



[CINÉMA](#) 12/08/2009 À 06H52

Article by Didier Peron

People on Vacation: Locarno is not a film market, it is a festival geared essentially towards an audience made out of people on vacation (Swiss, Italians, Germans...) who show up in the projection rooms or during the open-air evening shows on the Piazza Grande, notwithstanding the frequent rain. From that perspective, the new artistic director, Olivier Père, is inheriting a very healthy situation.

So far, the best is coming from the unofficial selections. First with **October Country**, an American documentary about a poor family from the suburb of New York, the Moshers. They accumulate neurotic behaviors, traumas and problems of all kind over 3 generations and play it out under the same roof. The grandparents, the divorced mother, 2 daughters (one of whom is already a mother herself), an adoptive son, Chris, picked up on the street and one absentee. In fact, the absentee is the son, Donal Mosher, who is hidden behind the camera with his accomplice, Michael Palmieri. He is never seen on screen. He made it out of the circle of misery which paralyses his relatives. The grandfather, formerly a sweet young man, became cold and bitter after the horrific experience of Vietnam. His daughter was knocked up at a young age by a jerk who used to beat her up. Her oldest daughter, even though she seems to have awareness of the situation, is reproducing the same pattern of behavior: a boyfriend, a baby, and lots of bruises. Chris, the foster child, shows off, hones his skills as a thief and a dealer. He repays his foster family by stealing from them (computer, TV, stereo) and disappears for a while. The grandfather's sister is also part of the trip; from an early age, she locked herself into a Gothic world. She plays witch, isolated, heavily medicated, speaking to dead people, her only friends, in cemeteries. Her brother hates her; he thinks she is "of no use to society". The remarkable sophistication of the editing never shortens the time allocated to the different protagonists to express themselves. These people, ghosts in their own lives, in the Director's own words, wander in the darkness of a society dominated by competition, the taste for war, and the normalization of abandonment.