

# THE PLAYLIST



## The Best Cinematography Of 2017

Jessica Kiang / December 7, 2017 2:02 pm

### 14. Joshua James Richards – “God’s Own Country”

One of the things that makes **Francis Lee**’s exceptional drama unquestionably one of the most exciting debuts of the year is the sheer confidence of its execution, and the richly immersive authenticity of its rural English setting. Beneath its thrilling main love story, there is another, broader love story being told, a genuine feeling for and connection to the land, and to the often harsh and forbidding landscapes of Yorkshire. Joshua James Richards, who had a stellar 2017 also having worked on **Chloe Zhao**’s stunning “**The Rider**” observes that harshness without romancing it to softness: between sweeping wides of misty hills under mottled skies and minute observational details like a puff of sheep’s wool caught on a barbed wire fence, his photography is a windswept, drizzled-damped embrace of a world far removed from the urban lifestyles most of us live. But he also brings that sense of groundedness to the film’s more emotional and visceral moments, whether it’s the first sex scene which feels as mucky and real as it is urgent and passionate, to the later interiors with their glow of unexpectedly intimate domesticity.

Cinematography lists are often dominated by the traditionally beautiful and epic, but Richards gradually finds the loveliness in this often bleak setting, just as the characters gradually stumble upon love, and are transformed so radically it beautifies their whole world, without anything materially having changed.