

HEAVY SOUL (2005)

Category : DVD REVIEWS (D-I)

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Directed by Oren Shai

Review by Dan Greene



Released by: N/A (self-distributed screener)

Year of release: 2005

Running time: 14 minutes

Rating: NR

Color Format: Color and Black & White

Audio / Subtitles: English

Region Code: Region 1 NTSC

Aspect ratio: 1.85:1

16:9 enhanced: No

Special features: None

Trailer Online: No



Oren Shai's startling new short film, *HEAVY SOUL*, plays like a cinematic conversation between David Lynch, Russ Meyer, and the hundreds of nameless directors-for-hire who churned out the much-maligned (and much-mythologized) educational filmstrips of the 1950s. Simultaneously an homage to—and send-up of—the aforementioned influences, *HEAVY SOUL* is an experimental narrative short with style to spare.



The life of square high school student Dakota Thompson (Sally Conway) takes a severe detour when she attends a party populated by juvenile delinquents. Somewhere amidst the sensory overload of this soiree, young Dakota ends up becoming a “blood junkie.” She’ll do anything to get a fix, from prom-night prostitution to self-mutilation, and ultimately lands herself in the care of an electroshock-happy psychiatrist.



The film’s strong performances (most notably by its haunting, beguiling lead actress) are enhanced by the incredibly moody 16mm photography and modern-retro soundtrack. Bizarre imagery, thoughtful lighting & camera setups, and creative editing tricks abound in Shai’s strange fable of tainted innocence. I say we give this guy 90 minutes and a budget and see what happens. Definitely a rising filmmaker to keep an eye on.

As of this writing, Oren Shai’s HEAVY SOUL does not have commercial distribution. More information can be found at the director’s website, www.rockingoren.com.