



COPACABANA

a film by Martín Rejtman

Documentary - Argentina - 2007 - 54 min - HD

Synopsis



Every year in mid October the Bolivian community in Buenos Aires celebrates its most important Patronal festivity: the party of Nuestra Señora de Copacabana. Hundreds of music and dance groups from all over the country, some even arriving from Bolivia, get together in the Buenos Aires neighborhood of Charrua for a big parade, in a celebration that transcends religion.

Copacabana takes this celebration as a starting point. Focusing on rehearsals of dance and music groups, photo albums, and the border between Bolivia and Argentina, among other things, the film threads a simultaneously distant and close portrait of the Bolivian community from Buenos Aires.

Crew

Director: Martín Rejtman

Produced by: Martín Rejtman - Ruda Cine - Ciudad Abierta

Associated Producer: Morocha Films

Executive Producer: Rosa Martínez Rivero

Photography and Camera: Diego Poleri

Sound: Jesica Suárez

Editing: Martín Mainoli

Line Producer/ Research: Nico Chausovsky

Biography of the filmmaker

Martín Rejtman (Buenos Aires, 1961) studied filmmaking at New York University.

Before making his debut feature he worked as assistant director for various productions and made two medium length films: *Doli vuelve a casa* (1984-2004) and *Sitting on a Suitcase* (1986). He then made the feature films *Rapado* (1992), *Silvia Prieto* (1999), *Los guantes mágicos* (2003) and the documentary *Copacabana* (2006).

Besides being a filmmaker, Martín Rejtman is also a writer. He published *Rapado* (Planeta, Buenos Aires, 1992), *Treinta y cuatro historias* (included in *Un libro sobre Kuitca*, 1993), *Velcro y yo* (Planeta, Buenos Aires, 1996), the screenplay *Silvia Prieto* (Norma, Buenos Aires, 1999) and *Literatura y otros cuentos*, Interzona 2005).

In 2000 he received a fellowship for the International Writing Program from the University of Iowa (U.S.A.) and in 2002 the Beca Antorchas (Argentina).

In 2006 was a Member of the Jury of the International Film Festival of Rotterdam.

In 2006 MALBA made a Special DVD edition of his films.

Festivals - Awards

2007

International Film Festival Rotterdam

FICCO (México) / Fipresci Award – Best International Documentary.

Buenos Aires International Independent Film Festival

Los Angeles Film Festival

Film Festival Locarno

BFI London Film Festival

Festival des 3 continents (Nantes, France)

Gijon International Film Festival

REVIEWS



Review

Variety July 5, 2007

L.A. Fest

Copacabana

(Documentary -- Argentina)

By ROBERT KOEHLER

A Ruda Cine/Ciudad Abierta production. (International sales: Ruda Cine, Buenos Aires.) Produced by Martin Rejtman. Executive producer, Rosa Martinez Rivero. Directed by Martin Rejtman.

Martin Rejtman takes a break from his droll contempo comedies and applies his sharp eye to the docu form with "Copacabana," a largely non-verbal film about Bolivian emigres living in one of Buenos Aires' poorest districts. Expectedly for Rejtman watchers, pic (helmer's first in HD) is exquisitely composed and paced, but what surprises is work's strong ethnographic qualities -- docu records Bolivian folkloric dance performed for the annual Virgin of Copacabana celebration. With a prestigious fest and awards tally, doc's content, under-hour playing time and Rejtman's rep makes it a natural for tube play worldwide.

Rejtman and editor Martin Mainoli have unconventionally structured things in reverse -- from the end of the yearly Copacabana parade, to rehearsals, and, finally, to the arrival of a new group of immigrants crossing the Bolivian border into Argentina. Pic, shorn of any crutches like graphics or narration, demands observant viewers who will notice that the event's lavish, inventive costumes, plus involved dance moves, are the results of months of preparation in available spaces in the dirt-poor neighborhood. Glimpses of everyday life and a man flipping nostalgically through photo albums cleverly punctuate doc.

Camera (color, HD video), Diego Poleri; editor, Martin Mainoli. Reviewed at Mexico City Film Festival, Feb. 27, 2007. (Also in Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Rotterdam film festivals.) Running time: 54 MIN.

