

Today's Cinema Review: Morbid comedy, sea sponges and murder dramas



Wild Tales (Damián Szifron, 2014) – ★★★★★ – Released March 27th (plays at the Cameo)

After its premiere at Cannes Film Festival last year, *Wild Tales* made a weaving journey through the festival circuits of both 2014 and 15 before arriving in UK cinemas courtesy of Artificial Eye and Curzon Cinema. A series of six, twenty minute vignettes, it depicts life's disappointments with a eye that is provocative and comically black. It bridges the fine gap between morbidity and comedy that many films fall into with near faultless execution. Spanish cinema god Pedro Almodóvar has a firm hand on the production here; his rather sardonic and matter-of-fact flare present throughout. It may falter ever so slightly in its midsection, becoming a little distracting, but it returns for its final segment: the hysterical story of a newlywed dawning on her husband's infidelity. It's a dazzling crescendo, and one that sends the film off with gutsy power.

The Spongebob Movie: Sponge Out of Water (Paul Tibbitt, 2015)
– ★★★★★ – Released March 27th

Children and parents alike have had a soft spot for *Spongebob* for over 15 years, and with the original movie adaptation of the hit show being a box office and cult winner, it would only be so long until we saw a follow up. Usually, a feature length version of any 20 minute TV show would grow turgid after a short while, but almost miraculously, *Sponge Out of Water* manages to be entertaining for almost its entire 100 minute run time. It owes that to its uncomplicated, witty script and

welcome embracing of the stupid. Its gags are colourful enough to lure in the laughs of your children, but their pun rich context can cause unexpected guffaws from yourself too.

In its final act, it transfers to the real world, featuring a swashbuckling pirate played by Antonio Banderas and a creepy set of claymation/3D protagonists. Its in these final moments that it loses its footing, stretching your patience in some aggravating, inconclusive and OTT battles that outstay their welcome. It lacks the charm as Spongebob's last cinematic outing, but it is rather funny considering the odds stacked against it. This may be no Lego Movie, but it manages to be the best film we've seen due for multiplex release today.

The Face of an Angel (Michael Winterbottom, 2014) – ★☆☆☆☆ –
Released March 27th

Winterbottom's latest film presents itself on paper as a loose depiction of the Meredith Kercher case, in which a young ex pat student is brutally murdered by her roommate in a small Italian town. In an effort to create a fictional version of the story, a film director heads to the town to look into the story for himself. Meetings with beautiful journalists and even more beautiful young barmaids add to a tacky version of a still rather sensitive story. This is a film about a drug fueled moron; not a murder case. It teeters cautiously on the line of defamation a little too closely, managing to be hyperbolic, stupid and rather distasteful.