



Ave

Director: Konstantin Bojanov
Country: Bulgaria
Date: 2011

An interview with the director for Cineuropa.org:

Konstantin Bojanov, for whom this is his debut film, says he doesn't like the excitement of Cannes where he presented *Ave* in avant-premiere (in SIC – International Critics' Week). He prefers the quietness and conviviality of a festival like Sarajevo which, this year, returned the compliment by awarding *Ave* the Special Prize of the Jury (presided by Ari Folman), as well as the Cineuropa Award which was an opportunity for us to meet with the director who was feeling fulfilled after a difficult shoot from a human relations point of view...



The film is a co-production between France and Bulgaria. How did this collaboration come about?

In reality, Geoffroy Grison, who is the film's French co-producer, was the first person on board the project when *Ave* amounted to two simple pages of synopsis. We met him at Cannes with the Bulgarian co-producer Dimitar Gochev and from then on, all three of us worked very actively on writing the screenplay. It's through this artistic involvement that the film is linked to France, because on a budgetary level, *Ave* was entirely financed in Bulgaria.

While the film's action unfolds in Bulgaria, the story could have been set anywhere. Was it important for you to situate the film on a human level independent of its geographical situation?

That was the most important thing for me. I wanted a story that speaks a universal language like the novels of William Faulkner which tell stories set in remote corners of the southern United States but where it's very easy to identify with the characters from a human point of view.

The film has a humorous tone which contrasts with the dramatic situations it describes. Was this for fear of lapsing into a certain form of overly-heavy social drama?

I don't know why, but I always return to comedy. It's an obsession with me. I wanted the film to have a certain lightness of touch and so I very deliberately created some comic elements. I'm glad that this tone manages to carry viewers through the film's more dramatic events because during filming, the atmosphere

was very tense between the two actors and for a long time I thought that this animosity would show through on screen. Fortunately, this isn't the case.



Didn't the actors get along on a personal level?

No. It was hell. There was no chemistry between them. I knew that without a good cast, I wouldn't have a film, because *Ave* really hinges on the relationship between its two actors. I spent more than a year looking for an actress to play *Ave* at over 700 casting sessions. Two weeks before the start of shooting, Angela Nediakova auditioned for a small role as a junkie and I offered her the lead role despite her total lack of experience. She

refused and then disappeared. We looked for her everywhere and finally found her in a café and persuaded her to accept. The day of the shoot, she didn't turn up on set. I'll spare you the details, but this attitude didn't at all please Ovanes Torosian, her partner in the film, who is a very introverted person and also very difficult to direct. From a directorial point of view, Angela turned out to be much more dedicated to the role and we built a relationship based on trust which enabled her to be wonderfully honest, even in the most difficult scenes.

From: <http://www.cineuropa.org/ff.aspx?t=ffocusinterview&l=en&tid=2278&did=208647/>

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H is for House (9 mins)

Director: Peter Greenaway
Country: UK
Date: 1976



This is an early short film by Peter Greenaway, best known as the director of *The Draughtsman's Contract*; *The Cook*, *The Thief*, *His Wife and Her Lover*, *Prospero's Books*; and, most recently, *Eisenstein in Guanajuato*. It shows his early interests in all things English, lists, and surrealist fantasies, all of which became trademarks of his feature films.

"I'd just married and had a small kid, and we used to spend our holidays in Wardour; we stayed in a magnificent early 19th century house belonging to a friend. It was the most extraordinary area of idealized, romanticized English landscape, very redolent of Roman Catholic history; all sorts of violent tragedies had happened there during the English Civil Wars. It was a rather shutaway countryside, so it had a sense of great drama and romance - in response to which, I made a series of films, of which this is the first. It was couched in the whole business of naming things - as in the late paintings of Magritte, the confusion between nomenclature, ascribing meanings and words... I made this enormous list of every single thing I could find in the domestic rural landscape that began the the letter H, which when juxtaposed gave you all sorts of interesting connotations. My daughter Hannah was learning the alphabet and her voice is on the soundtrack repeating and getting things wrong - the wisdom of the innocent. It was also very much to do with concepts of Heaven and Hell and how those are interchangeable."

From: <http://petergreenaway.org.uk/hisforhouse.htm>