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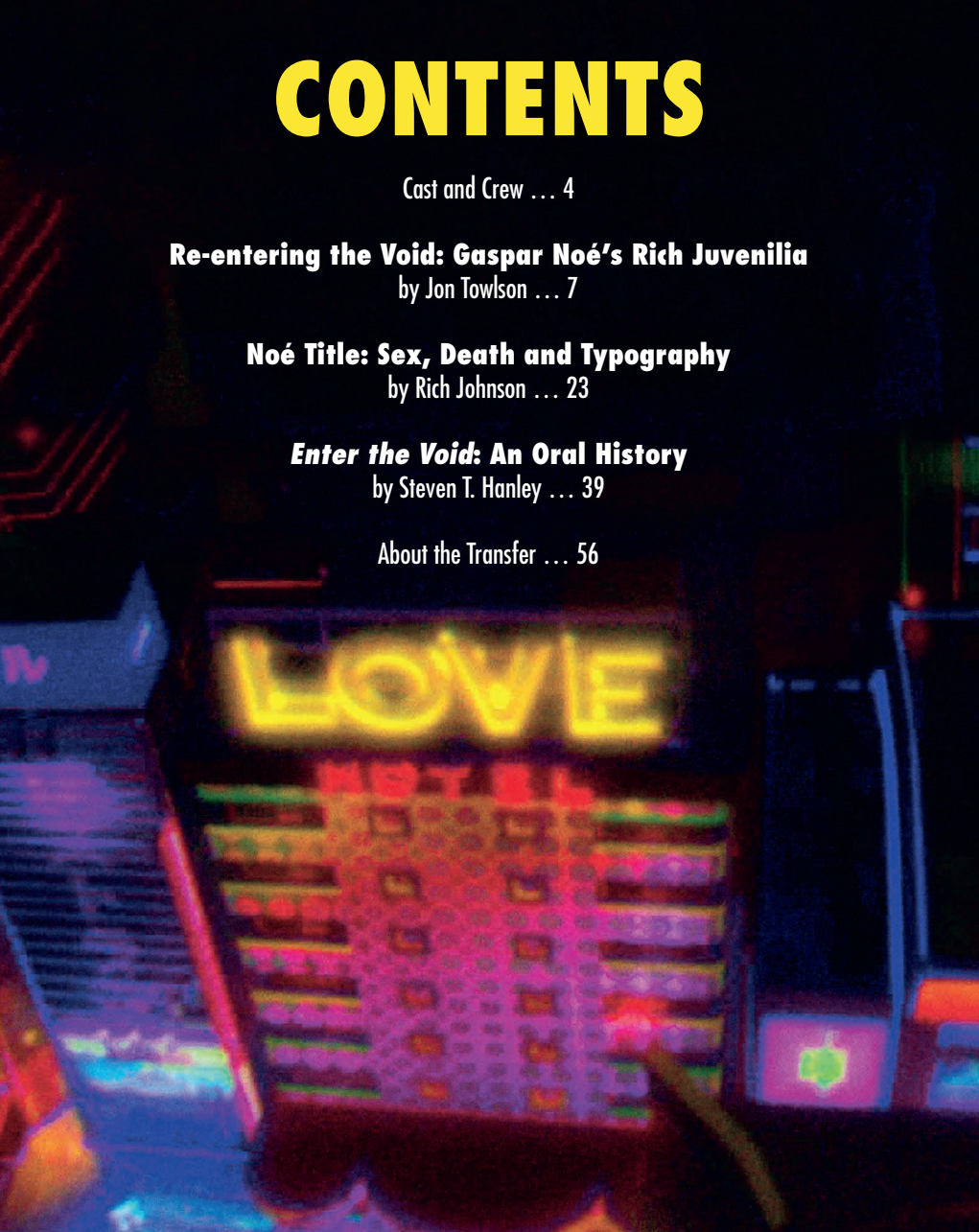
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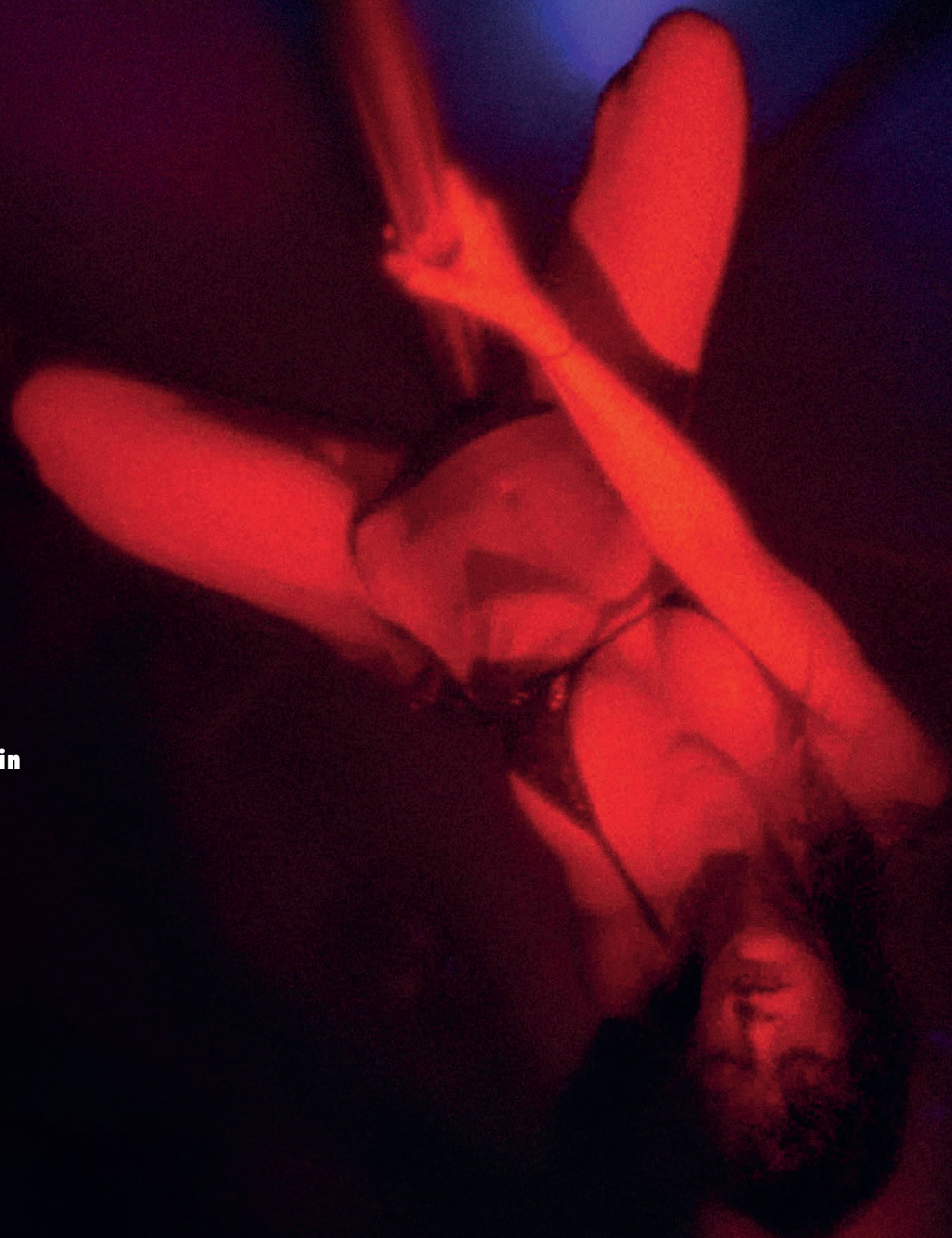


