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Intro to MIAP
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***La Bodega Sold Dreams:
Nuyorican Film in the 60's and 70's***

“New York, the Port of Gold...for some, the cold, implacable city that destroys an illusion...for others, the great promise comes true...This is the story of a dream, an ambition, a love.”
*Vendedora de amor*¹

Nuyorican film production during the late 1960's, and all throughout the 1970's, was united jowl by cheek with the exploitation² subculture of the times. Sharing key crewmembers of recognizable exploitation films of the period, along with themes and motifs of the genre. *Nuyorican* film adapted and assimilated the genre, choosing stories that spoke to Puerto Rican veterans, down on their luck women of the diaspora and the everyday man of *el barrio*, while portraying police and other authority figures as disruptors of peace hell-bent on harassing members of the community.

I. Introduction

The Popular Democratic Party (PPD) created a government-funded program with the intent of building upon social instruction and homegrown popular education campaigns during the 1940's. To this aim, they party

¹ <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,842289,00.html> (Cinema: High Life of Harlem 1965)

² For the purpose of this paper, exploitation film is defined as: “Any film that typically sacrifices the traditional notions of artistic merit for a more sensationalistic display, often featuring excessive sex, violence and gore. In many cases, these films success relied no on the quality of their content, but on the ability

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deployed a comprehensive graphic and moving image division, DIVEDCO (Division of Community Education), which is almost constantly referenced as the vanishing point of Puerto Rican film production. Even though DIVEDCO's civil engagement and grassroots community organization strategies paved the way and operated as training for various film technicians in the island, the predominant economical model adopted by film productions would turn up afterwards.

The alternative to the government produced ideological film, was a model that sought assistance from like-minded cultural contacts in Latin America. Regarded as the “Mexican Ed Wood”, producer Juan Orol's stance in Puerto Rico during 1960-1968 established, during that decade, the endlessly commonplace model of the Mexican-Puerto Rican, and occasionally Spanish, co-production. Alongside his film production company *Caribbean Films de Puerto Rico*, oftentimes referred to as *Caribe Films*, he shot 8 low-brow, prurient criminal underworld themed films during this period.³ The gangster film genre favored by Orol would take on new expressions by local filmmakers interested in bringing tall tales of notorious criminal outlaws to the big screen.

Distinctive examples of the criminal gangster film phenomenon are *Correa Cotto: Así Me Llaman* (1968), produced by Anthony Felton and directed by Jerónimo Mitchell and *La Palomilla* (1969) directed by Efraín López Neris. A promotional booklet for the film series “The Puerto Rican Crime Film As Protest” led by PRdream⁴ in New York City relays the films *ex post facto* momentousness as follows:

These films portray the law as an external imposition, foreign to the values of the common folk, and the outlaw as the unconscious expression of revolt. Both Correa Cotto and José Aníbal Gerena Lafontaine (*La Palomilla*) were simple men, thrust by circumstances into extraordinary acts of transgression that challenged the colonial status quo. Correa and Gerena were men

³ Notable titles include: *La maldición de mi raza* (1965), *Antesala a la silla eléctrica* (1968) and *Contrabandistas del Caribe* (1968).

⁴ PRdream is a website project led by Judith Escalona and Stephanie Owens. The project has the intent of recording oral histories of the Puerto Rican diaspora in New York. The website includes an online exhibition of Nuyorican cinema. Escalona was contacted to further the research of this project but never answered back.

of their times, embodying the passions of a people experiencing the trauma of rapid urbanization and displacement. (PRdream 2009)

Puerto Rican Theater Historian Roberto Ramos-Perea calls this cinema “Cine con Metralla” or film with shrapnel in his nationalism drenched manifesto *CineLibre* (Ramos-Perea 2008). The enraged declaration posits the crime genre as a direct response to Columbia Pictures *gringo* intervention into Puerto Rican cinema and puppet master, Egon Klein’s whims of cheaply produced moneymaking films. Nonetheless, historical records account that this method for producing cheap film was merely following a wide trend of exploitation film, that in it self was a continuation of the *carny* novelty aspect of movie making, a cinema of attractions that was garnering strength in the late 1960’s.⁵

The relationship between Columbia Pictures and local filmmakers will parallel that of Puerto Rico and the United States when speaking strictly of power dynamics. Columbia’s interest in Puerto Rican cinema was directly correlated in their interest to exploit the Hispanic media market and film producers received conditioned support and subsequent abandonment from the big media players. A 1977 Billboard article titled “Latin Movies May Hypo Records”⁶, Columbia Spanish Film Division executive, Carlos Barba ascertains the company’s move towards “revitalizing” the “Spanish”⁷ film industry by becoming directly involved as a co-producer with films in “Latin nations”. The plan was to increase the number of film exhibitors, consumer interest and identification. Barba also manages the Columbia owned Spanish television station in New York, WNJU-TV.

