

ELATHAN CINEMA

ASPECTS AND ANALYSIS OF SHORT FILMS

HOME

GENRES A-I

GENRES J-R

GENRES S-Z

LISTICLE

OSCAR WINNERS AND NOMINEES

CINEMA STUDIES

Locations in Time, Space, and History interlaced during Others Will Follow (2017)

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Others Will Follow, a mission to Mars

Science fiction movies, or alternative history movies even as *Others Will Follow* is a slight combination of both, tend to land best when they show the viewer something about themselves or about the human condition or leave them fascinated by the immense diversity and strangeness of the universe.

Short Focus, Short Theory



Elathan Cinema aims to be a project focusing on film theory as it applies to short films, as well as news and developments (where applicable).

Over time, the hope is to both share the joy of film, as well as deconstruct some of what makes short films magic in a way a feature may not be able to accurately capture, or even be accurately discussed due to the longer nature of their content.

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Others Will Follow is a 2017 short science fiction film set half on Mars half in Japan and inspired by an alternative history where the Apollo 11 astronauts never got the chance to return from the moon. It was written and directed by Andrew Finch, with VXF also by... Andrew Finch, modeling and set parts design by Andrew Finch, and honestly mostly everything other than the acting itself it seems, by Andrew Finch. As such, *Others Will Follow* took nearly four and a half years to make, with the production being funded by a [Kickstarter to the tune of \\$8,885](#) and an unknown amount of Finch's own personal finances.

While there is not a lead per-say, the main character is our stranded astronaut and the story follows the choice he makes at the edge catastrophe and how the Earth broadcasts it. They are unnamed, but played by Winston Tao, who is themselves one-half of a filmmaking duo called TwinTaoers with their brother Aaron. Their short, *SuperMaarko* (2016), was nominated for several awards in 2017, the year of this short's release.

Sound, Music, and How Do you Spell “Intertextuality”?



Sunrise on Mars

What is **beautiful** about this is short film, or rather one of many beautiful things from an editing and composition point of view, is it does something that most features of sci-fi cannot afford to get away with (and *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* (2017) [caused some theaters to issue a public warning](#) about for one scene), and that is the silence of the fallen capsule over Mars.

We have sound inside the capsule as Tao's character wakes up from their implied childhood flash back, and we do not regain sound again until the viewer is transferred from the shot of space to an overview of modern Japan, and the newscast of the transmission issues is heard over the city

occur about once or twice a month as we have a tiny staff. Email is always open for suggestions on new short films to view, or questions on cinematic film theory.

Allowances may occur for major international or public holidays.

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Sound does not travel in space, at the very least it certainly doesn't in any form that modern understandings of physics allow, and it is a touch of detail that makes our heart happy.

Additionally, while there is no dialogue in this short, for us as an audience there is something you can almost hear in the background, like a memory, that isn't really there at all. *Can you hear me, Major Tom?*



The Astronaut tries to send a message back to Earth, but there is no signal

Quick little detour history lesson: "Space Oddity" by David Bowie was released in July 11th, 1969.

Apollo 11 would land on the moon July 24, 1969, having been launched July 16, 1969, just days after the release of Bowie's song (which had **delayed radio play in some cases**, as it was thought the subject might jinx the Apollo crew coming back safely).

"Space Oddity" was also the first musical video recorded on the International Space Station in 2013 by Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield. #FunFact.

However, Bowie didn't come up with "Space Oddity" without influence, his being the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), one of the most influential science fiction features of the first century of film making, which is noted both for scientific accuracy and its limited dialogue and sound.

Something that *Others Will Follow* also plays to in its execution. The only dialogue of this short is the over-narration of the president and the related news cast, none of the characters themselves are seen or heard speaking.

Locations in Time, Space, and History interlaced during *Others Will Follow* (2017)
Manipulating Perceptions and the Flow of Time in *The Golden Fish / Histoire d'un poisson rouge* (1959)

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February 2019
October 2018
June 2018
May 2018
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Tom (Coming Home)”, which was released in 1983 and was inspired very much by Bowie’s song. So even the crew themselves is aware of this connection, even if it is not blatantly stated or referenced at all directly in the core short film itself.

The take away here being that:

Media is not produced in a vacuum, nor is it screened in a vacuum. It is constantly interacting with the experiences viewers bring with them.

