
New York Gets to See the Best Documentaries Brazilians Have Ever Shot

Contributed by Newsroom
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Without a doubt Brazil is one of the most interesting countries in the Americas and in the world due to its particular mix of cultures, and the resulting creative energy that characterizes its national identity. In recent years it has also been at the center of a unique process of political change that hints at the many possibilities that lie in store for the nation. Often referred to as "the country of the future," the Documenta Brazil festival makes it clear that Brazil is also a "country of the present."

Documenta Brazil 2008: Rhythms of Brasilidade, to be held this November in New York, is a pioneer festival dedicated to the most innovative and sophisticated cultural production of the last few decades in Brazil: the documentary film.

The selection of films provides a window into the many facets of the country's reality, attempting to go beyond easy clichés of what constitutes "Brazilianess" to provide a complex kaleidoscope of the many aspects of the country's identity.

Moreover, these films are also careful explorations of the possibilities of the documentary genre, frequently pushing the boundaries between fact and fiction, and between creation and documentation.

This first edition of Documenta Brazil, sponsored by the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center and by several academic departments at NYU, focuses on the rhythms of "Brazilianess." This includes the rhythm of music that is so pervasive in the everyday life of Brazilians, but also the rhythm of daily life in urban cities or in slums, or even in Brazilian communities abroad, as portrayed in these films.

Finally, it is the pulsating rhythm of the Brazilian documentary film itself, as it explores the country's multiple facets, and as it develops into an increasingly refined genre.

Perhaps Brazil's most famous cultural export is its music, which has influenced and permeated musical styles from jazz and pop to classical and experimental, in innumerable ways. The names samba, choro, and bossa nova immediately resonate in people's minds, yet few people are acquainted with their history.

Documenta Brazil 2008 showcases a number of films on music, as well as an extraordinary selection of award-winning films on the themes of immigration, art, urban violence, prison life, teenage pregnancy, and sight.

Documenta Brazil will screen films in the presence of documentary filmmakers, who will participate in Q&A sessions. International guests include renowned filmmaker João Moreira Salles, and the eminent cultural and literary critic and

composer José Miguel Wisnik, who will deliver the festival's keynote on November 18.

There will also be a roundtable discussion on the contemporary Brazilian documentary (on November 14), starring filmmakers and academics, and the festival will be launched with an evening of live music, performed by the choro quartet, Ginga do Mané.

Other festival guests include filmmakers Guto Barra, Tania Cypriano, Béco Dranoff and Sandra Kogut, and professors John Hamilton, Luz Horne, Richard Peña and Jason Stanyek.

Among the screenings are: *Santiago* (2006), by João Moreira Salles, *Jogo de Cena* (2007), by Eduardo Coutinho (the latest film by the director considered to be the father of the Brazilian documentary genre), *The Hungarian Passport* (2002), by Sandra Kogut, the award winning *Window of the Soul* (2001) by Walter Carvalho and João Jardim, and two sessions of award-winning shorts, among additional carefully selected films.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 13, 2008

6:15 *Brasileirinho* (Mika Kaurismaki, 2005) 90'

A breathtaking portrait of the musical genre choro, sometimes referred to as Brazilian jazz, and hailed by composer Heitor Villa-Lobos as the essence and the soul of Brazilian music. Choro emerged at the end of the 19th Century when music groups in Rio de Janeiro began blending European melodies with Afro-Brazilian rhythms. This film follows the Trio Madeira Brasil, as they get ready for a show, offering a very special tour of the intimate nooks of Rio de Janeiro and its music.

8:00 Concert by choro quartet, Ginga do Mané

Reception with Typical Brazilian Food

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2008

3:00 *Geraldo Filme* (Carlos Cortez, 1998) 54'

The subtitle to this film could very well be: "Yes, there is samba in São Paulo," a surprise for those who associate samba only with Rio de Janeiro. The life of Geraldo Filme, a central figure of the São Paulo samba tradition, is presented within a fictional framework featuring a journalist who digs up testimonies about his work and personality. With a spectacular

soundtrack by Filme, spectators learn the ways in which samba portrays and negotiates issues of race, social class, gender, and group identity.

