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Lili & The Baobab (2006/Casque D'Or DVD)

Picture: C- Sound: C+ Extras: C+ Film: C+

An outsider visits a place where the people speak a different language and slowly learns about their world in an exchange that brings growth and joy. That sounds like the 1963 Sidney Poitier hit **Lilies Of The Field**, but is also the set-up for Chantal Richard's **Lili & The Baobab**, a 2006 film about the French freelance photographer title character (Romane Bohringer) going on assignment to Agnam in the Senegalese desert in Africa and finding much more.

At first, she is enjoying the people and the culture, plus other fine moments when it turns out a young woman named Aminata illegitimately pregnant with no family and no hope. She intends to help her, but the situation means expulsion for the helpless Aminata. Though we have seen some of this before, this is done with some heart and soul, so see it if you are interested.

The anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image is very soft throughout with dullness, edge enhancement, aliasing errors and foiling some fine location shooting. Part of this might be a PAL-to-NTSC conversion issue, but the fine color tries to come through just the same. The Dolby Digital 5.1 mix is very dull throughout with a narrow soundfield and limited sonics. The combination is disappointing and not as good as the U.K. version on DVD. Extras include a making of featurette and original theatrical trailer.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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