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House of Flesh Mannequins

REVIEWED BY: Tim Posted on 31/07/2012



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I've always been a sucker for all things disturbing and gory (apart from the real life "shock" footage) so when I read about a film pushing the boundaries curiosity always gets the better of me and I just have to check it out. A lot of the time I'm left feeling disappointed and cheated by the hype or bored shitless by how poorly made and inept on every level the film was. 99% of the time I'm left wondering why I even bothered but every now and then there is a well crafted film where the extreme imagery is the icing on the cake adding realism and making the film an experience instead of just mere entertainment. Admittedly I'm losing my stomach for the more extreme side of cinema as I get older but curiosity still gets the better of me and something twisted gets thrown in the player.

I was pretty intrigued with House Of Flesh Mannequins after reading it was influenced heavily by directors from the classic era of Italian horror such as Fulci and Argento. Unfortunately for me House Of Flesh Mannequins' bark was worse than its bite and this was another case of me being duped by hype.

House Of Flesh Mannequins is the story of a film maker called Sebastian (Domiziano Arcangeli) who has an obsession with violent and sexual imagery which he spends his days collecting and edits/masturbates to them during night. He makes a living making various seedy films (a few hints are dropped that it's child porn) for an underground pornographer Cannoluti (Randal Malone). Quite a weird guy right? Well who could blame him after all he spent his youth being part of his father's sleep deprivation experiment, abused and was constantly filmed throughout his life.

As you may have already guessed Sebastian is very much a loner. Sebastian's loner lifestyle changes somewhat when he strikes up a relationship with Sarah Roeg (Irena A. Hoffman) a woman in his building. Sarah lives with her father who is blind and his health is deteriorating. Genre fans will of course recognise her father as he is played by one of the veterans of Italian horror/exploitation cinema Giovanni Lombardo Radice ([Cannibal Ferox](#), [Cannibal Apocalypse](#), [City of the Living Dead](#)). Sarah finds takes an unusual interest in Sebastian's work and they become friends which sends them both into a downward spiral.

The film itself tries desperately hard to be an art-house flick with its disjointed narrative and experimental cinematography. It struck me as quite pretentious especially the laughable riffing on David Lynch during the scenes where Sebastian visits the film's name sake where things take a turn for the more surreal. The film just didn't have the chops and came across as a pale mishmash of the director's various influences. After sitting through countless low budget films I do appreciate the more adventurous approach but for me it just fell flat.

The low point of the film for me was the pointless meandering dialogue between the characters. It really became an endurance test trying to stay awake and the characters started to sound like Charlie Brown's teacher to me. The film being split into different acts seemed kinda pointless to me aside from it perhaps being a nod to [Salò](#). House Of Flesh Mannequins was nowhere near as shocking as the cover would have you believe either. There's some fairly graphic sex scenes during Sebastian's visit to the "House of Flesh Mannequins" and a bit of grue during the scenes showcasing his film work but overall it's nothing to write home about in that department. Overall the film was a disappointment for me.

The special features side of the disc features interviews with the cast & crew, a featurette on the special effects and the 5 "snuff" films featured in the film. The extras may very well be the saving grace of disc because gore-hounds will be able to skip the movie and check out the longer cuts of some of the "shocking" scenes. Overall it's a good package of extras neither bludgeoning the viewer with hours of unnecessary content or stifling them with a bare-bones release.

DISC DETAILS:

DIRECTOR(S): Domiziano Cristopharo | COUNTRY: Italy | YEAR: 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR(S): MVD / Elite | RUNNING TIME: 100 minutes | ASPECT RATIO: 1.33:1 | REGION: All / NTSC | DISCS: 1

EXTRAS:

- Behind-the-scenes featurette

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

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- [Subconscious Cruelty](#)
- [A Serbian Film](#)
- [Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom](#)
- [Where The Dead Go To Die](#)

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