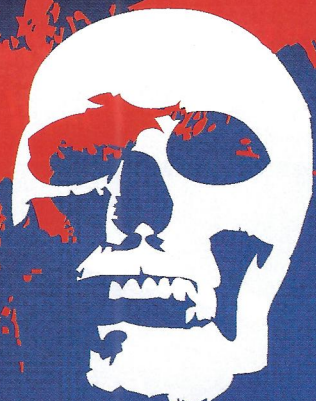


HORROR REVIEWS



WHAT'S HOT IN THE WORLD OF DVD & BLU-RAY...

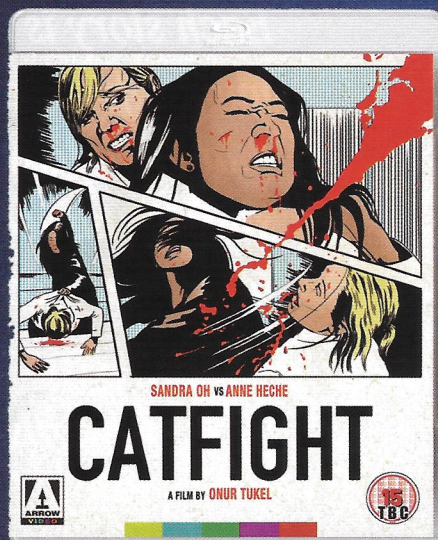
CATFIGHT

THE FILM: Savage, brutal and amazingly fantastic, Indie director Onur Tükel's *Catfight* is a raw and stripped-down comedy about two women plagued by their own sense of hatred and loss. Starring Anne Heche and Sandra Oh, *Catfight* pits a pampered socialite (Sandra Oh) against struggling artist Ashley (Anne Heche) after a heated argument at a swanky loft party gets out of hand. What initially starts as a misunderstanding turns into an all-out brawl in a quiet stairwell that will keep the pair locked in combat for many years to come.

Casting Anne Heche and Sandra Oh as the two leads in this film is perhaps Turkel's greatest coup to date. Heche is smirkingly unlikable in her role which is the polar opposite to the sort of roles she was famous for in the nineties. Meanwhile, whilst completely outside her comfort zone, Oh is completely captivating in her role of pampered socialite turned bitter scrapper. Together both leads are remarkably captivating and Tükel demonstrates his eccentric sense of humour (see his earlier Vamp comedy *Summer of Blood*) and the end result is borderline genius.

I only wish the film went further with its amount of violence as it seems Turkel has a tendency to hold back a little too much for my liking. The film's quirky sense of humour mixes in well with its dramatical scenes. However, the dark-hearted comical tone of the film lessens the impact of the fight scenes. I'm unsure if this was Turkel's choice or not. Perhaps he wanted to pander to the members of his audiences who are of a nervous disposition.

That said, it is the aggression and the heartache at the centre of the film that makes *Catfight* so compelling to watch. As a whole Turkel has done a superb job with this one. It's fascinating to watch and deserves a large audience willing to relish in its dark-hearted nature.



Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠🧠

SPECIAL FEATURES: *Catfight* choreography featurettes, 17 Deleted Scenes including an alternative ending to the film, 2x Audio commentaries (1 with Sandra Oh and Anne Heche and 1 with director Onur Tükel).

Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠🧠

CATFIGHT is out now on **UK Blu-ray** courtesy of Arrow Video.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

CHILD EATER

THE FILM: Director Erlingur Thoroddsen's *Child Eater* is an intriguing monster. A bastard child of the slow-burn chiller and the supernatural slasher, Thoroddsen tries his best to take his audience on a nightmare fueled splatterfest but the end result is anything but.