⁵ Legs McNeil references the *carny* parallelograms of exploitation film in the first few chapter of his book *The Other Hollywood: The Uncensored Oral History Of The Porn Film Industry* (McNeil, Osborne 2006)

⁶<http://books.google.com/books?id=DkUEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PT85&dq=puerto%20rico%20film&pg=PT85#v=onepage&q=puerto%20rico%20film&f=false> (Gurza 1977)

⁷ Using the term *Spanish* to denote the Hispanic community is a misnomer and further evidences the laziness when referring to the “other”, linked examples of this are the spelling of “Porto Rico” in early documents of the US invasion in 1898 spanning well into the 1930’s. The designation stems from a Portuguese term that was never used in the island.

“To help booster true national status for Latin artists here. Barba says Columbia is working with film producers to combine the appeal of different artists, say, one each from Spain, Mexico and Puerto Rico in the same movie. Barba admits the technique is a gimmick, but stresses it provides a point of sale appeal in the strong territory of each artist”

As per the article, the company was in final development in the shooting of films in US locations, one of them produced by Tony Betancourt; “El Barrio” would be made in New York and feature a salsa music background.

“By promoting culture and the Spanish language we’re protecting and developing a market. Then you can sell any kind of product you like- records, films, television” declares Barba. With a massive second wave of Puerto Ricans establishing themselves in New York City, the Columbia Pictures connection would prove to be an impetus instigating Nuyorican film production.

II. History Lesson: *The Diaspora Strikes Back*⁸

Gaining U.S. citizenship in the 1900’s, Puerto Ricans took part in a massive immigration wave. Succeeding that trend of migration dating back to the late 1800’s up until the decade of the 1960’s, Puerto Ricans constituted over 80% of New York’s entire Latino population.⁹ In the year 1969, the Young Lords party¹⁰ was founded by group of young Marxist Puerto Ricans inspired by the Black Panthers. The group demanded attention in favor for the self-determination of Puerto Ricans in the island and in the United States, commanded community control and showed solidarity with

⁸ *The Diaspora Strikes Back* is a seminal cultural studies text written by sociologist Juan Flores that exposes the mechanisms of Puerto Rican and Caribbean migration to the United States and its parallels with Native-American and African American communities. (Flores 2007)

⁹ <http://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/education/puerto-rican-studies/story-us-puerto-ricans-part-four> (Center for Puerto Rican Studies n.d.)

¹⁰ The Young Lords 13 point program and platform can be found here: http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/Young_Lords_platform.html The text is drenched with anti-imperialist views. (Young Lords Party 13-Point Program and Platform n.d.)

the liberation of the third world. Plunking down their roots in East Harlem¹¹ and the Lower East Side¹² neighborhoods, the Young Lords organization structured community centers, street cleaning campaigns, breakfast and day-care programs for children and did door-to-door lead poisoning testing. Tenement housing, a racist NYPD, discrimination and the disillusionment of fighting yet another war for a country that maintained an openly unequal relationship with their homeland segued into concentrated civic uprising comparable to the one being witnessed in the island in favor of Independence. Those were electrifying times intricately associated with the civil rights and Anti-War movements, the Stonewall riots¹³, Puerto Rican Independence parties and national liberation movements in Latin America. The call for Puerto Rican Independence led the Young Lords to attempt to set up camp in the island:

In March of 1971 the Young Lords decided they had to move the organization back to the island of Puerto Rico. After quickly realizing that the Lords were a *Nuyorican* phenomenon, they returned to the US, causing the first of a succession of bitter splits.¹⁴

The group subsequently splintered into an uncompromising Marxist-Leninist organization and mutated into the PRRWO (Puerto Rican Revolutionary Worker's Organization). Synchronously, a vibrant *Nuyorican* arts scene was emerging, particularly strong in music, literature and poetry. On the poetry front, it was spearheaded by Young Lords affiliate Pedro Pietri and former Vietnam Veteran. Pietri's poetry and "Puerto Rican Passport" art piece, made in collaboration with Adál Maldonado effortlessly encapsulate the predicament faced by Puerto Rican migrants. George Lipsitz expands in his book " (Lipstiz 2007) "Footsteps in the dark: the hidden histories of popular music":

Puerto Ricans come to the US mainland as Spanish speaking immigrants from a colonized nation but also as US citizens. Every facet of their lives in Puerto Rico has already been influenced by the US government before they emigrate. They migrate to the very country whose policies compel them to seek escape.

