



UNDER THE SKIN

Autumn
Season
2014

Release: 2013

Cert (UK): 15

Language: English

Runtime: 108 mins

Director: Jonathan Glazer

Writer: Jonathan Glazer/Walter Campbell from a novel by Michael Faber

Cinematographer: Daniel Landin

Cast: Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy McWilliams, Lynsey Taylor Mackay

A loose adaptation of Michael Faber's 2000 surrealist novel set in NE Scotland, which slowly revealed the true nature of an enigmatic 'human' female protagonist and her interest in 'alien vodsels' males. Darkly satirical, the novel touched on political themes but also on personal questions of humanity, sexual identity and mercy.

Director Jonathan Glazer, with co-writer Walter Campbell spent ten years developing his script, retaining the focus on the female character, played by Scarlett Johansson, and the Scottish locations. This is a stylish cinematic thriller cum art film referencing 'The Man Who Fell to Earth', '2001, A Space Odyssey', even 'Don't Look Now'.

Jonathon Glazer's early work included commercials, notably for Guinness and Stella Artois. His first feature was the British gangster film 'Sexy Beast' (2000) starring Ray Winstone and Ben Kingsley. In 2004 he directed 'Birth', which had mixed reviews but, writing in 2010 in the Guardian, critic David Thomson included the film in his list of '10 lost works of genius.'

Glazer's method involves very long script development and intense on-set collaboration with actors given daily re-writes of key scenes. His mastery of the 21st century MTV visual style coupled with an intense focus on the face of his female protagonists shows Under the Skin to be a thematic follow up to 'Birth'.

Apart from Laura, most of the characters in the film are played by non-actors; scenes where Johansson's character picks up men were unscripted conversations on the street filmed with hidden cameras. A champion motorcycle road racer was cast as the motorcyclist; the logger is played by the man who owns the location and Adam Pearson, who play the man with neurofibromatosis, was recruited from the Charity Changing Faces, which support people with facial disfigurements.

