

Picture This

Picture This was produced by South African Broadcasting Corporation. A young girl, Gile, suddenly finds herself in an unknown town where she has to get to know her father for the first time. This proves to be difficult in a middle-of-nowhere town where the community is struggling to make ends meet. But Gile's imagination will not let this dire situation get her down – she secretly starts painting the town using her father's equipment. The paintings are not welcome at first, but when tourists start flocking the town and improving the town's money-making prospects, they're grateful to the mystery artist – who doesn't remain a mystery for long!

Picture This was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2010 finalists in the 7-11 Fiction category.

International experts' opinions

The international experts expressed mixed opinions about the program. Some of them really liked the program. They believed that it was an ideal fairy tale with perfect elements in it. "I loved *Picture This*. I thought it was just so sweet. I just really liked this. It was a gorgeous story like when she was sad about leaving, and then saw that mural on the wall, when she was first leaving to go live with the dad, then to use what she loved, and the pictures on her dress. I just thought it was a very charming scene: good story. I thought it was beautiful too: a visually rich fairy tale" (female expert, Australia). Some appreciated the script and the role of the girl. "For me it was a very nice and good story – well made, just very touching. Also the story of her talent, and how she transformed and changed the whole city in a very simple way. It's a very good idea to show that even a small kid can do something great and change the whole world, because for them this village was the whole world. Even the animation was really great: the flowers, butterflies and such" (male expert, Poland).

Some found the program unreal and imaginary, though positive. Perhaps that is why they put it under the category of fairy tales. "It had this sort of distance, because people didn't talk much – much was on a non-verbal level. That made it unreal. It made it credible again, because something happened for real but it is the way that things can change: by painting, by creativity. It was very positive. I liked it very much" (male expert, Germany).



Figure 1: Gile is leaving to go live with her dad, whom she never met.

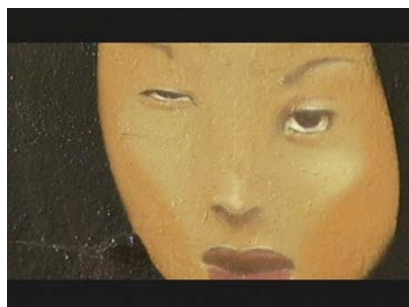


Figure 2: Gile smiles when she imagines Rapulana winking at her.

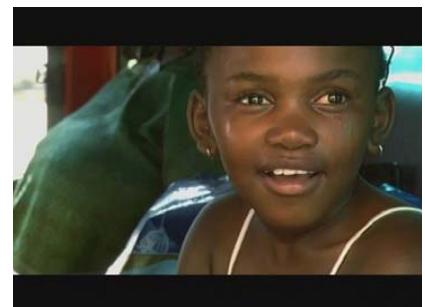




Figure 3: Gile's first encounter with her father.



Figure 4: Neighbours wondering who painted the pictures.



Figure 5: Her father is angry when he finds out it was Gile who painted the pictures.



Figure 6: Tourists flock to the little town, boosting local business.

Screenshots from *Picture This* © South African Broadcasting Corporation

Indeed, many liked the program because they appreciated the minimal use of dialogues. “I enjoyed *Picture This* out of this category – not because it was the best production value, best script, or the best acting; but it moved me, it had fantasy, and it was one of the few that didn’t use dialogue all the time to explain everything. In that sense I just loved it. It was very cute” (female expert, Netherlands). Another expert echoed the same opinion. “I like that it didn’t have a lot of dialogue in it. It felt kind of light, and you could really just enjoy looking at the show, and you still understood the story – you weren’t labouring with a lot of talking and dialogue” (female expert, USA). Some felt that the program was appropriate for the target audience. “I agree with her about less dialogue, and it was very colourful – I think because of these animals, it is very appropriate for the age group. Whatever the theme that they wanted to get across to the children, I think it would be very understandable because it was very simple. It reached the target group” (female expert, Philippines).

Some appreciated the character of the girl and her reactions towards new things in her life. “Yes, I think it was interesting that she had to move to this new place, and she was without her family that she grew up with, or she felt very alone. It seems like seeing these colourful images everywhere was her escape. And how she drew on her dress and then painted things. It is less vandalism and more escapism – so she could have a release” (female expert, USA).

However, there were also alternate opinions regarding this program. Some experts believed that the program was not appropriate or current. “I think there were a lot of stereotypes in it, and the girl who was responsible for all adults decisions; and like for me, it was talking a bit over the head of the children: if you paint here, then you can solve everything. That was so easy. I feel like in the 50s or something; it was really old fashioned, in my point of view” (female expert, Sweden).

Many international experts did not like the characters and found them too artificial. “I thought a lot of the characters were kind of flat or off, or not really there. I thought the charm of the girl under the paintings – it almost didn’t matter; those could all fall away, because she was so great and the paintings were so lovely and the impact that they had. It was just so sweet that those were almost like props” (female expert, USA). Some just could not accept the story. “I just wanted to say: I just didn’t get that this film *Picture This* did so much for you; it didn’t for me. I didn’t believe it. The dad was so closed up for such a long time that I never believed the turning point. So, it is very interesting to us too, because I have the opposite opinion of you” (female expert, Norway).

There were also other discussions and opinions about the character



Figure 7: Neighbours asking Gile to paint more pictures.

of the father and the family. Some experts found the girl’s journey to meet her unknown parent fascinating. “I think keeping the father like that is part of the surprise, because when she opened up her cupboard and there were all those paint pots. Then there were so many little surprises in that. We travel that journey with her, because she was going to stay with the parent that she didn’t know, and there was fear in her. I thought they claimed that the children have a lot, and they have to find a parent that they haven’t spent their life with” (female expert, New Zealand). An expert compared the attitude of parents in few programs and found the father of this program very honest. “I just want to say something about parents ... I really liked

that in this program there is the moment that the father says: ‘I don’t know how to do this’. He is very honest with her. He wasn’t a great dad, and so in that sense he wasn’t so great. In this and in a couple of others shows, I just really appreciated that there were parents that weren’t stereotypes and that had difficulties and they were human. I thought that was really refreshing to see” (female expert, USA).

Experts also appreciated the family bonding shown in the program. “I loved the line, the part that says ‘I don’t know how to raise a child.’ I think it was a strong thing to say, to understand each other. The girl didn’t know how to communicate with her brother and also wasn’t sure what to do and yet they understood each other” (female expert, Japan). “I would like to say something about Picture This, because there was this kind of family without a mother. There are very many families where you only have one parent. It is also very nice to show those kinds of families” (female expert, Sweden).

Finally, a few experts claimed that there was too much to handle in a very short time. “I think also that the fact that in fifteen minutes there was a lot of transformation, a lot happened; you could see the changes. Again, very simple with very little dialogue, but yet a lot happened in fifteen minutes” (female expert, USA).

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