4:15 Meninas (Sandra Werneck, 2006) 71'

The film accompanies the pregnancy of four teenage girls: Evelin, 13, pregnant by her drug dealer boyfriend whose face never appears on the screen; Edilene, 14, whose single mother is also pregnant, and whose boyfriend also impregnates Joice, 15; and Luana, 15, who helped raise her four younger sisters, and decides she now wants to have a child of her own. Focusing on these four individual stories, Werneck depicts an alarming social picture, and sounds an urgent call for a rapidly disappearing stage of life called childhood, while portraying the ability of these young meninas to adapt to their new life as mothers.

5:45 ROUND TABLE

RHYTHMS OF THE DOCUMENTARY IN BRAZIL: THE LAST 20 YEARS (Luz Horne, Sandra Kogut, Richard Peña, João Moreira Salles)

Brazilian filmmakers João Moreira Salles and Sandra Kogut, and two professors who are experts in the field, Richard Peña and Luz Horne, will examine the development of the documentary genre in Brazil since the 1990s.

Questions addressed will include the self-consciousness of the genre, the documentary's limits and conventions, and the relationship between documenting and representing; in other words: how stable are the boundaries between documentary filmmaking and fiction? Rather than simply asking: "what is a documentary?" speakers will also be asked: "what is documenting?" Moderated by Edgardo Diekele.

7:30 Jogo de Cena (Eduardo Coutinho, 2007) 105'

The latest film by Eduardo Coutinho, one of the most important and influential documentary filmmakers in Brazil, invites us to question the ease and eagerness with which we believe in the reality of documentary films.

Replying to a newspaper ad, various women tell their life stories to director Eduardo Coutinho, which are then reenacted by actresses, blurring the boundaries between truth, fiction and interpretation, and putting our belief to the test: which is the testimony and which is the acting?

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15, 2008

3:00 SHORTS SESSION 1

- Da Janela do Meu Quarto (Cao Guimarães 2004) 5'

A window, the rain, a fight. Two kids playing, life passing by.

- Seams (Karim Ainouz 1993) 29'

This film begins with a visit to the director's five great aunts, who tell stories about romance, marriage, suffering, and survival in a man's world, from which Ainouz weaves a subtle meditation on memory, love, and machismo.

- Marangmotxíngmo Mírang: From the Ikpeng children to the World, (Kumaré, Karané and Natuyu Yuwipo Txicão, 2001) 35'

Four Ikpeng children introduce their village to Cuban children from Sierra Maestra through a video-letter. They show their families, toys, celebrations, and way of life with grace and lightheartedness.

4:15 Santa Marta: Duas Semanas no Morro (Santa Marta: Two Weeks on the Hill, Eduardo Coutinho, 1987) 54'

A portrait of Santa Marta, one of Rio's most famous favelas. Coutinho interviews residents about life in a Rio shantytown. Careful not to succumb to clichés about favela life, the film explores issues such as faith, education, work, domestic and police violence, the drug trade, sex, marriage, racism, religion and dreams about the future.

Notícias de Uma Guerra Particular (News From a Personal War, João Moreira Salles & Katia Lund, 1999) 56'

Elected one of the best contemporary Brazilian films and winner of the documentary festival *É Tudo Verdade*, the film portrays the Santa Marta slum twelve years after Coutinho's documentary. The prevailing theme has now become overt violence, and shots of daily life in a slum dominated by the drug war alternate with interviews.

Participants in the conflict between drug dealers and policemen - including shantytown dwellers who live in the midst of the crossfire - deliver poignant testimonies in an astounding portrait of urban violence.

6:15 Santiago (João Moreira Salles, 2006) 80'.

Followed by a discussion with the director

In 1992, João Moreira Salles began shooting a film about Santiago, the butler in his childhood home who left an indelible mark upon the family. Santiago was an educated man who, in his spare time, produced some 60,000 pages of stories documenting aristocratic families, which he kept bound with ribbons and treated as loyal companions.