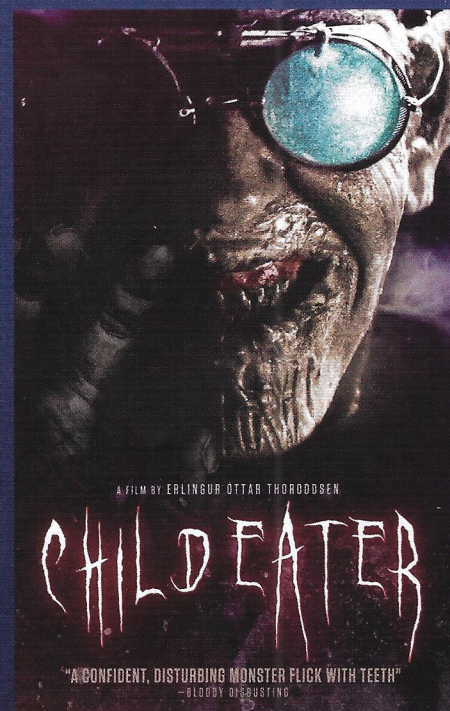
Far away from the high-octane supernatural chillers of recent years, *Child Eater* is, without a doubt, one of the most disappointing watches of the past year. Heavily flawed, problematic and incredibly dull, *Child Eater* attempts to master the slow burn without telling an interesting story. As such, Thoroddsen negates to offer his audience anything to chew on and loses

all credibility in the process.

The story is nothing new. There is no sense of mystery and the cast isn't that interesting. Overall there is no discernible trace of tension throughout the film. Further flawed by a bland cast and wooden acting, *Child Eater*'s scares come few and far between which is a shame. I could have been more forgiving if the cast had delivered believable performances but unsurprisingly they don't.

All negatives aside, Thoroddsen does show potential as a director. He has a keen eye for style and design and *Child Eater* has a few moments which do truly shine. One key example of this can be found in a scene inside a wardrobe (I'll say no more). But, at the end of the day, there's just too many missed opportunities which are ignored and it was deeply frustrating as a viewer. Everything feels stale, boring and unoriginal, so you can imagine my delight by the time the end credits begun to roll.

Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠🧠



SPECIAL FEATURES: Trailers

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

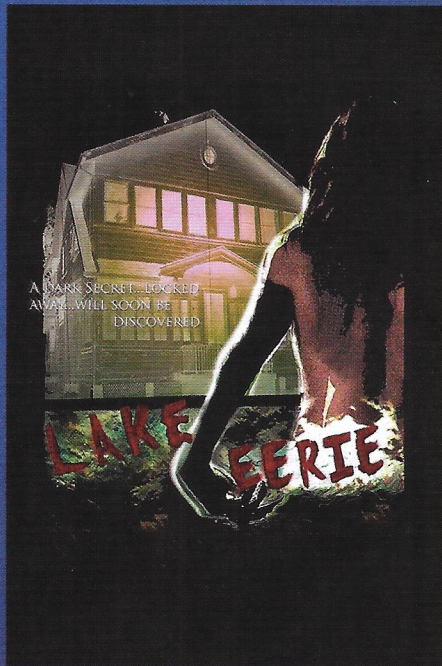
CHILD EATER is out now on **US DVD**

courtesy of MVD.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

LAKE EERIE

THE FILM: Lake Eerie has the makings of a fairly intriguing horror film and follows a young widow named Kate (Meredith Majors) who wins a house at auction after the passing of her late husband. Wanting to restart her life, it's not long before she befriends her neighbour Eliza (played by



Evil Dead's Betsy Baker) and discovers the previous owner of her home was a passionate archeologist whose research has strong links with the supernatural and it's not long before she begins to experience intense nightmares and begins to question her own sanity.

I had high hopes for this film because I enjoy a good ghost story but after watching I couldn't help but feel completely disappointed with the end result. As a horror film, there is nothing scary about this movie. As a thriller, the film holds no weight to its tension. So as a whole, Lake Eerie promises audiences a scary and thrilling ride but what is delivered is somewhat pedestrian. The plot, although possessing a surprising twist in the second act, remains basic and wholly predictable. Void of any surprise, style or coherence, scenes are haphazardly cut together and the end result is a very jarring nonsensical mess.

