

Focus on Film

Drama

The Samuel Project

Sunday, May 5, 2019 @ 1:00 p.m.

Director: Marc Fusco, 2018 USA

Running time: 92 minutes English

Eli is a high school student who loves art and wants to pursue it. Like so many creatives, his father thinks art is fine for a hobby, but doesn't get behind Eli's plans to pursue it professionally.

A competition provides a chance for him to prove himself, but he needs a topic for the film he wants to create. Spending an afternoon with his grandfather, Samuel, with whom he has not been close, leads to a discovery that gives Eli a focus for his film.

As his grandfather relates his experiences in Europe during World War II, Eli learns not only about his grandfather's past and his family, but gets to know him and all of the people in his life, including customers and employees of his grandfather's dry-cleaning business.

Eli expresses himself and all he is learning about his grandfather's past and present, and the people in his life through his drawings.

And through his drawings, we get a glimpse into what Eli is seeing and how he feels about it.

Like any true artist, all that he learns and experiences is synthesized through the filter of his art. In the end, all the people he meets through creating the Samuel project and all he learns and experiences come together in and around the act of creating his film and presenting it. And like all stories, it changes the people who live through it and the people who come to understand it through the storytelling of the film. Eli, in the end, creates something that affects all the people around him in ways you'll want to see the film to learn about. With beautiful animation throughout, *The Samuel Project* is an incredible story of perseverance and survival.

Reviewed by Beth Robinson

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