

Krisha finds catharsis through exploring family dysfunction

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“You are heartbreak incarnate,” one character informs the titular character in *Krisha*, the feature debut of writer and director Trey Edward Shults. The film is a fearless portrait of human dysfunction.

Krisha

is an emotionally shattering yet empathetic tale of one woman’s attempt to reconcile with her wary family on Thanksgiving. The movie belongs to Krisha Fairchild in the title role, who delivers an unflinching performance as a 60-something woman grappling with immense psychological issues.

“I always thought she was a great actress but never had a good role to play,” says Shults about his real-life aunt who, up until now, has mainly been known as a voiceover actress and for roles in such films as

The Killing of John Lennon

and

Under Heaven.

Shot over nine days at his mother’s house in Texas on a miniscule \$85,000 budget (funded mainly by family, friends, and a Kickstarter campaign), the film won both the Grand Jury and Audience Award at the SXSW Film Festival last year.

“It was so small that I thought we would have to win an award just to get noticed,” Shults says. “But by the last screening we were turning people away.”

Krisha

was also recently awarded the John Cassavetes Independent Spirit Award, a prize given to the creative team of a film budgeted at less than \$500,000.



In only 83 minutes, Shults expertly demonstrates a filmmaker's power of storytelling, using observation to help viewers fill in the blanks while preserving the mystery of what is yet to come. A missing fingertip is not explained as the camera catches her on the upstairs landing, ominously looming over her family downstairs. Meanwhile, the rising temperature of a cooking turkey serves as a metaphor for her family's repressed emotions bubbling to the surface.

Basing the film on some of Shults' own family trauma, the 27-year-old Texas native says he hopes families and individuals that struggle with some of the same issues will find it cathartic.

"I also hope that young filmmakers enjoy and appreciate it," he adds.

Krishna

starts

Friday at Edina Cinema

(<http://www.landmarktheatres.com/minneapolis/edina-cinema/film-info/krisha>).

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