

Glasgow Film Fest 2015 – Memphis (Tim Sutton, 2013)



In amongst the airy, ethereal atmosphere of Tim Sutton's Memphis, there lies promise. An idea that could make this film work in a sort of bizarre amalgamation of Beasts of the Southern Wild and Gummo. Both of those are blinding and beautiful depictions of the deep south that work in their sprawling style. Memphis gets unfortunately caught in between these genres with very little to engage with.

A struggling blues musician arrives in the city of Memphis, exploring its streets and meeting its people who force him to do better by telling him his voice is a gift from God.

Memphis has the laudable talent of looking and sounding sublime. Often, the film is engrossing through its ability to wash over you; visceral and seductive as if you're in that searing summer setting. It follows the life of a musician inspired partly by the star, the talented Willis Earl Beal in a sort of cinéma vérité style, depicting his almost nonchalance attitude with such an intensity the film itself becomes non progressive. Its finer moments lie in the scenes where Beal isn't centre stage. Uproarious church sermons, young childhood friendships and a mother with children, telling stories of the city she grows up in. The glimmers of potential here are, unfortunately, overshadowed by a character and script that's a little too obtuse.

Atmospheric depictions of life in a cultured city are the minor beauties in Memphis – a film otherwise a little too underdeveloped to be engaging.



Memphis plays at the Glasgow Film Festival on Thursday
26th/Friday 27th February. More information [here](#).