CAST

Nathaniel Brown Oscar
Paz de la Huerta Linda
Cyril Roy Alex
Emily Alyn Lind Little Linda
Jesse Kuhn Little Oscar
Olly Alexander Victor
Ed Spear Bruno
Masato Tanno Mario

CREW

Directed by **Gaspar Noé**
Written by **Gaspar Noé**, with the help of **Lucile Hadžihalilović**
Produced by **Brahim Chioua, Vincent Maraval, Wild Bunch, Olivier Delbosc, Marc Missonnier, Fidélité Films, Pierre Buffin**
and **BUF Compagnie**
Line Producers **Olivier Théry-Lapiney, Georgina Pope**
and **Suzanne Girard**
Director of Photography **Benoît Debie**
Production Designers **Kikuo Ohta** and **Jean Carrière**
Film Editors **Gaspar Noé, Marc Boucrot** and **Jérôme Pesnel**
Music by **Thomas Bangalter**
Costume Designer **Tony Crosbie**





RE-ENTERING THE VOID: GASPAR NOÉ'S RICH JUVENILIA

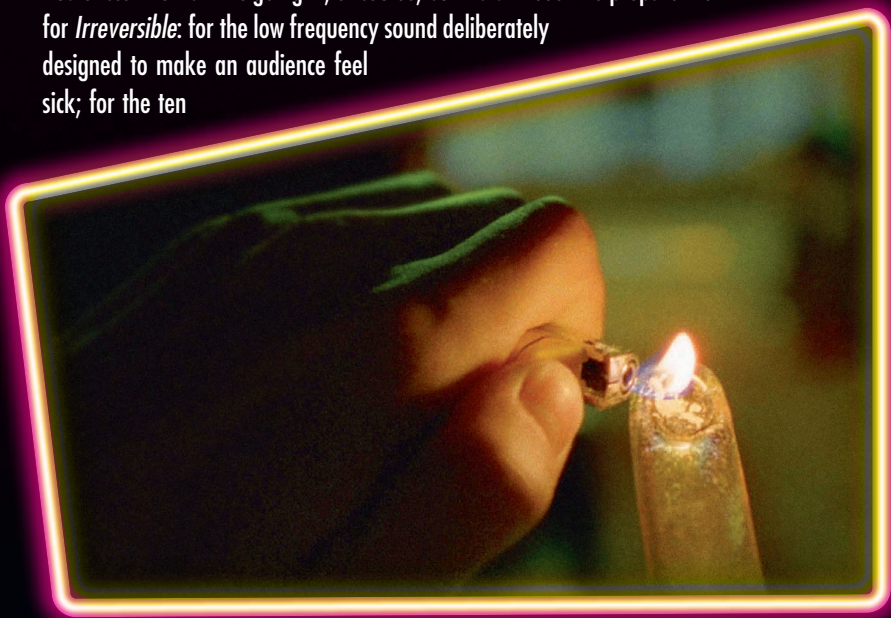
by Jon Towlson

London, September 24th, 2010. After a preview screening of *Enter the Void* at The Rio Cinema, Dalston, the audience sat largely silent, as they had throughout the film. Gaspar Noé, who was present for the post-screening Q&A, stood on stage at the front of the auditorium, squinting into the spotlight, trying to gauge the reaction. Judging from his look of dismay, cinema's foremost provocateur was not used to such a quiet crowd. Only a few short years ago, critics at the Cannes festival had walked out of *Irreversible* (*Irréversible*, 2002) in protest at its scenes of rape and violence, making the film a *succès de scandale* and earning Noé the reputation of *enfant terrible*. Why, then, was this London audience not cheering and/or booing Noé as he took the stage? Why did *Enter the Void* not provoke a single walk-out or even a fainting? Why was the audience seemingly so unresponsive to Noé's provocations this time around?

Could it have been that the condescending tone of the movie critic who introduced the film had displeased the crowd? ("I'm so *jealous* that you're seeing this film for the *first* time!") Or was the audience simply showing its defiance in the face of Noé's provocations – as if to say: "You can't shock us! We know your game!" The truth may be more complex. It's likely that the audience at the Rio Cinema that night had not yet forgiven Noé for *Irreversible*. With that film, Noé had trampled on so many screen taboos. In its broadest sense, cinematic shock is concerned with subverting the traditional morality of a society in unconventional, unexpected ways. Noé's films are intentionally constructed to instil shock in an audience by attacking their fundamental values. They are, in other words, deliberate shocks to the social/sexual/ideological system – and not always

progressive ones (many critics attacked *Irreversible* for its pervasive homophobia – a claim difficult to refute).

Of course, directors have been utilising their power to shock since the earliest days of cinema (one thinks of Edwin S. Porter's startling introduction of the close-up in *The Great Train Robbery*, [1903]) and many have pushed the boundaries of acceptability to emphasise the message they are presenting. Wes Craven has spoken of cinema's potential to show "truths that are too painful for a society to admit". What an audience experiences as shock reveals the conditions of a particular society at a particular point in time, its fears and taboos. The use of shock by Gaspar Noé is – at least in part – ideologically motivated (consider Noé's extraordinary feature debut *I Stand Alone* [*Seul contre tous*, 1998] – arguably one of the screen's most powerful indictments of fascism since Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* [1975]). The intention is nothing less than to address the traumas that society seeks to deny. Audiences know all this going in, of course, but it didn't seem to prepare them for *Irreversible*: for the low frequency sound deliberately designed to make an audience feel sick; for the ten



minute single-shot real-time rape sequence that offers the viewer no escape from what is taking place on screen; for the fire extinguisher that crushes a man's head to a pulp in the opening scenes of the same film.

