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FILM SERIES

# An Outsider's Outsider

March 3, 2022



A scene from "The Bloody Child" by Nina Menkes, whose films are the subject of a weeklong retrospective at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Arbelos Films

The independent filmmaker Nina Menkes defies obvious categorization. [Writing in The New York Times in 2012](#), Dennis

Lim, now the director of programming for the New York Film Festival, which played a restored version of Menkes's "The Bloody Child" last fall, called the director "an outsider both on the indie film scene and in avant-garde circles."

First shown in 1996, "The Bloody Child" is one of two of her features receiving daily screenings at the Brooklyn Academy of Music starting on Friday as part of a broader, weeklong Menkes retrospective. The film, which enigmatically pivots around brusque Marines involved in a murder arrest, tosses out conventional rules of chronology, image and sound; Menkes's distanced compositions refuse to direct the eye, and as mixed, the dialogue often seems to misdirect the ear.

Also showing daily, and similarly nonlinear, is "Magdalena Viraga," which premiered in 1986 but apparently is receiving its first full run in New York. Like "The Bloody Child," it stars Menkes's sister, Tinka Menkes, who delivers an affectless, almost somnambulant performance as an impassive prostitute detained for a killing.

BEN KENIGSBURG, *New York Times*, March 3, 2022