

Immediate release
Thu 19 May 2022

Post-Horror Summer Nights at Barbican Cinema Thu 4 Aug – Thu 25 Aug '22

Barbican Cinema 2

www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2022/series/post-horror-summer-nights



It Comes at Night, US 2017, Dir Trey Edward Shults

Throughout August, Barbican Cinema will present **Post-Horror Summer Nights**, a brief look at the breed of horror which began to boom in the mid-2010s – partly as a reaction to the success of bigger budget, mass-appeal horror films.

The term 'post-horror' (often used interchangeably with 'elevated horror') was coined in 2017 by the film critic Steve Rose, who introduces the opening-night screening of Trey Edward Shults' ***It Comes at Night***. This is the first in our series of titles which, for the most part, reject jump-scares and many other well-worn mainstream horror tropes, in favour of shocking subversion and existential dread.

Often produced on comparatively small budgets and with an artistic ingenuity wholly necessary when budgets are slight, the films in this programme demonstrate many of the characteristics prevalent in this brand of horror; embracing a slow pace and droning score in lieu of frequent jump-cuts and blaring audio cattle-prods. These titles are also wrapped in the expected horror imagery of old crones (Robert Eggers' ***The Witch***), supernatural forces (David Robert Mitchell' ***It Follows***) and deadly plagues (***It Comes at Night***), whilst subverting expectations by placing the true source of the horror elsewhere.

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Post-horror titles are also widely considered to be preoccupied with more serious themes, with narratives often fuelled by grief and existential dread, notably Ari Aster's striking debut feature ***Hereditary***, which also screens in this series.

Sonia Zadurian, Cinema Curator, says:

"Academics, critics and fans can't seem to agree on whether these titles represent an emerging sub-genre or a resurgence of a long-established art-horror tradition; but when a cinema trend is this breath-taking, thought-provoking and stomach-churning, does it really matter? Five years after Steve Rose coined the term one thing is certain; post-horror is not going anywhere. Every Thursday night in August, we invite audiences to turn away from the sun and venture into the darkness to explore what really makes this trend tick."

Screenings

***It Comes at Night* + Extended Intro by Steve Rose**

US 2017, Dir Trey Edward Shults, 91min

Thu 4 Aug, 6.30 pm, Cinema 2

Joel Edgerton, Carmen Ejogo and Kelvin Harrison Jr. star as the sacred family unit to be protected at all costs, in this post-horror gem by writer/director Trey Edward Shults (*Waves*).

The setting is a cabin in the woods. A mysterious and deadly sickness sweeps the country. With resources scarce and fear at an all-time high, the population has turned on one another. So far, so standard horror fare, but this one is really not what it appears to be.

With a deadly sickness running rampant in the outside world, Paul (Edgerton), Sarah (Ejogo) and their son Travis (Harrison Jr.) live a secluded life in their cabin in the woods. There's little laughter or hope until a mysterious stranger appears (Christopher Abbott), but is he all he seems?

Barbican Cinema is thrilled to have an extended, in-person introduction to this screening from the film critic Steve Rose, who coined the term 'post-horror' in his 2017 Guardian piece, [How post-horror movies are taking over cinema](#).

Hereditary

US 2018, Dir Ari Aster, 122min

Thu 11 Aug, 6.20pm, Cinema 2

After the death of her highly secretive and mysterious mother, things take an unsettling turn for Annie (Toni Collette) as devastating fractures begin to appear in her family. The death of Annie's mother casts an eerie shadow over her household, not least of which over Annie's daughter Charlie (Milly Shapiro), who was her grandmother's favourite. Meanwhile, her son Peter (Alex Wolff) makes questionable decisions with catastrophic results, which sends the family spiralling further.

This is not your average horror. Decidedly off-kilter and strange, it's impossible to shake the feeling that something is just not right.

Though Collette is just one of an all-round fantastic cast, her performance as a woman on the edge is utterly flooring and arguably her finest hour to date.

Writer/director Ari Aster's (*Midsommar*) first feature is a strikingly assured horror debut, inspired by the likes of *Rosemary's Baby* and *Don't Look Now*. Underpinning the outwardly horrific elements are the grief and suffering of Annie and her family. In this vein, Aster stated he was inspired by the work of Ingmar Bergman, in particular *Cries and Whispers*. This is really not your average horror.

