

= Inseminoid =

Inseminoid ( titled Horror Planet in the United States ) is a British @-@ Hong Kong science @-@ fiction horror film released in 1981 . Director Norman J. Warren 's eighth film , the plot of Inseminoid concerns a group of future scientists excavating the ruins of an ancient civilisation on a distant planet . When a monstrous alien creature attacks and inseminates one of the women in the team , chaos ensues as the unbalanced victim , possessing unnatural strength , murders her colleagues one after another in a psychotic bid to protect her unborn twin hybrid offspring . It stars Judy Geeson , Robin Clarke , and Stephanie Beacham . Victoria Tennant makes an early film appearance .

Filmed between May and June 1980 , Inseminoid is based on a script written by Nick and Gloria Maley , a couple who had contributed to the special effects of Warren 's films starting with Satan 's Slave ( 1976 ) . A low budget of £ 1 million , half of which was contributed by the Hong Kong Shaw Brothers , funded location filming in both the Chislehurst Caves in Kent and on the island of Gozo in Malta . Composer John Scott perfected the electronic score of Inseminoid in multiple hours @-@ long studio sessions following the completion of shooting .

Although initial box office reception was positive both in the United Kingdom and overseas , Inseminoid has since failed to impress a majority of critics , who have faulted Warren 's film for perceived poor acting , special effects and set design . Despite praise for actress Judy Geeson 's depiction of the lead character , Sandy , approval of the film in general has been tarnished due to its concept of an extraterrestrial insemination , which has been viewed negatively in comparison to the premise of Alien ( 1979 ) . Both Warren and Alien distributors 20th Century Fox have rejected claims that the script of Inseminoid was influenced by that of the earlier film .

Academic criticism of Inseminoid has concentrated on the film 's treatment of the female sex and female sexualities in the context of corruption by an alien source . In addition to its depiction of the abject Sandy , who is rendered a distorted Other in the aftermath of her unnatural impregnation , the film has been seen to incorporate a clash between the patriarchal and the maternal towards its climax , as the new mother kills her former friends one by one . Complementing the film 's successful VHS run , a novelisation of Inseminoid was written by Larry Miller .

= = Plot = =

On a desolate planet , a team of 12 Xeno project scientists are conducting an archaeological excavation of the ruins of an ancient civilisation . Shortly after an underground tomb network is found to contain crystals and wall inscriptions , photographer Dean White ( Dominic Jephcott ) is engulfed in a rock blast and left incapacitated . Deciphering the alien language in the caves , xenolinguist Mitch ( Trevor Thomas ) theorises that the civilisation was built on the concept of dualism : the planet orbits a binary star , and a pair of twins seems to have ruled the race that once inhabited it . Medical assistant Sharon ( Heather Wright ) discovers that an energy field surrounds the crystals , which causes her to deduce that a " chemical intelligence " controlled life on the planet .

A mentally unbalanced Ricky Williams ( David Baxt ) is driven to re @-@ enter the caves when a sample of crystals pulsates and the chemical intelligence exerts its influence through a mark on his arm . Thrown into a grille in a compromised environmental suit , Gail ( Rosalind Lloyd ) commits suicide , removing her helmet and freezing to death in the toxic atmosphere while trying to amputate her trapped foot with a chainsaw . Documentation officer Kate Frost ( Stephanie Beacham ) shoots Ricky with a harpoon gun before he opens both the inner and outer airlock doors and renders the air inside the base unbreathable .

Following the burial of Ricky and Gail , Mitch and Sandy ( Judy Geeson ) return to the caves to collect more crystals . A monstrous creature appears and dismembers Mitch before raping Sandy . Found distraught , Sandy receives treatment from Sharon and chief medical officer Karl ( Barry Houghton ) , who discovers that the assault has triggered an accelerated pregnancy despite the regular intravenous injections of contraceptives given to the women in the team . When further explosions within the catacombs scupper chances of deeper investigation , the surviving members

of the team are left with nothing to do but await the arrival of a Xeno rescue shuttle .