Revisiting the unfinished film thirteen years later, Salles reflects on his family and childhood, and on the reasons why the film took so long to complete. The result is an elegant mosaic with two parallel narratives, dealing with topics such as memory, identity, and documentary filmmaking. Winner of the Grand Prize at Cinéma du Réel in Paris.

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 16, 2008

3:00 Moacir, Arte Bruta (Walter Carvalho, 2005) 71'

In Chapada dos Veadeiros, a remote, rural region of Brazil, a mentally challenged man shares with the camera his compulsion to produce uncanny and fascinating images of horned devils and nude men and women that the people living around him admire, dislike or condemn, but which have earned him the reputation of being a visionary artist.

4:15 Nelson Freire (João Moreira Salles, 2003) 102'

A film about the world-renowned Brazilian pianist, who shyly lets us come into his world through interviews, performances, backstage scenes, and moments from everyday life. João Moreira Salles traveled together with the pianist for a year in order to create this moving portrait, remarkable both in its reticence and in its respect for Nelson Freire. Moreira Salles' beautifully structured film can be seen as a cinematic counterpart to Freire's music. In its exploration of the rhythms of life both on and off stage.

6:00 A Documentary Film in Progress: Excerpt from Beyond Ipanema (Guto Barra & Béco Dranoff) followed by a conversation between the filmmakers and Jason Stanyek

For many years Brazilian music has been sweeping America, Europe and Asia off their feet. What is it about Brazilian music that makes it such translates into such a powerful force? Why does Bossa Nova still lure DJ's and producers 50 years after it was created? Why does the Tropicália movement resonate so deeply with the alternative rock crowd? How could Samba take over a public school in Harlem in 2008? Beyond Ipanema explores these and many other questions about the Brazilian music experience outside of Brazil.

7:30 O Prisioneiro da Grade de Ferro (The Prisoner of the Iron Bars (Self-Portraits), Paulo Sacramento, 2004) 123'

The prison complex known as Carandiru, demolished in 2002 (capable of housing 4,000 inmates), once held up to 9,000 prisoners, and was considered to be the largest prison in South America. A year before the prison was shut down, Sacramento handed cameras to the inmates, who filmed parts of the prison the filmmakers didn't have access to. Leaving it purposefully unclear who is behind the camera, the filmmaker produces a multi-authored film that portrays an astounding tale of the human capacity for creativity and survival.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2008

3:00 SHORTS SESSION 2

- Helena Zero (Joel Pizzini, 2006) 20'

The creative world of actress and filmmaker Helena Ignez, who evokes and reinvents memories through Tai Chi movements.

- Rap, o Canto da Ceilândia (Adirley Queirós, 2005) 15'

A dialogue with four famous Brazilian rap artists (X, Jamaika, Marquim and Japão), who are all from Ceilândia, a satellite city in the outskirts of Brasília.

- A linguagem de Orson Welles (Rogério Sganzerla, 1990) 15'

An account of Orson Welles' visit to Rio in 1942 is combined with a description of the city's carnival, and the accident at the Barra da Tijuca where the "jangadeiro" Jacaré was killed on May 19, 1942.

- A.M.A Ceará (Pedro Martins, 2000) 16'

A portrait of Antonio Matos Alves, a craftsman from Fortaleza who earns his livelihood by carving wooden animals.

4:15 Viva Volta (Turning, Heloísa Passos, 2005) 15'

A moving portrait of Raul de Souza, a world famous Brazilian trombonist who has lived in Paris since 1996, and who still suffers from not being recognized in his own country. In 2005, Souza travels to Rio de Janeiro, where he reencounters and performs with interpreter Maria Bethânia.

