

Un ponte tra due mondi

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"A bridge between two worlds"

The fact that often, in international festivals, the best movies are relegated in sections of minor importance is not a mystery; this is the case, for example, of *Zero Bridge*, certainly one of the most valuable works seen until now in the kermes, and presented in the *Orizzonti* section at the Mostra di Venezia. The debut director, Tariq Tapa, (this is his first feature) shot his film in Srinagar, Kashmir, his native country.

The protagonist of the story is Dilawar (Mohammed Imran Tapa), a seventeen-year-old rebel from the outskirts of Srinagar. Dilawar lives with his strict uncle; a mason that took the child after his adoptive mother had neglected him. After having abandoned school, he starts working as an apprentice in his uncle's crew to make a living. But after a short time, Dilawar starts hating this restless life of privations, and starts planning his escape to Delhi. In order to realize his dream he starts charging his old classmates to do their math assignments and rounds off picking passenger's pockets. While on errand at the shipping office, he meets the young and beautiful Bani (Tanyia Khan), to whom the boy is immediately attracted, and a tender and conflictive

relationship begins between the two (Bani helps him with the [math] assignments). But at the moment they plan to escape together, Dilawar has difficulties abandoning his shady activities, and their dream crumbles against a wall of responsibilities.

Zero Bridge, a delicate and moving film on this relationship, is a wonderful fresco on the sub-urban India, one of the emerging countries of Asia, yet full of contradictions. The care of personal dimension, the will to recoup and the self-determination of many young people is still struggling with a cultural heritage of observances and religious morals that prevent these souls from making their dreams come true. Dreams that often consist in reaching the "West" (Bani often regrets having left the U.S.) or Delhi, a large city and the capital of India. This hazardous task is always threatened by the difficulty in leaving behind an "antiquated" world of values where self-sacrifice, hard work, and obligation are still vital observances, despite their repressiveness.

Zero Bridge was mostly shot in outside spaces with a portable camera, in natural light as a documentary. With its neo-realist inflection, it is able to introduce us in to a civilization between past and present in the most crude and convincing way, without lacking in moments of tender silences and glances that express the complicity of Dilawar and Bani. The movie takes advantage of this unobvious binomial establishment which exists between a dimension of intimate feelings and a social dimension of self-assertion.

In between, a bridge named Zero. In a struggle to connect two souls, two genders, two worlds, two temporal dimensions. And after the nth afflictive escape from home, Dilawar ends up halfway through, right where an arrogant policemen forbids him to dwell. He stays there waiting, maybe in vain, for Bani's coming. There. On Zero Bridge.