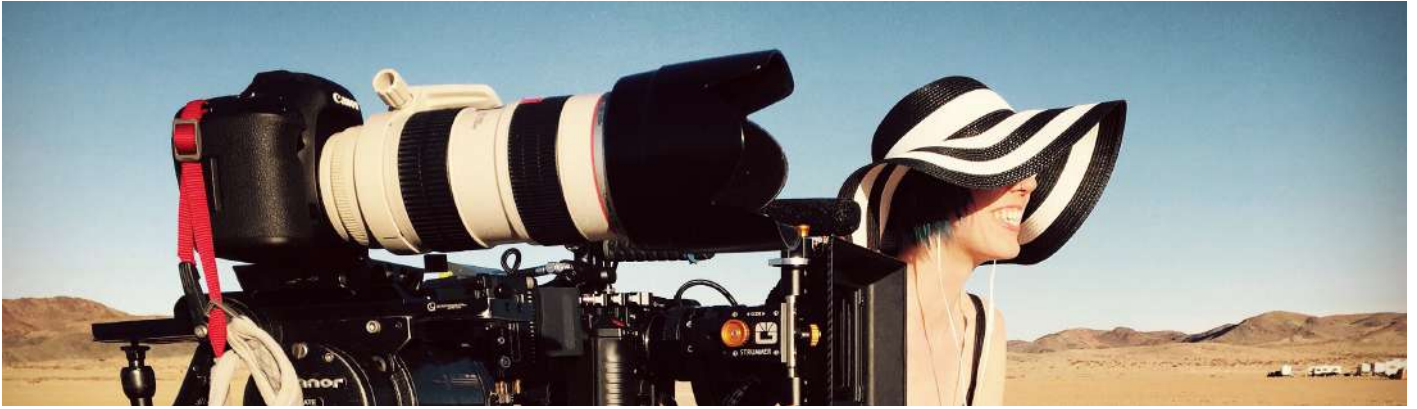


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IndieVisible

P U T T I N G F I L M S I N T H E S P O T L I G H T

Editor's Letter



Let's face it, it would be impossible not to start the editor's letter of a brand new independent film magazine without saying it's a difficult time for the industry. The pandemic has brought many productions to a halt and shut the doors of cinemas around the globe. I, like countless others, miss sitting in front of a giant silver screen, getting lost in a powerful story created by talented artists, so very much. Yet we at IndieVisible are focused on the positives. We created this magazine to provide a positive voice for all films - and within this e-magazine we talk about plenty. Whether discussing award-winning music documentaries like *Bleeding Audio* (p. 8) or hard hitting socio-political commentaries like *iHuman* (p. 6), we will shine a light on some of the most exciting indie movies cooked up over the last year. We'll also look back at classic films like 2011's *Drive* (p. 17), or the phenomenal career of indie stalwarts like Takeshi Kitano (p. 15), to take you back to simpler times. We will even hear from award-winning director Andrew de Burgh about how he turned the last few months into successful ones, with the release of his charming animation *The Legend of Santa* (p. 21). So, yes, the last year has been utterly woeful in so many ways. But over the next 20 pages we hope to give you a chance to escape all that and focus on the utter joy that independent films, and the brilliantly talented creators behind them, can provide.

George White, Editor

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With four screens showing everything from dazzling Oscar winners to European Art House gems and classic re-releases, **Showroom Cinema is Sheffield's only independently programmed cinema.**

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Sadly, closed in its **25th year** due to the pandemic Showroom Cinema is a **registered charity** and continues to seek donations, sell memberships and engage with its audience until it can reopen its doors.

For or the latest film recommendations to screen at home follow **@ShowroomCinema** on social media or visit: **showroomworkstation.org.uk**



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A very real problem?

by George White

A very real problem?

by George White

iHuman is the latest hard-hitting documentary from Tonje Hessen Schei, which dives into the booming artificial intelligence industry and the impact it could have on, well, humans. We talk to Tonje about the project, the threat of deep fake and premiering for Edward Snowden.

Why was this an important documentary to make, and how much has that importance increased since Covid?

For me, iHuman was an incredibly important film to make - as it takes on the ethical challenges we are facing with the most powerful and far-reaching and disruptive technologies of our time.

I got the idea for iHuman in 2014 while I was working on my last film, Drone - a political thriller on the CIA's secret drone war. When I started looking into autonomous weapons I realized that AI not only transforms modern warfare but everything around us. This was in 2014 - and since then I've been in the midst of an AI explosion, also called The New Big Bang.

We are facing a technology that is changing who we are, our societies and our future - without us having a proper debate about the consequences of AI invisibly creeping into our lives.

