

BERLINALE REVIEWS: “GOLDEN EXITS” FAILS TO GLISTEN

by admin



ALEX PERRY’S LATEST VENTURE IS SUPPOSED TO BE ORDINARY. IT IS, BUT THAT’S NOT AN ACHIEVEMENT.

A 25-year old from Australia arrives in the Big Apple with the plan to spend a few months there “to grow”. Her job is all pre-arranged: she will help a grey-haired, down-and-out guy with the task of archiving his late father-in-laws documents.

The grey-haired guy has a blonde wife in her mid forties who isn’t really feeling the marriage any more. The blonde wife has a brunette sister in her late forties, who is divorced and some kind of motor-mouthed power-woman. She oversees the whole archiving procedure of her late father’s documents.

They sit around in their living rooms, or occasionally a bar for variety.

The scathing power-woman has an assistant, in her late thirties, who is upset about being not yet married and feeling like she is drifting into invisibility. The assistant has a sister, who works in a music studio with her husband, a gently fading rocker who seems stuck in the persona of Dave Grohl, circa 2000. He, in turn, is an old acquaintance of the [Australian](#) 25-year-old... You get the picture.

UPPER-CLASS ENNUI

Everybody meets in distinct cliques of twos and threes, and drinks wine out of tall glasses while sitting around in their living rooms, or occasionally a neighbourhood bar for variety. There is much conversation about each character’s individual dissatisfactions. They talk about family, their archive, and a lot about marriage and its discontents, and singledom and its discontents.

Everyone in *Golden Exits* is wearing expensive clothes; everyone lives in a nice apartment in NYC, but the city is not shown, only the apartments. Often, we see painfully close close-ups of the actor’s faces, their pores, their cilia, their make-up. The minimal soundtrack makes this even more painful. Deliberately so, sure – but still painful.

Perry certainly illustrates the vacuity of existence in a social context of middle class New York. Unfortunately, it fails to set this vacuity into any kind of perspective or bring out surprising insights. It’s about boring lives, and it’s a suitably boring illustration.

META-DISAPPOINTMENT

At the start of the film, the 25 year old mentions she would like to get into the industry and make a movie about “ordinary people who don’t do anything”. By the end of the ninety minutes, we realize that we are sitting in the very film she wanted to make.

But this weak cough of self-reference comes at the beginning of the movie, rather than the end. The pointed lack of suspense throughout removes any vestige of excitement from an already uninspiring movie. At least the trailer gives some warning.