¹¹ Affectingly named *la colonia Hispana* (The Hispanic Colony).

¹² Later renamed *Loisaida*, a *spanglish* phonetic rendition of Lower East Side.

¹³ See Sylvia Rivera and her Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries organization founded by Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson.

¹⁴ <https://libcom.org/library/palante-brief-history-young-lords> (Federation 2011)

The diaspora experience and its cyclical nature exposed the bilateral racism and hostility between Puerto Ricans living in the island and outside of it. The remittance Juan Flores alludes to in his writings. Those who emigrated were also forced to deal with a discriminate host country. The way Puerto Ricans in New York would create film would represent that struggle in varying degrees and not without its fair share of puffery and exploitation. As Adam Lowenstein argues, “the modern horror film may well be the genre of our time that registers most brutally the legacies of historical trauma.”

Because these films were made by what many refer to as second-class citizens with a home base that shunned them, a case can be made for delimiting the films as orphan works, for they are mostly forgotten, if not erased from the canon and exist as impermanent films deprived of enduring territory. Conversely, since production took place in New York City, with its wide-ranging nourished film industry, adult film and exploitation crewmembers and producing partners overlapped in circles with *Nuyorican* film producers.

II. *Buenos Días, Mister Marshall*¹⁵: Who? What? Where? The makings of a community

Dominican-born, Puerto Rican-credited director Glauco del Mar shot *Love After Death* around 1966 in New York City with an international cast of Argentinians, Cubans and Puerto Ricans. The film is also credited as *Unsatisfied Love* and for years was sold on the DVD market by Something Weird Video as an Argentinian import. The film’s ludicrous plot point; a cataleptic man is buried alive by his wife and her lover, the man enacts revenge by sleeping with anyone he comes across in a fatal transverse leading to his wife, is made worse by its awful English language dubbing. *Love After Death*’s virtue lies in its beautiful black and white cinematography executed by Peter Palian. Del Mar’s directorial prowess (if any) is also evident and one can appreciate early renditions of his recurring

¹⁵ A riff on Luis García Berlanga’s *Bienvenido, Mister Marshall* a 1953 Spanish film, where a small town hears of the visit of American diplomats and prepares to impress them in hopes of benefitting from the Marshall Plan.

motifs. As David Wilt¹⁶ describes in his *Nuyorican Films*¹⁷ website as extreme close-ups of body parts, oftentimes reminiscent of Doris Wishman, images where one actor is framed by the body part of another character, sequences of showgirls and/or exotic dancers, unrequited love or failed relationships, transsexual performers and sexual assault.

Del Mar is described on a fan message board as “as enigmatic as the whereabouts of *London after Midnight*”; he directed a bevy of aesthetically formal exploitation films in New York City, but dropped out of sight in the late 1970’s. Along with Jerónimo Mitchell Meléndez’s¹⁸, *La Vendedora de Amor*, these are the earliest examples of exploitation film made by Puerto Ricans living in the United States. Mitchell directed *La Vendedora de Amor* (The Love Seller) in 1964, photographed by Urs Furrer, who would go on to serve as Director of Photography on 1971’s Blaxploitation gem, *Shaft*.¹⁹ *Vendedora de Amor* is a female centric tale of a young widow expecting to receive a large inheritance. During her waiting she reluctantly returns to *el barrio* to try and make ends meet. Sonia’s (Gilda Mirós) hubris is her ambition and quest for economical stability. She starts working as an exotic dancer at Palisades Park and becomes a *mafioso*’s mistress, while secretly harboring an emotional attachment for Roberto, an ex-lover. Sonia’s entanglement with the nightclub scene and the lurid black market underworld make of her a dishonorable woman and she eventually meets her untimely fate via a car chase accident by one of her *Mafioso* lover’s henchmen. The film employs the familiar convention of using Cuban, Mexican and Puerto Rican actors with an international cast and crew that would set the trend for further collaborations.

¹⁶ Wilt was an invaluable source for this research, his website is a treasure trove of forgotten films. He collaborated on the abridged anthology *Latsploitation, Exploitation Cinema and Latin America* released in 2011. (Ruétalo and Tierney 2009)

¹⁷ <http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~dwilt/Nuyorican.htm>

¹⁸ Oftentimes, referred as Jerry Mitchell.

