

## CINEMA

## Cult indie horror flick gets special screening

Indie horror hit *It Follows* will get a one-off screening thanks to the passion and persistence of a pair of local film buffs. **BY DYLAN TAN**

**I**T might be a nightmare putting things together but when *It Follows* finally hits the big screen next week, it would also be a dream come true for SCUM (Society for Cult and Underground Movies) Cinema, an alternative film society founded by Herman Ho and Anthony Chiam.

The cult horror flick – which has created a huge buzz on the Internet since its release last year – will be SCUM's highest profile release to date as it has been screening mainly cult classics from the 1970s, '80s and '90s since its inception 18 months ago.

**"I've sent countless proposals but nobody ever got back until now because our market is too small. So this is a very encouraging sign for us."**

**Anthony Chiam, co-founder of Society for Cult and Underground Movies**

Directed by acclaimed indie filmmaker David Robert Mitchell, the plot of *It Follows* revolves around a young teenage girl (played by charismatic newcomer Maika Monroe) who is pursued by a bogeyman after having sex with her new boyfriend.

The curse gets passed on whenever a victim gets intimate with another person. Critics and netizens have set the Internet abuzz debating on the film's symbolism ever since its re-

lease. Some argue that beneath the horror theme, *It Follows* makes a fascinating social commentary about promiscuity among youths in the age of Aids.

The multi-layered narrative intrigued Chiam enough to pursue its distributor for rights to screen it here. But after being rejected by other producers for the last 18 months, he was not keeping his hopes up and was genuinely surprised when he got a reply.

"I've sent countless proposals but nobody ever got back until now because our market is too small," he reveals, "So this is a very encouraging sign for us."

SCUM will also be charging for tickets for the first time and the move is an inevitable – though not permanent – one as the founders have been paying for everything out of their own pockets since day one.

"Some films cost more than others and we are still bleeding – a lot of people have told us we're crazy – but we're doing this out of sheer passion," Chiam explains, "Things like venue rental and getting the copy-right to screen a film can run into thousands of dollars so sometimes, we don't really have a choice."

He adds that even if *It Follows* sells out all 230 tickets, SCUM will only barely break even. It typically tries to defray some of its overheads from donations made by those who show up and from the sales of fan art merchan-



Charismatic newcomer Maika Monroe (left) stars in acclaimed indie filmmaker David Robert Mitchell's cult horror flick which has created a huge buzz on the Internet since its release last year in the US.

PHOTO: SCUM

dise at the screenings. "What we do is not about making money, it's about covering cost and we know we cannot just sit back and expect people to donate – we have to explain to them that we want this to be a self-sustaining thing and everything we collect will go on to fund the next screening," Chiam says.

The signs have also been positive as SCUM generally attracts an 80 per

cent turnout at their events. Its last screening of Jodorowsky's *Dune*, a documentary about the greatest sci-fi epic never made, saw a record attendance of about 170.

Donations have also started to pour in a little more generously as its followers start to show more appreciation for the work that SCUM is doing for cinephiles and the contribution they have made to the movie-going

scene in Singapore. "We get a lot of positive feedback on our Facebook page telling us our programming is spot-on etc; that sort of encouragement goes a long way," says Chiam, a life-long film addict.

He maintains SCUM's objective will always be to give the public a chance to watch films that have never been shown here before; as well as to provide them an alternative yet fun

movie-going experience. Never mind even if it means the founders will still have to dip into their own coffers. "When you're doing something as niche as this, you shouldn't expect to be a millionaire!" jests Chiam.

***It Follows* screens at The Projector on July 17 at 9.30pm. Tickets at S\$13 available from <http://itfollows.peatix.com>. For more info, check <http://scumcinema.com>**