

potentially spread to one another with lethal consequences. We stay inside as much as we can, unable to safely go to the office or school or even the grocery store. **The question becomes “Will I die?” or “Will someone I love die?”** The world is different now. In anticipation of the film’s release at the South by Southwest Film Festival, Seimetz said she wrote the film based on her experiences with anxiety; although talking through anxiety often soothes it, it tends to make those on the receiving end feel the reverberations of anxiety.^[1] Death or anxiety or hysteria does not need a concrete physical representation—the intangible and unknowable allow this film to succeed despite the many questions it leaves behind.

[1] “Neon Presents She Dies Tomorrow,” n.d., https://m.box.com/shared_item/https%3A%2F%2Fneon.box.

out to explain the process of crafting a custom leather piece from a carcass. Maybe she will become a leather jacket through this skewed interpretation of the object, living on as an object intended to be worn in another life. Death itself, as an ideological construct, seemingly falls apart as Amy, among others, starts to truly dig into it. It’s terrifying and disorienting for both Amy and the viewer.

Unintentionally, She Dies Tomorrow has become an apt allegory for this strange moment that nestles perfectly within some of this year’s other releases, such as Brandon Cronenberg’s *Possessor* and past films such as *Donnie Darko* and the sublime *It Follows*. For months now in the United States—nearly a year in other countries—we’ve been clothed in masks (or defiantly irresponsibly without) with hand sanitizer on hand or in reach, ready to combat the unseen threat that we can



She Dies Tomorrow: Abjection, Anxiety, Obsession, What-Ifs

A Brief Review That Wasn't Meant to Be But Was Anyway

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Jane as she later attempts to work in her basement photographing microscopic blood samples; suddenly panicked, she shows up to her brother and sister-in-law’s party in her pajamas, just as vacant and troubled as Amy before her. She states, deadpan, “We’re all gonna die. I just think we should all be able to talk about it.” A partygoer, Brian, asks her how she knows she is going to die, and she responds that she simply just knows.

This disruption of identity and expectations is possibly best represented through the ominous strobe lights that confront the characters as they realize death is near—red and blue wildly pulse on their bewildered faces that slowly but surely shift to dread. The abject is an all-encompassing nauseating hysteria that overwhelms. At the end of the film, Amy walks into a shop that specializes in leatherwork, still in her party dress. She trembles, stroking each piece, before the owner (filmmaker James Benning) comes

Navigating professional life has been weird and mostly unpleasant.

Becoming (or trying to become) immune to rejections, rolling my eyes at the lack of concrete possibility, battling imposter syndrome, trying my best to give a decent interview that frames me in the perfect light. The following is a shortened version of a film review that aptly reflects the *weltschmerz* everyone knows all too well in 2020; I wrote this for an online publication with the hope I’d get a little validation during this uncertainty. I was not selected with a curt automated email. However, the film is fantastic and funny and a little too relatable.

What makes this film so exhilarating, reason we are given by Seimetz and her cast puzzle of the story, or what sketches of loose threads woven together to create a picture of a phenomenon that is ultimately hard to pinpoint. It’s a horror film that isn’t really a horror film at all, at least not in the conventional sense; it is about that overwhelming feeling of, yes, dying tomorrow. But it also skillfully plays with female hysteria and the infectiousness of the intangible abject—in this case, the specter of death.

Amy’s friend Jane (Jane Addams) writes her off as drunk and sad instead of taking her claim of inevitable death seriously. After Jane leaves, Amy is left teary and terrified as she confronts the camera under an umbrella of inexplicable flashing colored lights. This fear catches up to

This what if seemingly belongs to Amy (played by the magnetic Kate Lyn Sheil), a twenty or thirty-something outfitted in

delicate buttoned dresses with her long hair effortlessly unkempt; personal details are sparsely expressed during the plot. Here, she is at the core of this disjointed story, as well as the stories of many others as they ebb and flow into hers. Amy trudges through the empty rooms of the home she has recently moved into, and at many moments, she seems to be incredibly, unspeakably grief-stricken. To be put simply, or rather, inexplicably, she’s going to die tomorrow. We’re not given a reason for this forthcoming death, and I don’t think we need one. As Amy encounters a varied cast of characters throughout the narrative, they, too, think they’re going to die. The sentiment of inevitable death gives the film natural elements of horror by way of the abject yet laces it with comedy through the absurdity of it all. It’s a compendium of fragmented pieces to complete the

and surreal about the mood director and writer Amy Seimetz sets in her second full-length feature, *She Dies Tomorrow*. From its first scene, a bleary eye smudged with traces of mascara focuses on the audience with a sense of unbridled fear. It slowly blinks, waffling between wanting to stay closed and needing to keep watching, waiting, in anticipation. Seimetz, an enduringly exciting actress to watch in her own right, understands how to elicit that same fearlessness from her actors. It is a film that relies on its emotive brilliance rather than the precarious nature of the plot itself, it’s driven by the what-ifs rather than the what’s-actually-happening with the more connective strangeness of mass hysteria and how it permeates everything around it.