

'The Owner' delivers unique film journey

*Dynamism, ambiguity provides
CollabFeature with eternal fuel for
discussion, imagination*

AMANDA MOONEY
Contributing Writer

'One Backpack. One World. One Journey.' That is the tagline of the Detroit-based independent film group CollabFeature's production, entitled "The Owner," which screened for the last time in the Detroit area at Main Art Theatre in Royal Oak. The film is the collaborative effort of 25 filmmakers across 13 countries, with the project headed by CollabFeature founders Marty Shea and Ian Bonner.

"The Owner" follows the international journey of a mysterious backpack as it's passed along to different people through different circumstances, all the while teasing the audience on whether the backpack will be returned to its unseen owner, known only as "MacGuffin," though at times throughout the film viewers may find themselves questioning if MacGuffin even exists, or if he's even the owner.

But this is how the film sinks its teeth in to the audience: ambiguity. Not just regarding MacGuffin, but about the meaning (or meanings) of the film in general. It plays into that human thirst for discovery and resolution, and keeps your attention. It's also a film that is open for discussion, one from which many interpretations can be made, reflecting the diverse production concept.

Each segment of the story is directed by a different filmmaker, making it an interesting approach to the production of a film with the story being told from the perspective of 25

directors, as opposed to that of one. The backpack is like the torch being passed to each director as the story progresses.

Though having so many creative minds on one project may seem like it'd make for chaotic storytelling, not in this case. "The Owner" does a great job of keeping with continuity and consistency. It's not exactly an add-on story. It has an established framework, and the details are just seen through different eyes.

According to Shea, this production concept represents how the one world we live in is perceived by the many different people in it. Not many films do this, and it's that diverse and novel concept that makes "The Owner" worth checking out.

Since "The Owner" is an international collaboration, nearly each segment is in a different language (there are subtitles, fear not). Despite this, the acting is very expressive and the delivery is engaging enough to where the audience can still generally know what's going on, regardless of subtitles. The film is also very visually pleasing, with beautifully-composed and vividly-rendered cinematography of the many locations in which it takes place.

"The Owner" is dynamic. Even after the film ends, the passing of the backpack seems to continue as the audience shares and interprets the world of "The Owner" in its own ways.

"The Owner" is now available for DVD purchase, digital download and digital rental via the CollabFeature website at www.collabfeature.com.