



WOLFWOOD.COM

GANKO FILMS

is proud

to present

its 1st DVD release

PHANTOM

a film by Jonathan Soler





SYNOPSIS

In Tokyo, a girl and her boyfriend
spend a night talking about their life,
their precarious condition and
their difficulties to earn a living,
their place in the world,
if ever they have one...

76 minutes / color / 1,78:1
language : Japanese / subtitles: French, English

PHANTOM in 3 points

The theme:

A precarious youth

At the beginning of the movie, the main character confesses her worry about having to pay the rent soon and it might be a problem.

She is a *freeter* (a part time worker in Japan) and earns money with small jobs, waiting to find a real one. The anxiety of this situation, to make a living only with small jobs despite her long studies, will bring some discussions about the worries of youth concerning their professional value, their future, their usefulness to society, their identity... and even about the fragility of contemporary civilization and its shaky economic system.

« *The real difficulty is to find a place in a world that does not necessarily have one for us.* »

Phantom is a kind of intimate coming-of-age movie in the midst of an economic crisis and about the complexity of the world.

The style:

Dreamlike

The style of *Phantom* is a radical one. To create the sensation that the movie is happening in a mental Tokyo (like a dream-sequence or a flashback sequence in traditional movies), the director used various stylistic techniques.

The most obvious is the relation between dialogues and video. As the 2 characters are talking off screen, footages of them or various scenes overlay, which allows an editing freedom, far from usual limitations, an editing style that plays with associations... a split montage. Moreover, the movie was fully shot with a very light-sensitive lens (*f/1.8*) always wide open to create a shallow depth of field, a strong *bokeh* (background blurriness) that allows playing with sharpness and blurriness, and sometimes putting purposefully the subject out of focus.

These effects (among others, such as framing, sound, music...) give *Phantom* a dreamlike style at least unusual!

The camera:

A photo camera

An film like *Phantom* needs to be shot in a original way and, therefore, needs to find the camera that will suit the most.

And *Phantom* is a "photographer film" in the sense that a part of the movie – the part without actors – needed the director to spend a lot of time, like a photographer, looking for things to shoot in the streets of Tokyo.

That's why he had to be fast-moving, with a small and lightweight camera, but with a very good visual quality. So he decided to shoot with the famous DSLR Canon EOS 5D Mark II that was already used by professionals. (It has been used for movies like *Black Swan*, *Rubber* or the TV series *House M.D.*)

Without such a camera that makes shooting simpler, the concept of the film would have worked much less.

Phantom finds part of its uniqueness from the great variety of footages that could have been recorded, thanks to this camera, in the most diverse places in Tokyo.

production NOTES

The idea

In early 2011, after finishing my previous movie *Un Regard*, a 52-minute long movie, I thought I was ready to make my first feature film.

So I began to think about what movie I could do. Even though I'm very motivated, to make a movie requires a lot amount of work, but to make a movie with a tight budget requires – not only motivation and a lot amount of work – but also some kind of madness.

I imagined this concept to shoot as much as footages as possible all alone (like a photographer), and to shoot only a few days with 2 actors. And in the editing room, I would mix all the video footages with the voice-over dialogues to be recorded in a studio. I thought that, being like a photographer, with only a camera and no sound while shooting, would be the best way to do this movie.

The screenplay was written during summer 2011. I was a bit worried about the end of my studies. And, at that time, we heard a lot about the European financial situation, or high unemployment rate in France, especially among young people, or protest movements a bit

everywhere in the world... and I guess I felt concerned with those issues, to such an extent I couldn't help but put some of my own worries in the screenplay.

The shooting

As soon as I arrived in Japan – knowing I was there just for 6 months – I started right away to shoot what I call the “second unit shots” (any shots without actors) and I started auditioning actors and scouting for locations.

Since I wanted the shooting to be as fast as possible, the gears were limited to the Canon 5D Mark II and a U-Flycam to avoid any micro-vibrations. All the footages were shot with Canon EF 50mm f/1.8 prime lens. The aperture was always wide open to keep a depth of field as shallow as possible. To make the shooting simple for everyone – since the actors and I were working during week days (I was in Japan to do an internship) – the shooting with the cast took 7 days, during the 4 weekends of April, 2012, each time in some different places and at different hours. And everything went without any major troubles.

