

The Sunday Statesman Magazine  
**November 23 2003**

# Star File

*At the recently concluded Kolkata Film Festival, Romain Maitra found an incredible actress in the diminutive Mira Gittner from Munich*

This incredible actress is the diminutive Mira Gittner from Munich. She was frequently marked at the film festival site with her dubiously unadorned appear-

From acting in television, Gittner had



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various involvements in theatres in Germany such as the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as acting soloist in *La Traviata* in 1993 and '94, or with the World Theatre Project in 1994 or with the Theatre Institute in Munich in 1997 and '98. It was, however, in 1998 that she teamed up with German actor-turned-director Róland Reber and actress Marina Anna Eich and wtp international film production was formed. Since then, this team has proved not only inseparable for all the three but has also revealed, in the film productions that followed, Gittner's other active roles, apart from her acting — as editor, cinematographer and producer.

In 2000, she acted in *The Room*, the first film of Reber's trilogy on "the search". In this film, screened at the Kolkata Film

Festival, we saw her as Sophie who shares with another man a house with a locked room. It dawned on us that the core of the film was not about the mysterious incidents in the house, but rather the hidden feelings of these two occupants. "All houses have forbidden rooms," says the man, and Sophie adds, "Just like our souls." For her role in this film she bagged the Best Female Actor award at the Melbourne Underground International Film Festival in 2001. About her idea of acting, she further explained, "If I am impersonating a murderer, for example, I have to look inside myself, at my own aggressive instincts, and then slowly expand it. The actor is like an instrument, like a piano with many keys having different tones and he must know how to use the keys, whether of aggression or of compassion."

The same year Gittner directed her first short film of 13 minutes, *Call it Love*, which, according to a reviewer in the USA, "dances on the edge of pathos and rage, (and) transports the viewer through an emotional labyrinth of May/December passion gone wrong". The film was awarded at the Panorama of Independent Filmmakers in Thessaloniki and at the Alternativa International Film Festival in Picciano. In *Pentamagica* (2002), the second film of Reber's trilogy which spares no aspect of the "magical sciences", she worked as one of the cinematographers and the editor. She also acted in the film as one of the five women who, at an esoteric summer workshop, all decide to work together on preparing a book about the world of magic, while each of them delves into one special area like shamanism, ritual magic, sexual magic, geomancy and so on. She got the Special Award for editing the film at the Panorama of Independent Filmmakers in Thessaloniki.

However, despite her multiple roles in the filmmaking process, it is acting that she enjoys most of all. "I want to get to know the dark sides in us humans because these dark places are alive. They are life." And among all her works, the one that would dwell memorably for a long time is her soul-searching act in *The Dark Side of Our Inner Space* as we see light falling on her piercing and timeless gaze while she utters, "Where does it start? Does the Big Game start with our birth — and we are not realising it...? Nobody asked you if

you want to be born in the game which we call 'life'. Maybe the game was there before you. Maybe it will go on after death. Where is the beginning? Where is the end? And where — the winner?" And in the welter of violent acts that unfolds, she emerges out of the doors of the vicious military base, a little wiser from the Big Game, holding a burning torch and her suitcase.

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