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Sundance Day Four For Fans of the Spooky and Supernatural

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

By Katie Small

What to Watch at the 2022 Festival: Films for Fans of the Spooky and Supernatural

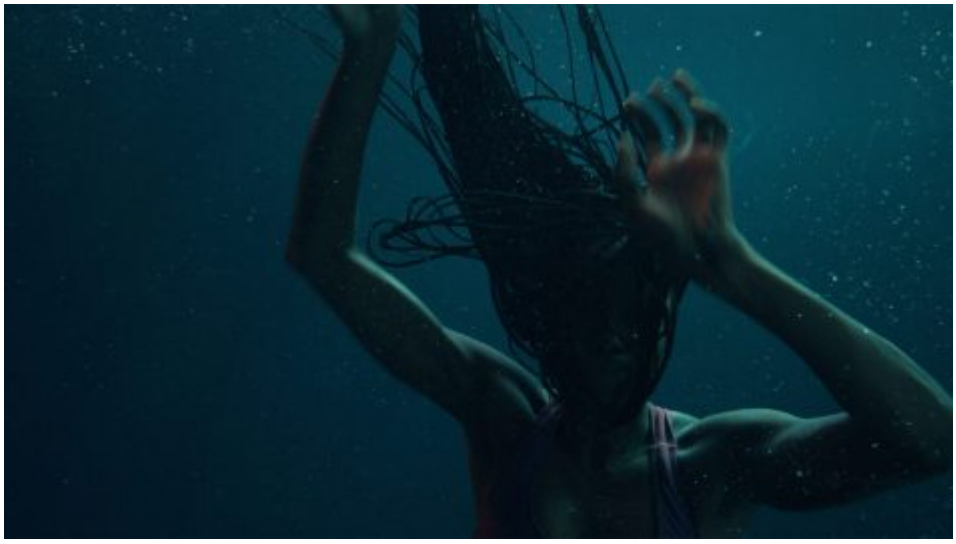
Maika Monroe appears in *Watcher* by Chloe Okuno, an official selection of the U.S. Dramatic Compe

From the Festival that brought you some of the most iconic and deeply disturbing horror flicks of the last several decades â?? including *The Blair Witch Project, Hereditary*, *Halloween,* and *Saw* â?? the 2022 Sundance Film Festival boasts yet another impressive lineup of deeply imaginative films that dwell in the terrifying and supernatural.

Whether youâ??re a fan of gripping psychological thrillers or supernatural folk horror, this yearâ??s selections are sure to keep you engaged and on the edge of your seat. But if you abhor gore, fear not, as there are plenty of palatable films for the squeamish; elements of magical realism and the paranormal abound.

The following list breaks the lineup down into supernatural dramas, psychological thrillers, and films that include a bit of both. Themes of social isolation, motherhood, family dynamics, romance, and racism dominate.

Supernatural Dramas



A still from Nanny by Nikyatu Jusu, an official selection of the U.S. Dramatic Competition at the Sundance Institute.

Nanny (U.S. Dramatic) â?? Aisha is an undocumented Senegalese immigrant in pursuit of the American dream â?? her specific version of which involves bringing her young son, whom she was forced to leave behind in Senegal, to join her in New York City. She finds work as a nanny for a wealthy Manhattan family, but must carefully navigate the tense atmosphere between the workaholic mother and the disillusioned father. Meanwhile, she is haunted by a supernatural entity derived from West African folklore, a presence that invades both her dreams and reality.

The Cow Who Sang a Song Into the Future (World Dramatic) â?? Magical realism propels the melodrama in the Spanish language film *The Cow Who Sang a Song Into the Future*; the mysterious resurrection of her long-dead mother forces Cecilia to return home to her familyâ??s dairy farm in southern Chile. Once there, she rendezvous with magical farm animals, eschews a connection with her mother, struggles to find common ground with her estranged brother and father, and grapples with the budding transgender identity of her eldest child.

Supernatural Horror

Regina Hall appears in Master by Mariama Diallo, an official selection of the U.S. Dramatic Co
Courtesy of Sundance Institute.

