

on their heads. Their wiry, thin-hipped frames and short hair are not ideal for such a task and one buckles under the weight of his basket. The other men, ashamed for him turn away, to which he retorts, "You're supposed to laugh when someone falls. Have you no pride?"

The women relish their newfound power, as the vexed men of the town struggle to adapt to subservient roles. There is, however, one voice of reason: a cunning and brash girl named Kuni. A true feminist, Kuni refuses to change her dress and give up her dignity. She must get to the bottom of how the whole mad situation started and guide the village to a natural state. Kuni envisions a culture of equality, in terms of respect and workload. She thinks men can be men and women can be women, and they should do the jobs their physicality suggests.

In the Dogon philosophy, the universe's equilibrium is reflected by their culture and if their lives are out of whack, then so is the universal order. It is up to the brilliant Kuni to reconcile social stability between men and women.

Cheers to Adama Drabo's direction, the magnificent cinematography and countless memorable performances; especially that of the young Ramata Drabo as Kuni. Rarely does a child actor's presence command the respect of the audience that she effortlessly emits. —Wyatt Ossa

TIFF

Vince Vaughn's Wild West Comedy Show: 30 Days & 30

Nights— Hollywood to the Heartland

Tourgasm part II, only better

Distributor: Weinstein
Cast: Vince Vaughn, Ahmed Ahmed, John Caparulo, Bret Ernst, Sebastian Maniscalco, Peter Billingsley and Justin Long
Director: Ari Sandel
Producer: Vince Vaughn
Genre: Comedy documentary
Rating: Not yet rated
Running time: 110 min.
Release date: TBD

Vince Vaughn's Wild West Comedy Show holds the promise of being a highly entertaining look at an old-fashioned traveling festival, inspired by Buffalo Bill's shows, where young, talented stand-up comics plied their trade across the country in September 2005. The picture becomes even grander, though—a generous and fascinating heartfelt examination of the makings of a comedian.

Although Vince Vaughn is the presiding spirit over the tour, he serves more as the impresario of the event. Helmer Ari Sandel, who directed the ingeniously funny comic short *West Bank Story* that parodied *West Side Story* within the Arab-Israeli conflict, gives

us more than just an inside look of the tour, taking us deep within its dynamics. Part of that, of course, is Vaughn paying tribute to the many performers who have been a huge part of his career, including director/writer/actor Jon Favreau, actor Peter Billingsley and country singer/actor Dwight Yoakam. But most of the picture is about novice comedians finding their footing on a nightly stage. Besides the distinctive styles of each performer, Sandel takes us inside the personal lives of each so we can see how it shapes their material. For instance, John Caparulo makes fun of the service industry, yet we learn that he makes his living waiting tables. Egyptian-American Ahmed Ahmed illustrates the frustrations of being an Arab in America by recalling a bitter story in which he was detained in a Las Vegas airport. Bret Ernst has some funny jokes about his gay brother, but they grow out of the bereavement of losing him to AIDS in 2001.

Since the tour takes place during the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, the performers also meet some of America's disenfranchised, whom they invite to the show for free.

Vince Vaughn's Wild West Comedy Show is a sweet and affecting tribute to the shrewd charms of the American road show. —Kevin Courrier

TIFF

The White Planet

As chilly as March of the Penguins was warm

Distributor: Paramount Vantage
Directors: Thierry Plantanida, Thierry Ragobert and Jean Lemire
Screenwriters: Thierry Plantanida and Stephane Milliere
Producers: Jean Lemire, Stephanie Milliere and Jean Labadie
Genre: Documentary
Rating: Not yet rated
Running time: 86 min.
Release date: TBD

On the heels of the unexpected theatrical success of *The March of the Penguins* arrives *The White Planet*, an examination of the ecosystem of the Arctic. Studying the wildlife over the course of four seasons, the filmmakers capture the eerie beauty of the landscape, which continually shifts majestically even as global warming affects its future, and follow the seasonal trials of polar bears and herds of caribou that make up part of the Arctic's diverse population.

Unlike *The March of the Penguins*, though, *The White Planet* has a National Geographic pictorial beauty without any of the lyrical flow of the migrating penguins. There's nothing here to match the droll wit of Morgan Freeman's descriptive narration either, and the commentary is often prosaic, as if we're trapped in a high school civics lesson. Although *The White Planet* opens up a fascinating world filled with the colorful creatures of the Arctic, the picture itself is a colorless conception.

—Kevin Courrier

