

RUBY:

PORTRAIT OF A BLACK GIRL LIVING IN THE SUBURBS

A FILM BY RAVEN JOHNSON



RUBY:

PORTRAIT OF A BLACK GIRL LIVING IN THE SUBURBS

A film by Raven Johnson



cinéfondation
LA RÉSIDENCE

Raven Johnson

E-mail: RubyFilm2020@gmail.com

Festival de Cannes

5, rue Charlot, F-75003 Paris
Tel. 33 (0) 1 53 59 61 20
Fax 33 (0) 1 53 59 61 24
E-mail:
residence@festival-cannes.fr
www.festival-cannes.org

Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or

even first feature film, and the merits of their feature film project. During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.

Technical Information

Working Title: Ruby: Portrait of a Black Girl Living in the Suburbs
Director: Raven Johnson
Screenplay: Raven Johnson
Nationality: United States
Genre: Drama / Coming of Age
Format: Digital
Length: 100 min
Shooting location: United States

Director's Information

Raven Johnson is a Liberian-American filmmaker from the Midwest of the United States. She recently received her MFA from NYU Tisch and was named one of AT&T's Emerging Filmmakers in 2017.

Raven's short film, *Tween*, was awarded Student Choice Award at the 41st Cleveland International Festival where she was invited as a speaker and also had its international premiere at the 62nd BFI London Film Festival. Raven's work is often an exploration of race, the African diaspora, and the sophisticated ways in which modern day racism continues to live on and thrive.



cinéfondation
LA RÉSIDENCE

Synopsis

Ruby (15) is your typical American teen living in the predominately white suburb of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota with her large, West African family. Constantly in the shadows of her popular, over-achieving sister, Florence (18) and her basketball prodigy brother, Marcus (12), Ruby spends her time away from home and running in the streets with her group of white friends and her bi-racial boyfriend, Chad (17). But when Florence becomes pregnant by a much older man and Marcus breaks his leg, all of the family's hopes and dreams are suddenly shifted onto Ruby. Now finally in the spotlight of her divorcing parents' love and adoration, Ruby will do everything she can not to crumble under the pressure and make sure she stays the apple of their eye.

Statement of Intent

My work focuses on Black Faces in White Spaces. I grew up in the American Midwest with a huge Liberian immigrant family and have therefor always felt a disconnect on where I belong. With this film, my goal is to explore immigrant identity and the costs of assimilating into Western ideals and culture. Through Ruby and her siblings, I will examine both the small and monumental choices one must make in order to successfully thrive in a country like the United States of America where it can be so easy to be labeled an "Other." Through this film, I will explore if, as a second-generation immigrant and a first-generation American, it is possible to hold onto two countries at once – the land of one's ancestors and the land that one has just recently learned to call home?

Synopsis

Ruby (15 ans) est une adolescente américaine typique qui vit dans la banlieue à prédominance blanche de Brooklyn Park, dans le Minnesota, avec sa grande famille ouest-africaine. Constamment dans l'ombre de sa sœur populaire et très performante, Florence (18 ans) et de son frère prodige du basket-ball, Marcus (12 ans), Ruby passe son temps loin de chez elle et court dans les rues avec son groupe d'amis blancs et son petit ami bi-racial, Chad (17 ans). Mais lorsque Florence tombe enceinte d'un homme beaucoup plus âgé et que Marcus se casse la jambe, tous les espoirs et les rêves de la famille sont soudain tournés vers Ruby. Enfin sous les feux de l'amour et de l'adoration de ses parents en instance de divorce, Ruby fera tout ce qu'elle peut pour ne pas s'effondrer sous la pression et s'assurer qu'elle reste la prunelle de leurs yeux.

Note d'intention

Mon travail se concentre sur les visages noirs dans les environnements blancs. J'ai grandi dans le Midwest américain au sein d'une immense famille d'immigrants libériens et j'ai donc toujours ressenti une déconnexion par rapport à ma place. Avec ce film, mon but est d'explorer l'identité des immigrants et les coûts de l'assimilation aux idéaux et à la culture de l'Occident. À travers Ruby, ses frères et sœurs, j'examinerai les choix, petits et grands, que l'on doit faire pour réussir à s'épanouir dans un pays comme les États-Unis où il est si facile d'être étiqueté « Autre ». À travers ce film, je vais explorer si, en tant qu'immigrant de deuxième génération et Américain de première génération, il est possible de s'accrocher à deux pays à la fois – la terre de ses ancêtres et la terre que l'on vient d'apprendre à appeler son chez-soi ?

