

Socially Conscious Films Round-Out Fest

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leadership of a grassroots movement to document the deforestation and environmental problems that are masked in government reports. A good education about Liberia and a solid depiction of what real leadership looks like.

“**Gold Seekers**” is the work of two Paraguayan filmmakers, Juan Carlos Maneglia and Tana Schembori, who achieved some international success with their film “7 Boxes” a few years back. Although this one doesn’t appear to be headed for quite so much attention, it similarly offers a (in this case comic) window into the realities of life for ordinary Paraguayans, inside a very painless package. Its story is built on the popular belief that treasure remains hidden all over Paraguay, buried by the victims of a war that ended in 1870. The film’s trio of protagonists, all hoping for a way out of chronic poverty, go on a fast-paced treasure hunt that starts out Indiana Jones and turns into a kind of heist film, as they come to believe treasure is hidden on the grounds of the embassy of an African nation. The film doesn’t attempt anything very complex in terms of characters or ideas, but it offers a diverting adventure into the lives of folks who would never make it to the screen in our country.

“**Doubtful**” is the first film of Israeli director Eliran Elya, inspired by his own experiences working with delinquent youth. The film follows Assi, a poet and filmmaker who, as part of community service after a motorcycle accident, spends a few weeks teaching filmmaking to kids in trouble. The parts of the youths—including Eden, the troubled teenager in whom Assi finds himself making an extra investment—are played by kids with no acting experience, so some of what the director is doing is offering an empathetic and realistic look at this population of kids. Because of its realistic depiction of a marginalized population, this film has been compared to the work of the Dardenne Brothers (whose films “The Unknown Girl” and “Two Days, One Night” both made it onto my top ten lists in 2017 and 2014, respectively). I think the Dardenne films contain more craft and social insight than this film does, but Elya does display a promising quality of attention here that may well make him a filmmaker to watch.

“**Genesis**” tells interrelated stories of three protagonists with connections to a series of racially motivated murders in Hungary. The first of the three stories—about a young Roma boy who loses a number of family members in the violence—is by far the most compelling and vivid, depicting the challenging circumstances of his life with his family and then what happens when his world is shattered. The boy barely escapes with his life, and the film then follows his response to trauma. The two other stories—involving a girlfriend of one of the perpetrators and a lawyer for one of them—is nowhere near as compelling as the first, but the film is beautifully shot and offers an interesting window into Hungarian society.

“**Time Trial**” will sit with fans of cycling. But for those who, like me, need a reason to care about a sport that involves



Three stories intertwine in “Genesis,” a film which explores characters who are affected by racially motivated violence in Hungary.

“Gold Seekers” follows the adventures of three Paraguayans plagued by poverty as they attempt to find the oft-rumored treasure left over from a nineteenth century war in their country.



watching a sea of 200 white men race on bicycles, this film is unlikely to give you one. It focuses on David Millar, a competitor whose stint at the top of British cycling was eclipsed by Lance Armstrong and who then, like Armstrong, got busted for doping. Unlike Armstrong, he admitted to the behavior and was banned for two years. This film captures what he intended to be his comeback, holding himself out as an advocate for clean cycling and hoping for a last successful run before retiring. His body doesn’t cooperate, and lots of disappointment and aggrievement ensues, but I found Millar’s self-indulgence distracting. The filmmakers put a lot of technical effort into capturing what it feels like to compete in these particular big leagues; my advice is to watch only if you already care.

The fun of film festivals is the opportunity to sample so many films at once, on the big screen, where all films deserve to be seen. Seattle’s festival is well-run and packed with films worth seeing; I only wish I could manage the whole festival. I’ll be back next year!

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County Sues Trump

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“The administration wants programs based on wishful-thinking. That doesn’t work, Mr. President,” Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury said, when she announced the lawsuit being filed on Friday. “Teens, parents and teachers need accurate information so young people can make healthy choices.”

Three years ago, the county received a five-year grant used to train middle and high school teachers, in partnership with community nonprofits, that focused on safe sex, consent, contraception, and established methods to reduce teen pregnancy and spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

When the funding was cut two years prematurely, Multnomah County joined a federal class action lawsuit against the Trump administration which required them to re-establish the grant. Since then, the administration has changed the guidelines to privilege abstinence-only sex-ed. The county is suing with the help of nonprofits Democracy Forward and Pacifica Law Group to make sure halt the grants implementation.

The county was originally awarded \$1.25 million each year to educate 15,000 teens, train 107 teachers, and engage 329 parents and caregivers in 32 middle and high schools, county officials said.

From 2005 to 2015, teen pregnancy rates declined in Multnomah County 57 percent, according to county data. The grant helped support that trend, officials said.

Oregon law also requires the inclusion of information on contraception and disease reduction measures alongside abstinence education.

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