



Friday 29 September 2017

## #CINEMAFORTHESENSES BYRON BAY FILM FESTIVAL 6 – 15 OCTOBER 2017

### Meet the Filmmaker: *Consent*

*Byron Bay filmmaker Clare Sladden's short dramatic feature gives a new twist to internet dating. Gail D Knight spoke to Clare about her film, which screens at BBFF 2017.*

Many a depiction of unspeakable human acts has been portrayed boldly on the big screen – the use of a child molester as the main character in *Lolita*; a cannibalistic serial killer in *The Silence of the Lambs*.

We know these movie types for their starkly clear depictions of the darker side of humanity.

In the movie ***Consent***, we get to know two virtual strangers, a dark request and a particularly chilling twist in the film's tale.

What writer and co-director **Clare Sladden** (her sister, Jasmine, was the other director) asks you to endure is both endearing and grimly breathtaking. "I wanted to create a completely untraceable situation as to how two people meet," Clare recounts. "And I wanted the audience to see the man as somebody willing to do something so unthinkable for someone that he didn't know."

To divulge many details of the film would be to destroy the cinema experience, so we'll tread carefully here. As judiciously as the lead actor, **Jesse Velik** does the moment he's let into the apartment of his co-star, **Sonya Suarez**.

It seems a story of salvation. You're handed love. You're nurtured, nourished even, when a meal is shared. But all along, our directors craftily converse with your subconscious, whispering not-so-sweet nothings that within one of the strangers, danger lurks.

This film will impact some viewers to the point of gasps and expletives. When I refer to whether Clare has contemplated how this effect may stay with people after the

film's end, she says, "I didn't really think about it. My main goal was ... I wanted to create a story that you would care about and be involved in".

She then surprises me again, but this bit isn't in the film. "My natural inclination in film is comedy/drama. I do struggle to tell people what this is about when they ask me, as happened at the **Palm Springs International Film Festival**. The reaction has been incredibly positive."

It seems that sometimes a film can even ruffle the feathers of its creator. Clare had to sleep in her spare room for a couple of weeks to recalibrate after the stress of the shoot. Why?

Because the most impactful scene was shot in her very own bedroom.

There are those chills again.

And what's next for Clare? A comedy web series to be shot around November. Her feature film script, *Broken Head* (an Australian road-trip/dramedy) has received some good attention at the Academy Nichols Fellowship (connected to the Oscars). Clare's even had some positive approaches from US management.

We seem to raise our choc tops in solidarity and box office support for disturbing flicks like *Consent*. Is it that we're keen to recognise others who we suspect capable of these acts, or connect a possibility to ourselves? Whatever the reason, it's the type of dark indulgence that seems to forever have a place in the cinematic landscape.

Having garnered a Women in Film award at **Fresh Flix**, and having screened already in Florida and Mexico film festivals, *Consent* will screen at the Byron Bay Film Festival 2017 at 7.30pm on Friday 13.

## **THE FESTIVAL**

**The Byron Bay Film Festival** is illuminated with two dazzling red carpet gala events in the heart of town. Opening Night offers a chance for industry networking and a taste of the flavour of the festival to come, and features a highlight film screening. The culminating celebration event is an exciting night of recognition for filmmakers, the festival, Byron Bay, and the international film industry, and not to be missed. Early ticket purchases are recommended to avoid disappointment to these two popular events.

The 11th Annual Byron Bay Film Festival is held on Friday 6 – Sunday 15 October 2017 in multiple venues throughout Byron Bay and surrounding suburbs.

Program OUT NOW.

**Tickets are on sale now via [www.bbff.com.au](http://www.bbff.com.au)**

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