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### Created:

Tuesday, October 26th, 2010

at 21:10

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## OneMetal.com REVIEW:

### Night of the Living Dead Reanimated



*Night of the Living Dead* is a seminal film for a lot of reasons. Not only did it bring a new and more overt sort of social commentary to horror cinema, it basically defined zombies in film to this day. So much of what we associate with zombie cinema – eating flesh, headshots for kills, the shambling gait – all of it comes from *Night*. Of course there were zombie films before, but none have had the wide-ranging and long-lasting influence of Romero's film. It took a



supernatural threat from the Caribbean and transplanted it to America as a more banal and insidious threat (Romero loves to refer to his zombies as ‘the neighbours’). Couple that with the fact that it’s a classic film and it’s little wonder that people are still dissecting it to this day.

*Night of the Living Dead Reanimated* sets out to examine Romero’s original film by replacing the footage with artwork that interprets the movie, tells the story, and keeping the original soundtrack. The makers have gathered 100 international artists with the remit “select scenes from the original film and reinvent them through your art”, patching together the results into an experimental take on the original. No type of artwork is off-limits, so there is a mixture of still frames, flash animation, comic and anime-inspired artwork, machinima and plenty more

besides, meaning the style jumps around frequently and allows a broad range of artists to showcase their work.



(<http://www.onemetal.com/2010/10/26/night-of-the-living-dead-reanimated/graveyardzombie/>)

The iconic graveyard zombie from the opening of the film.

The trouble is that you present something explicitly as art, it helps to have something to say. So many of the artists involved seem happy just to recreate scenes from the movie as is, without contributing anything of their own to interest or inform. Some of the pieces of ‘art’ contributed are just scenes from the original with a filter laid over the top, and plenty more are crudely roto-scoped renderings of the exact frames. That isn’t art. That’s plagiarism. To genuinely try to pass off a couple of hours of watching your computer render an effect (which no doubt took all of minutes to select) as something worthwhile is deceitful and sad. There are some strong sections: the artwork that plays out at the beginning of the film’s chilling credits sequence (a phrase usually only applied to Adam Sandler movies) is angular, high-contrast stuff that conjures pre-WW2 industrial artwork, but it is the exception rather than the rule. While the makers are very clear that they don’t expect everyone to like every contribution (and quite right they are too) I suspect they think this is because you will be challenged by it; in reality the majority of the work is ferociously bland stuff.



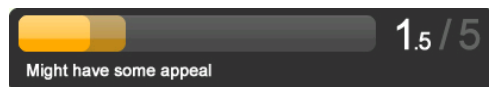
(<http://www.onemetal.com/2010/10/26/night-of-the-living-dead-reanimated/whackcooper/>)

Even in cartoon form, Cooper is still a jerk.

What you’re left with is essentially a reductive remake. So few of the contributors have anything of their own to say that you are left watching vast swathes of virtually worthless images to see the few that do show any spark. The project is a great idea, but with so few contributions showing any sort of imagination beyond choosing a medium and recreating a chunk of the film or an iconic image, *Night of the Living Dead Reanimated* is more of a chore than an experience for even the staunchest zombie fan. It’s not that a project like this can’t work, but simply that this one doesn’t. It would be great to see the people responsible for curating this project take another stab at examining Romero’s work with a less ambitious aim than recreating the whole film. The love for the work is clear, but stricter limits on what is accepted could only benefit everyone involved.

### Bottom Line

While a great idea with occasional sparks of genius, all too often the contributors to *Night of the Living Dead Reanimated* fail to make the distinction between ‘art’ and ‘drawing’. With a better lineup of artists this could have been something special, rather than 100 people with nothing to say.



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