

[Home](#) » [From Here to There: Lists](#) » Film List: Soda_Jerk

[FROM HERE TO THERE: LISTS](#) / [VISUAL ART](#)

Film List: Soda_Jerk

by [Conflict of Interest](#) | Published [September 16, 2018](#)



Formed in Sydney in 2002, [Soda_Jerk](#) is a two-person art collective who work at the intersection of documentary and speculative fiction. They are fundamentally interested in the politics of images: how they circulate, whom they benefit, and how they can be undone. Their sample-based practice takes the form of films, video installations, cut-up texts and lecture performances. Based in New York since 2012, they have exhibited in museums, galleries, cinemas and torrent sites.

Their new film *TERROR NULLIUS* is a political revenge fable which offers an un-writing of Australian national mythology. This experimental sample-based film works entirely within and against the official archive to achieve a queering and othering of Australian cinema. Part political satire, eco-horror and road movie, *TERROR NULLIUS* is a world in which minorities and animals conspire, and not-so-nice white guys finish last. Where idyllic beaches host race-riots, governments poll love-rights, and the perils of hypermasculinity are overshadowed only by the enduring horror of Australia's colonizing myth of terra nullius.

Ahead of the screening of our new film *TERROR NULLIUS* at the [Austin Film Society on September 21](#), we've compiled a list of some Australian films that we've sampled within our own. With a complete sample list of over 200 sources in *TERROR NULLIUS*, the inventory below is a mere drop in the Pacific Ocean but a good place to start for anyone wanting a beginner's schooling in the "foreign films" of Australia.



***Mystery Road* (2013)**

Ivan Sen's staggering Australian Western focuses on the investigation of a murdered Indigenous girl in an outback town full of racist cops and feral dogs. But the real crime scene under interrogation goes way beyond, concerning the socio-political conditions that have been shaped by the horrific and unacknowledged legacy of colonial history. (See also: Warwick Thornton's recent masterwork *Sweet Country*).



***The Babadook* (2014)**

An Australian horror movie that became a queer classic after it was accidentally categorized by Netflix in the LGBTQ+ section. Restyled with pink flamingo glasses, *The Babadook's* dapper monster has been riding memes and Pride parade floats ever since.



***Puberty Blues* (1981)**

The bible of Australian bogan beach culture. A cracker of a feminist coming-of-age tale. Two teens navigate a world of casual misogyny, chicko rolls and awkward sex with surfers in the back of Combi vans. A good place to get schooled in the lubricating properties of Vaseline and signature Aussie vernacular like “strewth,” “deadset,” “wanna root?,” “rack off ya moll!” and “you’re dropped!”



***Long Weekend* (1978)**

Both an Ozploitation classic and one of the very first films of the eco-horror genre. A white couple go camping and display a complete disregard for the natural environment and, in turn, are savaged by birds, ants, trees, a possum and an undead dugong. As the weekend unwinds, so does the marriage, leading the woman to have a very Aussie tantrum about an ant-infested frozen chook.



***Shame* (1988)**

This feminist revenge film from the late 80s seems to be finally getting its dues. A fierce female barrister rides her motorcycle into a rural Australian town and seeks retribution for the rampant culture of sexual violence and crooked cops. It's heartbreakingly brutal, and still as horrifically relevant today as it was three decades ago.



***Pauline Hanson: Please Explain!* (2016)**

A deft political documentary that also doubles as an Australian horror movie. Pauline Hanson is one of the most notorious figures of right-wing politics. She went from owning a fish+chip shop straight into politics, then into jail, then onto reality TV, then back into Parliament House. She recently swapped out her 1996 warning that Australia would be “swamped by Asians” with the revamped slogan “swamped by Muslims.”



***The Man from Snowy River** (1982)*

Heroic story of a man on a horse who must tame some wild stallions to earn back his rightful plot of property. Conspicuously absent is any hint that a land rights dispute in Australia might extend beyond a squabble between two white farmers. Please also enjoy the frequent meaningful cuts between shots of the wild mare and the man's wild-eyed love interest. Both apparently need taming.



