



China shows maturity in *Juvenile*

"It's like your baby for so long. You work with it for a long time, and then it's gone and you forget about it – like an ex-boyfriend."

Bold, witty, intelligent – these words describe both the film *Juvenile* and its director, China Moo-Young. With an impressive collection of projects behind her, including computer game *Get Away: Black Monday*, and *Liar*, a short film that was screened at Cannes Film Festival in 2006 after winning two runner-up titles from the New Producers Alliance, China shows no indication of slowing down. Born English Chinese Jamaican and raised in London, at the young age of 29 this filmmaker is one who has more than earned the accolades following her work.

Her latest work, *Juvenile*, was released this spring and showcases her talent as a director. The visuals are stunning, and the overall feel of the film manages to be serious without causing an onset of depression for the viewer. The script, written by Glenn Doherty (who also plays the role of Steve in the film), gives the story of a single father realizing his daughter's impending adulthood while he still has some growing up to do himself. Solid and believable performances from Sophie Shaw-Foucher (the daughter, Sarah) and Louis Sheridan Cordice (Leon, Sarah's boyfriend) compliment that of Doherty to bring the movie a step beyond being another ordinary indie short.

Though the dialogue for the film was taken largely straight from the script – "Glenn has a natural feel for dialogue," says China – her skill as a director in the visual arts is

presented with scene after scene of brilliant frames. Every shot displays her attention to detail, which she says is critical in short films where directors lack the time to draw out scenes and character development. The decidedly gray tone of the movie came about as a happy misfortune – *Juvenile* was set to be filmed at the end of the summer and happened to be scheduled during a week of gray skies. Though China had intended for the color scheme to be brighter and more lively (and therefore having a more light-hearted effect on the viewer), the end result is a slightly more somber set kept alive by witty dialogue and visual jokes.

Despite all of her experience on previous projects, China continues to learn and experiment with new film techniques – this time using 35mm film and aiming for more of an all-around cinematic experience. Her new goal included increased attention to the film's soundtrack, relying on the music's storytelling abilities to boost that of the script and image, meaning a return to the musical duo Oskar who were also on board for *Liar*. A personal favorite of hers, China fell in love with their sound four years ago, and Oskar continues to win fanfare for their contributions to film and their own band projects.

So what's her secret to creating exceptional films? "A good script and good actors to bring it alive," she declares, revealing a deep appreciation for what

actors bring to the table and recognizing their importance to the outcome of her projects. For her, working with the actors is a pleasure; especially actors like Doherty, who asks critical questions during rehearsal and pushes her as a director to get more in touch with the personal and realistic representations of the characters. Though her appreciation of their abilities is serious, noting that trust is a key element in the director/actor equation, China doesn't let that get in the way of enjoying herself. She says of rehearsal, "You spend three months, playing around and getting to know each other," before everyone gets down to the business of filming.

Currently China is working on a feature-length drama, again with actor/writer Doherty, which she describes as a "...gritty, cheap British bit of realism with drama and comedy," not entirely unlike *Juvenile*. While her list of achievements continues to grow, little time is spent dwelling on past accomplishments; "I just look forward," she says. "It's like your baby for so long. You work with it for a long time, and then it's gone and you forget about it – like an ex-boyfriend."

While there is no release date set for her next project, *Juvenile* is available through FutureShorts, released through WantedFilms.

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