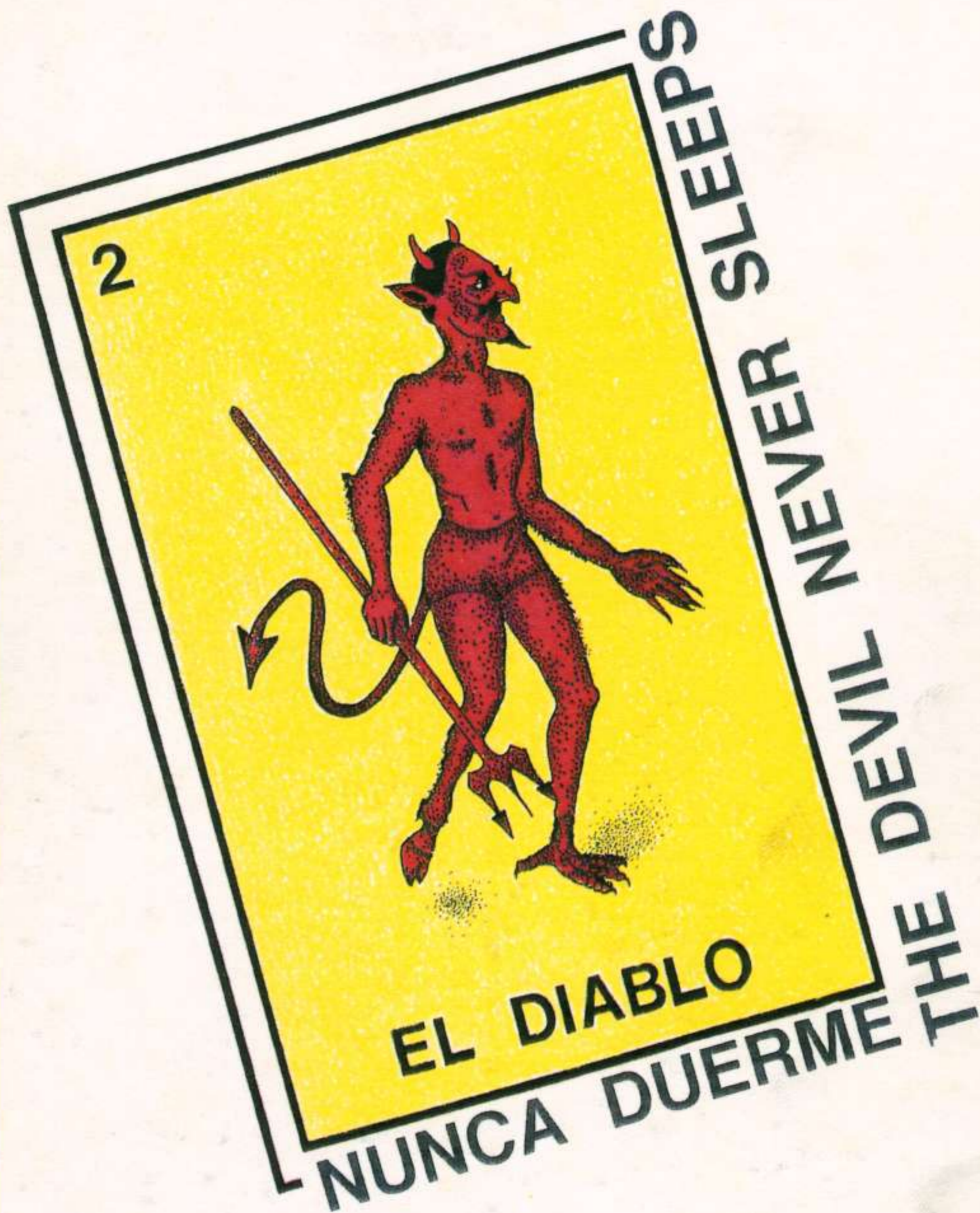


Document Citation

Title	El Diablo nunca duerme
Author(s)	Maya Allison
Source	<i>Xochitl Films</i>
Date	
Type	press kit
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	10
Subjects	Araujo, Jose Kibbe, Kyle Valladares, Michelle Gilliam, Vivien Hillgrove Portillo, Lourdes
Film Subjects	El Diablo nunca duerme (The Devil never sleeps), Portillo, Lourdes, 1994



