

Maudie, based on the true story of diminutive folk artist Maud Lewis and her romance with a reclusive curmudgeon, Everett Lewis.

Inflicted with childhood arthritis, Maudie is hunched and her hands are gnarled. Her determination, however, is iron clad as she aspires to be an artist. Overcoming her physical difficulties, she is limited in the use of a paint brush.

Ethan Hawk as Everett is terrific. He's buff and gruff and lives in a 10x12 foot house. He hires Maud, regretfully at first, as a housekeeper. He wants to fire her but with her incredible will, talks herself back into the job.

After a while Everett, lonely, very lonely, talks about a more intimate relationship with her. Every time he brings it up, Maud, being very proper, talks about marriage.

Shot in Nova Scotia, the photography by Guy Godfree is astounding bringing out the color and beauty of the surrounding landscape and Aisling Walsh direction is strong and superbly crafted.

Maud dawdles with her paintings over the walls and windows of their tiny dwelling. When she runs out of space, she paints on post cards and canvas and sells them out of her house.

Everett, who didn't have much to talk about with Maud, realizes that she truly is talented and is able to bring in a few extra dollars. Their relationship warms up and a sense of joy starts to permeate their household. It becomes even more joyful when Maud's paintings not only bring in money, but catapults her to a career as a famous folk artist.

Now, let me write about Sally Hawkins portrayal of Maud. I don't remember being so totally impressed and taken in by an actor's performance. Her crooked smile, wit and sparkling eyes completely overcome her appearance. She is, all at once, beautiful, graceful and 10 feet tall. And, I defy any guy not to fall in love with her. If she is not nominated for an Oscar, I will lose my faith in the industry and stop reviewing films (which should come as a blessing to some of my detractors).

Hawke and Hawkins are simply put, great! I can't conceive of two actors playing so in tune with their performances. Bravo!

4 Bagels out of 4