

# SAMSON & DELILAH

Alice Springs film maker Warwick Thornton describes his latest film *Samson and Delilah* as his “good fight”, his “reason for being”. And it shows.

Thornton’s heart and soul manifest themselves in exquisite images on the screen which are so unhindered by dialogue, it is almost a silent film.

As young actor Marissa Gibson who plays Delilah says: “Aboriginal people don’t say very much, we just use body language”.

Relentless and profound, this small scale film spares nobody – art dealers, governments, Aboriginal family relationships, white Alice Springs café goers. Everybody is complicit in the misery that has befallen these two symbols of Aboriginal youth.

We are all responsible for the plight of these two young people who, unlike their many real life counterparts, narrowly avert tragedy.

While Thornton spares nobody, he is equally tough on himself – not a sound, not an image, is used which doesn’t support the stark and frightening reality of *Samson and Delilah*.

It is so unrelenting and sparse that the audience is herded, like *Samson and Delilah* and many Aboriginal people in Central Australia, on a bleak and inexorable journey only made bearable by scenes of delicate and exacting beauty.

Samson’s brother’s band, which plays on the outstation every day, thrums out the same music - day in, day out - pounding out the boredom, the monotony of life on this remote outstation into the bleached dust.

Those reggae rhythms, commonly heard on nearly every Central Australian community, become a powerful symbol of the smallness of their world.

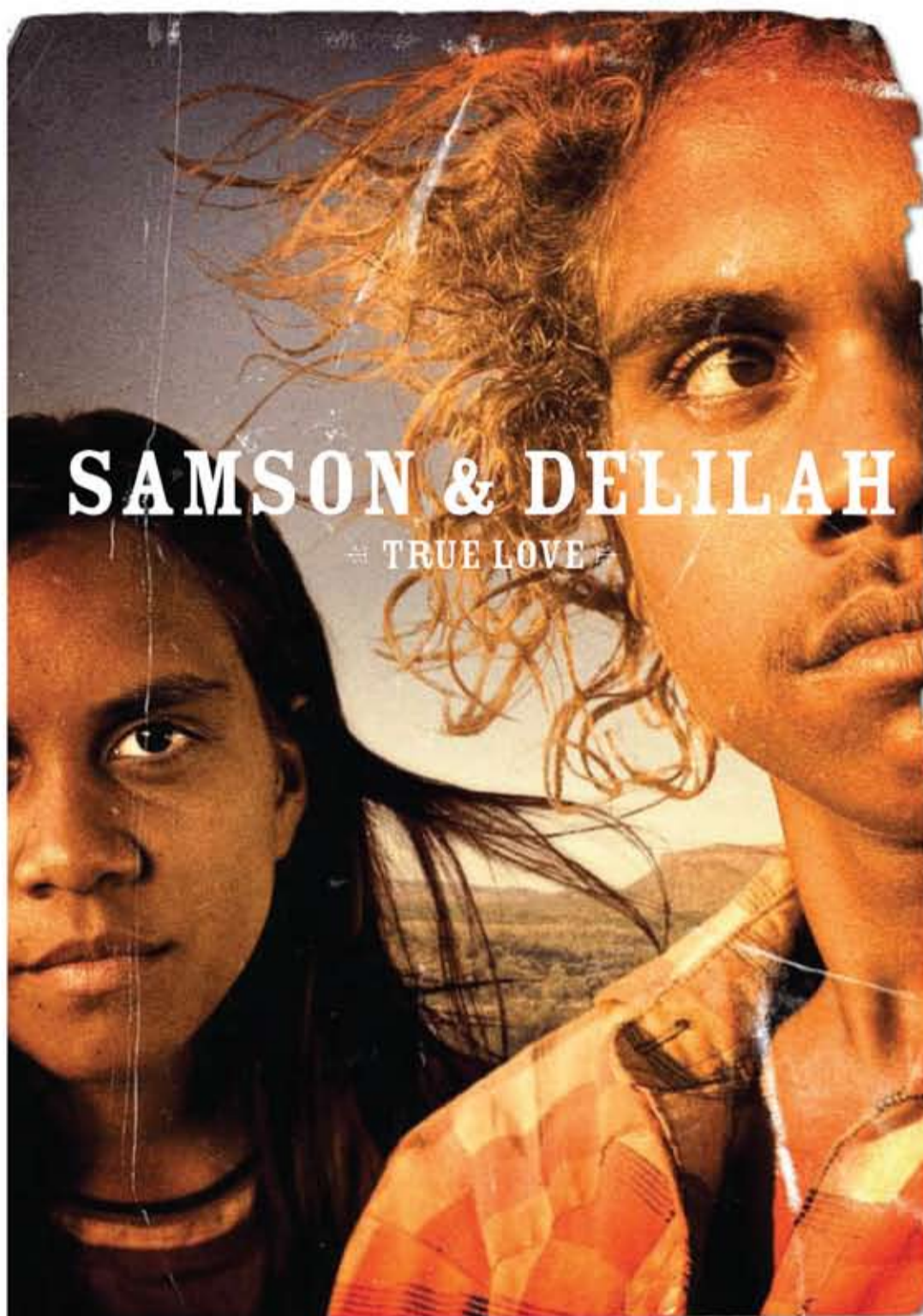
The cycle of debt and poverty are played out through the art dealers who prey on Delilah’s grandmother.

The potent juxtaposition of her famous artist Nana’s paintings in a smart gallery in town and Delilah’s own desperate attempts to sell her own paintings to silent coffee drinkers at a café is a damning indictment of the Aboriginal art industry and its hypocrisies.

Thornton is so skilled at story telling that the audience’s relationship with *Samson and Delilah* is maintained despite the cultural chasms between them.

Relentless to the end, redemption, for these two, is at hand only as a tough alternative and a very last resort.

Thornton will pick up many awards for his small masterpiece.



## THE STORY

*Samson and Delilah* live in an isolated world – A remote Aboriginal community in the Australian desert. In amongst a tiny collection of houses, everything here happens in a cycle.

Day in and day out – nothing changes, everything stays the same and no one seems to care.

Except for Samson, a cheeky 15 year-old who yearns for the horizon. Even though boredom set in long ago, Samson attempts to occupy himself with his offbeat humour.

Unable to express his desire for something more, Samson’s private

escape comes in a tin – he’s a petrol sniffer.

When a violent eruption takes place at home Samson breaks the cycle and his journey begins.

Sixteen year-old Delilah is the sole carer of her artist grandmother, who fancies the hopeless Samson for her son-in-law.

When Nana passes away Delilah is held responsible and the traditional punishment is harsh.

Battered and bruised, an unlikely young man comes to Delilah’s rescue. Samson. In a stolen car with no food,

money or idea where they are headed they turn their backs on the community and head towards the desert horizon.

The next day, out of petrol, they walk into the closest town.

The two teenagers soon discover that life outside the community can be cruel. Though hungry and rejected Samson and Delilah fall in love. It is all they have.

It is real.

Delilah searches for a way to improve their situation and begins to paint.

She tries desperately to sell

her work, but no one is buying. In frustration she pushes her work at potential buyers aware of their discomfort, aware of them not wanting her.

Samson tags along, the tin a constant companion. Exhausted and belittled Delilah also falls prey to Samson’s demon.

By accident the two young lovers are forcibly separated and Delilah starts a journey of her own – a journey to a better place.

As Samson slowly self-destructs alone and under the bridge, Delilah’s love guides him home.

**SAMSON AND DELILAH WILL BE SHOWN AT THE CLC COUNCIL MEETING AT TITJIKALA ON 28 APRIL 2009**