



「ある眼差し」

Aru Manazashi

French title: *Un Regard* / English title: *Glance*

A FILM BY JONATHAN SOLER

CAST: Mariko Tsuboi (坪井 麻里子) / Yuta Kato (加藤 勇太)

SYNOPSIS

A student in Tokyo. His camera. His world of loneliness.

And then, a classmate he likes. In his own way.

Filming her. Secretly... Forgetting about privacy.

51'14" / Color / 2010 / Japanese / 1,77:1 / 720p / 23,976fps

Images and Press kit downloadable at <http://gankofilms.fr/presse/>
contact@gankofilms.fr

INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN SOLER

On the occasion of the VOD release of *Aru Manazashi*. (September 2011)

WHY DID YOU MAKE THIS FILM?

I was in Japan for one year at university (from September 2009 to September 2010) and it was absolutely out of the question to leave the country without having shot a fiction in that country.

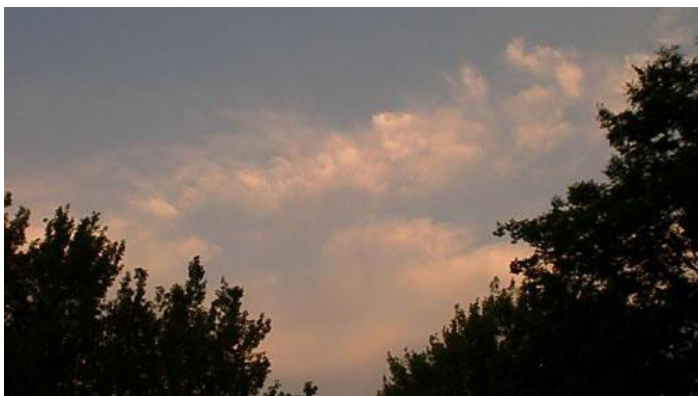


In early January 2010, I went to a concert in Shibuya (Tokyo), I shot some part of the live concert with my small compact photo camera hidden in my pocket. I wasn't even looking at what I was shooting. When I got back home, I watched what I shot and, when I saw those peeping-film-like videos, I thought it was visually extremely powerful; it could become a very interesting concept as a movie.

And I remembered an idea I had several years before about a guy in love with a girl who doesn't know it and he spies and shoots video of her without her noticing it... A kind of espionage love story.

In this old idea, there were 2 levels on the narration. The first one was made with the footage shot by the guy, with a "voyeur film" style. There are sometimes, in movies, some "voyeur" shots, some shots took, for example, hidden outside a window, spying someone inside, and giving this feeling that we're peeping to something we shouldn't. Brian de Palma did it quite a lot. It's also often done in 80's horror films. On the second level of narration, the cameraman caught, in a police station with policemen, tries to explain why he did what he did. It was also a way to put morals to this story. Despite that, it was an idea that I still felt too controversial back then, so I completely abandoned it quickly, never to make a film about it... until I saw the footage I shot at that concert.

So I adapted the overall idea to Japan and I got rid of the "Police" part because there was no way I could do it.



And I thought it could be really interesting to make a film only made with videos shot through the camera of a guy who, at first, shoot in a contemplative and poetic way things of his lonely life, and then, probably out of boredom, let himself crossing the line not to be crossed: to shoot someone he likes without her knowing. At first, with some distance, and then, little by little, forgetting totally the limits of privacy and intimacy...

I wanted, with that film, to raise a question: in this world where anyone can upload images/videos of everyone without permission, will "privacy" or "respect to one's image" still mean something for a long time?

The film raises that question, maybe in a puzzling way, or even a disturbing way, but at least it raises the question in a very clear way. It brings no answer, no moral. It's not its purpose. It lets anyone find their own answers.



HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO MAKE THE FILM?

Since this concept allowed me to shoot things without a crew (the film needed a lot of footage without actors), I started shooting footage in early February with the trip to Kyoto (from 20' to 22'12 in the movie.)

The last footage was shot August, the 17th with the last sequence in the movie.

