An incredible talent, Marina de Van and her stylistic explorations of disassociation and self-discovery are among the most exciting in international cinema. Where IN MY SKIN (Dans ma peau) graphically announced a provocative new voice, DON'T LOOK BACK (Ne te retourne pas) saw an ascent to a gorgeous visual command of Hitchock-ian suspense. Currently in progress on what's only her third feature since 2002, the Ireland-set DARK TOUCH, de Van continues her immensely personal journey digging into similar themes, only this time with children and all they suffer.

FANGORIA: What can you tell us about DARK TOUCH?

MARINA DE VAN: It's a horror movie, not very gory, but rather based on suspense, tension, fear. With spectacular scenes, though, even if it's a very sober film; nothing apocalyptic. The main subject is child abuse, and around that, I used the supernatural, objects and furniture moving and psychic powers to kill. The main characters are kids. It's dark, as you can guess.

FANG: How do you find you've progressed further from IN MY SKIN and DON'T LOOK BACK?

DE VAN: Well, the scale of DARK TOUCH is smaller; shot very quickly, with very little money. And it's also a genre movie, so it could be more conventional maybe, in this regard. I experienced a great freedom in filming though. I don't know if I improved in that way, or just gave up my control on directing to enjoy, in a less obsessive way. And I shot much more than usual, more material. The style remains sober, but there are a lot of images. I also tried to move more, to have moving shots—not big complicated movements, but always a tension suggested by even slight movement rather than by static shots. I would have used a steadicam if I had been able to, financially, but I wasn't, so I used handled, which I normally avoid. I thought I needed this movie to be very dynamic.

FANG: How, if at all, does DARK TOUCH continue your themes of identity crisis and self-discovery?

DE VAN: The main character discovers throughout the film what she did, her own emotions (of which she wasn't aware), and she realizes her limits in a very sad and pessimistic way; she acted from what she understood. So the movie is, differently than before, dealing with someone unaware of herself and discovering, not directly as an analysis of an identity, but of a history, of actions she didn't know she had made, and the actions she then takes control on from there.

FANG: DARK TOUCH follows an 11 year-old girl. What prompted this shift to an exploration of an adolescent versus an adult?

DE VAN: The theme. The subject of child abuse, sexual child abuse, which was my interest in this movie. I wanted to show in what precise way a kid is mutilated by sexual abuse, and how she's unable from there to have any normal, happy contact with others—physical as well as affectionate contact. It's about a trauma and a failure coming from the trauma. And this particular trauma I wanted to speak about, is a trauma from childhood.

FANG: Regarding your previous films and their interests in identity: How much of that do you find specific to your experience as a woman, or even a woman filmmaker?

DE VAN: It's my experience of the world, as a woman. I've never shot an image I hadn't lived, even if there can be transposition. All the feelings involved, the meanings, the questions, are my experience of life, since I'm a kid. It's specific to my life, and what is specific to my work is even more the fact that I can only shoot what I live.

Expect much more from Marina de Van as DARK TOUCH nears completion and release.