
Latin Cinema and Its Stereotypes

10/04/2015



What's concerning about this is not the fact that there's too much given space for these realities with excessive relevance, it's the fact that a trend is built within the public, inside and outside our frontiers, a matter that implies that this is how we see ourselves and how we want to be seen by the rest of the world.

Until not so long ago, these type of stories dominated the Latin big screen above the comedies or dramas. There's always more attendance and box office income from these films that in most cases, more than portraying a local reality, doesn't leave a positive message or open a space for discussion in the audience.

Many would think this as mere intellectualism or the desire to stop having movies as a media of entertainment, but to the contrary, it is to use this as a tool with its massive reach to communicate more positive things and project ourselves to the world from a different perspective. Currently there is an opening to new topics, but we're still balancing on a thin line between the stereotype and the real identity that defines us as a people

I remember when I had the privilege to interview Ecuadoran cinematographer Tania Hermida ('Qué Tan Lejos', 'En El Nombre de la Hija') and she told me that's precisely the struggle that she and many other Latin American Directors have to be able to to get audiences to connect with other topics and make the financial institutions interested in more local stories felt within our culture.

Hermida's work is known by precisely that interest – her two movies are inspired not only by her life perspective but also by her own childhood experiences, so she wanted to represent that in her characters. We are such colorful and diverse societies that we don't need to go very far to write a story. Sometimes it's just a matter of sitting down and talking to a close relative or finding those unforgettable memories within ourselves.

The filmmaker also highlighted other common tendency in our films, which are the bad scripts, something that she is particularly mindful of. That's why she's a selective cinematographer who doesn't attend or support any festival or showing, because sometimes the stories, even when local and national in scope, don't contribute in a positive way to local filmmaking.

As Latinas/os, sometimes we have the responsibility to fight against thousands of prejudices from Anglo and European societies, but this exercise starts at home. Picking our content instead of commercial cinema and empowering a resource that belongs to us brings us together. We have the privilege to have all natural landscapes and all kinds of weather to locate the stories, and when it comes to these, the source is infinite.