So with iHuman I set out to do exactly this: Start a much-needed global debate on the impact and governance of AI in our lives.

We do live in incredibly intense times, and 2020 has been a shit year. With Covid-19 I also feel that a lot of the sci-fi scenarios the experts in iHuman talk about have become part of our everyday lives.

When the pandemic hit it was quickly revealed how governments globally already have AI surveillance architectures in place, and this in a time when we are more dependent on the digital realm than ever.

During times of crises it is ever more important to understand how our human rights often get stripped away in acts of panic and fear.

Did you learn anything particularly shocking or revelatory while making this film?

One of the most shocking things I learned during the production of iHuman was how AI is already everywhere. We are addicted to intelligent machines that pretty much hear everything we say and see everything we do. AI is in our phones and in our computers - and we are increasingly using machine learning and algorithms in our daily lives.

I was scared to realize how we might not be ready for this technology, especially because of how fast AI is developing - and because we haven't solved some of the main issues of AI, like dirty data sets which enhance bias and discrimination and that there are no international regulations in place to govern the most powerful technology of our time. That is deeply



Tonje Hessen Schei

frightening to me.

I was also surprised to learn about the goal of many computer scientists: to make AI that can be smarter than us. In some ways I feel we've already been outsmarted by this technology as it's made us ever more addicted to a destructive digital rabbit hole.

But most of all I was shocked to see the immense power the tech giants have in our world today. Artificial intelligence is now largely under the control of a few white, very wealthy young men, and the decisions they make have consequences for most of humanity.

How will AI affect the future of the film industry?

I imagine actors and celebrities will be particularly impacted by deep fake technology.

Pretty soon I do think most of us will learn how

to use AI as filmmakers. We played around a lot with machine learning in the process of making iHuman. Mostly as inspiration and in creating our VFX, and it was incredible to see how fast the tools are developing.

It is predicted that in a year deep fake will be so good that it will be impossible to see the difference between what is fake and what is real.

As a big fan of democracy and as a documentarian I am extremely worried about what deep fake means for our understanding and trust in the media.

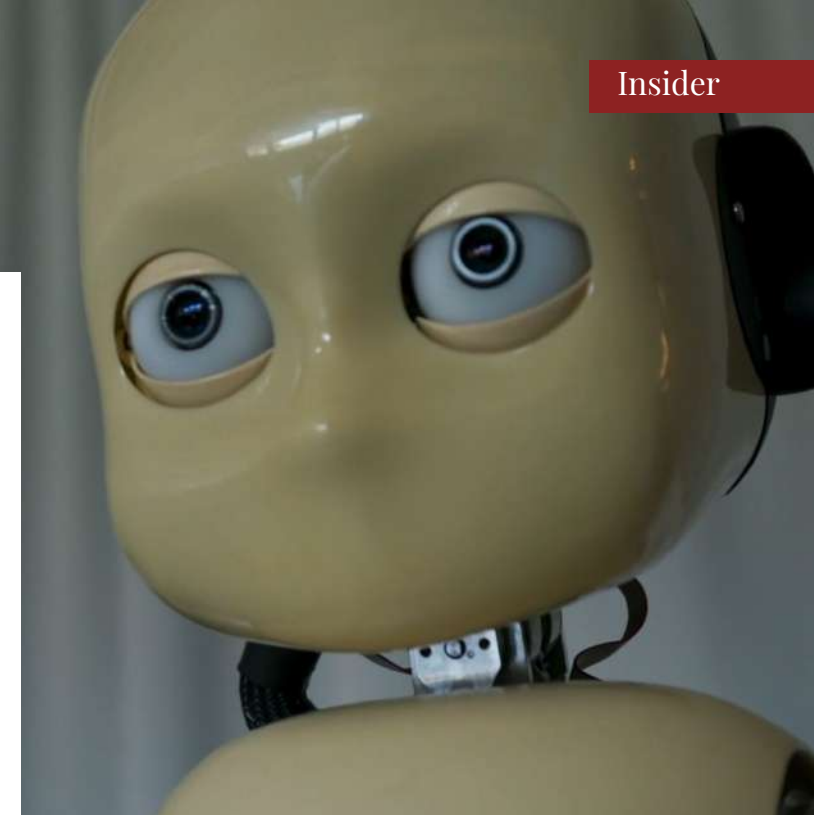
How was the filmmaking process for this iHuman?

The making of iHuman was an incredibly exciting journey. I had the honor of working with an amazing creative team of DPs, VFX artists and a brilliant sound designer.