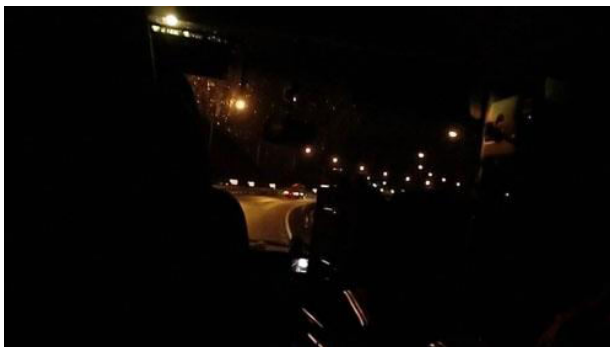
So more than 6 months of shooting. Of course, I didn't shoot every day. Since the movie was shot with a small compact digital camera that I always had with me, each time I felt something was interesting, I shot! This is the kind of thing you can't do with a limited shooting schedule.

On the opposite, the shooting with actors was extremely fast. It took 9 hours in all, spread over 3 days in July 2010.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO EDIT THE FILM?

Around 20 days.

The first draft was edited on Music Maker, (a music-making software that has rough video editing features) because I hadn't any decent editing software in Japan. That's why I wanted to wait to be back to France to edit it.



But actually, even in France, when I came back, I was so broke I edited the movie on a trial version of an editing software! I had 30 free days free, which means 30 days to edit the movie! Sometimes, making a movie is an epic adventure!

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO SCORE THE FILM?

Since *Aru Manazashi* is a *found footage* film (in that sense that we're supposed to watch exactly what the guy shot, without modification nor editing), there was no need for music in it. To make a *found*

footage film can be frustrating because you can't use usual movie grammar (like music to emphasize feelings, for example), but it doesn't mean video and sound can't be manipulated because of the sake of "truth" that the *found footage* genre requires. It just needs a much more subtle work, much less audible.

So, I put in the whole film some sound effects that can be heard, but they are so natural you can't really notice that they were purposefully put here and there to create special sensations. For example, there is a police car at the beginning (5'30), and in order to create some tension, I added some sound of the wind blowing on the camera microphone. (Something that is considered as amateurish in movies, and avoided as much as possible—but the concept of *found footage* allows it.)



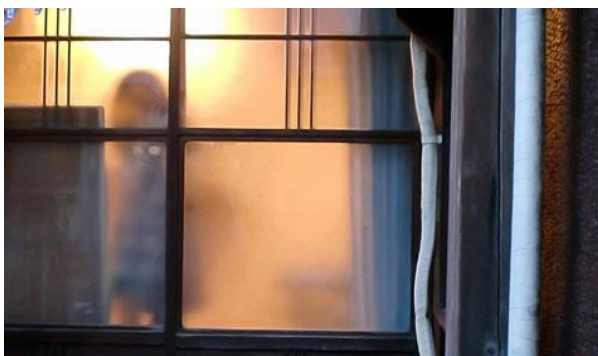
Another example: when the guy jumps over the wall of the girl's house (18'20), you can hear some crows. There was no sound of crows when I shot.

Since the sound editing was done at the same time as video editing, I can't say precisely how long I spent on it.

WHAT KIND OF RESPONSES DID YOU GET WHEN YOU SCREENED IT TO PEOPLE?

Well... I actually didn't screen it that much!

With *Aru Manazashi*, I really wanted people to feel like they're watching some stolen videos. At first, it's harmless videos, since he poetically shoots things of his lonely life. Then it's more disturbing videos since he shoots, without her noticing, a girl he loves. And he goes very far in that spiral of indiscreet cameraman.



