



Monday 07 October at 6:30 pm

Next of Kin

Australia/New Zealand 1982

Director: Tony Williams
 Producer: Robert Le Tet, Timothy White
 Production co: Filmco, Film House, SIS
 Screenplay: Michael Heath, Tony Williams
 Photography: Gary Hansen
 Editor: Max Lemon
 Music: Klaus Schulze

With: Jacki Kerin (Linda), John Jarratt (Barney), Alex Scott (Dr Barton), Gerda Nicolson (Connie), Charles McCallum (Lance), Bernadette Gibson (Rita)

89 mins, Blu-ray. M violence

After shooting two feature films in the 60s, Tony Williams went on to make a huge contribution to the development of the New Zealand film and television industries through the nine ground-breaking indie documentaries he directed for Pacific Films, and his feature-film *Solo*, which was one of the earliest films of the 1970s Kiwi new wave.

In the early 80s Williams shifted his base to Melbourne (and later Sydney), and directed *Next of Kin*, which he co-wrote with Michael Heath. After taking over the retirement home formerly run by her late mother, a young woman (Jackie Kerin) starts to worry that a pattern of unexplained deaths and strange visitations is repeating itself. Tony Williams' cult feature began development as a black comedy about murderous Kiwi caterers, before morphing into this moody gothic mystery – the first horror film directed and written by Kiwis (though it was ultimately shot and set in Australia). Williams has continued to have a lively influence on our culture as the award-winning director of many legendary commercials, including the Toyota “Bugger” campaign and the Crunchie train robbery ad. – **NZ On Screen**

Why does it feel so good, and so rare, to stumble upon a horror movie that doesn't just feel in command of its images, but uniquely risky as well? *Next of Kin* is the best kind of surprise: it combines the campy pleasures of 80's B-horror with the baroque composition and exacting sensibility of *The Shining*, *Suspiria* or *Don't Look Now*. It has deep resonances with these prior films, but stakes a territory that feels confidently original, carving out spaces of surrealist reverie and slow-motion lyricism in moments of ostensible panic. Still, it never feels condescending to its genre – as if horror could only be made artistic by departing from its core conventions. Genuinely obsessed with the gross liquidity of the human body – the wrinkled pallor of drowned skin and the unreal glassiness of eyes – *Next of Kin* finds a delicacy in the grotesque that feels traumatic rather than affected. Full of startling imagery and pulsing with a fantastic score from ex-Tangerine Dream member Klaus Schulze, it's a film of disarming beauty about the visceral fear that adulthood is mad, violent, and wrong.

Next of Kin is so refreshing a film that almost everyone who writes about it ends by musing why Tony Williams hasn't made a feature since. Perhaps renewed interest – *Next of Kin* features briefly in the wonderful recent documentary about Australian cult cinema, *Not Quite Hollywood*, in which Quentin Tarantino (among others) lavishes it with praise – will succeed in drawing Williams back into the driver's seat? Or perhaps – as with *Next of Kin*, which ends with Linda and Nico on the open road, speeding away from cataclysmic destruction – Williams found that, after this, there was nowhere else to go.

Jonathan Foltz, *Not Coming To A Theatre Near You*



Monday 14 October at 6:00 pm

Early start: long run time

Aquarius

Brazil/France 2016

Director/Screenplay: Kleber Mendonça Filho
 Producers: Émilie Lesclaux, Saïd Ben Saïd, Michel Merkt
 Production co: CinemaScópio, SBS Films, Videofilmes, Globo Filmes
 Photography: Pedro Sotero, Fabrício Tadeu
 Editor: Eduardo Serrano

With: Sonia Braga (Clara), Maeve Jinkings (Ana Paula), Irandhir Santos (Roberval), Humberto Carrão (Diego), Zoraide Coletto (Ladjane), Fernando Teixeira (Geraldo), Buda Lira (Antonio), Paula De Renor (Fátima), Bárbara Colen (Clara in 1980), Daniel Porpino (Adalberto & Rodrigo), Pedro Queiroz (Tomás), Carla Ribas (Cleide), Germano Melo (Martin), Julia Bernat (Julia)

146 mins, Blu-ray. R16 nudity, explicit sexual material & offensive language
 In Portuguese with English subtitles

Sonia Braga gives the performance of her long, storied career in *Aquarius*, Brazilian director Kleber Mendonça Filho's follow-up to his much admired *Neighboring Sounds* (2012). Set, like that film, in Recife, the capital city of Pernambuco, *Aquarius* is named for the apartment complex in which Clara (Braga) grew up and where she still lives at age 65, in retirement, even though she's the last tenant remaining in the building. Where *Neighboring Sounds* leaned heavily on formalism, fashioning a kaleidoscopic portrait of an entire block, *Aquarius* is more conventionally structured. Its plot, which sees Clara standing her ground against the rapacious interests of developers who want to tear down the Aquarius and build a condominium, dates back at least to Elia Kazan's *Wild River*.

But Mendonça Filho is as interested in Clara herself as he is her ties to the objects that partly define her life and takes time for numerous digressions ... involving her love life, her family, her relationship with her longtime maid (Zoraide Coletto), and her love of music ranging from samba to Queen. ... The character study doesn't mesh with the social-justice drama as snugly as one might hope, but it's hard to complain that they seem like two separate movies when both movies are so thoroughly enjoyable. And they do share Braga, who makes Clara an indomitable force of nature while also expertly revealing the character's fragility. Plus, she's allowed to be a fully sexual woman at 65. "Dona Clara, forgive me, but are you hitting on me?" asks a hunky young lifeguard at one point, and I could almost hear the audience thinking, "You wish."
 Mike d'Angelo, *AV Club*

Aquarius is a marvelous and surprising act of portraiture, a long, unhurried encounter with a single, complicated person. And that is enough to make it a captivating film, an experience well worth seeking out. But there is also, as I've suggested, more going on than the everyday experiences of a modern matriarch. Clara's particularity is precisely what makes her such a resonant and representative figure, because it's her idiosyncratic spirit that is threatened by the sterility and greed represented by her mercenary antagonists.

This is, in other words, a political film, and it's not surprising that it has been caught up in the drama of recent Brazilian politics.... *Aquarius* has become a rallying point for the embattled Brazilian left, but even viewers with scant knowledge of the situation in that country will be aware of the film's timeliness... Clara represents values that look, in the current climate, decidedly old-fashioned. She is a warrior for aesthetic distinction, for critical thought, for sexual and creative liberty – for things that cannot be bought, sold or indexed. And she is not someone you want to go up against in a fight.
 AO Scott, *New York Times*