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TORONTO INTERNATIONAL
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CLAIR OBSCUR BY Yeşim Ustaoglu



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CLAIR OBSCUR

DRAMA / TURKEY - GERMANY - POLAND - FRANCE / 2016 / RUNNING TIME 105' MIN / SCREENING FORMAT HD/ DCP / IMAGE RATIO 1:2.39

ORIGINAL TITLE: TEREDDÜT



CAST

Chehnaz	Funda Eryiğit
Elmas	Ecem Uzun
Cem	Mehmet Kurtuluş
Umut	Okan Yalabık
Koca / Elma's Husband	Serkan Keskin
Kaynana / Mother in Law	Sema Poyraz

CREW

Writer and Director	Yeşim Ustaoglu
Producers	Yeşim Ustaoglu, Titus Kreyenberg, Marianne Slot,
Co-Producers	Klaudia Smieja, Eliza Oczkowska
Associate Producer	Meinolf Zurhorst - ZDF / Arte
Executive Producer	Serkan Çakarer
Director of Photography	Michael Hammon
Sound Engineer	Bruno Tarrière
Editors	Agnieszka Glińska PSM, Svetolik Mica Zajc
Music	Antoni Komasa-Łazarkiewicz
Sound Design	Guido Zettier
Set Design	Osman Özcan
Costume Design	Şenay Çıtak, Şeda Yılmaz
Make-Up Artist	Canel Tekiner
Produced by	unafilm
	Ustaoglu Film
	slot machine
	Aeroplan Film
in Coproduction with	

CLAIR OBSCUR

LOGLINE

Clair Obscur is the psychological dance of two women who are deprived of and distanced from their natural right to mature and discover themselves, to love and be loved and to sustain a real relationship of their choosing.

SYNOPSIS

Chehnaz is an attractive woman in her early thirties and works as a psychiatrist. She has a lovely home and a handsome husband, Cem, who is a successful architect. They come across as an enviable couple. Both live in a hip neighbourhood in a flat that they designed and furnished in a state-of-the-art style.

Chehnaz has been assigned to a public hospital in a small, remote seaside town to complete her mandatory 2-year duty. Instead of settling down here, she has a room in a hotel which is situated on the coast. On winter nights, in her transitory home, she watches the roaring dark waves from her window overlooking the sea. During the week Chehnaz treats her patients in the town's hospital, looking forward to the weekend when she will go back to Istanbul and her husband. Her only wish is to complete these two years as quickly as possible and return to her real life in Istanbul.

However during this routine, Chehnaz a sexual problem with her husband becomes more evident- a problem that she is not able to face. Making love to Cem seems to be a unilateral act aimed merely at satisfying her husband's narcissistic needs rather than being a mutual search for pleasure.

After a stormy night the course of Chehnaz's life is changed forever, when she meets Elmas, a young woman from the town. Elmas was married-off to a distant relative and came to the town a few years ago. Hers was a forced marriage arranged by her father. She survives as best she can far away from her family, in a hostile environment with an older man she doesn't love and with a mother-in-law who needs special care due to diabetes. Elmas also has encounters great difficulties having sex with her husband.

This stormy night breaks the vicious circle of her suffocating, endless flow of days. After the storm has settled, Elmas is found more dead than alive by the police and arrested for homicide. Her husband and her mother in law lie dead in their beds. After having been examined by the coroner, she is brought to Chehnaz's office for a psychiatric examination.

Chehnaz helps Elmas to confront not only the trauma of that

stormy night. This encounter will lead both women to undertake an intense process of self-questioning, confronting deeply hidden problems and anxieties.

The encounter of these two women who could not be more different is a confrontation of different cultures, values and traditions. But as both women share similar anxieties and suppressions they manage to open the door to new possibilities and lives.

DIRECTORS NOTE BY YEŞİM USTAOĞLU

Clair Obscur is a psychological dance of two women deprived of their natural right to mature, to love and be loved, and to sustain a relationship of their choosing. The social cost of these psychological wounds reverberates from micro to macro levels throughout a society that is rotting from within.

I can clearly perceive that the successful future and health of a developing society lies in breaking the cycle of destructive cultural practices as they are passed on from one generation to the next, especially those that threaten and deny the freedom of women and their sexual identity and the rights of the individual to express and discover him or herself.

