

The Spanish and Latin American Studies Department presents,
in conjunction with **SURCLA - Sydney University Research Community for Latin America**

LATIN AMERICAN REALITIES: SURVIVAL AND RESISTANCE DOCUMENTARY SERIES

Tuesdays 3 - 5:30 | Architecture Lecture Theatre 1, Wilkinson Building, City Road

Cocalero

USA/Bolivia. Director: Alejandro Landes (94 mins, 2006)

Born out of the U.S. war on drugs, an Aymara indigenous man named Evo Morales – backed by a troop of coca leaf farmers – travels through the Andes and Amazon in jeans and sneakers, leading a historic bid to become Bolivia's first Indigenous president.

The filmmakers, granted astonishing up close and personal access to Evo, capture the intimate moments of this controversial figure and his triumphant rise to power. A story of geopolitics, people's movements, Indigenous culture, and one man's impressive determination, Cocalero is "a luminous portrait of working people in rare triumph against U.S. imperialism" (Prairie Miller, WBAI Radio).

Maquilapolis

Mexico. Directors: Vicky Funari, artist Sergio De La Torre, and Tijuana women's organization Grupo Factor X (60 mins, 2006)

Maquiladoras are the multinationally-owned assembly plants which dominate the economy of the U.S.-Mexico border region, employing over a million people. Carmen is one of these people. She works the graveyard shift, six nights a week, in Tijuana's Panasonic factory. After making television components all night, Carmen comes home to a shack she built out of recycled garage doors, in a neighborhood with no paved streets, no sewage lines and no electricity. A single mother, Carmen takes care of her three children all day, and if she's lucky she sleeps for an hour or two before heading off to work again. At 29, she suffers from kidney failure and anemia resulting from her years of factory work. Carmen earns six dollars a day.

This unique documentary tells the story of globalization from the personal perspectives of Carmen and a dynamic group of Mexican maquiladora workers who together are working towards creating liveable solutions to the complexities of life in a globalized city. The film meets women who are each dealing with the hardships of environmental toxins, labor rights abuse, infrastructure and housing issues, and women's rights. MAQUILAPOLIS approaches the workers as experts who can provide us with keys to our common future, inviting them to co-author their own story on videotape.

17 MARCH

31 MARCH

21 APRIL

FASINPAT

Argentina/Italy. Director: Danièle Incalcaterra (60 mins, 2004)

FaSinPat, formerly known as Zanon, is a worker-controlled ceramic tile factory in the southern Argentine province of Neuquén, and one of the most prominent in the recovered factory movement of Argentina. The name is short for "Fábrica Sin Patrones," which means "Factory Without Bosses" in Spanish.

"Although it is not made explicit in this film, the reason that Zanón argued that he had to lower wages to stay in business was that Menem's "free trade" policies opened Argentine businesses to intense competition with goods produced in low-wage economies such as China. Believing he could no longer turn a profit, Zanón forced workers to agree to lower wages and benefits, and when they refused, he closed the factory. The workers, however, returned to occupy the factory and successfully kept production going, returning profits to the factory. They have been able to hire an additional 170 workers as a result.

Apart from the background narrative in voiceover, the documentary largely allows workers to tell their story in their own words." - Kathryn Lehman

Apaga y vámonos!

Chile. Director: Manel Mayol (87 min, 2005)

"Switch off" is a tale about an usurped nation, about a forgotten genocide, about globalization, about one river.

The Biobío is the longest river in Chile. It has its source in the Andes and flows into the Pacific Ocean. This river is of enormous ecological value as well as of great historical and political value because the Biobío was the natural frontier during the Spanish occupation. From the Biobío down, the Spanish were unable to subjugate the original inhabitants, the pehuenche-mapuche indigenous peoples.

In 1997 ENDESA, the transnational Spanish company, decided to build a dam in the Biobío river: the Ralco hidroelectric power station. ENDESA is the foremost hydro-electric company in Spain and Latin America. It's one of the main companies responsible for climatic change due to its annual emission of millions of tons of CO2.

Since 1997, the mapuches made their opposition clear, seeking protection under indigenous law. But ENDESA, which up to that time was a public Spanish company, was privatised by the government of José María Aznar and it became a company with powerful capital. In May, 2004, the flooding of the Ralco valley started and 70 indigenous families were exchanged and "invited to live in the high mountains" at a height of 2,000 meters. They have been without electricity for over three years, using candles for lighting.