Some people when they watch this short might be reminded of the unused speech that Finch used as reference, other people will hear David Bowie’s “Space Oddity”, or Shiny Toy Guns’ “Major Tom (Coming Home)”, some people might see parts drifting by of *Star Trek* or *Star Wars* or *Blade Runner* or something else completely unknowable to both us as film writers, and the production team as filmmakers.

And that is beautiful and powerful, and maybe for some people it misses the mark completely and that is fine too. No one singular film product will ever be for everyone, but that *this* managed to connect to so many, on such a small budget (by production terms), is a massive accomplishment given its time in production limbo. The fact it was able to be released *at all* is near magic given the extreme coordination effort behind film production of all types.

In more academic terms, this would be considered optional intertextuality and accidental intertextuality. The optional intertextuality being the viewer’s understanding of the original Apollo speech written for Nixon in event of a failure of return (“Others will follow,” comes directly from this speech as a line, even), and being able to connect the beats of the short to the content of that speech. Accidental intertextuality would be experienced here as viewers who feel a connection to the aforementioned songs, or other science-fiction film sources, as they are not *directly* related to the text in a knowing-way by the creators of the short film itself.

You could geek on about the layers for a while really, and that’s *such* a science fiction culture thing.

Transitions, Repetitive Framing, and Letting the Audience Do the Work For You



An upside down image of a Girl / Lady watching the news broadcast the photograph from Mars

Short films are by their very nature, *short*, so there is not always a lot of space (or budget) for long expositions or dialogues, or explanations of things or thoughts or concepts. Yet the filmmakers point still needs to come across to the audience in a way that they can connect or engage with the story. Which means, in this case, being on top of how you storyboard, or plan, your shots.

When we first meet Tao's character, it is not the one that carries the action of the movie, it is the version of him that is much younger and inspired to go to the stars in the first place. Or so the audience's mind is led to believe due to transitions.

When the bit with the astronaut as a child ends, it is as they are upside down with a fish bowl on their head, and we as viewers, are moved directly into Tao's astronaut as an adult, with a helmet on them that mimics the fish bowl (though not upside down to the viewer – but in space, the concept of “upside down” being usable at all is debatable), seeming to wake up from a flashback caused by the trauma of whatever technical problem has befallen the Mars craft.



A boy upside down, watching a new broadcast on the moon landing



The film's Astronaut, waking up from an implied flashback to childhood

None of this is directly stated by *anyone in the short*, it is only suggested by editing. For all reality, the child could very well be a random child just watching a television broadcast of the moon like so many others of that time.

This is also the same imagery the short goes back to later on, relying on the audience to make the connection that, this boy, watching and upside down image transmission and being inspired, is mirrored again in concept with the girl in modern Japan tilting her head (and being framed by the camera as upside down) watching the end transmission image loading upside down on the city projector.

likely as the short shows, to somewhere beyond. Perhaps a moon of Jupiter to look for new life.

Or any other bold explorations of human curiosity.

Because we are, as *Voyager 1* showed us in 1990, just tiny wiggly things on a *Pale Blue Dot*.



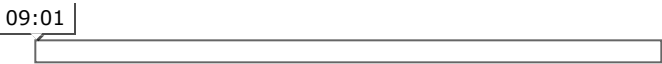
Others Will Follow mimicking the iconic *Pale Blue Dot* Imagery from *Voyager 1*

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Additionally, if you would like more in-depth information on this short, [Elizabeth Howell on behalf of Space.com did an Interview with Finch](#) back in November of 2017, and if you (woefully unlike us, though we wish we could) would like to follow along with the heavy VFX tech-specs behind it, there is also a lovely interview from Film Supply earlier this year that goes into the technical depths that we here at Elathan Cinema are completely unqualified to even *attempt* writing about in a way that captures the full-scope of at this time. Brilliant article, you can read it here: [The Making of Others Will Follow](#).

Others Will Follow (2017) runs about nine minutes in length and can be viewed as shown below, [on their website directly](#), or on [Vimeo](#). The “Making Of” video can also be seen on their website, or Finch’s Vimeo page.

*This short film was originally sourced from [this reddit thread](#) for review suggestion.



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Making of: Others Will Follow

from **Andrew Finch**

03:12

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