

Member and guest feedback for *Green Border*

It was a tough watch but its sympathetic portrayal of the appalling treatment suffered by the refugees and migrants on the border between Belarus and Poland was an eye opener, as I was not aware of this shocking situation. The treatment of the Ukrainian refugees was humane and welcoming by comparison and I wondered if this was due to racism in Poland.

Difficult to watch but a well-made film with authentic characters. Interesting approach to show the different perspectives. The few uplifting scenes were a relief.

What a powerful film. One really cared about all the fleeing individuals portrayed. But the border guards....what nasty pieces of work. Though one did redeem himself. Could have easily been a documentary and now with the Middle East its scenes will be repeated everywhere. Man's inhumanity to man and corruptionat all levels. The nearly two and half hours sped by I was so absorbed ... so overwhelming.

Difficult watch but an outstanding thought-provoking film.

An excellent film and one, for a movie with a strident message, that actually works. Despite its length the time flew past even though this is at times a shocking film. However, we must recognise this is propaganda. The activists are for the most part all wonderful and the border guards the opposite. The epilogue, where the Ukrainian refugees are welcomed into the country, marks a stark and powerful contrast with the way the Third World country refugees are treated. The Polish authorities no doubt had their reasons for differentiating between the two. Still a great choice from a great director, promoting her humane (though possibly naive) vision.

This shocking, unforgettable film shook me to the core. It is a very complicated subject but the documentary style with three narrative strands filled out the bigger picture from the three different viewpoints of the refugees, the activists and the Polish soldier who was grappling with a moral dilemma. I came away from watching it completely wrung out and exhausted.

A harrowing but vital watch.

What an extraordinary and distressing film, more a docudrama than just a film! And although we've read and heard about these things going on, to see it portrayed in such an incredibly powerful way leaves you speechless and full of admiration for and gratitude to, the people who do try to help, in whichever way.

This was really an animated documentary but well done. It made me feel like what it is to be a refugee (as opposed to a migrant!). I hope that the right people watch it!

A really powerful film which showed so many different aspects of the migration issue. I felt I learnt a lot and it held my complete attention throughout, despite its length. I loved the green forest fading to black and white at the start. It said so much. Then the frequent juxtaposition of technology and 'normal life' together with fear of death, utter despair/hope and trauma was quite exhausting. Throughout it all we were constantly reminded of the humanity of the characters, both good and bad. A great choice of film.

Devastating. The Society will not show a finer or more important film this year.

Not a film to enjoy but one to enlighten. The division into sections was welcome, the humanitarian workers bringing relief to both refugees and film watchers. Some scenes were harrowing yet the film concluded with some positive outcomes.

A stunning film. Horrifying in its subject but a masterpiece, showing the reality of how our veneer of humanity can be so easily removed.

My thoughts: A truly important film, angry yet empathetic, stunningly shot in stark black and white with an excellent ensemble cast, it brilliantly explores the balance of compassion and degradation inherent in the response to the migrant crisis in Europe. Although long and difficult to watch at times, I was gripped from start to finish. Thank you - I hope that it has given me more courage.

Interesting topic but not so sure about the existence of swamps in coniferous and birch taiga. 'Be prepared' might have been the watch word for the family who thought, wrongly as we learn, that becoming an illegal immigrant/refugee was just a matter of walking to a border and declaring oneself. The number of people prepared to assist the group members seemed high: what are the actual numbers - or will we never know? This must have been an incredibly cheap film to make: the only cost was probably the razor wire.

This film was utterly devastating because it highlighted how much we are all complicit in what is happening in the refugee crisis. There was inspiration in the behaviour of a few brave people offering help. There was the most horrific portrayal of systematic cruelty. It made me determined to try harder to battle xenophobia, to expose state violence, to support those of our fellow human beings most in need, to walk in the light.

I was concerned about watching this film as I knew that it would be a very hard watch but felt that I ought to. However, because of the split into the different chapters it wasn't as gruelling as I feared and despite its length, I was mesmerised from start to finish. It is an important watch and I was pleased that I made the effort to do so, thank you for showing it.

Excellent film. It was long but that was not a problem because it was totally absorbing. So glad you showed it.

Factual and rightly condemning to the authorities in many countries and to the parents for taking such risk with their children onboard. Distressing at times. Good performances all over including kids. Director and cameraman deserve applause.

Good film but too long.

Too long. I realise the plight of the family with the endless movement across the border but I feel that could have been successfully illustrated by a shorter film. Well worth watching. I liked the documentary style and the structure with the various viewpoints aligned with the politics. An important comment on attitudes to refugees.

Compelling telling an important story from a range of perspectives.

It was equally harrowing and brilliant, with superb acting and direction. Somehow it didn't feel overly long. I left the theatre feeling deeply saddened and overwhelmed by the plight of so many refugees.

Best film so far and while I am not religious the phrase 'There for the grace of god goes I' comes to mind. 152 minutes went by quickly.

Tough going but worth every minute for its significance and sheer humanity. I am only thankful that I was watching, albeit guiltily, from a comfortable seat in peaceful London. You are certainly challenging us this year, and I applaud you for it. We can find easy entertainment anywhere. This is cinema at its very best. Thank you.

