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La Truite (The Trout)

Directed and co-written by Joseph Losey, starring
Isabelle Huppert and Jeanne Moreau (France 1982)



Isabelle Huppert is Frederique in Joseph Losey's film *La Truite (The Trout)*, showing this week at Cinema 7.

Joseph Losey is a director known best for taking an almost clinical interest in his characters, their relationships, and motivations. His latest film deals with the absurdity of sexuality as seen through a series of coincidental meetings of its primary characters. Central to the film is the attitude that "there are no longer any heterosexuals or homosexuals—one is either sexual or not." Losey says of the film:

The small group of protagonists comes from different backgrounds, places, and attitudes. But the fabric is inextricably and tightly woven... I would call it a social comedy with bitter and sometimes tragic overtones. Funny, sad, disturbing, sensuous and sensual, I hope.

Based on Roger Vailland's book, *La Truite*, the film was updated from the '60s to the '80s. It is structured around three main narrative blocks, each filmed on location—Paris and Japan for the present and the Jura (a range of mountains along the Swiss-French border) for the past. The film weaves its pattern of different cultures and attitudes through international business and multinationals.

The film opens and closes with bookend shots of water running upstream, signifying the social ascent made by Frederique (Isabelle Huppert), "the Trout." As an adolescent in the Jura, Frederique formed a club called "The Savages," the purpose of which was to get things out of men without giving them anything. As an adult, she maintains an attitude of wanting to conquer while refusing to be used.

In a wonderfully cinematic scene in a bowling alley, full of

sexual metaphors, Frederique wears a T-shirt boldly emblazoned with "peut-etre" (perhaps) on the front and "jamais" (never) on the back. Frederique is an enigma to the world around her, yet she seems to be in great control of that world. Having learned how to defend herself in the adult world, her very presence seems to reveal its corruption. Her character develops in sophistication until she becomes a natural companion for the likes of Lou (Jeanne Moreau) and Daigo (Isao Yamagata), the film's two most mature and wise characters. Huppert is made to play Frederique.

La Truite's director of photography, Henri Alekan, won the 1982 French Academy Award (Cesar) for best cinematography. One of France's greatest cameramen, Alekan is perhaps best known for shooting Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*. *La Truite* is visually first-class, creating through the use of lighting three different looks for the film's locations.

—Cathy Sarkowsky

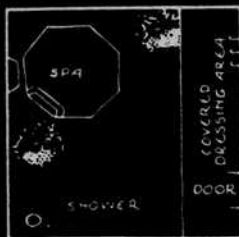
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