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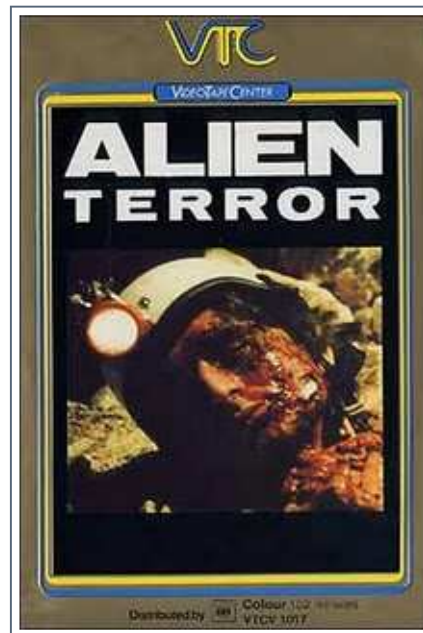
Dellamorte's Disco Dichotomy

DJ/producer/cineaste/friend to cats. I play across the board from hip-hop, funk, reggae, soul to techno, house, dubstep and electronica. You will find mixes, info, even reviews of obscure films here.

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tuesday, 30 august 2011

Film Review - Alien 2 : On Earth (1980)



The world of the Italian exploitation film is a strange one – From 1956 until petering out sharply in the early nineties, the Italians simply made the most colourful, exciting and over the top B movies in the world, mostly with ultra-low budgets and a sense of artistic freedom undreamt of by Hollywood. Their pioneer spirit and commercial nous (many Italian exploitation films did incredible business around the world) sometimes meant that conventionally accepted rules were sometimes bent, however, such as in the case of 'Alien 2'.

Obviously, Alien 2 is not an official sequel to Ridley Scott's 1979 sci-fi/horror masterpiece Alien – The official sequel was, of course, James Cameron's awesomely pumped-up 1986 Aliens – Instead Alien 2 was apparently written before the Alien trademark was registered (another story claims that the producers of Alien attempted to sue for \$10 million, but were thwarted when a 1930 novel also titled 'Alien' came to light). There's no way even the most uneducated of viewers could mistake this for a film in the same series however. Instead this feels a lot more akin to, for instance, Norman J Warren's 'aliens in a cave' flick Inseminoid (also 1980), with plot points borrowed from the first two Quatermass films.

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The basic plot goes like this – after a plethora of stock footage, we learn that an aborted space mission is on it's way back to Earth, (shades of the original Quatermass here). A young woman starts having terrible visions which may or may not be linked to the return of the mission (You may or may not be surprised!). When the spacecraft returns, all of it's occupants seem to be missing, and a few days later strange blue rocks start appearing around LA.

The girl who was having the premonitions is part of a group of pot-holers investigating stalactites, and their caving expedition runs afoul of the deadly blue stones, which, in a twist blatantly obvious to anyone slightly familiar with Quatermass 2 or the 'chest-burster' creatures from the original Alien, turn out to creatures which incubate within human hosts. Can they survive?

I probably shouldn't have enjoyed Alien 2 quite as much as did, but I did. Part of this is the aesthetic joy I get from watching any Italian exploitation, specifically that filmed abroad (on location in California no less!) without sync sound and with Cinecitta dubbing and sound effects, and part of it is the sheer wrong-headedness of the monsters and the gore. The creatures resemble nothing more than piles of guts (fairly likely that's what they were..I have a theory that butchers made half their income from gore films in the 70's) which burrow into people and, er, make their heads explode – Or, in one particularly grin-inducing moment, slowly drop off in a shower of grue. None of the well-thought out and convincing ecology of Scott's Alien here – This thing is played for yucks alone, and when they come, they're brilliantly executed (for the budget and time, silly and effective yucks – Actually pre-empting, in the case of one or two, Rob Bottin's FX from the Thing a couple of years later (there's no secret that John Carpenter was a fan of the Italian horror film, after all). It's a shame that (spoiler alert) when the fully-grown alien at the end makes an appearance, we only see it from a POV shot (through an, erm, interestingly-shaped 'eye').

All in all, then, your enjoyment of Alien 2 probably relies on your expectations – If you're expecting gritty realism, intelligent spectacle or the psycho-sexual edges (aside from the afore-mentioned 'eye') of the Alien series, you'll be likely to be heavily disappointed. If you're expecting a fairly slow-moving Italian sci-fi gore flick which does, at least, finally deliver on the grue, then you might well be entertained.

(Interesting bit of trivia – One of the cavers is future director and Argento protégé Michele Soavi, the man behind a film called Dellamorte Dellamore (1994), of which this author is rather fond)



Posted by DJ Dellamorte at [03:36](#)

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