



57 FESTIVAL DE SAN SEBASTIÁN
DONOSTIA ZINEMALDIA
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 18/26 IRAILA SEPTIEMBRE 2009

OFFICIAL SELECTION

10 to 11

Written and directed by Pelin Esmer

Thursday 24 th	09.00h	Teatro Victoria Eugenia	Press screening
Thursday 24 th	12.00h	Kursaal K1	Press screening
Thursday 24 th	19.00h	Kursaal K1	Official presentation
Friday 25 th	16.00h	Teatro Victoria Eugenia	Public screening
Saturday 26 th	16.00h	Antiguo Berri	Public screening



After her great success in the Zabaltegi-New Directors section in 2005, Turkish director Pelin Esmer is coming back to San Sebastian with her first fiction "10 to 11". Her film will compete both in the official section and Zabaltegi-New Directors section. In three of the most prestigious film festivals in Turkey, "10 to 11" has been awarded Special Prize of the Jury in Istanbul Film Festival, Best Film and Best Screenplay awards in Adana Golden Boll Film Festival and will represent Turkey in the international competition of Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival in October.

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Synopsis

Living on the fourth floor of Emniyet Apartment Building, Mithat Bey has, against all threats he has faced, managed to protect his collection, which he has been working on for years and that has left him with only a small space to live in. Any piece that he searches for to maintain the continuity of the collection could lead him anywhere in Istanbul. For Mithat Bey, Istanbul is as unlimited as his collection whereas for Ali, it is limited to the Emniyet Apartment Building and its surroundings. Coming from the village to Istanbul, Ali started to work as the concierge of the apartment. When his daughter contracted asthma due to the humidity in the concierge's floor, Ali sent his family back home in his village until the conditions were improved. When the other tenants of the apartment building, out of fear of an earthquake and with the ambition to own a more valuable building, prefer to have the building demolished to be rebuilt again, Mithat Bey begins the most challenging of wars he gave for his collection. The building becomes now the shared destiny of these two men who live alone. Their relationship that begins for the continuity of the collection takes on a different course with Mithat Bey handing Istanbul over to Ali and it ends where they inadvertently change each other's destiny.



Director's note

I started "10 to 11" with the desire of understanding an extraordinary collector who freezes every moment of his life with an object that he adds to his collections. He threads together tightly the past, present and future with a rope on which he walks with the dexterity of a master stuntman. Leaning on Istanbul's tolerance for contradictions in life, I wanted to tell the story of the unintentional interference of 83 year-old Mithat and his concierge Ali in each other's life, two lonely men who have very different backgrounds, very different lives, very different dreams and very different realities. Meanwhile I happened to discover in their lives that they were winning as they were losing, were defeated as they triumphed and began as they ended what these two men were able to offer each other was, once again, Istanbul.

Interview with Pelin Esmer

You met the audience with your new film “10 to 11” four years after your previous film Oyun (The Play) shot in 2005. What’s happened in the meantime?

After “The Play” I’ve started working on 10 to 11. The pre-production took very long since it could only get developed in a long time and I was determined not to shoot it before the script was literally in the can. Meanwhile I was invited to Cinéfondation of the Cannes Film Festival, in Paris. They invite six young film-makers twice a year to the residence in Paris for 4-5 months so that they can work on their projects. I wrote the screenplay of 10 to 11 there. This period was very useful for me to get away from everything and concentrating on the screenplay. Writing in a world where I do not belong to was proved to be very effective for me since I had already built up a substantial amount of ideas regarding the film and thus I went there well equipped. I had the chance of writing the script in a more serene environment. However, I completed the screenplay after turning back to Istanbul since I particularly wanted to conclude it in Istanbul.



A determination of survival, just like the one Mithat Bey and Ali display in 10 to 11, of peasant women who strive for creating a theatrical production exists in your documentary The Play. Have you ever discovered any similarities in the human stories that attract you?

I have big respect for the life struggle of those who are genuinely different. Maybe, this is my way of expressing my respect to them.

Considering the films produced in recent years also with 10 to 11 we can see an approach that focuses more on characters than the story. Can we claim that the lack of ‘characters’ in the Turkish cinema has been cured?

Characters come along with their own stories at any rate. People love listening to stories and I do too. But when someone is primarily carried away by the story then the hero or the heroine is left in the corner. I am more interested in characters who listen to their stories in their corner.

You gave the leading role to your uncle Mithat Esmer who is also a collector in real life...

He was my only alternative for that role.



How was the experience of giving role to an old person who had never been actor in his life?

This of course required some effort. We, as a team, tried not to disturb his daily routine as much as possible. He has adapted himself to us, and we have adapted ourselves to him. But I never experienced any difficulties in acting. I think some are born actors.

