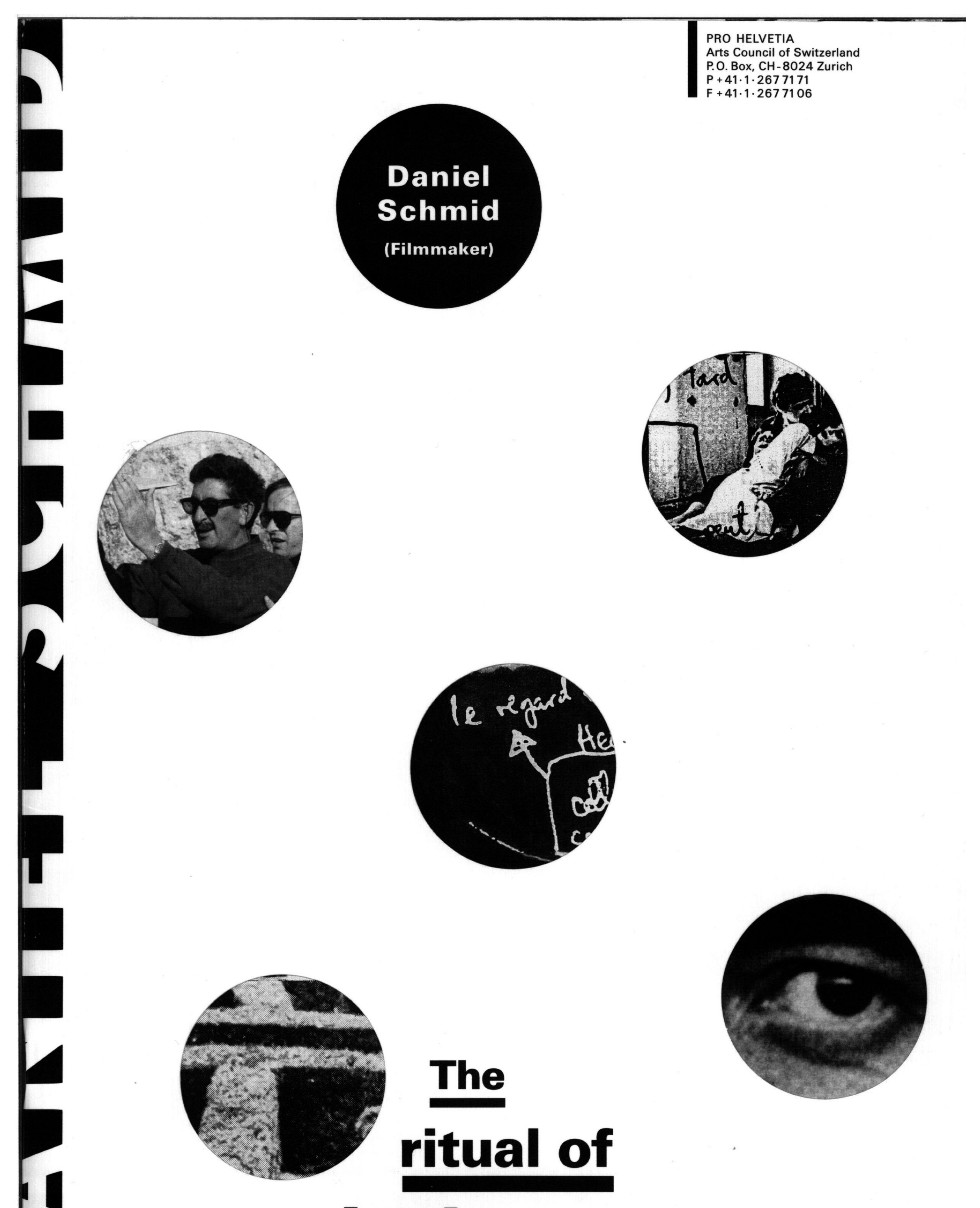


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desire by Rudolph Jula

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Writer, lives in Berlin. He spent several years as a freelance film critic for various Swiss newspapers and magazines. A collection of his short stories (Conquest) was published in Zurich in 1988.

GARY INDIANA

Author of several novels and short story collections, including Rent Boy and Gone Tomorrow. The film version of his play Roy Cohn was recently produced by Jonathan Demme.

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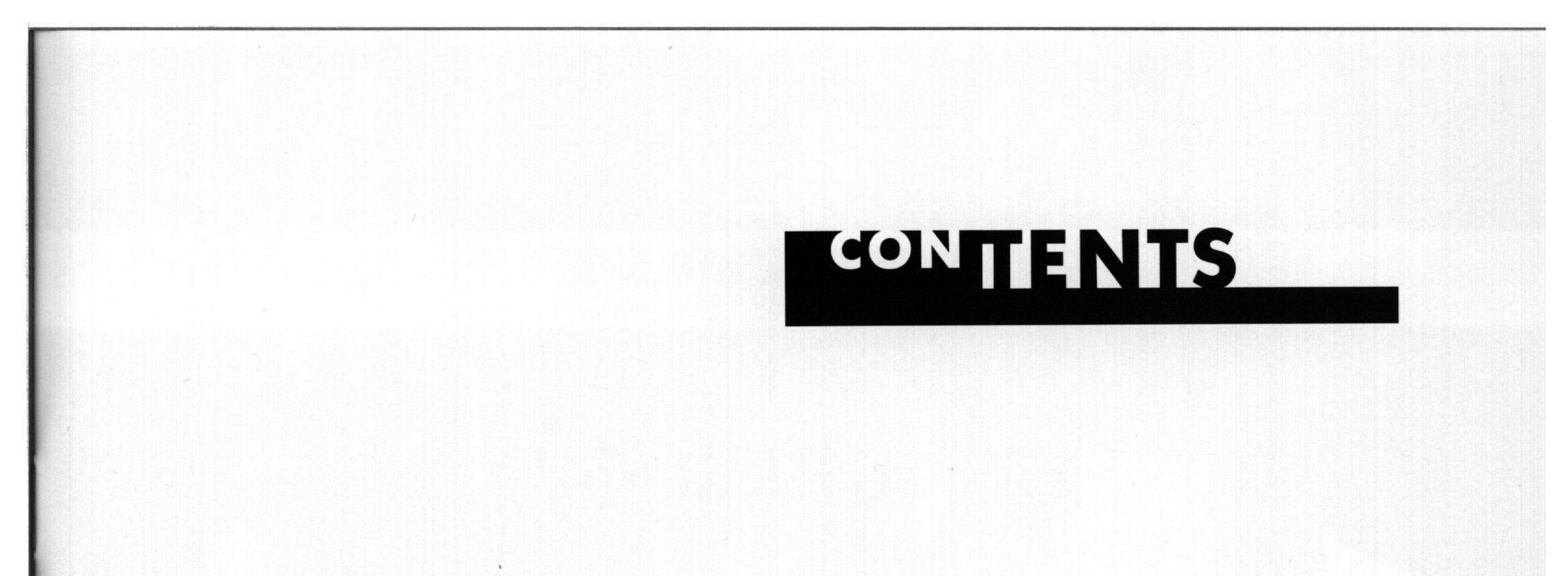
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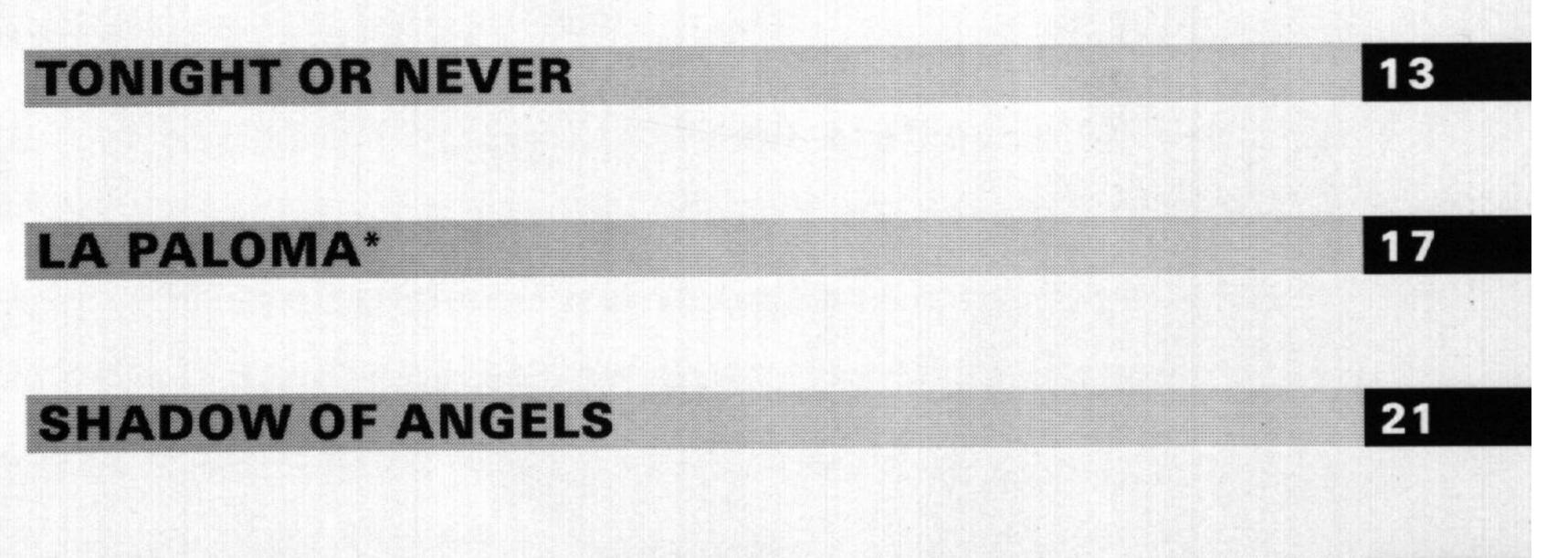
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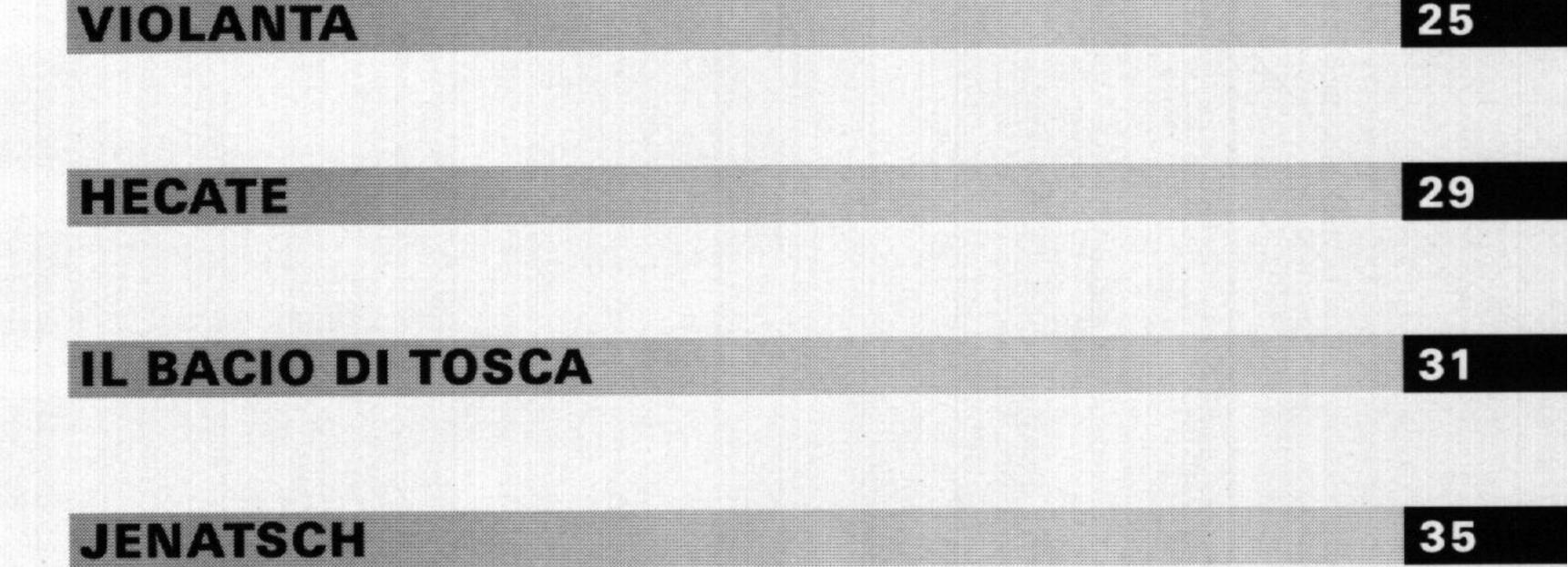
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THE RITUAL OF DESIRE





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CORRIDORS OF MEMORY by Hans Schifferle

