

Film Review: Mind-Blowing ‘Midsommar’ is Disturbing and Beautiful

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 4, 2019 - 11:31am

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CHICAGO – “Midsommar” is beautifully composed, disturbing in nature and very very Swedish. Writer/Director Art Aster creates a stunning sophomore effort (after his brilliant debut “Hereditary”) that is pure cinema, and weaves a fantastical tale of humanity stripped to its bare bones. It moves a bit slow, but it also builds to something completely original and unexpected.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

With more than a nod to the Swedish master Ingmar Bergman, Aster starts with the horribly emotional wreckage of a triple suicide, and morphs into a Swedish Midsommar fest, which becomes more and more unimaginable. There is also the contrast between the ugly American superficiality and the older European culture, which narrows the vision of the guests in witnessing the events of the ritual – and you’ll understand why once you see the film. Like religion, the Swedish commune that is depicted relies on myth, but their myth is rooted into a more natural human cycle (thus the reference to “mid-summer” and the nearly 24 hour sunshine). There was a time when we were more attuned to our nature, and the nature around us, Aster just frames it in some vivid and disturbing rites of passage.

Twentysomething grad student Dani (Florence Pugh) is in emotional crisis after her family commits a triple suicide. Unstable herself, she is a little girl lost after the happening, and clings to a soulless relationship with her boyfriend and PhD candidate Christian (Jack Reynor). She gloms onto a retreat to Sweden with Christian’s friends, and begins a new journey.

The commune is rooted in ancient traditions, including a nine-day Midsommar “festival” that includes many rituals of human transition, and happens once every 90 years. Josh (William Jackson Harper) and Christian fight over who will study the cultish behavior for their thesis, which alerts the commune’s elders to possible infiltration. As the days of the festival commence, the collective anticipates the crowning of the May Queen.

“Midsommar” opens everywhere on July 3rd, including Landmark Century Centre in Chicago, 2828 North Clark Street. Featuring Florence Pugh, Jack Reynor, William Jackson Harper, Will Poulter and Ellora Trocis. Written and directed by Ari Aster. Rated “R”



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Dani (Florence Pugh) is in Over Her Flowered Head in ‘Midsommar’

Photo credit: A24



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