The film takes place in Istanbul and its nearby coastal regions. It explores the mind and soul of its main characters and shows how often, regardless of our culture, we can be weak and blind to a destructive cycle of fate, but most strikingly, it also reveals that, where humanity resides, so does the compelling power of compassion and renewal.

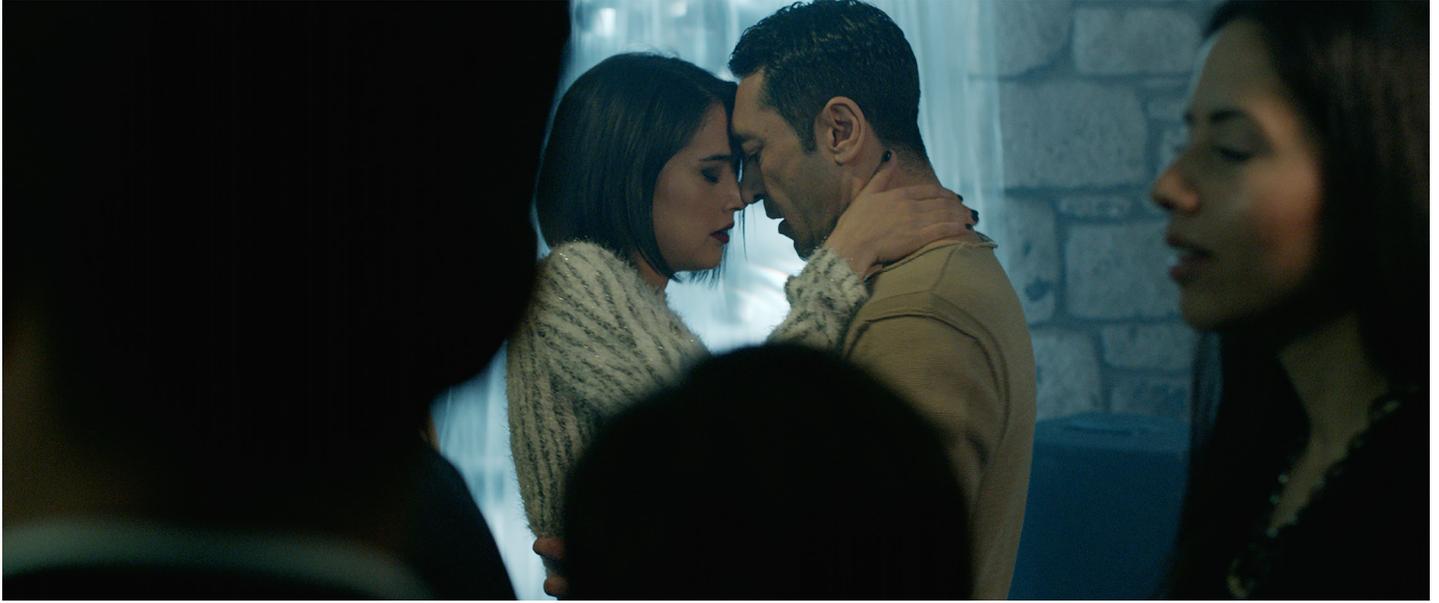
Yeşim Ustaoglu

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Chehnaz is an attractive woman in her early thirties. She is a psychiatrist. She has a lovely home and a good-looking husband that she worships. With her husband Cem, they make an enviable couple. They live in a hip neighborhood of Istanbul in a house that they themselves have designed and furnished in a state-of-the-art style. Sehnaz has just finished her internship as a psychiatrist, and now she has got to complete her 2-year-long compulsory employment. She has been assigned to a public hospital in a small, out-of-the-way seaside town 'Karasu'. Every weekend, with the hope of making this transitional period a bit more bearable, Sehnaz runs away from this gloomy town and goes to Istanbul to her husband and the life that she's used to.

Cem is 42 years old, handsome and successful architect. He works as a prominent designer in a firm that designs smart

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buildings. He is a rational-minded person, mastering perfectly all kinds of cutting-edge technology. With her wife Sehnaz, they live in a chicly decorated house with a garden. His self-centeredness and ambition gradually becomes a kind of narcissistic characteristic. He is more satisfied by his own body and fantasies.