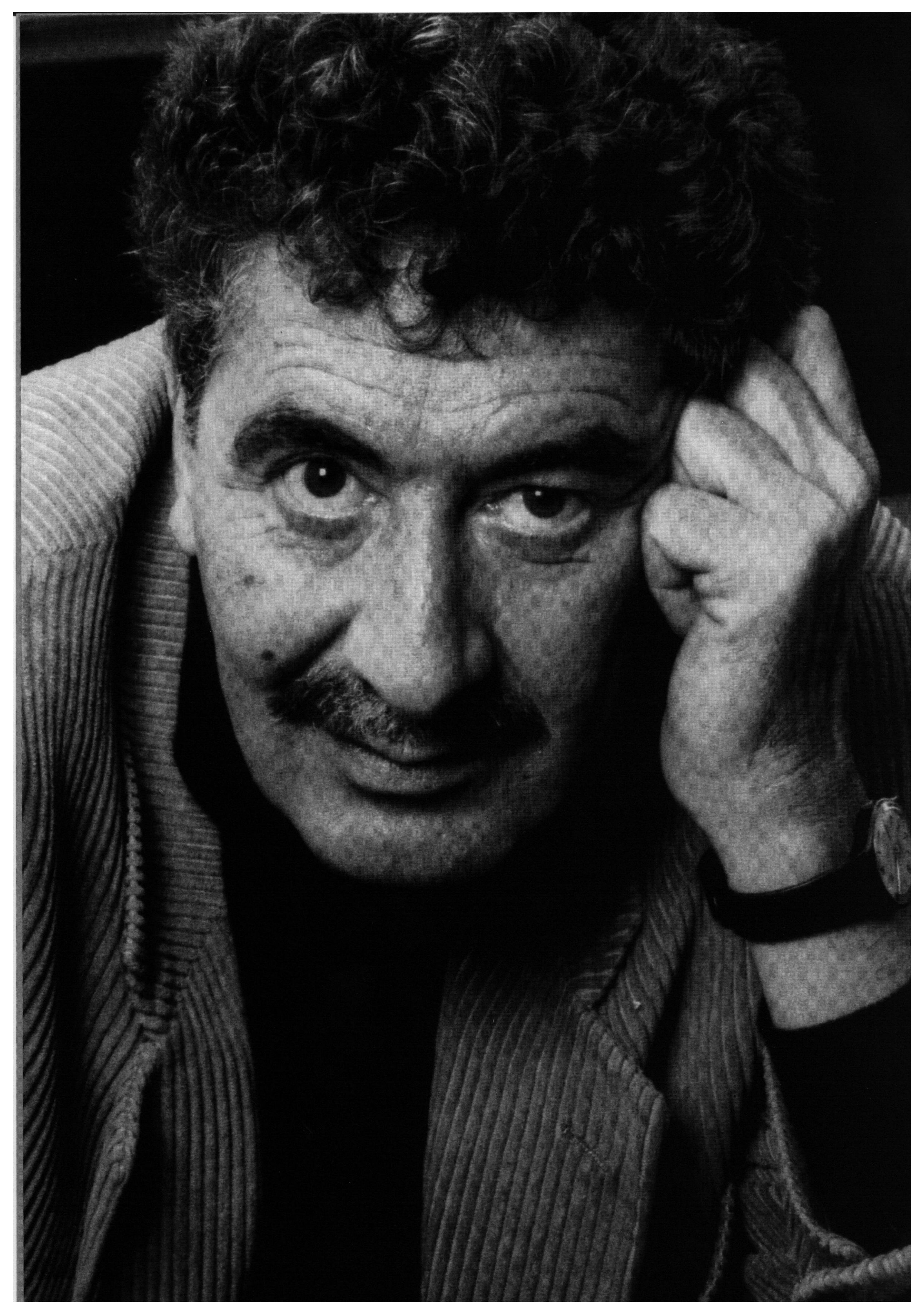
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TWILIGHT GEISHA by Daniel Schmid

*Review by Gary Indiana

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FILMOGRAPHY



HERIUATOF DESIRE

5

The shutters are closed, the curtains drawn. The drawers and cupboards in all the rooms have been lined with newspaper, and newspapers cover the beds to protect the material. In the dark room, weight and time begin to transform: banner headlines lose significance and small items grow into legends. Place stories in this room and several days later they will be older than the calendar would allow. The broad spiral staircase is surrounded by passages leading off into the darkness. Great mirrors wait idly for beautiful images. In the hall, furniture and paintings are enveloped in white cloth. Eros, who invented amorous adventures, rendez-vous and tender promises in this deserted corridor, is asleep. His dream carries the stories forward. But in the light they cease to be.

Daniel Schmid spent the early years of his life in a hotel, a "grand hotel" in the eyes of a child : little turrets, bay windows and balconies, half-hidden behind pine trees, girded and cut off by the insurmountable majesty of the mountains. In the forties, when the hotel still closed down for the winter, the building became a maze of stories. His mother and grandmother ran the hotel, their dead husbands now shadowy apparitions in a mythology that retreated further and further from reality with every passing winter. Like a railway station, a ballroom, a casino or a trans-Atlantic liner, a hotel is not a place. It is an imaginary world, a parable – an idea that acquires spatial reality through the presence of people. When the people leave, the lights go out and the voices fall silent, the hotel lobby, its spiritual centre, is not only empty, it ceases to exist. Suddenly it is no more than a senselessly beautiful shell, an abandoned coral reef, an empty husk. "There is nothing as empty as an empty hotel," says

Daniel Schmid. The sole person to have remained at the end of the season steps into the empty hotel lobby and immediately senses his exile. The lobby he has entered is cut off from life, lonely, a parable without a message. It might be supposed that the involuntary exile's imagination is kindled only by the feeling of loneliness. But in subjective reality, the only reality that remains without other people, an alliance takes place. For the dead room longs as deeply for the life it has been dispossessed of as the person does. An aura of elegant society still surrounds the white-

shrouded furniture; like the person, the whole room is rife with imaginative potential. The room reveals what it has been left with, little stories of bygone days, a shadow-play: the magician Malivi, who announced his soirées at the hotel with "Come one, come all or never see the genius known as Malivi". His calling card read "New York - St. Moritz". Oscar and Charlotte or Eugène and Lilo, who offered the guests lessons in obsolete ballroom dances. A grandfather who did not lose his job as a waiter at the Ritz thanks to Sarah Bernhardt, because only he knew where she liked the salt to stand on the table ... trifles and ephemera of yesteryear. "The lower life falls, the more it needs the work of art to unseal its mysteries and adjust its scattered elements in such a way that a meaningful pattern emerges. The way it distributes the weight and ties together the action coaxes sense out of the world of non-sense and lends meaning to the topics touched on in it."¹ The imagination of the exile, who as part of this unfolding magical pact is still alone but no longer lonely, arranges, provides cues and entrances; it gives life and renewed meaning to what has become insubstantial and solitary. In that hotel lobby it is not a place but a whole self-contained world that is created. Its appearance is continually being transformed. Now it is a hall in a castle, where for a single night each year servants and masters exchange roles Tonight or Never, or a cabaret La Paloma, or a big, cold city consisting almost exclusively of interiors **Shadow of Angels**, or a retirement home for opera singers and musicians II Bacio di Tosca. The outside world is illusion and trompe l'oeil. It appears in the casino through "force of imagination", it is a mountain valley diorama in the theatre auditorium Violanta. The "Berne" of Hécate is no more than a series of letters, a charming phrase at the beginning of the soirée. The story only appears to lead from dinner in the dining room to Morocco. The setting turns out to be an imaginary world: it is Arabia, a distant land, created as a backdrop according to the accounts of the few who have ever travelled there. The hotel lobby is not a place, it is space that can become anything. The locales are variations of a wonderful Somewhere: a town that could be any town, an unknown valley, a strange land, insular interior spaces. Everything remains unnamed, for this space is shaped not by an encyclopaedic desire for knowledge but by the memories of an intact belief, to which places are no more than lovely sounds. Illusion does not

¹Siegfried Kracauer, Das Ornament der Masse/Die Hotelhalle

conceal reality, it is reality. "Illusions are to the soul what atmosphere is to the earth. Roll up that tender air and the plant dies, the colour fades."² Liberation from facticity, transcending the ordinary to ²Virginia Woolf, Orlando achieve the incomprehensible, has its price. The figures are always only in the space as such and never at home. Certain things, everyday existence, remain inaccessible to them; melancholy combines with their nameless freedom. Where there is no place there is no time. Time

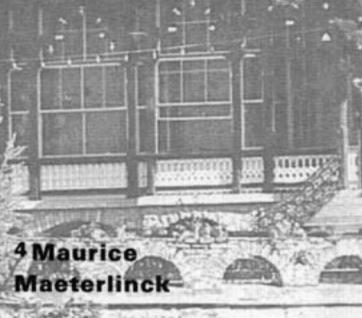
stands still, it moves backwards, moves forwards. The clock in Lily's shabby flat Shadow of Angels always shows five minutes to twelve. Hécate and La Paloma lead through a timeless flight of thought back to the beginning. Minutes or years have passed, perhaps only a moment of self-forgetfulness. The number "1942", with which Hécate begins, is an association with some yesterday, La Paloma takes place "Once upon a time". Even if the imaginer occasionally remembers a fixed temporal system - how long ago did he enter this space? - the yardstick is missing, and round him crowd the time-lost stories of the present. Of course, they occurred some time: the masters always served their servants on St. Nepomuk's day. But who knows what day that is? Times interweave and interlace, they build a hall of mirrors. The journalist Sprecher searches for traces of Jenatsch there: he turns round and has suddenly traversed centuries. It is the permanent state of experiencing the alienating feeling of waking up and not knowing what time it is. How long one has been asleep, unconscious, can no longer be gauged. Dawn could be twilight. The old singers in Il Bacio di Tosca live in the present, but through their stories the past becomes incomparably stronger; it acquires tangibility. The Now retreats and is swallowed up even if it remains visible. All figures live in a self-contained world, a world that has been imagined for them - and through them -, that has been reduced to space and thereby infinitely enlarged; they wander through shifting times in the timeless space of memory. Completely cut off from what is certain and tangible, they are left to their passions, longings and obsessions. Everything in this greenhouse grows slowly, in slow motion, beyond its accustomed proportions. Their actions, exempt from objective necessity, must follow fate alone. "It makes no difference whom we love and who breaks our heart. We are driven by fate, and the end is always renunciation. We believe and hope and think that one day a miracle will happen"³ Music, the third immaterial force apart from space and time, directs their unconscious steps, the glances that scan the distance through Yesterday and Tomorrow. Music accompanies the unfathomably two-dimensional women, who look in the mirror again and again to convince themselves of their existence. Opera and old German popular songs are juxtaposed, contrary to educated standards of taste. The popular songs are echoes of sentimental moments, softly filling the empty lobby, played on the radio, hummed by

³Zarah Leander, Nur nicht aus Liebe weinen (popular song)

> the staff. The force of memory brings back their forgotten glamour. They use unfamiliar words – Shanghai, La Habañera – and speak of unconditional love, "Tonight or Never, you must tell me if you love me". The fact that these memories are only imagined, the songs mere echoes, their exoticism hackneyed, their romantic whisperings stale, does not rob them of their charm. On the contrary, this very moment of recognition makes them painfully beautiful, ennobles their naive greatness and lends

