

**Review of *REFLET DANS UN DIAMOND MORT* (*Reflection in a dead diamond*),
Hélène Cattet, Bruno Forzani, BE/LU/IT/FR 2025**

Written by Antonio Dagostin

Relet dans un diamond mort is a movie that speaks about a retired spy that has to face his past in a hotel on the Côte d'Azur. Even though the plot seems simple the film is really complicated as its story is not clear in the main points. The directors, Hélène Cattet and Bruno Forzani, have in fact created a visual experiment that has its roots in the postmodernist conception of art, which is treated as something that has reached its maximum expansion and that can only reflect on itself.

Thus, the movie set up a large system of dialogue with other works from the past, especially with B movies mixed up with a lot of techniques from experimental cinema. Of course, as we are speaking of a spy movie, there's a big link with James Bond's movies, especially with *Diamonds are Forever*, in which Bond must face his nemesis, who killed his wife in the previous instalment of the film series. In this Bond movie, the main characteristic of the villain is the use of plastic surgery to create look-alikes, an aspect that is used also in *Relet dans un diamond mort*. Here we have the use of different types of masks that merge with the skin of the characters and that are exploited to create an undefined character who hunts the protagonist to kill him. But the story is not so simple as the movie is structured through flashbacks that take place in different universes, each one with its specific characteristics.

We can see this for example through the different gadgets used by the protagonist, a series of objects that reveal the various influences from experimental cinema. These gadgets are a mixup of different ideas coming from the soviet avangarde, the surrealist movement and the American experimental avangarde of the 50s, just to quote some of the influences. We can see this postmodernist cocktail in absurd objects that mock the spy movies of the 60s, where most of the flashbacks are set. That is the case of the ring with an eye that allows the person who wears it to see through things with a laser that destroys objects if exposed to it for too much time. Or even in the constant use of diamonds, a surface that lets our eye see what is behind it but that does not allow us to go through without wounding ourselves, an element often used in experimental cinema for obvious implications.

The movie does nothing but bring us to the death of the protagonist, which, in a certain sense, is also the death of the movie itself, so to say the end of it. It's no coincidence that, in one of the flashbacks, the protagonist is informed that the killer who is tailing him could kill him by manipulating his mind and leading him to think he is in a cinema at the end of a movie and then attack him to end his life. But this is just one of the various ways the undefined villain can manipulate the mind of the protagonist and even our minds.

Thus, the spy starts to think he is an actor for *Serpentik*, a series of movies that are adaptations of a comic series that resembles *Diabolik*'s production history, from the original comics created by sisters Giussani to Bava's adaptation of the 60s. In this chaotic kaleidoscope of past and present, set in different places, we arrive at the end of the "story", that is the death of the protagonist who is killed by his own movie.