

'I Stare at You' an Intimate, Fresh Journey

TV REVIEW

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Susan Mogul's latest documentary, "I Stare at You and Dream," is another example of her distinctiveness as a Los Angeles filmmaker, whereby her subjects in the Highland Park neighborhood where she lives become your extended family. As they are hers.

The first of a new batch of KCET's "Independent Eye" films and videos, "I Stare at You and Dream" offers earthy charms, humor and intriguing insights that affirm the rewards that come from locating and

gently probing common denominators that make up the routines of ordinary lives.

In a bit of a sequel to her film "Everyday Echo Street," Mogul dwells on both the stability and fragility of personal relationships, revisiting her good friend, Rosie Sanchez, who works in her parents' restaurant two blocks from Mogul's home, and Ray Aguilar, the interesting, enigmatic man with whom she has an "on and off" romance.

Also prominent is Rosie's daughter, Alejandra, a spirited young poet whose jobs here range from clerking at Thrifty's to being a phone sex operator.

Mogul's work is personalized and very intimate because she makes her camera a public confessional. While giving Alejandra a tattoo, the tattoo artist tells

Mogul about his bad relationship with his father. And this leads later to Alejandra talking to Mogul about her own father, whom she never knew.

And so it goes, with Mogul extending her film's amazing candor to herself. At one point, the woman exposing her tears and pain to the lens as if it were a secret diary is the filmmaker, distraught about her atrophied relationship with Ray: "He said I was getting too close, and he didn't want to be my boyfriend."

Mogul has a talent for swiftly getting you interested in people about whom you know nothing—so interested that the hour you spend with them zooms by.

■ "I Stare at You and Dream" airs at 10 tonight on KCET-TV Channel 28.