The intelligence assumes control of Sandy , who has been marked in the same way as Ricky . She stabs Barbra ( Victoria Tennant ) to death with a pair of scissors , demonstrating superhuman strength while committing the murder , and then mutilates Dean and the remains of Mitch , drinking their blood . The rest of the team seek refuge in the Operations Room as Sandy destroys essential machinery ? including the base transmitter ? with explosives . When the imbalance in Sandy 's mind appears to correct itself , Karl , Sharon and Commander Holly McKay ( Jennifer Ashley ) attempt to sedate her to spare the unborn children . Sandy 's madness returns and Holly and Karl are killed in an accident with heat @-@ sealing apparatus , whereupon Sandy disembowels the corpses .

Senior officer Mark ( Robin Clarke ) radios Sandy ? his romantic interest ? from the Operations Room to stall for time as Kate and operations chief Gary ( Steven Grives ) depart to requisition chainsaws from a storage room . The ruse is uncovered and Sandy harpoons Gary outside the airlock , breathing the atmosphere to no ill effect as she mauls his flesh . Preparing for a final confrontation , Mark stumbles across Sandy 's newborn , mutant twins . He entrusts them to Sharon as the mother blasts through the Operations Room door and destroys all the equipment inside , although it is evident that she no longer possesses unnatural strength . Crippled by an explosive charge , Kate is gored to death . In a last stand , Mark strangles and kills Sandy with a ripped @-@ out cable . He returns to Sharon to discover one of the twins biting at her slit neck , before its sibling launches itself at him .

Twenty @-@ eight days later , Xeno Auxiliary Module 047 lands on the planet to investigate the loss of contact with the team . With the base in ruins , the mission records destroyed and the scientists either murdered or missing , combat marksmen Corin ( Kevin O 'Shea ) and Roy ( Robert Pugh ) abandon the search for survivors and pilot Jeff ( John Segal ) contacts Xeno control to request clearance to return . The final shots reveal that Sandy 's children have stowed themselves away inside a storage compartment on board the shuttle .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

Following the releases of Satan 's Slave ( 1976 ) , Prey ( 1978 ) and Terror ( 1979 ) , Norman J. Warren had at first been attached to direct a film titled Gargoyles . When this production collapsed at the scripting stage , Warren and his producer , Richard Gordon , accepted a plot proposal from the husband @-@ and @-@ wife team of Nick and Gloria Maley , who had worked on Satan 's Slave as members of the special effects department besides Star Wars Episode IV : A New Hope ( 1977 ) and Superman ( 1978 ) . The Maleys drafted their concept as a composite of their favourite science @-@ fiction ideas and an opportunity to exhibit their best effects work , although the suggested title , Doomseeds , had to be changed to avoid confusion with the 1977 film Demon Seed . The script for the new Inseminoid , which indicates that the film is set two decades in the future in a militaristic universe , required amendments prior to filming , although the premise received Warren and Gordon 's approval .

= = = Casting = = =

Producer Richard Gordon cast American actors Clarke and Ashley while on business in Hollywood . Prior to Inseminoid , Ashley had starred in minor films of such independent studios as Crown International Pictures , while Clarke had just completed filming on the 1980 film The Formula . Warren recalls that although Ashley " was not the greatest actress , she was very enthusiastic and very easy to work with . " The professional relationship between Warren and Clarke broke down during the filming of sequences such as Dean 's incapacitation inside the caves , when the director and actor disagreed about the extent to which Clarke needed to respond to the script when his character raises his voice to a shout . Warren asserts that Clarke 's " high opinion of himself " made

the actor " a nightmare to work with " , and adds that he " could be extremely difficult , making every scene with him an uphill struggle . "

Rapports between the director and other cast members proved to be positive : in particular , Geeson is credited as " an absolute dream to work with " and praised for her acting of the maddened expectant mother , which Warren argues avoids descending into unintentional humour . Gordon also offers a positive assessment , stating that Geeson accepted the demands of her part with enthusiasm and did not complain that it demeaned her as an actress .

