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HELSINKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2013 MUST SEE MOVIES AT THIS YEARS FESTIVAL #1

Simon Killer (2012), 101 min

From the get go there is one thing you need to know about the titular Simon and that is that he is not only your menacing anti-hero but he is a genuine parasite to society. This is not to put anyone off on watching this film, but just a reminder that we are dealing with a leading man who is on par with David Thwelis' Johnny from Mike Leigh's classic Naked (1993).

Simon Killer is the second full length directorial work from Antonio Campos, his feature debut was excellent Afterschool (2008) which starred one of the best young actors of his generation Ezra Miller. This time around Campos manages to get a stellar performance from Brady Corbet in the title role of Simon. Corbet is probably best known as playing Peter alongside Michael Pitt's Paul in the US version of Funny Games (2007), he also starred in Martha Marcy May Marlene (2011) which Campos produced. Simon's character has depth and persuasion, he is not your typical American tourist in Paris, who only ever seem to speak English, Simon, has studied French in high school and makes a descent attempt to engage those around him in French, but primarily he fails to connect with those around him. Simon appears to be quite the sociopath but who seems to believe that he himself is a good person, not unlike Robert De Niro's Travis Bickle in Taxi Driver. Brady Corbet also receives a writing credit alongside Campos, which appears to make the delivery even more sinister and believable.

Campos manages to portray Paris as a world of opposites, where in the beginning Simon visits the Louvre to see the Mona Lisa, but as the film progresses we see the seedier side of the city. Joe Anderson's bleak cinematography complements Campos' strong direction, and a well placed mainly electronic soundtrack, pull the viewer into Simon's world, but never revealing the whole story. The relatively young Campos proves with this menacing yet intriguing film that he will be a director to watch in the years to come.

Verdict: A must see movie