The post-production

The post-production started when I came back to France, in July 2012. In a usual movie, you edit the whole movie thinking about videos first, and then the sound and voice-over, if any. In the case of *Phantom*, I started to edit the dialogues first, put them in order in the editing software, and only then, I thought about what video footages would be the most appropriate with the dialogues.

Somehow, with *Phantom*, it's the video track that underlines the dialogues, which allowed me to think about editing in a very unusual way, therefore, very playful and stimulating way.

From the original idea, in spring 2011, to the end of the post-production, in autumn 2012, it took roughly 1 year and a half, some falling hairs due to stress, a huge amount of motivation and even more madness to make it. Despite the difficulties related to the production of a feature film like *Phantom*, I am so pleased with the experience and the movie itself that I'm already looking forward to do it again!

Images and press kit downloadable at :
www.gankofilms.fr/presse.htm

A couple stands on a balcony or walkway at night, looking out over a city with blurred lights. The man is in the foreground, wearing a dark jacket with a fur collar, and the woman is behind him, holding a transparent umbrella. The background shows a busy city street with out-of-focus lights and signs.

Yuki FUJITA 藤田 裕紀
Actress. Born in 1984 in Osaka.

Masato TSUJIOKA 辻岡 正人
Actor. Born in 1979 in Osaka.

- *Bullet Ballet* (dir. Shinya Tsukamoto)
- *Hell* (dir. Teruo Ishii)
- *Blind Beast vs. Dwarf* (dir. Teruo Ishii)
- *Suicide Club* (dir. Shion Sono)
- *A Snake of June* (dir. Shinya Tsukamoto)
- *Vital* (dir. Shinya Tsukamoto)
- *Haze* (dir. Shinya Tsukamoto)

The director Jonathan Soler

Born in 1985 in Lyon, France. Passionate about cinema, he started to learn Japanese after watching Japanese cinema, especially, independent films of the 60s. In 2010, during a year in Tokyo as an exchange student, he made *Aru Manazashi*, his first 52-minute film in Japan. 2 years later, he made his first feature film *Phantom*.



What are the influences of Phantom?

They are many! I've always been fascinated by movies that can avoid telling a story through characters like Godfrey Reggio's *Koyaanisqatsi*, Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil* or Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*. It's a dangerous challenge to make a movie without characters. *Phantom* owes a lot to these movies. There are also movies that propose an alternative way to handle montage like Maya Deren's short movies, Stan Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving*, Jonas Mekas' *Glimpses of Beauty*...

The budget was quite limited?

The more the budget is limited, the more motivation must be unlimited. This means that to do this film, it was not motivation but a mix of recklessness and stubbornness! And it was also a challenge, the challenge to do the movie with such requirements that no one could feel any kind of restriction. That's why anything that wasn't spent with money, I spent it with time and effort. It especially allowed me not to care about the profitability of it. It's purely a passion project. This is maybe what sometimes lacks in movies: to think a bit less about profitability and a bit more about passion.

Were you implicated in most of the steps of the making of it?

Yes! A small production makes you multi-skilled. You can't just come to the location, say "Action!" and "Cut!" and go back home. You need to be responsible for everything. It needs much more effort. It needs to be involved in everything and concerned with the result. They are no better school. From now on, it will be difficult to delegate these tasks to other people.

How do you define your cinema?

I think my movies will always have an unusual approach. I don't understand what is the thrill to make (or to watch) a conventional movie. What I like is making movies I'd like to watch but don't exist. But the danger is to forget that people are going to watch it. For example, when I edited *Phantom*, I allowed myself to do everything (even unusual things!) but always keeping in mind that the movie must be accessible to everyone, because I think a movie is an entertainment first. I just want to tell stories in a different way and to surprise people... But the most important is to have fun making them. If I had to define my movies in one word, I'd say without hesitation: playful!



GANKO
FILMS

distribution@gankofilms.fr