A Film by Lourdes Portillo



XOCHITL FILMS
Lourdes Portillo

347 Dolores St. 301-B • San Francisco, Ca 94110 • Tel. 415-255-7399 • Fax 415-255-7704

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: *Edith Kramer*

ATTENTION TO:

FAX #: *510 642.4889*

FROM: *Lourdes Portillo -- see likes note*

FAX #:

DATE:

*I am showing
with her
short Columbus
on Trial (we
already showed)*

*Judy -
moved this*

EL DIABLO NUNCA DUERME THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS

SYNOPSIS

Early on Sunday morning in July the filmmaker Lourdes Portillo, received a phone call informing her that her beloved Tio (uncle) Oscar Ruiz Almeida had been found dead of a gunshot wound to the head in his (and her) native Chihuahua, Mexico. His widow immediately declared his death a suicide. Most of his family, however, raised a cry of murder, with suspicions cast in a number of directions: his business partner, his farm hand or the second wife?

The filmmaker returned to Mexico to investigate exactly who her uncle really was and why he died, exploring the irrational as well as the logical, looking for clues in the shared cultures on both sides of the border and the history of her family and its values. Tio Oscar's death has revived in her the resonances of her own history, her feelings for Mexico, her family, and her unresolved emotions about her own

EL DIABLO NUNCA DUERME

The Devil Never Sleeps



Lourdes Portillo
Director/Producer

Xochitl Films
981 Esmeralda Street • San Francisco, Ca. • 94110
Tel. (415) 255-7399 Fax (415) 255-7704

XOCHTL FILMS
Lourdes Portillo

347 Dolores St. 301-A • San Francisco, Ca 94118 • Tel. 415-255-7399 • Fax 415-255-7704

*I am showing
with her
short Columbus
on Trial (we
already showed)*

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: *Edith Kramer*

ATTENTION TO:

FAX #: *510 642.4889*

FROM: *Lourdes Portillo*

-- see library note

FAX #:

DATE:

*Judy -
I moved this
to Mon., April 17
for Albert + Women of
Color series*

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE:

Here it is !!

CINEMATHEQUE

EL DIABLO NUNCA DUERME
(THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS)
a film by Lourdes Portillo

December 3, 1994

Tio Oscar's death has revived in me the resonance of my own history, my feelings for Mexico, and my unresolved emotions about my own emigration and the life I lost when I left Mexico behind at the age of 13. A deeply personal film, The Devil Never Sleeps is an attempt to mine the intersection of numerous routes — between fact and fiction, analysis and autobiography, evidence and hypothesis, melodrama and the police procedural, and finally between film and video. It is a combination of family gossip, local slander, fact, fiction, and truths stranger than Mexican telenovellas.
—Lourdes Portillo

When award-winning film-maker Lourdes Portillo tells you in the beginning of *El Diablo Nunca Duerme (The Devil Never Sleeps)* that she will return to Mexico to find out how her uncle died, it seems that this will be a personal exploration, a return to her childhood environment. She speaks in the visual language recognizable as personal or lyrical documentary — family photographs, thoughtful voice-overs, metaphorical imagery. But the moment the family gossip begins to flow, Portillo becomes the star sleuth in a personal journey with the suspense dynamics of a classic murder mystery. As we begin thinking like detectives, all the members of her family become important, not as figures in her personal mythology as much as potential murder suspects. And unlike the research of a more traditional documentary, the appeal of the discovery lays not in its political or social conclusions (which it can still have) but rather in the pleasure of the chase, playing detective. Each interview begins to have innuendo and every statement seems to hold a clue. Rather than pulling us into the drama of her family life through our interest in her personal reality, Portillo draws us into the puzzle, asks questions with us and we wonder if we can solve the mystery before she does. Even the most entertainment-minded viewer pays attention to the whos and hows of her family history.