¹⁹ The intersection between *Nuyorican* and African American culture is vast and expansive. Joe Bataan a Filipino-American musician, who recorded an abundance of records in honor of Puerto Rico with the *Fania* label, covered the eponymous *Shaft* theme in Spanglish. The song is worth a listen, an astonishing cover: (<http://youtu.be/HLpmlDC2WIU>).

Glauco del Mar collaborated as a screenwriter, with Orestes Trucco²⁰, an Argentinian expatriate living in Puerto Rico, on the film *Correa Cotto: Así Me Lllaman* (1970), that was filmed in Puerto Rico. Orestes Trucco, later gained notoriety by in the 1980's by directing *Una Aventura Llamada Menudo*, a cult favorite starring the internationally acclaimed boy-band Menudo. He also was an accomplished producer, his credits include the notorious *The Curious Dr. Hump*. *Hump* was directed by Emilio Vieyra and according to Gerard Dapena in his article *Emilio Vieyra: Argentina's Transnational Master of Horror*, a friend alerted him that Puerto Ricans in New York like horror films spiced with liberal doses of sex in the early 1960's.²¹ The friend's assessment was accurate; for there was already talk of establishing an emporium catering to Hispanic markets in the United States. As per A 1972 New York Magazine article titled *Movies: The Latin Nabs*:

“Probably, there will never be a Mili y Pili²² retrospective at Lincoln Center²³ and no doubt Andre Sarris is oblivious to the nuances of *El Blue Demon*. Nevertheless: the Latin cinema has made its mark on New York. And while it might not be certified art, it's pretty funky for the most part and anyway you can't spend all your evenings weeping over Ozu.”

Orestes came to Puerto Rico on account of another film project led by the renowned Leopoldo Torres-Nilsson (the filming of *La chica del Lunes- Monday's Child* and *Los traidores de San Angel- The traitors of San Angel*) and remained in the island up until his death in 2010. Anthony Felton produced *Correa Cotto*, a tale of a serial murderer in the sleepy Puerto Rican town of Ponce. Felton would produce a number of titles in New York. Peter Palian on the other hand, director of photography for *Correa Cotto* will work with Glauco del Mar in *Love After Death*, *Tigresa* (Tigress, 1969) and a lost film called *Heroína* (Heroin, 1965), which he reportedly stole a print of because he was not paid for his work.

²¹ *Latsploitation, Exploitation Cinemas in Latin America*

²² *Pili y Mili* are a Spanish comedy duo

²³ Ironic because Richard Peña of Spanish and Puerto Rican descent was program director for the Film Society of Lincoln Center for 25 years; he stepped out of his position in 2012. This, of course was after the writing of the referred article.

The 60's brought a decade of paramount international collaboration. Even though a few of the films produced during this decade conveyed a specific folkloric flair, such as the case of *Heroína* and *Correa Cotto*, the approaching 70's would signal a compositional framework or producers and crewmembers, already in place to harbor to a precise population.

Del Mar's incredible incumbency with film would inaugurate the 1970's decade with *Tigresa* (Tigress, 1970). A colorful rape-revenge film photographed by usual suspect, Peter Palian. *Tigresa* trails the saga of Patricia Martínez (Perla Faith). Following her mother's death, Patricia is left to care for her alcoholic father. One night after the father passes out from drunkenness, Patricia is raped in her own home; the unidentified rapist subsequently kills her father and she can only identify the attacker by a scar he had on his back. In the wake of the traumatic episode, Patricia's mentor and boss, Mr. Goldberg, a Jew, draws a compelling parallel between Jewish and Puerto Rican Diasporas. A distraught Patricia seeks Mr. Goldberg's comfort; He advises "Don't worry, even though we are from different religions, we love the same God. And we suffer the same sorrow, caused by the ingratitude of our people." When Mr. Goldberg unexpectedly dies, he leaves a sizeable inheritance in Patricia's name.



