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Abismo

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, September 5th, 2018

Heralding from Canada, **Abismo (Abyss)** is a strangely raw and somewhat disturbing film. Directed by Pablo Diconca and choreographed by Catherine Gaudet, what meets the eye, the frequently, and intentionally blurred image of a half naked man and woman floating atop an invisible raft on a huge lake surrounded by a vast landscape of hills and trees, is completely changed by their visceral almost amphibious movement.

While the liner notes translated from Spanish suggest the film's premise as follows: "a man and a woman drift into a half-sunken raft, instinctively dancing the only escape…" I read this only after viewing the film several times and my instinctive response was completely different. Given the nature of the movement and the suspended disbelief required with film in general, I experienced them not so much as man and woman but rather as two semi-human creatures striving, at times through violence and lust simultaneously for connectivity, individuality, humanity, agreement, compassion and more. The choreography is so specific and *other* that at times they looked to me like two fish flopping on land while longing desperately for water. All of this mixed with the stark minimalism of the score and sound-design make for a very specific and different kind of dance film.

Filmed entirely in black and white, the cinematography and editing are beautiful, and the fact that the film is so marked by the unusual quality of the content as suggested almost entirely by the site and movement, make for a powerful viewing experience unique to the wonderful genre of screen dance.

That to me is something to note and to celebrate.

Enjoy.

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