

Film Notes

By Sal Creber

Alpha

2025 | 128mins

Director: Julia Ducournau

Starring: Mélissa Boros, Golshifteh Farahani, Tahar Rahim



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Julia Ducournau, the visionary French director of cannibalistic coming of age film *Raw* (2016) and the Palme D'Or-winning, metallic body horror film *Titane* (2021), comes *Alpha*. Telling the story of 13-year-old Alpha (Mélissa Boros) and her devoted single mother (Golshifteh Farahani), whose world is torn apart when Alpha returns home one day with a crudely done tattoo on her arm.

We quickly learn that the world Alpha and her mother live in is being torn apart by a new virus - 'Mauvais Sang' ('Bad Blood' in English), which is passed through blood, and turns the infected into chalky, sandy statues. We then begin to see that Alpha's tattoo, done using the same dirty needle as her classmates, isn't healing properly. We also meet Alpha's uncle, Amin (Tahar Rahim), a drug addict who often appears at their home needing another fix, or medical attention from Alpha's mother, who is a doctor struggling under the huge workload that has come as a result of this new, devastating virus.

Ducournau's commitment to extreme visuals and unsettling imagery is displayed in *Alpha*; working with Belgian cinematographer Ruben Impens for the third time, the two of them have crafted a world that is haunting, strange, and oddly beautiful. In contrast to *Raw* and *Titane*, the world shown in *Alpha* is one of sickly, desaturated colours and ghostly shapes.

A clear and at times uncomfortable (as all the best social commentary horrors should be) allegory for the AIDS epidemic, something that took the French government several years to acknowledge and has evidently had a profound effect on Ducournau, *Alpha* follows its titular character as she begins to deal with the consequences of a small act of teenage rebellion that, in a world without the virus, would be a very small problem.

'Ducournau exhibits her most mature and moving storytelling in her directorial career'

-Hector A. Gonzalez



Excellent

Fair

Poor

What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

Please add any further comments here

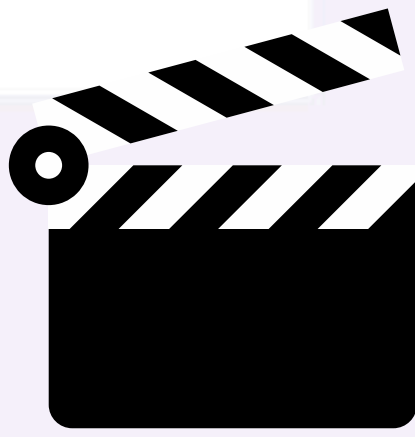
Please detach this from your Film Note and drop it into the box or hand it in at the end of the screening. Thank you!

Did You Know?

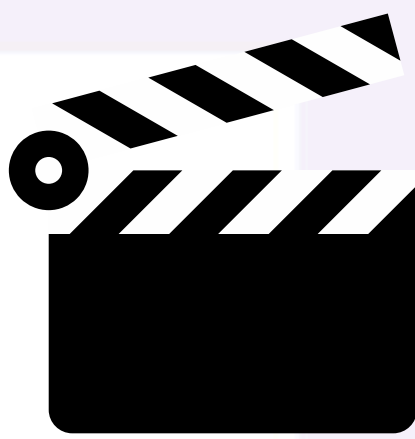
- Tahar Rahim says he lost 20kg for the role of Amin.
- Julia Ducournau’s parents were both doctors, something that may explain her love for medical body horror.
- This is Mélissa Boros’ first feature film.

Continue Your Journey...

If you enjoyed this film, you might like:



Titane (2021)
Also directed by Julia Ducournau, *Titane* shares *Alpha*’s visceral style and exploration of gender and identity. It’s a natural companion piece - almost a continuation of her ideas.



Crimes of the Future (2022)
Directed by David Cronenberg, *Crimes of the Future* is a philosophical body horror about evolution, technology, and the transformation of flesh. A thematic echo of Ducournau’s obsessions, but with a more existential tone.

SCAN ME



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