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FINDING LOVE BEYOND BORDERS

April 02, 2017 | posted by Lara Klaber in Filmmakers



Love reveals itself in all matters of shapes, colors, and sizes, and pops up in the most unexpected places. That's a key takeaway from "Signature Move," which follows Zaynab, a lesbian Muslim from Pakistan, who meets Mexican-American Alma while dabbling in amateur wrestling in Chicago. Not uncommon of many relationships, the two bond over their cultural similarities—food, tradition, religion, and the importance of family—and quickly fall in love.

"Signature Move" is an autobiographical film directed by Jennifer Reeder and written by Fawzia Mirza, who also stars as Zaynab.

"Fawzia's story was really different from a story I would write, but I wanted to take on the challenge of directing a script I didn't write, and one that is accessible," comments Reeder. "My own scripts tend to be dark, or take on aspects of magical realism, but this is a pretty straightforward family drama."

While neither culture—Muslim-American or Mexican-American—is native to Reeder, her aim was to represent each as authentically as possible.

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opportunities to alumni of CIO programs to be part of her film projects to give them hands on experience.

“I feel like I’ve given experiences to my students I would have liked as a young film student,” says Reeder. “The best way to learn how to make films is to make films.”

Reeder grew up in central Ohio and has spent the last two decades living in Chicago. This is the first opportunity she’s had to bring one of her films to the CIFF screen.

“Even though I’ve lived outside Ohio for 20 years, I’m an Ohio girl,” says Reeder.

“Being able to return to my home state a successful filmmaker, with a film I feel really proud of, is very validating, and I don’t take it for granted.”

—Amy Brown



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