



CHANTAL AKERMAN, FROM HERE

A film by Gustavo Beck

An Icarus Films Release

Official Selection, Marseille International Film Festival

Official Selection, Viennale International Film Festival

Official Selection, Buenos Aires International Independent Film Festival (BAFICI)

Official Selection, Valdivia International film Festival

Opens Friday, June 6 through Thursday, June 13, 2014

at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, New York City

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SYNOPSIS

In *Chantal Akerman, from Here* (2010) the renowned Belgian filmmaker sits down for an hour-long conversation about her entire body of work.

Throughout, the camera holds steady from outside an open door. The long, unbroken shot, and the frame-within-a-frame pay homage to Akerman's own unmistakable style ("I need a corridor. I need doors. Otherwise, I can't work", she says). But by shooting her in profile, the filmmakers provide a contrast to the signature frontality of her compositions (one of the many subjects covered in the wide-ranging interview)—an acknowledgement of this portrait's contingency also underlined by the title.

Akerman describes her first experiences with avant-garde film in New York, and, in particular, the lessons she took from the work of Michael Snow. She answers questions about her approach to fiction, documentary, and literary adaptation, covering everything from the early *short La Chambre* (1972) to the recent feature *Là-bas* (2006). She explains her preference for small budgets and small crews, and the paramount importance of instinct and improvisation in her directorial process.

She is nothing if not forthcoming, candidly assessing her successes and failures, including an aborted attempt at writing a Hollywood screenplay. An image emerges of a filmmaker as assured and idiosyncratic as the work suggests. We see that behind Akerman's cinematic innovations there is not only a remarkable intellectual clarity, but an ethical commitment to making films in which the viewer can "feel the time passing-by in your own body", because, she says, "that is the only thing you have: time."

ABOUT DIRECTOR CHANTAL AKERMAN

"Comparable in force and originality to Godard or Fassbinder, Chantal Akerman is arguably the most important European director of her generation."

—J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*

"The films of Chantal Akerman are the single most important and coherent body of work by a woman director in the history of the cinema."

—*Film Center Gazette of the School of the Art Institute*

"In 1976 the French newspaper *Le Monde* heralded Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman 23, quai du commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* as 'the first masterpiece in the feminine in the history of the cinema.' The unconventional style and subject made the film a powerful sign of a decade when feminism erupted into the arena of politics and film. Akerman the filmmaker came of age at the same time as the new age of feminism, and her films became key texts in the nascent field of feminist film theory. Feminism posed the apparently simple question of who speaks when a woman in film speaks (as character, as director ...); Akerman insisted convincingly that her films' modes of address rather than their stories alone are the locus of their feminist perspective. The many arguments about what form a "new women's cinema" should take revolved around a presumed dichotomy between so-called realist (meaning accessible) and avant-garde (meaning elitist) work; Akerman's films rendered such distinctions irrelevant and illustrated the reductiveness of the categories.

— *Professor Janet Bergstrom, UCLA, in Sight and Sound*

Born in Brussels, Belgium in 1950, Chantal Akerman is a filmmaker whose work gives new meaning to the term "independent film." An Akerman film is an exercise in pure independence, pure creativity, and pure art. The viewer must give him- or herself over completely to the experience of the film, to watch with open eyes and an open mind. To label Akerman's work "minimalist" or "structuralist" or "feminist" is to miss most of what she is about. Strong themes in her films include women at work and at home, women's relationships to men, women, and children, food, love, sex, romance, art, and storytelling. Each Akerman film is a world unto itself and demands to be explored on its

own terms. Her films are the subject of recent books including *Identity and Memory: The Films of Chantal Akerman* by Gwendolyn Audrey Foster and *Nothing Happens: Chantal Akerman's Hyperrealist Everyday* by Ivone Margulies.

Icarus Films is proud to distribute six Chantal Akerman films:

- **One Day Pina Asked** - Chantal Akerman follows choreographer Pina Bausch and her dance company on a five-week tour across Europe.
- **From the East** - Chantal Akerman retraces a journey from the end of summer to deepest winter, from East Germany, across Poland and the Baltics, to Moscow.
- **From the Other Side** - With technology developed for the military, the INS has stemmed the flow of illegal immigration in San Diego. But for the desperate, there are still the dangerous deserts of Arizona, where renowned filmmaker Chantal Akerman shifts her focus.
- **South** - The heart of this journey is the brutal murder of James Byrd, Jr in Jasper, Texas. But this is not an anatomy of his murder, rather, it is an evocation of how this event fits in to a landscape and climate as much mental as physical.
- **Chantal Akerman by Chantal Akerman** - A self-portrait by experimental & feminist Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman.
- **Chantal Akerman, From Here** - An hour-long, single-shot conversation with Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman about her films and her directorial philosophy.

