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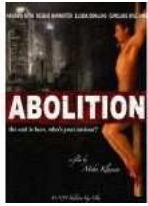
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## Abolition (R Squared Films)

By [Upchuck Undergrind](#)  
 – January 10, 2013 Posted in: [Reviews](#)



ABOLITION is a sparkling, refreshing twist on the antichrist motif. Throw in the apartment setting with a fascinating ensemble of supporting characters and you’ve got a bit of a less gothic “Rosemary’s Baby” factor. Beyond that, the film is both subtle and graphic; it begins quietly, builds its theme and its curious antichrist – named Joshua (ahem) – who doesn’t start off knowing who he is, only suffering the torment of wondering why mysterious events occur around him in which he’s trying to help but ends up hurting. The character’s character arc moves in beautiful tandem with the tonal build-up of the film, which begins quietly and understatedly and culminates in a surprisingly violent climax that has the additional bonus/ignominy of being rife with sacrilegious shock. Then there’s Reggie Bannister’s character. Bannister you’ll know as the balding but pony-tailed hippie from the “Phantasm” films and a number of recent indie horror efforts, among which this is one of the finest. This is also among Bannister’s most outstanding performances. Here he plays a disgraced minister who wanted both his calling and his love – a woman who walked into the church where he ministered. Now he is still a man of God, but rough around the edges, and the manager of an apartment complex. Reggie’s arc from laid back cool dude slash defrocked preacher to maniacal opponent of blooming antichrist is as fascinating as Joshua’s tale, which essentially comes down to a revamped origin story, sort of an antichrist reboot. That story is not to be dismissed however. Quietly played, we are presented with a character – who we know damn well from the beginning is the antichrist (the fascination is watching this realization culminate in Joshua’s awakening) – with whom we heavily sympathize for more than 90 percent of the film’s running time, DESPITE the fact that we KNOW up front he’s the FUCKING ANTICHRIST. It’s walking a razor’s edge as a viewer. And all these elements are remarkably and organically cohesive, forming into a surprisingly dramatic and serious turn on the old AC tale. This is a completely modern re-envisioning, though many elements will be comfortable. It’s supposed to be that way. We are seeing tropes ripped out of their trope state and back into original idea form. I don’t know what else to say that isn’t either understatement or hyperbole. So let’s just say this is a great antichrist horror film, supernatural yet intensely psychological in its delivery of horror. Even given the grotesque scene toward the end, which is perfectly blossomed from the growth of the quiet but ever building in dread storytelling. ABOLITION is a powerful film. And, it boasts a terrific closing shot. Surprising and supremely satisfying.

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