



THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

Following an acclaimed feature debut is always going to be difficult – how can you follow it? Director Simon Rumley promises James Mottram that he'll tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth...

ALREADY compared in some quarters to the likes of Eric Rohmer and Richard Linklater, British writer-director Simon Rumley returns this month to London's National Film Theatre for the release of the second instalment of his 'youth' trilogy, *The Truth Game*. Following his highly-praised debut, the crafty pseudo-documentary *Strong Language*, which also ran at the NFT, *The Truth Game* is a deliberately more mature effort, dealing with that anxious period when, as Rumley puts it, "you're still young at heart but your discussions turn to house buying". Set at a dinner party, it spans the course of one evening as two couples (including Tania Emery, who featured in *Strong Language*) converge on their friends Eddy (Stuart Laing, another Rumley regular) and Lily (Selina Giles) for a night of conversation and recrimination.

"It's about people lying to each other, on a small scale, and we all lie to each other," says the 33-year-old Rumley. "*The Truth Game* itself is a game that is played by younger people who've had a bit to drink. You get your mates round and everyone agrees to tell the truth on 20 questions. Inevitably, it turns into a session seeing who can ask the most lascivious questions. It's opening a can of worms really. It's such an embarrassing thing to play. Ironically, the title is 'The Truth Game', but they never play it. Every character is hiding something, trivial or otherwise."

The film was shot over just 11 days, and cast just eight weeks before shooting commenced with only an idea, and no script. Working with the actors, Rumley improvised the scenes, in much the same way as he did in *Strong Language*. Utilizing a hand-held camera, as well as Altman-like overlapping dialogue, *The Truth Game*'s raw and unconventional feel comes partly from the director wanting to break some rules.

"What I've been trying to do is get rid of boring film grammar," he says. "Like cutaway shots. I use a few, but all these shots that directors use to give the audience time to breathe I think are rubbish. It's very much the camera being quite intelligent, hopefully. While the dialogue has got a snappy Kevin Smith feel to it, in terms of direction, it's much more European art-house."

Of course, this being a trilogy (although an unofficial one), there's one more part to come. *Club Le Monde*, in fact conceived and written before either of its predecessors, will be released this Autumn, again featuring Emery as well as *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*' Frank Harper amongst the cast. Set around one night in a tacky London club, it promises to be, according to Rumley, "*Short Cuts* meets *Slackers*", or perhaps the antidote to *Human Traffic*.

"In terms of the trilogy, *Club Le Monde* is very much about one's early twenties, and it's set in the early Nineties," says the Tunbridge Wells-raised Rumley. "*Strong Language* was across the board, and set in the mid-Nineties, while *The Truth Game* is more mature, and comes at the end of the decade. It's how I've grown up. My progress as much as anything really." ■

The Truth Game is released on July 20 by the NFT. The film is reviewed on page 28