

35 Shots

By Lauren Parkes

A subtle, under-the-radar sort of film, *35 Shots* is a spectacular example of what international film is all about. It begins as a jumbled mess of irregular connections but soon blossoms into an intricate web of relationships within a working-class apartment building. Father and daughter, Lionel and Josephine, live alone in their tiny apartment; however, they are kept company by Noe and Gabrielle, other residents in the close-knit complex.

The film follows these four, among others, as they come to discover the meaning of life, the meaning of family, and their place in the world. They all must come to grips with the arrival of the new and the departure of the familiar, however sudden.

Unlike most films today, *35 Shots* is a slow-moving, delicate piece that shows little climactic build-up or resolution. The use of symbolism to portray the complexity of relationships is harnessed and delivered to the audience in a way that is hard to resist. Director Claire Denis does not underestimate the intelligence of her audience as she develops the intimate relationships between her characters.

The techniques used in *35 Shots* are perhaps subtler than others; rather than manipulating angles and lighting, Denis uses the faint marginalisation and privileging of certain sides to silently explain the issues her characters are experiencing. Little is directly told in this film; most finer details are found within the smaller dealings between father and daughter, neighbour and neighbour, love and love.

This heartfelt masterpiece explores the inner workings of family life and the trials and tribulations associated with breaking free of these connections; well-deserved congratulations must go to Claire Denis.