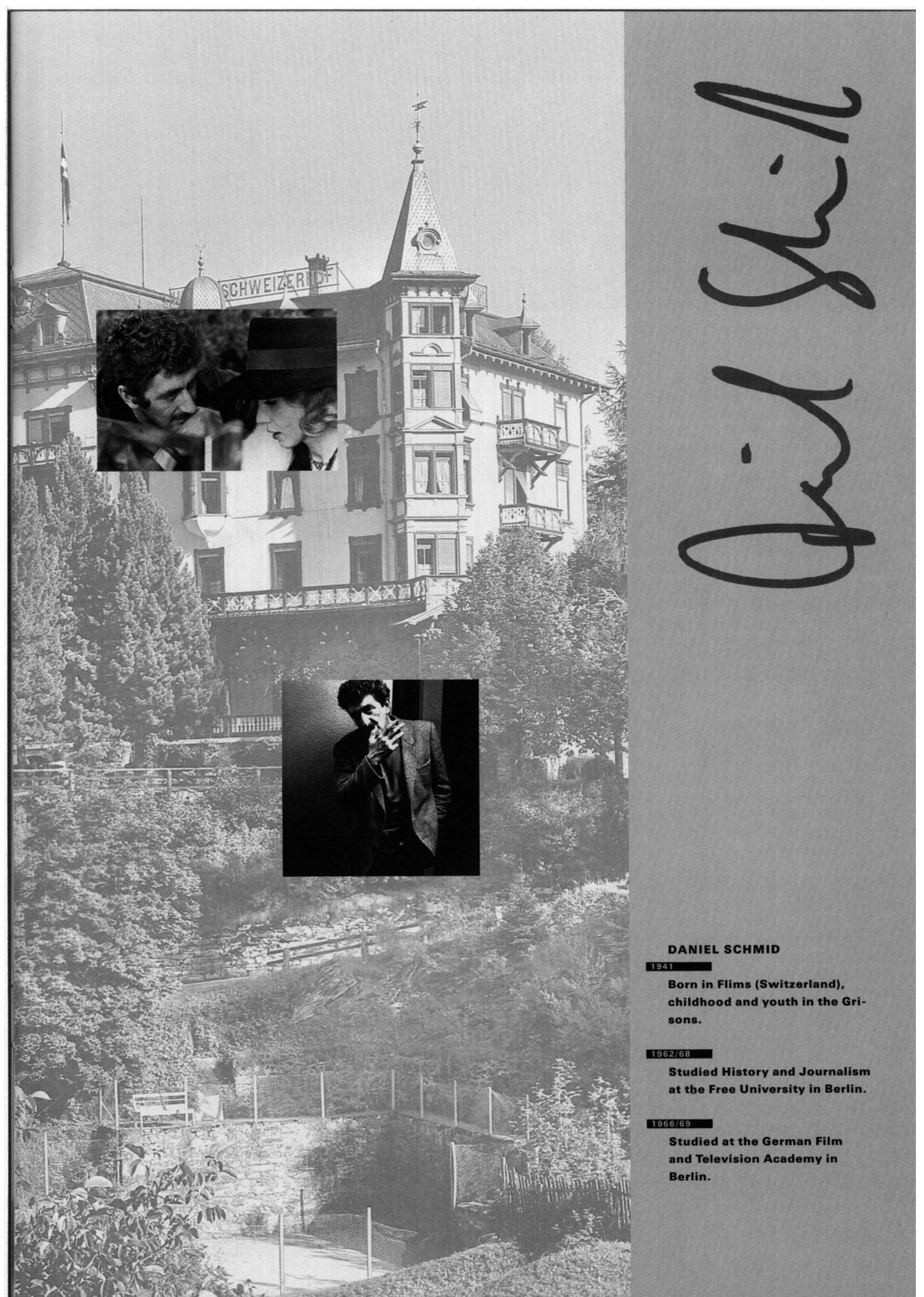
them a brilliance equal to opera. All kitsch harbours some paradise lost. Here the music, as invisible as a Proustian fragrance, is a way back. The moment the wintery hotel lobby is entered and imaginative potential imposes itself, a conjuring act begins. It is as dark as at a séance, the curtains are drawn and all traces of the outside world blotted out. Memory becomes a conduit, oblivion, awakening in a world where beauty is absolute, the smallest human fate is great and tragic, anecdotes take on the aura of legends, and Shanghai and Nice are magic words; where songs are no more than nameless sounds and the clock is merely two hands turning meaninglessly in a circle. Only a feeling of longing survives as a reminder that laws cannot be abandoned without the help of conjuring and concentration, that the imaginary sublime must be wrested from the actual and ordinary - that not everything is a gift, as it once was. Thus the continually metamorphosing figures who walk through this darkened, silent hotel lobby, this timeless, eternally interior space, are driven by rituals of desire. They perform them unwittingly, implacably, slowly, sometimes almost somnambulistically. A sleeping Eros, whom they find without looking for him, or search for without finding, is concealed in the darkness. The figures say, or appear to say, little, for their words are always circles around the incomprehensible something that fills them. Endlessly the mysterious is revealed as unmysterious, the unmysterious as mysterious. "As soon as we express something we strangely devalue it. We believe we have dived into the depths of the abyss, and when we return to the surface, the drop of water on our pale fingertips no longer resembles the sea from which it comes. We fancy we have discovered a treasure trove filled with wonderful treasure, and when we return to the daylight, we have brought back only fake stones and splinters of glass; and yet in the distance the treasure glitters unchanged."4

ickground: Hotel (Schweizerhof) in Flims ft: Schmid, 1971. Schmid and Fellini, 1986. ght: Schmid and Bulle Ogier, 1974.





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Tonight or Never is a kind of parable. It goes back to the tradition of an aristocratic Austrian family who ruled parts of Czechoslovakia and Bohemia for several centuries. On one night of the year, the night of St. Nepomuk (16 May), they would exchange roles with their servants. Tonight or Never takes up this tradition and introduces a third group, the comedians. Paid by the masters playing servant, they come to perform a kind of potpourri of bourgeois entertainment. They put on assorted bits from the "cultural scrap heap": a section of Gone with the Wind, a scene from Tennessee Williams, the death of Madame Bovary by Flaubert and the end of Tschaikowsky's Swan Lake. In the course of the evening one of the players proclaims the revolution. As incendiary as his speech is, it turns into a comedy routine and receives hearty applause from the masters cum servants. This speech concludes the performance. Afterwards everyone joins in the dancing. And when the party is over, everyone returns to his original place: the servants are servants again and the masters masters. The rich are rich, the poor are poor, and the comedians get paid and depart.

of the "grand hotel" is an upper middle-class idea. Were you trying to resurrect the metaphor of bourgeois art in a highly politicized world?

It was a world I knew, and I think you can only really say anything about worlds you know. With all the rules of their specific games, all their strengths and weaknesses. At the time many of my colleagues – writers, film-makers – were identifying themselves with a working-class environment

You made <u>Tonight or Never</u> in 1972, in the cultural context of the revolutionary 1968 period. Conceptually you exposed revolution as a comedy routine. Stylistically you opted for extreme artifice instead of the realism they'd never lived or functioned in. Some of them, by the way, were the same people that supported the "holy" war against Saddam Hussein twenty years later, a war everyone helped make possible. But I'm no politician.

Have you been reproached with being a bourgeois artist?

Yes, to the point of being accused of celebrating bourgeois cultural fascism. That was a term being hurled at everyone at the time. Everyone was a fascist, apart from oneself of course. But all these words have lost their meaning today, like Communism. The more often you repeat a word, says someone in *Shadow of Angels*, the more it loses the meaning it never had anyway.

popular at the time.

The film was severely attacked by the prevailing leftist "Zeitgeist". It's very strange. I recently talked to an American critic who's now 25. For him the sixties have only survived as a theatrical act – and that's exactly how the comedian in the movie is treated.

Setting the whole film in a hotel also made it into a very personal part of your life. The idea Would you still refuse to call your art "bourgeois art", to say it derives from an aesthetic strongly reminiscent of the 19th century, the century of the bourgeoisie?

It definitely has links to the bourgeois tradition, even if the relationship is not totally intact. After all, my up-bringing comes straight out of the 19th century. My father died when I was very young, and my grandmother was firmly rooted in the 19th century – her whole generation rang down the

TONIGHTOR NEVER

curtain in 1914. From then on nothing would be the same again. And it never has been. The sixties, in particular, considered the Congress of Vienna a conservative restoration, but at least it brought Europe a century of peace with little unrest. Nothing compared with our terrible century, which didn't have a congress like that and has turned out to be a disaster.

In 1860 Princess Mathilde, a cousin of Napoleon III, had a "salon" in Paris where she received everybody: Hugo, Flaubert and all the future revolutionaries. Revolutions generally come out of salons – or cafés: the French Revolution of 1789 originated against the backdrop of bored aristocrats in their castles and the Russian one in the cafés patronized by exiles, like the Odeon in Zurich.

The shooting of Tonight or Never

We spent two weeks shooting at my grandparents' hotel. I'd told five people that I wanted to do it. They came, bringing friends along, mostly people they were involved with. Years later certain people told me: you know, I only came because I was in love with this guy. We had nothing but the material for the film and some borrowed money. I asked a friend of mine in Zurich, This Brunner, about a cameraman and he gave me Renato Berta's phone number. I called him. When he answered and I heard Maria Callas in the background at the other end, I knew: that's my man. You don't have to go to school to learn things like that. We've been working together ever since. It was off-season for the hotel. We lived there and worked mostly at night because I'm a night person. We had a late breakfast, then started in the afternoon and worked until the next morning. It's strange to look back at those things. Usually I only remember the last five minutes of my films because in recent years they've been putting on retrospectives - which give you a nice opportunity to travel the world. After checking the quality of the sound for the first five minutes, I go for a stroll and make sure I'm back an hour and a half later. It's odd to see my films again because I don't have any distance to them. I remember that Fassbinder tremendously enjoyed watching his movies. When one of them was being shown in New York once, he took me to the movie theatre and cried at his own

Is <u>Tonight or Never</u> a nostalgic vision of the 19th-century bourgeois ritual?

I don't think so, because it's never completely intact for me. I mystify only to demystify. It can't be pure nostalgia if it's not intact. I don't invoke a Gattopardo world, I disavow it, treat it ironically. I like to play with forms in a world where there are hardly any structures and forms left. Think of Griffiths' first close-up of Lilian Gish. It was a sensation, it was meant to be something specific. Today the whole world of television is one close-up concerto. That means the

degeneration of structures, the degeneration of forms.

performance.

So the formal ritual is no more than a spectre today. The people in the film even have a phantasmagoric way of moving around - as if they were only a kind of memory.

Yes, but memory should be conceptualizable. How can the future be practicable if the past can't be conceptualized.



La Paloma is the story of a man who gets involved with beauty, love, madness and death. The movie is about projecting into a person's face. It's set in the world of cabaret. One of the numbers is an unsuccessful chanteuse with tuberculosis. The man falls in love with her and follows her, but she treats him like shit because she's stopped believing in love. Then she recovers and he marries her. She goes to live with him without being in love, but she loves the strange, strong feeling towards her, the incredible passion the man projects into her. It's a brand-new feeling, like a warm fireplace. She doesn't understand it, but it's the only good thing that's ever happened to her and she starts to believe in it. And then she wants to know how far she can go. When she finds out that this incredible love doesn't always work, she embarks on her strange revenge - and at the end it's all a dream.



One of the high points of <u>La Paloma</u> is a scene where Ingrid Caven and Peter Kern sing a duet from an operetta. There's an alpine landscape projected behind them, with a hermaphroditic Eros hovering in the background. You seem to have no inhibitions when it comes to making use of kitsch.

I don't know what "kitsch" is. Everybody has his "kitsch" side. The line between the sublime and the ridiculous is very,

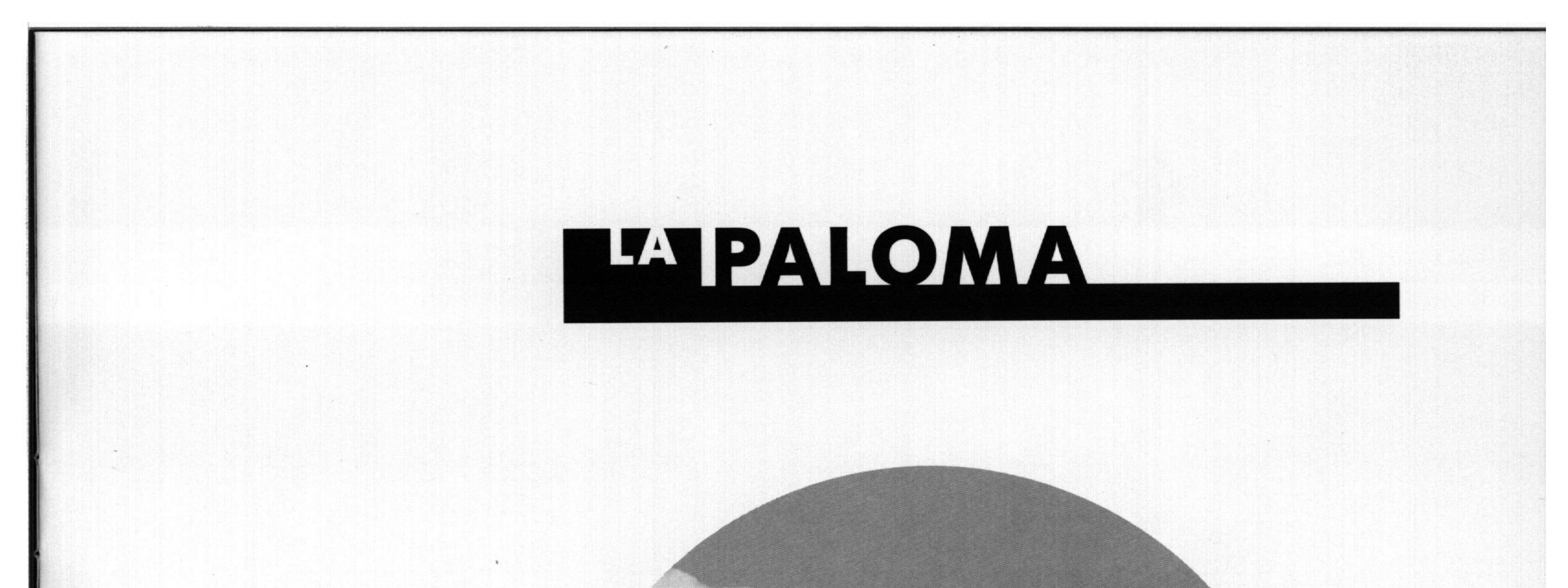
very thin. When *La Paloma* was shown at the New York Film Festival, it was considered very camp. Susan Sontag liked it a lot. If *Tonight or Never* can be seen as a parable of our society, *La Paloma* is something similar for an extreme relationship between two people. Actually these two movies might be considered a kind of outer framework that all my other movies fit into.

Do you believe in "the love of one's life" the way you depict it in La Paloma?

Are we talking about Gone with the Wind?

That's what I'm asking you.

