As footage of actress Claudia Gerini walking out of the exclusive sex club Tulpa runs on the screen, the camera indulges on the actress’ face…and someone shouts, “Stop! C’mon, she looks as if she’s jaundiced!” We’re in a Rome editing studio, and the man protesting to director of photography Giuseppe Di Maio about the color of the sensual Gerini’s skin is her companion, musician and filmmaker Federico Zampaglione.

The director of 2010’s creepy SHADOW has allowed this writer to attend the color-correction and sound-mix phases of his new effort behind the camera: TULPA, a classic *giallo* with supernatural elements (see previous items
here
and
here
). “I am focused on every single stage of TULPA,” Zampaglione, who provided the exclusive pics seen below, tells us. “With SHADOW, I was driven by my enthusiasm and love for the genre, and surely I was a bit irresponsible. I know there are great expectations for this picture; the audience wants to know if I was just someone who wanted to try out the director’s chair or if I truly love genre cinema and can be the new Italian master of horror—and my worst critic is me.”

Zampaglione later invites Fango to a preview screening of TULPA, also attended by DRACULA 3D line producer Barbara Di Girolamo and German director Andreas Marschall, who loves *gialli* and last year crafted the SUSPIRIA homage MASKS, to great reactions. TULPA is the movie fans have been craving for years—the picture we all hoped Dario Argento would shoot. Zampaglione knows all the stylistic elements of the cinema of fear, honoring Mario Bava, Argento and Lucio Fulci, yet this is not just a nostalgic work, but a modern and terrifying thriller

all its own. “This is the TENEBRAE of the new millennium; I haven’t seen a *giallo* like this in years!” raves Marschall after the closing credits.

TULPA follows the desperate investigations of beautiful and respectable businesswoman Lisa Boeri (Gerini, pictured below), trying to locate who is brutally killing all her lovers, plunging her and the audience in a neverending nightmare. In the best *giallo* tradition, Zampaglione plunges Gerini into a spiral of extreme situations: sadomasochism, orgies and lesbian relationships, in what stands as the most challenging role of her career. “I knew Lisa was not an easy character to play,” she says. “I have mainly been offered comedies or dramas, but I liked the many different sides of Lisa and wanted to try something different. And who better than my companion to direct me? He’s a very sensitive director and loves the genre. Be prepared: He may have given birth to the new mistress of horror!”

Thanks to the twisted mind of veteran screenwriter Dardano Sacchetti, you will experience a number of original and graphic murders in TULPA, the most shocking of which has a girl tied to a wooden horse getting her face torn by barbed wire. “Leonardo Cruciano did the visual effects and the makeup/prosthetics,” Zampaglione explains. “I saw his work in the web series WMZ: WORLD MAKES ZOMBIES and immediately hired him. Bruno Albi Marini did the digital FX. I’m very happy with the final result, and I’m sure the fans will love the gore.

“I’ve had enough of people criticizing our genre movies, saying that Italy is not able to make such classics as DEEP RED, THE BEYOND or TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE anymore,” he continues with a touch of anger. “I’ll beat the shit out of whoever says that! But it’s our own fault; we are stuck in a sort of limbo, we’re the first to not believe in ourselves and suffocate any spark of creativity. But I’m not wasting any more of my time giving in to despair; I instead prefer to do my best to change things. I’m a fighter, not someone waiting for somebody else to do it all, I’m not intimidated by anyone and this time I decided to go my own way to give new life to Italian horror cinema!”

fo: Emanuela Scarpa