



'Pearl' review: A24's revelation of the iconic villain of 'X'.

Molly Shillinglaw reviews Mia Goth's and Ti West's reunion in the horror prequel.

It's very possible that you've seen *Pearl* celebrated by the media since September, but it took until March this year for the film to be distributed outside of the US. The film follows its titular character, in the year of 1918, as she longs for a life in the movies; she is confined to the restricted lifestyle of the farm whilst having to care for her father. A trip to town one day, to pick up her father's medicine, leads her into the arms of the cinema projectionist, he encourages her to follow her dreams of being in the movies, contradicting the wishes of Pearl's conservative German mother. Once the opportunity arises for Pearl to audition for a dance show, her zealous attitude towards the prospect results in her murdering her mother, shortly after the brutal stabbing of the projectionist. The murders that take place in the film are deeply personal, all driven by some sort of jealousy. Pearl herself is an unfathomably complex character, driven by desire for a lifestyle completely out of reach. She suffers from the woes of farm life, an over-bearing mother and the lockdown induced by the Spanish flu. The score that accompanies the film, composed by Tyler Bates, is romantic, and reflects her ignorance to the inequalities of life which are roots to her strong-willed character. The aesthetic of the film is that of a technicolour whirlwind. Within the scenery of the farm, Pearl's bright clothing stands out, however, against the background of the local town and the dance audition, Pearl blends in.

She will only ever be the star on her own terms, never in the eyes of anyone else. She assumes everyone should see her in the same way and is therefore astonished when the projectionist seems to lose the attraction he had for her, this rejection is what motivates Pearl to murder him. A pivotal scene in the film is her breakdown after receiving the news that she was unsuccessful in the dance audition. Following her breakdown she confesses to her sister-in-law (her husband is away at war) in a one-reel scene. She explains her fear that she is unlike everyone else and describes the details of her disloyalty to her husband and her murders. Goth's performance in the film is phenomenal. In *X*, she plays both Maxine, an aspiring adult-film star, and Pearl as an old woman under a layer of prosthetics. Her versatility in horror aside from both *X* and *Pearl* has led to her being labelled as the new modern scream queen. The (soon-to-be) trilogy is sure to cement her as an icon within the horror genre. Director Ti West has shared his plans for the third instalment *MaXXXine*, which is set to follow the life of Maxine after the events of *X*, in which Pearl carries out another killing spree. The film has given Goth the opportunity to nurture the complexity of the already-confusing character she played in *X*, and the film's execution brilliantly narrates the desperate nature of her lifestyle.



“Untitled” (Portrait of Ross in L.A.) by Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Grace Jappy shares views on the art piece.

Gonzalez-Torres was a Cuban-born American visual artist who worked in New York city, he was born on November the 26th 1957, and died at age 38 on January 9th 1996. Being was most well-known for his exceptionally minimal and conceptual works of art, in the majority of his pieces it is evident of his intentions to incorporate a minimalist visual vocabulary. This is made clear in certain artworks that are composed of everyday materials such as strings of light bulbs, paired wall clocks, stacks of paper, and in this case individually wrapped sweets. However, his clever composition and stories behind these pieces is what makes them so much more than ordinary objects, and has created a development in the impact of contemporary art on today's society.

This is the perfect example of an art piece that you can never completely forget once you learn the true meaning behind it. In 1988 the artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres's partner, Ross Laycock, was diagnosed with aids, deteriorating rapidly and dying in 1991 the same year this piece was installed. The piece itself presents a pile of spilled multi-coloured sweets that sits in a corner with a description that encourages viewers to take one. Stating how if you do not eat the art it can never be fully realised. If left untouched the piece would weigh around 175 pounds, Ross Laycock's exact weight when alive and healthy, with the weight gradually decreasing as people remove pieces of candy from the pile. Gonzalez-Torres describes how he wanted to create an allegorical portrait of his partner's life.

There are multiple interpretations for this piece, with some critics believing the pile is intended to represent a body deteriorating and decaying before death, each time a sweet is taken it mirrors Ross's diminishing body weight during his illness similar to how aids destroys the body. Whereas others believe the sweet eating aspect of this piece is intended to make the viewer complicit in Ross's eventual death serving as symbolism for the public complacency during the aids crisis. Others instead see it as representing all who lost their lives to aids, through taking a sweet it is as though you are taking a piece of the person and continuing their memory.