Filmmaker page: <http://icarusfilms.com/filmmakers/chant.html>

IN THE PRESS

“Invented by the post-New Wave, the exercise is well-known: put a filmmaker in the frame, make him talk about his career, evoke his admirations, rummage in his methods, and add words to silences, spoken images to seen images. It's always very instructive. As is the case here too. Chantal Akerman, passing through South America, talks about herself for an hour, and it's fascinating. Even if her recalling of the relationship between the cinema and time makes up only a few rare minutes.

“Elementary, decisive, up to date. Her every word, her choice of adjectives, the tempo of poses, her French accent in English, all count. But Gustavo Beck deliberately ties his hands and adds a handicap to the race in that he has chosen to do it a little bit “in the style of”. Fixed camera, single shot, framing with doors, etc. The result? A very elegant homage in the form of a one-act comedy with a single character. Consequently, the professionally confessed revelations are definitively less poignant and cinema takes the upper hand. In other words, one rejoices only in the visible: Akerman in interview—or Akerman at the hotel. Her way of sitting with her legs crossed, of adding a cushion to her seat, of taking one, then two glasses (one straight glass, one balloon glass) to serve herself water, her freedom to violate smoking regulations in a public place, etc. As if a body in dialogue with the complications of daily life added to the understanding of her production. As if ? No, it's true. Check it out.” —Jean-Pierre Rehm, *FIDMarseille*

“*Chantal Akerman, From Here* is an uncut interview with the prestigious Belgian director. We hear Akerman's reflections on her own work and method—especially *Hotel Monterey* (1972) and *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975)—, as well as the influence of directors such as Jonas Mekas and Michael Snow, her relation with Proust's novel which she adapted in *La Captive* (2000), and her failed attempt to venture into more commercial filmmaking; all that in 62 minutes. It is clear—right from the framing, which is a wink to the interviewee's style, to the previous work on the questions—that Gustavo Beck and Leonardo Ferreira both have a genuine interest in the life and work of Akerman; who, even if she does not always satisfy the curiosity of

her interviewers, shows herself in her idiosyncrasy, whether that means lighting a cigarette in a non-smoking building, or assessing the errors and successes of her filmography. “
—Hans Hurch, *Viennale*

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Gustavo Beck was born in 1982 in São Paulo, Brazil. He earned a degree in Cinema & Film Studies from the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Television, Cuba. He also holds a BA in Philosophy from Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro and a MBA in Film & Television Business from the Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro. In 2008 he founded the production company IF YOU HOLD A STONE.

Gustavo directed and produced the documentaries *O Arquipélago* (2014), *O Inverno de Željka* (2012), *Chantal Akerman, de cá* (2010), *A Casa de Sandro* (2009) and *Ismar* (2007). His films played at festivals such as FIDMarseille, Cinéma du Réel, CPH:DOX, Viennale or Locarno as well as at key Latin American festivals like BAFICI and FICValdivia. His films also showed in museums and institutions like the Centre Pompidou or La Cinémathèque Française.

In addition, Gustavo is the Head Programmer of the New Views Competition of Olhar de Cinema - Curitiba International Film Festival. He also acts as a Program Advisor for Edinburgh International Film Festival and collaborates as an independent film curator with film institutes and art galleries.

2014	<i>O Arquipélago</i>	Documentary 28' - DCP - Color - Brazil / Chile
2012	<i>O Inverno de Željka</i>	Documentary 20' - DCP/35mm - B&W – Brazil /Croatia / Denmark
2010	<i>Chantal Akerman, From Here</i>	Documentary 60' - DCP - Color – Brazil
2009	<i>A Casa de Sandro</i>	Documentary 35' - DCP - Color - Brazil
2007	<i>Ismar</i>	Documentary 12' - DCP - Color - Brazil

FILM CREDITS

DIRECTOR: Gustavo Beck

CAMERA: João Atala and Rudá Capriles

EDITOR: André Mielnik

SOUND: Eduardo Psilva and Fernando Henna

CAST: Leonardo Luiz Ferreira and Chantal Akerman

POST SUPERVISOR: Fernanda Teixeira

PRODUCTION COMPANY: If You Hold A Stone, Enquadramento Produções

RUNNING TIME: 60 minutes

PRODUCTION COUNTRY: Brazil

COPYRIGHT YEAR: 2010

NORTH AMERICAN RELEASE YEAR: 2014

LANGUAGE: English

SHOOTING & PROJECTION FORMAT: HD & DCP

ASPECT RATIO: 16:9

SOUND: 5.1

IMAGE: COLOR

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