Warren retains fond memories of Beacham 's " very professional " performance , and remarks that , " with tongue firmly in cheek , she would often wind me up by asking what her motivation was for a particular action , just as I about to call ' Action ! ' , knowing full well that my answer would be , ' Because it 's in the script ' . " Beacham , a mother of two infant children , agreed to appear in the film to support her family : " I had to choose between a play that I really , really wanted to do , which would have paid me £ 65 a week , and this script for a film called Inseminoid . Hey ! No choice . Two pink babies asleep upstairs ! No choice ! "

= = = Filming = = =

Agreeing to fund half of the proposed £ 1 million budget , the Hong Kong Shaw Brothers became partners in the film 's production . Elder brother Sir Run Run Shaw is credited as the presenter of Inseminoid in the opening titles . With a production staff of 75 , principal photography commenced on 12 May 1980 . John Metcalfe , camera operator for Satan 's Slave and Terror , assumed the role of cinematographer . His former role fell to the less experienced Dick Pope . Three weeks of location filming at the Chislehurst Caves in Kent preceded a one @-@ week indoor session at Lee International Studios at Wembley Park in London . The second unit completed special effects and linking shots in a fifth week , based at Film House in Wardour Street . To simulate the desolate landscape of the alien planet in long shots , the production team departed for the island of Gozo off Malta for a final recording session of two days , capitalising on the strong Mediterranean sun to produce good lighting .

Opting to record using Mitchell cameras incorporating 35 mm Eastman Kodak film and anamorphic lenses , Warren recalls that the produced footage boasted " an incredibly sharp image and what I would term as the ' American ' look . " He remembers that the setting of the Chislehurst Caves rendered the subterranean complex more realistic than a potential in @-@ studio alternative given the modest budget of Inseminoid . However , the cold , damp , airless conditions , combined with the uneven surface of the cave floors , complicated the filming sessions and necessitated frequent repairs of equipment .

Shooting often ran for 12 hours at a time and led to frequent minor injuries among the cast and production staff , while some developed intense feelings of claustrophobia in the confined space . Gordon suggests that the uncomfortable working conditions made the performances of the cast more realistic , but concedes that although , " I think all this paid off in terms of what we got on the screen for the budget , but the circumstances were very difficult . " In the absence of suitable facilities inside the caves , the personnel established administrative , dressing and make @-@ up rooms in a car park some distance from the recording area . Co @-@ writer Nick Maley reprised his role as a special effects technician to produce the infant twin props that appear in the climax of the film .

The filming of Inseminoid wrapped two days behind schedule . Warren remembers making a major cut to scenes of Ricky 's rampage to help the shooting finish on time : " I had to put the " blue pencil " through part of the scene , which involved a chase through various tunnels . Three pages of script , which I had to condense into one shot . Having to make such an enormous compromise was not a happy choice for me , but it was the only way of getting us back on schedule . " On his contribution to Inseminoid , Warren stated that Peter Boyle proved to be " a pleasure to work with , because he had a natural feel for the material and managed to create just the right pace and rhythm throughout the film . " During the post @-@ production process , the editing staff increased the brightness of the original print , concerned that a dim appearance would damage the chances of sales to television

broadcasters , and removed the most graphic shots of the birth of the mutant children for the purposes of classification . The opening title visuals , consisting of vibrant oil frames , are a contribution of Oxford Scientific Films .

= = = Music = = =

Determining that the low budget precluded an orchestral soundtrack , Warren and his long @-@ serving composer , John Scott , agreed that all the music should be electronic . Produced after hours of studio multi @-@ tracking and overdubbing , Warren considers the final score an " amazing achievement " and praises Scott 's realisation of a soundtrack incorporating the " experimental " electronic brand of music . The score received an LP release in 1982 .

