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## REEL WORLD



### Lost in space

**A provocative interstellar journey into the nature of humanity**

I can't say I really liked this film, but I do admire it for its array of peculiarities, and much else. In a way, its far-flung oddness is what I liked most, but with the added proviso that, in this case, the film's liveliest moments have only a glancing relationship with likeability, in the usual sense of the term.

by  
**Juan-Carlos Selznick**



**High Life**  
Ends tonight, May 16. Starring Robert Pattinson and Juliette Binoche. Directed by Claire Denis. Pageant Theatre. Rated R.

the ship's physician and freelance "sex witch." Monte dotes on his daughter Willow, who was born on board the spaceship and serves as a kind of de facto captain among the increasingly demoralized crew.

Dr. Dibs distributes medications to the crew, actively manages the ship's sperm bank, and serves as a near-mythical sexual athlete.

Echoes of more conventional sci-fi adventures are scattered throughout *High Life*, but Denis and her co-writers take care to strew the film's low-key narrative

events in distinctly nonchronological order. The result is a kind of poetic puzzle, the parts of which viewers can reassemble and link via dialogue references and salient details that recur.

The film is richly evocative in a number of ways. The epic journey toward that black hole carries with it something like a Garden of Eden to which some of the characters occasionally retreat. Visually, Denis' film can feel a little like an inversion of Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, a journey away from the Earth and human time, and back to primal gardens and fire.

Binoche's Dr. Dibs might be taken as a wondrously radical variation, or reinvention, of sci-fi's generic mad doctors and rogue scientists. There may be a touch of the original *Alien* as well, except this time the monsters are hairy robots wielding stainless steel dildos.

It's all an exceptionally interesting mix. Even the odd fits and starts seem to contribute some wild zest to the film's crumpled, drifting narrative. It's also a mixed bag, and maybe a weirdly furnished mess, but I wouldn't mind at all seeing it again, and sorting through that strangely electric clutter some more.

And by the way, the growling electronic score, by Stuart Staples and Tindersticks, is a wonder all by itself.



Poor



Fair



Good



Very Good



Excellent