

Earthworm (2022)

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2023 FILM MAUDIT 2.0 FILM FESTIVAL REVIEW!

Claire (**Charlotte Foley**) has just found out that she's pregnant, but she has no intention of having a baby right now (she'd rather rip off her eyelids). She schedules her doctor's appointment, she gets the approval of her parents, and she is prepared to have a routine visit to the doctor in order to be prescribed abortion medicine. However, visions of an **Earthworm** begin to haunt her and nothing seems to be going as planned. As she prepares for the worst, even that won't help with what she's about to experience.

It's clear pretty early the intention of **Earthworm**—and it's to convey social and political opinions for viewers to decipher. I get it, but it's not really a conversation that I want to have. That's selfish, sure—but the reality is that Foley (also the writer) and Director **Grace Gregory** have to understand that their political narrative won't appeal to everyone. With all of that being said, I do believe that Gregory and Foley understand this, because **Earthworm** doesn't just exist as a political allegory—it excels as a horror film as well.



Beyond that political aspect of *Earthworm* exists a horror film that, regardless of your stance on the topics presented throughout the course of the film, you'll be able to appreciate. A worm doesn't seem like the most daunting creature in the world, however, the way in which it is presented to viewers manages to spark fear, ruffle some feathers, and cause viewers to cringe at the thought of something similar happening to them. That's such an important part of creating a horror flick that includes political undertones—creating something that can be appreciated without having to face the politics. That's exactly what *Earthworm* is, a daunting horror film that has the ability to appeal to many.

Again, I'm not super interested in the sub-narrative about women's rights and abortion. I know, I know—I'm a man and I could never understand. Don't get me wrong, I'm not condemning the ideas that Gregory and Foley present to the world (I'm also not saying they're right)—it's just not a conversation that I want to have right now. And just like there will be many people that agree with me, there will be plenty of potential viewers that will want to have that conversation and will most definitely appreciate the things said and expressed throughout the course of *Earthworm*. The political aspect of the film is presented in a way that appeals to certain viewers, but doesn't turn others away. However, regardless of what the opposition thinks, *Earthworm* makes you think, and it allows viewers the opportunity to have certain conversations of their own accord.

It seems clear that Foley and Gregory understand that their political stance, the one strewn throughout the course of the film, will ruffle some feathers along the way. They never dilute ***Earthworm*** by being too forward, and they keep viewers from all walks of life intrigued. The visuals play a role in how viewers receive the story, how they receive the film as a whole—and as a horror film (separate from the politics) it does so well. It's still edgy, graphic, painful, and uniquely scary—and everything works in the favor of the film's success.

Directed by Grace Gregory.

Written by Charlotte Foley.

Starring Charlotte Foley, Michelle White, Rob Nagle, Rodney To, Elizabeth Frances, etc.

★★★★★^{1/2}/10



