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Films you can't miss: The Souvenir—Part II

BY READERS DIGEST
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Director Joanna Hog returns with a potent follow up to her moody 2019 drama, *The Souvenir*

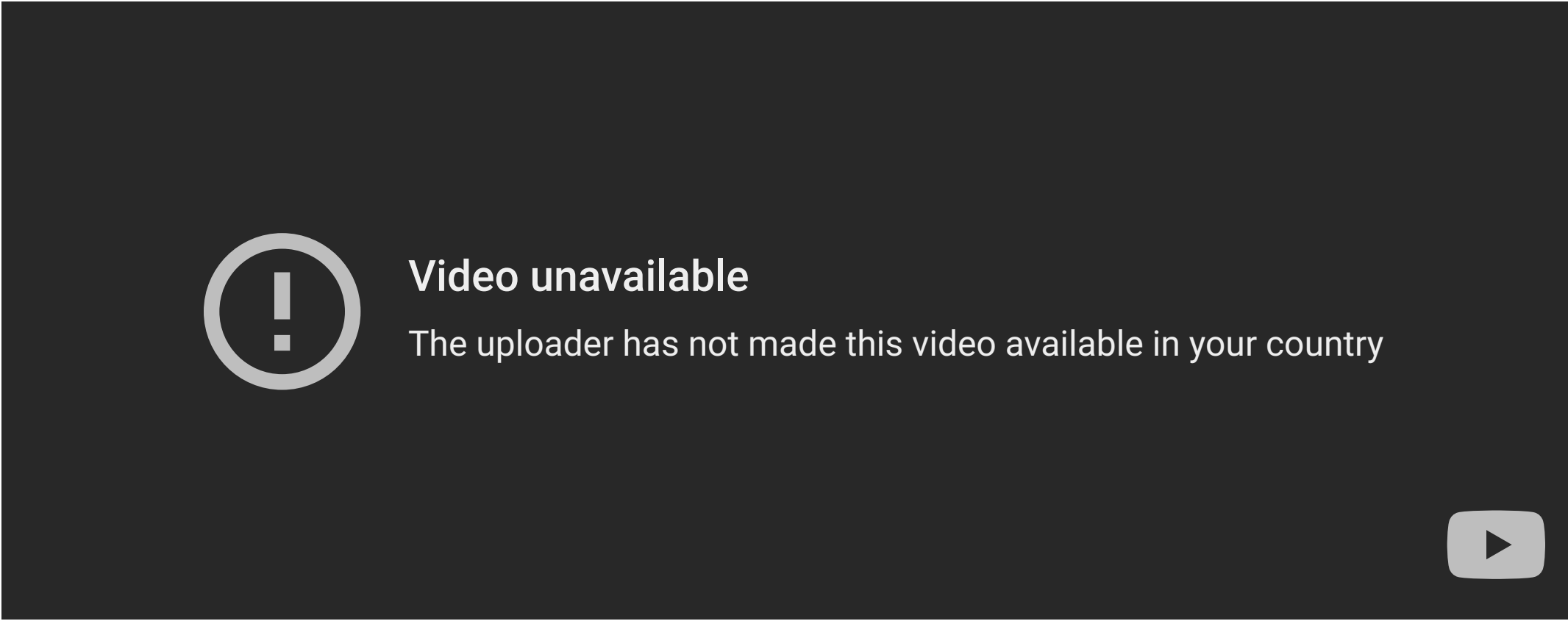
Two years after the release of the critically acclaimed arthouse drama [The Souvenir](#), director Joanna Hog returns with the equally yearning if not more lacerating follow up. Let us refresh your memory: in *Part I*, we watched the slow disintegration of a toxic relationship between a young film student, Julie (the moodily dreamy Honor Swinton Byrne), and her manipulative drug addict boyfriend, Anthony (the ever-charming Tom Burke).

Contemplative and enigmatic in a quietly depressing sort of way, the film culminated in Anthony's death from a heroin overdose in a public toilet. [The Souvenir Part II](#) finds Julie recuperating from her loss and turning her final film school project into a memorial for her late troubled partner.