This strange wedding of murder mystery drama and personal documentary allows new twists for the narrative and its audience. In trying to solve a mystery with traditional elements (including an evil stepmother) the audience begins to read Portillo's less traditional visual style more fluently. She uses film and video in contrast, to connote the factual, the intimate or the suspicious; to remind us that she is responding to and sifting through the interviews with us, as new facts come to light. She places herself on and off screen as the detective and the mourning niece, the fact-finder and the reminiscing émigré.

Creating the palatable dynamic of the murder mystery plot sets the audience at ease. This liberates Portillo to alter the course of our interest. The basic elements of solving a mystery evolve into revelations which go deeper than 'who did it': the loyalty and suffocation of a family community, the destruction of a woman's self esteem, corruption in Mexican government, environmental tragedy — the loathsome and the beautiful in human nature. Early on the mystery pulls us in, gossip takes on larger than life significance and we pay attention. In this way abstract questions of truth and lying innuendo, fact and family legend, slip in through the back door, until we notice that the authority figures don't speak greater truths than the 'gossips.' Perhaps more importantly, the relatives transcend the role of suspect or witness and take on the sheen of loved ones.

Program Note by Maya Allison

EL DIABLO NUNCA DUERME
THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS

SYNOPSIS

Early on Sunday morning in July the filmmaker Lourdes Portillo, received a phone call informing her that her beloved Tío (uncle) Oscar Ruiz Almeida had been found dead of a gunshot wound to the head in his (and her) native Chihuahua, Mexico. His widow immediately declared his death a suicide. Most of his family, however, raised a cry of murder, with suspicions cast in a number of directions: his business partner, his farm hand or the second wife?

The filmmaker returned to Mexico to investigate exactly who her uncle really was and why he died, exploring the irrational as well as the logical, looking for clues in the shared cultures on both sides of the border and the history of her family and its values. Tío Oscar's death has revived in her the resonances of her own history, her feelings for Mexico, her family, and her unresolved emotions about her own emigration and the life she lost when she left Mexico behind at the age of 13.

A deeply personal film, *THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS* is an attempt to mine the intersection of numerous routes-- between fact and fiction, analysis and autobiography, evidence and hypothesis, melodrama and the police procedural, and finally, between film and video. It is a combination of family gossip, local slander, fact, fiction, and truths stranger than Mexican telenovelas.

EL DIABLO NUNCA DUERME, *THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS*,
16mm, color, 90 min.

For Info. call: Xochitl Films, 981 Esmeralda St., SF, CA, 94110,
Tel 415-255-7399 • Fax 415-255-7704

The Production Team

EL DIABLO NUNCA DUERME THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS

Murder or suicide?... across the border.

A fictionalized documentary by Lourdes Portillo

LOURDES PORTILLO - Writer/ Producer/ Director

Lourdes Portillo is a widely recognized Chicana filmmaker who has been writing and making films for over 15 years. Her films include *Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza De Mayo* which received an Academy Award Nomination and 18 international awards; *La Ofrenda, The Days of the Dead*, a critically acclaimed film on the Day of the Dead festival, and her most recently completed film *Columbus on Trial*, which was featured in the 1992 Whitney Museum Biennial. Her films have been the focus of special exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Wexner Center of the Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and her works have been screened in the U.S, Spain, Italy, London, France and Argentina.

MICHELLE VALLADARES - Co-Producer

Michelle Valladares has previously worked with Victor Masayesva on a feature documentary *Imagining Indians* and Nina Rosenblum on *Through the Wire*. This is her second collaboration with Ms. Portillo, the first was, *Equality's Child* for the Declarations Series which aired on PBS.

KYLE KIBBE - Director of Photography

Kyle Kibbe is an award winning cinematographer who has worked extensively on documentaries, features and music videos. His credits include *American Dream* by Barbara Kopple which won the Academy Award in 1990, *Who Killed Vincent Chin* and *Mississippi Triangle* by Christine Choy, *The Last Supper* by Robert Frank and *Haiti after Duvalier* by Kim Ives. This is his third collaboration with Ms. Portillo.

