At a recent screening of their highly stylized debut feature AMER at New York City’s Lincoln Center as part of its New Directors/New Films series, Fango got to chat briefly with directors Hélène Cattet and Bruno Forzani. We also learned of an impending U.S. release for the movie.

AMER combines striking visuals with bursts of visceral violence, following its heroine as a little girl, a teenager and a grown woman dealing with assorted threats, largely involving sexuality and masculinity. Its images and soundtrack (largely eschewing dialogue) directly homage the style and content of Italian *giallo* cinema, and Forzani notes a few specific influences. “ ‘The Drop of Water’ from BLACK SABBATH by Mario Bava in the first part,” he tells Fango, “and SUSPIRIA as well. Also BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR, where you had the parents [making love] with the saturated colors. For the second part, it was [Japanese]
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movies with the bikers, while the colors and aesthetics of the exteriors are like SEVEN BLOODSTAINED ORCHIDS by Umberto Lenzi and Sergio Martino’s THE STRANGE VICE OF MRS. WARDH. For the third part, it was Lucio Fulci’s LIZARD IN A WOMAN’S SKIN, regarding the character, and the beginning is also inspired by Antonio Margheriti’s SEVEN DEATHS IN THE CAT’S EYE, when the woman arrives at the house and there’s a gorilla looking at her naked.”

“When we were shooting, however, we were not thinking about [specific] movies or this scene or that shot from a film,” Cattet adds, and Forzani continues, “It was subconciously done; you watch a lot of movies, and after you digest them, you do your own.”

One element directly lifted from past cinema is AMER’s soundtrack, an evocative collection of cues from past Italian fare. Most of the tracks are by Stelvio Cipriani, though Ennio Morricone, Bruno Nicolai and others are heard as well. “We didn’t choose it, the music chose us,” Cattet says. “We were listening to CDs when we were writing the script, on loops, and there was some

music that [particularly] inspired us.

“When writing a sequence,” Forzani elaborates, “we would put a track on a loop, and so we came to imagine the sequence with the music. “It was a bit by chance, because we have a big soundtrack collection that we listen to every day.”

While offers for work in Hollywood have come the duo’s way in the wake of AMER’s fest success (including an adaptation of the Charles Burns comics series BLACK HOLE), “We are working at the moment on a *giallo* set in Brussels,” Forzani says. “We want to use the *art nouveau* style, so it would be a bit in a point of view reminiscent of AMER, but this time we’ll try to explore the detective aspect of *gialli*.”

In the meantime, U.S. rights to AMER have been picked up by Olive Films. Currently specializing in DVD distribution, Olive plans to give AMER big-screen play, which Fango has learned is tentatively scheduled for October. See AMER’s trailer below and its official website here, and look for updates and more coverage at this site and in the pages of FANGORIA magazine in the future.

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