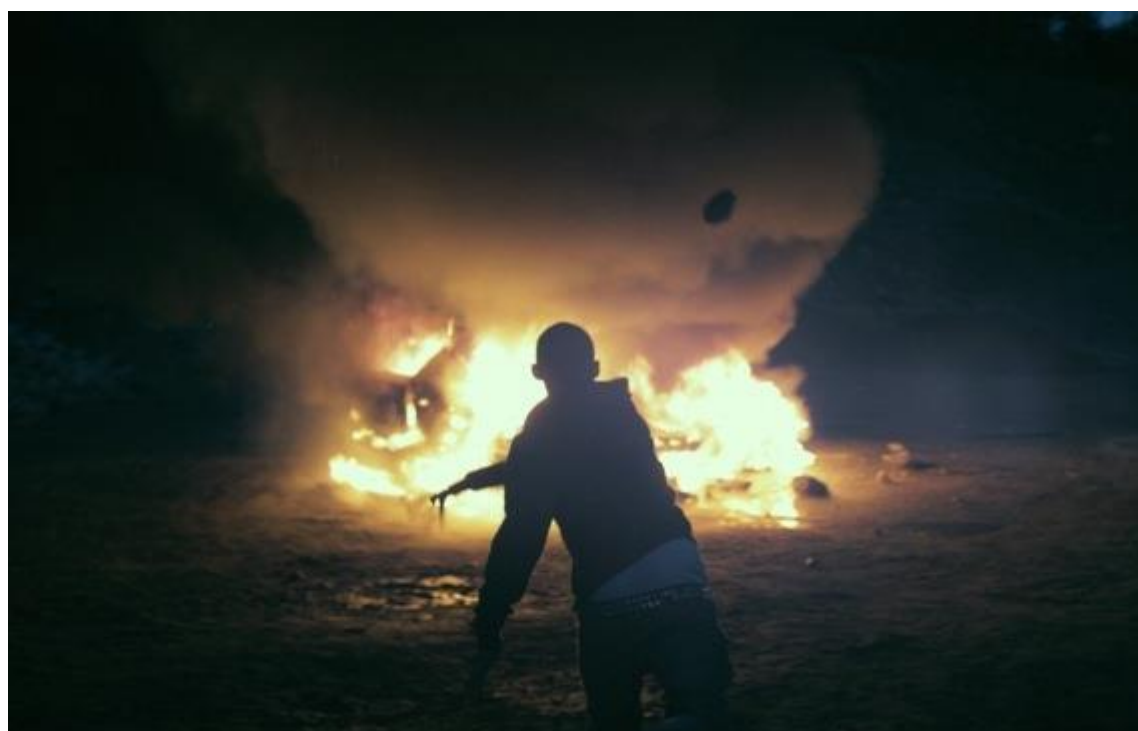


***Chrieg*, the rabid echo in the Alps**

by Muriel Del Don

23/09/2014 - Young Swiss director Simon Jaquemet has presented his solid first feature, *Chrieg*, at the San Sebastián Film Festival



Simon Jaquemet's *Chrieg*, having its world premiere at the [San Sebastián Film Festival](#), is a violent and uncompromising outcry, a distorted soundtrack accompanying an adolescent world gone adrift. For his first feature film, the promising Swiss director has created a seductive ode to rebellion, a dangerous but reinvigorating escape from a claustrophobic and standardised society.

Matteo is 15 years old, and his whole existence drifts between monotony and his parents' lack of understanding. An apparently fragile guy, swallowed up by an adult world he does not understand and aches to escape from. Reality melts away into a sea of uncertainty, nothing is what it's supposed to be, and no one seems to manage to wake Matteo from his disturbing numbness. In a desperate attempt to run away from an authoritative and oppressive father, the young protagonist escapes into the woods together with his even younger brother. His desperate act has dramatic consequences that force him to spend the following four months far away from the world, trapped in the mountains, in a kind of prison ruled by unscrupulous torturers. The punishment inflicted on him is severe, violent and inhumane, even though – despite what you may think – a blinding light is hidden somewhere behind the darkness.

Through his suffering, he finds some sort of redemption that leads him to rediscover his human side, in a brutal, visceral way.

Matteo is being accompanied on this almost mystical journey by three young teenagers: Anton, the head of the group, who is unpredictable because of his frequent outbursts of rage; Dion, a Serbian immigrant with a strong temperament; and Alina, a kind of skinhead version of Giovanna D'Arco. Before he can gain their much-desired trust and respect, Matteo has to be humiliated and ridiculed to an extreme extent. For him, this initially inexplicable “Way of the Cross” ends up being some sort of out-and-out initiatory journey towards discovering his true and inner self. Together, the four kids form an “artificial” new family, a parallel universe where violence turns into affection and feelings emerge from behind a concrete wall.

Director Simon Jaquemet tells the story of youth at war, battling against a society that offers nothing but a superficial and condensed heap of codes of conduct, but also – and above all – against themselves. Violent outcries of protest are their ferocious and sensual way of saying they exist. For Matteo and his friends, it is all about revenge against a world that wants to subjugate them by making them “harmless” and “accepted”. Courageously, *Chrieg* investigates the dark side of adolescence, that beguiling feeling that pushes people to try to break through boundaries, a feeling always sure to get its own way. Jaquemet has created an aesthetically enchanting universe where the grandeur of nature, of the mountains, reflects the protagonists' tormented frame of mind. In *Chrieg*, nature is wild, dangerous and seductive, simultaneously a friend and an enemy, a kind of bewitching siren that might well set you adrift.

This feeling of restlessness linked to nature is gradually transformed into a metaphor for Matteo's torment, as he finds a substitute family in his new alpine refuge – even a reason to keep on living. Jaquemet shines a light on a different side of being young, a very – but not solely – Swiss adolescence, with a raw and ruthless story in which the reward for confronting one's own inner demons is redemption. Sublime.

Chrieg was produced by [Hugofilm Productions](#) and [Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen](#), with sales handled by [Picture Tree International](#).

(Translated from Italian)