VIVIAN HILLGROVE GILLIAM - Editor

Vivian Hillgrove Gilliam is an award winning editor whose extensive picture editing credits include, *Henry and June* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, by Phil Kaufman, and sound editing credits include, *Blue Velvet* by David Lynch, *Amadeus* by Milos Forman which won 11 Academy Awards in 1984, and *One From the Heart* by Francis Coppola. Documentaries include *Broken Rainbow* by Victoria Mudd which won the 1985 Academy Award. This is her fourth collaboration with Ms. Portillo.

JOSE ARAUJO - Sound Recordist

José Araujo has worked for the past ten years as sound recordist and mixer for American, Brazilian and German feature and television productions. His credits include Percy Adlon's, *Salmonberries*, many episodes of German TV's *GEO* and CBS's *60 Minutes*, and numerous independent documentaries. This is his fourth collaboration with Ms. Portillo.

LOURDES PORTILLO Biographical Statement

In 1972, I joined the San Francisco NABET (National Association of Broadcast Engineers and Technicians) apprenticeship program, where I received thorough training in the mechanics of filmmaking under veteran cinematographers Stephen Lighthill (Break of Dawn) and Judy Irola (Northern Lights). At the same time, I joined Cine Manifest as Lighthill's first assistant in the collective's feature Over, Under, Sideways, Down. My work with Lighthill continued through the production of the artist documentary Christo's Fence and other works.

With the encouragement of my Cine Manifest partners, I attended the San Francisco Art Institute, where I focused on filmmaking as art, working with such fine film artists as James Broughton, Gorge Kuchar, Gunvor Nelson, and screenwriter Lester Cole. In 1978, I used the American Film Institute's Independent Filmmaker Award monies to produce a film that would inform the public about the Nicaraguan struggle that was beginning then. Nina Serrano and I joined to make After the Earthquake, a narrative film illuminating this country's conflicting views for the Nicaraguan revolution. The film won International awards, including Special Prize at the Krakow Shorts Film Festival; and Jury Prize at the Havana Film Festival.

In 1981, I contracted with producer Moctezuma Esparza to adapt for the screen the Chicano novel Pocho, by Jose Antonio Villareal, as part of the Somos series of Chicano novels that most recently included John Nichols' the Milagro Beanfield War, directed by Robert Redford. In 1982 I wrote Chola, an original screenplay about the struggles of a thirteen-year-old, orphaned Salvadorean refugee in San Francisco.

In 1983, Susana Muñoz and I began a three-year project to chronicle the struggle of the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, who were demonstrating to bring the government to an accounting of their disappeared ones. Las Madres received twenty international awards, including a 1986 nomination for an Oscar for Best Documentary, and a nomination for an Emmy. In 1989, we completed the documentary film La Ofrenda, a film about the Mexican holiday that celebrates and honors the dead. The film represents a departure from our earlier documentary work, in that we are telling the story visually -- relying on images to convey meaning and emotion -- rather than relying on interviews. La Ofrenda has also received several awards, among them a Blue Ribbon at the American Film and Video Festival as well as Best Documentary at the Athens Film Festival.

In 1990, I completed a full length screenplay for an animated film The Myth of the Five Suns, for Patricia Amlyn, and the award winning Aids video Vida, a short. In 1988, I received a Rockefeller Intercultural Fellowship for a narrative feature that deals with marginal exiles, intercultural clashes and the search for love. The renowned playwright Maria Irene Fornes is the author of the screenplay. In 1990, I received a second Rockefeller fellowship for the production of the film.

With money granted to me by the Inter-Arts NEA program in 1993 I completed Columbus on Trial a new video that brings Columbus to trial within the structure of a political satire, and video experimentation. It has been shown at the London Film Festival and will also be a part of the Whitney Museum's Biennial, as well as the Sundance Film Festival in 1993.

In 1992 I was awarded a grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop and research a project on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the notable 16th century Mexican nun. She was a poet and intellectual whose work still is of great importance in Latin America.

In 1993 I received two grants from Independent Television Service and National Latino Communications Center for my most recent completed documentary El Diablo Nunca Duerme/The Devil Never Sleeps, an investigation of the death of my uncle, which takes me back to my native Chihuahua, Mexico. The film is an attempt to mine the intersection between fact and fiction and analysis and autobiography. It is a combination of family gossip, local slander, fiction and melodrama stranger than telenovelas. In 1994 I was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for all my past work.

