

Tribeca announces Midnight Slate; EXCL Programmer Comments

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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The latest from French provocateur Marina de Van, the second feature from RABIES duo Aharon Keshales and Navot Papushado, Neil Jordan's new vampire tale, festival favorite V/H/S/2 and the long-awaited FRANKENSTEIN'S ARMY lead the Spotlight and Midnight sections of New York's Tribeca Film Festival. Fango reveals the slate and speaks with programmer Cara Cusumano.

"We've had midnight for a long time and then we changed the name to Cinemania for a couple of years. This year, we're returning to Midnight and kind of going for more of a classical approach to programming genre filmmaking and the section," Cusumano tells Fango, before previewing the genre-centric section. "We just really didn't want to feel limited by the section and we felt like Cinemania sort of implied something wacky and zany, and while we have that, we didn't want to be closed off at all to the full breadth of what people were really doing. I think that's how we make it Tribeca, because in all of our sections, we really want to not approach programming with any agenda, but let the films show us what they are and we kind of represent that and convey it in all its diversity to the audience."

In what could be their strongest slate yet, Tribeca sees the return of Keshales and Papushado, who brought the world premiere of their darkly hilarious RABIES to the fest two years ago and took off greatly from there. Of course, that would lead us to question which of the more unknown selections could break out come May: New Zealand cannibal comedy FRESH MEAT? Mad Scientist cyborg story THE MACHINE? "We're really excited about that, first of all. RABIES was something we kind of discovered and launched and we are so proud of them; to be able to bring them back in Spotlight with this bigger film is very triumphant for all of us," the programmer says. "It's always hard to predict what's going to kind of pop, so I'd be nervous to prognosticate on record, but I think all of these have a lot of potential and they're all so different from each other, that I'm hoping that the people who love action are going to be excited by RAZE and the people who love horror/comedy are going to be excited by FRESH MEAT; sci-fi, THE MACHINE. We're really hitting a lot of different points, whereas last year was a lot of thrillers, which was great but I think this year has so much more breadth. I'm hoping more of the films will really strike a chord with their individual audiences."

One of the biggest catches is undoubtedly de Van's DARK TOUCH. She who brought us the graphic, unnerving IN MY SKIN and the Hitchcockian identity crisis DON'T LOOK BACK, explores child abuse in an Ireland-set shocker she previously spoke to Fango about here. "It's our opening night film, which is great. We started last year with doing opening nights for our competition sections and this year, we're expanding that to include Midnight, as well. It's just a

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perfect way to kick off the section. First of all, this is a female filmmaker working in genre film, which is rare and very exciting for us. And her last film was in Cannes, so it does have a sort of sophistication to it that's a great way to kick off the section. At the same time, it's incredibly scary and definitely a full horror film. It's something that we're really excited about and I think, speaks to what we're trying to do across the board in this section."



As Women in Horror Month just wraps up, with de Van having been our first spotlight, there seems to be certain women's touch this year that extends from filmmakers, to protagonists, to those behind the scenes that bring these very films to our attention. "I started programming out of grad school. I went to NYU for Cinema Studies and started programming for the Hamptons Film Festival and then Tribeca and being able to work/focus in midnight is just my personal taste, some that I'd always hoped to do and I'm really excited that Tribeca gives me that opportunity and that they love that about me. So, being able to contribute to the team, in the area that I love to personally watch is incredibly rewarding," says Cusumano. "I think a lot of the women on our team are the ones who are most excited about things like this, or the most difficult to impress because they're such purists and die-hards, which I love to see and be around, because I think it's not necessarily the public perception. That doesn't reflect real audiences for these films. If we can spotlight that with Marina de van, or female programmers focusing in Midnight, that's all the better."

Speaking further on the subject, she adds, "We are a little reluctant to prescribe themes, because we prefer the films to organically speak for themselves and we don't want that to be informing our process, but in just sort of talking about this section, it has become clear, speaking of women, that not only the filmmakers, but the characters—there's a lot of strong women in the program. The main character of THE MACHINE, Caity Lotz gives this amazing performance as this really intense superhuman warrior, and then in RAZE, too. Zoe Bell, who's fantastic and legendary in her own right, is in this film that's all about women fighting women in this HUNGER GAMES-esque plotline. These powerful female characters have been definitely a thorough line. It emerged organically."

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Without further ado, here's what you can expect from Tribeca's Midnights, as well as the genre-touching films in Spotlight and Viewpoints, as well.