When she receives her money, Patricia undergoes a physical and emotional transformation. She dyes her hair blonde, sports the latest fashions, starts dealing with the Mafia and becomes a nightclub owner/*madam* (Chateau Caribe, a real life nightspot). In the course of her rebirth she is also enthusiastically pursuing her attacker to avenge her father's murder, with the help of a mafia big shot. In the process she encounters a childhood friend, María in the street and protects her when some scofflaws attack her. Patricia's *protégé*, María is harboring a secret,

she is plotting with her boyfriend (played by rockabilly recording artist, Johnny H. or Jesse Presley) to steal the inheritance money. When the boyfriend seduces and sleeps with Patricia, she notices a scar on his back and immediately recognizes it as the same scar his attacker had. Through an unfolding of events and fast beat car chases, Patricia accomplishes her vengeance with the help of a sympathetic policeman. *Tigresa's* triumph lies in the retelling of the well-established rape-revenge trope, while enforcing the dubious morality of *machismo* culture. Patricia is chastised and consequently punished for her reluctant dealings with the mafia, only to be rescued by an unassuming policeman. When Patricia receives her inheritance money, she draws attention to herself and is besieged by resentful members of her own community. The film is in the vein of other female empowered exploitation films, such as *Coffy* (1973) and *Foxy Brown* (1974), corresponding to the likeness established by the Puerto Rican diaspora experience and African Americans in the US, while maintaining a neutral veneer of *boricua* cultural signifiers.²⁴ Del Mar's usage of dubbing is improved upon with the help of Lazslo Haverland. Haverland owned a film production and dubbing studio on east 39th street and was also employed by *Toño Bicicleta* screenwriter, Tony Betancourt on his first legitimate directorial effort.²⁵

Yeyo (1974-1976) was based on the true story of Rogelio Sotomayor (Ricardo Reyes), a Vietnam P.O.W. whose homecoming turns for the tragic, when he finds his wife in bed with another man. An enraged Yeyo shoots wife and lover and dashes to his brother's apartment for refuge. His brother explains, that the family and his wife were told he was presumed dead. Yeyo's asylum is soon disrupted when news of what happened spread across the neighborhood and reach the police.

In a sequence where Yeyo breaks his seclusion to buy a carton of milk, a bodega owner pesters him, implying he will steal from the store because he is black. An infuriated, Yeyo throws the milk at the store manager and howls "I am black, not a thief. I am *Boricua*, just like you!"

²⁴ By way of slang and Spanish language inflections.

²⁵ As per an interview with Ye Yo's director of photography and editor, Larry Revene, Betancourt had already shot an x-rated film in Puerto Rico. (Revene 2014)



The oppositional force encountered by Yeyo and people in positions of authority is accentuated through the dramatic murder of his brother, shot through an apartment's locked door by the police. Carlos, Yeyo's brother in law is a patrolman that is complicit in the force's search for the murderer. Incorporating once again, the theme of authority positioning brother against brother. Yeyo's only apparent getaway is by way of moving to the idealized paradise island of Puerto Rico. As evidenced by sociologist Juan Flores, the remittance between mainland and island is far from being the haven first generation *nuyoricans* were sold on by their parents.

The production team for Yeyo attempted to screen and market their film in Puerto Rico, traveling to the island to hone their effort. Larry Revene, editor and cinematographer for the film, suggested over an interview I conducted with him, that the film flopped in the island because *Saturday Night Fever* opened on the same night. It turned out to be disastrous attempt to translate the *Nuyorican* experience back to the island. Puerto Ricans living in the island did not seem to care for *Nuyorican* productions and Yeyo's promo team was faced to compete unfairly with a film theater monopoly that favored big budget North American films and continues to exist to this day.

Natás es Satán (Natás is Satan, 1975) was touted by actor-director Miguel Angel Alvarez as unofficial sequel to 1971's *Serpico*. Alvarez's intention of making an illegitimate sequel to a North American film, starring an award winning actor and directed by the established Sidley Lumet, hint the actor-director's delusions of grandeur. Alas, the sentiment is repeated

through exploitation's rounds in the third world. The films can be seen as vehicles of articulating fears and anxieties in the face of Otherness. *Natás es Satán* has the mannerisms of an Italian *giallo* and foreshadows Abel Ferrara's *Bad Lieutenant* (1992), focusing its narrative on a psychopathic cop that intimidates a Puerto Rican couple, Victor and Jessica and conveys on the seedy underbelly of the police force. In his *Nuyorican Films* page, David Wilt describes the film's turn for the uncanny.

The film's most bizarre sequence follows: in his apartment, Natás watches a porno film (holding the projector on his stomach), smokes dope, puts on a life preserver (!), then greets David and the three transvestite-assassins. The scene concludes with Natás embracing and kissing David as the "women" watch! [Earlier, Natás had remarked that David's good looks would make him a favorite of the ladies, "but you don't like women." The relationship between the two policemen is--aside from the kissing scene--not overtly homosexual, but there are certainly homoerotic overtones.]