Elmas - 16 years old, is a young girl living in the town. Two years ago she was married off to a man in his forties who ran a furniture shop and so came to this town (Karasu) back then. It was a forced marriage decided upon by her father. Her family had made this decision for her and she lives a desperate and unhappy existence. She is obliged to take care for her mother in law who lives next door and suffers breathing and walking difficulties due to diabetes. Her whole life is confined to four walls and filled with housekeeping chores.

Umut is a 38 years old forensic physician. He lives in Karasu alone in a isolated and wooden house facing an amazing fjord. The house itself and the way it is decorated very simply with plain furniture also reflects his attitude towards life: basic and easy-going. He is a man with no ties or plans who lives close to nature and his relationship with death and life intrigued Chehnaz, even impressed her.

BIOGRAPHIES CAST

FUNDA ERYIGIT AS CHEHNAZ

Born in Istanbul in 1984, Funda Eryigit graduated from Istanbul State Conservatory of Stage Arts Theater Department, following her bachelor degree in Political Science. She is an acclaimed Stage Actor and awarded as Best Actress in 18th Sadri Alisik The-

ater and Film Awards for her performance in the play Sessizlik and nominated for the Best Actress in Afife Theater Awards. She is also known for films and TV series as 'Eski Hikaye' (2013), 'Ev'(2010) and 'Canim Ailem' (2008).

MEHMET KURTULUŞ AS CEM

Born in 1972 in Turkey, Kurtuluş is a German actor of Turkish descent. He is best known for his work with German director Fatih Akin. He performed several television roles in episodes of different TV shows and continued working in theater until his big-screen debut in his main role as the young Turkish boy Gabriel in Fatih Akin's film 'Short Sharp Shock' (1998). He appeared in the successful TV mini-series 'The Tunnel' (2001), of Roland Suso Richter. Doris Dörrie chose him for her sex comedy NAKED (2002). He went back to working in television with the love film 'Love in Saigon' Kurtuluş played the main detective role of the cult German television series 'Tatort' (2007-2012).

ECEM UZUN AS ELMAS

Ecem Uzun was born in 1992 in Istanbul. She has been acting in TV series as Kucuk Sirlar (2010), Genis Zamanlar (2007) and Aliye (2004). She is still studying at Kadir Has University, Film&Drama Department.

OKAN YALABIK AS UMUT

Okan Yalabik was born in 1978 in Istanbul. He started acting in Sakip Sabanci High School Theatre Club. He graduated from Istanbul University State Conservatory. He has been featuring in numerous plays, films as PAINS OF AUTUMN (2009) and HUNTING SEASON (2010) and TV Series as 'Hatirla Sevgili' (2006),

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'Muhtesem Yuzyil' (2011) and he works for Kenter Theatre Company.

SEMA POYRAZ AS MOTHER-IN-LAW

Sema Poyraz was born in Zonguldak, Turkey, in 1950. She immigrated to Germany in 1961 and studied at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin. Since 1980 she has worked as a freelance author, director and actress. Her film production GÖLGE (1980) can be considered an early precursor of German-Turkish cinema. Sema Poyraz appears regularly on stage, in films and TV productions and as an actress at Ballhaus Naunynstraße in Berlin. She is also a social and political activist. In 2013 she won the Golden Tulip as Best Actress at the 32nd Film Festival in Istanbul for her portrayal of the mother in the movie OZUR DILERIM by Cemil Agacikoglu.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR YEŞİM USTAOĞLU

After making several award - winning shorts in Turkey, Yeşim Ustaoglu made her feature film debut with 1994's THE TRACE. The film was presented at numerous international festivals, including Moscow and Gotenburg.

Yeşim Ustaoglu received international recognition for her 1999 film, JOURNEY TO THE SUN. In competition at the Berlin Film Festival, JOURNEY TO THE SUN received the Blue Angel Award (Best European Film) and the Peace Prize. The moving story of a courageous friendship undaunted by political cruelty, JOURNEY TO THE SUN swept the İstanbul Film Festival by winning Best Film, Best Director, the FIBRESCI Prize and the Audience Award.

Her third film, WAITING FOR THE CLOUDS, the story of a woman

forced to live for 50 years with the haunting secrets of a hidden identity, was awarded NHK Sundance - International Film-maker's award. Film traveled many festival and established a strong reputation for the director. Ustaoglu's fourth film, PANDORA'S BOX tells the story of an old woman who suffers from Alzheimer disease. The film won The Best Film and The Best Actress award in San Sebastian Film Festival. Having participated many international festivals and winning many awards, the film also theatrically released in many countries.

