



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

SISTER MIDNIGHT (15)

Director: Karan Kandhari

Starring: Radhika Apte, Ashok Pathak, Chhaya Kadam

UK, 2024, 1 hour 47 minutes, Hindi + English Subtitles

Mischievous and daring, *Sister Midnight* commands attention as a debut feature for writer-director Karan Kandhari. It could be a match made in paradise — the two “village idiots” get married, proving their neighbours and ill-wishers wrong. Sure he stinks and she’s insane, but perhaps they’ll balance each other out.* A wild adventure ensues (with an appropriately eclectic soundtrack, of course), as Uma (Rahika Apte) becomes more immersed in a strange nightlife of her own design.

A comedy-horror feels entirely apt for this bizarre scenario — not only does the film straddle both genres well, it feels it could only have been thus. This also isn’t the first ‘Mumbai-based wild woman meets disaffected man’ story Kandhari has given us. His short *Bye Bye Miss Goodnight* (2005) featured a free-spirited, pregnant hitchhiker who meets a taxi driver on a mission.

Perhaps inevitably, comparisons have been made to Wes Anderson. Yes, both directors are irrefutably “quirky.” It’s hard not to recall Anderson’s India-based *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) — particularly the slightly melancholic deadpan moments when our female star has her nose bandages, which does strongly resemble the bandaged Owen Wilson. However, the comedic language, a delightful blend of both British and Indian influences, is entirely unique. Much of the praise for the film has focused on Apte, our outrageous Uma, who shines as a gifted physical comedian — by turns subtle and unabashedly big.

This fresh “*feral feminist fable*” (Time Out) is guaranteed to strike a chord as it whisks you away to stifling Mumbai.

Content warning: Graphic violence and animal abuse.

*Opinions from characters within the film. Unattributed quotes author’s opinion.

Notes compiled by Sarah Nicol (Community Engagement Coordinator)

If you like **SISTER MIDNIGHT**, you may enjoy:

MURDERING THE DEVIL Long forgotten, recently restored, Ester Krumbachová’s directorial debut is an exuberant, biting feminist satire.

SANTOSH In the rural badlands of north India, a young widow is drawn into the investigation of a murdered teenager that divides the local community.