I am a big science fiction fan - and our references ranged from Inception, Blade Runner to Black Mirror, and Koyaanisqatsi.

But in particular, the creative process with our main VFX artist, Theodor Gronenboom, was mind-blowing. Theodor is a genius, with experience from films like Gravity, Star Wars, Dr. Strange and Alien - and his mind is limitless.

So working out how we would visualize an invisible technology, and how we would give life to artificial



intelligence in the film was such a blast. I am proud of how it manifested itself in the film.

It involves some huge figures in the AI industry, how was it to work with them?

Through iHuman I got to meet some of the leading pioneers at the front line of AI development at some of the world's leading AI labs in the US, China and Europe.

It has been an amazing journey. As a tech nerd it's been such an honour for me to spend time with these brilliant computer scientists - and to get on the inside of their mindsets to learn of their hopes, questions and fears developing AI.

The film has picked up awards on the film festival scene. Have you been happy with the response?

iHUMAN had its world premiere last year at IDFA, one of the largest documentary film festivals in the world. Edward Snowden was first to see the film - and he agreed to join us for our world premiere, which was a great honour, for sold out audiences.

Since then the film has travelled the festival circuit, and we've had some incredible impact screenings at the UN, EU and G7. So I'm grateful to see how the film is travelling, and more so I'm thrilled to see what kind of impact the film is creating on both the policy level and through our tech partners.

And we are still just beginning our work here.

Why should people check out iHuman?

I believe iHuman raises some of the most important questions we are facing today. How do we live with AI, and how do we make sure this technology is used for our common good?

Without regulation, legislation and governance frameworks based on crucial ethical standards we risk losing our grip on this powerful technology, removing human intelligence and our uniqueness from the equation.

I think it is crucial for people to become informed so we can take back our narrative of who we are.



Chelsea Christer

A Bleeding Good Documentary

by Charlie Vogelsang

Based in San Francisco, award-winning filmmaker Chelsea Christer had already directed two well-received fiction shorts: *We're Just Like You* and *Sierra*. Now her first feature film, *Bleeding Audio*, has been chosen for Official Selection at the Slamdance Film Festival.

Bleeding Audio recounts the story of how *The Matches* went from promising band to break-up to rebirthed brilliance. It provides an insight into how the music industry has changed and how this has hindered many talented artists from becoming successful.

IndieVisible spoke to Christer about her filmmaking process, *The Matches*, and what's next for this talented director.

What drew you to *The Matches* and their unique story?

It always kind of baffled me that this band that had so much to say wasn't skyrocketing to fame. While I was cognizant of the changing industry, seeing them constantly on the road and appearing on magazine covers felt like signals that the big break was imminent. While working on the video projects with the band, I saw the weariness and burnout in everyone. So when they broke up - I understood why.

When the guys let it slip to me that they were going to reunite, I knew it was going to be a massive success. Their fanbase is so passionately supportive of them - but *The Matches* had absolutely no idea how big it would be.

What did you think were the most important bits to showcase in *Bleeding Audio*?

It was really important to me to make sure to dispel the illusion of outward success vs financial success we as consumers see in our artists. In constructing the narrative for *Bleeding Audio*, I wanted to ensure we were telling *The Matches* unique story - but also making sure it was universally accessible to all artists who are trying to make it today.

It's quite a distinctive documentary with interesting visuals, how did *The Matches* inspire the creative visuals in *Bleeding Audio*?

The fact both Shawn and Justin (from *The Matches*) are incredibly talented artists gave the band a totally different texture from their early DIY beginnings. We were able to utilise and revitalise some of that album art in the animations throughout the film. I similarly wanted the animations in the film to evolve alongside the narrative.

So, Act One was stylized to match the E. Von Dahl Killed the Locals era artwork, Act Two used elements from the Decomposer

album art, and Act Three featured texture and design from the A Band in Hope era.

What did you learn about yourself coming away from this project?

I get a little bit of shit for this bleak outlook, but the biggest thing I learned out of this project was I totally get why people quit. This shit is hard, and it can make a person wildly unhappy at times. What I learned about myself is that even through the tears in making this movie - I loved making this film.

What was the biggest challenge during production?

A challenge we faced was when to stop filming the story, which is definitely a challenge for documentary filmmakers. Things were changing for *The Matches*, and they actually recorded a couple new songs. I thought this was the pinnacle of our resolution for the film. Once we got into post, it didn't feel like the place to end this story. I'm glad I have those sessions recorded but it's always a hard call for documentary filmmakers to know exactly when the story stops.

