



The Modern Forest

Long-term residents of Noida often reminisce of a time – a habit shared by individuals in cities across various cities in the country – of ‘a simpler time’. It is worth inquiry what exists within the historical composition of this *notion* of simplicity, and as a corollary, the precise upheavals in the ensuing years that have induced, according to these chroniclers, the vast set of complications that permeate through the life of the city as it is now. It is beyond doubt that Noida seems to teeter precariously on various, narrow ledges: historical, but geographical, too. Its very conception serves as an occasion for irony: a ‘new’ suburb that could serve as a model for urban living of the future, conceived however by a feudalistic, primitive regime. This, but also its location: between the alleged modernity and organization of the national capital and the entirely Dionysian chaos of Western Uttar Pradesh. In the context of this knowledge, it is perhaps not too outrageous to deduce in Noida a curious paradox – a city that employs an immense matrix of surfaces, of exteriors, of facades, to conceal (or make acceptable) the barbarism that lays at its very heart. ‘Only twenty years ago’, say the same residents, ‘this whole city was barren, a forest’. Even if all of this mythical forest has now been razed to the ground to install, in its place, a regime of strict geometry, two decades is not enough time to exorcise all the ghosts that lurked within it.

The present series of films therefore explores Noida as a place in perpetual limbo; a site of manufactured, artificial order, which subsides on occasion to reveal the residues of a feral past. The included titles will contemplate various universes that think of the seeming opposites of order and chaos, sophistication and crudity, decent and vulgar as essentially, being inseparable. It is useful to learn that the residents of Bisraha, a village that exists a few kilometers away from the grandest construction project in Noida, believe that it is the birthplace of Ravan, the mythological supervillain. The films in the series posit that the grand project of civilization in Noida (or in all the suburbs across the third-world) may in fact, only be a simulation.

Films

Night of the Demon (Jacques Tourneur, 1958, 95m)

American professor John Holden arrives in London for a parapsychology conference, only to find himself investigating the mysterious actions of Devil-worshiper Julian Karswell.

---double bill with---

Cat People (Jacques Tourneur, 1942, 73m)

An American man marries a Serbian immigrant who fears that she will turn into the cat person of her homeland's fables if they are intimate together.

Body Snatchers (Abel Ferrara, 1994, 87m)

A teenage girl and her father discover alien clones are replacing humans on a remote U.S. military base in Alabama.

Cannibal Holocaust (Ruggero Deodato, 1980, 95m)

During a rescue mission into the Amazon rainforest, a professor stumbles across lost film shot by a missing documentary crew.

Nosferatu (F W Murnau, 1922, 81m)

Vampire Count Orlok expresses interest in a new residence and real estate agent Hutter's wife.

Queen Kelly (Erich von Stroheim, 1929, 101m)

A convent girl is abducted and seduced by a prince before being sent off to a brothel in East Africa.

World on a Wire (R W Fassbinder, 1973, 212m)

Somewhere in the future there is a computer project called Simulacron one of which is able to simulate a full featured reality, when suddenly project leader Henry Vollmer dies. His successor Dr. Fred Stiller experiences odd phenomena. A good friend, Guenther Lause, disappears in the middle of a conversation and a week later nobody has ever heard of him. And those fits of dizziness - Stiller cannot believe himself to be fool. There has to be an explanation for all this.

The Invitation (Karyn Kusama, 2015, 100m)

While attending a dinner party at his former home, a man thinks his ex-wife and her new husband have sinister intentions for their guests.

Hors Satan (Bruno Dumont, 110m)

In a village on the French Opal Coast, a drifter engages in a perplexing relationship with a young woman who has suffered abuse.