

American Horror Story: 1984 Review A Disappointing Edition to the Idiosyncratic Series

BY MARYKATE FENSTERMAKER

AMERICAN HORROR STORY IS AN anthology horror TV series. The show, currently 9 seasons long, contains a separate plot line in each sequence, but has recurring actors such as Sarah Paulson, Evan Peters, and Lily Rabe. AHS season 9, titled 1984, aired on FX Networks about three months ago. The story follows five characters who become summer camp counselors at Camp Redwood, the spot of an infamous massacre in 1970, just fourteen years earlier. 1984 breaks away from the typical AHS patterns by following an 80's slasher movie theme, but the season has little in common with the rest of the series. There is a substantial amount of time leaps, flashbacks, and foreshadowing which challenge the event sequencing. 1984 feels very inconsistent and fails to impress viewers with the big twist, something *American Horror Story* is known for. Overall, 1984 lacks in depth.

First off, AHS veterans; Sarah Paulson, Jessica Lange, Evan Peters, and Frances Conroy are all missing from 1984. Although they play different roles throughout the series, the recurring actors are a big part of what viewers enjoy about the show. The absence of these icons, especially following the amazing character crossovers in season 8, just threw 1984 out of sync. Speaking of season 8: *Apocalypse*, the writers did an incredible job pursuing previously loose ends of the earlier seasons while introducing new elements. Originally, it followed the apocalypse, caused by the Anti-Christ in season 1: *Murder House* and ended up resurging the witches from the third season. While following the main plot, several subplots were also inserted. After nine seasons of *American Horror Story*, viewers have become conditioned to the freakiness and twists AHS offers. Every character has an intricate back story, and each season has an overarching theme aligned with the rest of the series. 1984 feels too comfortable as it was an 80's slasher, and that's it.

Among the gory deaths and cliché friend groups, like 80's slashers, 1984 focuses on good vs evil and redemption. The characters in 1984 were summed up to their either good or bad backstory, which was later used to justify their life or death. After the first few episodes, a well-liked character, Ray, admits to accidentally killing someone after a hazing went wrong. In a short amount of time, his character totally switches gears and leaves multiple people behind to save himself. Within seconds of escaping, he gets his head sliced off by Mr. Jingles, and I will admit, I felt he deserved it. We also have Trevor, a sleazy camp staffer who saves multiple people and lives happily ever after as a ghost. Even though the characters have a unique backstory, these were never pursued beyond flashbacks. We do not learn enough about the characters to know why their personalities drift so far away from expectations, other than inconsistency within the season. Emma Roberts, an AHS recurring star who plays Brooke Thomson in 1984, is set up to be the "final girl" from the very beginning. We know little about her, and we become neutral on whether she should survive or not. There is not much of a story to Brooke other than her cliché ending monologue, which was a disappointing finish.

Despite the lack of character depth, 1984 was a fun season that indulged on pop-culture references. Although a big twist is never revealed, a few fan theories suggest an even crazier plot involving time travel, surveillance, or video game simulation (which would explain why characters stray so far away from their usual temperament). The year 1984 has a smaller impact on the story than suggested by the title. The setting, Camp Redwood, has more of an influence on the events. However, some people suggest George Orwell's 1984 may have something to do with the story. Overall, AHS's 1984 was not as good as we were expecting. Creator, Ryan Murphy, has already given out clues to what season 10 will bring to the AHS universe. Hopefully, it will be a step up, otherwise the authentic anthology series could come to a bitter end.

World Art Gallery Opening

BY ERIKA SOUKUP

A NEW GALLERY SHOW IS now open at Concordia from November 19 until December 16. The show is from the Concordia Collections and is based on World Art. The pieces in the gallery have a large range, including Chinese paintings, Japanese Prints, art from New Guinea and West Africa, and Western Art. The show itself has a wonderfully diverse focus and on every wall there are new things to observe and learn.

Keith Williams, professor in the Art and Design Department was the one who set up the gallery for this show and chose which pieces to highlight. He says, "What I chose to highlight is world art so it's in conjunction with the world art course I'm teaching. It's meant to be an educational collection as opposed to a collection that accrues financial support." Beside every art piece there is information concerning the piece such as the author, date, and materials, and for every section there are a couple paragraphs that speak about the culture and art style as a whole. "It shouldn't be a completely foreign experience. I've given viewers a bit of a read in the layout to assist in understanding," Williams says.

While looking through the collection, you can see the thought and beauty behind each piece. Chiwara masks from the Bamana are wildly popular in the United States because they're such spectacular and abstract sculptures. There's a large hanging banner from a Korean Christian artist, all of it using typography created by the text of the New Testament in the Bible.. Another piece present is a very famous Ukiyo-e image: The Hollow of the Deep Sea Wave off Kanagawa. The department has both the original and a reproduction hanging side by side so the audience can see the direct differences.

Not only should this exhibit be an educational experience for students, but it should also speak to the larger issues at present. Williams says, "Concordia's the most diverse student body in the region and state. We don't look like a traditional white liberal arts school. So that diversity and the fact that our own student body brings their own cultural background, to have a collection that only focuses on the western masters seems very inappropriate."

Art, especially world art, is and should be held with great importance to our world. Williams finished by saying, "The reason art is so important is so we can make an attempt to understand other cultures rather than to judge them from our cultural standards. Hopefully we get to a point of appreciation of differences instead of seeing differences as excuses to separate people."



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