I believe in projection. I think love is ultimately projection. People project into you, people do incredible things because of this force of projection. Some call it love. Oscar Wilde said "Each man kills the thing he loves." A passage in Goethe's West-Eastern Divan reads something like this: No distance makes you inaccessible/you come flying and enraptured/and finally desirous of the light/you are a butterfly burnt/and as long as you do not have this/this die and become/you are only a dull guest on the beautiful earth. The two possibilities might be to burn or rot, to use a radical formulation. *La Paloma* starts with a croupier in a casino



saying "Les jeux sont faits, rien ne va plus." The game is over. It's all very "fin de siècle", even fin de millennium. That's why so much has suddenly happened in the last two or three years. Nobody knows where things are going. With the great crisis in the arts and philosophy, politics, morals, structures, religion, values. Buñuel said he would only regret dying because he wouldn't know how the soap opera was going to go on. He always wished that once a day he'd be able to climb out of his grave and go to the nearest what they'd been used to for forty years. They were a horrible old petit-bourgeois couple, grotesque. She in her coat, the clothes of the escape, holding his hand, insulting everybody for insulting him. It was total politkitsch. If you live in the kind of reality they, or Hitler, did, your reality is totally different from the reality of the people who suffer under the system. If you're so powerful and if you're used to stepping on everybody, you start living in a very special world that doesn't have much to do with the world other people live in. It's very common among dictators, they have no friends, they're only obsessed with each other from far away, like Stalin and Hitler. Coming back to the image of the Ceaucescu trial: perceptions of reality become very strange at such a moment. People have so many possibilities of "pseudo-identification" in this constant stream of information that most of them can't make choices according to their own identity anymore. They just float along as if they were floating through the supermarket in the morning: staggering women with shopping baskets, some of them with babies, friends, their mother-in-law, unable to choose according to their own real needs anymore.

newsstand, get a paper and return to the grave – just to know what had happened in the next episode. It all became a soap opera.

There are two images I'll always remember from the last few years. One is connected with the Gulf War: the first night, the night the war started, we all watched this reporter standing in a hotel room, holding his microphone out the window to catch the sound of the bombs falling outside. And they looked like fireworks at some strange Disneyland. It was the war of "surgical strikes" with precision weapons. Nobody seemed to be getting killed. In today's world we always say that everything's so transparent and everybody's wellinformed - I didn't feel well-informed, I didn't know what was going on, nobody knew. That bizarre image of a man in a hotel room, that was the war, and it was one night or two and then people would change channels - but the television stations had already switched back to the usual programming before they could. People were dying and nobody talked about it or about how many more would be killed. And

You went from La Paloma to Ceaucescu.

Because the reality we saw was so surreal. I've always wondered why people talk about the artificiality in my movies when reality is sometimes so unbelievably artificial and surreal, but it's the real thing.

we still don't know.

Another similar thing, the same kind of real pictures that are somehow totally surreal, came about when the Romanian dictator Ceaucescu and his wife were arrested. There they were, on trial in some provincial school room. It was incredible because it was so simple and yet like a big, cheap soap. The amateurish camera, the questions from the off and this miserable old couple who probably didn't even realize what was going on. He kept on looking at his watch, he must have thought it was all a dream and in five minutes the security guards would come and kill all the others. That's

The surreal reality of <u>La Paloma</u> comes to a bitter end: Lily is dismembered.

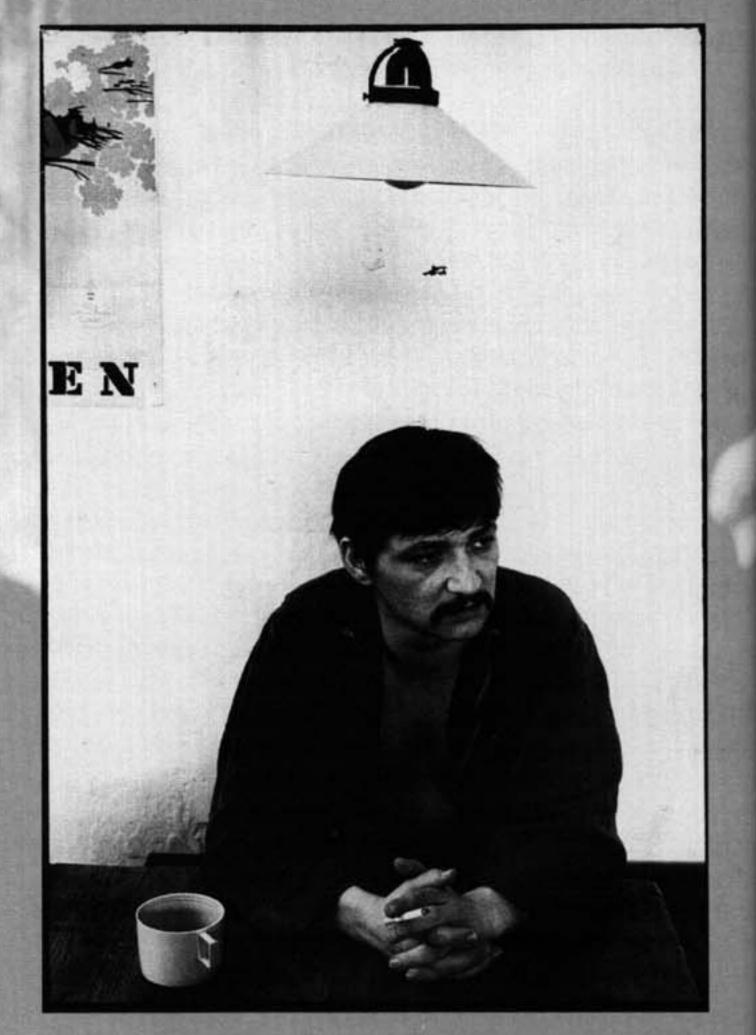
Everything ends bitterly. Genuine happy endings are very, very rare.



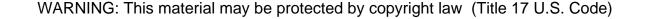
Shadow of Angels is the story of a prostitute too beautiful to have clients, and of an act of revenge she becomes the

moment Lily decides to die because she can't go on taking the shit people have hidden in their minds anymore. She

eft: Ingrid Caven (Lily Brest, the prostitute) Iiddle: Jean-Claude Dreyfus (the dwarf) ight: Klaus Löwitsch (the estate agent) ottom: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1975 object of. She meets a man, referred to as "the rich Jew", who advises her to stop going to bed with men, but just to listen to them and still charge for it. On that basis Lily makes a career as the most successful whore in town. She becomes the emotional garbage can of the city - it was supposed to be Frankfurt, but it could be any town, real or imaginary. It's a society where people don't talk to each other anymore, most of them hold monologues - if you want someone to listen to you, you have to pay for it. Lily meets numerous men who tell her things people never tell anyone. Lily's German parents, Herr and Frau Müller, also appear in the movie. Herr Müller is a fascist, a war criminal who hadn't been able to shake off his past as so many others had after the war in 1945. He couldn't go back into business because too much was known about him. He didn't get a CIA passport for South America in exchange for a list of Communists like Barbie in France. So now he has to hide, living only at night, as a female impersonator in a strange cabaret. His wife, Frau Müller, is a Marxist who has survived in a wheelchair. "I'm back in business," the rich Jew explains to Lily. "The mayor of the town is my friend, they use me because of their bad conscience. When they have sleazy business to do, they use me as a front and nobody dares to say anything because I'm Jewish." Once Lily has been launched as a high-class prostitute paid only for listening, all the ordinary fascists also go and tell her everything they'd never admit openly. It was the confession one of these men makes while he's with her that sparked the attack on the Fassbinder play the film is based on. The play couldn't be performed in Germany because they took the words of a man clearly characterized as an old Nazi and claimed them to be the author's opinion, which obviously wasn't the case. In the play this is the begins looking for someone to kill her. She has her last





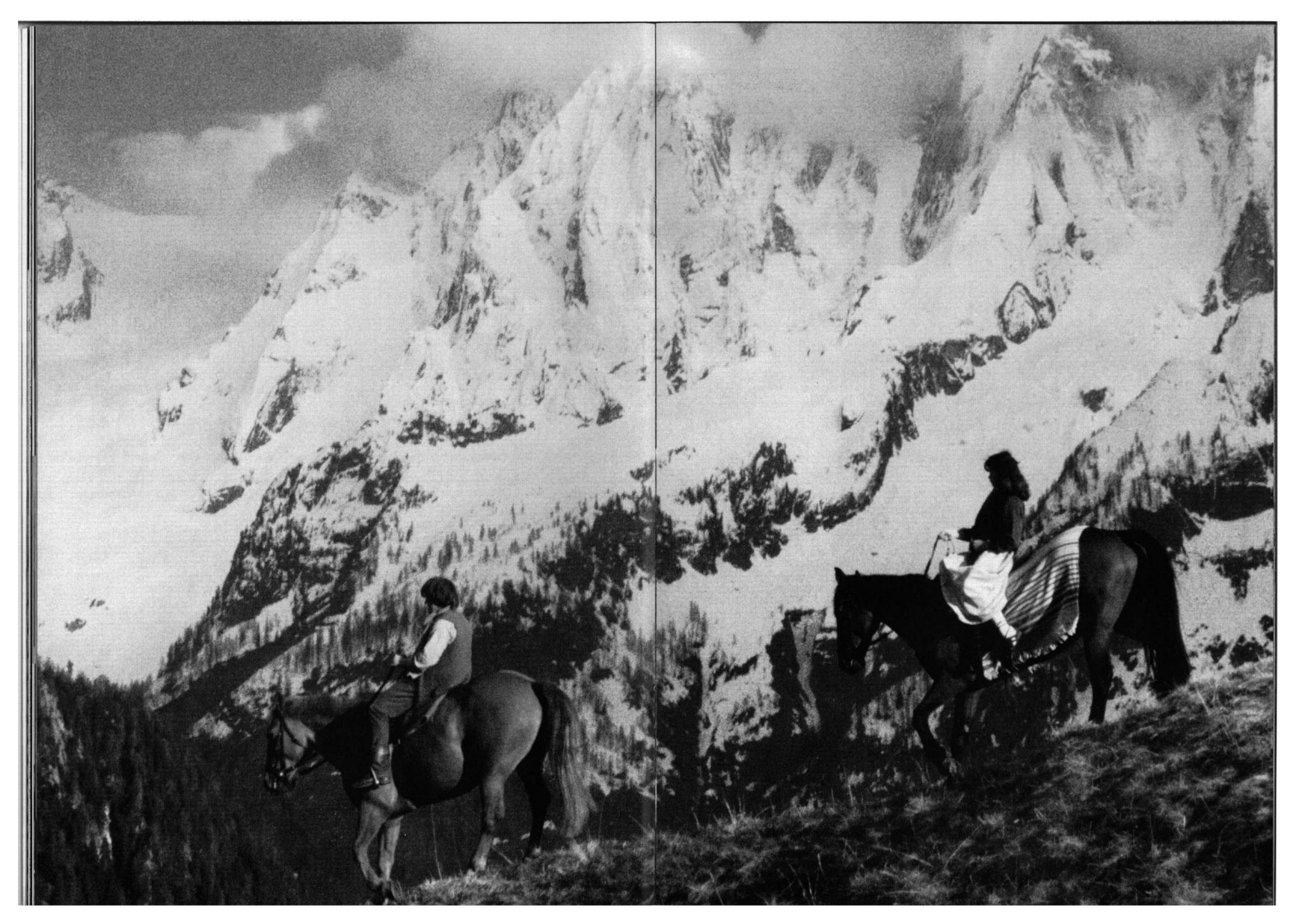


SHADOW OF ANGELS

meeting with the man called "the rich Jew" in a car: "We never listened to music together," he says. "I know," she answers, "music might have deluded us." - "And who wants to be deluded?" he asks. To which she replies, "All of us, we all need songs that sing of love." Fassbinder wrote the play on planes, somewhere between Europe and California, in some gay café in Los Angeles, some hotel room, some airport. When I read it, it stunned me because it was so mysterious, like a sad fairy tale. It was shot in 1975. I remember on the last day of shooting Pasolini was killed. We imagined the story as being set at the end of the eighties, though we'd originally thought it might take place in the time of Belshazzar's Babylon, when the famous writing appeared on the wall: Mene Tekel Upharsin - Thou art weighed and found wanting. The night the King was killed and the town destroyed. Shadow of Angels is based on one of Fassbinder's best, most mysterious plays. And, as I said, I've always understood it as a strange sad fairy tale. It's also a movie about Germany after the Holocaust, and I think the reason Fassbinder wanted me to adapt the play for the screen was that I wasn't German. He said he was too close to the whole thing. Imagine Herr and Frau Müller; he's a fascist, she's a Communist in a wheelchair. The night they escape from the cabaret she says: "Don't worry darling, we won't let outside conditions get us down." I always saw the characters as types: the fascist, the Communist, the Jew, the prostitute, the pimp, the gay, the dwarf, the little prince. They're all like cards in a bizarre game, where the players can trade cards: today I'm the prostitute and you're the pimp, but tomorrow I might be the Jew and you the fascist. Couples function only in their misery, like the Müllers. Of course it was a scandal in Germany that a character should suddenly be called "the rich Jew", that was a taboo. Fassbinder was shocked at being accused of anti-Semitism after the play was published. He was a man totally without prejudice, somehow like a child, and that's very rare. But you can see it in all his films and plays. Belonging to a minority himself, he was always on the side of minorities, sexual, racial or whatever. He was traumatized by the political past of Nazi Germany, and his position on the Holocaust had always been absolutely clear. There's a saying that the Germans will never forgive the Jews for what they, the Germans, did to them ...