Would it not be risky to have a professional and popular name like Nejat Isler with Mithat Bey?



I think cinema is about risk-taking. However, I have not seen that as a risk from the moment I have decided to give the role to Nejat Isler. I think that Nejat is an excellent actor. I believed that he would have a very different experience by acting with an amateur. What I expected from him was no easy thing. The mutual relation to be created between them was at least as important as their performances. I sensed that Nejat would succeed in that.

Did they come together before the shooting and spend time together?

No, they met each other in their first scene together and they have not met before then.

In the film, Istanbul is almost the third leading character...

Istanbul is a city open to surprises at any moment. It can offer you new experiences where you can spend your life running after a collection object. It's a city as colorful and rich just as the collection of Mithat Bey. It is a city which can offer him everything he looks for or he does not. A collection item he is after constantly pulls him to different locations and makes him meet new people. He has a private and particular relation with each one of the thousands of objects in his house. And there is no jealousy! He does not live alone but with thousands of characters. After all, it is his choice of life protected against any threats. On the other hand, Istanbul for Ali consists only of the apartment building where he works as a concierge and a few blocks away in the neighborhood. He has been living in Istanbul for many years but he most probably has not even seen the sea. Taking over Istanbul from Mithat Bey, he is recreating his own Istanbul slowly, going after Mithat Bey's collections.

How and in which direction did the relationship the director established with the Istanbul character proceed throughout the production process?

I actually considered Istanbul as a character swapped between two men. As if swapping lovers... Of course in one of the parts of the film you can see the polygamous relation Istanbul has established with these two men! Location research was what I enjoyed the most during the pre-production process. This research has taken years. I have been going after Mithat Bey and following his footsteps for years in Istanbul. This city makes you embark on an adventure after an object, search it during a lifetime and eventually lets you find it.



One of the important factors in the film is sound, sounds of Istanbul and the way they are perceived. Even when we acknowledge that a sound which we think as real is actually from an audio tape, at that point you open a small window again with regards to the perception of reality.

What is actually reality itself? In life, real things turn to unreality and things we think as unreal may turn up to be real at any time. Being in the quest of clarity on this issue is only a waste of time. I prefer to believe in the reality within the film itself.

And, did you have any difficulties regarding such a chaotic sound design?

I wanted to use sound as a narrative tool rather than a medium. I also used sound in the script as one of the collection objects of my character. I can imagine better through sounds of which I do not see the source. Perhaps living in a house which is not soundproof has also effects in this. There have been lives which I have not seen but listened to from distance. Seeing is something closer to reality itself while listening puts forth its own reality and story. I may forget some images, but I can never forget some sounds.



Did you have an intention of establishing a bond in terms of aesthetics with your previous films, such as *The Play*, or tried to develop a brand new style in parallel with the subject of the film?

In each film, I try to create a style requested by the world and the characters in the film. I tried to base the aesthetic approach of 10 to 11 on contradictions, dualities and contrasts and reflect these dualities both visually and acoustically.

You recreated Mithat Bey's house for the film, right?

Yes, we have created a completely different location. For me, the most important thing was to make Mithat Bey feel at home in this new location, so we used his own collection since he is a character who establishes his relationship with life through his collection items. In addition, I thought that an environment created with his collections would be helpful for him in his acting and add color and sincerity to the film. Anyway, I would probably have had to work for 10 years to recreate such a collection! We thank him very much. The collection was categorized, boxed and returned to him with utmost care after the shooting.

Have there been any contributions to his collection from the film?

Of course, the film's posters and DVDs are being added now in pairs!

Telling only the story of a collector could perhaps have been perceived as praise for efforts of preserving the past. But the story of the concierge adds a different dimension to the film which prevents the film having a nostalgic atmosphere.

In fact, there is also something about the passing of the object from hand to hand and its continuity. The collector character certainly does not have a nostalgic point of view. What the character is after with the collection is continuity; he is in no way interested in its material value. For Ali the value and meaning of a collection object develop, change or contradict within itself over time during the relation he has established with Mithat Bey.



Mithat Bey's loneliness is actually very tragic, isn't it? But you never reduce this solitude to a sense of pity

Mithat Bey, on the other hand, is a person who lives at his home with thousands of objects. Each of the objects is a different character for him. He has established special relationships while looking around for objects for his collection in Istanbul. In fact, he is much more sociable than Ali and most of us. There are

many different forms of loneliness in life. To feel pity for a person does not seem to me to be the right way of building a relationship.

We talked about the contrasts of these two characters however; they are both alone on the other hand.

