

Thursday March 28th 2024

Transit

Germany/France 2018 101mins Cert 12

A breathtaking film that feels at once strikingly original and a perfect example of postmodernism, Christian Petzold's *Transit* - based on the 1944 novel by Anna Seghers - resists easy classification, preferring instead to absorb the film movements of both the 1940s and the present, producing from that process not a synthesis of the times but a reflection on them, and an elegy for the senselessly dead.

Grounded in present-day reality, it uses its conceit to further emphasise a feeling of being adrift, without a country or even a home, ceaselessly thrown back among the same crowd of people until they become your own, until you've lost yourself without them and lost them within yourself.

Petzold, who also wrote the film's screenplay, keeps Seghers's narrative essentially intact, placing her characters in a timeless space that resembles the modern day in certain ways while retaining anything of the past he can conjure up. This world, is as untethered to our reality as to the lives of those within it.. The film is framed by a voice-over from a man who isn't identified until at least halfway through but we gather early on that although he knows the details of the story, he is still receiving them second hand. The film lulls you into the sense that the narrator often recites things merely as they happen on screen. However, his voice is too compelling for that to be the case, and even his recitation of events recontextualises them into a second-hand perspective, making the characters' actions seem predictable at best, futile at worst. This underscores their sometimes inexplicable motivations in perpetuating the myths of identity and the myths of purpose.

Transit is one of the truly great films about the refugee era, reflecting a story and a time that we've previously defined in stark moral terms onto a contemporary period that is still very much in flux - but no less clear when addressed in humanistic terms. It speaks to both times without being beholden to them or becoming a thesis with a message. It is a meditation on a condition that exists inside everyone but which means life or death for some. It's a beautifully wrought, mesmerizing piece of work.

Of the numerous nominations and awards gained by the film, perhaps the most prestigious were winner of the 2019 USA National Board of Review for Best Foreign Language Film, the Best of Masters Jury Prize for Christian Petzold at the 2019 Portland International Film Festival and a Golden Bear nomination at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Acknowledgments: Scott Nye, *Battleship Pretension*

Leading Players

Franz Rogowski	Georg
Paula Beer	Marie
Godehard Glese	Richard
Maryam Zaree	Melissa
Lilien Batman	Driss

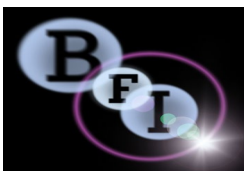
Production Credits

Director	Christian Petzold
Producers	F K von Gustorf, Antonin Dedet + 4 others
Screenplay	Christian Petzold, based on novel by Anna Seghers
Cinematography	Hans Fromm
Original Music	Stefan Will, Talking Heads

Coming Soon

April 25th

AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD (Mexico/Germany, 1972, 95mins, Cert PG) Shot entirely on location in the Amazonian jungle, this film stars the legendarily volatile Klaus Kinski as a power-crazed 16th century Spanish explorer who leads an unruly band of conquistadors on a doomed expedition in search of El Dorado, the fabled City of Gold. A visceral, ambitious exploration of megalomania and savage beauty, the film remains one of Werner Herzog's most outstanding directorial achievements and an all-time totemic masterpiece of German cinema.



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