You and Fassbinder had very different positions. Was there any serious friction while you were working together?

We had a few clashes, but not during the shooting. He only came for six days, to play the pimp. That was the condition. All I wanted was for him to be beautiful. He lost 18 kilos in one month. People always have this image of a fat ugly man, but he could be very beautiful, seductive and extremely dependent on the dependency of others. When he stepped into a room it was as if the electricity had been switched on. We met in 1966 when we were both taking the test for the film school in Berlin. I came in and there were already 400 people in this big room. I saw him immediately, all the way in the back. There was an empty seat next to him, so I went and sat down there. We remained close from that moment until he died. For Shadow of Angels I always imagined him as Marilyn Monroe, which may have been what he was unconsciously aiming for. "Come on," I said, "you can be as beautiful as Marlon Brando." But I treated him like Marilyn. That was the only direction I gave him as an actor. Two weeks after the shooting ended he was fat again. You don't meet many of his kind. A man with no prejudices and something of the child in him. And he was many people in one.



eft: Maria Schneider (Laura) liddle: Raúl Gimenez (Adrian) and ucia Bosé (Violanta) ight: Daniel Schmid directing François S

Violanta is the story of a man whose past catches up with him when he comes home to the place where he grew up. And, like most of my movies, it's also the story of a strong woman – played by a beautiful woman, because to me cinema has always meant beautiful women too. Ingrid Caven, Carole Bouquet, Lauren Hutton, Lucia Bosé all share a certain quality. I think women are better adapted to conveying emotions via the film medium. "Beauty, mystery and suspense, that's what it's all about," Bette Davies once said. I don't like movies without women.

Violanta is about a woman who rules a mountain valley and refuses to loosen her grip though she's lived a lie all her life. When everything collapses because of an incestuous relationship between two people who don't know they are brother and sister and all her deceptions crumble, she takes the consequences. The film is based on a 19th-century Swiss novella by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. Freud mentions the writer and the novella as examples of his theories on psychopathology. One of the reasons I did the movie was because it meant coming back to the place where I grew up. And it was an opportunity to define some of my so-called cultural identity – which is an in-between position. The place

is in the Alps, at a point where rivers run south and north, and it's on the border between the Latinate and the Germanic world. It's always been well-travelled country: our roads go back to the Romans, the Etruscans. All the traffic between northern and southern Europe used to cross these mountains. There are also three languages spoken within a very small area: Italian, German and Romansh, a language that goes back to the vulgar Latin spoken in the time of the Roman Empire. This intertwining of cultures makes it impossible to identify completely with any of them. It's traditional smugglers' country. You're in between. I've lived in Germany, Italy and France, I always got very close, but I never identified. That's why my movies are in French, Italian and German. Violanta was my first Italian-language movie. The scenery is miraculous. I generally hate exteriors because you can't really control the light, and then there's the wind to dissipate concentration. Like the open "corrida" in Spain, at the bull fights. Interiors, roofed-over spaces, give you some control of the spirits, good ones and bad. In Violanta I tried to include the landscape as well, to integrate - and play with - the landscape I grew up with.

VIOLANTA

But as opposed to Freud, you're not interested in a psychoanalytical study but in the force of destiny.

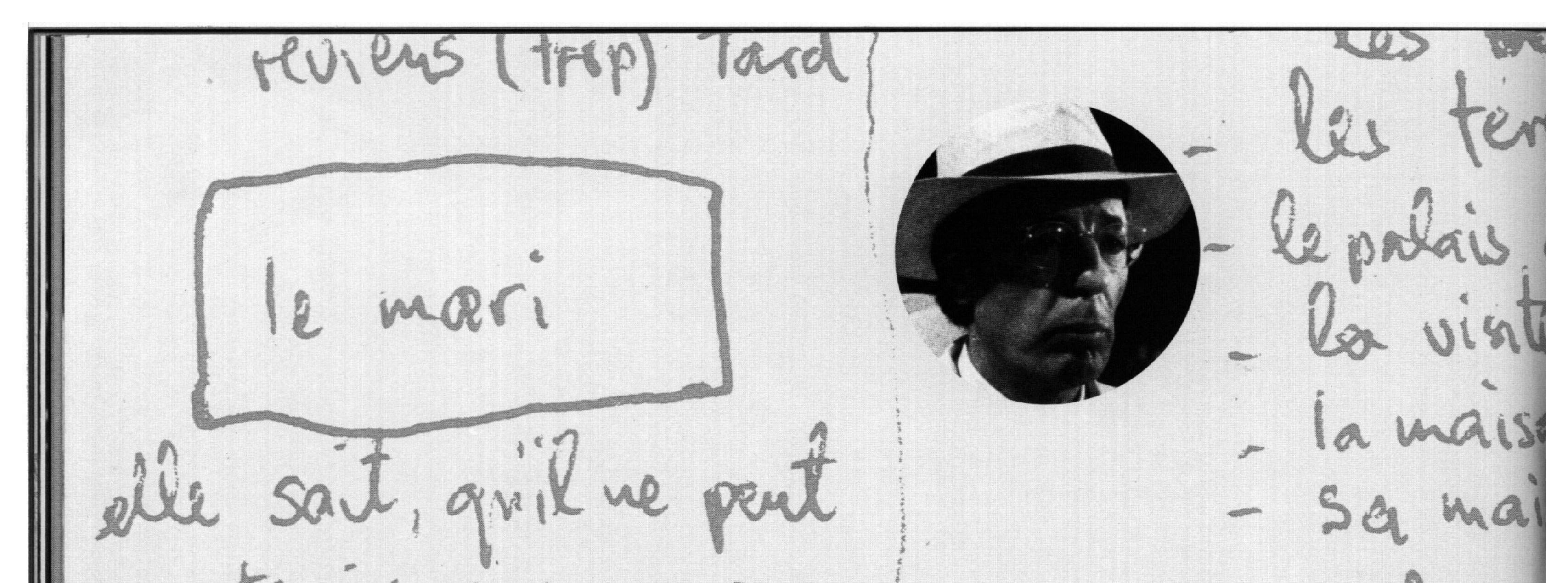
Yes, there's a certain fatalism about the story. And I love legends, they're what remain at the very end, and no one cares about the real truth. Everyone's fate is predetermined from the beginning, as if they were under a spell. There are no genuine couples, only impossible ones. And the main characters live with people from the past, the dead are sometimes more present than the living.

In the film you say, "I morti ritornano. Sono morti quando sono veramente dimenticati."

They live as long as someone continues to think about them. *Violanta* is also about people living with phantoms. There's a letter to Zelda Fitzgerald I sometimes think of. The Fitzgeralds and the Murphys were two glamourous

American couples in Paris in the twenties whose lives ultimately ended in an atmosphere of Greek tragedy, with drugs, alcohol, separation and death. And they'd been such swinging, brilliant people, representing modernism, a new era, everything new. Years later Murphy wrote to Zelda Fitzgerald that she'd been right, referring to something she'd said in the happy years, namely that you find pure beauty only in invented, imaginary life. When real life interferes, it mixes things up and ultimately makes a mess of everything. It's a Chekhov thing, the lie you live when you live your life as an imagined life. When you find satisfaction only by taking off, dreaming away. Because the dreary pettiness of daily life always screws over the pure dream of life and "grand amour." And passion seldom remains pure. There's always a toothbrush round the corner. After Traviata dies, maybe Armand brushes his teeth before going to bed. Violanta could also be seen as a declaration of love to one of the most beautiful women in Italian post-war cinema, Lucia Bosé.





direction avec Ini

"What kind of woman is that?" asks Julien, the movie's main character, at a reception at the French embassy in Morocco in the thirties. "Just a woman looking out into the night," answers the host. And he's right, he's telling the truth. The stranger turns around, smiles, shows how beautiful she is and from that second on dominates the screen. The fact that Julien himself is beautiful doesn't help him much. He's lost, and with him all the men in this world who know about love as an obsession. It's the story of someone in a faraway place in the latter days of a crumbling colonial world dominated for a hundred years by the French and the English, by people who could read a two-month-old Times as if it had come out that very day. The world of Somerset Maugham novels. It's the story of two people who have a perfect love affair at first, with sex and style and money and lots of time, in an exotic setting. She's married, her husband is far away. Julien asks her whether she's still in love with him. She says no. Do you miss him? She says no. She's mysterious. He wants to know more, starts being jealous of her past, jealous of this other man, far away in Siberia, who went crazy. Then she says all right, if you want to play this game, if you want to be jealous, I'll make you jealous because you want me to, because you're projecting into me. At which point he starts getting jealous of everything. He suspects her of making love to everybody, even children. He goes berserk, provokes a scandal and has to give up his post, which had been the first step in a diplo-

lives. Hécate, by the way, is the name of the Greek goddess of magic, in ancient mythology the goddess of protection. In the decadence that came when this mythology was absorbed into the world of the Roman gods, she became the



matic career. He leaves, succeeds in his career anyway and becomes an ambassador.

Many years later, during the war, they meet again at a party in Switzerland. That's how the movie starts, that's how it ends. He tells her he's never stopped loving her. She says words always come too soon or too late. *Hécate* is the story of a man who's intelligent, good-looking and successful, but mediocre. He's not very interesting but becomes interesting when he steps out of his mediocrity. He experiences one crazy episode in his life and becomes interesting because of the woman he falls in love with. For a few months he really

goddess of darkness, of night and the Underworld. She is sometimes represented with two or three heads. She belongs to the family of Lulu and Lilith, Adam's first wife. She's not a mother, she's the mysterious pursued one, the femme fatale. But the really fatal element is the men she



encounters – and their projections. She's neither bad nor good, she's just there, like an open space for projection. It may be a cottage or a palace, a church or a brothel. That depends on the eye of the beholder.

And it's the only film you've ever made with explicit sex scenes in it. Otherwise your films are very chaste.

Maybe because I'm puritanical. You get so-called intercourse scenes in this movie, but you never see anything. Not in any

That's also a definition of the traditional movie star. You didn't cast a star from your personal circle of friends as <u>Hécate</u>, someone like Ingrid Caven. You used Lauren Hutton, who comes from further afield.

Yes, and Lauren Hutton did a wonderful job. It's a pity the movie isn't known in America. She considers it one of her best. I have very pleasant memories of the movie because we shot it in Morocco, a place that in our eyes seems totally disorganized, but if you get up close it's just organized in a different way. The embassy scenes at the beginning and the end, which look as if they were in Switzerland, were actually shot at the American Consulate in the middle of Tangier. All the people in the reception area are from the British colony in Tangier, the last microcosm. Right next door to Paul Bowles, David Herbert, Patrick Thursfield and Lady Diana Cooper, the most beautiful woman in the world in the twenties. A fading world. We also shot in Fez, at the palace of the El Mokri family. The young prince is writing a thesis on the ball scene of Visconti's II Gattopardo, and he let us use his palace as Clothilde's (Lauren Hutton's) place. A lot of things come together at the end of the world. The novel Hécate was written by Paul Morand, the character was based on his wife Helene, whom I met when she was a very old woman. She was supposed to be eighty-five when she died, and then they found out she was ninety-seven. She'd altered her passport so often that even her husband didn't know. Hécate is a film about projection, possession, jealousy and logical destruction.

of my movies. I'm so bored with sex scenes in general. I don't mean erotic scenes, but you don't have to make love to be erotic. A fight scene, a death scene can be erotic. Desire doesn't mean pretending to put on the bedroom Olympics. It doesn't mean physical exercise.