Besides this, the mapuche spokespeople who denounce the situation of their brothers, are persecuted and convicted by the Chilean courts, with the anti-terrorist law (brought in by Pinochet) frequently being applied, although none of them have ever been found in possession of a firearm. The basic proof used to convict the indigenous leaders are faceless witnesses. These witnesses attend the trials wearing hoods and with their voices distorted and not even the defence lawyers know their identity.

The UN Special Rapporteur, Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, stated that there was a human rights violation in the construction of the Ralco hydro-electric power station in the Upper Biobío in the Andes. The ARCIS University in Chile described the scheme as genocide against the Pehuenche-Mapuche indigenous peoples. Switch off.

State of Fear

Peru/USA. Director: Pamela Yates (94 mins, 2005)

A country faces a terrorist threat and in a desperate search for security, transforms its political system into a state of fear. The country is Peru, but the story is disturbingly familiar in today's world as the current U.S. "war on terror" unfolds with startling parallels - the terrorist threat, anti-terrorist legislation, an attempted military solution, the roles of intelligence and the media in the use of fear to manipulate public opinion, and the assault on democracy.

State Of Fear highlights the long and courageous campaign of resistance by human rights activists and civil society in Peru and their role in the ultimate collapse of President Alberto Fujimori's regime.

Today the subsequent Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, empowered by the new government uncovers the truth about terrorism. As Peruvians now live in the aftermath of a "war on terror", the story revealed by their Truth Commission provides a sobering cautionary tale to the world. Guiding us through this journey is the engaging voice and charismatic presence of Carlos Iván Degregori, leading Peruvian intellectual, opinion-shaper, and political observer. From his early encounters with Dr. Abimael Guzmán, leader of the terrorist organization Shining Path, to recently serving on Peru's historic Truth Commission, Degregori is uniquely qualified to describe, as a protagonist, every chapter of Peru's "war on terror".

Favela Rising

Brazil/USA. Directors: Jeff Zimbalist and Matt Mochary (80 mins, 2006)

Favela Rising documents a man and a movement, a city divided and a favela (Brazilian squatter settlement) united. Haunted by the murders of his family and many of his friends, Anderson Sá is a former drug-trafficker who turns social revolutionary in Rio de Janeiro's most feared slum. Through hip-hop music, the rhythms of the street, and Afro-Brazilian dance he rallies his community to counteract the violent oppression enforced by teenage drug armies and sustained by corrupt police.

At the dawn of liberation, just as collective mobility is overcoming all odds and Anderson's grassroots Afro Reggae movement is at the height of its success, a tragic accident threatens to silence the movement forever.

On The Edge: The Femicide in Ciudad Juarez

Mexico/USA. Director: Steev Hise (58 minutes, 2006)

On The Edge is a documentary covering the brutal murders of hundreds of poor young women in the border town of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, murders that have been repeatedly ignored and unresolved by police and governments since 1993, despite the continued and persistent efforts of family members and activists to obtain justice for the victims. Rather than provide an easy, murder-mystery style solution to the crimes, the film sets out to explain the social, cultural, and economic factors that have created this situation where the killings can continue, and continue to go unpunished. In addition to explaining the circumstances, On The Edge situates the Juárez killings in the context of wider political and economic trends, showing the audience that this is not just an isolated phenomenon in one far-off city, but a glimpse at a nightmarish future for much of the world, unless something is done to prevent it.

SPECIAL DOUBLE: SEXUAL DIVERSITY
IN ARGENTINA & CHILE

16 JUNE

Lesbianas de Buenos Aires

Argentina. Director: Santiago García (82 mins, 2002)

A celebration of the diversity of Buenos Aires' lesbian community, Lesbianas de Buenos Aires brings to the fore some of the many voices which have been neglected for too long. From a lesbian soccer coach to a lesbian activist and mother, each of the women featured have contended with discrimination and invisibility, though none have compromised their sexuality. They share stories about their first fantasies, the consequences of coming out, the desire to have kids, and of love between women in a culture of machismo. By establishing an intimate rapport with three women as they go about their daily lives, this documentary provides an honest and sensitive portrait of homosexuality in contemporary Latin America.

Trans

Chile. Directors: Cristóbal Cohen, Marcelo Hermosilla and Marcelo Fuentes (97 mins, 2007)

This documentary is a portrait of transsexuality in the marginal neighborhoods of Santiago, Chile. The film is centered on the history of Paula, a transsexual who must struggle day after day with discrimination and difficulties to find a space for herself in society. Her daily life, family relationships and personal aspirations interact with the experiences of other transsexuals in even more precarious situations. Trans reflects the identity conflicts and social problems of a country that tolerates, but still does not accept, its minority groups.



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