L O U R D E S P O R T I L L O
F i l m o g r a p h y

El Diablo Nunca Duerme / The Devil Never Sleeps **1993**

A feature **documentary** about an investigation of the death of my beloved Tio Oscar, which takes me back to my native Chihuahua, Mexico. The film is an attempt to mine the intersection between fact and fiction and analysis and autobiography. It is a combination of family gossip, local slander, fiction and melodrama stranger than *telenovelas*.

Declarations / Equality's Child **1993**

An eight minute experimental **video** featuring civil rights activist and law professor Derrick Bell narrating a parable about equality.

Columbus On Trial **1992**

An 18 minute **Video**. A political satire, with Culture Clash -- the comedy trio. Verbal satire, physical comedy, and state of the art video techniques are used to dramatize a faux-trial of Columbus in a present-day courtroom.

Mirrors of the Heart **1992**

A one-hour **Documentary** for WGBH in Boston for *The Americas*, a ten-part series on Latin America to be broadcasted in 1993. The film, *Mirrors of the Heart*, explores the notions of ethnic identity, filmed on the Island of Hispaniola and in the highlands of Bolivia.

The Aztec Myth of Creation **1991**

A **screenplay** for an animated feature for animator Patricia Amlyn. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It is presently in production.

Vida **1990**

A short **narrative** film for AIDS FILMS that depicts the struggle of a young Latina woman in New York, coming to terms with the dangers of AIDS. Recipient of a Gold Award at the International Film and TV Festival in New York Cine Golden Eagle, and a Silver Apple at the National Educational Film Festival. *Vida* received an Honorable mention at the San Antonio Film Festival.

La Ofrenda **1990**

16mm, a lyrical **Documentary** film that portrays the attitudes that Chicanos and Mexicans have towards death. The film has received several awards, including a Blue Ribbon from the American Film and Video Association, as well as Honors from the Independent Documentary Association, and the Latino Film Festival in San Antonio, Texas.

Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo **1986**

A one-hour **Documentary** depicting the story of the mothers of the disappeared in Argentina. The mothers forced the military regime into an accounting for their disappeared ones. Recipient of 20 National and International awards, including a 1986 Oscar nomination for Best Documentary, and an Emmy nomination.

Chola **1982**

Original **screenplay**, commissioned by American Playhouse, about a teenage Salvadorean refugee in San Francisco, an orphaned girl who has come to live with her grandmother in the U.S.

Después del Terremoto **1979**

16mm, half-hour **narrative** about a Nicaraguan maid trying to adapt to America, and her dilemma over her impending marriage to a Nicaraguan revolutionary. Recipient of awards in Poland and in Cuba.

UN film américain fauché et de langue espagnole, *El Mariachi*, a été l'un des grands événements du dernier Festival de Deauville et de la rentrée cinématographique en France. Le monde entier connaît désormais l'histoire du jeune réalisateur texan Robert Rodriguez (25 ans) qui a financé son film (7 000 dollars) en vendant une partie de son corps à la science... Rodriguez a écrit le scénario d'*El Mariachi* en trois semaines, l'a tourné en dix-sept jours et l'a monté en huit semaines. Un record. Son film, qui mêle allègrement western, comédie, thriller et violence, n'était pas destiné, dans un premier temps, à sortir en salle, seulement au marché vidéo de la communauté chicano des Etats-Unis. Mais la compagnie Columbia, l'une des grandes d'Hollywood, reniflant le bon coup, prit sous son aile le jeune prodige et, pour la première fois, décida de diffuser ce film tourné, au départ, en 16 mm, sans star, sans budget et en espagnol.

El Mariachi a été primé partout, du Festival de Telluride (Etats-Unis) à celui de Toronto (Canada), et son insolite succès a eu pour conséquence d'attirer l'attention sur la face cachée du cinéma chicano, auquel le Festival de Saint-Sébastien (Espagne) a consacré, en septembre dernier, une très complète rétrospective.

