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## Tideland washes strange things ashore

### Tideland

Directed By Terry Gilliam  
Starring Jeff Bridges, Jodelle Ferland  
and Jennifer Tilly  
Runs 26-29 January  
Metro Cinema

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Heralded as a mix between *Alice in Wonderland* and *Psycho*, Terry Gilliam's *Tideland* will leave audiences in a state of shock and confusion. This film doesn't shy away from any topic; instead, it deals with everything from a child's dream world to heroin abuse to human taxidermy.

The original script for the film was derived from the novel of the same title written by New Mexican author Mitch Cullin. The story details the life of a young girl named Jeliza-Rose (Jodelle Ferland) who's brought up in a less than orthodox household. The film opens with a scene where young Jeliza is cooking up a batch of heroin for her junkie parents. She fills the syringes, tightens the tourniquets and looks after her parents while they're off on their "vacations."

Although the acting throughout the film is fairly decent, there are a few moments where it edges upon being slightly overdramatic. During the early stages of the movie, Jeliza's mother dies from a heroin overdose in a horribly contrived and terribly acted death scene, spurring her doped-up father to pack up their belongings, hop aboard a Greyhound bus and flee for the prairies. They're let off, seemingly in the middle of nowhere, and we learn that the duo has come to inhabit a long-abandoned farmhouse, which once belonged to Jeliza's grandmother.

Immediately upon arrival, Jeliza's father slips into a heroin induced haze, from which he does not recover. Left to her own devices, the young girl begins to explore her newfound landscape and discovers that even though her new home is remotely located, some strange neighbours can



be found within walking distance. These neighbours consists of a mentally handicapped fellow clad in a wetsuit, speedo and snorkelling mask as well as his sister who is constantly dressed in a beekeeper's suit due to her overwhelming phobia of bees. The remainder of the movie details young Jeliza's interactions with this peculiar pair as she experiences many odd events including human embalming, sexual advances and the effects of dynamite on a train.

**For any prospective viewers, let me say outright that this movie is straight-up weird.**

The film constantly switches between reality and fantasy, as the inner workings of a young child's dream world are one of the main driving forces behind the production. Although the fantasy scenes are quite surreal, they seem somewhat less bizarre when compared to the peculiar real world in which Jeliza lives. Even though many of the scenes in the film are quite outlandish, they allow the director to use some very clever camera shots that may not have been possible while filming a

more conventional movie.

Young Jeliza-Rose's character is also not entirely normal. The child has no toys, save for four Barbie doll heads (that's right, heads only) with whom she holds lengthy conversations and whom she considers to be her friends. Despite the strange scripting for this character, ten-year-old actress Jodelle Ferland does a fabulous job of playing her odd role. Her southern accent—although sometimes annoying—is flawless, and she accurately portrays the emotions and behaviors of a typical preteen.

For any prospective viewers, let me say outright that this movie is straight-up weird. Some scenes are so peculiar I couldn't believe what I was seeing and others were just outright disturbing. Going into this film, you should know that you aren't going to get a flowery story about a young girl who perseveres despite the shortcomings of her parents. If you enjoy the occasional movie that is a little bit off the wall, than by all means you should definitely check out *Tideland*; just go in with an open mind. If you are more of a traditionalist, I would recommend staying far, far away from this film. The jacket of the novel *Tideland* is adorned with a quotation which reads, "Fucking brilliant," but I would suggest the film be adorned with the quote, "Fucking strange."

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