Review

FIPRESCI Website Mexico City Film Festival (FICCO)

Freedom in the Face of The Other

By Robert Koehler

Since Martin Rejtman has been making a series of droll comedies that examine, among other matters, how people can't manage to live together, the appearance of his first documentary, *Copacabana*, about how a community of Bolivians in Argentina actually do live — and thrive — together, is genuinely startling. The very idea of Rejtman, a gifted control freak if there ever were one, ceding some authority over what would play out in front of his camera and function as a serious documentary filmmaker is remarkable enough. But for him to convey the essence of a poor but vibrant group of Bolivian workers living in the dusty outskirts of Buenos Aires, and to inject a sense of cultural victory against considerable odds, represents an interesting case of a filmmaker capturing a sense of hope running counter to a trend in documentary cinema that indulges in depressive anthropological thinking.

For Rejtman to make such a film is the rough equivalent of Hong Sang-soo making a film about poor Filipino immigrant workers in South Korea or Eric Rohmer observing the existence of marginalized Arabs in Paris's suburbs. Like these two masters of human comedies capturing sometimes droll and always highly sophisticated interactions between characters often at cross-purposes with one another, Rejtman's cinema up to *Copacabana* is a highly devised internal world, operating by its own set of rules and logic. A Rejtman film, from his exquisite early short, *Doli vuelve a casa* (1986) to his most recent narrative feature and his richest expression of male-female and social dysfunction, *The Magic Gloves* (Los guantes mágicos, 2003) is almost a visual graph of the filmmaker's obsessions and pet peeves, and bound to include the following: Meticulously arranged gags with unexpected but perfectly timed pay-offs; buzzing alarm clocks; characters pausing to study themselves in mirrors; strangers accidentally meeting each other and setting off an unplanned series of events; many exchanges over food, often in fast-food diners or roadside cafes; endless complications with mobile transport; women and men forging their own little gender camps; rock n' roll; deadpan lines deliveries; tons of borrowed, traded and robbed items that circulate absurdly between characters. These hardly include all Rejtmanisms, but the full list is so numerous as to constitute as distinct a personal universe of operations as has been managed by a director since Aki Kaurismäki, another director for whom deadpan is as essential as oxygen.

All of these concerns are discarded in *Copacabana*, and it's appropriate to speculate that Rejtman felt so taken with the completely realized social and cultural world of these Buenos Aires Bolivians that he simply gave himself over to them. This isn't to say, though, that his

COPACABANA

filming, as a demonstrably European-influenced and highly successful Argentine artist, bears any mark of romance toward a people whose roots belong to Bolivia's indigenous culture. First, the film is quite cleverly structured, both formally and temporally, beginning with two paired sets of left-to-right moving shots taking in the end of an edition of the annual Copacabana festival in Buenos Aires, and ever so subtly goes in reverse, observing several group rehearsals for the festival, to the point where the camera is on board the bus taken by new émigrés from the Bolivian side of the border.

Second, Rejtman's camera, both as a matter of artistic instinct and as a perfectly proper aesthetic choice for a documentary (one that can be seen as closely associated with certain Austrian cineastes such as Nikolaus Geyrhalter), maintains a usually fixed and lengthy distance from the groups he's filming — be they gaudily costumed marching and dancing groups in the festival parade, or young girls practicing their routines in a cramped café, or brass bands blowing away to their hearts' content. The visual effect is to give each group a considerable sense of dignity by placing them inside their own proscenium created by the *mise en scene*; remarkably, Rejtman manages an even more precise relation between camera and bodies under these slightly uncontrolled circumstances than he has ever managed before under his precisely calibrated fictional ones.

Only once, this most verbal of filmmakers allows a chunk of conversation into the film (between a young woman and her distant family members on the other end of a public pay phone), and only twice — in two perfectly complimentary sections in which an off-screen voice describes Bolivia through an album of postcards, and another when the same voice describes another album of photos of past Copacabana festivals in his adopted city — does he practice his well-honed technique for the surprise cut. Otherwise, Rejtman frees himself from his past cinema to encounter something considerably outside of himself and the urban, generally middle-class surroundings he knows so well. In *Copacabana*, he launches into an adventure to face the Other—the marginalized, the minority, the groups classified as "exotic" or "tribal" or "foreign", drawn to a better life far from their own land and finding inventive and sustainable ways to celebrate their lives and their essential cultural voices. Rejtman, in a personal triumph, has listened.

