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Spiral Farm

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Spiral Farm

Abstract

This is a film review of *Spiral Farm* (2019) directed by Alec Tibaldi.

Author Notes

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Spiral Farm (2019), dir. Alec Tibaldi

Spiral Farm, for which the movie is named, is a commune-like community that is off the beaten path. It is identified as a place of understanding and a place of acceptance—noble goals to be sure. Spiral Farm is a mostly self-sufficient community where people work together for the common good and where people can come to know themselves and to experience life in the moment—again, noble goals.

Anahita has spent most of her life at Spiral Farm. She lives there with her mother, sister, and young nephew, whom she loves very much. While idyllic, Spiral Farm is separated from other communities and somewhat isolated. Into this seemingly peaceful setting comes Maurizio, a former lover of Anahita's mother, Di. While Maurizio brings a distinctive change to the community, it is his young son, Theo, who brings the drama, especially for the young women of Spiral Farm. Anahita's burgeoning sexuality, her love of dance, and her desire to see what lies beyond the community are all stoked by her interactions with Theo. Theo takes Anahita to a dance

audition in the city. She does not get the part, but she does get her first taste of the city and she likes that taste. Before returning to the community, Theo and Anahita spend a night in a motel, thereby further stirring Anahita's sexuality. And Maurizio offers to help Anahita move to the city to attend college. At the end of the movie, Anahita faces the choice between staying in her familiar surroundings with the people who depend on her or striking out on her own to create a new life for herself.

The movie offers the audience an interesting story and you feel as though you are a part of that story. The movie, however, is much more than its story. It examines what it means to live separately from the larger community, to live in isolation from others. How does living in a closed community affect who we are and how we understand the world? *Spiral Farm* is almost a little universe all unto itself. And, what does living apart from others mean for connecting to the world at large? What is the allure of the larger community? Can there be an easy transition from one world to another? And back again?

Since many religious groups are similar to *Spiral Farm*, the movie is also about Amish communities in Iowa, compounds of Mormon polygamists from Arizona all the way to Canada, the Branch Davidians, the followers of the Reverend James Jones in Guyana, small town churches, mega churches, cults of all kinds, home schooled children, even on-line communities. It is also about religion, itself, where religion creates its own world of understanding and values, separating adherents from the larger community.

One technical note about the film: the acting is so natural, so realistic that you feel more like a voyeur than a movie goer. It is as though you are watching real people doing real things in real time. These performances, all of them, draw you into the experiences of the characters. At

the end of the film you will want to know whether you, yourself, should stay at Spiral Farm or strike out for the city.



Piper De Palma, Bill Blizek, and Jade Fusco on the Slamdance Red Carpet for *Spiral Farm*