Qui sont les Chicanos ? Au sein de l'importante communauté hispanique des Etats-Unis (environ 25 millions de personnes), les Chicanos constituent la plus forte minorité d'origine latino-américaine (quelque 12 millions), loin devant les Portoricains (3 millions) et les Cubains (2 millions). Descendants des Mexicains qui peuplaient les territoires conquis par les Etats-Unis au milieu du XIX^e siècle, les Chicanos sont surtout concentrés dans quatre Etats : la Californie, l'Arizona, le Nouveau-Mexique et le Texas. Au cours des années 60, et à l'occasion des grandes luttes dans l'agriculture, cette communauté a pris conscience de son importance et de son identité (1). Un puissant mouvement culturel s'est alors développé dans lequel le cinéma a joué un rôle prépondérant (2).

Pédagogie et militantisme

AINSI, avant Robert Rodriguez, le metteur en scène Luis Valdez avait déjà, à la fin des années 80, éveillé l'intérêt du grand public pour la culture chicano grâce au film *la Bamba* (1987) qui connut un grand succès en France et racontait le destin tragique du chanteur Richie Valens, idole de cette communauté, devenu célébrité mondiale. Ce film avait également été produit par Columbia.

Autre exemple : *El Norte* (1983), réalisé par Gregory Nava, que l'on put voir sur tous les écrans d'Europe et qui retraçait le périple dramatique d'un frère et d'une sœur guatémaltèques fuyant la dictature militaire de leur pays et ambitionnant d'atteindre le « paradis américain ».

L'exemple de ces trois films - *El Mariachi*, *la Bamba*, *El Norte* - est trompeur. Leur succès ne reflète nullement la situation ordinaire des films chicanos, œuvres bâtarde entre deux Etats, deux langues, deux cultures. Souvent artisanaux, produits avec de très petits budgets, ces films ont, comme dans bien des cinémas du tiers-monde, une vocation pédagogique. De nombreux cinéastes y tiennent, en effet, un discours politique militant et cherchent à rendre leur communauté plus active, plus organisée. D'autant qu'une certaine tendance à aller vers le conservatisme s'accroît chez les Chicanos.

Ainsi, dans *Power, Politics and Latinos* (1992), Hector Galan rappelle que, sur les 25 millions d'Hispaniques, à peine 9 millions sont inscrits sur les listes électorales ; et que si, en 1980, 85 % d'entre eux avaient voté pour le démocrate John Kennedy, ils ont été plus de 30 % à voter, en 1992, pour le républicain George Bush.

Cela n'a pas toujours été ainsi. Dans les années 60 et 70, beaucoup de Chicanos, stimulés par les révolutions latino-américaines et la résistance vietnamienne, rêvaient, eux aussi, d'en découdre avec l'« oppresseur américain ».

« Un matin, raconte Reis Lopez Tijerina, dans *Yo soy chicano* (Je suis chicano, 1972) de Jesus Treviño, le lion, roi de la jungle, ordonne au criquet de cesser de faire du bruit. Le criquet s'étonne qu'un animal aussi puissant puisse être dérangé par les petits cris d'un insecte. Mais le lion ne veut rien savoir. Le criquet défie alors en duel le roi des animaux car il préfère mourir plutôt que de se taire.

* Journaliste et cinéaste.

La mémoire insurgée des Chicanos

Au sud-ouest des Etats-Unis, les Chicanos constituent la principale communauté hispanique. Ils sont les descendants des Mexicains qui peuplaient cette région au XIX^e siècle lors de la conquête américaine, et les fils des émigrants venus du sud du Rio Grande. La signature de l'Accord de libre échange nord-américain (lire les articles pages 12 et 13), leur fournit un prétexte pour affirmer encore plus passionnément leur culture spécifique mexicano-américaine, que le cinéma, depuis vingt ans, n'a cessé, avec bonheur, de revendiquer.

