

EIFF – Where is Kyra? (2016)

99 mins ***



Kyra (Michelle Pfeiffer) lives with her mother in Brooklyn, having left her Virginia husband and an unsatisfactory life the previous year. When her mother dies she struggles to make ends meet, trying hard but failing to find a job to pay the bills. One day she meets Doug (Kiefer Sutherland) who lives in the same building and they begin a relationship, each feeling that at last they have begun to make better lives than before and can leave their mistakes and poor life decisions behind.

There is a relentless bleakness in this examination of the downward spiral of poverty and fate as it stumbles towards an inevitably bad end. Pfeiffer carries with her a pall of sadness and an air of desperation making the viewer want to shout at Sutherland to cut his losses and continue to improve his own life rather than try to rescue the lost cause that is Kyra.

Andrew Dosunmu is a photographer as well as a filmmaker and this is evident in the stylish setting of his shots. Oscar-nominated cinematographer Bradford Young's lighting matches the sombre mood of the film and Philip Millar's music jars and serrates when Kyra's life begins to twist out of control. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2017.