US Congress passed a bill offering \$15 billion in relief for struggling art venues through the help of the campaign #Saveourstages, what does this mean to musicians and struggling artists?

THIS. IS. SO. IMPORTANT. I'm so thrilled that this bill actually passed. A point that is made in the film is that it's no secret musicians are no longer able to live off of their music alone. But it's not only the artists who are affected,

it's the venues and the event staff that help make shows possible that are struggling.

Music is a community connector and a piece of our culture that must be protected and preserved. The thought of someone being deprived of live music because there was nothing protecting our artists or venues during this pandemic breaks my heart.

***Bleeding Audio* has won multiple awards from Cinequest Film Festival to SF Doc Fest, and now has been chosen as the Official Selection of Slamdance Film Festival. How does this success make you feel?**

It feels really amazing and validating. I had been told so many times that I couldn't make a film that would be embraced by audiences about a band no one has heard of. I worked with an incredible team of people who really supported my vision and helped craft this story. The audience reaction to date makes me feel like the care and consideration we put into every second of that film is coming across.

What's next for you in the future? Are there any exciting new projects we should be on the lookout for?

I love *Bleeding Audio*, but after over six years of dedication to this project, I'm very eager to create something new. I have a couple feature scripts I've written that I would love to get made. One in particular carries forward the story of the music industry's mental health impact on musicians, and the other is a crazy story that wrestles with identity.



The Future of Cinema

by George White

This past year has been a difficult one for the film industry. Productions across the globe have been brought to a halt. Movie releases have been delayed for months or, in some cases, years. And both multiplex and arthouse cinemas have had to close their doors for significant periods of time.

The challenges for movie theatres have been heightened by several studios' decision to move some of their biggest projects online. Disney released much-anticipated titles *Mulan* and *Soul* on its Disney+ streaming service, for example, and Warner Bros has said it will make all of its 2021 titles available on video on demand.

Nigel Douglas, senior lecturer for the University of Derby's BA Film Production course, has warned this is a trend that will likely continue in the future.

"The main Hollywood studios are watching Warner closely at present," he explains. "If this is financially successful, then it is likely that Disney will expand its platform followed by Sony and Universal."

"British cinemas are, on the whole, dependent on American large-scale releases to attract audiences. With most studios holding back both production and release of films, such as the new *Jurassic Park*, *Batman*, *Indiana Jones* and *Bond* movies, cinemas will struggle to attract significant audiences."

Yet it is not all doom and gloom, he adds. "Cinema has consistently bounced back over decades of challenges from radio to television," Nigel claims. "For most cinema-goers, it is the shared experience of the big screen and full audio that appeals, and this is unlikely to change."

This is especially true for independent cinemas, whose loyal supporters have already helped in many ways throughout the pandemic. Venues such as Broadway Cinema in Nottingham and ArtHouse Crouch End in London have seen large numbers purchase memberships to keep them afloat while they're forced to close, and Nigel claims many film fans will be eager to return to the big screen as soon as possible.

"It is mostly cinema devotees that regularly enjoy the offer from arthouse cinema and this is unlikely to change," he claims, "although cinemas remain cautious on how many will be willing and confident to be in a large populated public auditorium."

And will independent films be the centrepiece of the moviegoing experience in the future? You wouldn't bet against it.

"It is possible that cinemas will have to broaden their offer over the next five years away from blockbuster multi-screens and support lower budget films that may not find an online audience, without the big studio marketing and platform power."

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The Rise and Rise of Daniel Kaluuya

by Nathan Warby

Following his breakout roles in British TV series such as *Skins* and *Black Mirror*, Daniel Kaluuya has solidified himself as one of the most accomplished actors in modern cinema. What makes him particularly interesting is the manner with which he has steadily made a name for himself as an A-list actor, all while simultaneously starring in some of the most culturally significant films in recent memory - both big and small.

If it was *One Million Credits* that launched Kaluuya's career, it was Jordan Peele's thought-provoking 2017 horror *Get Out* that propelled it into the stratosphere. In a film that bravely tears down cinematic and social norms in ways never seen before, the role of the protagonist becomes even more important in getting the audience onside. Kaluuya effortlessly establishes himself as a likeable character in his portrayal of Chris by coming off as decidedly normal. He isn't a puff-chested hero with an aura of invincibility, he's the type of guy you bump into on the street every single day - who just wants his girlfriend's family to like him.