= = Release = =

In the UK , Inseminoid premiered on 22 March 1981 in the Midlands . It later opened at 65 cinemas in the region , and reached London in October . Overseas , German cinemas had begun to exhibit the film in January under the title Samen des Bösen ( English : Seeds of Evil ) . To the dislike of Warren , distributors Almi released the film under the title Horror Planet in the United States and Canada , but later restored the name to the original Inseminoid .

Original pre @-@ release advertising included a regional " mail drop " of circulars presenting screenshots of a screaming Geeson and the tagline " Warning ! An Horrific Alien Birth ! A Violent Nightmare in Blood ! Inseminoid at a Cinema Near You Soon ! " Warren , who regrets the decision to publicise the film in such a graphic manner , comments , " The problem with mail @-@ drops is that you have no way of knowing who lives in the house , or who will see it first . It could be a pregnant woman , and old lady , or even worse , a young child . So it was not such a good idea . "

Rated " X " in the UK , in the United States Inseminoid screened under the " R " certificate for its " profanity , nudity , violence , rape and gore " . In 2005 , the British Board of Film Classification revised its certification of Inseminoid , re @-@ rating the film " 15 " from " 18 " for its " strong , bloody violence " . Inseminoid became one of the first films to be released on VHS soon after its appearance in cinemas , and reached seventh position in British video sales charts in November 1981 . Renewed editions became available in 1992 and 1998 .

= = Critical reception = =

Inseminoid attracted positive critical reception on its original release . In terms of box office performance , it reached a high of fifth position in the 1981 British charts . At one point it ranked seventh at the box office in France , while in the United States it proceeded to enter the Los Angeles Times list of top ten films . American director Roger Corman congratulated Warren on the film and considered commissioning him for further productions . However , a private screening had failed to impress members of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts , who dismissed Inseminoid as " ' Commercial rubbish ! ... Not the sort of thing the Academy should be showing ... And certainly not the kind of film the British film industry should be making ! ' " .

In 1982 , Inseminoid received a minor accolade at the Italian Fantafestival ( winning the Best Special Effects prize ) and a nomination at the Fantasporto convention in Portugal ( for the Best Film award ) . Recalling how the depiction the female sex in Inseminoid displeased women 's circles , Warren states , " It seems it is quite common for pregnant women to have nightmares about giving birth to some kind of monster . Of course , all their complaints and their letters which were printed in the local papers only helped to increase the queue at the box office . "

Examining the acting in a review published in Starlog magazine , Alan Jones expressed a preference for the British members of the cast , crediting Geeson as " absolutely first @-@ rate " and criticising " the weak performances from the token Americans , Robin Clarke and Jennifer Ashley " . Praising the production values for cost @-@ effectiveness , he discerned signs of Warren 's " particular trademark " in such murder scenes as that of Barbra ( through repeated scissor @-@

stabbing ) and Holly ( through heat @-@ searing ) . He professed his opinion that Inseminoid " is not faultless by any means " , citing a predictable and often " ridiculous " plot as factors detracting from his pleasure in viewing the film . Nevertheless , he asserted that Inseminoid meets audience demands for a B film of its genre , progressing " at such a pace that you nearly almost forget that you 've seen it all before " , and declared it to be " far less routine and far more enjoyable than I had expected . "

Critical response in the United States proved to be less favourable . In a review published in Virginia in January 1983 , Edward Jones of The Free @-@ Lance Star offered praise for the " novel touch " of casting a would @-@ be @-@ mother as the principal villain , commenting , " In what has to be a new low , even for extraterrestrial @-@ horror films , all the men end up punching this pregnant woman in the stomach . What a time to have twins ! " Nevertheless , Inseminoid is discarded as " no more than a mix of everything @-@ you 've @-@ ever @-@ seen @-@ in @-@ a @-@ horror @-@ movie @-@ and @-@ didn 't @-@ particularly @-@ want @-@ to @-@ see @-@ again . " In a November 1983 edition of the Floridian newspaper Boca Raton News , Skip Sheffield branded the film " horrible " and " cheapo " , suggesting that his readers " Imagine Alien without the fantastic sets , convincing special effects and literate dialogue , and you have a picture of Horror Planet . " He added his opinion that brutal violence does not guarantee narrative suspense , punning on the name Run Run Shaw in his downbeat conclusion that " Horror Planet is a film to run , run away from ? fast . "

