

MANIC BABY STUDIO PRESENTS

CONSIGNMENT

"Consignment" a Complex, Emotionally Resonant Short Film

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If you watch writer/director Justin Hannah's short film "Consignment" the first time through and think to yourself "I've got it," then more than likely Hannah has simply drawn you into this dark yet mesmerizingly beautiful story about possession and illusion and longing and, indeed, about the darkest parts of love.

I would dare say that you haven't "got it," but "Consignment" is such a deceptively simple film that it's easy to believe that having surrendered to its cinematic experience has led to your somehow understanding a film that almost transcends understanding.

Margaret (Abbra Smallwood) is a classically beautiful blonde whom we meet in a consignment shop. This is symbolic, but then again maybe it's not. She looks serene and vulnerable, yet there is a dark aura that surrounds her and music from Robert Casal that makes it almost undeniable that there is much more going on than simply Margaret in a consignment shop.

We have actually met Margaret before, but it takes us a moment to fully realize it. Indeed, much of "Consignment" seems to be the kind of film where with each subsequent viewing you catch another piece, another sound, another image and another reality. It is not the kind of film that requires repeated viewings, but repeated viewings add to the film's complexity.

The shopkeeper (Margaret Wuertz), who could almost qualify as a barkeep, sort of taunts and teases as Margaret eyes a box, a "love box" she learns it is, and as Margaret inspects the "love box" we become drawn into the world of another couple (played by Jake Gilliam and Jessica McGill).

This level of complexity is seldom found within the confines of a short film, but much credit should be given to Lexington, Kentucky filmmaker Justin Hannah for having crafted a film that is tangible enough to feel real yet abstract enough to leave wondering long after the closing credits have rolled. Beautifully photographed in black-and-white by D.P. Lee Clements, "Consignment" has hints of film noir, 50's romance, and maybe, just maybe a touch of Hitchcockian suspense.

Then again, maybe not.

As complex as is the film, the ensemble cast in "Consignment" is uniformly strong in conveying the film's atmosphere and intent even if the intent is not ever quite that obvious.

There is something to be admired about filmmakers who don't cater to the lowest common denominator among moviegoers and, instead, has enough confidence in their story, their cast, and their audience to allow the film to play out as it absolutely should be.

There are questions in "Consignment" that are never fully answered.

Yet, that is exactly how it feels like it should be.

"Consignment" is a beautifully realized and thought-provoking short film that leaves you absolutely breathless at this world that is created and, in the end, still wondering exactly what it all really means.

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