

Mirror Effect Review

First, the Recap:

Light and sound. Two integral elements to our day to day lives that, in many ways, we totally take for granted. We witness daylight illuminate our way during everyday tasks, light bulbs which reveal our working, shopping, and home spaces so that we may carry on routine. Sound accompanies much of this as well, whether the blaring of car horns, the din of offices and malls, or the TV set emanating the nightly news as we wind down for another evening. However, there is an experience of light and sound that can transcend all of this, formed into a series of tandem wavelengths that create a captivating spectacle which impacts both the eyes and ears simultaneously, an actual emotional experience that stirs the mind. Welcome to the world of visual music.

Next, my Mind:

Having just been screened recently at the 2nd Annual 2019 Berlin Illambra Experimental Film Festival shown at Salon AM Moritzplatz and hosted by Illambra, this concise, compact, visually and audibly stirring film from director Oliver Smith weighs in at just over three minutes in length, yet delivers its indisputably catching appeal with full-on fervor and a building intensity as the pairing of luminescence and electronica pulsate on the screen. Starting with a purposefully minimalistic approach and then slowly expanding as the elements all become more and more intricate and complex, the reverberations and waves of imagery multiply, mimic, mirror, and flash before the viewer's gaze, almost hypnotically, growing and growing, reaching a climax before vanishing into black. It's truly mesmerizing to see, and it's another beautiful example of indie filmmaking's out-of-the-box thinking.

As a non-narrative exploration, it is very unique to see that the foundational image which makes up the whole of this effort is strangely human. Might it tell a story in itself if one were to choose to delve into more philosophical notions about what meanings could be arrived at here? Perhaps. But, this is more strictly aimed to be a study in the utilization of light and sound as a medium for creativity beyond standard concepts of those facets we, as mentioned above, often take for granted as part of daily existence. As to the effort's more limited color schemes and associated visual elements as opposed to something more obviously vibrant, Smith specifies that "Minimalism is the biggest influence on my art. Limited color, muted palette, spare-ness of form hold an appeal. Trying to do as much as possible with the least is an objective guiding my creative process." That tactic works wonders here, and does illustrate that literal fact that more is not always better and much can be presented in short order.

Having likewise cited influences such as Oskar Fischinger, Jordan Belson, and Hy Hirsh when it comes to his chosen direction in filmmaking, it makes it even more evident that Smith's desire and intention is to showcase the areas of the art that most might overlook and not even consider, since so much of film is dedicated to strictly narrative-based directions. But as you watch the echoing light patterns in Smith's film, the way they are formed to copy each other to the beat of music and proliferate exponentially to the levels chosen then just vanish into the void, there's no denying the freshness it brings to the entire perception of what film is, and as this critic has mentioned in other reviews, I hope this style is allowed to gain more notoriety. As such, and in total, "Mirror Effect" is a fantastically executed short film with creative flare made with relevant, contemporary processes actually born far before the age of CGI. It's the artisan at work, and that's what indie filmmaking reflects with absolute consistency.

As always, this is all for your consideration and comment. Until next time, thank you for reading!

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