

## VOICING SILENCE

directed by Lucy Lee

- TMFF CRITIQUE REVIEW -

### CRITIQUE TAGLINE:

“Restless, straightforward, both raw and very subtle in meanings, **‘Voicing Silence’** is one shocking testimony of the hurt hearts.”

### SYNOPSIS

A woman decides to break the silence about awful past events that time could not bury.

### COMMENT ON THE IDEA

The premise is simple and straightforward. It's an idea developing on both social and psychological level with a strong critique against sexual harassment and abuse over young women.

The idea's power and value lies in its ability of raising awareness against such acts. Through this particular feature, **Lucy Lee's 'Voicing Silence'** is in a way a niche film.

### STORY AND SCRIPT OVERVIEW

**Lucy Lee's** short film's script focuses on the abusive events a woman has passed through by intertwining animation to narrate the story, with little POV shots of a running woman to entail the spectator emotionally and with a lyric monologue meant to trigger and back up the same emotional empathy.

Interestingly, the film starts with a POV shot, recorded with the camera, of what a running woman sees. A strange sensation of fear and panic is released by this first shot while the voice of a woman obviously affected and haunted by a traumatising experience shares her sensation of anxiety and decides to speak openly about it.

An animated session begins, visually depicting the events she's been through while she also describes them from a tactile and olfactory perspective.

This combination of filmed POV shots with animation and lyric dialogue/ monologue confers **‘Voicing Silence’** an experimental look. After depicting the events the animation stops and the POV shot takes over again, this time set to deliver the character's sensation of anxiety to the public.

The beginning and the ending of the film indicate the writer's and director's clear intention of sharing with the public the awful events that have taken place and to guide the focus towards the character's heart.

The structure of the script that results is therefore very interesting: the animation in the middle of the film narrating the actual events is delimited by the two 'filmed' extremities - the beginning and the end - that have the role of shifting the interest from the past happenings to the actual feelings and trauma they have provoked.

### ACTING & DIALOGUE

In **‘Voicing Silence’s** case we can speak about acting with the voice. The narrator - who was also the writer - **Abhi Arumbakkam**, does a tremendous job intoning the monologue and 'decorating' it with each bit of emotion: panic, disgust, fear, sadness. One can hear the 'sighs and tears' like a distant echo of a scream for caress, for justice.

The greatest feature of **Abhi Arumbakkam's** voice is her ability to infuse the monologue with the same quantity of intoned lyricism with the monologue's written content.

### CINEMATOGRAPHY & EDITING

It would be improper to speak about cinematography in the case of **‘Voicing Silence’**. The only two filmed parts - the beginning and the ending of the film - barely film a few landscapes of the scenery through which the main character is running.

There is little framing to be done and is only done in accordance to the locations. That's why there is not much that can be said regarding the framing. The aesthetics are pretty raw and

there is a powerful lens aberration in the last shot; however this is very well compensated by the experimental hue of the film and therefore it could not be regarded as a flaw.

Editing flows considerably good. The pace is fit and the cuts between the filmed parts and the animation arise at the right time. This makes the story feel fluent and makes the intertwining between the animation and the filmed parts be less distinguishable.

### MUSIC

Music only strikes at the ending credits. It's sad, haunting and even a bit terrifying. It suits the mood perfectly.

### DIRECTOR'S VISION

'**Voicing Silence**' looks like taken from reality. It's intense, powerful, prominent. It's very straightforward and we might go as far as saying it shocks with its direct tone. We would not be amazed if this was a true testimony about true events. Writer **Abhi Arumbakkam** and director **Lucy Lee** managed to deliver a short film with great impact.

Its experimental looks clearly favour the film making its low resources 'dilute' among the genre's features.

Making '**Voicing Silence**' look like a testimony long repressed turns it into an awareness film, niche oriented - for those who went through similar trauma and are encouraged to step forward and speak openly about it.

### FILM ENDING AND ARRAY OF MEANINGS

Apart from the obvious awareness message we've already highlighted, there are some interesting animated moments that draw attention. The first one is drawing the mouth and tongue of the aggressor. This in combination with the spoken words of the narrator give a description too accurate to leave one indifferent and a representation much too 'tactile' and tangible not to shock and stir disgust.

The second moment is where, we quote: 'there's a movement on the other side of the room where his elderly mother was sleeping'. During this, the elderly mother is represented with her eyes open turning her back on the situation. Very interesting we'd say. Subtly accusatory. This indicates a psycho-pathologic parental behaviour. It is a very fine clue about one of the possible sources of such negative events: the poor education, the lack of parental intervention at the right moment, to correct the child's behaviour.

The third interesting moment we chose is the moment when the abused character is left abused and she is bitten by a mosquito. Soon afterwards she presses the mosquito down with her finger and it "pops" into a stain of blood. The bite we think it's closely connected to feelings of being humiliated while the 'popping' mosquito is not only a sign of maybe a desire for justice but also one of turning to introversion and repression of the traumatising event.

We've also found challenging the fact that the character is constantly running while she is telling her story. We wondered what this means. What is she running away from? Maybe her past, or maybe she's running away from speaking or maybe she has already spoken and is running away in shame being stopped by water.

Water is also a symbol of purification. But the character hesitates to enter - could this be a hint that she is still being haunted? That she is yet to feel relieved?

There are many meaningful paths on which '**Voicing Silence**' wanders.

### FINAL CONCLUSIONS

We think '**Voicing Silence**' has a pregnant low budget look, but the fact this is overcome by the intense viewing experience and the consistent layers of meanings made us much like it.