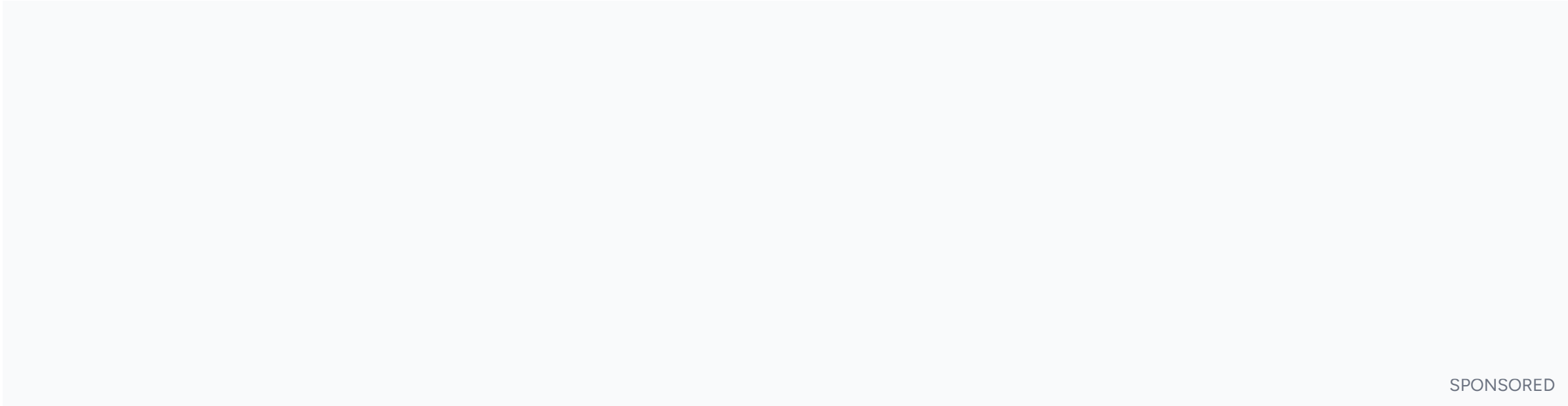
"Includes one of the greatest final scenes I've seen in recent years"

As spellbinding and poetic as its predecessor, the film dives even deeper into nightmarishly surreal art sequences reminiscent of Powell and Pressburger's [The Red Shoes](#). As she works through her trauma and searches for her own voice as a filmmaker, Julie takes on the role of passive observer: detached from the speeding world around her and emotionally numb, she just lets the pain wash over her as she takes pictures and blankly stares into space.

[The Souvenir Part II](#) is beautifully slow and elegiac, adorned with stretched out sequences of mesmerising nothingness, like some of Tarkovsky's most affecting moments—yet there's something uncomfortably miasmic and stagnant about it, now that it's devoid of Anthony's exhilarating presence. Nevertheless, it's an engrossing piece of cinema which includes one of the greatest final scenes I've seen in recent years.



