general, while subtly analysing social and political forces behind it.

Ogresta's films were screened and awarded at renowned international and local festivals (Venice, Karlovy Vary, London, Montpellier, Haifa, Denver, Milan, Pula). Some of the most notable prizes are the Nomination for European Film Award in the category of best young director (**Krhotine/Fragments**, 1991), Prix

Italia, Grand Prix Pula FF and GP Rome IFF MEDFILM (**Isprani/Washed Out**, 1995/1996), Grand Prix Haifa IFF, GP Rome IFF MEDFILM, Best director & Audience Award Pula FF (**Crvena prasina/Red Dust**, 1999) Crystal Globe Special Jury Prize at the Karlovy Vary IFF, Grand Prix Denver IFF, GP Milan IFF, GP Pula FF (**Tu/Here**, 2003/2004), Audience Award Motovun IFF (**Iza stakla/Behind The Glass**, 2008) ...



Some of the elements of the story look as if they walked right of the newspaper headlines. What attracted you to do this story?

The problem this film deals with has been occupying me for years. The phenomenon of forgiveness: are we capable of forgiving without hurting the innocent ones around us? Our reality has made it possible for me to put the theme I find interesting into a story which is pressing, which illustrates our present time and mirrors our recent past. Although the tragedy that befell this part of Europe some twenty years ago is not rarely interpreted in film, I think that enough time has passed since those unfortunate years, and that in that sense I've reached a sort of personal catharsis. That is why in this film I'm trying not to judge but understand. Both those from „this“ and „that“ side.

The characters in your film are running away from their past, but it turns out that this is impossible. In a way, this reflects our society's attitude towards recent past. Can your film be regarded as a political commentary or a statement?

It is definitely not a political commentary, political commentaries are not my cup of tea. This film primarily tries to put forward a humanist attitude, something which in my opinion all of us living here have to adopt if we want to continue living like good neighbours, without tongue in cheek and cocked guns.

Your directing choices are very important in creating the sense of anxiety: the lurking shots leave a feeling of anxiety, and you also film characters through glass surfaces a lot. Can you tell us more about your aesthetic choices?

The title of the film „On The Other Side“ has a metaphorical meaning both in terms of its story and its form. „On The Other Side“ refers not only to „the other

side“, but to „the other side of the mind“ as well, since my protagonists go beyond rational behaviour into rather irrational. The way scenes are presented is also „on the other side“; there is often an obstacle between the character and the camera, as if we were watching „from the sidelines“. Each scene has been filmed in just one uninterrupted shot. I'm glad that those who have seen the film have not noticed that, because if they had, it would have probably been taken as a „visible“ director's choice, which wouldn't be good. Long takes are here to give the scene as authentic feel as possible, to create the impression that there is no editing and manipulation of reality.

This is the first time you work with Mate Matišić who is a well known Croatian playwright and screenwriter, known for his grotesque political and social satires. Since your sensibility as a filmmaker is quite different, how did you two match together?

Through collaboration with Mate I've made a new friend and an excellent associate. I admit that I feared how our two poetics would entwine and whether they would

enrich each other or suppress each other. Namely, as a film director I'm not primarily interested in storytelling, and with Mate I entered into a proper storytelling. The screenplay I've created with Mate left me puzzled, I didn't immediately have all solutions to situations resulting from the script. That fact stirred up a particular creative Eros in me. I am one of those authors who are always very prepared, but my usual preparedness was not enough for this film. Simply, I had to look for some solutions during filming, I had to listen attentively to my film, hear what it wants, let it be the master, not me. And agreeing to that is one of the most beautiful creative experiences in my life.

The actors in the film are excellent in playing their characters, especially the subtle fractures on the surfaces of their everyday lives. Can you tell us more about your casting choices?

I've never finished a screenplay without knowing the cast. I like to keep an open mind to the choice of actors to the extent that before filming I would change some roles in the script from male to female or vice versa, providing they were not de-

termined by gender. It was amazing to work with the two leading actors, Ksenija Marinković and Lazar Ristovski. Ksenija Marinković is a world class actress! The role she is playing in my film suits her perfectly, both as an actress and as a person. I think it was her most challenging role so far, and she played it impeccably. When it comes to Lazar Ristovski, he was my first and only choice for the role and it started from that. Lazar is an excellent, extraordinarily talented actor, absolutely underused in the roles of this kind. He has never played a similar role and he has created something really special. He often surprised me, there were many situations in which he reacted both as an actor and a director. Some of his comments on certain dialogues or understanding of his character were truly brilliant, exceeding what we have written in the script.



Interfilm is an independent production company based in Zagreb, Croatia. Established in the mid-nineties, Interfilm has produced over 30 feature films so far including several European co-productions. Interfilm's filmography also includes more than a 100 documentary and television projects.

KSENIJA MARINKOVIĆ

Born in 1966 in Virovitica, where she finished high school.

Ever since she was eight and until enrolling in the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb, she was involved in the Virovitica Theatre as an amateur actress. As a student of the Academy, she started to collaborate with the Gavella Drama Theatre and the Histrion Theatre Troupe. After graduating from the Academy, she spent a year with the 'Teatar u gostima' and has been employed in the Zagreb Youth Theatre (ZKM Theatre) since 1989.

Other than in the Zagreb Youth Theatre, she performed in the Histrion Theatre Troupe (Wich Of Grič, the &TD Theatre (Waking Up Beautiful, Bitter, Bitter Moon), the Ulysses Theatre in Brijuni (King Lear,

Hamlet, Drunken Night Of 1918), the Gavella Drama Theatre (Crazy Days, Leda, Closer), as well as numerous independent theatre troupes. Currently a member of the Croatian National Theatre ensemble in Zagreb She has won multiple theatre and film awards and has recently acted in films such as Just Between Us (2011), Projections (2013), Life Is A Trumpet (2015), The Good Wife (2015), The High Sun (2015).

LAZAR RISTOVSKI

Actor, director and producer. Born in Yugoslavia on 26.10.1952.

After finishing teachers college, he enrolled in the Academy of Dramatic Arts of the University of Belgrade, graduating as an actor. He has more than 4,000 theater performances.

He appeared in more than 70 films, TV series and TV dramas.

Feature film The White Suit which he directed was screened in the Cannes Film Festival Critics Week program. He played Hamlet in the Dubrovnik production of the play - directed by Oscar winner Jiri Menzel. The Emir Kusturica film Underground in which he played the lead role, won the Golden Palm in Cannes.

As a producer he has made 15 feature films. He is the recipient of numerous national and international awards. Lazar Ristovski is the sole owner of Zillion Film production house - www.zillionfilm.com, and member of the European Film Academy.



CAST & CREDITS

CREDITS

Directed by: Zrinko Ogresta
Scriptwriters: Mate Matišić, Zrinko Ogresta
Producer: Ivan Maloča, Interfilm
Co-producer: Lazar Ristovski
Director of Photography: Branko Linta
Production Designer: Tanja Lacko
Costume Designer: Katarina Zaninović
Editor: Tomislav Pavlic
Composers: Mate Matišić, Šimun Matišić

CAST

Ksenija Marinković Vesna
Lazar Ristovski Žarko
Tihana Lazović Jadranka
Robert Budak Vladimir
Toni Šestan Božo
Vinko Kraljević Perić
Alen Liverić Vuletić
Marija Tadić Vladimir's Mistress
Ivan Brkić Mato
Nives Tena Jeić Gajski





CONTACTS

S ONE STRANE / ON THE OTHER SIDE / AM ANDEREN ENDE

Duration: 85 mins

Format: 2K / 1:2,39 Cinemascope / colour / 5.1

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