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MURDERING THE DEVIL

FILM BY ESTER KRUMBACHOVÁ

DIGITALLY RESTORED AND BACK ON SCREENS

Ester Krumbachová's directorial debut was 1970's biting feminist satire, *Murdering the Devil*. The Czech scenographer, dramaturge, artist, costume designer and screenwriter offers the audience a similar feast for the senses as the film's protagonist, played by Jiřina Bohdalová, prepares for her insatiable guest, Mr Bohouš Čert (čert being the Czech word for devil), played by Vladimír Menšík. While Krumbachová could only ever use a few of her many talents when collaborating on films by Karel Kachyňa, Jan Němec and Věra Chytilová, *Murdering the Devil* is a dense concentrate of everything that fascinated her and at which she excelled. The elaborate props, costumes and sets help to characterise the pair of archetypal characters, adding further layers of meaning to the central battle of the sexes. Weaving together motifs from fairy tales, legends and other folk narratives, the film plays with audience expectations, as well as gender stereotypes. The casting of two stars of the period evidently helped in securing production of the provocative film. Instead of conventional comedy, however, audiences were treated to an ornamentally exuberant experiment which utilises alienating techniques found in avant-garde theatre and multimedia performances such as the magic lantern. Despite this exclusivity, the cinema release of *Murdering the Devil* in autumn 1970 did not see any major complications. Even so, during the normalisation period, the multi-talented artist's creative activity was progressively suppressed. The film, which takes the saying "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach" to its absurd conclusion, represents the culmination not only of the Czechoslovak New Wave, but also of Ester Krumbachová's brief directorial career.

Czechoslovakia 1970 • 75 min. • DCP & Blu-ray • english subtitles

Director	Ester Krumbachová
Screenplay	Ester Krumbachová, Jan Němec
Director of Photography	Jiří Macák
Set Designer	Boris Moravec
Edit	Miroslav Hájek
Music	Angelo Michajlov
Cast	Jiřina Bohdalová and Vladimír Menšík

The donors of the restoration project were Mrs. Milada Kučerová and Mr. Eduard Kučera.

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