

Latest Reviews

The Bloody Child

Anyone who has seen a film by Nina Menkes will have experienced the whirl of dark pain embodied on screen by Tinka Menkes, the filmmaker's sister and collaborator. The pair's earlier work includes the stunning *Magdalena Viraga* and the more recent *Queen of Diamonds*, each of which stars Tinka as a woman almost completely broken by the weight of patriarchal oppression.

In Nina Menkes's latest feature, *The Bloody Child*, Tinka plays a Marine Corps officer who has become almost completely numb to the violence of everyday life. Shot primarily on the Marine base in Twentynine Palms, the film travels backward from the arrest of another marine for murder, through the reverberations of his act on Tinka's character. This movement is almost hallucinatory: sounds, words, and images repeat, and the scene of the arrest is ruptured by shots of Tinka naked in a strange but lush garden. While the film is based on a true incident, Menkes eschews the realism rampant on nighttime cop shows for an internal realism, characterized by uncanny voices, meditative visions, and an obsessive return to the scene of the crime. All of these repeat over and over, slowly accruing force, but not necessarily reaching culmination. Disturbing and at times beautiful, the film creates an alternate rendering of the horrific act, acknowledging the layers of pain and violence beyond the instance of overt aggression. (Holly Willis)

■ American Cinematheque at Raleigh Studios, Charlie Chaplin Theater, Fri 8. Special appearance by director Nina Menkes.