Forum 2017: Realistic and Surreal

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

The 47th Berlinale *Forum* is showing 43 films in its main program, 29 of which as world premieres and 10 as international premieres. This yearâ??s Special Screenings will be announced in a later post.

This yearâ??s program shines a light on the sheer wealth of forms employed by the documentary, including films from Southeast Asia, Europe, North America, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. The spectrum could hardly be broader here, encompassing institutional portraits, long-term observational projects, and works that employ participatory, narrative, essayistic, ethnographic, political and experimental approaches. These are joined by various hybrid forms that cannot be clearly categorized as either fiction or non-fiction. One recurring motif is that of landscape, which is seldom relegated to the status of backdrop, but rather frequently takes on a leading role.

One regional focus is formed by films from Latin America, with six works from Brazil, Peru, Chile, Mexico and Argentina exhibiting a wide range of different formal approaches.



Adiós entusiasmo (*So Long Enthusiasm*) von Vladimir Durán

Davi Prettoâ??s narrative feature *Rifle* sets out for the endless plains of the Brazilian south to stage a modern Western there. A taciturn former soldier is employed to guard a small landholderâ??s estate. But when an agricultural company seeks to buy up the land, he reacts in truly drastic fashion.

Peruvian brothers Alvaro und Diego Sarmiento find stunning images to convey the leisurely flow of life in a verdant river landscape. *RÃo Verde. El tiempo de los Yakurunas* (*Green River. The Time of the Yakurunas*) is an attentive observation of the daily routines of the indigenous inhabitants of Peruâ??s Amazon region.

In *Casa Roshell*, Chilean director Camila JosÃ© Donoso assembles a portrait of a most unusual institution in the Mexican capital, a place where men learn to be women during the day, before the parties get going at night. All manner of boundaries blur in this tiny utopia: between gay, straight and bi, male and female, past and present, reality and fiction.

Vladimir DurÃ¡nâ??s debut feature *AdiÃ³s entusiasmo* (*So Long Enthusiasm*) is at once realistic and surreal and one of three Argentinian films showing in the main program. Ten-year-old Axel lives with his mother and three sisters in a flat in Buenos Aires. Theyâ??d be a perfectly normal family if only the mother werenâ??t imprisoned in one of the rooms.

El teatro de la desapariciÃ³n (*The Theatre of Disappearance*) by sculptor and installation artist AdriÃ¡n Villar Rojas presents a hypnotic triptych which depicts latent states of war, drawing on sensual images seemingly only tenuously connected that employ disparate styles and jump freely from continent to continent.

Albertina Carriâ??s *Cuatreros* (*Rustlers*) examines Argentinaâ??s complex recent past: Isidro VelÃ¡zquez was a bandit and dissident active in the 1960s whose story formed both the basis for a sociology book by her father Roberto Carri and a feature film that is now lost. The director draws on archive images to bring her own biography into alignment with wider historical events.

The Sensory Ethnographic Lab has already been well-represented at the *Forum* and *Forum Expanded* in the form of *Sweetgrass, Leviathan* and *Yumen* and several of its key figures now return to this yearâ??s program. Verena Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylorâ??s *somniloquies* works with sound recordings of Dion McGregor, who became famous for talking in his sleep. In El mar la mar, J.P. Sniadecki and Joshua Bonnetta dissect the Sonoran Desert â?? a landscape marked by the border between the United States and Mexico.

North American cinema once again forms a strong presence at this yearâ??s *Forum*. *Golden Exits* by Alex Ross Perry tells the story of a young Australian woman who comes to New York for a few months and unwittingly throws the lives of two couples into disarray.

Menashe, the feature debut by Joshua Z Weinstein, is set in Borough Park, Brooklyn and is almost entirely in Yiddish. The titular Menashe fights to keep custody of his son following the death of his wife. Yet the Hasidic community demands he lead a more ordered life and find a new spouse, neither of which come easy to this kind, but awkward loner.

Amman Abbasi is also showing his debut feature at the *Forum*. It tells the story of a thirteen-year-old who has lost direction following the death of his brother, meaning that being initiated into a local gang now appears a necessary step towards becoming a man. *Dayveon* is a search for brotherhood in an African American community in the rural South.

Jeremy Levine and Landon Van Soestâ??s sensitive long-term documentary *For Ahkeem* was shot in Missouri, focussing on Daje, who lives with her single mother in St. Louis. Like many black teenagers in

the neighbourhood, she has problems at school, while her everyday life is shaken again and again by the violent deaths of her friends.

The many strong documentaries in the program also include works from Germany. Ann Carolin Renninger and RenÃ© FrÃ¶lkeâ??s *Aus einem Jahr der Nichtereignisse* (*From a Year of Non-Events*) follows a year in the life of a 90-year-old north German farmer, who lives alone on a rural farmstead.

Heinz Emigholz, a familiar *Forum* guest for many years now, returns to the programme with his â??Streetscapesâ?• series, which loosely links together four separate films. *2+2=22 [The Alphabet]* documents the recording sessions for the album â??ABCâ?• by electronic music group Kreidler in Tbilisi, Georgia. *Bickels [Socialism]* examines the architecture of Samuel Bickels, who created numerous kibbutz buildings and museums in Israel. Streetscapes [Dialogue] is a fictionalized dialogue about filmmaking based on the protocols of a mammoth psychoanalysis session and was shot in buildings by Julio VilamajÃ³, Eladio Dieste and Arno Brandlhuber in Uruguay and Berlin, some of which then pop up again in the final chapter *Dieste [Uruguay]*.