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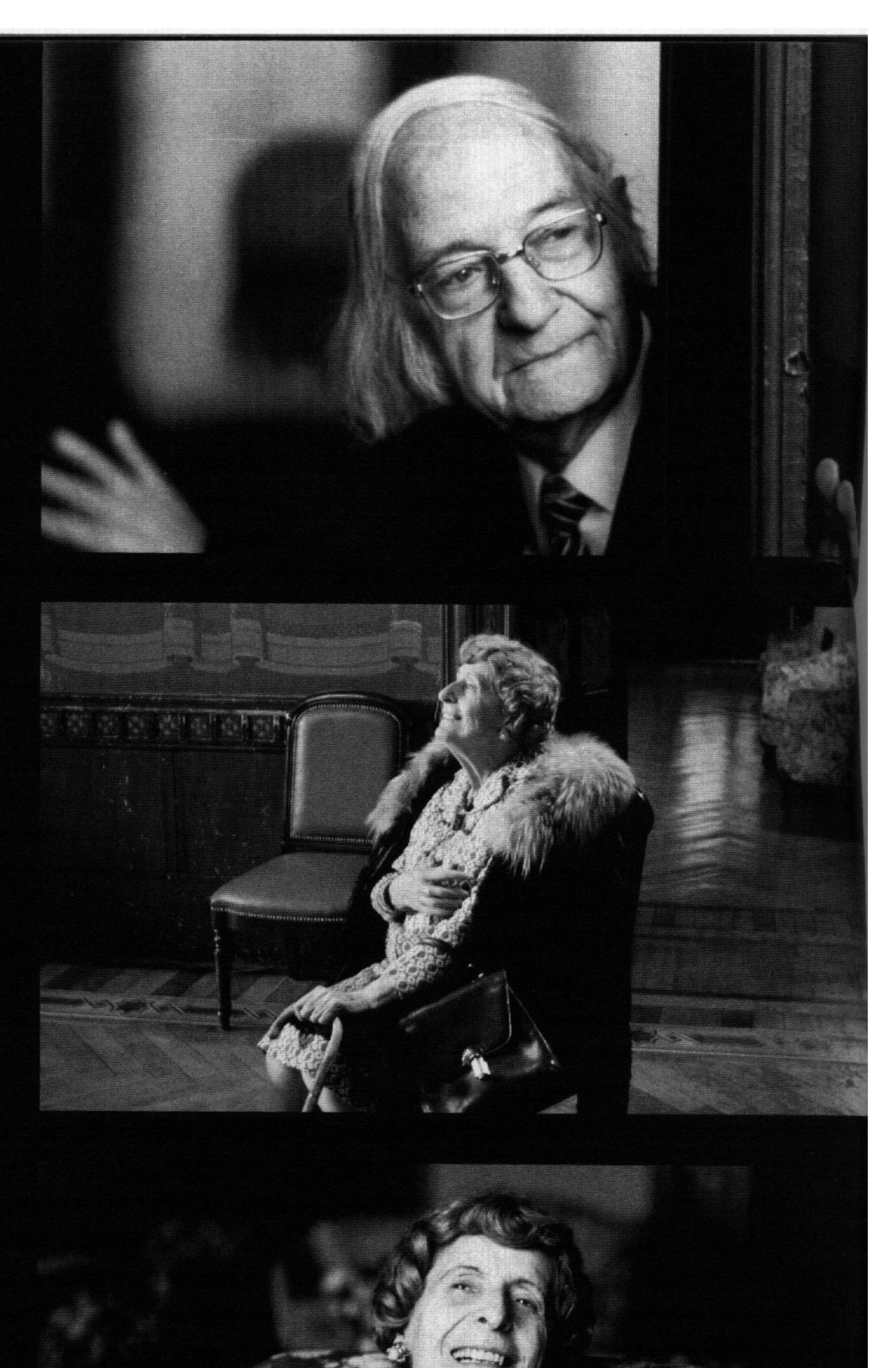
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It seems to me that you refuse to provide your characters with sexuality. They tend to move around in a far more unphysical realm, their longings.

That's the way I grew up. I grew up among women who weren't having sex anymore because their husbands had died. Or who were only really interested in the sex-lives of other people, like my mother. (...) In *Hécate* there's a monologue I like a lot. It's spoken by the consul (played by Jean Bouise), who lives like an exile in this lost place. He and Julien

are in a car returning from a visit to a foreign legion camp. The car stops near the embassy. The consul tells Julien that the only thing that interests him in life is the walk from the embassy to the café and back four times a day: the reflection of the sun in puddles of water, the old prostitute who's stood at the corner for many years and always says that the best are already dead. For the rest, he says, the political ideals, social ideas, intellectual fads – all of them are so far away and absurd. The only thing that really interests him is the walk from the office to the café and back. Four times a day. For the last thirty years.

Il Bacio di Tosca is the result of a lucky moment, when you're at the right place at the right time. A friend of mine wrote me a postcard from Milan. He'd visited a retirement home for old singers and musicians that had been founded by Verdi, who'd had no children, and financed out of the royalties from his works. It used to be on the outskirts of Milan, but it's in the centre now, the Piazza Buonarotti. This friend of mine, a well-known film critic in Germany, wrote that I should visit this place. I went there with my cameraman, Renato Berta, and we immediately fell in love with it. We did the film with a very small crew since there was only one place to shoot, all interiors, and the actors - you have to call them actors because if they're not, who is - were there all the time, ready to shoot. We didn't know what movie we wanted to do, we only knew what we didn't want to do: we didn't want to make a film about the world we found there but together with it. I guess you have to be in love with people while you work with them. In // Bacio di Tosca we fell incredibly in love with all of them, and those emotions were somehow communicated in the movie, I think. On the last day, when we were leaving, Sara Scuderi, the big star, waved to us in the corridor and said "Don't turn round! Don't turn round!" We were crying as we left. We didn't start shooting as soon as we got there. We stayed there for a while first to get accustomed to the atmosphere. Most of these people are between the ages of eighty and ninety. Of course, the presence of the camera and the lights transported them back to the time when they were in the limelight. The terrifying thing about singing is that your time is limited. One day the voice will fade, one day the last curtain call will come. Giulietta Simionato, the great mezzo-soprano who often partnered Callas, says: "You have to leave when the voice is still in 'belezza'. So the public remembers you at your best. And anyhow it's better for the artist to leave the public than for the public to leave the artist." That's the stuff legends are made of, like Garbo, James Dean and Marilyn. Most of these people appeared on stages all over the world forty, maybe fifty years ago. But the fact that we were there with a camera made it all seem like yesterday. When we asked Sara Scuderi - she was eighty-five at the time - when she'd made her last record, she answered: "Oh, at least two or three years ago." They all had their suitcases ready in their rooms, prepared to leave tomorrow if the Met called. And there was competition among them: "I'm not going to be in the movie if she's in it" - in the end they were all in it. We had to use some tricks though. We had these two prima donnas who'd lived next-door to each other for twenty-five years but ignored each other in front of the camera. They'd had a big fight probably forty-five years ago about a Tosca in Buenos Aires, which the entire world had forgotten but not the two of them. But I wanted to film those two ladies in their rooms, all of which are the same size, by the way. Never in their lives would they have spoken to each other again. Now, movie-making is also about manipulating, it has to do with vampirism. So I went to one of them and said that the other one had just told me secretly that her rival was actually the greatest. And I did the same with the other one. Then the second one went to visit the first one, to thank her. She comes in, says hello, how nice and so on, sits down and the first







HEAD DITOSCA



things she says is, "Your room is very nice, I like your room but mine is a bit bigger." – "Your room is bigger?" wonders the other one. "But you know this wardrobe takes up a lot of space." – "I know," answers the first one, "I have one just like it." How can you invent a dialogue like that?

And they pretended the camera wasn't there. One day we thought we'd hide and went to the third floor, where the telephone booth was. Two minutes later someone came up to make an imaginary phone-call to his daughter in Sicily, wishing her a Merry Christmas. It wasn't anywhere near Christmas. He didn't even have money to throw in. By then Sara Scuderi, who could hardly walk, had come up all the stairs looking for the camera and the lights. She saw us filming in front of the telephone booth and switched into Tosca, an opera she'd sung with this guy in the phone booth forty-five years ago. "I killed him many times all over the world," she used to say. He comes out of the booth singing "Tosca finalmente mia", she stabs him and he falls back into the booth, he really does. It's very uncomfortable and he wants to get up, but she says, "Not yet," and finishes the scene. Then he starts singing about his daughter in Sicily and she says, "I don't know this opera," and leaves. In the meantime one of the maids has passed in front of the camera because someone has died and she has to see to the body. Nobody wanted to finance the movie because it's about opera. They said: who cares about opera. And it's about old people. Who cares about old people. Some time ago a friend of mine disguised herself as an old lady to do a report on old people. She said it was terrible. The worst thing

wasn't the danger of being more vulnerable to attack but that people looked right through you. You don't exist when you're old. She was a good-looking woman of thirty-five, she saw it in black and white, you might say. (...) Sara Scuderi died a month after the movie came out in Japan. I remember when I last talked to her on the phone she said, "You know, it's strange, I get all these letters and flowers, and they're all from Japan - and I never sang in Japan." The explanation was simple, the film had been shown by a major TV station there. She's the star of the film, she has this "prima donna quality", and she's on screen most of the time. After she'd seen the movie she said she'd kind of liked it, but there were some scenes where she thought she looked too old. The average age at the Casa Verdi is very high, I don't know whether it's the competition that keeps them young.

Of course they can be very nasty. Sara Scuderi told us that one night someone scratched the autograph she got from

Puccini with their fingernails. There were people who thought she was too important in the movie. For the last scene we went to La Scala to record the applause that was later played in the empty dining room. All the main characters were behind the curtain, and I wanted to get them out one after the other to take the applause. The situation was totally artificial and they knew it. But it never worked, and my assistant said, "Well, come and see why for yourself." Because "star wars" had broken out behind the curtain. People were throwing aside their canes just to be able to run out to take their curtain calls.



Jenatsch is about a so-called political "hero" in the Swiss mountains, where I come from, who was murdered at a masked ball in 1639. If I made it now, maybe I'd call it "Time-Walker". It's the story of a journalist who, like Julien in Hécate, is not very interesting as such but becomes interesting because of what happens to him. While on assignment in the mountains he misses a train and suddenly gets involved with somebody who died 300 years ago. He starts falling back into the 17th century and doesn't know why. He has problems with his girlfriend, who thinks he's working or drinking too much. He can't explain it. He's drawn into the whole thing through an anthropologist, an old professor who's opened Jenatsch's grave and stolen his skull. Suddenly the journalist starts switching into a time he doesn't know, at first in connection with little items like the bell from the graveyard. The movie starts taking place on three levels: today's world, the past and a level between the two. The journalist begins investigating the murder of this local politician in 1639. The more involved he gets, the more he falls back into that time, and at the very end he even becomes, or might become, the murderer himself.

In <u>Jenatsch</u> you gave relatively unknown actors the leading roles with all the dialogue, and you have the two stars, Carole Bouquet and Vittorio Mezzogiorno, who never say a word.

That's true. I've never even realized it. They don't talk – but everybody talks about them. Actually I like films where people don't talk so much. Everything should be visual. I very rarely remember dialogues of movies. I like things to be reduced to their essentials. It's like really great acting, which is doing nothing. Which is the most difficult thing. Because then the personality, the existential essential, appears and at the same time you have to control it.

There are costume scenes in the film. Were you never tempted to make the whole thing into a costume piece?

A period movie? No, no. Doing period movies today is very delicate, especially in the tradition of the Visconti movies, Senso, II Gattopardo. You can't do any better than that. I thought it needed to be alienated, you have to play with it. I liked the idea of somebody who encounters another time and people from another time.

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Oddly enough, it's your most realistic movie. One sees Zurich, Chur...

It takes place in a kind of present-day world. My other movies are more out of time, never in a precise epoch. Though they're 20th century, they actually cover it from the thirties to the nineties. They're never set in a specific fashion period. La Paloma seems to be in the thirties or forties, but at one point they're on the train and she says, "Have you read the newspaper? Eva Peron is dead." Which would make it 1951. It could also be '49 or '59. But I'm not obsessed with the idea of doing timeless movies. They just happen. Anyhow, if you start a movie, you have to forget everything. You have to try to become like a child again. And you should do movies about things you know. And things you know mostly go back to your childhood. Everything comes from there. And if it's not your own story you want to tell, you have to make it yours, it has to belong to you. You have to know what you're talking about. To make sure that what you want to say is important to you. I never think of making timeless movies. It's nice if they age well, if you can still watch them ten or fifteen years later, which is the dangerous age for movies. Thirty- or forty-year-old movies pass more easily again. (...) I love movies, I always have. Even if cinema may by now be

the still living, dead art of the 20th century, the way opera is the still living, dead art of the 19th century. And then there's the movie house as a social event: maybe you'll meet somebody. The ice-cream, the lights. You sit next to somebody you don't know. The lights go down, and you share the same expectations as this stranger next to you, the expectation that now it's going to get dark and something hopefully wonderful is going to come on screen. Dreaming together with the others. I think as long as people have this desire, cinema will continue to exist. As long as people have this desire to dream together in a darkened room, in a cinema, there will be movies, like chamber music concerts, in a corner maybe. Especially the kind of movies I'm interested in, which are personal movies, not big ones. I believe that people have a need for mythical forms, mysterious images, atavistic fairy tales, and magical symbols that take them back to the hidden memories of their childhood and their culture. I therefore believe that cinema is also a means of escaping the dreary uniformity of life and the loss of one's identity. Unfortunately, I'm still interested in myself.

Interview with Daniel Schmid by Rudolph Jula (August 1991)

JENATSCH

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A hotel film by Daniel Schmid

One of the most wonderful scenes in film history occurs in Nicholas Ray's The Lusty Men, when Robert Mitchum returns to his parents' dilapidated house and retrieves a box containing comic books and a few other souvenirs of childhood from an old hiding-place in the floor. In Daniel Schmid's beautiful, melancholy film Zwischensaison (Off Season), Valentin (Sami Frey) returns to his grandparents' now derelict hotel, where he grew up, to retrieve 350 Mickey Mouse comic books, a complete collection including special editions.