Par CARLOS PARDO*



« GANGS » (1988) de Jesus Treviño

Le combat commence. Très vite, l'insecte va se nicher dans l'oreille du lion. Celui-ci essaie de chasser la petite bête et, de ses grandes griffes, il se gratte, se gratte, se gratte jusqu'à perdre tout son sang. Et en mourir... » « Dans cette parabole, ajoute Reis Lopez Tijerina, le lion, c'est les Etats-Unis ; le criquet, c'est nous, les Chicanos. »

C'était l'époque du « Chicano Movement », le combat pour le respect des droits civiques que menaient les Chicanos au nom de « La Raza », nom qu'ils donnaient alors à leur communauté. Reis Lopez Tijerina est devenu un héros de la cause le 5 juin 1967. Ce jour-là, la Convention que devait tenir l'Alliance Federal de Los Pueblos Libres (Alliance fédérale des peuples libres) à Tierra Amarilla, petite ville du Nouveau-Mexique, fut interdite par les autorités. Pour protester, Tijerina, avec l'aide d'un complice, enleva deux conseillers municipaux. D'énormes moyens policiers furent alors mis sur pied pour une chasse à l'homme qui durera cinq jours. Tijerina finira par relâcher les otages et se rendre. Après un procès de trois semaines, où il prit lui-même sa défense, il sera acquitté. Le réalisateur Jesus Treviño a évoqué ces événements et le geste de Tijerina dans son célèbre documentaire *Yo soy chicano*. Ce cinéaste californien y rappelait que, à l'origine, le sud-ouest des Etats-Unis était une terre indienne, puis hispanique bien avant la « conquête de l'Ouest » par les Anglo-Saxons.

Le début du mouvement chicano se situe à l'aube des années 50, lors d'une grève historique des mineurs du Nouveau-Mexique. Le premier film ayant pour personnage principal un Chicano est *Salt of the Earth* (le Sel de la terre, 1953), réalisé par deux cinéastes hollywoodiens de gauche, inscrits sur la fameuse « liste noire », Herbert Biber-

man et Michael Wilson. Ce film dénonçait les conditions de vie des mineurs ; Juan Chacon en était l'interprète principal. Il avait été le leader de la grève. Quarante années plus tard, un superbe documentaire de Beverly Sanchez Padilla, *El Corrido de Juan Chacon* (1990), rappelle cette grève fondatrice.

Le mouvement chicano prit sa véritable dimension au cours des années 60 et 70. La lutte était alors menée sur deux fronts. Tout d'abord combattre la nouvelle forme d'esclavage qui se développait dans l'industrie de la confection, où était exploitée une majorité de travailleurs mexicains en situation irrégulière. Ensuite, montrer que la cause de ces travailleurs immigrés et celle des Chicanos ne faisaient qu'une. Pour permettre d'accroître les chances de se faire entendre, une « union fraternelle » s'imposait entre Chicanos et Mexicains.

Susan Racho, dans un remarquable reportage produit par la télévision publique de l'Etat de New-York, *Garment Workers*, a décrit précisément les effroyables conditions de travail dans les ateliers de confection du sud de la Californie où ouvriers chicanos et mexicains sont également exploités. Dans *Requiem 29* (1971), David Garcia a évoqué avec talent et sobriété la manifestation du 29 août 1970. Ce jour-là, le Moratoire chicano s'était réuni à Los Angeles pour protester contre la guerre du Vietnam et l'envoi d'un trop grand nombre d'Hispaniques sur le front. Beaucoup de manifestants périrent sous les coups de la répression policière, dont le journaliste Ruben Salazar.

Dans *Raíces de Sangre* (1975), long-métrage de fiction, Jesus Treviño rappelle, sur un ton brechtien, les luttes de cette époque. Le prétexte est simple : un syndicat essaie de se mettre sur

Un'eruzione video dal «Cono Sud»

MARIO J. CEREGHINO

SAN PAOLO Può il video del «Cono Sud» latinoamericano concorrere con le superpotenze audiovisive di Usa ed Europa? Questo il tema di fondo di una mostra svoltasi al Museo dell'Immagine e del Suono di San Paolo, che per la prima volta ha riunito la produzione più recente di Brasile, Argentina, Paraguay, Cile e Uruguay, paesi che — dal 1995 — costituiranno il «Mercosur», il mercato comune più esteso del Sudamerica.

