

# The AFI FEST Interview: KILL ME PLEASE Director Anita Rocha da Silveira

## Description

This debut film follows 15-year-old Bia and her friends as they grow up in the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro. As the girls try to navigate the usual pitfalls of puberty, a wave of murders sweeps the city and bodies begin to appear in the groupâ??s usual stomping grounds. What starts as morbid curiosity slowly starts to infect their young lives, and after an encounter with death, Bia will do anything to stay alive. This audacious vision announces filmmaker Anita Rocha da Silveira as a rising talent whose mastery of dark subject matter is strikingly bold and altogether entertaining. The production, packed with killer performances from its young cast and brilliant music, is a giallo-tinged take on puberty and the experience of living in a girlâ??s body. As it reaches its tense conclusion, the alchemy of styles



Anita Rocha da Silveira

screens as part of AFI FEST 2016â??s New Auteurs section.

**AFI: Your film plays cleverly with horror film references. What inspired you?**

**Anita Rocha da Silveira:** Iâ??m particularly fond of David Lynch. The TWIN PEAKS pilot and BLUE VELVET were very important references. He inspired me to create an alternative universe where I could exaggerate the tones. Most importantly, however, I like the way he portrays flaming desire within

a society thatâ??s doomed to fail. I think mostly in characters such as Donna Hayward [on TWIN PEAKS], who feel everything so intensely that they seem just about to faint.

Iâ??m also a fan of Dario Argento and got some inspiration from films like THE STENDHAL SYNDROME. Other essential references are Brian De Palmaâ??s CARRIE, Jacques Tourneurâ??s CAT PEOPLE and Claire Denisâ??s TROUBLE EVERY DAY. Some might not consider TROUBLE EVERY DAY a genre piece but, for me, itâ??s one of the greatest films of the 21st century and an amazing modern vampire tale.

**AFI: Your lead actor Valentina Herszage is an incredible discovery and a real-life high-schooler. Talk about your collaboration.**

**ARDS:** It was very important to be able to work with teens of the same age as the characters. I didnâ??t want a 20-year-old playing a 15-year-old girl. I wanted to find teens who were going through similar dilemmas, [and had] faces that carried the marks of a stage in our lives when our bodies are constantly changing.

We knew we needed to find new talents, so we announced the casting call in drama classes and on Facebook. We saw around 300 girls in our first audition, then I picked 50 for a more specific activity. I finally came down to 13 for one last audition, from which I chose the leading role and the supporting characters.



Valentina was 15 years old during the shoot, and she fascinated me because of her love for horror movies â?? her favorite is THE SHINING. Other actresses were more prepared but she was fearless and that kind of energy was fundamental to the character. Together, we talked about sexuality, desires, experiences with death, violent impulses. She was always completely committed.

**AFI: Did the themes of religion come from your own personal upbringing, or did they erupt from the setting of the film?**

**ARDS:** In Brazil, weâ??ve been seeing evangelical churches grow at an exponential rate. Itâ??s the fastest growing religion in the country. Every election year we see the evangelical bench in congress increase, as well as the rise of conservative thought, along with the daily attack on womenâ??s and LGBT rights.

We have several evangelical churches here, following different trends. For KILL ME PLEASE, I took my inspiration from a real church, with a big temple in the area where I shot, which targets a younger public. This church has teenage pastors, uses surf boards as altars and also pop music to attract followers. For me it was important to show the church because itâ??s part of the lives of many Brazilian youths, and also a counterpoint to [lead character] Biaâ??s desires and wishes. It represents a conservative discourse Iâ??m fed up with, mostly about how a woman is supposed to behave.

*Free tickets for KILL ME PLEASE will be available on AFI.com beginning November 1.*




(Source: http://www.blog.afi.com)

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