

## ***La vie nous appartient: Young people on the brink***

by Alfonso Rivera

22/11/2013 - The Austrian production in French, presented at the Gijón festival, confronts the delicate and obscure social problem of suicide among adolescents



Austria is number six on a sad ranking few ever speak about: young people deciding to end their lives. This fact prompted director **Alex K. Lee** to write the screenplay for his first feature film tackling the unsettling theme. Unsurprisingly, Lee was met with a number of sceptics who thought the theme would lead to too much of a severe theme, while the screenwriter wanted hope to prevail. The film had its global premiere with its entire crew in the *Enfants Terribles* section of the 51<sup>st</sup> International [Film Festival of Gijón](#).

Over the course of its 88 minutes, *La vie nous appartient* follows two characters closely. Sarah (**Alix Bénézech**) is a determined girl who doesn't go anywhere without her backpack and guitar. She gets in touch online with Philip (**Florent Arnoult**), a boy her age. They meet up in a place in between mountains, which her father has shown her. This is not a romantic film however. Her motivations are quite different.

The film follows the two teenagers who no longer want to live for two days slowly unravelling the reasons why they have made such a drastic decision. It does so through conversations, which unveil traumas, worries, dissatisfactions and needs. She suffers from love for an absent father, he is the school freak and wishes he were noticed more by his classmates. Both come from families that communicate little and are victims of living in a world they do not listen to and does not listen to them.

The film means well but suffers from an abundance in dialogue that takes away from the action, which hardly moves forward. Beautiful mountain views give way to questionable episodes of musical sentimentality. The writer based the characters on letters left behind by young people who have committed suicide. This is the main attraction of the film: to shed light on an obscure and taboo slice of today's society. It does this with caution and humility. The director adapted the original screenplay into French after the main characters were chosen, counting on support from the **Lower Austria Cultural Fund**. The film will be distributed by **Penny Lane Film**.

(Translated from Spanish) - <http://www.cineuropa.org/nw.aspx?t=newsdetail&l=en&did=248330>