Gonzalez-Torres wanted to make art about watching someone you love waste away in front of you, however, unfortunately at the time aids was so taboo you couldn't get art exhibits to showcase a piece about aids that was openly about aids. He made this pile of sweets art piece so that he couldn't be censored, by disguising his true intentions under a seemingly trivial and innocent idea such as sweets.

According to the artists instructions the museum that is displaying the work is required to replenish the piece to 175 pounds as long as the work is on view, although the sweets should not be replenished until they have all gone, allowing viewers the opportunity to watch it dwindle. The pile will shrink, it will parallel the process of a loved one dying but it will always be revived, giving it a kind of eternal life.



LAST WEEK'S SONNET:

Mr Brightside - The Killers

Can you guess the pop song from the Shakespearean sonnet? Correct answer in next week's Culture Vulture!

It is unclear; pray clarify for me
what thou'st purport when thou dost nod assent
when I know in thy mind thou'dst rather be
professing well thy genuine dissent.
What message should I hear when thou say'st 'go'
but see within thine eyes thou'dst bid me stay?
What troubles must thy heart tormented know
to say our time doth swiftly ebb away?
Thy indecision leads me t'ward the left
ere thou dost change thy course and travel right;
our daylight quarrels feel of love bereft
ere turning into passion through the night.
No, I cannot thy message clearly glean
so tell me true, my sweet: what dost thou mean?



What's on in Bristol this Spring/Summer

Miss Ramsay shares three events taking place in Bristol this year and how to get tickets

Bristol is a cultural hub, with various different events taking place this summer. Below are just a few of the festivals and occasions that you can enjoy.

Bristol Comedy Garden:

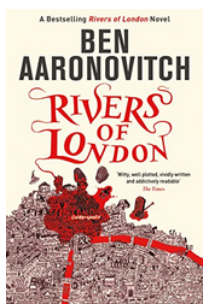
The south-west's biggest comedy extravaganza returns to Queen Square. The line-up includes, Off-Menu's Ed Gamble, QI guest Ivo Graham, Multi-award winning star Sarah Pascoe and Mock the Week regular Rhys James. This festival is paired with food-stalls from all of Bristol's favourite spots and should be a fantastic weekend to spend with friends. Tickets are available from £13.50 and can be bought via the Bristol Comedy Garden [Website](#).

Bristol Film Festival:

The Bristol Film Festival is a continuous independent event that provides an alternative experience for lovers of film and cinema in Bristol. The organisation screens classic films in unique locations across Bristol, including Clifton Conservatory, Avery's Wine Cellar and the SS Great Britain. Tickets can be bought for each individual film via the Bristol Film Festival [Website](#), where you can also sign up to see which events are coming soon.

Forwards Festival:

Forwards Festival is a new inner city music festival drawing the biggest names in international music to Bristol Downs in September. This year's line-up includes Raye, Biig Piig, Aphex Twin and Jockstrap. Tickets went on sale on Friday 24th so make sure to check the [website](#) to grab the last few!



Mrs Madden suggests:

The Rivers of London Series - Ben Aaronovitch

Like Harry Potter for grown ups (aimed at grown-ups!) A crime drama novel series with a magical twist set in some hidden parts of London.

Soundtrack to the week:

This week's soundtrack to the week has been built by editors and readers. If you would like to have your say, follow the QR code on page 5!

MONDAY:

Paradigms - Sam Fender



TUESDAY:

Look At Us Now (Honeycomb) - Daisy Jones & The Six



WEDNESDAY:

Doubt Nothing - JGrrey



THURSDAY: Recommended by Molly Shillinglaw

Other Side of the Game - Erykah Badu



FRIDAY: Recommended by Sam Barnes

Mis-shapes - Pulp



SATURDAY:

Shh - Biig Piig



SUNDAY:

River - Leon Bridges



WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

As the weeks progress, we are hoping Culture Vulture will become jam-packed with student articles, recommendations and reviews. If you would like to make your own creative suggestion, or have a piece of work that you would like to see in the next magazine, scan the QR code.



Alternatively, if you would like to contribute an article, film, album, book or podcast review, or have an itching to write a features piece about a current cultural affair, email aramsay@gordanoschool.org.uk with your idea and they can point you in the right direction. Who knows - you may see your name in print!

Make sure to encourage your tutors and friends to get involved, and let's make creativity central to the Gordano Sixth Form experience!

