



'Sleep Furiously' is a Powerfully Sincere Film and a Promising Start for First Time Director

By Christopher Clemente
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Sleep Furiously
Directed by Gideon Koppel
Wales, 2011

From movement comes rest, humble beginnings comes fading memories, and from individual stories comes a sense of community. Thus is the subtle tone and slow pace of Gideon Koppel's *Sleep Furiously*, telling the unbiased story of a small Welsh farming community making the best of life by surviving one day at a time. Quaint in nature and small in scope, Koppel gives an unprecedented look at the struggling community without any signs of hope or resolution. From the film's

observations, comes a sense of empathy and longing that can only be contrived by the truth extracted innocently from those observations.

Sleep Furiously does not hold back in making an outsider feel at home. Each character introduced immerses the viewer into the life that is this farming community. Whether it be watching a sheep herder fussing and frustrating over getting his flock back into its pen, or seeing the facial expressions of a woman orchestrating her church choir, or following a lonely librarian drive his van to give an elderly woman her shipment of books, Koppel stirs emotions of unity and relatability onto the audience simply by showing the community in its entirety and doing so in a candid fashion.



There is style to the film that ejects nodes of motion, yet in the end it's inevitable to realize that the community and its inhabitants are at a standstill. Scenery elapsed by speed time, a baby tossing in his sleep through fast framing, and the blurring of night lights are small examples alluding to the notion that

the community must go on as it disappears. Even more apparent than the visuals, is Aphex Twin's epic soundtrack. Music and sound bleed into scenes, propelling the film along. Yet in the end, the credits must fade and the film must finish. Like the farmers taking a lunch break propped up against their tractors or the sheep shearers resting on woolly floors, perhaps the title is an outcry of how things are for the future generations of the Welsh community. Although it's time for the older residents to whine down, they'll go to sleep as hard as they have worked their daily lives and they'll do it together. All in all, *Sleep Furiously* is a powerfully sincere film and a promising start for first time director Gideon Koppel, with prospects of even greater things to come.

Sleep Furiously will be available for streaming on Fandor (www.fandor.com/sleep_furiously) for only 24 hours on July 29, coinciding with its New York City opening at Cinema Village.