The Photograph

Movie Review & Analysis: ***The Photograph & Music***

The Photograph, is a 2020 urban love story from the past and of the future. It is an expression of '*black love*' and how past time stigmatisms and the desire to become something symbolic of a success carved a wedge between men and women. This work has shown the sensitivity of a man, the determination of a woman and the loss in love ones failure to follow his heart can bring.

Others have compared this tale to that of 1990's *Love Jones*, a black love story seen in movie theaters nationwide, which was a timely necessity toward the inspiration of relationships, a genuine vision of the intensity in building a life and having a career, symbolic of young Black America and our dependency upon friendships. In *The Photograph* we see the difference it bares from *Love Jones* as this writer brings us into her undertaking of love through Christina's expression of an internal force, a passion, to take photographs and become someone special in life as the voice behind each photo.

This character, is exemplary of the lives of those who've lost loves in the ethnic struggle to gain cultural and financial ground, especially as a woman. We interpret Christina striving to fulfill those innate urges beyond the boundaries of home life, caution of becoming a married woman raising babies and taking care of home, whatever it was comprised of. We interpret the uncertainty of her choices and understand that there are regrets of both she and Isaac, her boyfriend. Regrets can out weigh the pride and blessing from obtaining our objectives. However, inside that intentional loss and risk in love is the discovery that love is transferable and different with different people. Inside the conditions which enable us to have loved and lost are those which inspire us to love again.

The timing, within this storyline, of journalist Michaels [*LaKeith Stanfield]* interviewing Isaac for another interest which is then overcast by a simple photograph of Christina and his longing to know her whereabouts. This sets him on a historical journey in up-holding the promise he's made, man to man. This gives *The Photograph* a sense of perfection relative to Michael's natural spirit as an influencer upon his intuition. His decision to follow through with finding Christina [*Chante' Adams]*, Isaac's past love, leads him into a fling with Mae [*Issa Rae*]. As he stumbles into infatuation, bed and the pursuit of happiness, viewers both understand the distance between one's heart and one's mind as Mae's mother chose to leave the father of her daughter Mae behind and outside of their lives until after her death. In finding a new life and husband to raise Mae, she buried the hurt of leaving him and home, Louisiana, in her work and drive to become a recognized photographer. Though we imagine she is bitter with his sudden marriage soon after she's moved away we also know that her becoming a success gave credibility to her decision to escape the confinement of home in a small town for a better life in the big city. As the only regret Christina has was the lie she held from Mae and Isaac [*Rob Morgan*]. He too chose to ignore the suspicion of this child she had soon after she has left home and we are privy to his expression of regret for not having gone after her up to New York City.

She comments that she refused to have her greatest accomplishment become 'cooking you dinner' as if that was exactly how Christina envisioned her mother's opinion of Issac Jefferson and his wife of

choice. It was an assurance that she'd gifted Mae something of greater importance and that is of having proved herself as a career woman well beyond the borders of her small insulated town.

Each photograph she had taken well before running off for a career, is a protection of what her heart held dearest spurning emotion, memories, and recapturing time. Mortality itself can not defeat a photographic projection of life and those we live it with.

These are camera images which are later focused onto film or other light sensitive material and made visible & permanent by chemical treatment. Today they are also stored digitally. Memorabilia that is restoration of the past. Symbolism of the chemical mixture created to store such featured projections is comparative to that of our natural biological change that brings about such emotion and mental suggestions in and of love one unto another. Though it can and will fade (emotions), the possibility of regenerating its original intent, memory, is always possible through photographs. Thanks for this fascination belongs also to Joseph Nicephore Niepce who invented photography in 1826.

It was the photo of Christina's which provoked reporter for the Republic, Michaels, interest which turned into his affinity for Mae upon their first encounter at the Queen's Museum.

And, as this film suggest, there is the possibility of two growing unities in Mae and her girlfriend [*Jasmine Cephas Jones*] willingness to date both Michael and his workmate Andy[*Kelvin Harrison Jr.*]. The concept of a good balanced man is defined in their careers, fluid attractions and for Mae embroiled within the concept of a good marriage portrayed by Mae's father [*Courtney B. Vance*] and Michael's sister and brother in-law [Kyle: *Lil Rel Howery*] as *for real* loving couples.

