

Film Review: Eyegasmic ‘Oblivion’ With Tom Cruise Wins Your Optics, But Loses Your Brain

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on April 20, 2013 - 4:15pm

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CHICAGO – “Oblivion” is a Pyrrhic victory that wins its battle, but loses the overall war. While this is the kind of visual production value you’d expect on a \$120 million budget, an ostentatious steak dinner in the special effects department never makes up for a story that tastes more like cheap ramen noodles.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

In an expensive film of this grandiose scale, neither can it afford to insult you with oversimplification nor overly complicate itself beyond your ability to reasonably comprehend it. While “Oblivion” from “TRON: Legacy” director Joseph Kosinski definitely doesn’t pander to the simple minded, its slipshod story devolves into a sci-fi discombobulation that gets lost in its own twists and turns.

“Oblivion” draws inspiration from more than two handfuls of other major films. For starters, “Prometheus” – though its story line is literally in another world – feels similar to “Oblivion” in terms of its majestic environments and its overall loneliness. Though both films feature vast imaginary lands with few primary characters, “Prometheus” succeeds in one key area where “Oblivion” fails: it inspires you to ask questions.



[Read Adam Fendelman’s full review of “Oblivion”.](#) [18]

When “Oblivion” complicates itself with two Tom Cruises and two Melissa Leos and how they interact with one other, you might be willing to remain misunderstood without caring to find a clear understanding. By contrast, a film like “Prometheus” – or other sci-fi masterpieces like “Star Trek,” “Star Wars” and “Alien” – inspires you to question deeply controversial curiosities about science, god, religion, faith and other lifelong debates.

In “Oblivion,” all along you get the feeling you’re dealing with an “I, Robot”- or “Eagle Eye”-esque artificially intelligent supercomputer that’s barking out commands from the mother ship. And in “Oblivion,” it’s hard to enjoy Melissa Leo’s Sally character because you have to constantly question why Andrea Riseborough’s Victoria and Tom Cruise’s Jack never do.

“Oblivion” stars Tom Cruise, Morgan Freeman, Olga Kurylenko, Melissa Leo, Zoe Bell, Andrea Riseborough, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Abigail Lowe, Isabelle Lowe and David Madison from writer, director and producer Joseph Kosinski and writer Michael Arndt and Karl Gajdusek based on the comic book by Joseph Kosinski and Arvid Nelson. The film, which has a running time of 126 minutes an opened on April 19, 2013, is rated “PG-13” for sci-fi action violence, brief strong language and some sensuality and nudity.



[Continue for Adam Fendelman’s full “Oblivion” review.](#) [18]



Jack (Tom Cruise) cautiously approaches a drone in “Oblivion”.

Image credit: David James, Universal Studios



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