



HIGH LIFE

IndiePix, \$7.95 download

High Life (2005) is about overgrown adolescents—a subject fully exploited by *The Real World*—but director Lila Yomtoob's version offers less sensation and a more thoughtful approach. She graduated from film school frustrated with the notion of a fixed script and the actors-as-pawns-of-the-director model. Inspired by Leigh and Cassavetes, she researched different acting and “being” exercises and cast a group of actors comfortable with improvisation. They spent three months establishing their characters and building up the relationships in the story. Using three mini-DV cameras, they shot an afternoon in the lives of the characters, as they wait for a missing friend. Smartly edited by Yomtoob, the film manages to traverse a range of interactions from solo portraits to intimate entanglements to divergent ensembles. Her choice to make a collaborative film is courageous, and her promising skill as a director is evident in the convincing performances she helped her actors to form; but the energy of the story dissipates as the characters settle back into their lives only marginally changed. Maybe this is intentional, but I wish some of the characters had more fervor, that more than juvenile drama and listless aspirations fed their lives. indiepix.net

—Marcia Scott