The representation of homosexual lust in the film is a tad bit problematic, as is the inclusion of drag performers in *Tigresa* and *Love After Death*. In spite of that, the abovementioned kiss might be the first kiss between two men in the Puerto Rican filmography. The commonality between Italian *giallos* and their so-called *Nuyorican* counterparts extends far beyond the murder mystery leitmotif; the two genres manifest evident impetus to imitate American cinema and their worn-out tropes. The result is, in the most common cases is a cheap rehashing of known imagery but also, and in some instances permutated political lyricism is present in muddled but revelatory ways. Notwithstanding *Natas*, demonstrates to be an earnest attempt of incorporating a dingy thriller with the typical exploitation tropes.

Various members that had worked on other *nuyorican* features convene in *Natas*. Larry Revene, who had already worked on *Yeyo*, shot *Natas*. He had been to Puerto Rico on several occasions, to shoot X-rated

films and on a promotional tour for *Yeyo*.²⁶ Anthony Reyes, who had worked on *Toño Bicicleta*, produced the film and is still active in producing films. Perla Faith and Frank Moro played the beleaguered couple. Perla, a fairly well known *vedette* of the time, would go on to act in one more picture, *Préstamela esta Noche* (Lend me the Girl Tonight, 1978). Following an email conversation with actor Victor Freytas, Faith apparently is still alive and living off her artwork in Spain. Frank Moro was a Cuban actor, well established within the *telenovela* circuit. It was believed that Moro and Álvarez would draw enough attention to make the film a success, but that did not go as planned, despite being picked up by Columbia Pictures to be distributed.

These *Nuyorican* films may not reflect the quotidian existence of Hispanics in New York in a very favorable way, yet if other literary records of the time were to be believed, it is certainly a representation shrouded in frankness, regardless of political correctness. The monster or threat in *Nuyorican* films is infiltrated, it could be the corner policeman or it could be your own flesh and blood, feeding into an already paranoid migrant community with inscribed cultural complexes. The most important point of juncture is in its themes, utilizing corruption, crime and sexual aggression to exorcise a violent past. These *Nuyorican* productions are replete with homophobia, misogyny and generally exceedingly politically incorrect. A reason for which this period in Puerto Rican cinematic history has been largely ignored.

Heroína: The Lost Film

Released in 10 November 1965 in New York on the studio Theater at Broadway. A New York Times article²⁷ fawns over the fact that it is a Spanish language picture (with English subtitles) that was made “right here in New York”. The film is distributed by Royal Films international.

²⁶ *Yeyo* opened the same week as *Saturday Night Fever*, this is credited as the reason why the film was a flop on the island by Revene.

²⁷<http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9B03E5DE1639E33ABC4952DFB767838E679EDE> (CROWTHER 1965)

Photographed by Luis Maisonet, who worked on the graphics division of DIVEDCO and who himself, directed *Juan Sin Seso*²⁸. The film had the task to showcase the music of Charlie Palmieri, a salsa composer who attended the prestigious Julliard School and collaborated acutely with Fania Records. Richard Goldstein for *New York Magazine*²⁹ adulates the film as the crowning jewel of *Nuyorican* cinema in the following quote:

To date (1972) there has been only one film, which can be considered a genuine product of New York's barrios and that is *Heroína*, starring Jaime Sánchez (a superb Latino actor), directed by Jerry Mitchell (also a New York Latin). *Heroína*³⁰ has ended up on the U.H.F. circuit, where it can still be seen. As an example of the urban-*verité* school of cinematography, it rivals anything Shirley Clarke has done. It's authentic and arresting, very different from *El Hijo de Frankenstein*."

The searches for *Heroína*'s film elements by Puerto Rico's National Archives have not yet yielded results. However, as part of the research conducted for this paper, I attempted to track down film prints of the additional *Nuyorican* films, by writing letters directed at the postal addresses given for defunct production and DVD authoring companies. The film's importance, aside from the well reception of the public, lies in the film's gritty record of an endemic social problem and its portrayal by superior actor Jaime Sánchez.³¹

