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FILM

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The Refreshing Discovery That Joyland Was

A recent look at this year's everybody's perfect program brought its surprises and great discoveries- one of them being this year's coat of arms of the Pakistani cinema; Joyland.

To start, here is a quick synopsis :

The Ranas, a very patriarchal family, desperately expect a boy as their next-born child. In parallel, the family's youngest son - Haider - enrolls in an erotic theater where he hopelessly falls in love with its trans first act. This seemingly impossible love story shines a light on a family's beliefs and one's yearning for sexual liberation.

The movie features actors such as Ali Junejo, Rasti Farooq, Alina Khan, and Sarwat Gilani. It tackles themes of patriarchal injunctions, queerness, and questions involving sexuality and gender. What more do the people want?

The movie already has had its fair share of success: It's been nominated for several international movie festivals and recently won the *Un certain regard* and the Queer Palm prize at the Cannes Film festival. Categories highlighting up-and-coming artists as well as those tackling often marginalized subjects. This movie, very surprisingly, so is Saim Sadiq's directorial debut.

Although addressing the repression of desires and orientation, the storyline stays very neutral and doesn't present the issues in a very trenchant way. Here, it is not the bad guy versus the good guy scenario like it is often the case in dramas. No, it's way more nuanced than that - a very refreshing proposition.

A piece about societal standards, breaking generational ordinances, and years of unspoken words and secrets. It is harsh in the silence and pressure it shows, sometimes tearing in the deep sadness illustrated at times. However, it is not an entirely sad movie as it is playful and truly funny at moments. All in all, it takes us beyond taboos and questions the fundamentals of its setting.

And a point couldn't be more proven as it's been critically acclaimed since its launch. And even managed to be the first-ever Pakistani production to be displayed at the Cannes film festival; a veritable milestone has been set.

It's also proven to be a crowd favorite; it offers cultural discovery and a general perspective on topics and feelings we can also universally commiserate.

Overall, it gives a fresh perspective on Pakistani life, culture, and family traditions. A visual journey of pure love accompanied by just magnificent shots and ambiances. You might cry and laugh during the experience, which is its beauty—a solid piece led with great storytelling and mesmerizing imagery. A remarkable discovery and a piece to absolutely check out!

A screening is going to take place at everybody's perfect festival on the 16th of October at 2:30 pm, more info on:

<https://www.everybodysperfect.ch/events/joyland/>

Images courtesy of the movie