



AFTERSCHOOL

USA | 2008 | 120m | 18

Director: Antonio Campos

Screenplay: Antonio Campos

Cinematography: Jody Lee Lipes

Editing: Antonio Campos

Original Music: GoBlimpsGo

Leading Players: Ezra Miller, Jeremy Allen White, Michael Stuhlbarg, Adison Timlin, Rosemarie DeWitt

filmnote

A young internet addict captures the drugs overdose of two school girls on camera. That is the basic premise of this dark and twisting film by Italian/Brazilian director Antonio Campos. But the story becomes much thicker as the film progresses and we the audience begin to question those on screen.

Veteran filmmaker Antonio Campos has been making films since the age of 13 so it's no wonder that his controversial *Afterschool* has such an outstanding sense of style and awareness. At an American boarding school, a young student named Robert has accidentally filmed the death of two classmates. In order to help the students with the healing process, they are set an assignment, to make an audio-visual memorial to the two girls. However, all does not go to plan and paranoia begins to take hold of the teachers and students.

Robert is not happy at his boarding school and these periods of unhappiness are marked by phone calls to his mother. He tells her he doesn't like it there and that he doesn't think he is liked by anyone. It becomes more and more apparent throughout the film that Robert is a lustful and angry boy, but surely he wouldn't kill, would he?

Robert's angst-ridden nature is well known throughout school and questions begin to arise over the connections between him, his camera and the death of the school girls.

Campos has been noted as saying he drew on his own school experiences to create the world of *Afterschool*; a boarding school, where one can often feel trapped and isolated, which is brought across well in the film. Campos describes how other influences on the film include Michael Haneke whose particular film style would unfold slowly in order to create tension, something that can be seen clearly in the way *Afterschool* begins to unravel. Another influence is Frederic Wiseman who is the master of knowing how and when to use an extended scene, something that Campos took



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B

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D

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onboard and used to his advantage. This is when he began to view *Afterschool* as a documentary. Campos would even go as far as shooting scenes that would not be used to give the actors a sense of depth to their experience of the moment. This style granted the actors a lot of freedom, giving the film a very rich naturalistic style.

Recent trends in media allow us to view a huge array of footage and screen action from our own bedrooms and this is one such reason why Robert is fascinated with them and hence why for 107 minutes we are fascinated with them too. This is represented in the way in which the film is shot from Robert's point of view. Campos' decision to make the film in a documentary style meant that actors could play out entire scenes in front of the camera whilst they were constantly watched, quietly observed, reflecting the content of the film and adding to the realism.

The plot of this film delves into how new technologies interfere with the age-old teenage questions of power, pleasure and identity within school. Although Robert is seen to feel alone and disliked at school, he has two close friends and enjoys the audio-visual club. He seems like the average anxious, angst-ridden teenage boy. But what he captures on film is more real than he ever imagined. There is a mystery here of sorts, a visual exploration into the new media dominated world through the very lens that is being questioned.

BFF Film Note by Amy Tuckwell

Tomorrow at Bath Film Festival 2009...

Thursday 19 November, 7.00pm (doors 6.30pm) | Chapel Arts | £6 / £4

Echoes of Home / Heimatklänge

Stefan Schwitert | Switzerland/Germany | 2007 | 82m | U

This remarkable film explores the raw power of the human voice. Set against the vast and wild Alpine landscape, it's as beautiful to watch as it is to listen to. *An Alpine horn player will serenade you before the screening from 6.30pm*

Thursday 19 November, 8.50pm | Chapel Arts | £6 / £4

The Sky Crawlers

Mamoru Oshii | Japan | 122m | 15tbc

In this nightmarish world, war is a media contrivance played out between gigantic corporations to reassure the populace that things are being taken care of. The meditative, dystopian worldview of Mamoru "Ghost In The Shell" Oshii's latest anime is balanced by stunning aerial action sequences and a muted but striking beauty.

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