

Film Notes

By Ella Moorhouse

Bugonia

2025 | 120mins

Director: Yorgos Lanthimos

Starring: Jesse Plemons, Alicia Silverstone, Emma Stone

      @FilmBathUK



Bugonia is an American satirical sci-fi thriller and the latest film from the genre-defying auteur of dark comedy Yorgos Lanthimos. Emma Stone plays Michelle Fuller, the cold CEO of Auxolith Corp., a wildly successful pharmaceutical conglomerate. Meanwhile, Teddy (Jesse Plemons), a small-town beekeeper and crazed conspiracy theorist, targets and kidnaps Michelle along with his naïve cousin, intent on his belief that she is an alien intent on destroying Earth.

An inspired take of Korean cinema's hidden gem *Save the Green Planet!* (2003), directed and written by Jang Joon Hwan, *Bugonia* captures the spirit of our divided society, where huge conglomerates rule, and as an attempt to find control, more and more people turn to conspiracy theories to understand our new world. The Greek word 'bugonia' translates to 'ox birth,' originating from the ancient Mediterranean superstition that a swarm of bees could be born from an ox carcass. This sets up the core message of the film: where is the line between myth and reality?

Starting his directorial career as a key figure of the Greek New Wave scene with films such as *Kinetta* (2005) and *Dogtooth* (2009), Lanthimos has made waves in Hollywood for his specific blend of provocative themes and stylised dark humour.

His fourth feature collaboration with Emma Stone, and with horror filmmaker Ari Aster as producer, *Bugonia* is one of Lanthimos' most politically angled films yet. At the film's press conference at the Venice Film Festival, Lanthimos explains that "unfortunately, not much of the dystopia in this film is very fictional. A lot of it is very reflective of the real world [...] hopefully it will trigger people to think about what's happening today, all around the world" (The Hollywood Reporter, 2025).

Bugonia is absurd and comical, combining eco-anxiety and a satirical look at our modern world where everything and everyone is not as they seem.

'*Bugonia*, is a heady and gripping experience, in no small part because it takes the form of a duel — tactical, philosophical, brutal — between two characters who might almost be locked in a contest entitled "Who's the More Outrageously Spectacular Anti-Social Offender?"'

-Variety

Excellent

Fair

Poor



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

Please add any further comments here

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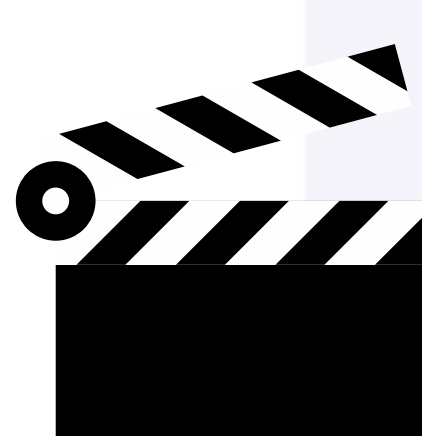
- The composer Jerskin Fendrix was only given four key words to base his score off of, without being given a script or footage until seeing the final film.
- Scriptwriter Will Tracy’s previous credits include three episodes of *Succession* (2018-2023) and co-writing *The Menu* (2022), bringing the blend of horror and corporate culture into the script of *Bugonia*.

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Okja (2017)
A little girl Mija and her best friend – a huge animal called Okja – live a peaceful life in the mountains of South Korea. However, a multi-national conglomerate decides to take Okja for their own sinister reasons, and Mija must fight to rescue her friend.



Misery (2008)
A classic kidnap thriller story, an acclaimed author wakes up after a car accident in the house of his biggest fan, Annie Wilkes. However, Annie’s true colours start to show as the real reason for rescuing her favourite author becomes clear.

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