

DALI DOES DARIO

Desecration DVD

Starring Irma St. Paule, Danny Lopes and Christie Sanford
Written and directed by Dante Tomaselli
Image Entertainment

Recently, a few small wonders like *Blair Witch* and *The Last Broadcast* have rescued the phrase "low-budget independent horror film" from becoming a truly dirty word, but it still doesn't usually inspire the greatest confidence that what you're about to watch isn't a corn-infested pile of direct-to-video stool. But every so often you're treated to something that is so much more than it probably should have been, and you're reminded of a time when the word "style" meant as much to a director as it did to the costume designer.

Enter *Desecration*, the twisted supernatural exploration of a young boy's personal hell from first time writer/director Dante Tomaselli. With \$150,000, a single 16 mil camera, and a whole lot of balls, Tomaselli has aptly crafted his own short film into a full-length surrealistic nightmare voyage into the mind of a cursed Catholic boy haunted by the memory of his mother's sudden death.

The story surrounds the ghastly chain of events terrorizing young Bobby (Danny Lopes) after he accidentally wipes out a nun with his model airplane. Through a series of dream sequences à la *Jacob's Ladder*, Bobby discovers that, for reasons left open-ended, the ghost of his dead Mother is trying to use him to escape from hell. What we don't really know is why she's there in the first place or how she plans to do it. But that's pretty much just pointless detail — the Euro horror influence in *Desecration* is unmistakable.

Dialogue takes a back seat to the rhythmic soundtrack and pulsing sound loops created by Dante's brother Michael. Vivid color schemes and dazzling imagery compensate for a plot that's either too convoluted to follow or just weak. But the overall result works in the sense that you don't so much watch a movie like this, you feel it. It's a nasty, powerful vision born of an obvious passion for the material and love for the genre.

In that sense I can forgive the occasional over-indulgence of art-house sensibility. With a little more space I'd tell you about two sedately creepy goblin clowns and the horribly hilarious cough of Bobby's grandmother, so you'll just have to trust me on that.



Desecration: ghastly surrealism.

But like *Blair Witch*, *Desecration* does a lot with very little. It just does it in a very different way. I'm anxious in see Tomaselli's beautifully twisted imagery tossed up against a storyline. I certainly can't question the man's potential as a future mainstay in the kingdom of surrealist/atmospheric horror. *Desecration* is easily the best European horror flick ever filmed in New Jersey.

-Tom Dragomir

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