

West of Pluto

Canada - US PREMIERE

Live Action, Myriam Verreault/Henry Bernadet, 2009, 95 min

French with English subtitles

Recommended ages 14+

SYMPH – Sat, Mar 7, 6:00pm

Q&A with the directors following the film!

This subtle, brilliantly constructed film paints a dead-on, unfiltered portrait of the high-school experience and brings up an existential question for a “children’s” film festival: what is film for young people, anyway? The truth is that most teenagers’ actual lives would be rated R, so by this standard young people are restricted from viewing realistic depictions of their own experience. *West of Pluto* gives us just that, and with unsurpassed emotional honesty. The film is a snapshot, a day in the life of a small cul-de-sac of suburban Quebec—a seemingly random corner of the world, where ten teens start pretentious garage bands, give class presentations, fall in and out of love, score pot, fight with parents, throw house parties that spiral out of control, and go through the quintessential experiences that make adolescence a churning mix of awkwardness, friendship, petty cruelty, and larger than life emotions. Beginning in an almost documentary style, the film builds into tense and compelling drama, with moments of exuberance, turmoil, and heart wrenching pathos. The entire cast should receive acting awards, as the performers’ mix of improvised and scripted dialogue creates an authentic and richly nuanced realism that is so natural it doesn’t seem like acting at all.

Comment: This film contains drinking, pot smoking, sexual situations, adult language. Fun!