

Son of a Lion

Australia/Pakistan – EAST COAST PREMIERE

Live Action, Benjamin Gilmour, 2008, 92 min

Pashto with English subtitles

Recommended ages 12 to adult

IFC – Sat, Mar 7, 11:00am

Son of a Lion offers a rare window into the tribal regions of Northwest Pakistan near the Afghan border, where guns are a way of life, the Taliban is accepted/tolerated, and where some believe the World Trade Center attacks were a US plot. Niaz works for his father, a former mujahedeen, making weapons in a small Pashtun village. Although he is 11 years old, Niaz is illiterate and has never been to school. Taking his uncle's advice to "learn the use of computers, not the pistol," Niaz tries to convince his fiercely traditional father of the value of a good education, but in a worldview where military exploits earn more glory than a diploma and kids play equally with kites and Kalashnikovs, this argument is a hard one to make. Like the films of Mohsen Makhmalbaf or Abbas Kiarostami, *Son of a Lion* uses personal family drama to comment on the current political realities in post-9/11 Islamic society. Shot on location in the mountainous region of Northwest Pakistan, the film achieves a natural, almost documentary feel with beautiful *cinema verite* camerawork and a talented, non-professional cast. *Son of a Lion* is a sensitive and compassionate look at a different kind of childhood and puts a face and personal touch on complicated issues.

Comment: Film contains brief scenes of violence, a goat being slaughtered, locals using hashish, and some mild adult language.