- **DARK TOUCH** (pictured above), directed and written by Marina de Van. (France) – World Premiere, Narrative. Niamh is the lone survivor of a bloody massacre after the furniture and objects in her family's isolated house take on a monstrous life of their own. The police ignore her wild stories and the family friends and social worker who take her in try to introduce a new life. But in this psychological thriller, Niamh is unable to leave her violent past behind her, endangering everyone who crosses her path.
- **FRANKENSTEIN'S ARMY**, directed by Richard Raaphorst, written by Chris W. Mitchell and Miguel Tejada-Flores. (Netherlands) – International Premiere, Narrative. In the waning days of World War II, a team of Russian soldiers finds itself on a mysterious mission to the lab of one Dr. Victor Frankenstein. They unearth a terrifying Nazi plan to resurrect fallen soldiers as an army of unstoppable freaks and are soon trapped in a veritable haunted house of cobbled-together monstrosities. Frankenstein's Army is the wild steampunk Nazi found-footage zombie mad scientist film you've always wanted.
- **FRESH MEAT**, directed by Danny Mulheron, written by Briar Grace-Smith. (New Zealand) – New York Premiere, Narrative. After a poorly executed escape from the police, a gang of dysfunctional criminals flees to the suburbs and gets more than it bargained for when it crash lands in the garage of an upper-class Maori family whose refined palates have developed a taste for human flesh. This action-packed horror comedy tells a blood-spattered tale of basement butchery and shifting allegiances as these unlikely adversaries enter a deadly showdown. A Tribeca Film release.



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• **THE MACHINE**, directed and written by Caradog James. (U.K.) –World Premiere, Narrative. Caradog James adds another layer to the Frankenstein story in the latest gripping sci-fi adventure to come out of the U.K.. Already deep into a second Cold War, Britain's Ministry of Defence seeks a game-changing weapon. Programmer Vincent McCarthy unwittingly provides an answer in *The Machine*, a super-strong human cyborg played by the impressive Caity Lotz (*The Pact*). When a programming bug causes the prototype to decimate his lab, McCarthy takes his obsessive efforts underground, far away from inquisitive eyes.



• **MR. JONES**, directed and written by Karl Mueller. (USA) – World Premiere, Narrative. Scott (Jon Foster) is a filmmaker in need of inspiration. He and his girlfriend Penny move into a desolate house hoping to make a breakthrough. Then they discover their neighbor, the elusive Mr. Jones. Famous for his haunting sculptures, Mr. Jones has remained a mystery to the world. Scott and Penny, convinced that they have found the perfect film subject, sneak into his workshop and realize that their curiosity may have chilling consequences. Who is Mr. Jones?



• **RAZE**, directed by Josh Waller, written by Robert Beaucage. (USA) – World Premiere, Narrative. Stuntwoman Zoe Bell (*Inglorious Basterds*, *Kill Bill 1&2*) headlines this sly subversion of the women-in-prison genre. After Sabrina (Bell) is abducted, she finds herself in an underground lair, forced to do battle with other innocent women for the amusement of unseen spectators. Each of these reluctant warriors has something to lose, but only one will remain when the game is done. Violent and relentless, *Raze* takes its video game aesthetic to the

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deepest and darkest places, rarely surfacing for air. Includes Rachel Nichols and Tracie Thoms.



• **V/H/S/2** ([Our Review](#)), directed by Simon Barrett, Adam Wingard, Eduardo Sanchez, Gregg Hale, Timo Tjahjanto, Gareth Evans, Jason Eisener, written by Barrett, Jamie Nash, Tjahjanto, Evans, Eisener, and John Davies (USA, Indonesia) – New York Premiere, Narrative. Investigators break into a house, find a vast collection of VHS tapes and play them one by one. The videos include visions of the paranormal, flesh-eating zombies, a shockingly genuine scene of hell on earth and a slumber party gone horribly awry. This highly anticipated sequel to last year's horror breakout V/H/S features contributions from contemporary genre filmmaking's leading talents, including the creators of HOBOWITH A SHOTGUN, THE RAID, YOU'RE NEXT and THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT. In English, Indonesian with subtitles. A Magnet Release.



Spotlight

• **BIG BAD WOLVES**, directed and written by Aharon Keshales and Navot Papushado. (Israel) – World Premiere, Narrative. A vigilante cop and a vengeful father capture and interrogate an

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accused serial killer. Aharon Keshales and Navot Papushado's brutal follow-up to *Rabies* (TFF 2011) examines a horror that most would not want to imagine: what would you do if someone hurt the one you loved most? A revenge thriller with teeth, *Big Bad Wolves* delivers on its raw tension and operatic drama. In Hebrew with subtitles.



• **BYZANTIUM**, directed by Neil Jordan, written by Moira Buffini. (U.K., Ireland) – U.S. Premiere, Narrative. Neil Jordan's exploration of vampirism began with *Interview with the Vampire*. Now he returns to this lurid, malevolent realm through Clara (Gemma Arterton) and her daughter Eleanor (Saoirse Ronan). Creatures from Clara's past come calling, and these immortals are forced to relocate. Dire consequences follow anyway when Eleanor makes a connection with a local boy (Caleb Landry Jones) and slowly reveals the truth of who they are and how they survive. An IFC Films release.



Viewpoints

• **THE MOMENT**, directed by Jane Weinstock, written by Jane Gloria Norris and Weinstock. (USA) – World Premiere, Narrative. After a tumultuous affair between international

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photojournalist Lee (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and troubled artist John (Martin Henderson) ends in John's disappearance, Lee lands in a mental hospital to recuperate. She strikes up a friendship with a fellow patient bearing an uncanny resemblance to her missing lover. The pair works to uncover the truth behind the disappearance, but Lee's precarious sanity comes under threat when the clues lead to the last place she would ever expect.

For much more, visit [Tribeca Film](#).