



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

THE STIMMING POOL (12A)

Directors: The Neurocultures Collective (Sam Chown Ahern, Georgia Bradburn, Benjamin Brown, Robin Elliott-Knowles, Lucy Walker) and Steven Eastwood
UK, 2024, 1 hour 7 minutes, English

From a B-Movie film club host, to an office worker masking their autism, to a young woman taking an eye tracking test, to a picture book story about a dog superhero, *The Stimming Pool* offers a trail of breadcrumbs, leading us to better understand the diversity of neurodivergent experience.

The film has its origins in the *Autism through Cinema* project led by Queen Mary University of London, which looked at representations of neurodiversity on screen. Artist filmmaker and Professor of Film Practice Steven Eastwood ran a series of workshops which led to the creation of the Neurocultures Collective, consisting of Sam Chown Ahern, Georgia Bradburn, Benjamin Brown, Robin Elliott-Knowles, and Lucy Walker. Rather than being another one of the many films about autism, *The Stimming Pool* places neurodivergent artists at the forefront, defining their own representation through a production process which prioritised the autonomy and ambitions of the largely neurodiverse crew.

This experimental hybrid documentary uses the concept of the autistic camera to focus on first hand experiences and perspectives. The film highlights the sensory overwhelm of a busy pub or a bustling office, using repetitive cycles of movement to reflect the comfort to be found in 'stimming' (using repetitive behaviours or motions to self-soothe or cope with discomfort and anxiety). Drawing on Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul's concept of social (sur)realism, *The Stimming Pool* places the fantastical alongside the every day, revealing the power of the autistic imagination as well as the struggles many neurodivergent people share.

The film has proven to be a real highlight of the festival circuit, screening at CPH:DOX, BFI London Film Festival and Folkestone Documentary Festival.

Preview courtesy of Indox

Notes compiled by Emily Mason (Radix Film Club)



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SISTER MIDNIGHT A surreal, punkish and distinctive comedy, tinged with offbeat horror, stylistically fresh, inventive and magical.