What this means is that when things start to get weird as the plot unfolds, you're immediately sympathetic to the everyman

who isn't cut out for the horrors that are ensuing. Why? Because Chris could be your neighbour, or the guy you talk to at the bus stop. This sympathy is the touchstone of the entire film, because it offers the audience a window into the fear and oppression that people like Chris experience every day. Kaluuya manages to make a powerful statement about the prominence of racism in modern society through his accessibility and subtle emotional beats. An impressive feat that speaks to the boundless talent of the actor.

It's hardly his most iconic role, though it is easily his greatest financial success, but his portrayal of W'Kabi in *Black Panther* might just be Kaluuya's most underrated performance of the lot. Here, in what might look a straight forward side role, he uses his compelling voice to represent the frustrations among the Wakandan people towards the way they are treated.

They have spent years living in the shadows, afraid to truly express themselves and show the world what they can offer. The genius is in how Kaluuya manages to convey these emotions in so little screen time. His character tends to occupy the side of the screen behind the likes of T'Challa and Killmonger, so he has to express what is going through his mind in

smaller ways, like with a brief facial expression or eye movement. Unsurprisingly for an actor of his quality, he does this to excellent effect and the audience is never under any doubt as to what he is thinking.

His third, and possibly most important, role is as the titular Slim in *Queen and Slim*. In this, his character is thrown into a social movement as he inadvertently becomes the catalyst for the change he seeks. Here Kaluuya perfectly slips into his guise as an 'average Joe', but slowly evolves into something much more.

Watching his performance develop as Slim transforms from a typical young man on a date with a girl to the icon of an entire campaign within the film's runtime is a truly incredible ride. The beauty of it is that the audience may not even notice the subtle ways he changes or how he grows into his newfound celebrity. It's only when you think back to those early scenes where we first meet him that his extraordinary

performance can be truly appreciated.

The final film of his doesn't exactly fit with the others, but his performance is more than worth talking about. 2018's *Widows* saw Kaluuya break his usual mould and take a turn at being a fully-fledged villain. For someone who's so likeable, he turns himself into the playful, sociopathic Jatemme Manning with an almost unsettling amount of ease. In a project that featured an ensemble cast including Academy Award winner Viola Davis and nominee Liam Neeson, the sheer fact that critics have singled out Kaluuya is testament to his pedigree as an actor.

It may seem a little redundant to say 'keep an eye' on an actor who has already been nominated for Best Actor and starred in a film that broke \$1 billion at the box office. But at just 31 and with such an impressive resume behind him already, in 20 years' time we might just be talking about Kaluuya as one of the all-time greats.

Gangster's Paradise

by **Jamie Morris**

The sublime crime dramas of Takeshi Kitano. We explore the works of one of Japan's most notorious indie film directors.

From Quentin Tarantino to the Safdie brothers, many of cinematic history's most celebrated crime directors broke into the spotlight by leaving their mark on the independent scene. Among indie crime cinema's greatest success stories - and soon to be adapted into a biopic for Netflix - is that of comedian-turned-master-filmmaker "Beat" Takeshi Kitano and his blood-splattered back catalogue of cult classics.

Prior to his big break as a respected actor-director, Kitano was already widely recognised in Japan as one of the Two Beats, a slapstick comedy duo whose gags were often inspired by true tales he had been told by yakuza audience members. While still almost exclusively referred to as "Beat Takeshi" in Japan today - and best known as the namesake of the game show Takeshi's Castle in the UK - Kitano began his foray into dramatic cinema with Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983) alongside co-star David Bowie.

Japanese audiences at the time laughed at Kitano on screen, assuming his role was solely comic relief due to an unbreakable association with his stand-up gigs.

Yet, determined to become an actor, Kitano took on a number of increasingly serious roles, and was eventually hired for the film *Violent Cop* (1989). What he didn't realise was that this film would also be his directorial debut, as previous director Kinji Fukasaku eventually walked out on the project after growing tired of the full-time comedian's busy schedule.

Boiling Point



Kitano's fascination with crime is inseparable from his directorial identity, no tour through his filmography would be complete without mention of his excellent dramas that take place outside of and adjacent to the yakuza world. The first, *A Scene at the Sea* (1991), focuses on a hearing-impaired couple as one of them learns to surf, with powerful acting and an exceptional score. *Kids Return* (1996) follows a pair of high-school delinquents as one becomes a boxer and the other joins the yakuza, but veers more towards coming-of-age trappings than crime. *Kikujiro* (1999) is a road movie starring Kitano as an ex-mobster who takes a young boy on a trip to see his mother, and is the director's most uplifting, optimistic work.

