

# The Universe of Miranda July Foresees ‘The Future’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 5, 2011 - 11:09am

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Rating: **4.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The beauty of indie filmmaker Miranda July lies in her ability to create substance and mystery out of the most mundane everyday circumstances. Ms. July wrote, directed and stars in the symbolically rich new film “The Future,” and nurtures the concept of “the relationship” into another realm.

Forging a stunning commentary on the mendacity of couplehood, July uses doses of intense fantasy and starkly cruel reality to light the dark corners of the interrelating human race. It also can be argued that this film is nothing more than survival mechanisms at work, and that the fantasy elements involved are merely represented to propagate the good fortune of getting to the next sunset.

Sophie (July) and Jason (Hamish Linklater) are a thirtysomething couple that have been together for four years. They have their internet and their rituals, including indulging in a pretend game that has Jason stopping time. Their lives are about to change because they find a stray, injured cat. They decide to adopt him, but the vet at the shelter tells them the cat’s specialized care will take thirty days, and they can pick him up then.



All is Well?: Hamish Linklater as Jason and Miranda July as Sophie in ‘The Future’  
*Photo credit: Roadside Attractions*

Given that they have only thirty days left of “freedom,” Sophie and Jason decide to quit their jobs and satisfy their heart’s desire. Jason joins a volunteer environmental organization, Sophie decides to do 30 dances in 30 days. As the time ticks away towards the adoption, the portals that the couple have opened begin to vacuum their emotions. Sophie becomes involved with a factory owner (David Warshofsky) and Jason

starts to unravel in unexpected ways. If only he could really stop time.

Miranda July has such a grasp on her image, both as a performer and a woman. She has a smooth sensuality, but it is also quite goofy. Even as she is “seducing” the capitalist, there are contemplative minutes where Sophie observes the trinkets of his typical suburban home (he is a divorcee with a daughter). It is a remarkable moment, both vulnerable and in control. July’s character is one of mystery and sensibility, though by standards of normalcy she can be viewed as really out there. But she also has an uncanny ability to reel it in, just in time, to invite us into her universe.

The sphere of purpose in the narrative is really strong. It is about couples, and the rut they get into – the opening scene has Jason and Sophie on their laptops, surfing the web while “together.” The adoption of the cat, the decision to indulge in their journeys and even the result of that indulgence all have to do with the secrets they keep from each other. How much easier it is to surf the web than communicate, there are all the distractions in the world. By giving themselves permission to find truth rather than distraction, they mettle with the dynamic of what they’ve created in their relationship, and have to pay it back accordingly.

It is not a web that July weaves, because nobody is captured. The couple’s decision to go through their freedoms starts a series of ramifications, which changes them, the capitalist, his daughter, an old man that Jason buys a dryer from and oft-mentioned friends Tammy and Sasha. This “butterfly effect” (one small change elicits larger changes) is one of the more fascinating elements of the film. It even involves the cat, who seems to have an uncanny ability to sense what is going on with everyone around him (July provides the actual voice of his narration).



Primal Dream: Miranda July Acts on Her Instinct in 'The Future'  
Photo credit: Roadside Attractions

This film is much more mature than July’s last feature, “Me and You and Everyone We Know,” because she is five years older and obviously more reflective on the experiences of her various relationships. There is much to embrace in this particular path, she speaks to the procrastination of creativity, the alluring appeal of negotiating a new sexual partner and the unrelenting sorrow of being too late to put it all back afterward. This is superior meditation, and a warning about keeping truth intertwined with evolution.

It is gratifying that personal filmmakers like Miranda July can get to a point where her musings can reach a larger audience. Me and you and everyone we know can take something away from it, if only to embrace some simple and necessary lessons.

*“The Future” continues its limited release in Chicago August 5th. See listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Miranda July, Hamish Linklater, David Warshofsky, Isabella Acres, Erinn K. Williams, Oona Mekas and Clement von Franckenstein. Written and Directed by Miranda July. Rated “R”*



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