Robert Koehler

Review

El Amante – May 2007

**Copacabana**

Argentina, 2006, 56'

DIRIGIDA POR Martín Rejtman.

Al principio puede parecer raro que Martín Rejtman haya realizado un documental. Pero inmediatamente la película demuestra el rechazo del lugar común como organizador de las imágenes, algo que podría servir como definición del estilo a veces inasible del realizador. Aquí la historia se cuenta "al revés": se trata de mostrar a la comunidad boliviana en Buenos Aires tomando como eje la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana. Pero primero se ve la fiesta, luego los ensayos, después la vida cotidiana y recién al final cómo los bolivianos vienen a Argentina, con increíbles imágenes en Villazón. Cuando uno recuerda escenas de *Silvia Prieto* o *Los guantes mágicos* y descubre el absurdo, tiene la tentación de

pensar cuánto tuvo que penar el realizador/guionista por lograrlo. Pero no: *Copacabana* demuestra que el mérito de Rejtman es que su ojo es puro cine, que encuentra lo extraordinario (muchas veces "extraordinario" es sinónimo de "absurdo") allí donde nadie piensa encontrarlo, y que cuando se maneja con la realidad cambia la comedia. Cambia: en sus ficciones, la comedia tiene eso de mecánico que es propio del género, sabemos que nos está permitido reírnos de y con los personajes porque, después de todo, no existen. Esa doble perspectiva, ese "entrar y no entrar" en el mundo de lo cómico es lo que sostiene el precario, inteligente equilibrio del género. Pero aquí Rejtman corría un riesgo mayúsculo: era la realidad, era una comunidad de la que generalmente nuestra sociedad se ríe y se burla. Entonces, en lugar de risa o de ironía, lo que hay en el film es alegría. Cuando se vea la realidad en esas imágenes de los ensayos, lo que surge es una alegría contagiosa. La cámara para eso no tiene que moverse, debe dejar que el tiempo y el ritmo de lo que sucede frente a ella se impongan y el director, fiel a su sensibilidad, las elige y las monta. No hay risas cuando escuchamos a una mujer recién llegada a Buenos Aires hablar con sus tíos en Bolivia: sí, esos diálogos son –si se quiere– tan "rejtmanianos" como los de sus ficciones. Sin embargo, advertimos por contraste que lo que vemos, al ser real, está teñido de ternura, de una

alegría que no es cómica, de un absurdo que nos habla mucho más de nosotros que de los personajes que vemos en la pantalla. Hay una exploración de la diferencia entre pobreza (material) y miseria (humana). En *Copacabana* la pobreza es visible y la miseria está ausente. En ese mundo paralelo que –como todos los mundos de Rejtman– está a la vuelta de la esquina, lo que hay es celebración de la vida, posibilidad, alegría, cuerpos en movimiento. Otra lección de cine (o sea, algo que la visión de esta película nos obliga a aprender): los cuerpos que se mueven y no necesariamente las palabras son emoción pura. En este film breve pero de enorme cantidad de capas, los gestos, los desplazamientos, las arritmias y la construcción paulatina de la armonía entre las personas (armonía al mismo tiempo musical y social, o social desde lo musical) generan en el espectador una adhesión inmediata. Por eso el epílogo de *Copacabana*, esas imágenes en Bolivia antes de comenzar el viaje, generan en quien las ve la identificación con esas personas que tienen que subir a un bus para bajarse a los cinco minutos y ser cruel, absurdamente maltratadas por una aduana. De la alegría al dolor para ver cómo del dolor puede resultar alegría, invirtiendo los tantos para demostrar una verdad tan humana como la sonrisa, *Copacabana* es, más que un documental, un cine de enorme pureza, una obra maestra.