A search through the copyright office, brought about a 1987 record number: V2318P435 that states that *Natás es Satán, El Callao, Toño Bicicleta, La Tigresa, Sangre en Nueva York* (sic), *Ye Yo, Soñar no cuesta nada joven, Arroche et Clemente* (sic), *Mataron a Elena* were part of a mortgage and assignment of copyright from Multiple Development Corporation to Today Home Entertainment, Inc.³² Today Home Entertainment appears to be active in the copyright's office until 1989, acquiring another 147 film titles through a "stock exchange agreement" with Heritage Entertainment, Inc. In 1989, copyright document V2563P173-181

²⁸ <http://youtu.be/bmOXLW4JkG8>

²⁹

³⁰ *Heroína* file at the American Film Institute Catalogue

(<http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/DetailView.aspx?s=&Movie=18960>)

³¹ Sánchez had an array of secondary appearances as an actor in: *The Wild Bunch, Serpico, Bad Lieutenant* and *Carlito's Way*.

³² (Copyright Catalog n.d.)

lists *Natás es Satán*, *El Callao*, *Tono Bicelta* (sic), *La Tigresa*, *Sangre en Nueva York*, *Ye Yo*, *Soñar no cuesta nada joven*, *Arrochio y Clemente* (sic) and *Matmron a Elena* (sic) as properties of International Film Exchange, Ltd. International Film Exchange (IFEX) were part of a lawsuit 1985 where they acted as defendants against Corynth films for copyright infringement by selling illegitimate copies of the Italian film "Ladri Di Biciclette" ("The Bicycle Thief"). In the court brief, it is disclosed that IFEX's *modus operandi* was the business of exploiting foreign film productions in the United States and it is recommended that the plaintiff proceed to trial. No recent trail has been found for IFEX or the original whereabouts of the abovementioned films. More work on this front will continue to be made by this author, in hopes of leading to some original films elements.

Selected Filmography

Title	Year	Notes
<i>Vendedora de Amor</i> , Dir. Jerónimo Mitchell	1963	MovieLab, Stranger Films
<i>Heroína</i> , Dir. Jerónimo Mitchell	1965	Lost Film, reportedly stolen by Peter Palian (trying to get Palian's contact info)
<i>Love After Death</i> , Dir. Glauco del Mar	1968	Abrams & Parisi, (Charles Abrams) Producers Haverland Studios
<i>El Callao</i> , Dir. Glauco del Mar	1969	DP: Glen Richard Tracy
<i>Tigresa</i> , Dir. Glauco del Mar	1970	Laszlo Haverland Studios
<i>Yeyo</i> , Dir. Tony Betancourt	1974	Chango International Film Productions 4227 White Plains Rd. Bronx, NY 10466 Produced by brothers Prespitino
<i>Natás es Satán</i> , Dir. Miguel Ángel Álvarez	1977	Produced by Anthony Reyes (Zay-Re Productions) copyrighted by Joe Zayas

Film Theaters that screened Hispanic Films:

1. The Jefferson 14th street between second and third ave.

2. The Tapia on Broadway and 147th street
3. The Puerto Rico East 138th street in the Bronx

IV The *Spectre* of Exploitation

While the hybridity of these films, along with other exploitation examples produced in Latin American countries, may bother or seem problematic in the face of post-colonialist discourses and theory. However, their value is unquestionable as dramatized renditions of the pent-up impasse of the *Nuyorican* community. The lack of scholarly research into this subgenre is faced with the oppositional force in favor of delving into other film genres that championed national artistic autonomy over a model that favors borrowing for Hollywood conventions, re-cutting, redubbing and incorporation of cultural symbols subject to market convenience.

Nuyorican film production's methods are on par with other cultural contributions made by the demographic group. The collaboration with other reprobated members of society (Jews³³, African Americans, delinquents and producers of X-rated films) are on par with Latin music production. Willie Colón, a *Nuyorican* salsa trombonist elevated the mythos of the common criminal gangster in his record covers (see below). Colón founded the *Legal Alien Orchestra* in response and referencing Puerto Rican's legal yet unincorporated status in the United States.

³³ Case in point; Alfredo Mendez popular radio program *La Hora Hispana* which used Rafael Hernández's "Lamento Borincano" as its theme, was really Alfred Mendelsohn a Jewish pianist who took on a Rican identity to appeal to Latin audiences. Larry Harlow a Jewish salsa multi-instrumentalist was affectionately nicknamed and adopted as *El Judío Maravilloso* (The Marvelous Jew) by the Puerto Rican community.



A case can be made in framing these films as orphan works that are “neither here or there”, that wander midway territories of resistance and assimilation to the United States canon without ever ensconcing permanence. Navigating web sources, it seems like the only people that remember these films are the ones that were involved in the making of the films. The only records available for viewing these films are third rate shoddy transfers made by illegitimate DVD companies. The purpose of this work and its future permutations is to change that and provide an apparatus for further research.