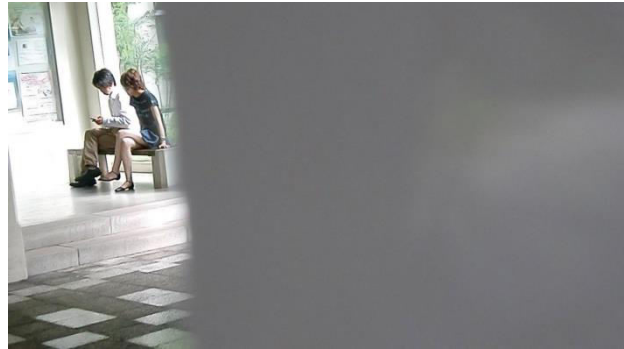
Because we see what he shoots, not only there is no moralizing point of view, but it makes the audience complicit in it. And to feel like a "peeping Tom" is not a pleasing sensation. That's why the film might be disturbing, for someone who can't take some distance from the content. However, for someone who can take some distance from the content, and not to forget that everything is fake and staged, I think it might be quite a unique experience of cinema, and thought-provoking.

It's a film I wish I could have watched as a viewer, to know how I would have reacted to it. And when I screened it to a few people, it generated very interesting discussions and reactions.

Nevertheless, I'm careful to whom I show the film.

COULD YOU TELL ONE INTERESTING STORY FROM THE PRODUCTION (MAYBE ABOUT WORKING WITH THE ACTORS, OR SHOOTING IN A PUBLIC PLACE IN JAPAN)?

There is a scene where the 2 actors are sitting on a bench in the university (at 10'32) while the cameraman is filming from a corridor. While filming, a bunch of girls walked behind me.



One of them saw me filming secretly 2 people (without her knowing they were actors), then she looked at me again, and I could feel in her eyes: "Oh! That's a pervert!!! He's peep-filming at other students! Pervert!" I wanted to tell her it was a movie with actors. I didn't feel at ease, at that moment. The same happened in the karaoke with some employees who passed by my side with a face like: "What is he doing? Is he spying through the door?"

WHAT KIND OF OBSTACLES DID YOU ENCOUNTER MAKING THE FILM?

I thought it would be complicated, if not impossible, to find an actress who would understand the point and the originality of this project. If you're a foreigner in Tokyo, if you make a movie with a ridiculous budget, and if your movie deals with a very delicate topic, and with an unusual visual style, you don't put the odds on your side. I thought that finding an actress would be the biggest, if not the only real obstacle of the film. And I was wrong.

With my friend, and actor in the film, Yuta Kato, we met some actresses and we explained to them the project. Each time, I feared an unpredictable reaction. And each time, I was surprised to see that they



were curious, asked questions about the style, the content... And from memory, no one seemed to show a bit of a worry. Quite the opposite, I think that such a project must have been a kind of amusement to her, or a challenge.

Which is fine! To work with people who have fun on my shooting, or people that take it as a challenge, that's an attitude that gives me even more motivation.

WOULD THE FILM BE VERY DIFFERENT IF IT HAD A HIGHER BUDGET?

I don't even know how more money could have been useful. I felt no frustration because of that. I don't think the film would have been better with more money... Well, I don't see how. I never thought, "If only I had few bucks more..." No, I could do everything I wanted...



And to answer the question, yes, the film would be different with a higher budget. It would have been more "reasonable" and more consensual, because it would have had to be more "profitable". And it would have lost all its meaning!

Some movies need to be, as much as possible, detached from financial constraints to be able to go as far as they need. I think *Aru Manazashi* is one of them.



COULD YOU GIVE US YOUR PHILOSOPHY AND THOUGHTS TOWARDS FILMS AND FILM MAKING?

No matter what film I make, might it be accessible to a big audience or "delicate" and experimental like *Aru Manazashi*, my process is the same. My main motivation, it's an absolute love for movies, and sometimes, the disappointment to see so few movies trying

something different, unusual. So, through its topic and its style, I try to make a movie I wish I could see, but doesn't exist as far as I know.

My wish, as a filmmaker, is to try! Even if it totally fails... I have more admiration for filmmakers who tried crazy things and totally failed, than for those who did masterpieces and played the safety card.

WHAT TYPE OF PROJECT ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

I'm quite the confidential kind, as long as a project is not finished. Some I won't unveil a lot.

But I can say that I would love to make another movie in Japan... Why not my first feature film...