

A Ghost Story [12] 2017|USA|92 min

UK release date	11th August 2017
Director	David Lowery
Screenplay	David Lowery
Cinematographer	Andrew Droz Palermo
Cast	Casey Affleck (C); Rooney Mara (M); Will Oldham (Prognosticator); Kenneisha Thompson (Doctor); Rob Zabrecky (Pioneer Man); Sonia Acevedo (Maria)

David Lowery's *A Ghost Story* is haunted more by sadness than fear, and a kind of black humour, drier than asbestos dust. It invites you to make what you will of its central image – a ghost wearing a sheet with eye-holes like a kid's Halloween getup, or a big ungainly emoji. Lowery's film has the same deadpan, unreadable quality as that white-masked face. But the shroud is worn as elegantly as the film's own ambition and audacious simplicity.

It is a story of sundered love. But it is also a piercingly strange meditation on loss and grieving and what it means to imagine the people we love one day going on without us, and to imagine how the world is and was beyond our own fragile, temporary lives. Does such an act of imagination entail ghostlike alienation and trauma?

The movie alludes to and is loosely inspired by Virginia Woolf's 1921 story *A Haunted House*. Mara and Affleck play a couple living in a modest single-storey home. He is a musician and composer and she doesn't appear to work. He is tender and loving but also sometimes abstracted and moody, often wrapped up in his music. She is keen to move, but he has an attachment to this rickety old place, a reluctance to leave it, for reasons that he can't articulate. But on moving day there is a catastrophe: he is killed in a car crash and his spirit lives on, in the sheet that covered him in the morgue, and he is now aware of other ghosts, too.

As loyal and mute as an unseen dog, this ghost-man hangs around Mara wearing his deadly serious joke-store outfit, while she approaches and then

pulls back from the edge of lonely despair. She finally leaves the house after repainting it as a kind of therapy or exorcism, and writes a secret message on a piece of paper, sliding it into a crack in the doorframe and painting over it. And the ghost is left behind, unable to pick out the paper because his fingernails are beneath the sheet and condemned to roam the house, to watch over all its subsequent tenants, and then to haunt the property that will one day be built on its demolished remains, and even to haunt what was there before, the land staked out by midwest pioneers – a particularly brilliant and disturbing episode.

There is a kind of sentimental romance in the ghost's silent stoicism and determination to carry on. The awful inevitability of death is complicated by the thought that you might have to survive, as a ghost, for reasons as arbitrary and meaningless as the cause of your death. Which is scarier still.

After: **Peter Bradshaw**, The Guardian, 10 Aug 2017

Coming Soon....

Wind River (15) – Monday 30th April

The Magic Flute (U) – Monday 7th May

For more information about all our films and more, go to our website

www.buxtonfilm.org.uk

Buxton Film is a Registered Charity no. 1165040



admin@buxtonfilm.org.uk



@buxtonfilm



BuxtonFilm