SYNOPSIS

1950s America. Since his mother’s confinement to an institution, Andy has lived in the shadow of his stoic father. A family acquaintance, Dr. Wallace Fiennes, employs the introverted young man as a photographer to document an asylum tour advocating for his increasingly controversial lobotomy procedure. As the tour progresses and Andy witnesses the doctor’s career and life unravel, he begins to identify with the institutions’ patients. Arriving at a California mountain town, a growing center of the New Age movement, they encounter an unconventional French healer who requests a lobotomy for his own daughter, Susan.

A surreal and uncompromising reckoning with the dangers of passivity, representation and utopian thought from the director of ENTERTAINMENT and THE COMEDY.
AN ANTI-UTOPIAN FILM

In our current socio-political climate in the United States, the 50’s are either maligned or celebrated, depending on your political persuasion and demographic. It’s the era “Make America Great Again” references implicitly (sometimes explicitly) when gender norms and white male supremacy were the architecture of culture and politics, and unbridled aspiration was the fuel of society. The film looks to disrupt the cinematic-retro-narrative and aesthetic that has helped foster that nostalgia. It attempts to interrupt narrative as an anesthetizing agent and force the viewer to consider the container that carries the story. I like to think of it as a problem film, an anti-utopian film, that reasserts the beauty and necessity of the finite.

PERSPECTIVE AND INTENTIONS

I like to work with context. I like how it informs the audience’s experience, whether they are aware of it or not. Emotion and fragility are very accessible to Tye Sheridan as an actor, he is increasingly known for that great ability. The film uses that capacity and intentionally doesn’t readily deliver on it. It often renders that potential mute and uses that larger energy as conflict. Jeff Goldblum is a charismatic force of nature that is celebrated cinematically and culturally. While that cult of personality is available to the viewer, the film flattens and upends it to some degree, assigning it to the context of the perpetrator, and forces us to question the nature of the film’s perspective and its intentions.
THE LURE OF NOSTALGIA AND BEAUTY

As a problem, the film attempts to use form as a combative force, and nostalgia and beauty as a lure. American popular cinema has always outsourced unattainable commercial utopias and degraded audience’s instincts for critical thought. That’s part of both the subject matter and form of The Mountain.

PASSIVITY IN RESTLESS MINDS

I want the audience to be active, to contend with the film as something outside of themselves. Too often films and episodic television reinforce audience’s perspectives and world-views as a kind commercial narcotic. They are manipulated by forms and are taught to be unaware. I want people to struggle with and in the film, not just under the influence of its narrative but with the material of it, to be skeptical of it, to question its use and authority. The lobotomy was a procedure to engineer passivity in restless minds. In a broad sense, the entertainment industry has a similar motivation. I’m at odds with that form of experience, especially in our disproportionately privileged societies.
RICK ALVERSON (WRITER-DIRECTOR)

RICK ALVERSON (born June 25, 1971, Spokane, Washington) is an American filmmaker and musician living in Richmond, Virginia. His feature films include THE MOUNTAIN (2018), ENTERTAINMENT (2015) and THE COMEDY (2012). His work has screened at Sundance Film Festival, Locarno, New Directors / New Films, International Film Festival Rotterdam, and BAFICI among other festivals. He has directed videos for Oneohtrix Point Never, Sharon Van Etten and Angel Olson, among others.

2018  THE MOUNTAIN
2015  ENTERTAINMENT
2012  THE COMEDY
2011  NEW JERUSALEM
2010  THE BUILDER
INTERVIEWS

Deadline Studio at Sundance with Rick Alverson, Jeff Goldblum, Tye Sheridan
WATCH: https://youtu.be/u01IMpctqAk

IMDB Studio with Kevin Smith interviewing Rick Alverson, Jeff Goldblum, Tye Sheridan
WATCH: https://youtu.be/bwlph2cHIDw

Associated Press: Rick Alverson & Jeff Goldblum
WATCH: https://youtu.be/MLEhMDV-9Q4

The Hollywood Reporter: Rick Alverson, Jeff Goldblum, Tye Sheridan
WATCH: https://youtu.be/j_NpPQZvw-I
VICE STUDIOS PRESENTS A MADE BED / REMERGENCE PRODUCTION

THE MOUNTAIN
A FILM BY RICK ALVERSON

2018, USA, 108 mins, color, ratio 4:3, sound 5.1, in English & French

MAIN CAST
TYE SHERIDAN - Andy
DENIS LAVANT - Jack
UDO KIER - Frederick
HANNAH GROSS - Susan
and JEFF GOLDBLUM as Dr. Wallace Fiennes

MAIN CREW
directed by RICK ALVERSON
written by RICK ALVERSON, DUSTIN GUY DEFA, COLM O’LEARY
director of photography LORENZO HAGERMAN
curator MICHAEL TAYLOR and RICK ALVERSON
production design JACQUELIN ABRAHAMS
musical arrangements DANIEL LOPATIN
sound designer GENE PARK
music supervisor CHRIS SWANSON
casting director AVY KAUFMAN, CSA
costume designer ELIZABETH WARN
produced by SARA MURPHY, RYAN ZACARIAS, ALLISON ROSE CARTER, EDDY MORETTI
executive producers DANNY GABAI, NATALIE FARREY, VINCENT LANDAY
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