With *Irreversible*, Noé actively sought to *hurt* his audience; and the audience had not forgotten this. At least, that was my impression that night at the Rio. Certainly, I had watched the film in trepidation, wondering what trauma lay ahead. I had avoided *Irreversible* altogether for that reason – and to this day cannot bring myself to watch it. Indelible in my mind, too, was the horse so shockingly slaughtered for meat in the opening scene of Noé's early short film *Carne* (1991) (with no warning to the viewer of what they were about to see); while I had found *I Stand Alone* traumatising to the degree that I thought I was going to have a full-blown panic attack right there in the cinema as I was watching the film.

Enter the Void, then, caught audiences on the defensive – certainly it did on the night of the Rio Cinema preview. Still reeling from the shock of his previous films, we were unprepared for its phantasmagoria. Our silence was the result of being blindsided by this fabulist vision of the afterlife; our struggle to reconcile such flights of fantasy with the cold formalist brutality we had come to associate with Noé; the realisation that we were witnessing another side of Gaspar Noé, one hitherto unseen in his films.

In his Q&A, Noé revealed that the idea for *Enter the Void* had first presented itself to him when he was a teenager. This came as no surprise to those of us who, up to that point, had considered Noé the bastard offspring of William Castle and Georges Franju. From the latter, it seemed to us, Noé had inherited the *épater les bourgeois* sensibility of the French Decadent poets by way of the Surrealists; from the former, a huckster's sense of schlocksploitation.

Certainly, Franju's *Eyes without a Face* (*Les yeux sans visage*, 1960) continues to exert a strange fascination on filmmakers and world cinema audiences alike. As with much of Noé's output, it was reviled on first release – it met with international disgust and was



slammed by critics – but has subsequently grown in acclaim. Like Noé's movies, Franju's masterpiece is at heart an attempt to cash in on the success of exploitation films – but emerges as much more. We might draw comparisons between the two filmmakers in terms of artistic temperament. Franju was engaged as director of *Eyes without a Face* on the strict proviso that he avoided three things so as not to upset European censors: gore, animal cruelty and mad scientists. Of course, he ended up including all three in the film. Noé, without doubt, would have done the same. Like Noé, Franju started out directing short films, two of which – *Hôtel des invalides* (1952) and *Blood of the Beasts* (*Le sang des bêtes*, 1949) – intersect horror and modernity in much the same way as does Noé in his work. A further point of comparison: Franju's films address, albeit in allegorical fashion, the atrocities of fascism, and a Europe stained by the horrors of war. Franju turned government-sponsored documentaries about war veterans, factories and meat processing plants into virtual snuff movies, showing the industrialised slaughter of the modern world. In *Blood of the Beasts*, Franju contrasts the dispassionate butchery of animals with the seemingly oblivious bourgeois normalcy of the surrounding Parisian suburbs. Gasper Noé would achieve much the same effect in the shocking butchery of the horse at the start of *Carne* and throughout much of *I Stand Alone*.

Fantasy film and art cinema have, of course, always been closely connected. Franju's movie has its precedents in Louis Feuillade's silent films, and in the early works of F.W. Murnau, as well as in the Universal horror movies of Tod Browning and James Whale. Likewise, Noé has sought to splice his films with the kind of shock effects favoured by exploitation merchant William Castle. (Think of the warning that flashes up before the climax of *I Stand Alone*, advising squeamish audience members to leave the cinema: what is about to follow might be too much for their nerves to take!)

Channelling Franju and Castle (not to mention Kubrick and Gerald Kargl, whom Noé has named as conscious influences), Noé has pretty much mined the cinema of all its varieties of shock: visceral, perceptual, moral, emotional, ideological. Indeed, it is difficult to think of another contemporary director able to combine the types in such potent ways (only





Lars von Trier comes close). Of course, it is easy to shock an audience — if all you want to do is shock an audience. What makes Noé such an intriguing and provocative filmmaker are the glimpses of utopianism — however fleeting — that one gets in his work (even *Irreversible*, by virtue of its back-to-front-narrative, ends [begins] on a grace note). As *Cinema Axis* noted of *We Fuck Alone* (Noé's entry in 2006's *Destriated* — an anthology of short films by different directors exploring the impact of pornography on society), while “very dark in tone, there was also a strange air of childlike innocence that flowed throughout the film”.

All of which brings us back to Feuillade, Murnau and *Enter the Void*. It is fitting that Noé should have conceived of *Enter the Void* as a teenager, fantasy often being the richest form of juvenilia. After all, who, as a teenager, hasn't fantasised about having an out-of-body experience; about astral projection or being able to travel through time and space without the need of a body? It's a sweet, romantic idea closely tied to a pervasive sense of teenage angst. Francis Ford Coppola included such a sequence in *Rumble Fish* (1983), his Cocteau-esque *Bildungsroman*, where Rusty James (Matt Dillon) floats out of his body after being injured in a gang fight; his soul hovers above the people in his life as they mourn his tragic and premature demise. They'll miss him when he's gone, right? In the same way, Noé's drug-dealer protagonist, Oscar, leaves his body after being shot by the police, to float as a discarnate entity above the Tokyo streets, observing the aftermath of his death.

Enter the Void adopts the fantastic realism of Feuillade, whose great contribution to the development of cinema was to detail the impossible in crime serials like *Fantômas* (1913), *Les Vampires* (1915–16) and *Judex* (1916). Feuillade's work has been described as the “social fantastic”, and this applies equally to *Enter the Void* as it does to other auteurs of the fantasy school — Clive Barker, for example (whose stories often deal with out-of-body experience). The great German Expressionist F.W. Murnau dreamt of freeing the camera from physical restraint, in much the same way as an astral body is capable of travelling outside the physical body. His ambition was partly realised by



cinematographers Karl Freund in *The Last Laugh* (*Der letzte Mann*, 1924) and Charles Rosher and Karl Struss in *Sunrise* (1927). Murnau envisaged a camera that was free to move through the architecture in his films in much the same way as Oscar's disembodied soul floats freely through the city of Tokyo.

