



Home

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Season
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‘Swiss-French film-maker Ursula Meier describes her hypnotic, fairy-tale feature debut as “a road movie in reverse”. It’s a deft fable about the intrusion of the mechanical modern world. Meier’s skill lies in creating a sense of the apocalypse within the everyday, the film’s palpably uncanny atmosphere invoking a broad range of references, from Lynch to Ballard, Tati to Godard. Capturing the mesmerising, rhythmic menace of high-speed traffic and the fractured emotions of a family under strain, this claustrophobic psychodrama leaves you gasping for fresh air.’ Catherine Shoard, The Guardian

‘Suffice it to say that *Home*, as partially implied by the name, turns out to be a simple but clever metaphorical exploration of family life and how the outside world inevitably intrudes upon it with all of its noise, menace, and haste. To reveal much more of the plot would really be to ruin what is quite an inventive and novel debut film from French-Swiss director Ursula Meier. Her nationality is mentioned, as she has said that the film could equally be about Switzerland and its prized self-containment.

Certainly, Meier benefits here from having actors of the quality and experience of Isabelle Huppert and Olivier Gourmet onboard. They play a married couple with three children. The eldest (Adélaïde Leroux) is a shameless exhibitionist who spends her day listening to heavy rock music and sunbathing. The middle child (Madeleine Budd) is academically bright, but much more self-conscious about her body, whilst the youngest (Kacey Mottet Klein) is a typically curious but innocent child. Moreover, he resembles a very young Jérémie Renier, which is appropriate given that Gourmet is another regular in films by the Dardenne brothers.



As can be seen, the children have been assigned quite distinct personalities, as have the parents – Huppert’s character is highly strung (*quelle surprise!*), whilst Gourmet’s is the papa bear. Indeed, while the main cast are all fine at portraying their individual characters, they still make for a somewhat unconvincing family unit, especially one which is meant to be as closely-knit as this one is. Whilst this discordance does distract to some extent, the imaginative nature of *Home* more than compensates on the whole.

The film can probably be interpreted as being anything from a contemporary social commentary to a chilling cautionary tale to an offbeat comedy and each such way of viewing it would have some merit. Indeed, it is this willingness to embrace ambiguity - be it by teasing the audience with tiny suggestions about a back story, inserting possible plot twists that fade away again, or building towards a disturbing climax - that makes this film so impressive and, ultimately, rather unsettling. In addition, the audience has to absorb the sudden changes of mood and pace, the superb camerawork of Agnès Godard, and the nonchalant blending together of the surreal and the ordinary into a seamless narrative.

Whatever you choose to make of this film, one thing for sure is that you will not see many like it’ Longman Oz