In 2004 , Douglas Pratt argued that Inseminoid consists of " some gooey gore shots but few other thrills " and denounced the quality of the acting and props used . He still conceded that Inseminoid " goes through the motions properly , however , so fans will probably find it worth passing the time . " The film is award one star out of five on the AllRovi website , where reviewer Cavett Binion rules that it is a " fairly standard rip @-@ off " of Alien in spite of the originality of its core premise , with a " rabid , eye @-@ popping performance " from Geeson that is " more than a bit uncomfortable to watch . " The rape sequence is seen as a " surreal and truly disgusting flashback " and the title of the film itself deemed " sleazy " .

Warren rejects the label " video nasty " , which has been applied to Inseminoid on the incorrect assumption that its violent content made it impossible to release uncut on home video formats in the UK . The film was incorrectly labelled as previously banned in 1984 when it was rereleased in its cut cinema print in 1994 by Vipco . It has long been uncut in the UK on DVD . In response to the idea that the film has attained cult status , he remarks , " if Inseminoid has become some form of cult movie , then I am very pleased and , indeed , very flattered . " On his private response to his work , he answers that " I don 't think you could ever be one hundred percent satisfied with any film you make " , and that , in the scenario of remaking Inseminoid , he would darken the lighting of certain scenes to heighten the tension and demand a longer filming schedule .

= = = Analysis = = =

Inseminoid has been criticised as a perceived imitation , " knock @-@ off " or " rip @-@ off " of the 1979 science @-@ fiction horror film Alien . Peter Wright , a film historian and lecturer at the University of Liverpool , interprets both the " atmospheric " scenes set in the underground tomb network , and the mess hall sequence preceding Rick 's madness , as potential derivations from Ridley Scott 's film : while the first recalls the setting of the remote planetoid , LV @-@ 426 , the second resonates with the " chestburster " horror scene . Wright asserts that the connection of Inseminoid to Alien could appear to be " exploitative " , while Barry Langford of the University of London views Inseminoid as representative of the dependence of British cinema on its American counterpart .

Alan Jones of Starlog magazine suggests that " any similarity between Inseminoid and Alien is totally intentional . Except here is the basic idea contained in Alien taken to its sleaziest extreme . " He interprets one such parallel in the character of Kate who , it is argued , emulates the appearance of Sigourney Weaver in the role of Ellen Ripley . However , he also cites Contamination ( 1980 ) and Scared to Death ( 1981 ) as less effective imitations of Scott . Besides Alien , Edward Jones of the

newspaper The Free Lance ? Star discerns elements of the novel Dracula ( 1897 ) , the TV series The Bionic Woman ( 1976 ? 78 ) , and the films Night of the Living Dead ( 1968 ) and The Thing ( 1982 ) in the plot of Inseminoid .

Warren denies claims of an imitation , noting the discrepancies between the production schedules : when Inseminoid entered the shooting stage , Alien , which had been filmed in closed studios , had been released months before . While the director accepts the often " uncanny " similarities between the two films , he states that Alien distributors 20th Century Fox discounted the possibility of derivation after watching the final cut of Inseminoid : " ... in fact , the head of Fox sent us a very nice letter saying how much he enjoyed the film and wished us luck with the release ... I find it flattering that anyone can compare Alien , which cost in the region of \$ 30 million , with Inseminoid which cost less than £ 1 million . We must have done something right . "