Organizzata dai produttori paulisti Sergio Martinelli e Andreina Seligmann, la rassegna ha presentato una cinquantina di opere, molto apprezzate dal pubblico e dalla critica per la maturità tecnica e narrativa raggiunte in poco più di un decennio di attività. «Nel nostro continente non mancano certo festival video — racconta il video-

maker argentino Carlos Trilnick — Le tecnologie sono ormai molto diffuse e rappresentano uno strumento accessibile a tutti e, per fortuna, estremamente democratico: da qui l'idea di organizzare un festival non competitivo. Il successo di queste prime edizioni, a Buenos Aires e San Paolo, ci incoraggia ad andare avanti: dall'anno prossimo, infatti, la mostra sarà suddivisa non per nazioni ma per temi, a sottolineare un'integrazione audiovisiva che è andata molto più avanti del previsto».

Il I «Festival del Cono Sud» ha spaziato dalla videoarte più pura (*Arda Gardel* e *Flight 101 to no man's land* di Diego Lascano, *Poesia è uma ou duas palavras* di Joao Moreira Salles, *Mi sueño no tiene sitio* di Bernardo Ismachoviez) al documentario di denuncia (*Algunas mujeres* di Sabrina Farji, *Guia del imigrante* di Andrés di Tella

e Fabian Hofman, *Viaduto do cha* di José Santos) e alla fiction (*La classe de organo* di Juan Carlos Maneglia, *Momentos* di Ray Armele).

«In Paraguay, ad esempio, il video si è sviluppato molto grazie al contrabbando di apparecchiature di alta tecnologia — ci dice quest'ultimo — anche se la dittatura di Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989) ci ha sempre impedito di esprimerci liberamente. Attualmente, i nostri videomaker (una ventina) puntano soprattutto alla fiction, dal momento che il cinema è del tutto assente nel nostro paese».

A sorpresa, i video dell'Uruguay (l'ex-Svizzera del Sudamerica) si sono rivelati i migliori della rassegna. «Come in Paraguay, anche da noi il video è fiorito per l'assoluta mancanza di industria cinematografica — dice il produttore Daniel Stapff — L'ultimo film è stato prodotto

13 anni fa, così molti autori sono stati costretti ad utilizzare le tecnologie video; la maggioranza, una cinquantina, lavora nel campo pubblicitario per sopravvivere». Da segnalare lo splendido *Por una cazaba* di Pablo Dotta e Pablo Gutierrez (a ritmo accelerato, tutto l'Uruguay e la sua cultura in 11 minuti) e l'elegante lavoro di fiction *Los muertos* di Guillermo Casanova, tratto da un racconto di Mario Levrero.

Il festival ha anche ospitato un'importante retrospettiva dedicata ai video latinoamericani realizzati negli Usa da cubani, portoricani, *chicanos* e centroamericani. «Negli Usa, si producono annualmente decine di *latin videos* — ci dice il professor Luis Valdovino, curatore della selezione — Il problema è che non si vedono con facilità. La produzione si concentra soprattutto a New York, San Francisco

e Los Angeles; promuoviamo anche due rassegne a San Antonio (Texas) e a Chicago (Illinois). Negli ultimi anni abbiamo finalmente acquisito l'importanza che meritiamo: non bisogna dimenticare che nell'anno 2000 i *latinos* saranno il 25% della popolazione Usa, superando così la minoranza afroamericana».

La fiction *Colon en juicio* è stato il grande successo della mostra: l'autrice — la *chicana* Lourdes Portillo — immagina che Cristoforo Colombo torni in vita alla vigilia delle celebrazioni per il Cinquecentenario e viene naturalmente processato da un tribunale di New York, in cui il pubblico ministero è un indiano, un *native american*.

Sembra, infine, che festival di questo tipo comincino a dare i loro frutti. A Rosario (in Argentina) si svolgerà dal 25 al 28 agosto la prima «Rassegna latinoamericana di Video», con un poster che rende bene l'idea: un guerriero azteco sorvola e riprende l'intero continente con una *handycam*.

Il manifesto
1/8/93