

FILMS WITH A PURPOSE

by **Papo Colo, 1987**

New York City

“How they combined their will to realize their aspirations.”

Rene Marques, *Una Voz en la Montana*

Movies have the power to recover history and after three decades, these films are doing their job. Now, with resuscitation, they are placed within their context. Reasons and circumstances, analyses and criticisms, pioneers and creators are put in the time machine to measure their importance. Their endurance is attached to our capacity to understand them.

Films are also images and this is what most of us retain – fragmented, moving history, seeds of knowledge for further generation of viewers. Cinema is a translation of gestures and actors are their medium. In these films, peasants and workers are asked to play their lives with professional actors – art as life.

It is important to place the idea of filmmaking outside the idea of the mystery of politics in Puerto Rico. What counts is the will of creativity, the framing of photography, the editing, the intention of the narrative and the quality. The subjects are universal – health, education, history and folklore – the solutions sublime. Art movies for non-art people.

We always speak of film in the past tense. This collective vision of nostalgia, of necessity as imagination, of cinematic idealists of drama and documentaries, of inventors and appropriators of images that were not in film before, are marked with the ritualizing effect of sacrifice. These films exist in the consciousness of continuity – a road to follow. Other countries have used these films as an example because they still serve their purpose – to teach how the mountains get literacy and that history is also a story, How love for film is also love for people.

Gratitude is a way to acknowledge recognition and this publication is a beginning for the further investigation of the Puerto Rican cinema. The images in this catalogue – a recollection of cultural portrait, almost silent – are approximate yet never faithful to the wonderful stories that are narrated in the films. A document of frozen photographs and opinions are evidence of a legacy that goes beyond any physical feeling to our collective memory because these films mark the beginning of the idea of the Puerto Rican art of filmmaking.

Text for the exhibition at Exit Art NY

FILMS WITH A PURPOSE: A PUERTO RICAN EXPERIMENT IN SOCIAL FILMS

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