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It’s always nice to see a little fresh perspective. That is, a filmmaker or actor not terribly well versed in horror jumping into the sandbox. And while Katie Aselton doesn’t have any grand notions of reinventing the genre, the fact that she’s made such a considerable impression in work like FX’s THE LEAGUE makes it even more intriguing that she’s popped into our world, both as a leading lady and director. Her second feature, BLACK ROCK (penned by husband and BAGHEAD co-director Mark Duplass), premieres this week as part of the Midnight section of the Sundance Film Festival, and she spoke with Fango about what to expect from her bit of survival terror.

BLACK ROCK sees Aselton, Lake Bell and and Kate Bosworth essay three friends on a getaway to reconnect, only to find their east coast island trip disastrously interrupted.

FANG: A lot of what we know of your work is from the comedy world. Horror and comedy have such a strong link, what’s your own relationship to horror?

KATIE ASELTON: It’s actually a bizarre one. I am not a massive fan of contemporary horror movies. I’m a huge fan of classic thrillers. I love films that are based in reality and have that sort of grounding pull to them. It [modern horror] doesn’t work for me because it doesn’t give me insane anxiety when I’m watching. Not like older thrillers like DELIVERANCE, even like CAPE FEAR or RIVER WILD. What’s terrifying to me are things that could actually happen to me; where I could imagine me in that situation or my family in that situation. That’s terrifying. And I think the comedy that I’m drawn to is also that sort of comedy that’s based in a very strong reality. I think the relationships on THE LEAGUE, while they are heightened versions of friendships, they’re all very based in truth. I have friendships like that, these cutting, witty, sarcastic, biting dynamics.

FANG: Of course, I have friendships like that and I think in THE LEAGUE and your previous film THE FREEBIE there’s an emotional honesty and authenticity at work that’s integral to horror as well.

ASELTON: Absolutely. That’s how we approached BLACK ROCK, just saying, ‘What is the worst possible thing that could happen on girls’ weekend away?’

FANG: What is the worst thing that happens?

ASELTON: The worst thing would happen, for me, is that shit goes brutally wrong and I'm left to take care of it with my own devices. I'm not trained in Kung Fu. I don't carry a gun. How would I, a 30-year old who just works out a couple of times a week, deal with someone who's twice my size and better equipped at dealing with that situation than I am.

FANG: BLACK ROCK seems to be a bigger production, in scale, than THE FREEBIE. What was your approach?

ASELTON: It was much larger on every level, from the size of our crew to the length of our shoot. It was just, bigger. It sort of had to be. I feel like it could even bigger. THE FREEBIE was very simple, we told that in my living room. This, we flew a ton of people to Maine to shoot outside, all exteriors, on the coast, on an island. It was intense.

FANG: There's a lot of the concept of "the getaway" in the genre, was there anything you took influence from?

ASELTON: I think my biggest influences were probably DELIVERANCE and THELMA & LOUISE. I love the idea of being out of your safety zone where you're not super comfortable. It's not what you're expecting. I like the idea that everyone isn't on their home turf.

FANG: Did you end up working with practical FX, was it your first time trying to orchestrate that?

ASELTON: Yea, we did. We worked with practical FX and some stunts, but it was also reality based. It was like, "How would I fight someone?" I'm just sort of scrappy and I'll just attack you [laughs]." So the stunts are cool. They're messy, ugly fighting. The special FX are sort of the same way when we were dealing with things like that. It's what it would really look like, I think.

FANG: How grisly does it get?

ASELTON: It gets pretty grisly. There's some blood that happens. A couple of us walked around or a good couple of weeks with blood on us. I don't feel like we pulled any punches, we hit pretty hard.

FANG: Whenever a woman makes a genre film, a lot seems to be made of the approach or intentions, and I'm curious if, in making the film, there was a sense of addressing a kind of pro-femme theme?

ASELTON: I love girls that are strong characters, and I believe in girls using their big-girl voices and standing up for themselves, and accepting their weaknesses for what they are, and also accepting their strengths. I'm a huge fan of strong female characters, but it wasn't my mission to say, "These are three strong girls!" These are girls who kind of find their strength, but they don't show up being ballsy like, "Fuck you, this is who I am." I like when someone's inner strength comes out. I'm sort of really over the movement of the gawky, shy beautiful girl who's uncomfortable in her own skin. I'm bored with that.

FANG: Did you have any prior relationships with Kate Bosworth or Lake Bell to build up that authenticity?

ASELTON: Yea, Lake and I were friends, not super close—nowhere near where we are now—

but she was one of the first people I sent the script to and she immediately responded and I knew she would be down to crawl around in the mud with me for a month, and I knew she would be really tough about it. Then, when she said yes to it, we were like, “Who else is going to crawl in the mud with us, because I can’t handle someone whining about breaking a nail; I’m gonna have bigger fish to fry.” She suggested that I meet with Kate. So I met with her, and just fell immediately in love. Kate is one of the raddest girls I’ve ever met, and she was so great, and so tough. We were three badass girls kicking it on the coast of Maine.

You can find out more about BLACK ROCK in the Sundance Film Guide .