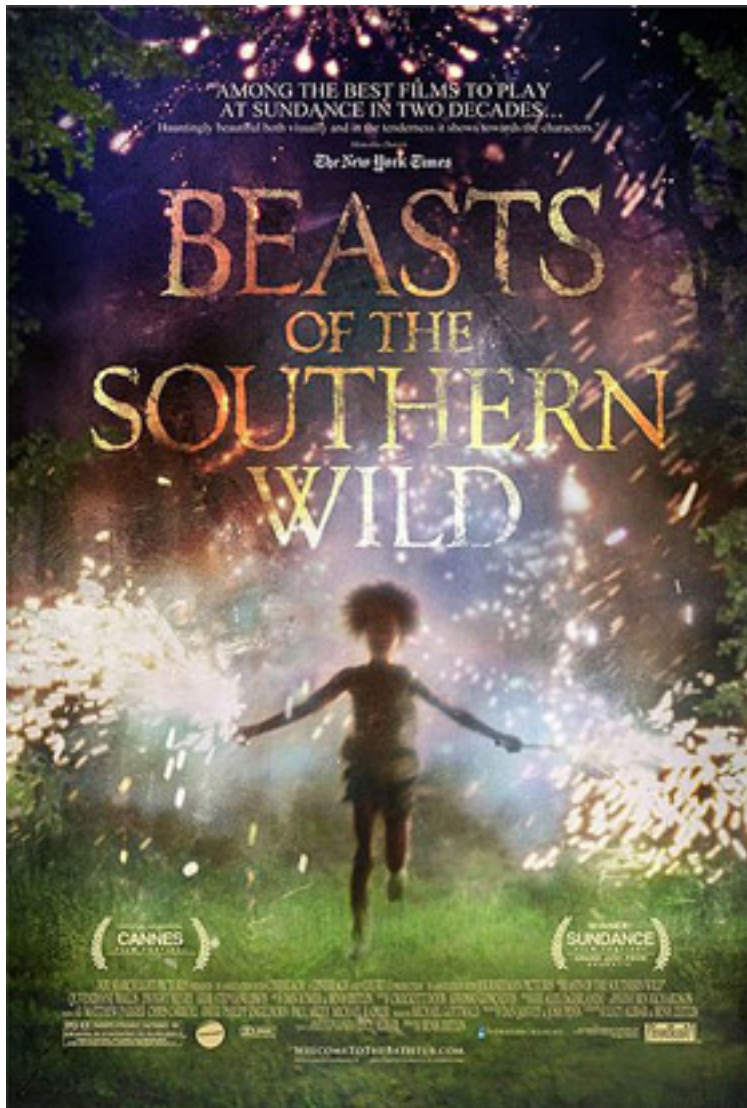


Naïve waif laments climate change in surreal cautionary tale

Written by Kam Williams , DVD Review



6 year-old Hushpuppy (Quvenzhané Wallis) is being raised under the radar in “The Bathtub,” a backwoods bayou located on the swamp side of a Louisiana levee. The self-sufficient tomboy divides her days between attending to her sickly father (Dwight Henry) and living in harmony with a handful of other hardy refugees from civilization.

Hushpuppy feels sorry for children growing up on land in nearby New Orleans because they eat fish wrapped in plastic and have been taught to fear the water. And while those city kids were caged in strollers and baby carriages during their formative years, she’s been free to explore surroundings teeming with vegetation and a menagerie of wildlife.

Yet, her existence is far from idyllic, given how much she pines for the mother her ostensibly-widowed daddy says simply “swam away” one day. The heartbroken little girl tries to fill the void via flights of fancy coming courtesy of a vivid imagination that enables her to carry on imaginary conversations with her long-lost mom.

Hushpuppy’s vulnerability is further amplified by her father’s failing health and by an ominous foreboding that climate change could destabilize the eco-system of her natural habitat. For, she’s been warned by Miss Bathsheeba (Gina Montana), a sage soothsayer who also serves as

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her surrogate mother that “The trees are gonna die first, then the animals, then the fish.”

So unfolds "Beasts of the Southern Wild", a compelling parable marking the extraordinary directorial debut of Benh Zeitlin. Considerable credit must go to newcomer Quvenzhané Wallis, a talented youngster who not only portrays protagonist Hushpuppy but narrates the film as well.



Like a clever cross of Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn and Al Gore’s An Inconvenient Truth, the movie repeatedly reminds us of a pre-pollution, pre-digital era when children were still encouraged to plunge headlong into nature to experience the world firsthand rather than artificially through electronic stimuli.

A visually-enchanting fantasy shot from the perspective of a naïve waif miraculously untainted by civilization.

Excellent (4 stars)

Rated PG-13 for profanity, mature themes, child imperilment, disturbing images and brief sensuality.

Running time: 91 minutes

Distributor: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

Blu-ray/DVD Combo Pack Extras: Auditions; The Aurochs; “Glory at Sea,” an original short film; deleted scenes with director’s commentary; “The Making of” documentary; digital copy; music featurette; and more.

To see a trailer for "Beasts of the Southern Wild", visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LA6F Fnjvvmg>

To order a copy of the "Beasts of the Southern Wild" Blu-ray/DVD Combo Pack, visit: <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B008220ALC/ref%3dnosim/thslfofire-20>