

Film Review: Art & Real World Taken to Task in Angular ‘The Square’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 23, 2017 - 1:54pm

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CHICAGO – Recently, the record for highest bid ever on a work of art was shattered – \$450 million for Leonardo da Vinci’s ‘Salvador Mundi’ – and the ownership of a canvas, for the price of supporting a small country, calls into question the meaning of art and collecting. All of this, and everything more, is generated in the cinematic rendering of “The Square.”



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

There is not much of a plot as a series of vignettes that comment on each other. The director, Swedish director Ruben Östlund, paints a sensational follow up to his equally fascinating “Force Majeure” (2014), which explored the family dynamic. In a way, “The Square” does the same thing, but expands it into the family of man. Issues of class, gender, power, the current tech culture and of course art come into these character’s lives at different levels and truths, culminated by a long scene of put-upon confrontation, which is a piece of art in its own right. “The Square” won the top prize Palme d’Or at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, which in a sense is the final absurdity in a film reveling in them.

The film begins with an interview with Christian (Claes Bang), top curator at an unnamed art museum in Stockholm, by a somewhat clueless journalist named Anne (Elisabeth Moss). The museum is about to launch “The Square,” an high concept exhibit that “... is a sanctuary of trust and caring. Within it we all share equal rights and obligations.”

As this takes place, Christian also loses his wallet, as part of a public square con. Instead of writing it off, he tracks the phone to a middle class high-rise, and confronts all the occupants of the building with a threatening note. Miraculously, the wallet and phone are mailed back to him, but one family believes that their son was the culprit. The boy confronts Christian to make amends, while The Square’s opening night wealthy glitterati audience is confronted with a monkey-like performance artist (Terry Notary). Art meets life meets art.

“The Square” is currently in a limited release in theaters nationwide, including Chicago at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 North Southport Avenue until November 30th. See local listings for other screenings, theaters and show times. Featuring Claes Bang, Elisabeth Moss, Dominic West and Terry Notary. Written and directed by Ruben Östlund. Rated “PG”



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Director Ruben Östlund, Elisabeth Moss and Claes Bang of ‘The Square’
Photo credit: Magnolia Pictures

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