Leonardo M. D'Espósito

N°180 EL AMANTE 45

At first it may sound odd to learn that Martin Rejtman has made a documentary. But right away we see that the film rejects any kind of cliché in its system for organizing images. We could also say this to define the sometimes hard to grasp Rejtman's style. In this case the story is told backwards: the plan is to show the Bolivian community in Buenos Aires with the celebration of the feast of Notre Dame of Copacabana in the center of the narrative. But first we see the celebration, then the rehearsals, afterwards the daily life, and only at the end the film shows us how the Bolivians come into Argentina, with amazing images from Villazón. Remembering the absurd of certain scenes from *Silvia Prieto* or *The Magic Gloves*, one is tempted to think about how difficult it must have been for the director to get them right. But no: *Copacabana* shows that Rejtman's merit is that his eye is pure cinema, that he finds the extraordinary (and many times "extraordinary" equals "absurd") there where nobody expects to find it. And that when he handles reality, comedy becomes something else. It changes: in his fictions comedy has the mechanic quality that's inherent to the genre. We know that we are allowed to laugh from and with the characters because, after all, they are not real. This double perspective, this "getting in and not getting in" in the comic world is what keeps the precarious, intelligent balance of the genre. But

COPACABANA

here Rejtman was taking a tremendous risk: his subject was a community that in general is laughed at and made fun of by the Argentine society. Then, instead of irony or laughter, the film emanates happiness. When reality sneaks in in the scenes of the rehearsals, what springs forth is contagious happiness. The camera does not need to move to show that, it just has to let time and rhythm impose themselves. The director, faithful to his sensibility, just picks and edits the scenes. There is no laughter when we hear a woman just arrived in Buenos Aires talking over the phone with her uncles in Bolivia. Yes, these dialogues are as "rejtmanians" as the ones from Rejtman's fictions. We notice nonetheless that what we see, because it is real, is impregnated with tenderness, with a certain joy that's not comical, with an absurd that speaks much more about us spectators than about the characters we see on screen.

In Copacabana there's an exploration on the difference between poverty (material) and misery (human), where poverty is visible and misery absent. In this parallel world that – like all Rejtman's worlds – is just around the corner, what we see is celebration of life, possibility of happiness, bodies in movement. One more cinema lesson (meaning, something that the vision of this film makes us learn): bodies in movement, and not necessarily words, are pure emotion. In this brief but multi-layered film, gestures, movements, broken rhythms and the gradual growth of communion among people (musical and social communion) gain the spectator's immediate attachment. This is why Copacabana's epilogue, images of Bolivia before the journey starts, makes the viewer identify with those characters who get on the bus, just to get off five minutes later and be cruelly and absurdly mistreated by custom agents. From happiness to pain, seeing how pain can turn into happiness, reversing the terms to show us a truth that is as human as a smile, more than a documentary, Copacabana is cinema of an immense purity, a master piece.

Leonardo M. D'Esposito

Review

BAFICI Catalogue 2007

Director Martín Rejtman created a universe with his fictions. You know it, you've seen it (if not, you should know you're missing out on something). Now then, the world, such as it is out there (far away from screenplays), has just created a director: the Rejtman who, with Copacabana – his debut in the field of documentaries–, gives us not only the most luminous Argentine film in a long time, but also a new version of himself, in which his usual powers of observation return, but hand in hand with extraordinary freedom, warmth and joy. Rejtman, combining modesty and fascination, tells a happy tale with a sad ending, or a story which, while unable to reach complete happiness, offers countless wonder-moments of those that deserve to happen in front of a camera; tells of the Bolivian community in Buenos Aires and the festivities of Our Lady of Copacabana, and manages to carry the spirit of the prodigious scene of the dance under the rain in Shara (Kawase Naomi) to a fifty-five minute running time.

Marcelo Panozzo

Review

L.A. Weekly
Wednesday, June 20, 2007

GO COPACABANA (Argentina)

The Argentinian director Martín Rejtman's first foray into documentary is a beautifully observed, elliptical portrait of Buenos Aires' Bolivian immigrant population. It's a collage of fragmentary snapshots and passing glances, seen from the perspective of Rejtman's constantly moving camera, most of them relating to the preparations for the annual Festival of the Virgin of Copacabana: workers in a sewing factory furiously spin thread; a Bolivian radio DJ enthusiastically rallies his listeners; dancers in fantastic costume rehearse their moves; an unseen narrator flips through two scrapbooks of photos — one of the old country and one of the new. By the end, what began as an anthropological exercise has turned into a profoundly humane contemplation of home and community. (Majestic Crest, Sat., June 23, 2:15 p.m.; Landmark Regent, Tues., June 26, 9:45 p.m.)

