

TATE FILM

LUIS OSPINA AND GRUPO DE CALI

Tate Modern, Starr Auditorium

28 – 29 November



Photograph of Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo on set of *Agarrando Pueblo / The Vampires of Poverty* c. 1978
Photograph by Eduardo Carvajal. Courtesy of Luis Ospina

Luis Ospina will introduce the screenings and discuss his remarkable body of work. The series is presented as part of the 10th Discovering Latin America Film Festival.

TATE
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LUIS OSPINA AND GRUPO DE CALI

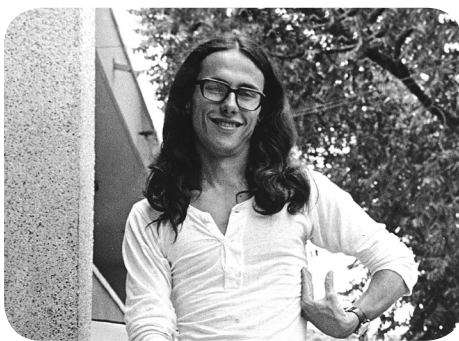
Luis Ospina is a penetrating observer and commentator on Colombian reality and cinema. A founder of the Grupo de Cali / The Cali Group, a pioneering group of filmmakers, artists and writers active in Cali, Colombia, whose influential exploration of social reality and popular genres extends from the 1970s into the present.

The Grupo de Cali was composed of Carlos Mayolo, Andrés Caicedo, Hernando Guerrero, and other artists in Cali, the third largest city in Colombia. Together they founded the *Cali Cine Club*, the magazine *Ojo al cine* and the artistic community Ciudad Solar where they held many screenings, events and discussions. Helping each other to make work, the group ushered in a vibrant cinema culture in Colombia and produced a critical body of work unique in the context of Latin America.

Luis Ospina made his first films in the early 1970s collaborating with fellow filmmaker Carlos Mayolo on two milestones in the history of Third Cinema. Their film *Oiga Vea / Hear, See* 1972 explores class conflict in Cali under the guise of documenting the Pan-American games and *Agarrando Pueblo / The Vampires of Poverty* 1978 criticised the 'pornomiserism' prominent in political film of the period. These classic works critique the divisions in society and the spectacle of 'poverty' in political cinema. Ospina's personal essay film *Andrés Caicedo: Unos Pocos Buenos Amigos* 1986 is a portrait of one of the most important writers in Latin America, the cult author Andrés Caicedo (1951–1977) who committed suicide on the day of the publication of his groundbreaking novel *¡Que viva la música! / Liveforever* 1977.

Two later works show the different directions Ospina explored after the key period for Grupo de Cali in the 1970s. The allegorical thriller *Pure Blood* is a commentary on the vampirism at the heart of capitalism in Latin America made in the guise of a B-Movie. Ospina's most recent film, *Un tigre de papel / A Paper Tiger* 2007 explores the 20th Century through the life of artist Pedro Manrique Figueroa, a pioneer of collage in Colombia whose adventurous life is filled with contradictions that complicate art, politics, truth and fiction.

– George Clark



LUIS OSPINA: GRUPO DE CALI Friday 28 November, 19.00 – 21.00

The Cali Group gathered around the writer Andrés Caicedo (1951–1977) as its nucleus. The group was educated in cinema clubs and with much creative drive, began by way of underground filmmaking.
– Luis Alberto Alvarez *Colombian Cinema: Silent and Talking Entrextremos*, No. 2, 1996

This opening screening will shed light on the legendary Grupo de Cali. Made up of filmmakers, writers and artists the Grupo de Cali led a cultural upheaval in Colombia through publications, screenings and the creation of unique films that reflected on the relationship between popular and political culture in Latin America. *Oiga Vea / Hear* 1972 the first collaboration between Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo exposes the divided society in Cali in 1971. The essay film *Andrés Caicedo: Unos Pocos Buenos Amigos / Andrés Caicedo: A Few Good Friends* 1986 is a portrait of cult author Andrés Caicedo.



