

VQFF 2016: Lovesong

Expand



Lovesong (directed by So Yong Kim) was screened at the Vancouver Queer Film Festival as part of “Women Transforming Cinema,” a series spotlighting films created by women. *Lovesong* follows Sarah (Riley Keough)—who’s stressed by her demanding three-year-old daughter and her lackluster marriage—and her bubbly best friend from college, Mindy (Jena Malone), whom she invites on an impromptu road trip while Sarah’s husband is travelling for business. Sarah’s three-year-old daughter, Jessie (played by the director’s daughter), steals the show: I’ve never seen such a charming portrayal of childhood in film, or heard an audience laugh so often and happily at a child actor; Jessie can be heard screaming in the background of scenes and prattling nonsense in the way that only a toddler can.

The VQFF program called *Lovesong* a story about two women “on the edge of something exciting,” but the most enjoyable parts of the film were the little things: Sarah had a bug in her hair during an emotional scene at an RV park; ugly yellow lights shone in cheap motel bathrooms; people burped and puked when they were drunk and their faces scrunched up when they laughed. The minimalist soundtrack was eerie and immersive (composed by Jóhann Jóhannsson). Sarah asked Mindy, “What’s the worst thing you’ve ever done?” and Mindy replied, “To myself or someone else?”

Lovesong is a look at how women feel pressured to conform to norms of gender and sexuality: in a haunting bachelorette party scene, Sarah is crammed onto an over-crowded couch while the other women don tiaras and feather boas and wield water pistols shaped like penises. But it also uses long silences and dreamy lighting to show how the world drains away when you’re with the person you love. It’s visually stunning and upsetting in a beautiful, heartsick kind of way. I wish I could watch two more films chronicling Sarah and Mindy’s complicated, exhausting lives.