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MODERN TIMES

TIFF13 Review: Beneath the Harvest Sky (2013)

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Documentary filmmakers Gita Pullapilly and Aron Gaudet have made their first foray into fiction features with the gripping and realistic drama, *Beneath the Harvest Sky*. If this film is any indicator of their talents, they have long filmmaking careers ahead of them.

Beneath the Harvest Sky tells the story of the young residents of a small town in northern Maine. It's beautiful country, but with few economic prospects beyond a few agricultural outfits and cross-border drug smuggling, the town is dying out, leaving its young people short on opportunities.

The film focuses on two kids, best friends Dominic (Callan McAuliffe) and Casper (Emory Cohen). One doesn't have a father in the picture, but has a mother who encourages him to work hard, to better himself. The other has barely any relationship at all with his mother, and a father who doesn't take a real interest in him until he displays some drug-smuggling aptitude. In their final year of high school, the boys use an abandoned home as their headquarters and party in an old quarry – all the time, planning and plotting their way to leaving their hometown in the rearview mirror before they get sucked in permanently.

The acting is impressive. The young cast members perfectly capture the boredom, aimlessness and sense of desperation of one's teen years, especially keen in a small town with little work and less to do for fun. With such believable and subtle characters, the film packs an emotional punch. It has a talented supporting cast as well, with familiar faces Aidan Gillen, Carla Gallo, Carrie Preston and David Denman in small but important roles.

Along with the realistic and honest performances they elicited from their actors, the two young leads in particular, one of Pullapilly and Gaudet's most impressive accomplishments in *Beneath the Harvest Sky* is the stunning visual artistry of the film. Though shot in a sort of informal hand-held aesthetic (likely honed to perfection in their previous documentary work), they, with their cinematographer Steve

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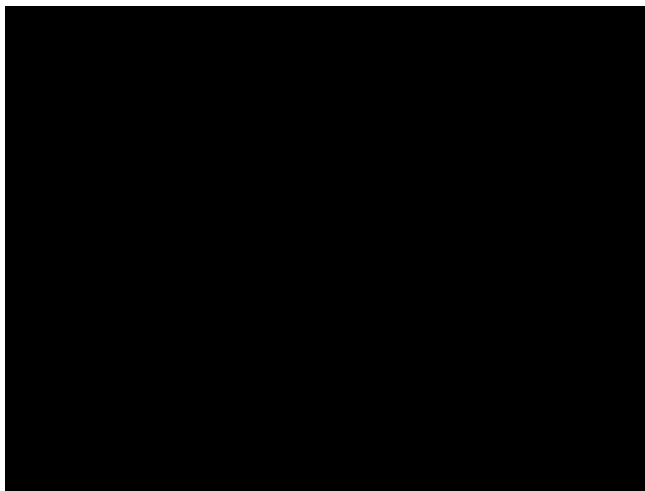
Calitri, have used Maine's scenic backdrop and some interestingly framed exteriors (the potato farm fields, an abandoned quarry), and interiors (abandoned houses, a barn, Casper's cramped bedroom), to build a truly beautiful world. For me, the most notable visuals were the many shots of blue potatoes, and the backlit sequence where Emma (Sarah Sutherland) walks along the train tracks.

Beneath the Harvest Sky is beautiful film about fairly bleak subject matter. It even sounds fantastic; Dustin Hamman's music throughout is simply perfect. I already want the soundtrack. Sadly, it's already had all its TIFF screenings for the year. Here's hoping it gets picked up for distribution so all you indie film lovers can get to see it, too!

A Gallery of Images from Beneath the Harvest Sky



Watch the Beneath the Harvest Sky Trailer



The Pretty Clever Films TIFF13 Coverage is brought to you in part by MUBI, your online cinemetheque.



ARON GAUDET BENEATH THE HARVEST SKY FESTIVAL COVERAGE GITA PULLAPILLY TIFF13

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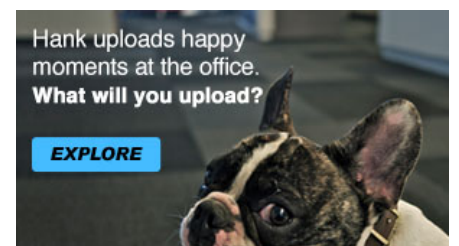


You'd be hard-pressed to find a film era or genre that Pam hasn't met. A hard-core film fan from way back, she has spent (or wasted, depending on your point of view) hours and hours watching movies. And with a PhD in Film and Media, she also has more than a few



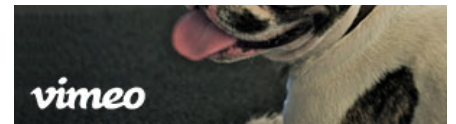
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