

## Women in Horror '13: Briony Kidd and her "DAUGHTERS OF THE EVERLASTING LUSTRE"

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
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In the fall of 2011, a short horror film festival introduced me to the work of Briony Kidd. Her 15 minute *THE ROOM AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS* was a haunting, poetic tale of a lonely student finding solace in the echoing energy of her new home's previous occupant. It was the standout of said fest, but aside from mutual admiration of PHENOMENA over Twitter, we haven't heard much from Kidd since. In honor of Women in Horror Month, Fango caught up with the filmmaker as she remains toiling away in all manner of genre activity down under, directing and programming The Stranger with my Face Horror Film Festival and waiting to go on two new features she's told FANGORIA about.

Prepping a *giallo*-esque film for production later this year in Tasmania, Kidd plans to use crowdfunding to help support *DAUGHTERS OF THE EVERLASTING LUSTRE*. In the film, "Jane Harrington, 45, is a successful crime novelist and lectures in creative writing. With beauty, wealth and intelligence, she seems to have it all...but her confidence is unraveling under the gaze of a mysterious stalker who phones her in the dead of night and watches her from afar. Out of the blue a colleague, Olivia, becomes the victim of a serial killer. The only clue is a silver coin that's been placed on her tongue. Suspecting a link between this gruesome crime and her stalker, Jane begins to doubt the students in her creative writing tutor group—particularly the ethereal Eve and her sullen friend Ursula, both of whom seem to harbor passionate feelings towards her. Realizing that the detectives assigned to the case are out of their depth, Jane decides that her only hope is to discover the killer's identity herself. She invites her students to attend a writing retreat at her house in the country, a Modernist glass box overlooking bushland. Her plan is to undercover clues as to her tormentor's identity under the pretext of writing exercises and philosophical discussions. But her sense of control is short-lived. Plunged into an hallucinatory realm of cults, incest and twisted obsessions, Jane must learn the rules of the killer's perverse game... and play to win."



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Having already displayed a lyrical aesthetic in *TOP OF THE STAIRS* (pictured above), Kidd's style and vision of the dreamy-sounding film seem a perfect fit for a subgenre the director refers to as "bold, experimental, violent and completely over the top." She also believes the renewed interest and revival of sorts *gialli* is currently experiencing (films like *AMER* and Ryan Haysom's short *YELLOW*, for example) will benefit from a female horror filmmaker's touch. "I think being a female director will lend enough of a new perspective on the

*giallo*

idea without me needing to do anything consciously different, but I am aware that there have been very few

*giallo*

or neo-

*giallo*

films directed by women," she explains. "At the same time, there's a tradition of female leads or female villains, and quite subversive choices such as gay male leads. Men have used the subgenre to say interesting stuff about gender, so that's inspiring, but women should have a turn as well. Of course I do have my own take on it. I want the film to be psychologically intense, in a slightly trippy Bergman way, by going a bit deeper into character than would be typical. The aim would be that it's just as frightening at times through emotion (i.e. through performance) as it will be in the bloody and violent moments."

As we wait for the *EVERLASTING LUSTRE*, Kidd is developing a supernatural tale entitled *SALT OF THE EARTH*, as well as gearing up for March's aforementioned second edition of the *Stranger With My Face* Festival. The event, co-founded with filmmaker Rebecca Thomson, aims to "promote discussion around genre and gender, from ghost stories to gore, from art house to exploitation. It's focused on female filmmakers working in the genre, highlighting bold new work by independent filmmakers." The 2013 iteration features *AMERICAN MARY*, from fellow *Women in Horror* interviewees the Soska Sisters, as well as the Jennifer Lynch-centric documentary *DESPITE THE GODS*.

For much more, visit the [Stranger With My Face](#) official site, and bug [@BrionyKidd](#) on Twitter, so she'll finally get *THE ROOM AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS* online in full.