The cast is similarly a let down. In the lead role of Kate, screenwriter Meredith Majors exercises her acting chops to play a recent widow struggling to live her life

but her emotional scenes often fall flat. Meanwhile, making an appearance as Kate's dad is Lance Henriksen. Relegated to a supporting role, Henriksen appears in a handful of scenes and fails to deliver anything noteworthy. Thankfully, the same can't be said for Evil Dead's Betsy Baker whom as Eliza thankfully avoids a number 2 pencil to the achilles to shine as Kate's over enthusiastic neighbour. She is hilarious and is the only redeemable part of the film.

On reflection, Director Chris Majors fails to deliver anything of value with Lake Eerie. The plot and script are a mess. Its execution is poor and its performances are almost laughable. Basically, any ounce of credibility is gone by the time the end credits begin to roll. Do yourself a favour and give this one a wide birth, there's nothing of value to be offered here.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

SPECIAL FEATURES: Trailers

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

LAKE EERIE is out now on **US DVD** courtesy of MVD.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

LADY BELLADONNA'S NIGHT SHADES

THE FILM: Lady Belladonna's Night Shades struggles where all anthology films do by being a mixed bag of segments that range from the abysmal to the excellent. Each story improves in quality, so by the time you reach the fourth and final 'Wolff's Law', you'll be surprised to see a touching and emotive character-driven tale that suggests the film has saved the best for last.

The first (and worst) story is titled 'Last Night on Mars' and follows a man who kills a group of young women. Taking elements from The Amityville Horror and The Shining, he is haunted by a presence in his home that lures him to go in for the kill. It's a simple idea and a frequented one, but the story here is never convincing. The soon-to-be-killer Jason (Voorhees?) sleeps on the sofa twice, rather than choosing to go to bed. He opens the fridge twice, but never eats anything. Every narrative decision is there for one reason: to ready the audience for a scare and that's a cheap tactic.

The mythology is never quite clear, relying on genre understanding and mindless acceptance rather than choosing to craft its own unique idea. Then we have some very pretty lighting to hark back to the days of '80s slashers, but this is just a ruse to mask the film's lack of depth.

This doesn't feel like the homage to horror that it probably desires to be, but more of a cheap imitation of films that horror fans love. From the poor acting to the hideous production design and the heavy reliance on jump scares over atmosphere, this is a forgettable and poor introduction to this anthology.

The next segment 'Perfect' is only a slight improvement, this story follows a woman who comes face-to-face with a killer in her kitchen. It's an interesting satire on suburban living that is mildly funny and saved by Marissa Bond's energetic performance as Leslie Borden (See what they did there?). Armed with a knife, she fears no evil when a masked intruder murders her husband, stabbing her perfect lifestyle through the heart. She humourlessly questions, "Do you have any idea how hard it is to find a man like him?"

What ensues is an entertaining back-and-forth between a killer and woman with a dark secret – it's not difficult to know what this is -, which feels a little drawn-out at 13 minutes, but its intention to unravel a façade of normality is successful. Not all the jokes hit the mark and the killer's refusal to admit his identity is a little confusing, but the playful soundtrack, the simplicity of the story itself makes it entertaining enough.

Next up is 'The Wake Up Call' which follows a man at a hotel who notices strange noises coming from the room next door. This one feels like a whole load of nothing, because it quite literally is. A short film has to offer something very special if it is to take a slow-burn approach, but this is simply dull. Very little happens and just as the man watches time ticking by, so do we. Investigate the room, already! Alas, when he does, the pay-off is non-existent. It's uncertain what actually occurs, but a thrashing in the bathtub suggests that the victim may not be who we initially thought. Yawn.

Finally, we've made it to the last segment. If you've made it this far, then don't give up now because it's time for 'Wolff's Law'. What came before were a trio of cheap and, at points, embarrassingly bad trio of short films that are loosely tied together under the thematic umbrella of "sins". Each short showed a sinner and each short showed the same sin: murder. The stories may be different, but they all boil down to the same idea and that makes the overall anthology a missed opportunity. However, this one is mind-bogglingly different.

Gone is the cheapness that comes with the low-budget territory and the poor acting that typically walks hand-in-hand.