A very well-made film on a topical subject and one that continues the laudable tradition of dissidence within post war Polish cinema. That said there is part of me that says such an overtly political film simply preaches to the converted but it is a minor reservation.

The film wasn't flawless but I thought it captured the chaos, uncertainty and plight of the refugees very well and painted a very balanced and credible picture of the different people they encountered.

Very engaging. Disheartening to see how politics and racism impact refugees.

Such a powerful and truly harrowing film. I was totally absorbed throughout and liked the way it was structured into chapters so that it gave insight into the complex area of migration from different perspectives.

Harrowing but salutary reminder of what people suffered and continue to suffer.

A giant of a film! Almost unwatchable brutality at times but small signs of hope in terms of characters at least by the end. An incredibly brave film for a Polish director to make about her country. Bravo! (To her and for you in choosing it).

My goodness, this film was harrowing throughout. It provided a very very close up and personal look at what the asylum seekers' experience can look like. The 'look' revealed broken systems and harsh, brutal and inhumane treatment. Thank you for this recent film and this peep into a very divisive, emotive and challenging subject. It is alarming how quickly those operating the system descended into brutality. Although it was hard to watch a lot of the time, in my view this was the best film that I've seen so far this season.

Such a harrowing film but wonderfully filmed.

An immersive, gripping piece of cinema. Subtle it ain't - I can see why it caused a political storm in Poland - but the deft storytelling and compelling performances really bring home the humanity and tragedy of the refugee crisis. A powerful, unforgettable experience. This is an Excellent.

An important and outstanding piece of filmmaking. The structure and use of 'chapters' worked extremely well, the cinematography was excellent and I found the story gripping throughout. There is so much tragedy and inhumanity in the world that we've become a little desensitised to such images, which is perhaps why the director adopted such a deliberately unflinching approach. The refugee migration crisis is only going to become more prominent in the coming years and Agnieszka Holland's compassionate film is highly topical, given that the dehumanisation of refugees remains a key feature of anti-migrant rhetoric. It's also a brave piece of filmmaking, as she must have anticipated the intense political backlash that she would receive from the Polish government, who accused her of slander and compared her film to Nazi

propaganda. In the event, the controversy generated significant public interest and nearly one million people saw the film in Poland.

A brilliantly shot movie, making fabulous use of both black and white film and washed out colour. Harrowing from the start, it is a powerful piece of political cinema, drawing attention to horrifying real-world events on the borders of Europe. Obviously, the emphasis was on sympathetic refugees and on the inhumanity of their situation but the wider complexity of the weaponising of migrants was also made very clear. A really tough watch but important topical cinema and a great selection.

This was hard to watch but so powerful. Seeing immigration issues from so many viewpoints was fascinating. The cruelty and disregard for human rights was shocking.

Thought provoking, well constructive narrative. Working well in black and white....this story could have been set in any decade, reaching back to the start of the last century. I found it a challenging watch, stepped into the lives of so many tragic characters. At well over two hours, it became increasingly difficult to follow which storylines resolved by the time the focus shifted borders. But a good selection, I scored it a Good. But I would struggle to watch this again.

A very hard watch. Timely reminder that other countries are dealing with the refugee crisis and of the human cost to both guest and host.

Some difficult viewing. So grateful to film directors (and their film companies) that they shed light on situations that so many of us are/were unaware of. Thanks too, to the Film Club for bringing these productions to us. I thought the introduction of new characters through the film was inspired. One tiny gripe: the rap scene was slightly unsubtle. The last scene was also inspired and thought provoking.

An excellent film. The super black and white cinematography, the often nighttime scenes and the forested landscape combined to provide a sense of foreboding as well as claustrophobia. The true background of Russia's encouragement of immigration from Asia via Belarus into 'the EU' was explained and Poland's populist government's reaction was described - and clearly shown in the scene where a Polish officer lectured his border guards. The division of the film into 'chapters,' enabling slightly different points of view to take the forefront, worked well. A slight negative was the last section showing the easy immigration of Ukrainian refugees into Poland. I thought the director was too heavy-handedly making a point here.

Harrowing but important film. Clever structuring to give us insights into the different angles of all affected; the refugees, activists and border police. The black and white restricts us to focus entirely on their storylines, each of which is difficult, cruel and mostly hopeless. Very well portrayed.

Good film but felt a bit relentless at times and a hard watch. Would have benefited from editing which would have made the message more powerful.

Thought provoking.

It was extremely well filmed and showed the real position of refugees and asylum seekers. It was so realistic and sad.

My wife and I both left the theatre in tears. It was emotionally overwhelming — a superb film that makes you question how you're living your life.

I was engrossed from beginning to end! It didn't seem at all like a long film.

At last, a film I 'enjoyed'!! I would give it a two and a half!! Very nicely filmed but a difficult subject matter.

An astounding film. It's hard to find any more words ...

For me this was the best film in the RFS season so far. Despite being over two and a half hours long, Green Border didn't drag and I was gripped. I think breaking it up into episodes/perspectives helped in this respect and was a highly effective technique. It was a hard watch but without lessening their impact, the most traumatic scenes weren't overly dwelt upon. In today's Times there is an article about the discovery of a number of tunnels under the same border, so this upsetting issue has far from gone away.

Harrowing. Beautifully made and unremittingly upsetting. As well a film on this topic should be. Thank you for screening it.

Just superb!