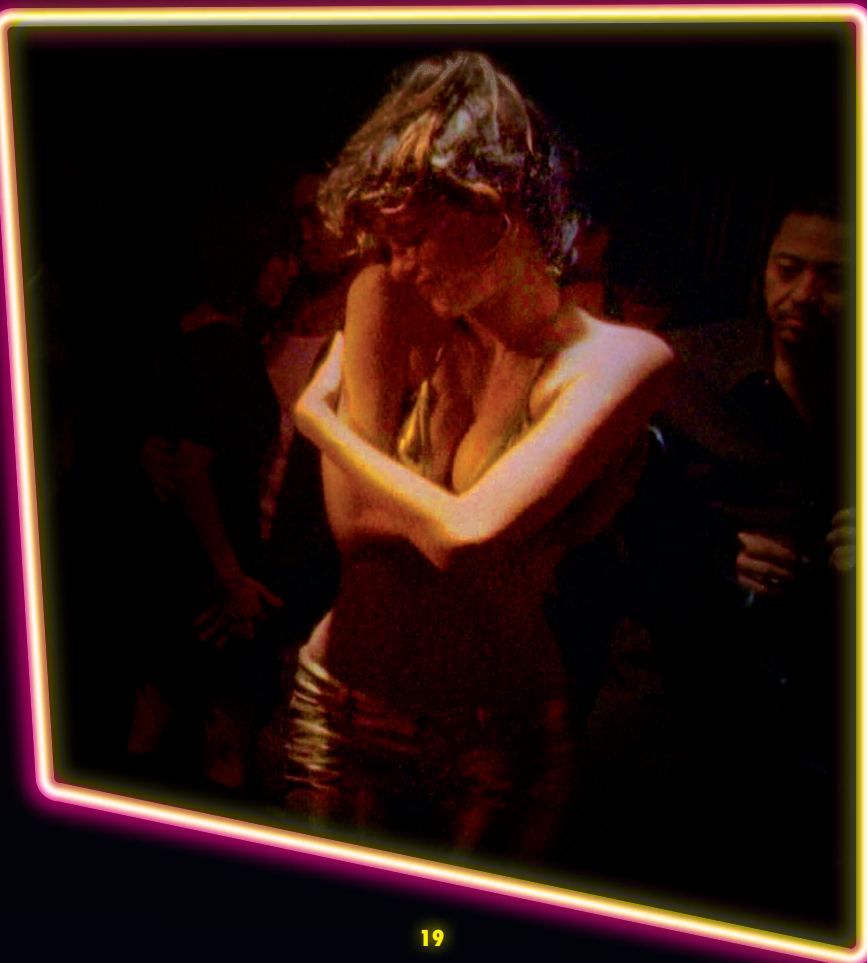
Indeed, the spirit of Murnau hovers over *Enter the Void*, not least in the extensive use of the subjective camera. Murnau had encouraged his cinematographers to utilise the moving camera in such a way as to take the point of view of his characters, most notably in *The Last Laugh* where Freund attaches his camera to a bicycle to see through the eyes of Emil Jannings; and in the magnificent scene in *Sunrise* where the errant farmer played by George O'Brien goes to meet his mistress, the Woman from the City, by a moonlit lake (Karl Struss would also make good use of the subjective camera in the first scene of Rouben Mamoulian's 1932 version of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*).

But how many films have taken the step of using the subjective camera to present an entire movie exclusively through the eyes of the main character: a feature film length POV shot? Prior to *Enter the Void* only one springs to mind: Robert Montgomery's *Lady in the Lake* (1947). Dismissed by critics of the time as a gimmick – as an example of juvenile filmmaking – the subjective camera would remain thereafter in the domain of avant-garde and experimental cinema (featuring prominently in such works as Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* [1947] and Alexander Hammid and Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* [1943]). François Truffaut was amongst those who refuted *Lady in the Lake*, claiming that the subjective camera is the opposite of subjective cinema: the viewer identifies with the people seen on screen. He has a point, of course. However, what better way to join protagonist and viewer together in a shared subjective experience? ("You and Robert Montgomery solve a murder mystery together" promised *Lady in the Lake's* publicity.) And what better way to evoke astral projection, as Gaspar Noé does in *Enter the Void*?

Enter the Void, then, is juvenilia, but it is rich juvenilia nonetheless. Its influence can be seen in at least two noteworthy films made afterwards. Franck Khalfoun's *Maniac* (2012)

is distinguished by its use of POV camera throughout, drawing us inside the psychosis of a serial killer while at the same time critiquing the traditional use of POV camera as Slasher trope. And would Alejandro González Iñárritu's Oscar-winning crowd-pleaser *Birdman* (2014) have come into existence without the inspiration of *Enter the Void*?

Jon Towlson is a film critic and the author of Dawn of the Dead (Devil's Advocates, 2022), Midnight Cowboy (Queer Film Classics, 2022) and Global Horror Cinema Today (2021).





NOÉ TITLE: SEX, DEATH AND TYPOGRAPHY

by Rich Johnson

ENTER

There is an art to looking sideways with a Gaspar Noé film. Heaven becomes Hell in reverse; up is down, backwards moves forwards and red turns to green for 'get out of here'. We revel and revile in the sex and the violence on display – turned on and off by the flick of a switch – witness to the worst in human nature and (fleeting) the best. There is a glimpse of tenderness as the young and the old lose their minds to drugs and dementia; all a warped symphony on the meaning of life; sex and death bookended by typography.

Then you catch your breath.

Noé is somewhat of a contradiction. He sets out to challenge and provoke his audience, constantly stepping over (blurred) boundaries of art and exploitation. Even his name contradicts – translating as 'comfort' in Hebrew¹ – most of the time we are anything *but* comforted. Part miracle-maker, part harbinger of doom; he seems to rejoice in the contrast. So, for such an extreme filmmaker you would expect to hear all kinds of nightmarish stories, yet he garners nothing but the same respect from his collaborators as he obviously has for them. This is evident not only in his sense of humour on set but also right down to each crewmember and department immortalised with their own unique piece of typography. No Gaspar cattle brand here. Instead, beautiful gifts that, in turn, feed into the aesthetic of his award-winning title sequence for *Enter the Void* (2009).