OIGA VEA / HEAR, SEE Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo, Colombia 1972, black & white, 27 min

In the early 1970s there appeared a certain type of documentary that superficially appropriated the achievements and methodologies of independent film to the point of deformation. In this way, poverty became a shocking theme and a product easily sold, especially abroad, where it is the counterpart to the opulence of consumption... We made a kind of antidote or Mayakovskian bath to open people's eyes to the exploitation behind the miserabilist cinema which turns human

beings into objects, into instruments of a discourse foreign to their own condition. – Carlos Mayolo & Luis Ospina

ANDRÉS CAICEDO: UNOS POCOS BUENOS AMIGOS / ANDRÉS CAICEDO: A FEW GOOD FRIENDS

Luis Ospina, Colombia 1986,
colour, black & white, 86 min

Music that feeds on live flesh, music that leaves you with nothing but blisters, music hot off the wax, that's what I want, what I live for; bring it on, sap my energy if you can, turn my values on their head, let me founder, abandon me to criminality, because I don't know anything any more...'
– Andrés Caicedo, *¡Que viva la música! / Liveforever*, 1977 Trans. by Frank Wynne. Penguin Classics, 2014

The influence and impact of writer Andrés Caicedo (1951–1977) has continued to grow following his untimely death. His writing, contrary to the school of Magical Realism, is grounded in urban experience and social reality. Luis Ospina was close friends with Andrés Caicedo and this essay film explores the work, life and legacy of Caicedo. As well as his writing Caicedo adapted many of his short stories into film scripts and embarked on various film projects, from a film he was to co-direct with Carlos Mayolo to attempting to sell scripts in Los Angeles to the legendary B-Movie producer Roger Corman. These various activities fed into his masterpiece, the novel *¡Que viva la música! / Liveforever* that was published on the day of his death in 1977.

Presented by Luis Ospina and followed by a discussion with the artist.

Programme duration: 113 min

Image credits (in order as through programme)

1. Photograph of Andrés Caicedo
Courtesy of Luis Ospina
2. Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo *Oiga Vea / Hear, See* 1972, film still. Courtesy of Luis Ospina
3. Luis Ospina *Pura Sangre / Pure Blood* 1982, film still. Courtesy of Luis Ospina
4. Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo *Agarrando Pueblo / The Vampires of Poverty* 1978. Photograph by Eduardo Carvajal. Courtesy of Luis Ospina
5. Luis Ospina *Un tigre de papel / A Paper Tiger* 2007, film still. Courtesy of Luis Ospina



LUIS OSPINA: PURE BLOOD + THE VAMPIRES OF POVERTY
Saturday 29 November, 17.00 – 19.00

Linked by the theme of vampirism, these two films adapt existing genres to create modern political parables. *Agarrando Pueblo / The Vampires of Poverty* 1978 made by Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo is a provocative work exploring the role of film in social and political life. Followed by Luis Opsina's seminal chiller *Pura sangre / Pure Blood* 1982 an ironic commentary on Colombian social inequality. As Ospina has commented 'the story of the vampire has always been a political one... It is a tale of power.'



AGARRANDO PUEBLO / THE VAMPIRES OF POVERTY
Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo,
Colombia 1978, black & white, 27 min

Deliberately detached from the accusatory militant left, Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo launch in 1978 what could be called their cinematic-political thesis: *Agarrando Pueblo / The Vampires of Poverty*, an outrageous protest of national and international documentary models, which at the time – and even today – shamelessly exploited all kinds of third-world suffering (referred to by the directors as "poverty-porn") and exported it to European television stations and festivals. Counterinformative from beginning to end and in every sense of the word, the film mixes staged and real scenes of a typical film crew commissioned by a Germany television channel to seek out archetypal social horrors, trampling over the basic principles of professional ethics, the meaning of information and, naturally, sociological research. – Isleni Cruz Carvajal *Documentary in Latin America*

PURA SANGRE / PURE BLOOD
Luis Ospina, Colombia 1982,
colour, sound, 90 min

Nurse Florencia is no Florence Nightingale. She travels around with two chauffeurs, nabs young boys off the street, drugs them, drains their blood and throws away the bodies. She gives the blood to her boss's father, an ailing sugar tycoon who is too cheap to buy transfusions from the local blood bank. Nurse Florencia is the leading character in a new movie *Pura sangre / Pure Blood*... The film looks like a grade-B movie. But is, in fact, a modern political parable about the rich capitalist who lives off the lifeblood of the defenceless. – Newsweek, June 13, 1983