Nicolas Wackerbarthâ??s feature *Casting* is also dedicated to the process of filmmaking. Director Vera is unwilling to compromise when it comes to finding the right lead actress for a Fassbinder remake for television. Acting assistant Gerwin delivers dialogues with a bevy of famous actresses and soon realises that this could be his big chance. The filmâ??s starry cast includes Ursina Lardi, Andrea Sawatzki, Corinna Kirchhoff, Judith Engel, Marie-Lou Sellem and many more.

The films of the 47th *Forum*

2+2=22 [The Alphabet] by Heinz Emigholz, Germany â?? WP

***AdiÃ³s entusiasmo* (*So Long Enthusiasm*)** by Vladimir DurÃ¡n, Argentina / Colombia â?? WP

***At Elske Pia* (*Loving Pia*)** by Daniel Joseph Borgmann, Denmark â?? WP

***Aus einem Jahr der Nichtereignisse* (*From a Year of Non-Events*)** by Ann Carolin Renninger, RenÃ© FrÃ¶lke, Germany â?? WP

Autumn, Autumn by Jang Woo-jin, Republic of Korea â?? IP

Barrage by Laura Schroeder, Luxembourg / Belgium / France â?? WP

Bickels [Socialism] by Heinz Emigholz, Germany / Israel â?? WP

Casa Roshell by Camila JosÃ© Donoso, Mexico / Chile â?? WP

Casting by Nicolas Wackerbarth, Germany â?? WP

***Chemi bednieri ojakhi* (*My Happy Family*)** by Nana & Simon, Germany / Georgia/France

***Cuatreros* (*Rustlers*)** by Albertina Carri, Argentina â?? IP

Dayveon by Amman Abbasi, USA â?? IP

Dieste [Uruguay] by Heinz Emigholz, Germany â?? WP

***DrÃ´les dâ??oiseaux* (*Strange Birds*)** by Elise Girard, France â?? IP

For Ahkeem by Jeremy Levine, Landon Van Soest, USA â?? WP

Golden Exits by Alex Ross Perry, USA â?? IP

***Jassad gharib* (*Foreign Body*)** by Raja Amari, Tunisia / France

***Loktak Lairembee* (*Lady of the Lake*)** by Haobam Paban Kumar, India

***Maman Colonelle* (*Mama Colonel*)** by Dieudo Hamadi, Democratic Republic of Congo / France â?? WP

El mar la mar by J.P. Sniadecki, Joshua Bonnetta, USA â?? WP

***El mar nos mira de lejos* (*The Sea Stares at Us from Afar*)** by Manuel MuÃ±oz Rivas, Spain / The Netherlands â?? WP

Menashe by Joshua Z Weinstein, USA / Israel â?? IP

***Mittsu no hikari* (*Three Lights*)** by Kohki Yoshida, Japan â?? WP

***Mon rot fai* (*Railway Sleepers*)** by Sompot Chidgasornpongse, Thailand

***Motherland* (*Bayang Ina Mo*)** by Ramona S. Diaz, USA / The Philippines â?? IP

***Motza el hayam* (*Low Tide*)** by Daniel Mann, Israel / France â?? WP

***Mzis qalaqi* (*City of the Sun*)** by Rati Oneli, Georgia / USA / The Netherlands / Qatar / USA â?? WP

Newton by Amit V Masurkar, India â?? WP

Occidental by NeÃ¯l Beloufa, France â?? IP

***Qiu* (*Inmates*)** by Ma Li, Peopleâ??s Republic of China â?? WP

Rifle by Davi Pretto, Brazil / Germany â?? IP

***RÃo Verde. El tiempo de los Yakurunas* (*Green River. The Time of the Yakurunas*)** by Alvaro Sarmiento, Diego Sarmiento, Peru â?? WP

***Shuâ??our akbar min el hob* (*A Feeling Greater than Love*)** by Mary Jirmanus Saba, Lebanon â?? WP

somniloquies by Verena Paravel, Lucien Castaing-Taylor, France / USA â?? WP

Spell Reel by Filipa CÃ©sar, Germany / Portugal / France / Guinea-Bissau â?? WP

Streetscapes [Dialogue] by Heinz Emigholz, Germany â?? WP

***Tamaroz* (*Simulation*)** by Abed Abest, Iran â?? WP

***El teatro de la desapariciÃ³n* (*The Theatre of Disappearance*)** by AdriÃ¡n Villar Rojas, Argentina â?? WP

***Tiere* (*Animals*)** by Greg Zglinski, Switzerland / Austria / Poland â?? WP

***Tigmi n Igren* (*House in the Fields*)** by Tala Hadid, Morocco / Qatar â?? WP

Tinselwood by Marie Voignier, France â?? WP

Werewolf by Ashley McKenzie, Canada â?? IP

***Yozora ha itsu demo saikou mitsudo no aoiro da* (*The Tokyo Night Sky Is Always the Densest Shade of Blue*)** by Yuya Ishii, Japan â?? WP

(Source: Berlinale Press Office)

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