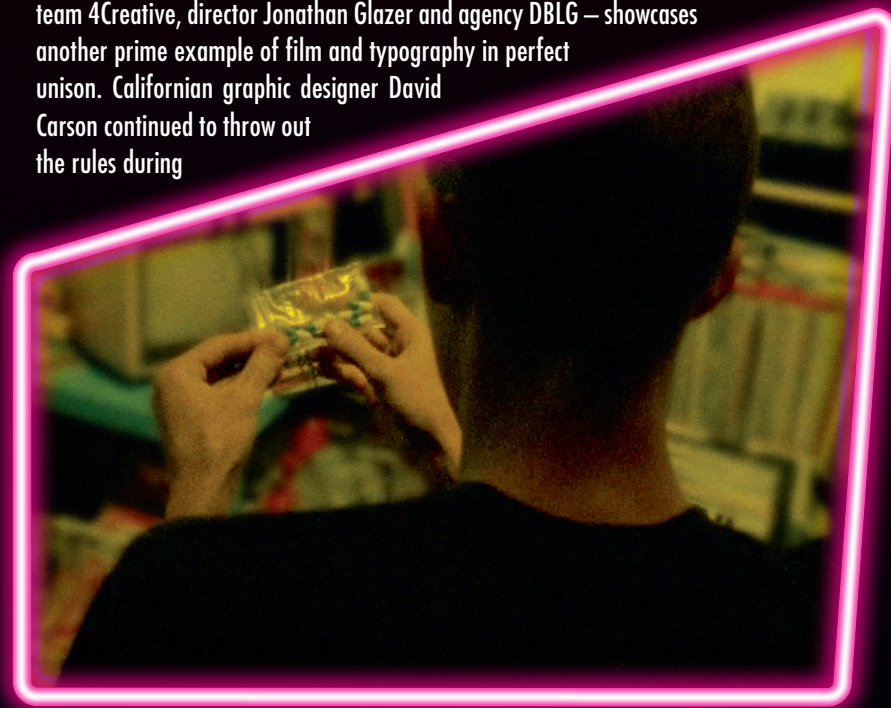
It would be worth seeking some order out of chaos by beginning with a close look at Futura Condensed Extra Bold. It's a Noé 'thing', often defaulting to the font when either nothing else works or due to time constraints. Noé's graphic designer, Tom Kan adds, "He will always put Futura first, go away and study every other font and then come back to it if need be. For example, on *Love* [2015], we came up with the idea of playing around with the typography in 3D but it felt like a gimmick. Maybe he needs the font for his creation to help him make the right choices. To focus."² As a universal font, Futura has become everyone else's *thing* over the years; from Nike to the UK's Conservative Party; Volkswagen to Richard Nixon and the moon landing. With the moon and 'monolithic' fonts in mind, it is of no surprise that Noé is a huge appreciator of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968) and is evident — throughout the promotion of Kubrick's own filmography — Futura was a staple favourite. Aside from the iconoclast's use of vivid starlit effects and bold primary set pieces, it makes complete sense that the font should also be so abundant in Noé's work. In her foreword to Douglas Thomas' book, *Never Use Futura* (2017),³ American graphic designer Ellen Lupton highlights, "Make no mistake: Futura played a bigger role in the history of twentieth-century design — and the history of the twentieth-century in general — than any other typeface... Futura is the most enduring typographic act of its time, shaping the drama of design, advertising, and public information for decades to come."

Based on visual elements of the Bauhaus design style (1919–1933), German typeface designer Paul Renner defined the modernist movement with the launch of the font in 1927 during a crucial time in history: "He renounced gothic text most vocally when the Nazi party embraced it."⁴ Self-confessed 'Typomaniac' Erik Spiekermann — who wrote the go-to book, *Stop Stealing Sheep and Learn How Type Works* (1993) — often reminds us how fonts have always paralleled architecture and a nation's characteristics. With all of this in mind, Futura's Bauhaus DNA can be clearly seen in its machine aesthetic — a geometry that is only rivalled by other universal fonts such as Gill Sans and Helvetica — the latter helping to define the 'International Style'.

Douglas goes on to reinforce, "Even as designers cast for a new Futura replacement, Renner's

90-year-old Futura is still a cultural force. The original lead-cast incarnation is rarely seen, used or even known, but the elegance of the Futura ideal excites the imagination because so many designers have breathed life into the typeface through their own uses, quotations and adaptations. The key to choosing Futura is to make it your own. Know its history but challenge its past — keep it fresh; make it new. Only in adding innovative voices to the conversation will Futura continue to be the typeface of today and tomorrow."⁵

Over the years we have seen a number of maverick graphic designers and typographers smash the letterpress. Neville Brody disintegrated Futura with *The Face* magazine during the 80s and, as a graphic designer still working today, continues to carry a deep-seated resentment for conformity. His rebrand of Channel 4 — in collaboration with in-house team 4Creative, director Jonathan Glazer and agency DBLG — showcases another prime example of film and typography in perfect unison. Californian graphic designer David Carson continued to throw out the rules during







the 90s and, as a surfer, is as maverick as they come. Winning countless awards for his innovative use of type, his mantra, “Don’t mistake legibility for communication” (often mashed up and back to front), still rings true with its irony. Multi-disciplinary design studio Why Not Associates set out to build typographic installations from all kinds of materials; their work more than reminiscent of the bold neon signs and typographic architecture on display throughout *Enter the Void*, while Jonathan Barnbrook continues to reinterpret and reinforce the meaning behind typefaces, often through strong political messages. However, he is perhaps most well-known for his work with David Bowie, most notably his final masterpiece, *Black Star* (2016), that (apparently) still has hidden messages embedded within the design.

Following suit, Noé is, of course, another maverick who also loves typography, dating all the way back to his short films. As with every other element of the filmmaking process, it is owed to his appreciation of the arts in general and, although he has often taken a stripped-back approach when creating the titles himself on earlier works,⁶ he is still more than open to working with others. A crossover of style is clearly at play on *Enter the Void*. As it begins, there is the familiar strobe effect on the font – as seen with Noé’s previous film, *Irreversible* (*Irréversible*, 2002) – before he breaks free and surprises us with the hellish and ‘electrifying’ title. This is followed by a sensory overload of logotypes in rapid beat to LFO’s “Freak” before they appear faster and faster, single images animating into a kaleidoscopic barrage of logotypes. Although German artist Thorsten Fleisch created the main title design, using the electrophotography process,⁷ it is Noé’s collaboration with Tom Kan⁸ where the titles take on a life of their own and ‘pop’ ... in more ways than one.

Born in France to Japanese parents, Kan’s love of design stems primarily from his visits to Japan while growing up, flavoured further by his European upbringing and distinct mix of culture. While working for French visual effects studio BUF Compagnie, Kan was introduced to Noé by company founder Pierre Buffin. He was immediately impressed. “When you are with Gaspar you see all the noise and the story around him. He brings this energy. He is constantly testing and improving. As one of the biggest collectors of posters – from film to political propaganda – his editing suite has a wall covered in



them. Based on this overwhelming information he had shared, my idea was about retina persistence; when you see something flashing you don't read it physically but your brain can understand what is happening."⁹

As with all of Noé's work, these details are one part of the whole experience. To understand Kan's designs fully as a piece of visual communication, you are forced to return, pause and interact. The editing process is crucial here and, other than the deft camera work on display, is a major part of what elevates Noé's direction and lends such a distinctive style. Working closely with his long-term editor, Marc Boucrot and bringing on board Jérôme Pesnel, the title sequence is the perfect (dis)harmony of sound and image which reverberates and animates to a sudden standstill.