Kitano's films after *Dolls* (2002) - a

beautifully-shot collection of three heartbreaking interwoven love stories - is harder to view outside of Japan due to a general decline in his critical and commercial success. Despite being something of an international hit, Kitano's remake of the blind samurai saga *Zatoichi* (2003) is currently out of print in the UK, as is his introspective yet divisive *Takeshis'* (2005) and long-awaited return to his yakuza roots, *Outrage* (2010). Several of his films have yet to see a UK release at all.

Takeshi Kitano's glory days might be behind him, but the director's spectacular output across the nineties has well and truly cemented him as not just one of Japan's finest, but one of the greatest indie filmmakers of all time. Kitano's story is one of rebellion and self-reinvention in the name of creative pursuit, and one that is sure to serve as an inspiration to aspiring actors and directors for generations.

The result was a shockingly raw bullet-fest, and a strong start to a fruitful career in on-screen crime. Kitano followed it up with the weaker yet more experimental *Boiling Point* (1990), a free-flowing tale of a baseball player who becomes involved with a mischievous gangster. Themes and artistic trappings from *Boiling Point* would carry over into *Sonatine* (1993), the first crime film to be produced by his own independent studio, Office Kitano, and arguably still his greatest work to date.

In *Sonatine*, Kitano casts himself as Murakawa, a nihilistic and monosyllabic yakuza enforcer who is sent to Okinawa to defuse a turf war. The film's runtime is made up largely of a series of games, from innocuous seaside wrestling to a round of Russian roulette in which

Murakawa seems unfazed - if not allured - by the barrel of the gun. Scored by Joe Hisaishi of Studio Ghibli fame, the music only heightens the mystique of Murakawa's character. Kitano would later partly rework the story on a global scale with the English-language *Brother* (2000), albeit with less subtlety and more thrills.

Kitano's equally impressive next crime film came four years later in the form of the Golden Lion-winning *Hana-bi* (1997) in which retired detective Nishi turns to crime in order to care for his terminally-ill wife. Elements from all of Kitano's previous features are combined into a deeply affecting narrative which contrasts idyllic scenes with intermittent moments of extreme violence, as Nishi shields his wife from the criminal underworld. A subplot sees Nishi's former partner become a painter after a gunshot wound leaves him paralysed, featuring Kitano's own handmade works of art.



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Drive

by Charlie Vogelsang

In 2011, Winding Refn created a neo-noir thriller that would become a favourite of many film fans across the globe. But does this blood-soaked cult classic still hold up 10 years later?

Based on James Sallis' 2005 novel of the same name, Drive follows an unnamed

Hollywood stunt driver, played by Ryan Gosling, who ends up moonlighting as a getaway driver. Directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, the film released 10 years and even had a standing ovation and won an award when it was shown at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival.

After its release, Drive appeared on several lists of the best films for 2011 - including the prestigious National Board of Review.

It's time to see if the film lives up to this hype 10 years later, or if it was simply overhyped because of the lack of competition at the time.

Known only as The Driver, the plot follows his life as he quickly establishes a relationship with his neighbour, Irene (Carey Mulligan) and her young son Benicio (Kaden Leos). Her husband, Standard (Oscar Isaac), is absent at the start as he is imprisoned - with The Driver left to fill in the void. Once Standard is released, though, The Driver teams up with him to take part in a botched million-dollar heist that turns out to endanger the life of every single person involved in it.

It's not very often that you get a protagonist that

“Movies like *The Guest* may have tried to copy the aesthetic, but there is only one *Drive* - and it's a masterpiece.”

speaks so little, yet is so endearing. *The Driver* is similar to the Man With No Name, played by Clint Eastwood in the Sergio Leone westerns. He almost never contributes verbally, but this doesn't leave him as a one-dimensional tough guy with no emotion. Instead, Gosling's facial expressions and actions show him as a caring and sensitive guy. The Canadian plays this character so well that it would feel cheap to make him talk more.

The chilling music explains *The Driver*'s emotions and the mood of the film as well as any dialogue could. The relationship between *The Driver* and Irene is a deep connection that is built up through montages of music and loving expressions between the two. It's an understated romance that grows from the track 'Real Hero', as Irene realises her new man could finally prove a real hero to her son. She doesn't need money or false promises, but someone who can actually be there and take care of them.

