



BLUE SCREEN

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK FLASHES TANK HIS PERVERT'S GUIDE TO CINEMA
Text by Marta Poznanski

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK IS not a pervert. At least, not more than any other man. The Lacanian polymath and romantic rebel doesn't even like porn. "Porn is, paradoxically, one of the most censored, conservative genres in cinema," he explains ahead of the London showcase for his *Pervert's Guide*. "It has a fixed framework and it's purposefully dull, based on a fundamental prohibition. The absurdity of why you pay to be shown everything is far more telling. For example, it's vital that the woman looks into the camera and that you don't identify with the male." Instead, he believes your local multiplex is the real Pandora's Box of perversity. "Cinema is the ultimate pervert's art – it doesn't tell you what to desire, it tells you how to desire." Later this year, Žižek demonstrates his theory in a three-part documentary and accompanying talk at the ICA. In the meantime, he tells *Tank* about the filmic moments he believes best illuminate our most frustrated desires.

Pervert's Guide to Cinema is at the ICA in October, along with a Žižek-curated season of films and talks. His new book, *How to Read Lacan*, is published by Granta. www.ica.org.uk www.granta.com

FAREWELL, MY LOVELY

Dick Richards, 1975

Woman as a symptom of a man (as embodiment of the man's betrayal of desires). Velma only exists as a result of the unethical dimension of man himself.

BLUE VELVET

David Lynch, 1986

The enigma of female desire clashing with the eclipse of the paternal authority. Deep, thwarted desires made manifest.

PERSONA

Ingmar Bergman, 1966

Against the male portrayal of woman as a masturbatory prop, this is woman's need to narrativise her fantasy. One of the most erotic scenes in cinema history.

VERTIGO

Alfred Hitchcock, 1958

The tragedy of two people caught in their own fantasies. For both Madeleine and Scotty, appearances win over reality. The fascination with beauty is a cover-up for a nightmare. If you get too close to the woman's fantasy, you see shit and decay. It's the ultimate abyss of the depth of another person, the "Night of the World" complex.

SOLARIS

Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972

Kelvin's libido needs the virtual world of fantasy – sci-fi meets the id machine. A materialisation of our deepest desires, fears and traumas – the innermost of your inner space.

MULHOLLAND DRIVE

David Lynch, 2002

Fantasy realised = nightmare, sustained always by violence. In this case, libidinal economy ("the only good woman is a dead woman").

IN THE CUT

Jane Campion, 2003

Sexuality is not about the body, but about its subsequent report in words. The ultimate seduction resides in words.

WILD AT HEART

David Lynch, 1990

Willem Dafoe and Laura Dern in the "Say 'Fuck me'" scene: deep female desire exemplified.