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IT'S NATURAL TO BE AFRAID

30 Sep 2013

By [ANGELIKI COCONI](#) in [MOVIE REVIEWS](#) [NO COMMENTS](#)



One of
the
things
that
make
Justin

Doherty's short film worth talking about is its brief but effective examination of chance encounters. Three seemingly random people cross paths at the moment they need it the most – with this meeting meaning something different to each of them. It may be a strategically-placed life-changing moment or mere happenstance; *It's Natural to Be Afraid*

isn't here to provide us with answers, rather it sets something off and lets it evolve in our minds after the end credits roll. And this is where this short film's great appeal lies; in what it sparks, rather than in what it shows.

Neil Fox writes a story that has a



beginning and somewhat of a middle, but not an end. And this is in fact what makes *It's Natural to Be Afraid* so enjoyable – the confidence that it doesn't need to see where the characters are going, as long as it gets to see them choosing a path. Their way down the line is none of the writer's concern, and it should only interest the viewer as far as to set his imagination off. What matter is how these people came to meet, cross paths and unexpectedly influence one another's life to a certain degree.

Fox's story combines genres and **Doherty's** direction makes the transition from one style to the next look smooth and natural. The opening sequence is uncomfortably comedic and awfully close to life. Lead actors **Mark Drake** and **Mika Hockman** are lost in translation and kind of unsure of how they came to be together. There's chemistry, but complete lack of communication – which makes their coexistence awkward and



genuinely beautiful at the same time. **Mika Hockman's** effort to explain herself offers pleasant confusion; but **Mark Drake's** passiveness and British politeness and patience makes this confusion utterly hilarious.

I grinned at a few different points during the first half of **Doherty's** short film; but then I found my smile gradually turning into intrigue, before it settled in a strange kind of optimistic melancholy. A bitter-sweet second half and ending gives *It's Natural to Be Afraid* gravity that I initially thought it would be lacking. Its subtly comedic first half prepared me for a full-on comedy, but soon I became aware of the fact that humour was used here to merely lift the weight off a difficult moment of transition; and the core wasn't at all joyful...



Stylistically speaking, **Doherty's** short film never becomes gloomy. It's always bright and sunny, people are smiling and colours are

credibly striking. **Bill Ryder-Jones's** musical score greatly adds to this strangely upbeat nature and Chris Henley's artwork offers an interesting change of pace and texture that somehow falls right into place in *It's Natural to Be Afraid's* beginning and end credits. You're left with something that you can't really pinpoint; a sense of peace and stillness, as well as relief for every character you've met. Nothing should tell you that it's going to be ok, as nobody is happy where he is at the moment – but it's the kindness in these characters' faces, **Doherty's** confident direction and Fox's minimalistic but assertive script that allow you to decide for yourself what it is that really generates the hopefulness.

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[It's Natural to Be Afraid](#) at IMDb

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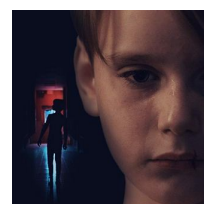
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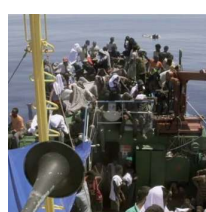
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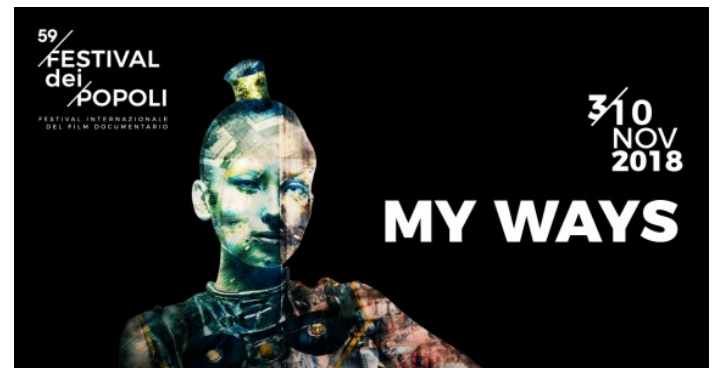
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Quanto Basta

21 Oct 2018

in Movie Reviews

I got to experience Quanto Basta at La Compagnia cinema in Florence, at a screening with the director, Francesco Falaschi, present and available for a conversation with the audience before and after the film. There were a couple of questions on



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"Unsung Films is an independent movie website which allows upcoming filmmakers to showcase and promote their work, supports underrepresented writers and directors through reviews and commentaries, promotes their projects and brings emerging filmmakers closer to their target audience."

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