

CINEMATECA PORTUGUESA-MUSEU DO CINEMA
ANTE-ESTREIAS
20 de fevereiro de 2025

Schneewitchen / 2024

A film by Stanley Schtinter

Director Stanley Schtinter / **Producer** Gareth Evans / **Screenplay** Robert Walser (from his dramolette in 'Fairy Tales', translated from German by James Reidel and Daniele Pantano) / **Cinematography** Sean Price Williams / **Sound design** Joshua Bonnetta / **Cast** Julie Christie, Stephen Dillane, Toby Jones, Stacy Martin, Hanns Zischler

France, UK / Print: 35mm, original version without subtitles, 70 min / First screening in Portugal

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Walser's text is a disenchanting fairytale adaptation, beginning where the story of SNOW WHITE, as it is most commonly told, ends. The dwarves are disposed of. The Prince never has his way with Snow. The poisoned apple is a performance, play, or even a practical joke. In Walser's telling our characters are afforded agency and ambivalence, aware of the parts they are playing and aware that it is the audience telling and re-telling the same tired stories that keeps them trapped, condemned to repeat their gruesome roles over and over again. Walser may be quietly asking whether we, the audience, should expect more from our version of reality if we will not tell better stories.

It is unclear whether the writer intended for his text - the first he ever published - to be performed. (Walser's first ambition had been to become an actor.) But it sits on the page as script, and in SCHNEEWITTCHEN we use the text uninterfered with (unless we consider translation a violation), as had João César Monteiro for his film BRANCA DE NEVE (2000), a decision and an approach we consciously ape. SCHNEEWITTCHEN is an Americanisation of the Portuguese film. If Monteiro's BRANCA DE NEVE stared at the void, then SCHNEEWITTCHEN intends to be the void staring right back at it.

Some years ago, I was thinking about the dominance of franchise revivals and remakes in the hyper-capitalistic hellscape of present-day cinema culture. I thought: what is the absolute last film that would be remade in this moment, remade by this culture? And it is surely Monteiro's BRANCA DE NEVE. Therein lies the first motivation. Let this be the last remake — with the last, to me, implying something to follow afterwards, or better still: a beginning.

SCHNEEWITTCHEN will only ever show at theaters as a 35mm print. It will never stream nor show digitally. This is neither fetishistic nor reactionary: if we shoot on film then we ought to show on film, and film is still the best we've got. However magnificent, the digital is numerical, it is flat. A dead representation of living matter. The analogue signal, meanwhile, is waves; it is living matter, and it moves as living matter moves. It flickers as the fire flickers. It captures, and the ghosts dance. You need not be an aficionado or a snob to recognise this

— rather, it is something I believe we feel. The gesture of apparently limiting the showing of the work in this way is also a celebration of the cinema space and experience, of the significance of attendance and of being in a room together, and the possibilities of the journey to and fro.

For his example, I thank first and foremost João César Monteiro. For her efforts in helping to organise this screening, I thank Ana Baliza, and for its delivery I thank the extraordinary individuals comprising Cinemateca Portuguesa, not least of whom Joana Ascensão, sharing as we did my first earthquake on February 17, as the print you will see tonight unspooled for the first time, inside the auditorium at Cinemateca.

— Stanley Schtinter