



THE GORE-MET

MENU: THREE CAUSTIC COURSES FROM UNEARTHED FILMS

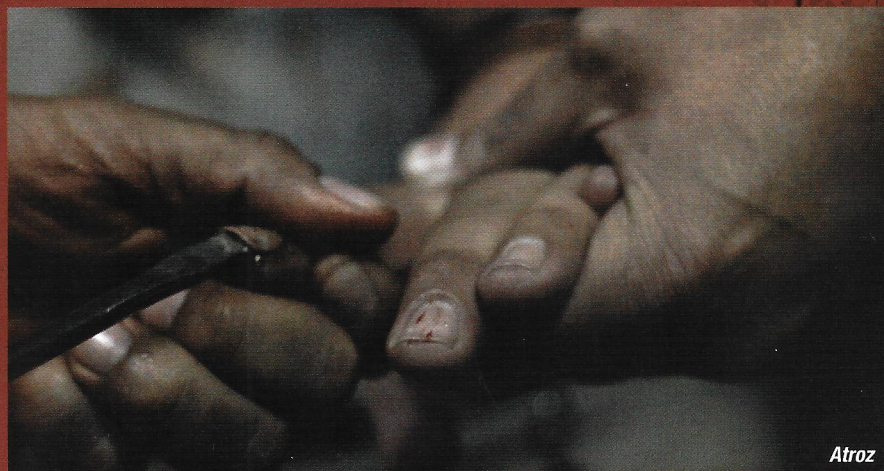


Montreal artist Rémy M. Laroche's sole feature film, 2003's *Mécanix*, is an ambitious and unsung underground gem. Drawing inspiration from such outré animators as Jan Švankmajer, the Brothers Quay and Terry Gilliam, Laroche melded claymation, stop-motion animation, animatronics, puppetry and traditional animation techniques with live action to craft an esoteric and grim fairy tale.

Out now from Unerthed, it brings us a sepiatoned, post-industrial nightmare world ruled by strange creatures sifting through the intestines of the few remaining humans for "the embryo of the universe, giver of life." The last freeborn man has half of the embryo inside him; he finds the missing half in a bizarre bird and hides it in his abdomen. Eventually the creatures find him and remove the two halves of the embryo, which comes to life as a woman to destroy them.

This is for fans of impenetrably weird fare such as David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977) or Shinya Tsukamoto's *Tetsuo* (1989). The creature designs are unique, the sound design stunning, and the film always visually interesting. Laroche and producer Phillipe Chabot appear in a supplemental interview to explain themselves.

But if you're craving something more, well, *meaty* this Halloween season, Unerthed has a treat for you. Unable to secure the rights to reissue the notorious Japanese *Guinea Pig* series, Unerthed head Stephen Biro launched his own series, *American Guinea Pig*, writing and directing the faux snuff bonecracker *Bouquet of Guts and Gore* (2014). Out now is the second entry, the delicately artistic *Bloodshock*,



Atroz

written by Biro and directed by Marcus Koch.

A man clad in a hospital gown (Dan Ellis) is wheeled into a dirty examination room, strapped into a dentist's chair, and has his tongue cut out by a sadistic doctor. He's then thrown into a padded cell. Every day he's subjected to an escalating series of tortures — beatings, tooth extractions, crude surgery — all while blood is drawn from him, which the doctor transfuses into himself to get high. The man forms a silent relationship with a woman in the cell next to him who's even more physically

decrepit. When an opportunity arises for them to escape, it gets disgusting instead...

Bloodshock is a decidedly different beast from its predecessor, artfully lensed in black-and-white and blossoming into crimson for the climax. The surgical shenanigans are accompanied by a hypnotic ambient industrial score. Snag it on Blu-ray or DVD.

Finally, out of Mexico City comes Lex Ortega's *Atroz*, Unerthed's contender for the title of Most Disturbing Film Ever Made.

While investigating a deadly drunk driving accident, a grizzled detective with a disregard for due process finds a video camera contain-

ing footage of the brutal torture and murder of a transsexual streetwalker. After an interrogation in which the two suspects are viciously beaten and electrocuted, one of them, Goyo (Ortega), reveals the location of the murder. There, the forensic team recovers a few more tapes, one of which contains the murder of a stripper Goyo had period sex with. On a second visit, he's upset she's no longer menstruating so he beats, rapes and kills her. Then his partner-in-crime joins in...

The bulk of the film is a VHS tape, which the detective forces Goyo to watch. There's footage of young Goyo's father finding gay pornography in his room. Enraged, he sodomizes his "faggot" son with a strapon dildo and throws him out on the street dressed in women's clothing. Goyo eventually returns home to record his violent revenge.

Ortega mixes high production values with ultra-graphic found footage to devastating effect. The ambiguous title, "*Atrocious*" in English, can apply to the prejudice that people who don't fit traditional gender roles face in Mexico. Or the consequence of that prejudice, as the abuse the sexually confused teen Goyo endures makes him a serial killer. There's vomit-inducing food for thought here. Available in a combo pack with the soundtrack, *Atroz* is the absolute darkest of deadly delights. **D**