Scott Foundas

COPACABANA



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a film by Martín Rejtman

Documentary - Argentina - 2007 - 54 min - HD

Synopsis



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Before making his debut feature he worked as assistant director for various productions and made two medium length films: *Doli vuelve a casa* (1984-2004) and *Sitting on a Suitcase* (1986). He then made the feature films *Rapado* (1992), *Silvia Prieto* (1999), *Los guantes mágicos* (2003) and the documentary *Copacabana* (2006).

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Festivals - Awards

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REVIEWS



Review

Variety July 5, 2007

L.A. Fest

Copacabana

(Documentary -- Argentina)

By ROBERT KOEHLER

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Review

FIPRESCI Website Mexico City Film Festival (FICCO)

Freedom in the Face of The Other

By Robert Koehler

Since Martin Rejtman has been making a series of droll comedies that examine, among other matters, how people can't manage to live together, the appearance of his first documentary, *Copacabana*, about how a community of Bolivians in Argentina actually do live — and thrive — together, is genuinely startling. The very idea of Rejtman, a gifted control freak if there ever were one, ceding some authority over what would play out in front of his camera and function as a serious documentary filmmaker is remarkable enough. But for him to convey the essence of a poor but vibrant group of Bolivian workers living in the dusty outskirts of Buenos Aires, and to inject a sense of cultural victory against considerable odds, represents an interesting case of a filmmaker capturing a sense of hope running counter to a trend in documentary cinema that indulges in depressive anthropological thinking.

For Rejtman to make such a film is the rough equivalent of Hong Sang-soo making a film about poor Filipino immigrant workers in South Korea or Eric Rohmer observing the existence of marginalized Arabs in Paris's suburbs. Like these two masters of human comedies capturing sometimes droll and always highly sophisticated interactions between characters often at cross-purposes with one another, Rejtman's cinema up to *Copacabana* is a highly devised internal world, operating by its own set of rules and logic. A Rejtman film, from his exquisite early short, *Doli vuelve a casa* (1986) to his most recent narrative feature and his richest expression of male-female and social dysfunction, *The Magic Gloves* (Los guantes mágicos, 2003) is almost a visual graph of the filmmaker's obsessions and pet peeves, and bound to include the following: Meticulously arranged gags with unexpected but perfectly timed pay-offs; buzzing alarm clocks; characters pausing to study themselves in mirrors; strangers accidentally meeting each other and setting off an unplanned series of events; many exchanges over food, often in fast-food diners or roadside cafes; endless complications with mobile transport; women and men forging their own little gender camps; rock n' roll; deadpan lines deliveries; tons of borrowed, traded and robbed items that circulate absurdly between characters. These hardly include all Rejtmanisms, but the full list is so numerous as to constitute as distinct a personal universe of operations as has been managed by a director since Aki Kaurismäki, another director for whom deadpan is as essential as oxygen.

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Only once, this most verbal of filmmakers allows a chunk of conversation into the film (between a young woman and her distant family members on the other end of a public pay phone), and only twice — in two perfectly complimentary sections in which an off-screen voice describes Bolivia through an album of postcards, and another when the same voice describes another album of photos of past Copacabana festivals in his adopted city — does he practice his well-honed technique for the surprise cut. Otherwise, Rejtman frees himself from his past cinema to encounter something considerably outside of himself and the urban, generally middle-class surroundings he knows so well. In *Copacabana*, he launches into an adventure to face the Other—the marginalized, the minority, the groups classified as "exotic" or "tribal" or "foreign", drawn to a better life far from their own land and finding inventive and sustainable ways to celebrate their lives and their essential cultural voices. Rejtman, in a personal triumph, has listened.

Robert Koehler

Review

El Amante – May 2007

**Copacabana**

Argentina, 2006, 56'

DIRIGIDA POR Martín Rejtman.