***The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert** (1994)*

A flawed but pretty fabulous classic of Australian queer cinema. Three men in frocks on a rock. As their tour bus stalls in the middle of the desert, Bernadette surveys the desolate landscape and deadpans, "Oh Felicia where the fuck are we?" And with that, she pretty much sums up our furious feels about where Australian politics have got to.



Sweetie (1989)

What is more Australian than shamelessly taking credit for New Zealand talent? With this in mind we're including the work of Kiwi director and cinema giant Jane Campion. Of her many ferocious female characters, closest to our collective heart is Sweetie.



Wake in Fright (1971)

Many Australians will tell you that this is the most significant Australian film ever made. Which is weird since it's actually helmed by a Bulgarian-Canadian filmmaker. But these origins aside, *Wake in Fright* is every bit as visionary as the hype suggests. This Australian Gothic masterwork drills into the seething desperation and isolation that lies within the aggressive hospitality of an outback town.



***Ten Canoes* (2006)**

"Once upon a time, in a land far, far away... hahahahahaha! No, not like that, I'm only joking." So begins David Gulpilil's narration of *Ten Canoes*, a work that teases and upends any expectations you might have of what the first movie filmed almost entirely in Australian Indigenous languages might be like. It's beautiful, lyrical and bawdy.



***Lucky Miles* (2007)**

After their boat sinks on the coastline of Western Australia, a bunch of Iraqi and Cambodian refugees wash ashore and venture inland into the desolate outback. Out of this utterly bleak situation, director Michael James Rowland squeezes a surprising amount of comedy. But the true gravity of the film comes from the fact that the only thing more unforgiving than the Australian landscape is the inhumane destiny that awaits the refugees if they are indeed "rescued" by Immigration and Border Protection.



***Crocodile Dundee* (1986)**

Mick “Crocodile” Dundee was rapturously embraced by the American mainstream of the 1980s for his uncouth roguish charm. Yet fast forward 40 years, and all that casual misogyny, transphobia and racism seems altogether appalling. Seems someone forgot to tell Tourism Australia though, as they just sunk 36 million dollars into a Dundee Super Bowl ad that attempts to rekindle America’s fondness for Australia’s most famous bigot.



***Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975)**

The towering behemoth of the Australian New Wave. Ever since its release in 1975, Australians have lost their shit over this story of four white schoolgirls who mysteriously disappear while on a picnic near a rock. Meanwhile, a vanishing act that has received far less attention is the one performed by British colonialists in 1770 when they willfully disappeared an entire nation of peoples by declaring Australia “terra nullius” (nobody’s land).



***Skippy the Bush Kangaroo* (1967–70)**

Whether it's catching animal traffickers and diamond thieves or helping lost school teachers find their way home, Skippy the Bush Kangaroo never fails to save the day. Communicating in a series of tsk tsk tsk noises that only his best friend Sonny can understand, Skippy is never short of wisdom and wisecracks.



***Wolf Creek* (2005)**

Australian horror flicks don't come more scary-as-shit than *Wolf Creek*. Based on two different true stories of Australian "backpacker killers" Ivan Milat and Bradley John Murdoch, the real genius of this film is the way it deftly merges these real life personas with the fictional character of the quintessential bushman Mick Dundee. It'll give you a whole new gruesome perspective on Dundee's famous quip "that's not a knife, this is a knife."



***Walkabout* (1971)**

There is so much we could say about the fact that lost and vanished white children are one of the most pervasive tropes of Australian literature and cinema. But what's fresh about *Walkabout* is that instead of falling victim to a menacing wilderness, the two lost kids are rescued and nurtured by an Indigenous Australian boy. David Gulpilil's inspired performance and Nicolas Roeg's experimental aesthetics have established this as a cornerstone of the Australian New Wave.



***Mad Max 1,2&4* (1979–2015)**

Australia's madly iconic and influential cinema series. The outback is recast as a barren wasteland of highway skirmishes, natural resource wars, and toxic masculinities. The highly publicized misogynistic rants and racist slurs of actor Mel Gibson only serves to sharpen the unhinged morality of the character of Max. Which goes some way to explaining why the female-driven story of the *Fury Road* installment feels like a small dose of retribution.

TERROR NULLIUS will screen at [Texas State University on Tuesday, September 18 at 5pm](#) and at [Austin Film Society on Friday, September 21 at 8pm](#).

Share:



Related