Ustaoglu's last film ARAF also having international success, the film tells a story about two young people whose lives are caught in a vacuum! Araf won Best Film prize in Abu Dhabi Film Festival, as well as Best Performance in Moscow Tomorrow Film Festival, Best Actress Award in Tokyo Film Festival, Special Jury Award for Best Acterss Award in Pune Film Festival.

PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Ustaoglu Film is an independent production company that was founded in 2003 with the aim of producing arthouse films, documentaries and providing line production services. Ustaoglu Film is dedicated to the development of creative, innovative and visionary projects. Besides, the company is actively working on several projects which will help to institutionalize the Turkish film industry.

Filmography

- 2017 THE ESCAPE by Kenan Kavut (Turkey/Germany)
- 2012 ARAF by Yesim Ustaoglu (Turkey/ France/ Germany)
- 2010 THREE SEASONS by Murat Erun (Turkey)
- 2008 PANDORA'S BOX by Yesim Ustaoglu (Turkey/France/ Belgium/Germany)



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- 2004 WAITING FOR THE CLOUDS by Yesim Ustaoglu (France/
Germany/Greece/Turkey)
2004 LIFE ON THEIR SHOULDERS by Yesim Ustaoglu (Turkey/
France) documentary

UNAFILM

Titus Kreyenberg was an executive producer for film and television for many years before he founded his own production company unafilm in 2004. unafilm produces feature films. Straight forward and artistically challenging. Fiction and documentary. National and international. The company's films compete in internationally acknowledged film festivals around the world- Berlinale, Cannes, Toronto, San Sebastian and Karlovy Vary among them. The German-Swiss coproduction COLOURS IN THE DARK Dark with Bruno Ganz was a major success in German cinemas, the German-Turkish coproduction OUR GRAND DESPAIR by Seyfi Teoman premiered in competition at the Berlinale 2011. HELI by Amat Escalante was selected to the official competition in Cannes 2013 to win the award for Best Director. In 2014 unafilm was present in Cannes' Official Selection with its coproduction THE BRIDGES OF SARAJEVO. The Cologne and Berlin-based unafilm is an active member of ACE, EAVE, AG DOK, the German and the European Film Academy.

SLOT MACHINE

Marianne Slot is a French producer of Danish origin. She founded the independent production company Slot Machine in 1993. She has worked with Lars von Trier since 1995 from BREAKING THE WAVES to NYMPHOMANIAC. She has produced extensively in Latin America, including films by Lucrecia Martel, Lisandro Alonso, Albertina Carri and Paz Encina. In Europe she worked with Bent Hamer, Malgoska Szumowska, Juliette Garcias, Hélène de Crécy, Thomas Vinterberg, Emma Dante, Susanne Bier and Marian Crisan. Marianne Slot is the Scandinavian Delegate of the San Sebastian Film Festival since 1998 and sits on the board of directors of the Danish House in Paris since 1999. In May 2013, Marianne Slot was nominated by CNC (Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée), President of World Cinema Support. The films DOGVILLE (2003), DEAR WENDY (2004), 'MELANCHOLIA (2011), LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED (2012), PALERME (Via Castellana Bandiera)- (2013) and NYMPHOMANIAC (2013) have received Eurimages support.

AEROPLAN FILM

Polish Warsaw based Aeroplan Film is independent film studio established by Eliza Oczkowska. Aeroplan Film concentrates on international co-productions such as the French-Polish historical drama Les Innocents (Agnus Dei) by Anne Fontaine, voted by Variety as one of the best films at Sundance 2016, and the Icelandic comedy hit Rams, which won un certain regard at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival.

WORLD SALES BETA CINEMA

World sales and co-financing company Beta Cinema has established itself as a "boutique-operation" for quality feature films that combine commercial viability with artistic integrity. Prime examples are Oscar winners and worldwide B.O. hits like THE LIVES OF OTHERS, IL DIVO, MONGOL and DOWNFALL.

Current highlights include the Emma Watson, Daniel Brühl, Michael Nyqvist thriller COLONIA, Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner SAND STORM and 6 times German Film Award winner THE PEOPLE VS. FRITZ BAUER.

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