Master (U.S. Dramatic) â?? At an elite New England university, the dean of students (Regina Hall), a first-year student (Zoe Renee), and a literature professor (Amber Gray) navigate politics and privilege as they encounter increasingly terrifying manifestations of their schoolâ??s haunted and racist past. An eye-opening study of power and privilege, *Master* marks writer-director Mariama Dialloâ??s first feature and blends horror, drama, psychological thriller, and social critique. Sundance programmer John Nein says, â??What begins as a search for belonging becomes a chilling struggle for survival, and Diallo shrewdly reframes a basic horror trope â?? escaping an evil force â?? asking what escape is possible for communities of color confronting a racial terror that is everywhere.â?•

You Wonâ??t Be Alone (World Dramatic) â?? Set in 19th-century Macedonia, folk horror film *You Wonâ??t Be Alone* is a dark fable propelled by the supernatural. After a young girl is transformed into a witch by an ancient, shape-shifting spirit, she is left to roam the woods in a feral state. When she inadvertently kills a villager, she becomes a shape-shifter herself, assuming the body of her victim. The

young witch continues to inhabit different people (played by multiple actors), living among the villagers for years, observing and mimicking their behavior until the ancient spirit who cursed her returns.

Resurrection (Premieres) â?? Taking an unsettling look at the consequences of emotional manipulation and codependent relationships, *Resurrection* mixes magical realism and horror to unnerving effect. After a phantom from her past returns to haunt her, Margaret finds herself being pushed to extreme limits that test her â??kindnessâ?• and ability to be a good mother â?? a key facet of her personal identity, and one that she has carefully cultivated while juggling single parenthood and building a successful career. Rebecca Hallâ??s magnetic lead performance makes this surreal psychological thriller unforgettable.

Hatching (Midnight) â?? Tween gymnast Tinja spends most of her time fighting with her obnoxious little brother and trying to please her image-obsessed mother, who showcases their familyâ??s existence on her popular blog â??Lovely Everyday Lifeâ?• as a bright and cheery vision of suburban perfection. After Tinja discovers a dying bird in the woods, she brings its strange egg home and nurtures it until it hatches. According to Sundance programmer Heidi Zwicker, â??The creature that emerges, christened Alli, becomes Tinjaâ??s closest friend, surrogate child, and living nightmare in this tremendously twisted coming-of-age body horror film.â?•

Horror and Psychological Thrillers

Maika Monroe appears in Watcher by Chloe Okuno, an official selection of the U.S. Dramatic C
Courtesy of Sundance Institute.

Watcher (U.S. Dramatic) â?? Newly married, Julia moves with her husband to Romania where he has just landed a new job. While heâ??s busy working all day, sheâ??s left alone to wander the wintery streets of Bucharest and lounge in their luxurious apartment. Cooped up, she notices someone

watching her in the adjacent building, and as the strangerâ??s observations continue unabated, Julia launches an obsessive quest to prove her suspicions to her skeptical husband. Meanwhile, a serial killer known as The Spider stalks Bucharest, targeting young women. *Watcher* hypnotically weaves a web of suspense and misgivings as Julia, isolated in a foreign landscape, must defend her intuition.

Speak No Evil (Midnight) â?? While on vacation in Tuscany, a polite Danish family befriends a free-spirited Dutch couple and their mute son; a few months later, the Dutch invite the Danes to visit them at their home in the Netherlands. They happily oblige, but what starts out as an idyllic reunion quickly takes a turn for the worse. The Danesâ?? exceptional houseguest manners are repeatedly tested by their erratic and eccentric hosts, who are harboring secret and sinister intentions. *Speak No Evil* masterfully builds tension and suspense, with a visual crescendo that is sure to leave a lasting impression.

PIGGY (Midnight) â?? Sara, a small town butcherâ??s daughter, is routinely ridiculed for her appearance by a clique of mean girls in her rural Spanish village. One summer day at the community pool, the girls take the bullying too far, nearly drowning Sara. A vigilante stranger witnesses the event and responds by kidnapping Saraâ??s tormentors. As the town searches for the bullies, Sara, intrigued by the strangerâ??s ambiguous intentions, keeps quiet. Horrific brutalities ensue and the violence only worsens the longer Sara holds her tongue. Bloody and laced with grim satire, *PIGGY* is a psychologically thrilling, nail-biting tale of justice, redemption, and the vulnerability of a tormented teenager desperate to fit in.

Fresh (Midnight) â?? Frustrated by dating apps, Noa takes a chance on the awkward-but-charming cosmetic surgeon that she bumped into in the produce section of the grocery store. Their romance quickly takes off, and she accepts his invitation for an impromptu weekend getaway, but quickly discovers that her roguish new lover is hiding some unusual appetites. Starring Daisy Edgar-Jones and Sebastian Stan, *Fresh* tells a twisted tale of the horrifying realities of modern dating.

Category

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Tags

1. deeply imaginative films
2. horror

3. psychological thriller
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