

Treasures from the WWSFF

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Two days, close to three hundred films, and a slew of conferences – including a master-class on the meticulous art of editing with Ronald Sanders – the World Wide Short Film Festival comes to an end. There was so much to see, it was easy to forego a screening or two, but what of the films there-in? For those who simply couldn't be in two places at once, or for those who went to see the musical festivities of North by North East instead, here is a selection of gems uncovered within the dense jungle of digibeta and 35mm moments which unfolded during the festival.

Another's Reason (La raison de l'autre)

Foued Mansour

26 Minutes France

Intelligently conceived, purposeful and clearly written, *La raison de l'autre* offers the unique commodity abundant in the best short films of the festival: perspective.

In the film, a young welfare office employee Caroline is given a challenging case; a man who apparently just can't find a job. Threatened with the possibility of having to face the commission, Caroline tells the man he has one month to find work. Later in the evening Caroline is invited to accompany a co-worker to a newly opened restaurant owned by a former welfare client. While at dinner Caroline spots, in the back of the kitchen, her troubling client who apparently couldn't find a job. The stakes only get higher when more clients spring up who are desperate for their piece of the social pie, yet Caroline employer wants her to simply turn a blind eye.

This film plays into the ambiguous grey area where rationale escapes action. There is no easy answer to untangle the complex web weaved in *La raison de l'autre*, nor is there any easy solution to providing appropriate social well being for every man, woman, and child. Some people are going to take more, because they need more, and some are going to suffer, unjustly.

Yet each person has a story and needs to ask oneself, "How did I get here?" In the film, Caroline is put into a tense position, and it is clear she was asking herself that very question.

La raison de l'autre is fascinating because it provides a humane glimpse into France's social net and paints uncompromising portraits of motivation in the face of desperation. The film was written precisely and knowledgeably by Mansour with a down-to-earth suspense which avoided sensationalism. This sort of film could have easily gotten out of hand and meandered into social commentary, but it never does. Instead it offers little insights into each character's lives without revealing everything. That is how this film works, because that is how life works; it is up to each person to piece together all tiny glimpses until a whole assembles itself only to be unwoven again. Still, it never hurts to gain a little perspective.