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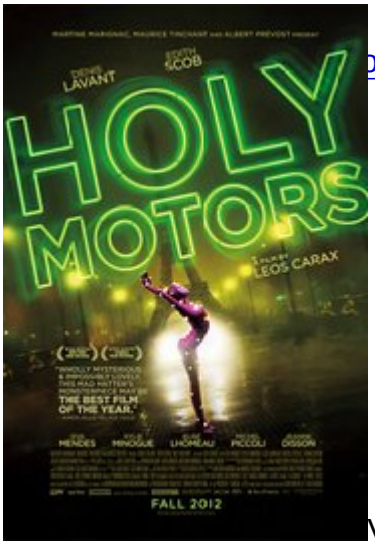
FILM REVIEW: Holy Motors (Carax, 2012): France

Description



on.

Viewed at the AFI Fest 2012 at the Egyptian Theatre. *Holy Motors*, winner of the 2012 Cannes Film Festivalâ??s Award of the Youth and the Hugo Award for Best Feature at the 2012 Chicago International Film Festival, directed by controversial Frenchman Leos Carax of *Tokyo!* fame, tells a beguiling tale of one Monsieur Oscar, a master of disguise, as he journeys from one appointment to another through the course of the dark hours of the night in Paris. He is, in turn, a beggar, captain of industry, an assassin, a bizarre reptilian-like virtual sexcapade participant, a sewer-dwelling, underground railroad member resurfacing as a cemetery-robbing monster gorging himself on flower bouquets and eventually kidnapping a famous model (played stunningly by Eva Mendez) complete in accompaniment with accordion players and more bizarre culinary choices with Ms. Mendezâ??s hair and paper Euros.

The film opens with a beautiful shot of the night sky. From there the unusualness begins. We see a sleeping audience. Then, the â??appointmentsâ?• begin with the old woman without a care begging on the sidewalk.While his stretch limo motors from locale to locale Monsieur Oscar utilizes the commute time to change his appearance through elaborate forms of make-up and disguise techniques. Carax

gives the viewer an eyeful with a frontal nudity scene while paying tribute to *American Beauty* with rose petals and in a more human form with the camera presence of beauty Mendez. Throughout *Holy Motors* Carax allows famed cinematographer, Caroline Champetier (*Of Gods & Men*) the camera ample time in the limo itself. This choice amplifies the effects of Monsieur Oscarâ??s ability to metamorphisize while on the go from appointment to appointment lending a genius effect that Monsieur Oscar is involved in transacting business, of sorts.

I initially was excited to see Parisian scenes and the River Seine. And while I did get to see these, I also got to see a lot more in the way of artistic license as Carax pushes the limits of normalcy through the antics of Monsieur Oscar through the dark of night in an unseen before Parisian form. Finally, towards the end of the night the viewer is returned to a sense of normalcy as Monsieur Oscar plays a caring family only to be trumped by a surprise ending

I do recommend this film. It has a most interesting style of storytelling. While it may or may not be mainstream, it has unusual artistic value in the subtlety Carax implements to drive home his point that in the end French cinema is all about business in one form or another. Well done, Mr. Carax.

Category

1. #AFI
2. #AFIFEST
3. Cannes Film Festival
4. Chicago Film Festival
5. Hollywood

Tags

1. Cannes Film Festival's Award of the Youth
2. Caroline Champetier
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4. Edith Scob
5. Eva Mendez
6. Film
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