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Leonardo M. D'Espósito

N°180 EL AMANTE 45

At first it may sound odd to learn that Martin Rejtman has made a documentary. But right away we see that the film rejects any kind of cliché in its system for organizing images. We could also say this to define the sometimes hard to grasp Rejtman's style. In this case the story is told backwards: the plan is to show the Bolivian community in Buenos Aires with the celebration of the feast of Notre Dame of Copacabana in the center of the narrative. But first we see the celebration, then the rehearsals, afterwards the daily life, and only at the end the film shows us how the Bolivians come into Argentina, with amazing images from Villazón. Remembering the absurd of certain scenes from *Silvia Prieto* or *The Magic Gloves*, one is tempted to think about how difficult it must have been for the director to get them right. But no: *Copacabana* shows that Rejtman's merit is that his eye is pure cinema, that he finds the extraordinary (and many times "extraordinary" equals "absurd") there where nobody expects to find it. And that when he handles reality, comedy becomes something else. It changes: in his fictions comedy has the mechanic quality that's inherent to the genre. We know that we are allowed to laugh from and with the characters because, after all, they are not real. This double perspective, this "getting in and not getting in" in the comic world is what keeps the precarious, intelligent balance of the genre. But

COPACABANA

here Rejtman was taking a tremendous risk: his subject was a community that in general is laughed at and made fun of by the Argentine society. Then, instead of irony or laughter, the film emanates happiness. When reality sneaks in in the scenes of the rehearsals, what springs forth is contagious happiness. The camera does not need to move to show that, it just has to let time and rhythm impose themselves. The director, faithful to his sensibility, just picks and edits the scenes. There is no laughter when we hear a woman just arrived in Buenos Aires talking over the phone with her uncles in Bolivia. Yes, these dialogues are as "rejtmanians" as the ones from Rejtman's fictions. We notice nonetheless that what we see, because it is real, is impregnated with tenderness, with a certain joy that's not comical, with an absurd that speaks much more about us spectators than about the characters we see on screen.

In Copacabana there's an exploration on the difference between poverty (material) and misery (human), where poverty is visible and misery absent. In this parallel world that – like all Rejtman's worlds – is just around the corner, what we see is celebration of life, possibility of happiness, bodies in movement. One more cinema lesson (meaning, something that the vision of this film makes us learn): bodies in movement, and not necessarily words, are pure emotion. In this brief but multi-layered film, gestures, movements, broken rhythms and the gradual growth of communion among people (musical and social communion) gain the spectator's immediate attachment. This is why Copacabana's epilogue, images of Bolivia before the journey starts, makes the viewer identify with those characters who get on the bus, just to get off five minutes later and be cruelly and absurdly mistreated by custom agents. From happiness to pain, seeing how pain can turn into happiness, reversing the terms to show us a truth that is as human as a smile, more than a documentary, Copacabana is cinema of an immense purity, a master piece.

Leonardo M. D'Esposito

Review

BAFICI Catalogue 2007

Director Martín Rejtman created a universe with his fictions. You know it, you've seen it (if not, you should know you're missing out on something). Now then, the world, such as it is out there (far away from screenplays), has just created a director: the Rejtman who, with Copacabana – his debut in the field of documentaries–, gives us not only the most luminous Argentine film in a long time, but also a new version of himself, in which his usual powers of observation return, but hand in hand with extraordinary freedom, warmth and joy. Rejtman, combining modesty and fascination, tells a happy tale with a sad ending, or a story which, while unable to reach complete happiness, offers countless wonder-moments of those that deserve to happen in front of a camera; tells of the Bolivian community in Buenos Aires and the festivities of Our Lady of Copacabana, and manages to carry the spirit of the prodigious scene of the dance under the rain in Shara (Kawase Naomi) to a fifty-five minute running time.

Marcelo Panozzo

Review

L.A. Weekly
Wednesday, June 20, 2007

GO COPACABANA (Argentina)

The Argentinian director Martín Rejtman's first foray into documentary is a beautifully observed, elliptical portrait of Buenos Aires' Bolivian immigrant population. It's a collage of fragmentary snapshots and passing glances, seen from the perspective of Rejtman's constantly moving camera, most of them relating to the preparations for the annual Festival of the Virgin of Copacabana: workers in a sewing factory furiously spin thread; a Bolivian radio DJ enthusiastically rallies his listeners; dancers in fantastic costume rehearse their moves; an unseen narrator flips through two scrapbooks of photos — one of the old country and one of the new. By the end, what began as an anthropological exercise has turned into a profoundly humane contemplation of home and community. (Majestic Crest, Sat., June 23, 2:15 p.m.; Landmark Regent, Tues., June 26, 9:45 p.m.)