Addendum

1/13/2014 Entity Information

NYS Department of State

Division of Corporations

Entity Information

The information contained in this database is current through November 10, 2014.

Selected Entity Name: CHANGO INTERNATIONAL FILM PRODUCTIONS INC.
 Selected Entity Status Information

Current Entity Name: CHANGO INTERNATIONAL FILM PRODUCTIONS INC.
DOS ID #: 398982
Initial DOS Filing Date: MAY 05, 1976
County: BRONX
Jurisdiction: NEW YORK
Entity Type: DOMESTIC BUSINESS CORPORATION
Current Entity Status: INACTIVE - Dissolution by Proclamation / Annulment of Authority (Jun 23, 1993)

Information to reinstate a corporation that has been dissolved by proclamation or annulment of authority by proclamation is available on the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance website at www.tax.ny.gov keyword TR-194.1 or by telephone at (518) 485-6027

Selected Entity Address Information
DOS Process (Address to which DOS will mail process if accepted on behalf of the entity)
 CHANGO INTERNATIONAL FILM PRODUCTIONS INC.
 4227 WHITE PLAINS RD.
 BRONX, NEW YORK, 10466

Registered Agent
 NONE

This office does not record information regarding the names and addresses of officers, shareholders or directors of nonprofessional corporations except the chief executive officer, if provided, which would be listed above. Professional corporations must include the name(s) and address(es) of the initial officers.

1/13/2014 Entity Information

directors, and shareholders in the initial certificate of incorporation, however this information is not recorded and only available by [viewing the certificate](#).

***Stock Information**

# of Shares	Type of Stock	\$ Value per Share
200	No Par Value	

*Stock information is applicable to domestic business corporations.

Name History

Filing Date	Name Type	Entity Name
MAY 05, 1976	Actual	CHANGO INTERNATIONAL FILM PRODUCTIONS INC.

A Fictitious name must be used when the Actual name of a foreign entity is unavailable for use in New York State. The entity must use the fictitious name when conducting its activities or business in New York State.

NOTE: New York State does not issue organizational identification numbers.

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New York State Corporations File for Chango International Film Productions (Yeyo's Film Production Company)

11/12/2014

Entity Information

NYS Department of State

Division of Corporations

Entity Information

The information contained in this database is current through November 10, 2014.

Selected Entity Name: MIRACLE PICTURES INC.
 Selected Entity Status Information
Current Entity Name: MIRACLE PICTURES INC.
DOS ID #: 831450
Initial DOS Filing Date: MARCH 29, 1983
County: NEW YORK
Jurisdiction: NEW YORK
Entity Type: DOMESTIC BUSINESS CORPORATION
Current Entity Status: INACTIVE - Dissolution by Proclamation / Annulment of Authority (Dec 27, 2000)

Information to reinstate a corporation that has been dissolved by proclamation or annulment of authority by proclamation is available on the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance website at www.tax.ny.gov keyword TR-194.1 or by telephone at (518) 485-6027

Selected Entity Address Information
DOS Process (Address to which DOS will mail process if accepted on behalf of the entity)
 OLGA BERDE MAHL
 529 FIFTH AVE.
 NEW YORK, NEW YORK, 10107

Registered Agent

NONE

This office does not record information regarding the names and addresses of officers, shareholders or directors of nonprofessional corporations except the chief executive officer, if provided, which would be listed above. Professional corporations must include the name(s) and address(es) of the initial officers,

11/13/2014

Entity Information

directors, and shareholders in the initial certificate of incorporation, however this information is not recorded and only available by [viewing the certificate](#).

*Stock Information

# of Shares	Type of Stock	\$ Value per Share
100	No Par Value	

*Stock information is applicable to domestic business corporations.

Name History

Filing Date	Name Type	Entity Name
MAR 29, 1983	Actual	MIRACLE PICTURES INC.

A Fictitious name must be used when the Actual name of a foreign entity is unavailable for use in New York State. The entity must use the fictitious name when conducting its activities or business in New York State.

NOTE: New York State does not issue organizational identification numbers.

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New York State Corporations File for Miracle Pictures
(DVD authoring company for *Yeyo*, *Natas es Satán*, *Soñar no cuesta nada*, *joven*, *El Callao*, *Tigresa*, *Mataron a Elena* and *Sangre en Nueva York*)

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