A key work of what Carlos Mayolo described as 'Gótico tropical' (Tropical Gothic) cinema, *Pura sangre* marks a development in the work of the Grupo de Cali filmmakers following the death of Andrés Caicedo in 1977. *Pura sangre* is a biting satire on Colombian landowners, social divisions and the vampirism at the heart of capitalism in Latin America. Inspired from a story from Ospina's youth, the film follows the 'Monster of the Valley' an urban legend of a figure who prayed on the bodies and blood of young men. The film centres on a bedridden sugar tycoon who communicates with the outside world by closed circuit TV and is kept alive by blood transfusions.

Programme duration: 117 min



LUIS OSPINA: A PAPER TIGER
Saturday 29 November, 20.00 – 22.00

Un tigre de papel / A Paper Tiger 2007 explores the life and work of legendary Colombian collage artist Pedro Manrique Figuerora from 1934 to his mysterious disappearance in 1981. The artist's elusive and contradictory story serves as a pretext for a documentary about the 60s and 70s, a period so often idealised and mystified, which examines the relationship between art and politics, between truth and lies, and between documentary and fiction.

UN TIGRE DE PAPEL / A PAPER TIGER
Luis Ospina, Colombia 2007,
colour, sound, 114 min

Some critics have rejected classification of *A Paper Tiger* among examples of the fake documentary genre, arguing instead that it is a documentary in the strict sense of the term, even though not one about the proposed subject, the artist Pedro Manrique Figueroa. Because what Ospina's film ends up doing, notwithstanding its initial claim, is opening up an opportunity to retell and re-imagine a crucial period of modern Colombian history, from the undeclared civil war that began around the 1940s to the guerrilla wars and the first emergence in the 1970s of what would later become the powerful drug cartels... When the experts who claim to have met Manrique Figueroa add little fragments of their own personal memory to the portrait of the evanescent artist, they collectively recompose and reevaluate a portrait of a generation which was originally drawn along the ideological, party-based lines of a world starting to drown under the freezing waters of the Cold War... – Felipe Gómez *Short Film and Documentary Third Cinema in Colombia: the case of Luis Ospina*

Programme duration: 114 min

Curated by George Clark

Organised together with Agata Lulkowska and Daniel Calderon as part of the 10th Discovering Latin America Film Festival 27 November – 4 December.

With additional support from the Colombian Ministry of Culture.

UPCOMING SCREENINGS

**GODARD AS CURATOR:
LE DÉSORDRE EXPOSÉ**
Sunday 7 December 2014
Tate Modern, Starr Auditorium
15.00–19.00

UK premiere of Olivier Bohler and Céline Gailleurd's essay film *Le Désordre Exposé* that retraces Jean Luc Godard's notorious 2006 exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, followed by a discussion considering Godard's films, videos and exhibitions in the framework of curatorial practice.

THE BEAUTIFUL SIGMAR: FILMS ON POLKE
Wednesday 14 January 2015
Tate Modern, Starr Auditorium
18.30–21.00

This second screening features films made about or with Sigmar Polke. Key films made by contemporaries reveal the artistic community in Düsseldorf in the 1960s and 1970s where Polke made his early work alongside Manfred Kuttner, Blinky Palermo, Gerhard Richter, Konrad Lueg (later known as Konrad Fischer) and Lutz Mommartz. Also included are works by younger artists such as Britta Zoellner, Astrid Heibach and 2014 Turner Prize nominee Duncan Campbell.



Olivier Bohler and Céline Gailleurd, Jean-Luc Godard, *Le Désordre Exposé* 2012. Film still. Courtesy of filmmakers / Nocturnes Productions

Britta Zoellner, *The Rainbow Serpent: Entering a New Inner Space, a New Inner Time* 1980–81/2013. Still from digital transfer of 8mm film © Britta Zoellner

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Thoughts, comments, reviews?

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