

Review: space opera 'Prometheus' is overlong, overblown and overpriced



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Prometheus

Rating:

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Ridley Scott's return to the franchise that made him a household name is a cosmic disappointment. **"Prometheus,"** a movie the makers stubbornly refuse to call a **prequel** to "Alien," is in fact an obvious prequel to "Alien." This is apparently something like refusing to call a remake a remake. Scott's "Alien" was a taut, scary, science fiction horror movie that was stoically uncompromising and focused as hell.

"Prometheus" is long, slow and suffers from terminal identity crisis.

To be fair, the Oscar-winning director is one of the finest craftsmen in modern cinema, and "Prometheus" is a spectacularly handsome production. But what it makes up for in dazzling visuals it more than lacks in cohesive narrative. After a thoroughly unnecessary prologue (that the movie never actually comes back to or explains), "Prometheus" takes us to Scotland in the late 21st century, where scientists **Noomi Rapace** ("The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo," "The Girl Who Played With Fire," "The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest") and Logan Marshall-Green have just found the latest in a series of related cave paintings that make it

absolutely clear that human evolution was influenced by advanced beings from another world.

Seriously? This is your idea of science fiction creativity? More than forty years after “2001: A Space Odyssey” and we’re still retreading freaking “Chariots of the Gods?” But in fact Kubrick’s masterpiece “2001” casts a long shadow over this high-tech but unimaginative retread. In any event, this gets our characters into deep space where they’re getting woken up from hypersleep, on a mission financed by one of those mysterious withered billionaires who want to live forever.

There are attempts at high-falutin’ philosophical dialogue of the “where-did-we-come-from” and “is-there-a-God” variety, but the script, by Damon Lindelof and Jon Spaihts isn’t up to the challenge and doesn’t answer the questions. Once on the alien world we see a great big, familiar-looking, horseshoe-shaped alien spaceship but dear God don’t call this a prequel to “Alien.” The movie rapidly deteriorates into “Forbidden Planet” with fake, 3D alien tentacles liberally slathered with K-Y. They’ll make you jump if you’ve ponied up the extra money for 3D, but trust me. you’ve seen this sort of thing before. A scene involving aborting an alien fetus is gory, unnerving and not for the fainthearted.

The fabulous Noomi Rapace plays the closest thing to a likeable character in a stable of underdeveloped clichés. Charlize Theron plays the corporate ice queen. Idris Elba plays the brave captain. **Michael Fassbender** plays the android who sounds suspiciously like the HAL 9000 from “2001: A Space Odyssey.” Guy Pearce, who is a young actor, appears only in old age makeup and I have no idea why.

Admittedly a visually spectacular achievement, “Prometheus” is overlong, overblown and thoroughly unimaginative. Ridley Scott’s return to science fiction is one of the most resounding disappointments of the year to date. The airlock is conveniently left ajar for a non-sequel to the non-prequel.