Alpine Palace, that is the name of the hotel waiting to be pulled down. Valentin wanders through the public rooms, where the furniture is shrouded in dust covers, to the broad staircase with its elaborate, old wrought-iron lift. He meanders once more through the long halls, which ultimately turn into corridors of memory. The empty rooms begin to fill with life again, the days of childhood re-emerge. As if there were magic powers in Valentin's bittersweet reminiscences. Hotels in films, from Murnau's Der letzte Mann (The Last Man) to Vicki Baum's Grand Hotel to Kubrick's Shining, are

places of desperation and longing, of tempestuous life and sad emptiness. In these neo-romantic transit areas, presence and absence alternate. As if the various types of hotel season (high season, pre-season, etc.) were trying to simulate the seasons of the year and the course of life itself. The hotel in Schmid's film is a mirror of life, of dreams, expectations, disappointments and death. And it has a kinship with another modern palace of dreams, one that seems almost superfluous today - the cinema. Figures of memory appear: Miss Gabriel (Andrea Ferreol), who ran the magazine stand in the hotel and always got the latest comic books for Valentin. She was always surrounded by pictures of American screen stars and European aristocrats. And she lived some of those dreams too. Then there is the magician, Professor Malini (Ulli Lommel), who once put the guests into a "Sahara" trance and made them all get undressed. And then there are Lilo and Max, the hotel musicians, portrayed by Ingrid Caven and Dieter Meier (of Yello), who dream of playing on the Queen Mary. "Tipitipitipso" and especially the "Capri Fishers", sung by Ingrid Caven, are

simply beguiling. Schmid the melodramatist has always known how to appreciate the truth of the old, sentimental songs.

The mound of Venus and the big, wide world

One of the hotel guests makes a particularly strong impression on little Valentin: the beautiful Anita Studer (Arielle Dombasle), a woman involved in all sorts of torrid love affairs. One night he peeps through the keyhole and watches the wanton Anita dress. Her mound of Venus, her pubic hair, those are impressions that will be with him for a long while. The big, wide world and the promises life holds out are there for the taking in a hotel.

All of the figures are entangled in a maze of stories. Whether true or false makes no difference. One story concerns Valentin's grandfather, who, as a young man, was once kissed awake by no less than Sarah Bernhardt. Then there is the story of a firebrand Russian anarchist, played by Geraldine Chaplin. And a third takes place in a building that is a distorted kind of hotel, namely a mental institution.

The time Valentin remembers, that he conjures up, is the fifties, with a few excursions into the twenties, the nostalgia decade par excellence. But Daniel Schmid also remembers the seventies and the hope-filled French and German films of the time. There is a very personal statement in the reappearance of Andrea Ferreol, Ingrid Caven and Ulli Lommel. At the end of Schmid's film, Sami Frey enters a room that Andrea Ferreol always loved, the room that overlooks the sea. There can be no such room in a hotel in the middle of the Swiss Alps. And yet, the shutters open, there is a rushing sound, a pungent scent... A look outside that is at the same time a look inside. This window was always there, every time Ingrid Caven sang: "When the red sun sinks into the sea in Capri..." Longing seems to be a feeling of open spaces inside oneself, a combination of memory and outlook. Schmid's thoughtful film, a little reflection on life, childhood and the cinema, is a cinematic gem that should not be missed. Go out to the hotel, go out and see the film. © Süddeutsche Zeitung, 17/05/1994, Off Season, **Hans Schifferle**

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CORRIDORS OF MEMORY by Hans Schifferle



The Written Face is a film neither about Japan nor about Kabuki theatre. We realized that is was impossible ever to enter this world entirely, a world innately unfathomable to us, a distorting mirror of the alien. We were always "within, and yet without".

From this position, from this viewpoint, we sought to gain insight into o man who currently works in Kabuki in Japan. In Japanese theatre women's roles are traditionally played by men. The man playing the woman's role, the Onnagata, does not imitate the woman, as he would in the West, but tries to suggest her essence. He does not stick too closely to his



model, drawing instead on his own contrasting identity - values shift but are never transgressed.

Tamasaburo Bando who first appeared on stage at the age of five, is one of the last defenders of this ancient performing tradition.

The same applies to his idols and mentors: the actress Haruko Sugimura, who worked with Ozu and Naruse during the golden age of Japanese cinema, and the Geisha Han Takehara, who for many years has been Japan's greatest dancer. Long known only to a small circle of clients, she did not make her first public appearance until late in her career, when she was already a legend. She is the most important representative of the rapidly declining Geisha tradition of entertaining men through the art of femininity. *The Written Face* reverberates in an echo-chamber of signs, where the transformation of a face also implies a shift in signifiers. We have attempted to show these shifts and the cracks in the mask, in the written face, as a way of suggesting images of an alien world. Within, and yet without. The film was made in autumn 1994 on the islands Kyushu (Yamaga) and Shikoku (Uchiko), in Osaka and in Tokyo harbour. 41

casino in the South of France. A suicide at the blackjack table. A magician fanning a hand of cards. A hermaphrodite in a laurel wreath and toga reclines on a Recamier

couch, with back titles: La Force de l'Imagination. An ancient party, her feathered headdress vibrant against the velvet theater curtains, singing. "You came along, from out of nowhere." Beautiful dreams, beautiful schemes from nowhere... And then Viola appears, the chimerical essence of *fatale*.

An epicene young man, alone at a table with his glass of champagne, falls in love with the mysterious singer. She has tuberculosis. They marry. A honeymoon at various spas, where she is cured. On a train to the races, he looks up from his newspaper and tells her: Eva Perón is dead. Oh yes, she sighs.

At his family château in Switzerland, boredom sets in.

She has an affair with his best friend, who refuses to run away with her. She becomes spectral, withdrawn. A year later she is dead. The two men read her will together. Viola poisoned herself, slowly. She wishes to be exhumed, her remains to be put in an urn in the family crypt. They dig her up. The poison she took preserved her body exactly as it was in life. The widower is forced, then, to slash her corpse into small pieces. We are whisked back to the casino. Where he still sits with his champagne, watching her sing: "Shanghai, Shanghai, longing for you, all the day through..." Gary In the blink of an eye, a magnificent and terrible romance has blossomed and died: what we would call a great love. When you want someone crazily, whether it's based on his looks, the way he behaves, his smell, whatever, and the person is one you cannot, finally, have, even if you come to possess him for a time psychologically or physically (but especially if you don't), you can fill the world with this desire: enough, at least, that when it ends you have a story with a legible arc, one that will feature myriad exalting and pathetic details. La Paloma is a story every human person lives at least once. If I return again and again to this early film of Daniel Schmid, it's because I have lived this story a few times, irrationally, against my better judgement. I recognize the delirium of the process this film describes as identical from person to person. The warp of an obsession, the way it grabs its victims out of the current, so that any conversation becomes a pretext to discuss the Loved One, is boring. Only the details are intriguing: the small scar below his right ear, for example. For the lover it's a question not of interest but of necessity.

La Paloma contains the voluptuous plenum of romantic madness as well as the deflating revelation that losing yourself in another person is always a story that happens in a champagne glass, in the blink of an eye.

FALONA BALONA

It's possible to be a citizen of this age, to approach all human problems in entirely existential terms, and still succumb to the feverish solipsism of desire. As the advice of perfection, one can say that desire is bad, pleasure good. Certainly yearning becomes an unattractive state when it becomes utterly unreasonable; having said this, I must add that the person who has seamlessly rationalized desire into wishing only for what he can definitely have is, in a sense, already dead. La Paloma is essentially the same story as Gus Van Sant's Mala Noche, 1986, or Paul Vecchiali's Drugstore Romance, 1983, or my novel Horse Crazy: a story that mimics conventions of 19th-century opera, in which the heroine is inevitably sacrificed in the fifth act, and the hero is left with a story to tell. These recent works are compromised by modernity, contemporary consciousness: one doesn't die for love anymore, except in fantasy, and soon emotion itself will seem a ridiculous extravagance, a relic like Tosca. Eva Perón is dead. Outside is the bitter truth of events, mortality, duty, wars, our bodies in the world systems that control our choices. Inside are feelings: the craving for maternal warmth, our childhood dreams and wishes that we cling to and fight for at the expense of all else. I like Daniel Schmid's idea that we are all private radio stations transmitting on our own frequencies, sometimes audible to each other, sometimes not. Personally, few blueribbon cultural products occupy my consciousness ldiana with anything like the force of my own imagination or experience, and those that do, like La Paloma, seldom belong to the upper reaches of any established canon. I am indifferent to any argument that a "greater" work should affect me more profoundly, or that there exists a legitimate authority to declare one thing "major" and another "minor". In the end we have only our experiences and we feel them with the particularity of monadic creatures. Why this film and not another? The intense perfection of its metaphor, possibly; something gorgeous in its refusal to coalesce around a conclusion that is less than hallucinatory; the sublimity of Ingrid Caven, whose voice and persona have always evoked for me the most

sardonic and melancholy reflections.

Romance involves us in abjection and absurdity. Beyond a point we have no choice about it. We do violence to ourselves by pursuing it and equal violence by squashing our feelings. It's a souvenir of the last century, and not the worst one. The protagonist of *La Paloma* is a dull man who becomes interesting through his infatuation. For one moment in his life he is truly alive. I can't answer the question of whether his fixation is "worth it", and because I can't answer it, *La Paloma* continues to haunt me as the paradigm of certain disappointments.

© Artforum, September 1993, La Paloma, Gary Indiana



1971

THUT ALLES IM FINSTERN EUREM HERRN DAS LICHT ZU ERSPAREN (DO EVERYTHING IN THE DARK IN ORDER TO SAVE YOUR LORD THE LIGHT)

Production: Bayerisches Fernsehen. Screenplay: Daniel Schmid. Photography: Gérard Vandenberg. Editing: Ila von Hasperg. Sound: Hartmut Kunz. Process: 16 mm, colour. Length: 45 minutes. Original version: German, French, Italian.

1974

LA PALOMA Production: Citel Films Screenplay: Daniel Schmid. Photography: Renato Berta. Editing: Ila von Hasperg. Sound: Luc Yersin. Music: Gottfried Hünsberg. Process: 110 minutes, colour. Original version: German. Cast: Ingrid Caven, Peter Kern, Peter Chatel, Bulle Ogier, Jérôme Olivier Nicolin, Béatrice Stoll. Process: 35 mm, colour.

1977

1981

VIOLANTA Production: Condor Film, Artco Film. Screenplay: Ila von Hasperg. Photography: Renato Berta. Art director: Raúl Gimenez. Editing: Ila von Hasperg. Sound: Florian Eidenbenz. Music: Peer Raben. Process: 35 mm, colour. Length: 95 minutes. Original version: Italian. Cast: Lucia Bosé, Maria Schneider, Lou Castel,

Cast: Igor Joszà, Isabella Morellato, Stella Longo, Jenny Caputer. World rights: Daniel Schmid, c/o Condor Films AG, Restelbergstrasse 107, 8044 Zurich, Switzerland. Tel. +41/1/361 96 12 Fax +41/1/361 95 75

1972

HEUTE NACHT ODER NIE (TONIGHT OR NEVER) Production: Matthias Brunner. Screenplay: Daniel Schmid. Photography: Renato Berta. Editing: Ila von Hasperg. Sound: Jeti Grigioni. Process: 16 mm, colour. Length: 110 minutes. World rights: Eric Franck, Fine Art 7 Victoria Square GB-London, SW1W OQY Tel. +44/171/630 59 72 Fax +44/171/630 68 85

1976

SCHATTEN DER ENGEL
(SHADOW OF ANGELS)
Production: Albatros Film.
Screenplay: Daniel Schmid
and R.W. Fassbinder.
Photography: Renato Berta.
Art director: Raúl Gimenez.
Editing: Ila von Hasperg.
Sound: Günther Korwich.
Process: 35 mm, colour.

Ingrid Caven, Gérard Depardieu, François Simon, Raul Gimenez, Luciano Simioni, Marilu Marini. World rights: Condor Films AG.

NOTRE-DAME DE LA CROISETTE Production: RTSI, SRG, PIC Film. Screenplay: Daniel Schmid. Photography: Renato Berta and B. Nicoulin. Editing: Luc Yersin. Sound: Luc Yersin. Process: 16 mm, colour. Length: 56 minutes. Original version: French. Cast: Bulle Ogier, Kira Nijinski, Bob Rafelson, Jean-Claude Brialy.

Length: 90 minutes. Original version: German. Cast: Ingrid Caven, Voli Geiler, Peter Chatel, Igor Joszà, Peter Kern, Anna Fadda, Harry Bär, Peter-Christian Bener. World rights: Daniel Schmid, c/o Condor Films AG.

Length: 105 minutes.