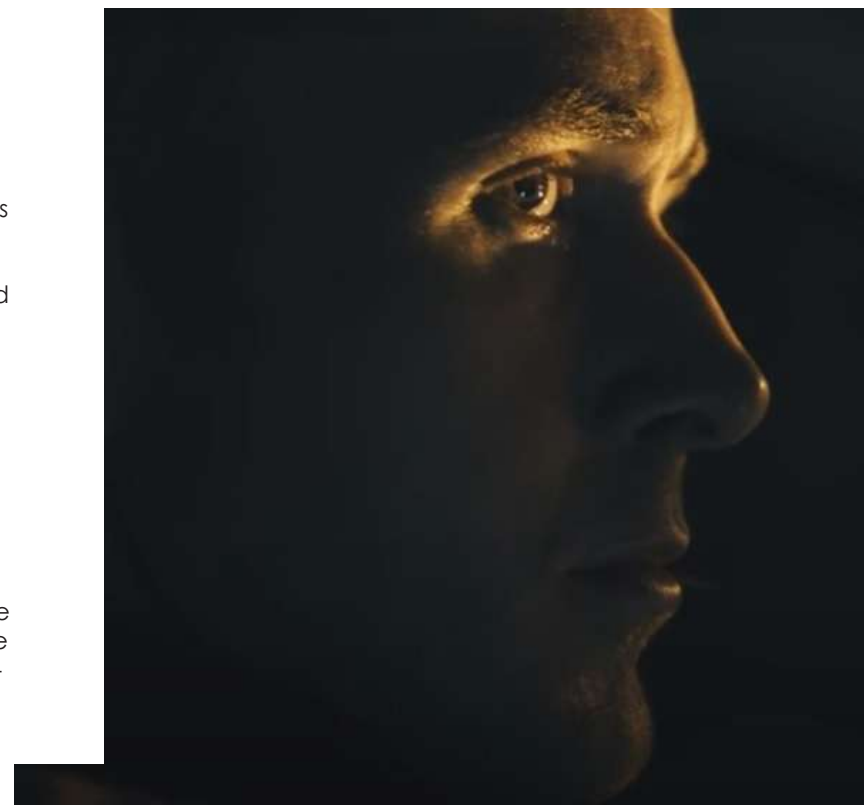
It's no surprise that the film received an Oscar nomination for Best Sound Editing, as the music and sound design is fantastic. The 80s synth music goes with the seedy shots of the nighttime activities - and it makes everything so cool. More than that, each tune conveys an emotion from a character and proves more than just an enjoyable song choice.

There are no meagre words to

describe the cast as every single person is outstanding. From Gosling to Mulligan, every character feels three-dimensional with so many different layers. Even the surprising casting choice of Albert Brooks pays off as he brings the morose Bernie Rose to life. Prepare to be blown away by his performance, which provides a blend of dark humour and chilling menace.

The brilliance of *Drive* is that tense moments aren't shown with multiple action shots and fast-talking dialogue, it's shown through nuanced and highly-stylised shots. At the start of the film, there's a car chase that is purely suspenseful and thrilling as the shots show *The Driver* as someone meticulous and rational. There is no fast-paced editing that feels rushed like in *The Fast And The Furious*. *Drive* is clever in its cinematography, editing and overall mise-en-scene to form a film that's thoroughly entertaining and engaging from start to finish.

It is a hard-edged, neo-noir action film that is incredibly stylish with clear art influences from European and grindhouse cinema. This blend with the cast and direction make it phenomenal, and the film just feels timeless. *Drive* is something you could've watched in 2011, or watch today, and it's still one of the best movies of the 21st Century. Movies like *The Guest* may have tried to copy the aesthetic, but there is only one *Drive* - and it's a masterpiece.



by Charlie Vogelsang

Anti-Valentine's Day Movies



Valentine's Day has been forced onto humanity as a day where you are made to feel guilty for being single. It's a time for overly-sentimental and utterly cheesy movies that sometimes make you want to throw up. This year, you can avoid all the fluff by celebrating an anti-Valentine's Day with us. Check out these five indie films which will make you glad to be single.

5 Guilty of Romance

A blend of arthouse and exploitation, Guilty of Romance follows a detective investigating a series of grisly murders on women in a love hotel district in Tokyo. Along the way he discovers a housewife trapped in a loveless relationship doubling as a prostitute.

4 Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

This film shows exactly why people stay single to avoid getting hurt. It conveys how complicated and heartbreaking relationships can be. From the stunning visuals, masterful performances and the delightful score, Eternal Sunshine is a film you'll never want to forget.

3 Animals

Adapted from Emma Jane Unsworth's novel of the same name, Animals gives us an insight into how romantic relationships can destroy friendships. Laura and Tyler have been friends and flatmates for a decade, but their dynamic changes after one enters a relationship.

