



The Pervert's Guide To Cinema: Parts 1, 2, 3 (TBC)

DIRECTOR: SOPHIE FIENNES
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(Lonestar Productions)

The title is quite misleading although this does not mean it is any less worthy as a critical account of cinematic form. For two and a half hours, Slavoj Zizek, who solely presents this documentary, delves deeply into concepts of reality and fantasy and psychoanalyses cinema using a wide range of films from the 1930's up to the present day.

There are no particular overtly sexual scenes or perversions in The Pervert's Guide, so if you are looking for the top 50 films containing these you will be hugely disappointed. Instead, he discusses ideas of what is really 'the real' and how our own fantasies and objects of fantasy are projected and shown in films. He talks about the superego, ego and id over clips ranging from various Hitchcock and David Lynch pictures to Alien and In The Cut.

Zizek's presentation form is an interesting and original one, often putting himself inside film sets that have been meticulously recreated to look like the originals, as well as visiting real locations used from films for this documentary. His passion about what he is explaining draws you in to listen with intent. The fact he seems to be not talking from any script or autocue demonstrates his depth of knowledge. The edits of many varied clips from films with Zizek's narration as examples of his analysis show he is adapting his theories to the 'real' world of cinema. Nevertheless, it keeps the audience engaged.

The Pervert's Guide To Cinema is enjoyable and originally presented. Whilst it is intellectual and thoughtful, it doesn't seem to actually produce any revelations or real insights into the cinematic form that have not already been expressed elsewhere.

SARAH DAVIES

Portobello Film Festival

Since its inception in 1996, the Portobello Film Festival has enjoyed success as one of the largest independent film festivals in Europe. As well as screenings of over 500 films, the festival hosts a multitude of other events – including live sets, comedy and exhibitions – all entirely free of charge.

Any short film festival tends to be rather hit and miss and Portobello is no different. But hey; if something doesn't interest you there'll be something fresh imminently. Clash caught a fair few gems along the way.

In terms of sheer style two Irish films ruled the roost. Screwback, a taut thriller halfway between Guy Ritchie and John Woo, marked director Brian O'Malley out as a possible directorial star of the future. Similarly, Stephen St. Leger and James Mather's Prey Alone looked amazing – not to mention amazingly expensive – with some dazzling computer generated imagery. With a budget rumoured to be around £55,000, it's inspirational to see what can be achieved.

Special mention must also go to Juan Perez-Fajardo's Till Death/Hasta La Muerta (pictured), a musical animated Western in the style of Tim Burton gone extreme. Damn funny and great to look at – a winning combination.

The more surreal efforts were often worth the challenge. Declan de Barra's Nun Fight Club was obvious but extremely entertaining whilst Oliver Klein's Bhai-Bhai attempted to put the story of an Indian illegal immigrant being deported from Paris to an often joyous Indian musical soundtrack. Baffling, yet surprisingly fun.

Nike Hatzidimou's Rootical was a leading work amongst the documentaries. The film follows Charlie Phillips, an Afro-Caribbean photographer who documented the social implications of immigration in Notting Hill. Rootical examines the cultural changes that the area has gone through over the past fifty years as well as the lack of representation of Afro-Caribbean history and culture in London museums.

The more leftfield category of oddities that makes up such a festival was good and present as ever. Ruud Vrugt's Meet H exuded a certain inimitable charm, Riki's O-I-L The Movie suggested that Riki was somewhat deranged as she documented her annual Piccadilly Circus Valentine's party. Jason Tammemagi's Not There Yet was basically an extended rant against the Irish transport System, whilst Punchdrunk's The Wall seemed to hold some sort of grudge against Roger Waters. Well, everyone has to have a hobby.

The Portobello Film Festival will doubtless return next summer.

BEN HOPKINS