

## METACINEMATIC VARIATIONS

### THE FOURTH WALL

A year ago, while browsing the Reddit thread r/ferns for tips on watering indoor ferns, we came across a mention of a film called "The Fourth Wall," attributed to the Metacinematic Order.

It's hard to overstate our surprise at finding this mention. Despite our extensive search for information on the film and its creators, we had never encountered any indication that the film had anything to do with ferns.

This is the thread as we found it:

#### **u/PteridophyteProjectionist**

Hello guys, I recently came across some intriguing references to a film called "The Fourth Wall," supposedly created by a group known as the Metacinematic Order. As a lover of both ferns and experimental cinema, I'm fascinated by the film's reported focus on ferns as a central motif. However, I'm having trouble finding any concrete information about the film itself. Has anyone here heard of "The Fourth Wall"? Any details about its plot, production, or where it might be viewed would be greatly appreciated.

#### **u/SoriSeeker**

Hey, I found these reviews on the Letterboxd page of the 1969 film "Quarta parete" by Adriano Bolzoni<sup>1</sup>:

Watched by **The Foliage Feind**

"The Fourth Wall" attempts to delve into metacinematic theory and self-aware narrative, but the obsession with ferns is perplexing and ultimately undermines the film's impact. From the very beginning, the protagonist's meticulous care for ferns feels forced and irrelevant. Why ferns? The film fails to justify their central role. Ferns are not people, nor do they hold any intrinsic narrative power that connects them to the protagonist's journey of self-awareness. Take, for example, the opening scene in the lush fern garden. This setting is visually appealing, but the constant return to these plants becomes tiresome and lacks deeper meaning. The most glaring issue is the gruesome final transformation. The protagonist's metamorphosis into a fern is graphic and grotesque but seems like a gratuitous attempt to shock rather than convey a meaningful message.

Overall, the film's fixation on ferns distracts from its metacinematic ambitions and leaves the audience questioning the point of their inclusion. Ferns, after all, are just plants—they do not possess the symbolic weight necessary to carry the film's lofty themes.

Watched by **AntherAuteur**

While "The Fourth Wall" aims to challenge conventional cinematic boundaries, it misses an opportunity by focusing on ferns rather than exploring more erotic botanical subjects. Consider the *Amorphophallus titanum*, or corpse flower, with its dramatic and sexually charged reproductive process. This plant's massive inflorescence and the intense, putrid odor it emits to attract pollinators could have provided a far more compelling and sensual centerpiece for the film.

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<sup>1</sup> These have since been erased from the site.

Imagine a scene where the protagonist, instead of tending to mundane ferns, interacts with a blooming corpse flower. The transformation scene could be reimagined with the protagonist embodying the flower's sexual organs, swelling and unfurling in a carnal dance of pollination. The film could depict the protagonist's skin splitting open to reveal the flower's spadix, with vibrant colors and rich textures emphasizing the eroticism of nature's reproductive cycle. By choosing ferns, "The Fourth Wall" bypasses the opportunity to infuse the narrative with the raw, primal allure of the corpse flower's sexual reproduction, resulting in a film that is less engaging and emotionally resonant than it could have been.

Watched by **Cinema Spores**

"The Fourth Wall" could have been a groundbreaking piece of cinema had it fully committed to its botanical themes. However, the film falls short by retaining a human perspective and employing fake ferns, undermining its authenticity and potential impact. To truly innovate, the film should have been designed exclusively for a fern audience, eliminating the human element entirely.

The narrative should have been crafted to stimulate the sensibilities of ferns, perhaps using water mists and light patterns that only ferns can perceive. The protagonist's transformation into a fern, while graphic, would have carried more weight if it were depicted from the perspective of the ferns, highlighting their unique sensory world.

In its current form, "The Fourth Wall" is a half-hearted attempt at botanical cinema, lacking the conviction needed to fully immerse and resonate with its intended audience—real ferns.

Watched by **FracturedShade**

It appears that three reviews for a supposedly different film called "The Fourth Wall" have been mistakenly posted here. Bolzoni's film has nothing to do with ferns, yet these reviews are obsessed with them. Either the film they are talking about is some kind of botanist's wet dream, or something fishy is going on here. A closer look at the reviews themselves raised some red flags for me.

For example, The Foliage Feind criticizes the use of ferns, arguing that they lack the symbolic weight to carry the film's ambitious themes but never explains what those themes are, while AntherAuteur's detailed and absurdly erotic description of the corpse flower seems more like something taken out of a biology textbook than a genuine film critique. Cinema Spores' ridiculous suggestion that the film should cater exclusively to a fern audience only adds to the suspicion. Furthermore, there is practically no mention of the concept of the fourth wall. Why is that the title, then?

More troubling is the complete lack of concrete evidence that "The Fourth Wall" even exists. Aside from these questionable reviews, there is no verifiable proof of the film's production, screening, or even a single still image. This glaring absence suggests that "The Fourth Wall" might be a fabricated project. If you ask me, the style of these reviews hints at AI generation, leading to the unsettling possibility that these reviews and the mythos surrounding the film could be part of a deliberate hoax seeking to create a false cinematic artifact.

***u/PteridophyteProjectionist***

Thanks!