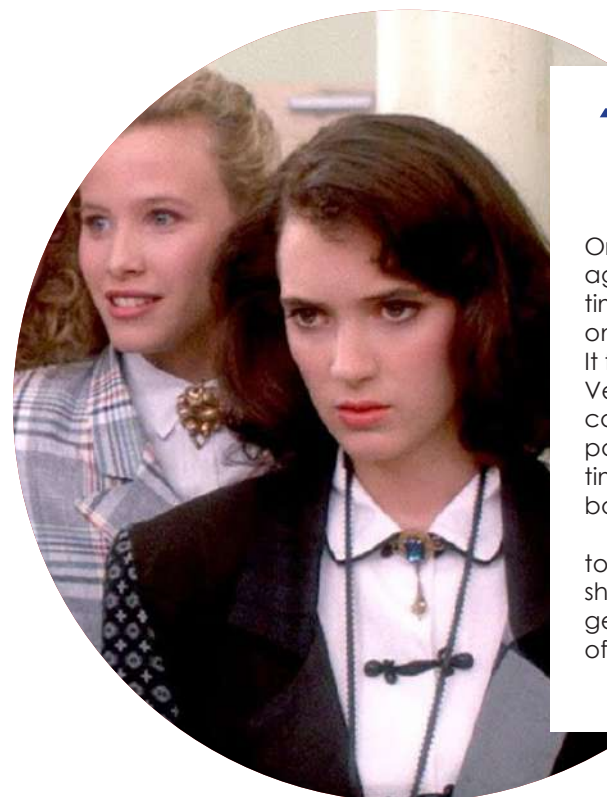
Animals is a truly poignant drama showing the messiness of life and that you don't have to follow everyone else. It shows the complexity of female friendships, and you'll find yourself rooting for their companionship more than their romances.



2 The Love Witch

If you fancy something a bit more cheery then The Love Witch is the one for you. Written, edited, directed, produced and scored by Anna Biller, the film tells the story of a modern-day witch who uses spells to get men to fall in love with her. After she entraps them, she disposes of them if they fail to satisfy her needs.

The Love Witch rewrites the concepts of romantic love and female sexuality by giving the witch unlimited power. It also pays homage to 1960s horror films with its remarkable tone and visuals. It's certainly a film that will shake up your Valentine's Day in the best way possible with horror, sex and comedy - just make sure you don't get any nasty ideas from it...



1 Heathers

Originally conceived as a reaction against the John Hughes films of the time, Heathers is an incredible twist on the romantic comedy genre. It follows a popular girl named Veronica who is in an elite clique called the Heathers. After losing her patience with them one too many times, she enlists her new psychotic boyfriend to help murder them.

Heathers is your ultimate antidote to the standard romance movies. It shows what can happen when you get swept up in the crazy moments of that killer honeymoon period.



Andrew de Burgh, Filmmaker

As I sit pondering my existence as an independent filmmaker during a global pandemic, a great deal of questions swirl around in my head. Should I look into changing professions? Did I make the right decision in deciding to be a filmmaker in the first place? Will I be able to make another film this year? I try to calm down and remind myself that I am extraordinarily lucky that last year I was able to produce and direct a title (animated short The Legend of Santa).

Despite the challenge of our team members working in different continents, we managed to make a production we are all proud of. The film has played at a few festivals, including the Golden Bee International Children's Film Festival, Cinema Steamboat and the Bite-Size Okotoks Christmas Film Festival. It will also be screening at the McMinnville Short Film Festival next month. As someone obsessed with cinema, the festival and critical success of the film has brought me an extraordinary amount of joy in what has been a dark period for the human race.

In terms of future projects, I am currently in the process of trying to launch The Twisted Doll, a crossover Bollywood-Hollywood thriller film that tells the story of a young Indian widow who arranges an elaborate revenge scheme after her life is ruined by two real estate agents in Los Angeles. Having made it into a 2017 short film of the same name, it is a story I am very passionate about and hope to make it into a feature film in the near future.

Overall, from my experience, independent filmmaking, both in terms of making a living from it and actually getting to do it, is very hard to do even during the best of times, let alone during a pandemic. I have a lot of empathy for fellow artists and filmmakers during this time and hope they have found ways to stay motivated and creative.

An indie filmmaker in the era of Coronavirus

AMANDA BRIGHT

AMIT SHAH

Adjoa Andoh Pearl Mackie Kerry Howard Charity Wakefield
Doreene Blackstock David Newman Joseph Fletcher
Vinegar Strokes

THE LENNOX REPORT

A lockdown love story



"Inspired by, and made possible by the Coronavirus pandemic,
The Lennox Report might be one of the most joyous,
uplifting and poignant pieces of indie filmmaking
to come out of this strange and unpredictable situation yet."

UK Film Review

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