Of course, they have very much in common. In addition to their loneliness, the gap between their dreams and realities are also very similar. I believe that the people whom we think at first glance would not have the slightest relation with each other can “touch” each other and might actually intervene each other’s lives unconsciously both in a positive and negative way.

In the film, we observe an ‘amusing’ conflict between the old values that have sunk in the oblivion (including even the “Republican” values) and an ‘upstart’ concept of opportunism (perhaps liberalism). Who will prevail eventually considering both the film and our day?

No one will. Here there are characters that have different needs in order to survive. In fact, these characters can live without crossing each other's path or coming together at all. But what they demand for meeting their requirements intersect at one point. The characters here win while losing and lose while winning. There is no single winner, champion or victim. None of the characters are purely innocent nor are they winning, defeated or the evil parties. What they long for are mere human and natural desires such as living in newer and safer house or the wish of a man to live again with his daughter and wife whom he has been separated due to living conditions or another’s wish of not being separated from a collection to which he has dedicated his life and for which he has given up so much.

Pelin Esmer’s Biography

Pelin Esmer was born and grew up in Istanbul, Turkey. After she majored in sociology in Istanbul, she attended the cinema workshop of the Turkish director Yavuz Ozkan. She worked as a first assistant director in a number of Turkish and foreign projects, including documentaries, features and commercials. She gave lectures about documentary film-making at Istanbul Kadir Has University in Istanbul.

She founded her own film company, Sinefilm, in 2005 and currently produces her own projects as an independent director and



producer together with her producer colleagues Tolga Esmer and Nida Karabol Akdeniz. She made two award-winning documentaries. Her first film, “The Collector” (2002) was screened in many festivals and received the Best Documentary Award at Rome Independent Films Festival.

Her first feature documentary “Oyun” (“The Play”) was premiered in New Directors Competition Section in San Sebastian in 2005. It has been screened over 50 festivals around the world and received 11 international and 3 national awards including “The Best New Documentary Filmmaker” award in Tribeca Film Festival, “The Best Mediterranean Documentary” award of CMCA and “The Best Documentary Film” award in Créteil Women Films Festival. Both Pelin and her film have been acclaimed by national and international critics among which are writers of Le Monde, Time-CNN, Variety, New York Magazine, Cinemascope and Senses of Cinema. “Oyun” was released theatrically, as well as in DVD format, a very rare event in Turkey for documentaries.

Pelin’s first feature “11’e 10 kala” (“10 to 11”) was one of the six chosen projects by Cannes Film Festival’s Résidence du Cinéfondation in Paris, where she worked on her script in 2007. “11’e 10 kala” received the Special Prize of the Jury in 2009 Istanbul International Film Festival National Competition, Best Film and Best Screenplay awards in Adana Golden Boll Film Festival.

Cast

Nejat Isler	Ali
Mithat Esmer	Mithat
Tayanc Ayaydin	Omer
Lacin Ceylan	Feride
Savas Akova	Ruhi
Sinan Dugmeci	Bookseller

Crew

Written and directed by	Pelin Esmer
Producers	Pelin Esmer, Nida Karabol Akdeniz, Tolga Esmer
Co-producers	Juliette Sol (France), Mustafa Dok (Germany)
Director of photography	Ozgur Eken
Art director	Naz Erayda
Line producer	Ozkan Yilmaz
Editing	Ayhan Ergursel, Pelin Esmer, Cem Yildirim
Sound recording	Kasper Munck-Hansen
Sound editing	Umut Senyol
Sound mix	Marc Elsner, Michael Kaczmarek

Technical Info

Original title: 11'e 10 Kala
English title: 10 to 11
Shooting Format: HDCAM
Formats available: 35mm, HDCAM
Color: Color
Sound : Dolby Digital
Length in 35mm: 2717m
Number of reels: 6
Running time: 110'
Original Film Language: Turkish
Subtitles: English, French, Spanish
Screening ratio: 16:9 (1:1.78)
Countries of production: Turkey-France-Germany
Production company: Sinefilm
Co-production companies: Stromboli Films, Arte France Cinéma, Bredok Filmproduction
Year of Production: 2009



Cinéfondation
LA SÉLECTION . LA RÉSIDENCE . L'ATELIER



10 to 11

nejat işler mithat esmer

tayanç ayaydın laçın ceylan savaş akova sinan düğmeci

line producer **özkan yılmaz** sound recording **kasper munck-hansen** sound mix **marc elsner**
michael karzmarek art director **naz erayda** editing **ayhan ergürsel** **pelin esmer** **cem yıldırım**
director of photography **özgür eken** co-producers **juliette sol** **mustafa dok**
producers **pelin esmer** **nida karabol** **akdeniz** **tolga esmer**

written & directed by **pelin esmer**



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