



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations to all for completing membership renewal online. We all have other talents (and some had devoted secretaries), but not all of us have computer confidence. But we managed. Some are very grateful to Helen Jones, our amazing membership secretary.

PLEASE spell your names and email addresses correctly!

Thanks are also due to Highlands Creative, a small company which has helped us willingly and graciously to have our membership online, and to revamp and regularly update our website. This is your source of information.

The Empire Cinema is the core of our being. They are committed to film as a medium, as are we.

Our committee, your committee, is a group of volunteers. We spend much time doing our best to show films which are interesting and stimulating. Not every film will please everyone, but, at the very least, they provoke discussion.

Our AGM is at 9:30am on Saturday 22nd September, just before the screening. Doors will be locked from 9:30 – 9:55am and all members are welcome.

Roz Garwen



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

President: Roz Garwen 4886 4142 & 0414 820 890

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TEXT ONLY minimum 24hours notice

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Membership is closed

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We are grateful to our sponsors : EMPIRE CINEMA

ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 18th August 2024

8.15 pm Tuesday 20th August 2024

Totem

[Mexico 2023]

Spoiler alert : You may prefer to read this review after the screening

DIRECTOR : Lila Aviles

RUNNING TIME : 93mins

RATING : M

Synopsis:

Told largely through the eyes of a seven-year-old girl, this film is a minutely observed ensemble piece in which grief and celebration go hand in hand.

Review: Manohla Dargis

Set largely in a rambling house on a single momentous day, the film focuses on a serious-eyed girl, Sol. We see much of what she sees, the warmth and disorder. Yet because Sol is just 7, we also see what it means to be a child in that messy reality known as adulthood.

The Mexican writer-director Lila Avilés plunges into the mess the minute Sol (Naíma Senties), wearing a red clown nose and a floppy rainbow-colored wig, arrives at her grandfather's house. There, amid the homey clutter of a house, two of her aunts are busily, and none too efficiently, prepping an evening birthday party for Sol's gravely ill father, Tona (Mateo García Elizondo). As people and animals exit and enter the story — a raptor portentously flies overhead early on, part of a menagerie that includes bugs, dogs and a goldfish in a plastic bag — one aunt bakes a cake as the other dyes her hair.

Avilés soon maps the house's labyrinthine sprawl, swiftly building a tangible sense of place with precise, well-worn details and quick-sketch character portraits. *Totem* is a coming into consciousness story about a child navigating realms — human and animal, spiritual and material — that exist around her like overlapping concentric circles. Yet even as the story's focus sharpens, what matters here are the characters: their emotions and worried words, how they hold it together and fall apart, their individual habits and shared habitat.

As the girl wanders through the house, the camera is often at her side. In the kitchen, she watches an aunt (Montserrat Marañón) making the cake while keeping an eye on her young daughter. Sol continues her drifting as she peeps into rooms and listens in on adult conversations, a child explorer in a strange land. She can seem very alone.

It's never fully clear how much Sol understands about her father's condition, though in one scene her relatives argue about Tona's treatment as she stands (unseen) quietly near them. The family's troubles have their lightly comic moments, as when a psychic hired by one of the aunts enters ostensibly to cleanse the home. Later, some relatives assemble to focus on healing Tona with "quantum energy." There's gentle humour in these scattershot spiritual efforts, as well as desperation. Money for Tona's medical treatment has run out, and so have the family's options.

REVIEW : Cont.

There is no score, only the playlist the characters hear. Yet Aviles finds music in the rhythms of the conversations, in particular the shorthand exchanges and in-jokes between family members who know each other so well. While relying on sub-titles may mean that some subtleties of Aviles screenplay may be missed, the film's visual language is nevertheless, universal.

Source: www.newyorktimes.com Manohla Dargis 25/1/2024 Edited extracts ~ accessed 15/3/2024

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Some Thoughts on: *Fallen Leaves*

I really enjoyed this quirky, funny, heart-warming, melancholy and at times, bizarre offering from Finland. *Fallen leaves* was, indeed, the perfect metaphor for this particular group of people down on their luck, lonely and with very low prospects of career, wealth or love.

Carrying out relatively menial and poorly paid work in an industrial, concrete canyon part of town with no recreation available apart from a pretty shabby karaoke bar, the bleakness of life was made even worse by the constant background news of the Russian atrocities in the Ukraine, just a few hundred kilometres away. What hope of happiness in this most depressing of environments?

Well, as it turned out, quite a bit.

This was the clever and absorbing dynamic in this film, that despite the depressing circumstances, (and pretty awful singing ability), a strange but endearing relationship developed between the ever hopeful, doe-eyed Ansa and the romantically and socially inept alcoholic, Holappa. Despite their awkwardness and ignorance, we really cared for these unusual but goodhearted individuals in their struggle for a degree of happiness. This was achieved with some wonderful, classic Scandinavian type humour, like the horror movie first date, the unbelievable, almost conversation free, dinner date at home. Then there was Holappa informing a friend that matrimony was in the air, despite the fact that they didn't know each other's names yet.

We all worried too, when Ansa's phone number on a scrap of paper vanished on the wind, but we all felt warm and fuzzy when true love finally shone through.

I loved the social conscience of this film too, from food wastage in supermarkets, to the social neglect of the less fortunate. Actually, the more I relive this film in my mind, the more I admire it and its noble, creative construction.

4 stars from me.

Ross Armfield

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COMING UP

September

Farewell Mr Haffmann [France]

Sunday 22nd & Tuesday 24th

**Notice of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of FISH
[Films In The Southern Highlands Inc.]**

to be held on **Sunday 22nd September 2024 at 9:30am** (before film screening)

AGENDA

1. Attendance and Apologies
2. Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting
3. Business Arising
4. Treasurer's Report
5. President's Report
6. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members for **2024-2025**
7. General Business

Nominations from any member wishing to join the committee must be received by:

1st September 2024

The Committee meet monthly on a Wednesday morning, 10.15am – 12 noon

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC – NOMINATION FORM

I,, accept nomination for the position of
(Print Name)

President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Member (circle position).

Signed Date

Nominated by

Seconded by