

## **Waking Life**

Among films which have recently opened in DC, *Waking Life* is an intriguing experiment that only partially comes off... Hard to categorize, this non-narrative feature, directed by Richard Linklater, is an earnest (and loopy) meditation on being and consciousness done in a striking animated style.

There is no real story, but rather a character's rich dream life is displayed through a series of vignettes and musings. Sundry colleagues and friends of Linklater float through the episodes, which are only variably interesting or effective. No big names are in the cast, though there are a few recognizable acting talents, like Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy, who reprise their characters from another Linklater film, *Before Sunrise*.

The animation Linklater experiments with is called "interpolated rotoscoping," wherein real (camera shot) digital images are overlaid with painted blocks of color laid down by computer generation. The result is a flowing, super ripe imagery that might have been called psychedelic some years back and which can be both fascinating--and annoying--to watch, depending on the sequence (the animated effect is not consistent throughout).

The script, full of vapid "philosophical" monologues with all the quality of dormitory bull sessions, does not convince, wasting the rich imagery on a parade of "two-shot" conversations. The technique might be tried again with more promising subject matter.

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