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'In the Fade' (Aus dem nichts) - A dark drama at Orinda Theatre

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

German screenwriter, producer and director Fatih Akin created "In the Fade," a drama that tackles an all too contemporary tragedy: terrorism. Akin once said that the violence happening all over the world made him very angry; from that anger was born a movie of violence, destruction, injustice and revenge.

Katja is a beautiful young German woman whose life is shattered when her Kurdish husband and her son are killed in a terrorist attack. When the normal system fails her, she takes it into her own hands to get justice.

Former top model and international actress Diane Kruger ("Inglorious Bastards") leads the film with a powerful interpretation that granted her a well-deserved Best Actress award at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival.

The genesis of the movie began in 2011, according to Akin, when the neo-Nazi group National Socialist Underground was prosecuted for killing 10 people, mostly Turks, over a seven-year period. He said what infuriated him most was that for all these years, the police, the media and the justice system all assumed that if these people were

killed, it was because they must have been drug dealers and that they had been killed by the Turkish mafia.

The director added that while the idea of the movie started with a political theme, as the character of the mother developed, the political content of the movie began to fade, and it became more of a film about grief.

Kruger explained this was why she was interested in the film, and in playing this role, which is so far from herself. She explained that the story needed to be told of what happens to those who survive and have lost loved ones, and how they can continue to live with the horror of what happened and with injustice.

The violence of the terrorist acts infuses this entire film. As Kruger put it in one interview, we are in a world where that reality is here to stay, and films must account for this distressing part of our reality. While the film's radical ending may not have been necessary to express the real and terrible drama victims' families go through, Akin said that he does not judge the path that Katja, the main character, takes, and that each viewer will make his or her own judgment.

"In the Fade" received the 2018 Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film. It will play at the Orinda Theatre as part of the International Film Showcase for at least one week starting March 23. For more information, visit lamorindatheatres.com.

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Perlmutter gallery exhibition challenges the mind and pushes boundaries

By Sophie Braccini

Expect to be challenged in a positive way when you visit Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery – challenged to encounter art in a way that is different from what is usually expected, and challenged to reflect as well as to experience the art that is on display. The current "Bio-Genesis" exhibit, which is on display until April 7, propels visitors through the intersection of art and science, delighting the intellect and stirring emotion.

On the wall of the gallery located at 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette, beautiful and strange creatures seem to have crawled out from ancient times, coming back to life in vivid colors. The detailed paper sculptures of Judith White Marcellini come straight out of the Cambrian Explosion, when these strange creatures emerged on Earth 540 million years ago.



Parents and children at Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery experience creatures of the Cambrian period as seen through the eyes of an artist.

Photo Jennifer Perlmutter

White Marcellini recreated the creatures in a larger scale – most were only a few millimeters long – using collected fossils from the period. From the flat images set in ancient rocks, she visualized and generated 3D organisms painted in brilliant hues. With the displays, the artist provides explanatory cards that describe what these living things were like.

Also set on the wall is a striking timeline starting with the dawn of existence, represented by a scale of what we know as the evolution of life on Earth, with the arrival of mankind represented by a sliver at the top of the scale. Like the artist, one can't help but wonder what caused the Cambrian Explosion, what caused the relatively sudden multiplication and diversification of life forms after billions of years in a world of simple, single cell life forms.

Next to the creatures from our past, Perlmutter offers a juxtaposition with Jill Taffet's work, whose visual creations explore the relation between creation and consciousness. Taffet is known for her large-scale immersive video installations, motion drawings and New Media. Taffet would have liked to

fill an entire dark room with motion drawings at the Perlmutter gallery, but the space does not permit it. Instead, screens have been installed to exhibit the artist's lively creations.

Each animation is made of original paintings, created frame by frame by Taffet. The short videos show the transformation of her vision and repeats itself continuously. Frames representing a specific phase of the work can also be purchased and displayed. Visitors can download an app on a tablet or smartphone and when pointing to the still painting, the entire animation comes to life on the tablet. The artist says her pursuit is to discover new ways of looking, thinking and experiencing the universe in which we live. Her intention is to create phenomenological experiences that evoke wonder and provoke inquiry.

The artistic animations that she created can be purchased on a thumb drive and projected on any screen.

The Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery is open Wednesday through Saturday, from noon to 6 p.m. and by appointment. For more information, visit jenniferperlmuttergallery.com.

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