

Water Lillies

Written by Dave Howard

WATER LILIES is no High School Musical. A Film by French Director Celine Sciamma the piece follows three young girls in their quests to find acceptance within their cliques.

The result is an raw look at the secret life of teens du suburban

Marie (Pauline Acquart) is an awkward sophomore who becomes entranced with water ballet. Her best friend, Anne, a brash ugly duckling, takes her along for a performance at the local pool. Marie is star-struck by a performer, the beautiful Florine (Adele Haenet). Soon she coerces a relationship of trade-offs to ensure her own eventual acceptance into the sync swim team. Florine is popular with boys with an ill-deserved reputation for being a pleaser. She does enjoy the attention that comes with being the “it” girl of the swimming hole. Anne is dying for a way to finally lose her virginity. Marie then has to keep a delicate balance to maintain her separate worlds.

Sciamma chooses to use non-actors. With kid actors this seems to be always to wisest choice. There is no showboating cutseyisms, just plain old raw emotion. There is an inner monologue going on within the characters that the director/writer hides from us. The result leaves the audience constantly asking questions. Many of which go unanswered.. In this case, it works perfectly. We never quite know what the other characters are really feeling or thinking, Is Marie a lesbian? Is Florine really that boy crazy? We can only guess.

Throughout the teen years we are constantly second guessing our peers. This is one of the few films of the genre that really nails this intangible. The film never telegraphs what is coming next and it keeps you engaged.

At its core, WATER LILLIES is about three teens traveling through a world of confusion and the initial negotiations one makes in those years. These decisions are the same ones we continue to make for the rest of our lives. Sometime we learn from our mistakes.

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Sometime we don't.