



39th SEASON

ENGLISH FILM CLUB 2018/19

Chiasso, Cinema EXCELSIOR

18.15

Friday, 29th March 2019

The Circle

2017

110 minutes

Directed by **James Ponsoldt**

Starring: Tom Hanks, Emma Watson, John Boyega

Watson stars as Mae, a bored twentysomething living at home, stuck in a job that fails to engage her and uninterested in progressing a flirtatious rapport with childhood friend Mercer (Boyhood's Ellar Coltrane). A surprise call from friend Annie (Karen Gillan) results in an interview to join her at the powerful internet company *The Circle*. She acs it and finds her life immediately transformed, working within an innovative corporation that aims to further blur the lines between our private and public lives. Its charismatic co-founder Eamon (Tom Hanks) soon takes a shine to Mae and her profile within *The Circle* becomes stratospheric but with the help of a mysterious colleague (John Boyega), she starts to worry about the damaging implications.

The techno-thriller is a sub-genre that's been placed on the back burner in recent years, film-makers becoming gradually aware that a) focusing a film on technological innovation will make it feel like a relic all too fast and b) watching someone type is really, really dull. So while it's easy to imagine *The Circle* seeming dusty within years, it does start as a rather convincing snapshot of the digital age we're now surfing. Director James Ponsoldt, who also wrote the screenplay with Eggers, injects the film with some smart touches (a dark audience lit with cellphones, colleagues using instant messaging to converse despite sitting next to each other) and, similar to a Black Mirror episode, it's all too easy to see how the company's more extreme ideas could actually materialize.

(Abridged from The Guardian, 27 April 2017, by Benjamin Lee)

Critics' comments:

- *A film that needs to be seen and debated, privacy is something necessary or as it already happens at the present moment it is something that needs to or can be abolished. The film navigates complex seas and is stimulating to reflect on the current information age. (Marcello Alvin, 26 June 2017)*

- *The ending definitely makes you think, however it felt rushed, and unfinished. There was definitely a possibility to have a different ending that would give the audience a more satisfying conclusion to this story. (Brice Kerlin, 21 July 2017)*

- *The production values are good, it's a fairly slick looking movie, performances are pretty good, Watson, Hanks and Gillen are all pretty good. It's somewhat forgettable, but it's certainly a film that makes you wonder if the way our society is going will lead to privacy being lost, and invasion getting out of hand. (Paul Evans, 11 June 2018)*