Scott Foundas

Review

Revista de Cine MABUSE – Julio 23, de 2007

Copacabana, mi amor

Hubo más de una persona con la que comenté **Copacabana** que creyó que la película de Martín Rejtman transcurría en la pequeña ciudad boliviana que orilla el Titicaca. Independiente del despiste, la equivocación era plausible por cuanto se trata de un documental que funciona con la idea de un espacio virtual, de un no-lugar. Ver la preparación de una fiesta religiosa originaria de Bolivia en garajes, galpones y casas que podrían estar en cualquier lugar de Latinoamérica, con rostros de indudable raíz indígena del altiplano boliviano, y si a eso se suma el engañoso título y la ausencia de cualquier indicación concreta que el filme transcurre en un lugar de Argentina, podía llevar a confusión. La misma estructura de la cinta en reversa (desde los bailes en la calle, los ensayos de las danzas, hasta grupos de bolivianos cruzando la frontera) indicaba que el filme no estaba interesado en delimitar o precisar en principio donde ocurría, ni siquiera en hablar de la inmigración boliviana a Argentina. **Copacabana** tiene otros ingredientes que están relacionados con la identidad, pero ajenos al lugar donde se desarrolla e independientes incluso a la fe popular que los origina (las referencias religiosas brillan por su ausencia), sino a algo mucho más etéreo y atávico: a un ritmo. **Copacabana** es un musical encubierto, el nacimiento y desarrollo de un espectáculo rítmico identitario. Porque los "artistas" de este show no son bailarines bellos y estilizados sino personas comunes y corrientes expresándose tal cual son. Rejtman mira el baile como una manifestación vernácula, pero la expone como una representación artística. La mayor parte de los planos de **Copacabana** están contruidos como escenarios. Los pies de los personajes tocan el borde inferior de los encuadres como si estuvieran encima de tarimas. De hecho, hay una gran cantidad de planos generales que reproducen la sensación de estar en un teatro presenciando los ensayos de un grupo de estrellas. Eso también da lógica a los álbumes de postales de Bolivia como quién muestra los recortes de prensa de su trayectoria. Que además Rejtman escogiera simplemente el nombre *Copacabana* para titular el filme, que está asociado a un barrio de Río de Janeiro y a un club nocturno de Nueva York, tampoco parece una casualidad.

La puesta en escena de Rejtman es notable. Trabaja los planos tensionándolos en su geometría (como en uno de los ensayos donde el grupo de bailarines gira alrededor de una columna que corta la habitación –y la pantalla- en dos) o generándoles un *suspense cómico* con sus elementos (como cuando un agente de aduana registra el bus donde viaja un grupo de bolivianos y un peluche en primer plano lo espera "amenazado").

Copacabana es una cinta que celebra la vida, que transmite alegría como dice Leonardo D'Espósito en *El Amante*. Similar a las sensaciones que transmite **Dong** de Jia Zhang-ke también presente en el Bafici. En **Dong**, la conmovedora tristeza inicial del encuentro del pintor Liu Xiaodong con la comunidad y familia de un obrero que ha muerto mientras trabajaba en la

COPACABANA

demolición de edificaciones de la zona de Las Tres Gargantas donde se construye una represa, se rompe con los regalos que éste ha traído para sus hijos. El gesto en sí no tiene nada de gracioso, pero genera una alegría espontánea y contagiosa. Con **Copacabana** pasa exactamente lo mismo. No es un *gag* el que genera el humor sino el júbilo que transmiten – incluso sin sonreír- esos bailes ejecutados en templada catarsis.

Simplemente extraordinaria, **Copacabana** fue filmada y exhibida en un proyector de Alta Definición. La resolución de la imagen es magnífica incluso superior al 35 mm. Quizás exagero, pero exhibida así, **Copacabana** se convierte en una experiencia cinematográfica única y la mejor demostración –para renovar los votos- que con sólo aguzar el ojo, con casi nada, se puede construir un espectáculo visual donde tiembla la emoción y los sentidos.

Jorge Morales

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