Each carefully designed logotype — 50% of which were never used — is considered very carefully so the shapes flow and grow en masse. Each design had to link to the next as closely as possible. "Sometimes it was too perfect; too harmonised and Gaspar would tell me to break it."¹⁰ Kan's schizophrenic output is down to being at ease with not having one particular style. Much like Noé, he experiments to educate himself: "If I don't know anything about something I am pleased to explore. It's all about experimentation."¹¹

The result was, on average, eight different designs per second — sometimes more depending on the speed — a rapid process of experimentation and evolution of ideas. No expert in animation, Kan was forced to develop the designs frame-by-frame and, as with any great designer, considered the computer only a tool. "I had this discussion with Dan Perri [title sequence designer of over 400 titles from *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) to *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Wes Craven, 1984)]. He said, 'When I see your work, Tom, it's more about design *and* animation.' Of course, it's perfectly true. The concept of the keyframes is always a strong thing. Take all the titles you want, there is always something strong in the typography and the art direction. Tools bring something else but it's another dimension."¹²





Enter the Void is all about dimension. Time and space are irrelevant, barely a neon light at the end of the tunnel as we are forced to become both the voyeur and the voyager, our eyes nailed open through a psychedelic journey that borders on a Lovecraftian nightmare. There is, as with the majority of Noé's work, a contrast between the brutal and the sublime, to devastating effect. Steadily you realise the central character, Oscar (Nathaniel Brown) is blinking less as each scene progresses. This subtle editing MacGuffin helps us come to the realisation that when you are dead you no longer need to blink. The same can be said for the title sequence that, in true Saul Bass style, 'symbolises and summarises' this intense experience at the heart of the story.

Noé's work is unapologetic. It hits you in the face with a sledgehammer and forces you to question *everything*, from the meaning of life to the human condition. The meditative and organic approach to his work may be explicit but there is an intelligence and understanding about 'cinema as experience' rather than film as a specific medium. For all its pretence, there exists Noé title, Noé life or death... rather that state between. He ends with birth and shows us that *Life* has been 'the void' all along. Or, in a typographic twist, a sign of death emblazoned above the entrance of a bar and an inevitable demise.

THE VOID

A lecturer in graphic design and film studies, Rich Johnson has written for Fangoria, Little White Lies, The Digital Fix, Shots, Auteur Publishing, Network, We Belong Dead, Diabolique Magazine, Rue Morgue, Animation Magazine, 101 Films and Second Sight Films.

¹ This is supported in the Bible (Genesis 5:29). On naming him, Noah's father says, "He will comfort us in the work and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed."

² T. Kan, 2021, *Arrow Video Interview*, Rich Johnson, 26 July 2021.

³ D. Thomas, *Never Use Futura* (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2017), p.14.

⁴ S. Garfield, *Just My Type* (London, Profile Books, 2010), p.191.

⁵ Thomas, p.181.

⁶ A nod to the titles of Jean-Luc Godard's *A Woman is a Woman* (1961) and Michael Haneke's original *Funny Games* (1997).

⁷ Alexander Ulloa, 'Enter the Void (2009)', *Art of the Title*, 21 November 2011, <https://www.artofthetitle.com/title/enter-the-void/>

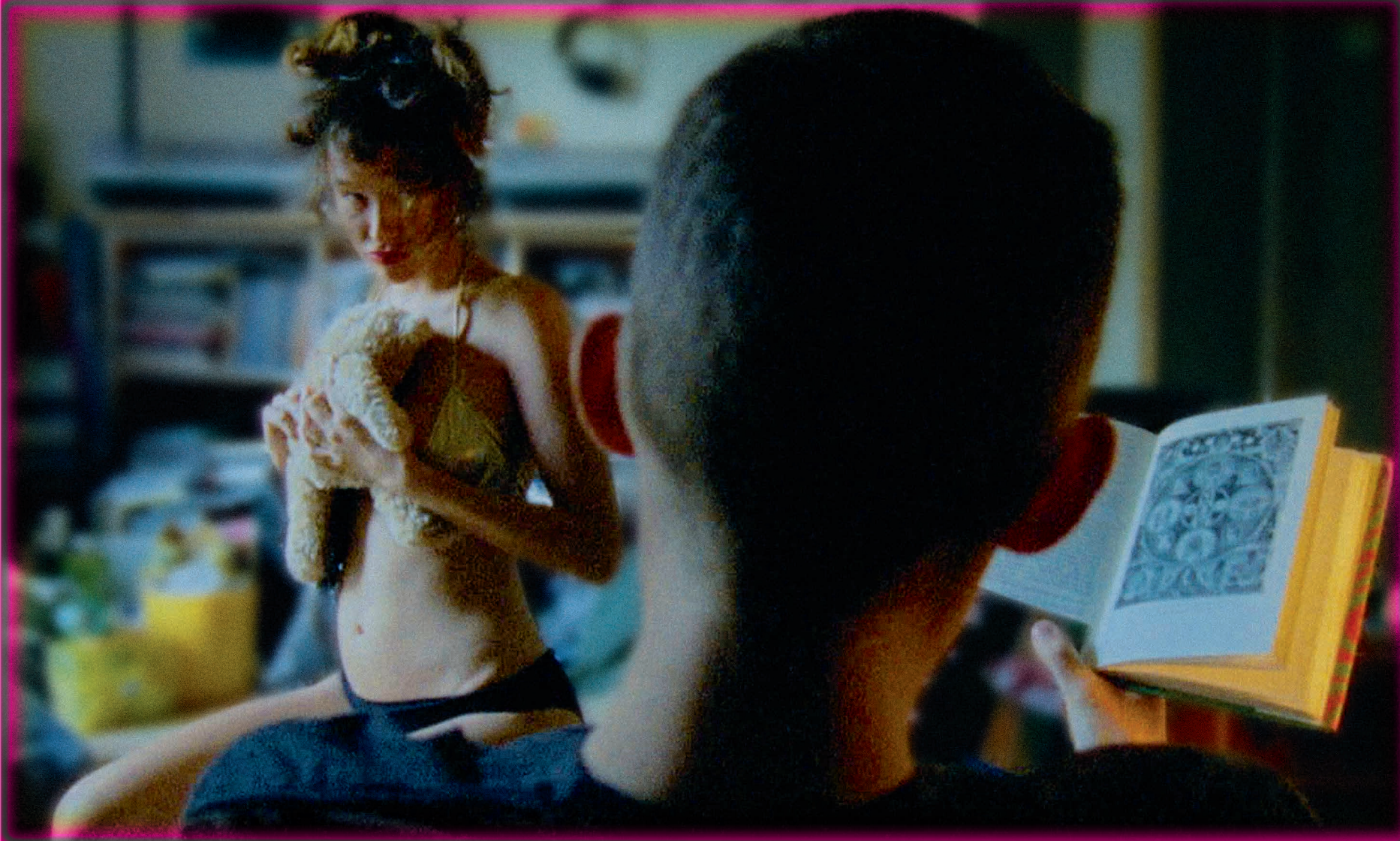
⁸ Gaspar on Tom Kan during the commentary on *Climax*: "My favourite credits designer in this world." Gaspar Noé (dir.), *Climax* (Rectangle Productions, Wild Bunch, 2018).

