

Cate Giordano: Sculpture, Satire, Original Score.



Cate Giordano makes filmmaking look easy. Just pick up a camera and mess around. Her films are so light to watch that you don't notice their bizarre complexity, until the fake-mustached protagonist transforms himself (herself) into the female lead and climbs out of a cardboard lion. No, I'm serious: this makes perfect sense.

What carries the absurdity is the fact that Cate's main character is—in all of his or her incarnations—a charmingly ineffectual everyman. The characters range in development. In the shorter films, the humor is sometimes just situational: eating pizza in a clothing boutique, asking the shop girl if she wants to star in a feminist film called *Ass n Titties*. As the program continues, we meet Hunter Dodge, who dances with his wooden wife, and tries to defend her from malicious attempts on her life (is she alive?) by Hunter's trampy ex, a pouting, chain-smoking blonde.

Overacting plus a great wig collection fills the work with easy laughs, but the melodrama actually saves the metaphors from being heavy. If you write them down— a paper lion, a mythical white buffalo, a wooden wife—they might sound trite, but they appear in such an absurd narrative structure that they feel completely fresh. It is also helpful that Giordano is a sculptor. The beasts are pretty awesome, even on film. In the Q&A, she mentioned that *Italian Vogue* temporarily (and without permission) appropriated one of her buffalo for a photo shoot.

Heritage is the most complex work in the program. Beau, a buffalo hunter made irrelevant by modernity, persecuted by his wife Ruby and a crew of maniacal evangelists, leaves home in search of the white buffalo. Strange adventures ensue, including baptism by blue paint, doppelgangers, and humanoids made of spray-foam and cardboard. I especially appreciated the automatic garage door as a cinematic tool, and an unexpected cut where a poetic and dreamlike sequence ends with a view of Costco. In her comments after the films, Giordano said that she works without a script; editing is like writing. Yeah, I get that.

