

Must-see â??Limited Screeningâ?• Baato Begins the 2020 Mountainfilm Festival

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Nothing quite like leaping into uncharted waters. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Mountainfilm Festival re-imagined this yearâ??s edition into a virtual experience. And boy, am I glad they did. With over 100 on-demand films and presentations over that I can watch on my time and from the comforts of my home theatre, I sprang out of bed, logged into my newly created account to access my festival (thank you, Nora Bernard), I spied *Baato,* a limited screening feature.

Without further adieu, I settled myself into a magnificent journey to a mountain peak in Nepal. And, it wasnâ??t by helicopter. Filmmakers Lucas Millard and Kate Stryker managed to capture an intimate portrait of a family in remote eastern Nepal collecting medicinal herbs, before making an annual 300-kilometer trek, partly on foot and partly by ramshackle bus, to lowland, urban markets â?? the nearest economic marketplace for their harvested medicinal herbs.

And, like any major endeavor, this one begins with the first step of many as the group sets out by foot with the women carrying the traditional, cultural load while the men complain about how difficult this walking portion of the journey is as they down a simple, collegiate-style backpack. Along the way, however, a three-part narrative emerges as Nepal is undergoing national development and the filmmakers capture a major road project being undertaken to link this area of Nepal to the southern border of China promising less walking and perhaps a less arduous life in some distant future. The massive project has employed many manual laborers, allowed for heavy construction equipment imports, and has a detrimental effect on local farming patches.

Deftly, *Baato* illuminates developmental pratfalls as road engineers take bribes to avoid destroying homes. Meanwhile, the herb collectors plot to avoid shakedowns by police and bus operators as they miraculously make their way to market. This is an observant film as the viewer witnesses a deep dive into a Himalayan culture engaged in a slow and chaotic, yet inexorable transition to modern life. Excellent cinematography, compelling narrative coupled with a mesmerizing soundtrack makes this documentary a â??must-see!â?•

Stay tuned for more as 2020 Mountainfilm Festival is just beginning.

LIMITED SCREENING DETAILS

SCREENING DATE	START TIME	END TIME	GEOGRAPHIC RESTRICTION	VIEWER LIMIT
May 15–17	9 a.m. MDT on May 15	11:59 p.m. MDT on May 17	United States Only	500
May 23–25	9 a.m. MDT on May 23	11:59 p.m. MDT on May 25	United States Only	500

Category

1. Big Sky Documentary Film Festival
2. Mountainfilm

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