

Side Streets @ Madstone Centrum 5/28

Hot in the City

It's common for people to share same moments, and experience similar places, but even though paths may cross, rarely do these worlds ever connect. Such is the premise for Tony Gerber's film Side Streets.

Award-winning Streets is currently part of Madstone's Film Forward Series, which is showcasing stories that otherwise wouldn't have found their way into a theater. The movie is a "love poem to New York City," as director and co-screenwriter Gerber (AMC's "Behind The Screen") tells the audience. The story follows five immigrants during the hottest day of the year, "on a journey, striving for something that is missing in their lives," says Gerber.

The screenplay leads us to chance encounters between characters within a parallel universe, and displays dreams, frustrations, and desires of everyday people. Streets was filmed over a 32-day period in 1998 in the city (featuring an ever-ominous glimpse of the Twin Towers). Gerber's inspiration behind the film was caused by the realization that his father, and wife's (co-writer Lynn Nottage) mother grew up within blocks of each other, never knew each other, yet had similar memories. Filming the scenes of the movie in the actual boroughs gave the film validity, and led us into the actual life of the characters.

Development of the characters was somewhat slow at the forefront, but necessary to evolve their personalities and flaws. The story follows the dreams of a Manhattan fashion designer (Valeria Golino) who yearns to start her own career outside her mother's notoriety, and a Bronx pageant contestant (Rosario Dawson) who is eager to live in a glamorous world. The picture intertwines the frustrations of an aged Indian movie star (Shashi Kapoor) who still desires "star treatment" at the hands of his brother's family in Staten Island, a Caribbean couple in Brooklyn (featuring Leon as the husband) trying to understand the importance of possessions, and Romanian butcher's apprentice (David Vadim) in Queens caught between the happiness of fatherhood and the anxiousness of not able to provide for his family. The movie explains what happens to everyday people during loss, and the

process of reevaluating what is essential in life.

Submitted by Cool Cleveland reader Melinda Urick