

CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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Wednesday 17th January: War Pony 2023

USA/UK 115 mins

Directors: Gina Gammell & Riley Keough

Writers: Franklin Sioux Bob, Bill Reddy & Gina Gammell

Cast:

Jojo Bapteise Whiting (*Bill*); LaDainian Crazy Thunder (*Matho*); Jesse Schmockel (*Echo*); Anjeliq Aurora (*Carly*); Iona Red Bear (*Auntie*); Jessica Poor Bear (*Coltina*); Schaevon Brewer (*Schaevon*)

Directed and produced by actor Riley Keough and her half-sister Gina Gammell, *War Pony* follows the intertwined lives of two young Native American boys growing up on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

The film comes out of Keough and Gammell's work on Andrea Arnold's [American Honey](#), during which shoot they befriended extras Franklin Sioux Bob and Bill Reddy, and through a collaborative process of conversations, workshops and improvisation sessions, built up a narrative based on their life stories.

The result is this unvarnished, naturalistic look at the lives of two Oglala Lakota youths. At 23, Bill (*Jojo Bapteise Whiting*) cruises around town in an old car, taking prison phone calls from the mother of his first child and trying his hardest to charm Echo (*Jesse Schmockel*), the mother of his second. Wanting to make something of himself (whether it's siphoning gas, delivering goods or breeding poodles), he is determined to hustle his way to the "American Dream".

Sweet, dreamy Matho (*LaDainian Crazy Thunder*), 12 years old, has a crush on a girl at school and desperate to win approval from his young, abusive father. But a series of impulsive decisions turns Matho's life upside down, forcing him to leave home, moving in with a relative (*Iona Red Bear*), but finds himself unequipped to deal with the harsh realities of the adult world.

Both main characters are torn between the traditions of their tribe and the consumer culture that surrounds them, both implicated in the difficulties faced by Native populations in the broader American scheme. Heartfelt and absorbing, *War Pony* is a tender depiction of the two boys' interior and exterior worlds, and a terrific debut from Keough and Gammell.

Our next presentation:

[The Eight Mountains](#) will be shown on Tuesday, 23 January, starting at 8:00pm.