Grandma Has a Video Camera (Tania Cypriano, 2007) 56'

Followed by Q&A with the director

For over twenty years, a family of Brazilian immigrants in the United States used their home video camera to record first-hand how they saw their new world and struggled to establish themselves. Tania Cypriano edited her grandmothers' home videos, and the result is a clever and touching portrait of migration, displacement, homesickness, and the search for a sense of belonging and identity.

6:30 O Rio Severino (Dado Amaral, 2005) 11'

In 1994 Biro da Bolívar hired Dado Amaral to film him in Rio de Janeiro before he returned to Paraíba. Ten years later the filmmaker proposes they make a film about the city.

Um Passaporte Húngaro (The Hungarian Passport, Sandra Kogut, 2002) 71'

Followed by Q&A with the director

A Brazilian of Jewish Hungarian origin embarks on a journey to obtain a Hungarian passport. The film traces the numerous bureaucratic steps taken, embassies visited, archives traversed and family memories jolted and transmitted, with a remarkably personal tone. The filmmaker, who works with a small crew, or handholds the camera herself, captures a fleeting individuality that persists despite the - at times mind-boggling-rigidity of bureaucracy.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2008

3:00 AfroReggae: Nenhum Motivo Explica a Guerra (AfroReggae: No Motive Explains War, Carlos Diegues & Rafael Dragaud, 2006) 84'

The first documentary film by the director of *Bye Bye Brasil* (1979), *Veja Esta Canção* (1994), and *Orfeu* (1999). Diegues follows the trajectory of the musical and cultural group AfroReggae, which originated in 1995 in the Rio slum called Vigário Geral.

Diegues spent weeks interviewing the members of the first group from a social project in a favela to sign with a major record label. The result is a story of violence in Rio de Janeiro told by those who literally 'survived to tell the tale'.

4:15 Janela da Alma (Window of the Soul, João Jardim & Walter Carvalho, 2001) 73'

Nineteen people with differing degrees of visual impairment - from mild nearsightedness to total blindness - discuss how they see themselves, how they see others and how they perceive the world. Writer and Nobel laureate José Saramago, musician Hermeto Pascoal, filmmakers Wim Wenders and Agnès Varda, neurologist Oliver Sachs, and blind photographer Evgen Bavcar, among others, make surprising revelations about various aspects of vision - the physiological working of the eye, the way eyeglasses frame the world and shape our personality, the meaning of seeing or not seeing in a world saturated by images, and the way emotions transform our reality.

6:15 KEY-NOTE LECTURE BY JOSÉ MIGUEL WISNIK

Introduced by John Hamilton

José Miguel Wisnik is one of Brazil's foremost critics and intellectuals, as well as a famous songwriter, pianist and singer. He teaches literature at the University of São Paulo, and has written extensively on literature, music theory, and most recently, soccer.

His books include *O Coro dos Contrários - a Música em Torno da Semana de 22 (Duas Cidades, 1977)*, *O Nacional e*

o Popular na Cultura Brasileira (Brasiliense, 1982), O Som e o Sentido (Companhia das Letras, 1989), Sem Receita - Ensaios e Canções (Publifolha, 2004) and Veneno Remédio: O Futebol e o Brasil (Companhia das Letras, 2008).

Wisnik has composed music for several theater plays, dance spectacles and films, including the documentary Janela da Alma (to be screened at Documenta Brazil 2008). Among his recordings are José Miguel Wisnik (2000) São Paulo Rio (2002), and Pérolas aos Poucos (2003).

Mr. Wisnik will speak about the interaction between music, national identity, and social phenomena in Brazil across popular, high and mass culture, addressing the way they're affected by the country's changing political and social landscape.

Followed by closing Reception

Service

Documenta Brazil 2008: Rhythms of Brasilidade

Brazilian Documentary Film Festival

November 13-18, 2008

At New York University's King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center

53 Washington Square South (between Sullivan & Thompson Streets)

Curated by Micaela Kramer and Fernando Pérez.

Guest curators for the selection of shorts: Thiago Mendonça and Moara Passoni

All screenings and events are free to the public. ID is required at the door.

Site: www.nyu.edu/kjc/documentabrazil