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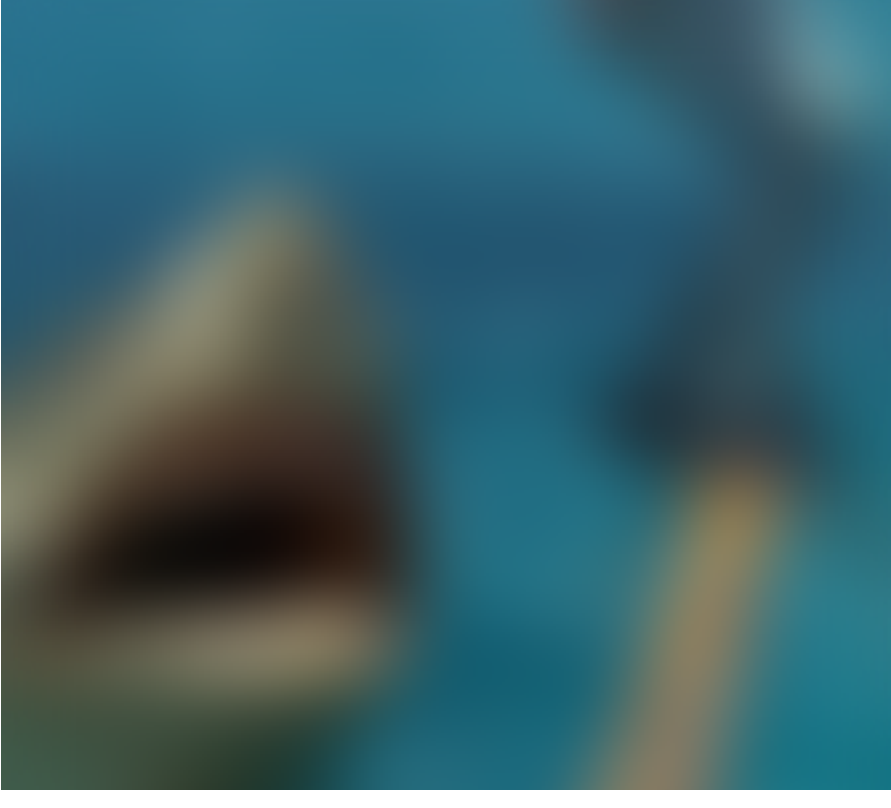
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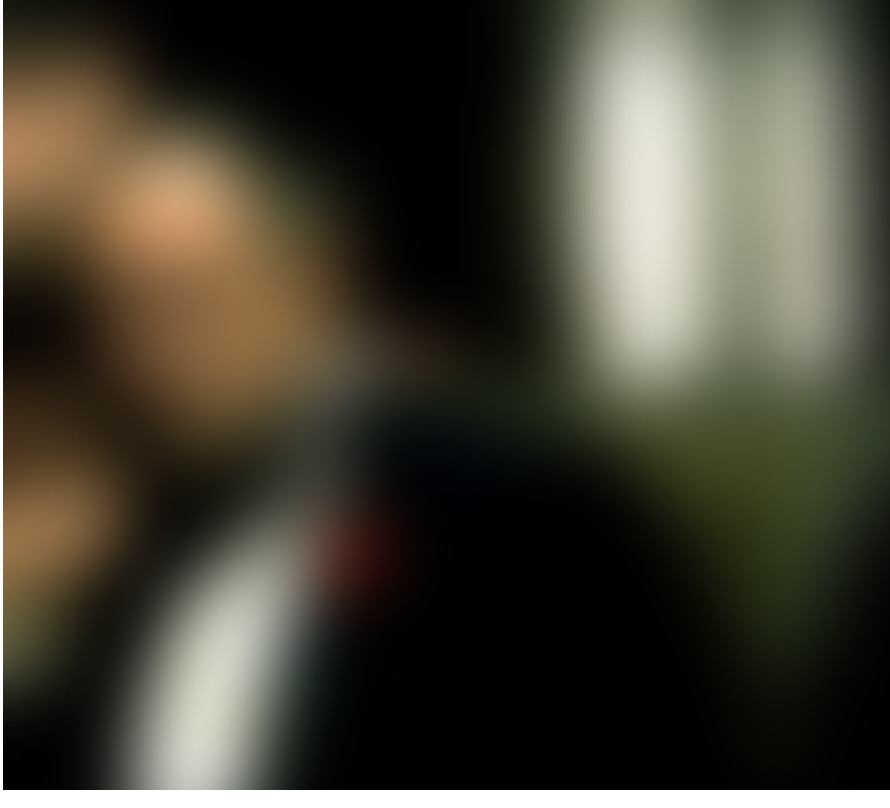
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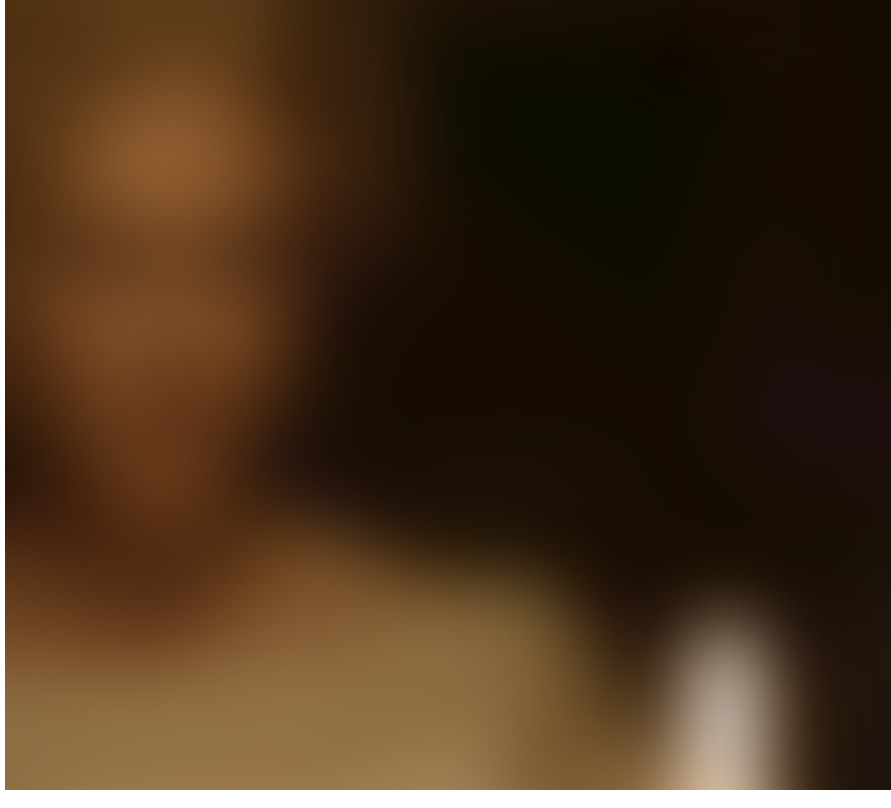
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