

CRICKETS, IT'S YOUR TURN

Olga Korotko · France / Kazakhstan · 2024 · 105 min

The title comes from a phrase we use when someone tells a joke and no one laughs — the silence belongs to the crickets. That phrase is the architecture of the film: a caricature of social Darwinism, exaggerated almost to the point of comedy. Almost — because the punchline is a tragedy.

Merey is a photographer. Her instrument is the composed image, and her resistance takes the only form available to her: theatre. The white-room tableaux begin as her private refuge — a stage where she rises above what she cannot fight. As the film progresses, that theatre stops asking permission to exist. When a podium with a microphone materializes in a living room, it is not a hallucination. It is the film admitting that it is a film — and asking the audience to think, not only to feel.

Humour was the most important decision I made. Humour does not make these men harmless. It deprives violence of the grandeur it so often claims for itself — on screen and in life. These men remain ridiculous and lethal at the same time, and that simultaneity is the film's tone: the moment you laugh at them is the moment you see how much power they still hold.

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The film treats patriarchy as one expression of a broader social-Darwinist logic: a world in which domination is mistaken for strength and solidarity becomes complicity. That is why the most dangerous man in the room is not the loud aggressor but Nurlan — reasonable, sympathetic, and ultimately more loyal to the group than to what he knows is right. The system does not require monsters. It requires men like Nurlan.

I knew that the ending most viewers would anticipate was revenge — the heroine taking justice into her own hands. I rejected it because it would betray everything the film observes. If Merey could survive only by adopting the men's logic, the film would already have conceded that their definition of power is the only one available. So the film denies the audience the narrative relief that victims themselves are so often denied — and turns the desire for catharsis into part of its ethical tension.

I call this *cinematic femicide*: the film enacts the erasure it diagnoses. The men applaud, the trophy changes hands, the sky continues indifferently. Comfort, here, would be a lie.

Olga Korotko — Director, Screenwriter & Producer · Seven Rivers Cinema Production (Kazakhstan) · Caractères Productions (France)