

Peterborough Arts Cinema

Films that make you think

Thursday 19th April at 7:30pm

The Book of Darren
Cardinal Cox

Mother! (2017)

R | 2h 1min US

Director; Darren Aronofsky. **Stars;** Jennifer Lawrence, Javier Bardem, Ed Harris

A once famous middle-aged poet husband is desirous of creating his magnum opus, however, he seems unable to break out of the persistent creative rut that haunts him. And then, unexpectedly, a knock at the door and the sudden arrival of a cryptic late-night visitor and his intrusive wife will stimulate the writer's stagnant imagination, and much to the perplexed wife's surprise, the more chaos he lets in their haven, the better for his punctured male ego.



Darren Aronofsky has never been afraid of tackling outré material in his films, as **mother!** has in spades.

His first film **Pi** (1998) is the story of a mathematician spiralling into obsession as his investigation of number theory that starts to embrace the esoterica of the Qabalah and gematria and ends with suicidal ants attempting to halt the computer Euclid. I remember enjoying it when it was shown by Peterborough Arts Cinema.

Based on the novel by Hubert Selby Jr, **Requiem for a Dream** (2000) the central characters fall into a squalid world of drug dependency, media obsession and sexual degradation. In America the film was released unrated as Aronofsky refused to cut any part to earn an NC-17.

The Fountain (2006) was his third film, starred Hugh Jackman and Rachel Weisz and has three timelines, the contemporary tale of a doctor whose wife is dying of cancer, a 16th century story (that the dying wife is writing) about Queen Isabella of Spain and a conquistador searching for the Tree of Life in the Mayan jungle, and a science fiction adventure in the 26th century with the doctor in a spacecraft (containing the grave of the dead wife that has the Tree of Life growing from it) towards a star about to explode.

Mickey Rourke and Marisa Tomei starred in Aronofsky's fourth film

The Wrestler (2008) as the title character reluctantly planning to return to the ring and a stripper a little past her prime. The film received acclaim both from film critics and professional wrestlers.

This was followed by the horror film **Black Swan** (2010) and features a ballet dancer (played by Natalie Portman) losing her grip on reality due to the pressure of her performance and inadvertent drug taking.

The Bible provided the inspiration for his sixth film, **Noah** (2014) with Russell Crowe in the title role. The film was banned in some Muslim countries, was criticised by fundamentalist/creationist Christians but had some positive responses from Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and Rabbi Shmuley Boteach.

Mother! also has religious overtones and a heightened sense of unreality (plus violence) that has been featured in Darren Aronofsky's works in the past. It isn't easy viewing and may leave the viewer with more questions than answers, but is sure to provoke conversation, something that Peterborough Arts Cinema thrives upon.

Cardinal Cox first attended a screening of the Peterborough Arts Cinema almost forty years ago. His column Pub Scrawl (which covers

the local literary scene in the magazine Rhythm and Booze) is currently marking its eighth anniversary. Last year he was part of the team adapting medieval mystery plays that was staged as Trials of Mary by Eastern Angles.