⁹ T. Kan, 2021.

¹⁰ T. Kan, 2021.

¹¹ T. Kan, 2021.

¹² T. Kan, 2021.





ENTER THE VOID: AN ORAL HISTORY

by Steven T. Hanley

Gaspar Noé, the Argentine-born French native, has been disrupting cinema and polarising opinions, receiving both huge acclaim and walk-outs at his screenings, since his 1998 debut, *I Stand Alone* (*Seul contre tous*). Set in France, the film follows a character known only as The Butcher (Philippe Nahon), a middle-aged ex-con and former butcher plagued by racist, misogynist and homophobic thoughts and a hair-trigger temper. Through an endless storm of hate-fuelled monologues, the viewer is locked inside his head for three pivotal days, climaxing in the film's most infamous scene, forewarned by a title card flashing on screen – "YOU HAVE 30 SECONDS TO LEAVE THE CINEMA" – followed by a 30 second countdown.

He was back in 2002 with *Irreversible* (*Irréversible*), the arthouse rape-revenge drama told in reverse. With its powerhouse performances, dizzying camera and extreme sexual violence, it cemented his reputation as both *enfant terrible* and auteur.

Following the worldwide success of his previous film, Noé took his vision even further with his magnum opus, the drug opera *Enter the Void* (2009). Photographed in the Yakuza-controlled sex district of Tokyo, the shoot left even Harmony Korine in awe when he came to visit Noé on set, declaring that he'd "never seen a set like it before".

A psychedelic tour of life after death, seen entirely from the point of view of a young American drug dealer and addict living in Tokyo with his stripper sister (Paz de la Huerta), *Enter the Void* features Noé's trademarks of visually dazzling camera techniques and punishing sound via his go-to composer Thomas Bangler of Daft Punk.



Noe has repeatedly pushed the boundaries of cinema and censorship and explored the beauty, darkness and fragility of life through relationships, sex, violence, drugs, altered states awash in neon, strobe lights and orange hues.

I was forewarned that Gaspar is notorious for being hard to pin down, often not answering his phone for days. He also doesn't like long interviews. After a month of waiting, in true Noé fashion, I got an email saying we could meet the following day. Through a mutual friend, he had agreed to spend an hour with me to discuss his career. I travelled to Paris to meet the incredibly chilled and soft-spoken Gaspar in his production office.

We spoke in depth about his films, his techniques, superhero movies, the Japanese mafia and ripping off film production companies for budgets in an attempt to try and understand the most exciting and fucked-up director working in modern cinema.

Let's go back to *Irreversible*, because the origin of *Enter the Void* is linked to it. Can you tell me how you convinced Monica Bellucci and Vincent Cassel to be in the film?



Gaspar Noe: I ran into Vincent in a night club one night and he asked, "What are you preparing? Me and Monica would love to work with you." I said, "Oh, I have this project but now you're too famous, and they'll never accept it. It's a love story between a boy and a girl that turns bad and I want it to be very sexual because that's the essence of passion between people of that age."

They said they'd be interested, so I found producers to do it. You have to remember they were the magic couple in French cinema — like Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise. So if they say yes, you can get it made. The producers said, "If you want to do a love story with Vincent and Monica, we have the money. We'll take care of everything!"

I finally gave them the treatment and they discussed it for hours. They said they couldn't do it because this level of intimacy was the only thing they had left in their own private life. They didn't want to expose their bodies above a certain level because they felt invaded by the press, their neighbours and men were so crazy about Monica. They didn't think they could handle it.



So where did the *Irreversible* script come into play?

Gaspar Noe: They still wanted to do a movie with me. So I said, "OK! We have producers, we have the financiers and we have you. Let's do another movie." Very quickly, I came up with the idea and there was no explicit sex – so they said "OK!" We also now had Albert Dupontel, who is another famous actor in France. Now he's a big director. He was the third character, so with their three big names and my smaller name we agreed to do this rape-revenge movie told backwards. And that's how the whole thing happened; it was like a bank robbery!

There was no script, just page outlines, and it was shot a bit like my last movie, in chronological order and very quickly.

Where did this incredible use of the camera come from? the camera is doing 360-degree rotations, it's climbing up the walls and spinning. I had never seen shots like it before.

Gaspar Noe: Well, I was already thinking and planning *Enter the Void* before shooting