In the end of our story, we see Michael Block travels to London for a new job with the 'Associated Press', as an attempt to spread his wings and grow within his industry. It is also forming a life abroad in an estranged territory. Mae's desire is unaccepting of letting the potential of their bulbing relationship escape a really beautiful bloom as she forwardly travels overseas to meet him for a concert. Her approach to their long distance problem is much more modern and well evolved from that of her fathers who let mother Christina tear their growing love into non-existing shreds.

Despite the writer and music coordinator, Robert Glasper's, decision to use songs such as 'Superwoman, Comfortable, Ain't Nobody, and If this world were mine' in this film, I had to ask myself after watching this flick twice why and what was the urgency in mentioning the *Kendrick Lamar* concert and using him as a symbolic commonality between the two. In reaching for a suitable answer I sat and listened to some of his music as I am familiar yet ignorant of his list of accomplishments. In having done so, locked in song and wrapped within a quote from this notable rapper and music artist was the comparative use of both forms of media. Kendrick Lamar as recognized by our characters within The Photograph, unlike film and imagery, poses the question, "If a flower bloomed in a dark room, would you trust it?" Flowers, just as relationships, require light and nutrients as energy for growth and blooming into its best form.

No Makeup ft. Colin Munroe [released July 2, 2011]

The use of Section 80 and its lyrical collision with personal imperfection and his use of make-up blowing ones cover while it covers-up is indicator for the lies to blow-up well after her death minimizing the impact it would have held upon their relationship. There the 'black eye' bestowed upon her even

in death for the decision to escape the south and loose love as his 'model for a mac book' lyrics is the 'cameo' session she has with her real father after years of failed acknowledgement. As I've interpreted that Christina has 'no regrets' remember, she's 'not sorry' she barely had time to cook Mae dinner nor for taking her from the south.

Family Ties [released August 27, 2021]

Family Ties video has full use of a *photographic scenic collage* design for the video itself in identifying with its use of digital form of photographs and memories of hanging out, kids, color lines, and other aspects of life and living all capable of modern day storage as music video media. Reflection of the past, gang banging, color lines and the seventies just as Mae is forced to realize and rethink her prospective of her mother and the choices she made only conserved in written words, photographs, and the realities during her very existence in life. This video is symbolic of seclusion and the means by which may become inclusive aspect of this culture and this world.

The only dilemma is my recognition of the King's Dead [released January 11, 2018] as she too is on tour in the experience of meeting her real father well before his existence [in death] leaves her on an empty street and grants her a place surrounded by fast moving cars onto her future full of knowledge, understanding their loss and accepting a chance at love within a different world from that of her mothers youth. For this piece, inside the realties in Lamar's rap lyrics is the strength of change and becoming excluded, outside the rim of each artist's interpreted life style through lyric and chorus and fulfilled in each characterization he described in the end of this rap song.

In our films conclusion, she, *Rae*, leaps out in faith and flowing emotion into a zone to save and have this man her heart she says may be her true love. All while she has protected the nature and sense of her youthful experiences with her mother as a photographer through the walls of her own career choice with the museum. It seems that the timing of learning the truth of her father and mothers burdensome lie in transplanting them, Mae and herself, in the big city is timely enough to save her from making the same mistake. As time brings changes only photographs can store, time in this film has exchanged the values in having a career as women, knowing and understanding the desire and sacrifices in relationships, and dealing with the suggested struggle found within her inability to let go and his choice to proceed with the opportunity abroad despite what he felt.

'The Photographs' Canadian film director and screenwriter, Stella Meghie, has chosen to create her own spin from the much loved film Love Jones as it falls in line with her prior works depiction of women and their issue in life and relationships in both film and television. She is well within the onset of a successful career as director with notables such as Everything, Everything, The Weekend and episodes from Grown-ish and Insecure among others.