Cast: Ingrid Caven, R.W. Fassbinder, Klaus Löwitsch, Annemarie Duringer, Jean-Claude Dreyfus, Ulli Lommel, Adrian Hoven. World rights: Eric Franck. World rights: PIC Films, 16, Via Lepori, 6900 Lugano, Switzerland. Tel. +41/91/56 38 71

HIGRAPHY

Full-length feature films

1982

HÉCATE (HECATE) **Production: T + C Film AG.** Screenplay: Pascal Jardin and Daniel Schmid. Photography: Renato Berta. Art director: Raúl Gimenez. Editing: Nicole Lubtchansky. Sound: Luc Yersin and **Bernard Rochut.** Music: Carlos d'Alessio. Process: 35 mm, colour. Length: 105 minutes. **Original version: French. Cast: Laur**en Hutton, Bernard Giraudeau, Jean Bouise, Jean-Pierre Kalfon, Gérard Desarthe, Juliette Brac. World rights: T + C Film AG, Seestrasse 41a, 8002 Zurich, Switzerland. Tel. +41/1/202 36 22 Fax +41/1/202 30 05

1987

JENATSCH

Production: Limbo Film AG. Screenplay: Martin Suter and Daniel Schmid. Photography: Renato Berta. Art director: Raúl Gimenez. Editing: Daniela Roderer. Sound: Luc Yersin. Music: Pino Donaggio. Process: 35 mm, colour. Length: 97 minutes. Original version: French. Cast: Michel Voita, Christine Boisson, Vittorio 1992 **HORS SAISON**/ ZWISCHENSAISON (OFF SEASON) Production: T& C Film AG, Zurich; **Pierre Grise Production, Paris;** Metropolis Film, Berlin. Screenplay: Daniel Schmid and Martin Suter. Photography: Renato Berta. Art director: Raúl Gimenez. Editing: Daniela Roderer. Sound: Barbara Flückiger. Music: Peer Raben. Process: 35 mm, colour. Length: ca. 95 minutes. **Original version: French** and German. Cast: Sami Frey, Maddalena Fellini, Ingrid Caven, Andréa Ferréol, Arielle Dombasle, Marisa Peredes, Maurice Garrel, Dieter Meier, Ulli Lommel, Carlos Devesa, Irene Olgiati, Béatrice Stoll, Luisa Barbosa, **Rosa Castro André, Laura** Soveral, Hilde Ziegler, André Gomes, Susana Borges, **Jacentino Ramos, Rogerio** Samora, Rogerio Claro, Vittorio Mezzogiorno, Géraldine Chaplin. World rights: T + C Film AG.

1984

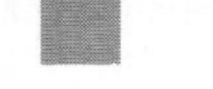
IL BACIO DI TOSCA (TOSCA'S KISS) **Production:** T + C Film AG. Photography: Renato Berta. Art director: Raúl Gimenez. Editing: Daniela Roderer. Sound: Luc Yersin. Music: G. Verdi, G. Puccini. Process: 16 mm, colour. Length: 87 minutes. **Original version: Italian.** Cast: Sara Scuderi, Giovanni Puligheddu, Leonida Bellon, Salvatore Locapo, Giuseppe Manacchini. World rights: T + C Film AG.

Mezzogiorno, Laura Betti, Carole Bouquet, Jean Bouise. World rights: Limbo Film AG, Josefstrasse 106, 8031 Zurich, Switzerland. Tel. +41/1/271 88 81 Fax +41/1/271 33 50

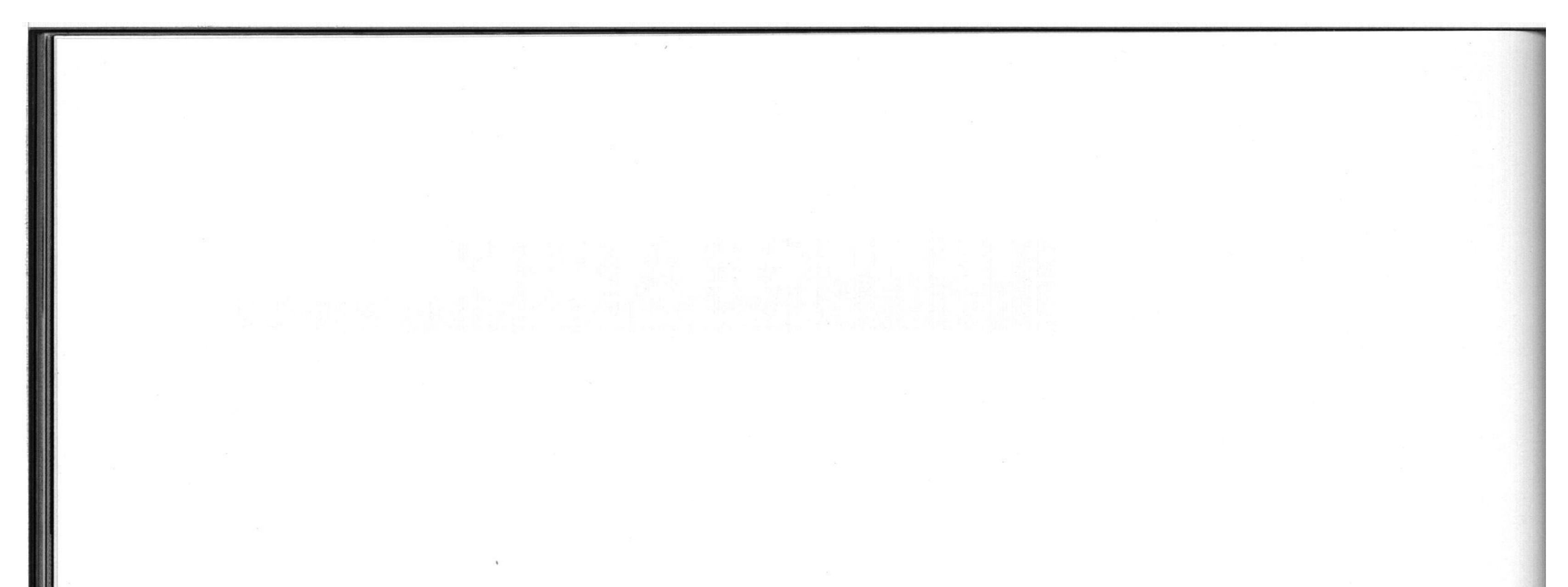
1991

LES AMATEURS (THE AMATEURS) Production: CS, Limbo, Film & Video Prod. Screenplay: Daniel Schmid. Editing: Daniela Roderer. Process: 35 mm, black and white. Original version: Italian. World rights: CARAC FILM AG, Zinggstrasse 16,

3007 Berne, Switzerland. Tel. +41/31/372 00 40 Fax +41/31/372 04 81



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1995

THE WRITTEN FACE Production: EURO SPACE Tokyo, T + C Film AG, Zurich Photography: Renato Berta. Editing: Daniela Roderer. Sound: Dieter Meyer. Music: Liszt, Puccini, ChowHsuan, Lecuona Cuban Boys. Process: 35-mm, blow-up from Super 16. Length: 89 minutes. **Original version: Japanese.** With the participation of: Tamasaburo Bando, Han Takehara, Haruko Sugimura, Kazuo Ohno, Yajuro Bando, Kai Shishido, Toshiya Nagasawa, Asaji Tsutakiyokomatsu, Hiroyuki Koga. World rights: T + C Film AG, Seestrasse 41a, 8002 Zurich, Switzerland. Tel. +41/1/202 36 22 Fax +41/1/202 30 05 EURO SPACE, 24-8-604 Sakuragaoka-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150. Tel. +81/3/34610212 Fax +81/3/37704179

FILMS FOR TELEVISION

STAGE PRODUCTIONS

1983

IMITATION OF LIFE (DOUGLAS SIRK) Production: Daniel Schmid, Luc Yersin, SSR. Photography: Renato Berta. Editing: Luc Yersin. Process: 16 mm, colour. Length: 50 minutes. Original version: German. Cast: Douglas Sirk, a.o. World rights: Luc Yersin, 1420 Fiez, Switzerland.

1978

INGRID CAVEN AU PIGALL'S Paris

1984

BARBE-BLEUE Opera by Jacques Offenbach, Grand Théâtre de Genève

1985

LULU Opera by Alban Berg, Grand Théâtre de Genève

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198**8**

GUGLIELMO TELL Zurich Opera House (Production, direction for television in collaboration with Ruedi Gyr and Elisabeth Schweeger)

1987/91

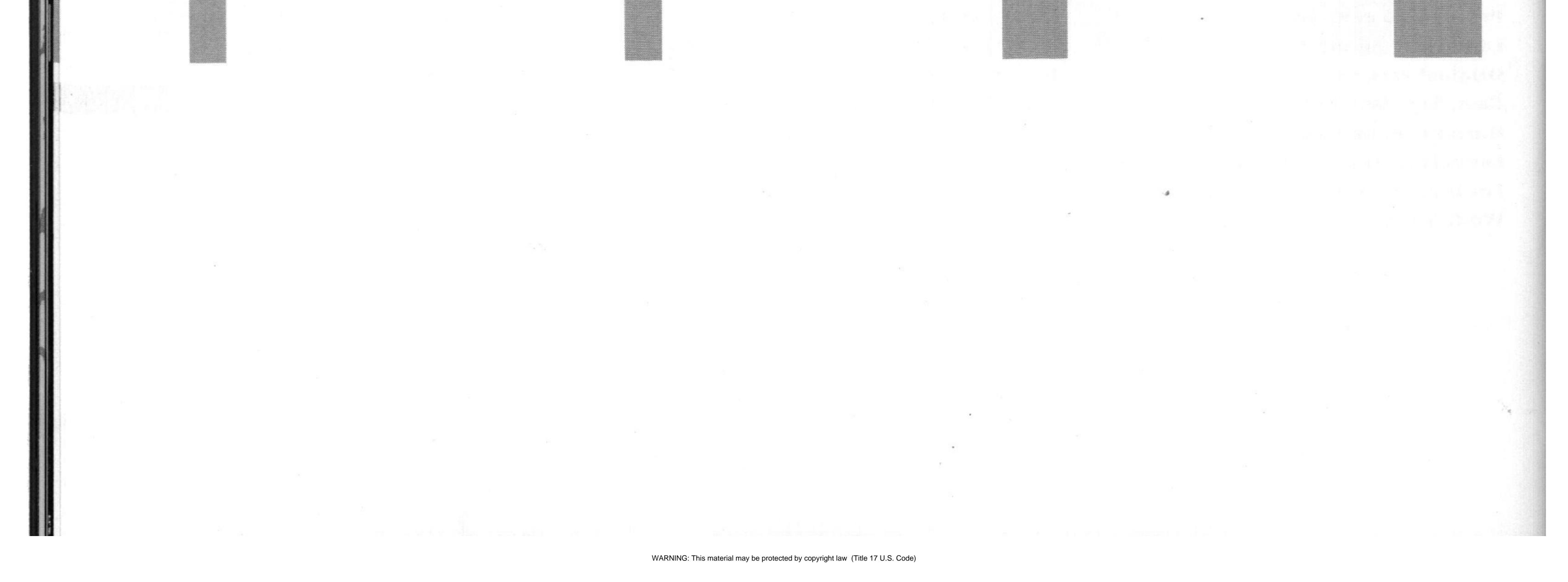
GUGLIELMO TELL Opera by Gioacchino Rossini, Zurich Opera House

1994/95

LINDA DI CHAMOUNIX Opera by Gaetano Donizetti, with Edita Gruberova, Zurich Opera House

1995

I PURITANI Opera by Vincenzo Bellini, with Ruth Ann Swenson, Grand Théâtre de Genève



FINOGRAPHY

ACTOR FOR OTHER DIRECTORS

BOOKS DEALING WITH DANIEL SCHMID

1971

THE MERCHANT OF FOUR-SEASONS Rainer Werner Fassbinder

LUDWIG Hans-Jürgen Syberberg

1977

1971

THE AMERICAN FRIEND Wim Wenders

1974

Freddy Buache: Portrait de Daniel Schmid en magicien, Edition l'Age d'Homme, Lausanne 1978 Film in der Schweiz, Hanser Verlag, Munich/Vienna

<u>1983</u> Gilles Deleuze: *L'Image-Mouvement,* Editions de Minuit, Paris

1988

1990

Irene-Anna Genhart: Spiegelbilder, Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zum Fragenkreis um Literaturverfilmungen am Beispiel des Films VIOLANTA von Daniel Schmid, MA thesis for the University of Zurich

Rolf Martin Haemmerle, *Daniel Schmid.* Das filmische Werk. MA thesis for the University of Vienna

ROBERTE, CE SOIR Pierre Klossowsky

1979

JUDITH TERPAUVE Patrice Chéreau

1980

1983

LILI MARLEEN Rainer Werner Fassbinder

PUBLICATIONS

THE INVENTION OF PARADISE by Peter Christian Bener and Daniel Schmid, in collaboration Hasumi Shiguéhiko: *Le Cinéma ou l'Ecriture de la Séduction,* Editions Teju-Sha, Tokyo

1985

1984

Karsten Witte: *Im Kino – Texte vom Sehen und Hören,* Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt

1982/88 Daniel Schmid, New Edition, Zytglogge Verlag/Pro Helvetia, Berne/Zurich 1991 Hasumi Shiguéhiko:

A la recherche de la lumière, Editions Teju-Sha, Tokyo

1993

Daniel Schmid, II fantasma della seduzione, edited by Ester Carla de Miro d'Ajeta, Pro Helvetia/ Università degli Studi di Genova

1994

El cine de Daniel Schmid, La máscara y el artificio, Filmoteca Generalitat Valenciana/ Pro Helvetia

with Martin Suter.

Illustrated book about Switzerland as a theatrical set and emotional backdrop in the 19th century. Beobachter-Verlag, Glattbrugg, Editor: Beat Curti.



