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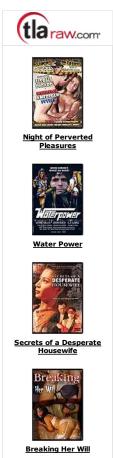
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Director: Maria Beatty

Cast: Janna Lisa Dombrowsky, Martine Erthel, Hans Piesbergen, Susanna Sachsse

GM Films / PAL Region 0 / ab 16 / 16X9 Widescreen / English / 91 Minutes / Purchase from GmFlilms.com!

Bandaged was a fresh film for this reviewer. No trailers, no photo stills and no online articles had passed by this guy's eyes. If I saw even one trailer for it, I wouldn't have chanced due to its overwhelming drama element, but if I didn't give the film that chance, I would have never thought to compare it to the outstanding likes of Sam Raimi's Darkman, the body horror themes of David Cronenberg and the attributes of mad science. This German erotic horror encompasses more subtleties of many fears than the majority of slasher films do with its one fear – a killer in a mask. Bandaged invokes the fear of loss, love, beauty, past, existence, failure and when you throw graphic scenes of taboo lesbian sex into the mix, there rises a titillating film that speaks loosely on the fears people face every day.

Lucille is on the verge of her 18th birthday and all she wants as a present is to attend college to study poetry. Her father Dr. Arthur sees things differently from a more logical standpoint and refuses her request. Being constantly sheltered by her father for fear of losing her and never being able to please him, Lucille's depressions reach their peak as she tries to commit suicide with a jar of acid from her father's medical stash. With her head completely wrapped in bandages, Arthur hires Joan, a nurse with a spotty past, to take care of his daughter while he works on a unique and highly illegal skin graft method for the third degree burns on her face. The young Lucille and the older Joan hide a forbidden sexual passion from Arthur leaving him to his unstable work.

In my article introduction, I had mentioned there being a connection between *Bandaged* and another, and more renowned movie. For the longest time, I couldn't for the life of me think of the film that was so strikingly familiar. Then, it struck me like lightning – *Darkman*. The skin graft's instability to sunlight was eerily similar. If you've ever been cool enough to have seen *Darkman*, the dark kept the tissue from dissolving whereas the sunlight turns it to goo in exactly 99 minutes. In *Bandaged*, the idea is a bit more simple. The skin graft, when exposed to sunlight, cracks and sheds. It was interesting seeing Joan "muff dive" on Lucille while half her face was cracking and melting off.

This brings me to the Cronenberg connection. The decaying dead skin graft that sizzles and then slides from Lucille's face is a pure example of body horror. When we are first introduced to the damaged Lucille, she has become a monster of sorts; her bandaged face is expressionless and one whole side of her face is missing. Arthur, portraying a well-intentioned physician, holds true to the qualities of a mad scientist. He works around the clock in his laboratory perfecting his skin graft. There are similarities between him and Mary Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein. Arthur tries to revive dead tissue much the same as Frankenstein reviving a life from death. Arthur also criticizes other physicians in his fields as idiots as which Dr. Frankenstein did as well. Lastly, Arthur had to destroy the lesbian he created in Lucille much like Dr. Frankenstein had to destroy his monstrous creation.

The horror in *Bandaged* is as plain as daylight, but you should keep an open mind. Due to its overdosing melodramatic effect, one can easily skip its gothic qualities. Besides, who can pass up on any film that is produced by Abel Ferrara, the man behind *The Driller Killer*? Also, this is my first viewing of the German expressionist inspired director Maria Beatty and she intertwines female sexualities in regards to fetishes and S&M into her films. *Bandaged*, Beatty's latest work, has me hooked on wanting more of her earlier work. Check it out on DVD by GM Films because I'm sure you'll be quite pleased with its subtle horrors and its direct sexual references.

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