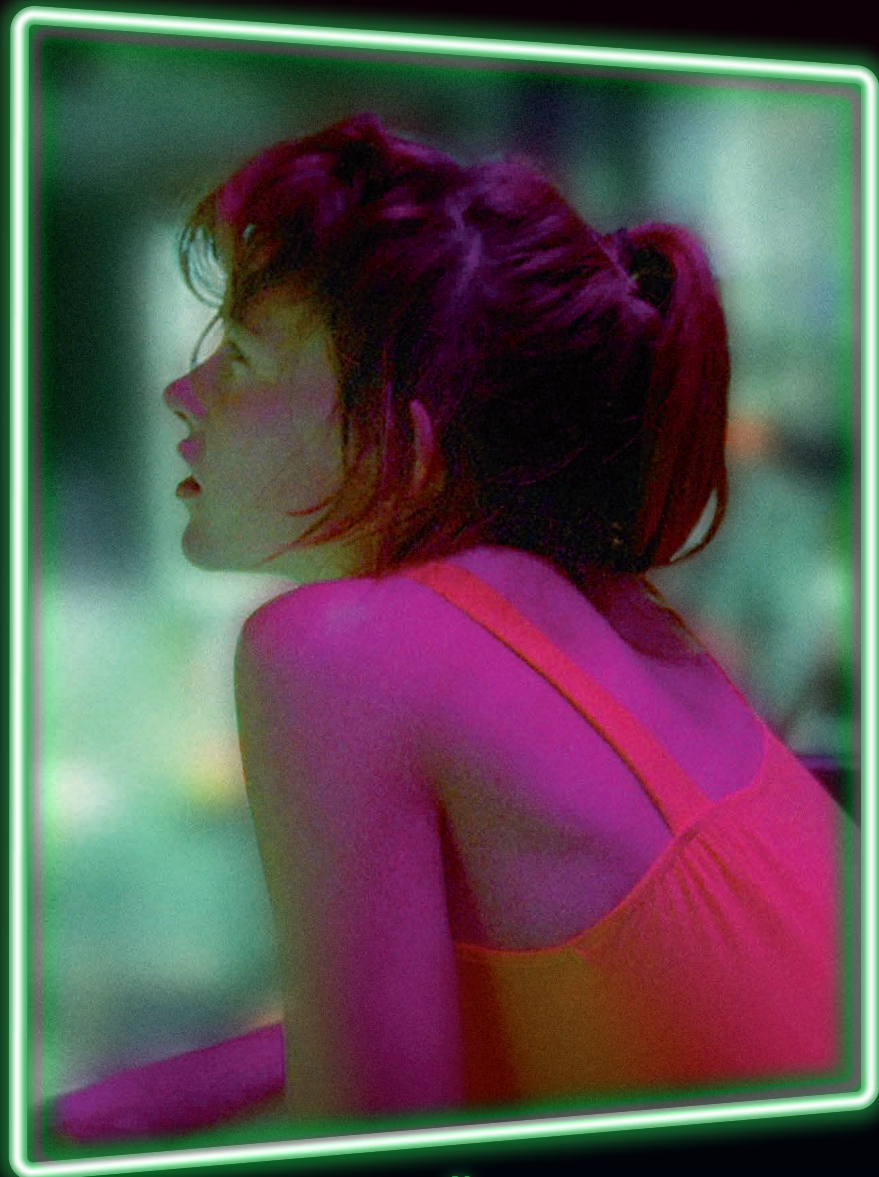


Irreversible, and I was already thinking, "How am I going to shoot it?" So in a way it was a kind of a visual and cinematic rehearsal for *Enter the Void*. I was watching experimental movies and I'm obsessed with *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968), where the camera is spinning all the time, upside down, sometimes on its side, and in the scene of astronauts floating in space the camera is floating too. On the film set we had a camera crane. I just started playing with it and moving it, experimenting and watching the video image on the monitor and I thought, "Wow, this really looks crazy!" I wanted the movie to look like a mushroom trip. (Laughs)

When you were filming *Enter the Void*, I heard you had to bribe the mafia.

Gaspar Noe: It's true. In Shinjuku, Tokyo, because of the Yakuza there are many zones where you have to pay to be able to shoot there. There is an area called Kabukichō where there are love hotels in the red light district. They are run by some kind of mob boss. Also, sometimes one block belongs to one family and then the next two blocks belong to another family and you cannot work fully in those streets if you don't speak to these guys. You pay them in cash or you can drop it into their account. Luckily we had a line producer in Japan who had the right contacts.





This was your biggest budget and most ambitious film to date. How did you find the experience?

Gaspar Noe: In Japan, I would say I was very happy, but I was very stressed because the shooting was very complicated and I had never done and will probably never do a shoot as complicated again. The Japanese crew and the production team all wanted to make decisions one or two or three weeks in advance and you only have one chance because they don't like you changing your mind. So my head was burning because every minute I had to give definitive answers about subjects that I couldn't answer at the time! I had to be very careful about what I said because words were like contracts. If you tell your set designer to paint the wall in red and then you change your mind and prefer it to be in pink, you can't! It's seen as offensive, like, "No, you already said red. It's done." My head was burning for a few months while I was shooting there and I could not sleep, so sometimes I was going out for drinks or going to a nightclub, and I would finally go to my bed at four in the morning, and at 7 a.m. someone was knocking on my door. For the three months that we shot, I probably slept three hours a night.

I've noticed, when watching your movies back to back, there's always a split second incident or a life-changing moment that comes out of nowhere.

Gaspar Noe: It can be a car crash or it can be a misinterpretation like in *Carne*, where the guy thinks this girl was raped because she's bleeding, but actually she's just had her first period and then he goes and stabs a man and everything falls apart

I had a car crash when I was a kid. (Pauses) There are moments where you get into an accident and you've escaped and it's all been very quick.



Nathaniel Brown (Oscar)

What was the shoot like? It seems like such a technical movie. How was that as an actor?

I had never acted before this film, so the entire process was new and exciting to me. Gaspar had an incredibly ambitious vision for the film that required a lot of interesting camera, set and acting wizardry. One of the most interesting memories from it was that I had to shoot almost all of the indoor scenes with my feet splayed out to not hit my head on the doorframes and ceiling due to my height.

The mirror scene was also entirely a trick of camera and set wizardry, with a set built in the exact opposite to create a reflection. It was very hard to shoot.

What's Gaspar like as a director to work with?

It was an amazing experience. Gaspar is a passionate creative with wild visions and a sweetheart to work with. People who do things "differently" are naturally misunderstood, which I think Gaspar often is, but the work speaks for itself. He was also very receptive to ideas, we bonded over electronic music — and both really loved the group LFO. He used their song "Freak" for the opening sequence. But it was all really fun and I was embracing every moment of it. Again, it was really my first time doing anything like that, and I was so interested in how a movie was made. It was like school to me.

How is it working with Paz?

Paz is a sweetheart, and an amazing actress!

Any memories or crazy stories from the shoot? Please fill me in!

One of my fondest memories was shooting at the Daft Punk Alive 2007 concert — unfortunately this footage wasn't used — and I've been dying to see it ever since. I think about it often.

Steven T. Hanley is the founder and curator of Deeper Into Movies, a London-based events series dedicated to screening important contemporary films and overlooked gems, alongside lectures on cinema, in-person conversations and live score performances.







ABOUT THE TRANSFER

Enter the Void is presented in its original aspect ratio of 2.39:1 with 5.1 and 2.0 stereo sound. The High Definition master was provided by Wild Bunch.

As per director Gaspar Noé's original intentions, the film is presented at 25 frames per second.



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by **Michael Mackenzie**
Executive Producers **Kevin Lambert, Francesco Simeoni**
Technical Producer **James White**
Technical Assistant **James Pearcey**
QC **Aidan Doyle, Michael Mackenzie**
Production Assistant **Samuel Thiery**
Disc Mastering **The Engine House Media Services / Leroy Moore**
Subtitling **The Engine House Media Services**
Design **Obviously Creative**

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Emmanuelle Castro, Isabelle Denis, Eva Diederix, Steven T. Hanley,
Alexandra Heller-Nicholas, Rich Johnson, Tom Kan, Félicité Lambel, Gaspar Noé,
Alexandre Poncet, Ellen Sueur, Jon Towlson, Jonathan Zaurin

