



People don't change.
She changes people.

MURDERFACE

ANDI'S FICTIONS PRESENTS „MURDERFACE“ STARRING MICHAELA BEHAL MUHAMMAD AL MASRI LEE REIMERS STEFANIA KAVAS SORAYA MARIA
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY LUCAS HEINZE ORIGINAL SCORE COMPOSED BY CHRISTOS DROUZAS EDITOR LUIS SEEMANN SET DESIGNER VINCENT CARTER
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY LEANDER BEHAL



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SYNOPSIS

In a not too distant future, two plastic surgeons running an illegal clinic find themselves caught between morality and compulsion after a serial killer requests a face transplant.

THE FILM

„Murderface“ is a German short film which deals extensively with guilt and morals. However, it was crucial that this film would not allow for a moralistic conclusion. Rather, it should display a gray area that encompasses the entire plot. For the spectator, everything may seem black and white at first. Should you help a murderer? Should you empower him to commit further atrocities? Of course not. But not everyone can afford to have morals. And as righteous as our main character (Martha) wants to be, her business leaves no room for scruples. A bitter internal conflict takes place beneath her cold exterior. Martha has a decision to make and is painfully aware of one thing: she only has wrong decisions to choose from.

PRODUCTION BACKGROUND

The unlikely source of inspiration for „Murderface“ was the writer-director’s ruptured appendix, which occurred in the Spring of 2019. After waiting far too long to visit the hospital and going under the knife with a high fever, he narrowly escaped sepsis. What followed were two weeks of sleep deprivation, leaking irrigation fluids, receiving shots, swallowing pills and going into surgery a second time; a surreal experience which gave birth to visions of a retrofuturistic underground clinic with questionable surgical methods. Combined with the writer’s fascination for moral gray areas, it turned into a tale of complicity and its consequences.

After the completion of the screenplay, the grand scope of the project became clear. Intricate sets had to be created in order to achieve a convincing futuristic setting. The most difficult of these, the „clinic“, was built from scratch inside a small bar cellar with bakestone walls and a low ceiling.

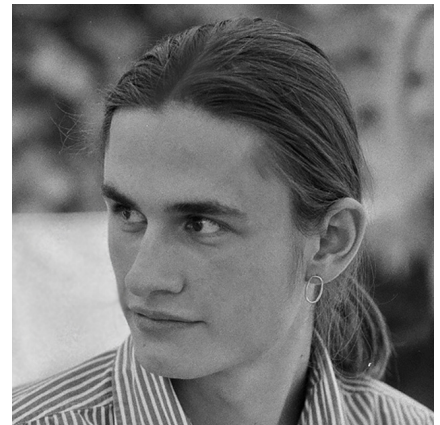
The other great challenge was makeup-related. The centerpiece of „Murderface“ is the surgery scene, which required the artistic realization of a very gory process: The removal of a person’s face. After much rumination, the team had found what they believed to be the perfect balance. And we can say with certainty: The result is something you have never seen on film before.

The postproduction for the film lasted a whole year. It was further complicated by the outbreak of COVID-19. After the completion of its score (composed and produced by Christos Drouzas), it was finished in August 2020. It premiered at the Filmfest Bremen and has had a successful festival run throughout Germany (including nominations for the German Youth Film Prize and the Camgaroo Award among others).



WRITER-DIRECTOR

Leander Behal is a screenwriter and director from Berlin, Germany. His films are characterized by a narrative style taking its cues from surrealism and magical realism while maintaining a sensitive, human quality. He cites the New Hollywood of the 70s and German Expressionism as major influences on his work. He puts a strong focus on originality and takes particular care to give his films a slightly gritty, underground feel. Since 2016, he has been enrolled in film studies at the Free University of Berlin. His short films have been screened at numerous film festivals in his native Germany, throughout Europe (e.g. Austria, Italy) and in Africa. Last year, he was nominated for the German Youth Film Award.



DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Lucas Heinze is a director of photography and steadicam operator from Berlin, Germany. Since 2018 he has been studying cinematography at the prestigious Filmuniversity Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF. The visual style of „Murderface“ was strongly influenced by Lucas' penchant for expressive lighting and offbeat compositional ideas. His ability to break the rules of visual continuity in all the right moments contributed a surreal atmosphere to the film which was crucial to its overarching themes.



EDITOR

Luis Seemann is a director and editor from Bremen, Germany. „Murderface“ is his third collaboration as an editor with Leander. The two are on the same wavelength when it comes to postproduction and they have been working together for over 2 years now. Luis has a bachelor's degree in film studies and currently studies directing at the internationally renowned University for Film and Television Munich (HFF).





CAST

Lee Reimers (top)

Studied acting in Vancouver, Berlin and Los Angeles. Has since worked extensively in film and theater. „Murderface“ is Lee’s third collaboration with director Leander Behal. Lee is currently base in Basel, Switzerland.

Michaela Behal (top-right)

Seasoned theater actress with decades of stage experience in prestigious theaters all over Germany. Made her first foray into feature films as the female lead in 2006’s „Schroeders Wonderful World“ by director Michael Schorr („Schultze Gets the Blues“). Note from our film’s director: „Michaela also happens to be my mom.“

Mohammad Al Masri (center-right)

Currently finishing his studies as an actor. Hailing from Syria, Mohammad made his way to Berlin to pursue his creative passion.

Stefania Kavas (bottom-right)

Born in Russia, she came to Germany at a young age and has since established herself as an actress in film and television with many credits to her name.



TEAM



Line Producer

Nicola Hermann is a freelance producer based in Berlin. A master's student of film studies, she has an extensive theoretical and practical background in cinema. She is very active in Berlin's independent filmmaking scene and came on board „Murderface“ at a very chaotic time, two weeks before the shoot. Her tasks ranged from the usual logistical responsibilities to unexpected ones like recording sound, aiding the makeup artist and driving a truck full of props and equipment. Without her dedication, we would probably still be shooting...



Production Designer

Vincent Carter, born in Copenhagen (Denmark), is a visual artist and graphic designer based in Berlin. With a keen sense for spatial aesthetics, Vincent's creative output centers around otherworldly room collages whose dimensions defy the laws of physics. It is this artistic quality which prompted the director to offer the position of production designer to Vincent. This was his first time designing sets for a film and he has proven himself to be a natural talent.



Makeup and SFX Artist

Jessica Troppens is a trained makeup and SFX artist from Berlin, Germany. The necessity for intricate practical effects were a great challenge even for someone as experienced as Jessica. Making an actor look like a completely different person, creating a realistic „skinless face“ mask, working out the best solution for the surgery sequence; these were some of the hardest tricks to pull off. But as you will see, she mastered all of them.



Composer

Christos Drouzas is a professional conductor and music producer from Ermioni, Greece. This being his fifth time working with Leander, he is the director's most frequent collaborator. For „Murderface“, it took several months of pondering and composing before he had the score ready for recording. He then assembled a team of musicians (trumpet, double bass, piano, singer) to record the score remotely. The result is a complex, bizarre and beautiful soundtrack.

FULL CREDITS

Directed by: Leander Behal

Written by: Leander Behal

Produced by: Leander Behal, Nicola Hermann

Editor: Luis Seemann

Principal Cast: Michaela Behal, Lee Reimers, Mohammad Al Masri

Supporting Cast: Stefania Kavas, Soraya Maria

Director of Photography: Lucas Heinze

Camera Assistants: Emrah Celik, Nimo Wöginger

Production Designer: Vincent Carter

HMU: Jessica Troppens

Production Manager: Nicola Hermann

Production Assistant: Dareios Haji-Hashemi

Sound Recordist: Nicola Hermann, Emil Viezens

Stills Photographer: Kaoru Chiba

Music Composer: Christos Drouzas

Musicians: Dimitra Kandia (singer), Alexandros Soronis (trumpet),
George Kokkinaris (double bass), Danae Vritsiou (piano)

Production Company: Andi's Fictions