***It Follows* + Recorded Introduction by David Church**

US 2014, Dir David Robert Mitchell, 96min

Thu 18 Aug, 6.40 pm, Cinema 2

Nominated for the Critics Week Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, the film follows Jay (Maika Monroe) who is pursued by a relentless, deadly force after a sexual encounter.

Undoubtedly one of the best horrors of the decade, *It Follows* continues to feel as fresh and original as the day it was released. Nothing chills the soul quite like the pounding of inevitability. It wants to consume and it will not stop. The only way to delay the inevitable and keep yourself safe, is to pass it on to another target through sexual intercourse.

From the opening sequence, the film invites you to question conventions and expect the unexpected. We watch a terrified, scantily clad young woman flee in terror, but here she is running in broad daylight from something we cannot see or hear. Like most of the best films of the genre, *It Follows* frightens the audience with both the horrors they can see, as well as the terrors they cannot. This is absolutely unmissable cinema and is guaranteed to stay with you long after the credits have rolled.

Barbican Cinema is delighted to have a recorded introduction to this screening David Church, author of '*Post-Horror: Art, Genre and Cultural Elevation*'.

The Witch

US 2015, Dir Robert Eggers, 89min

Thu 25 Aug, 6.40 pm, Cinema 2

Winner of the Directing Award at the Sundance Film Festival, this first feature from Robert Eggers (*The Lighthouse*, *The Northman*) garnered critical acclaim and launched the career of Anya Taylor-Joy.

In 1630s New England, Thomasin (Taylor-Joy) and her family are cast out of their Puritan colony and build a new house on the edge of a forest. While babysitting her baby brother one day, the child mysteriously disappears, propelling Thomasin's mother Katherine (Kate Dickie) into a deep and devastating grief. Blamed for the disappearance, poor Thomasin can't seem to do anything right and soon finds that terrible things just seem to keep happening to her family.

The Witch favours unnerving dread over jump-scares and is frequently cited as one of the key titles in this modern post-horror resurgence. Eggers' devotion to period detail sets the tale firmly and authentically at a time of religious zealotry, bringing the concept of original sin to the forefront. Though we have all the trappings of folklore horror, complete with dark forest and evil old crone, there's clearly something far more sinister at play here.

Ends

The Barbican believes in creating space for people and ideas to connect through its international arts programme, community events and learning activity.

To keep its programme accessible to everyone, and to keep investing in the artists it works with, the Barbican needs to raise more than 60% of its income through ticket sales, commercial activities and fundraising every year.

Donations can be made here: barbican.org.uk/donate

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Ticket prices:

Box office: www.barbican.org.uk

Standard ticket price: £12/ Members: £9.60/ Concessions: £11

Young Barbican: £5 (capped at 15)

under 18s £6

About Barbican Cinema

We connect audiences with a curated programme of international cinema; from celebrated filmmakers to ground-breaking and under-heard voices from past present.

Our programmes are presented in Cinemas 1 in the main centre and Cinemas 2&3 on Beech Street. We also present selected programmes and new release titles on our online platform Barbican Cinema On Demand which is available to stream across the UK.

Our programme ranges from thematic seasons that respond to today's world, to new releases, Screentalks, cross-artform collaborations, family events, access screenings and event cinema that presents the performing arts on screen.

We showcase the work of emerging filmmakers, as well as less familiar work of exceptional filmmakers from the UK and around the world.

We champion the work of Barbican young programmers and give stage to emerging musicians in our ongoing film & live music series which includes our flagship collaboration with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

As part of a cross-arts centre, our cinemas are a cultural space for people to share the viewing experience.

We strive to be inclusive in everything we do; providing platforms for the widest possible range of filmmakers and ensuring we are an open, welcoming and accessible venue for all our audiences.

We programme free offsite events in east London, offer reduced price tickets to 14-25 year olds through the Young Barbican membership scheme and special student ticket prices.

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over 1.1 million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite.

The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery the Curve, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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