

Short Films

Emerald Dream short film

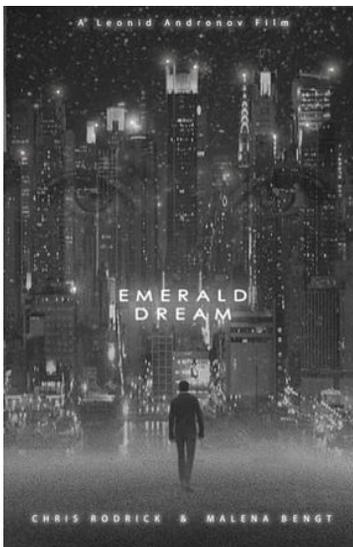
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Directed by Leonid Andronov

Starring Chris Roderick, Malena Bengt, Jeffrey S. Fellin

[Short Film Review](#) by Amy Cornforth

In 1962, **Chris Marker** made *La Jetee*, a 28 minute experimental love story in a dystopian future, which later went on to inspire **Terry Gilliam's 12 Monkeys**. The unique thing about this film is that it is almost entirely made up of still images rather than motion - which perfectly enhances the film's underlying theme of memory - because memories are like snapshots. **Emerald Dreams** is blatantly a homage to this film, using still images to form a narrative in a futuristic setting - and director **Leonid Andronov** has even dedicated the film to the late Chris Marker. This time, the film uses still images to capture the fragmented reality of the dreamworld - and each shot is so visually stunning, that they would make a wonderful picture book.



The film is a love story set in the future, after the New Great Depression. A young man, Gary Jibbons (**Chris Rodrick**), works for a company called Dream Adventures Inc. Basically, they take dreams and sell them, so other people can experience the dreams - almost like the next stage of cinema. He meets a girl named Valerie (**Malena Bengt**), who is capable of dreaming a high number of 'Emeralds' - the most valuable dreams. She signs a contract with the company, and she and Gary begin to fall in love. But they discover the company is far more sinister than it appears. Gary and Valerie must break away from the company if they are to have any hope.

Every aspect of **Emerald Dream** is dedicated to making the film as dream-like as possible. The cinematography is a particularly striking aspect of the movie, partly because of the novelty of a narrative formed by still images. Technology has come a long way since 1960, as the images are of a higher quality, and the camera often sweeps across the images so the film flows smoothly rather than remaining static. Also the pictures primarily have a shallow depth of field, blurring the background and sometimes even the edges of the image, and the combination of this and highlighting the actors with bright lights effectively gives the impression this reality is taking place in a dreamworld - and it's really beautiful to look at.

This also isolates and also draws attention to the actors - who have the difficult task of conveying character through only the subtlest facial expressions, without the additions of speech and physicality. Although all the actors do this beautifully - **Jeffrey S. Fellin**, who doesn't have as much screen time, does a particularly good job as playing the sinister Lawrence Gelding, just through the intensity of his expressions. Equally, Rodrick successfully conveys his love for Valerie and his determination to save her through his pained expressions and subtlest hint of anxiety in his stare. And **Burt Culver** is the voice of Gary - and he narrates the film in a relaxing monotone voice, which could easily send you off to the dreamworld.

All of these aspects combined have made for a very compelling and visual short. I imagine Chris Marker would be proud that his work has inspired such art.

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