Wright interprets the transformation of Sandy from innocent female to a murderous mother @-@ to @-@ be of human @-@ alien hybrid twins as a " direct manifestation of masculine anxiety regarding female reproductive capacity " . He comments that the origin of the horror of Inseminoid is internalised as the seed of a violent alien life form , which renders Sandy " woman @-@ as @-@ other " , or " abject Other " . This opposes the transferring of " fear of woman onto the alien other " as demonstrated in the extraterrestrial villain of Alien . Inseminoid is also judged to be reminiscent of the 1977 film Demon Seed , which casts an advanced computer as the source of a rape resulting in insemination : " in both films , women are framed as ' Other ' by their sexual congress with more conventional iconic others : the machine and the alien . " Pregnancies are depicted as sources of horror , an attitude apparent in the " uterine and cervical " opening credits of Inseminoid , which are suggestive of the viewer " entering the realm of the monstrous womb ... the titling reveals a microscopic insect resident in the body of a larger organism . "

Wright argues that Warren 's inspiration of terror through a distorted representation of the uterus strikes a chord with the 1979 film The Brood , in which a woman produces deformed children through asexual reproduction . Commenting further , he examines the rape sequence itself , in which Sandy witnesses Karl injecting her with an unknown substance prior to the alien insemination , and makes a connection to dialogue from other scenes indicating that the female Xeno scientists are regularly administered intravenous injections for contraceptive purposes . The impregnation of Sandy through perverted intercourse , conflicting with the suppression of childbirth that is manifested through Karl 's use of a hypodermic and ( phallic ) needle , reveals " coherent sexism " in so far as Inseminoid " attacks the very notion of female sexual freedom , while suggesting , paradoxically , that contraception is the responsibility of women . " That Sandy reproduces at an accelerated pace and regresses into an animalistic state are factors adding to her depiction as an abject Other , or object of " male paranoia " .

During the final struggle , which pits the patriarchal social structure of the Xeno team against Sandy 's maternal element , it is not until Gary has half @-@ suffocated in the toxic atmosphere that he is murdered . Wright argues that the sequence is reassuring from a male perspective despite its graphic content , since it implies that no woman , even one with superhuman strength , possesses the power to kill a man in cold blood . A murderer of colleagues of both sexes , that Sandy dies at the hands of Mark ultimately renders her an aid to the re @-@ empowerment of the male sex , although the twin offspring are quick to avenge her . Comparing the plot of Inseminoid to Biblical scriptures , Christopher Partridge of Lancaster University turns his attention to the nature of the twins , referring to them as " essentially space Nephilim , technological demons with appetites and habits reminiscent of the mythic forebears . "

Maternal images endure as far as the epilogue , featuring the arrival of Jeff , Corin and Roy at the Xeno base . In an allusion to the human menstrual cycle , it is said that 28 days have elapsed since the communications break @-@ down . The destruction of the installation and the deaths of its personnel are attributed to an " internal disturbance of some kind " , forming " an ironic phrase which encapsulates the film 's vision of pregnancy as an irruption of Otherness from within . " Focusing on Larry Miller 's 1981 novelisation , described as " imaginative and misogynistic " , Wright refers to sequences that are absent from the film and inspire repulsion on the part of the reader at the distortion of the female form . New transformations that afflict Sandy include oozing sores ( which

Wright construes as an aberration of natal oil secretion ) and pus emanating from the nipples ( argued to mirror colostrum , or pre @-@ milk ) . Sandy accepts such unnatural metamorphoses , which culminate in the onset of labour , with fascination .

= = Cultural references = =

An American punk rock band from Long Island , New York named themselves after the film 's alternative title , Horror Planet . Their eponymous theme song contained lyrical references to horrific aspects of the plot . The song was not released as a record but was circulated on cassette demonstration tapes prior to the only official release by the band . In 1985 , Horror Planet released a professionally produced recording on an EP record with hand @-@ painted fabric sleeves . The songs from the Horror Planet record were subsequently re @-@ released in their entirety on the anthology CD compilation , Something in the Water : the Secret History of Long Island Punk , by Winged Disk Records .

A brief clip of Inseminoid is featured in the South Park episode " Helen Keller ! The Musical " ( 2000 ) , seen during character Eric Cartman 's disturbing vision while he uses sensory deprivation to penetrate the mind of Helen Keller .