

THE BLONDS (Los Rubios)

A film by Albertina Carri, produced by Barry Ellsworth



"Innovative."
-VARIETY

*"One of the most original and creative
examples of New Argentine Cinema."*
- CLARIN

"...a tribute to the cinema itself. "
-Toronto Int'l Film Festival



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The Blonds

Synopsis

In 1977, when she was four years old, Albertina Carri's parents vanished without a trace, victims of Argentina's brutal military junta. In ***The Blonds***, (or Los Rubios, her parents' nickname) the young Argentinian filmmaker travels with her crew across Buenos Aires to unravel the mystery of her parents' life, disappearance and death. Attacking the shifting projections of memory from many fronts, Carri enlists an actor, her parents' comrades, fading photographs and happy Playmobil* dolls to investigate complicated questions of identity and responsibility.

Who were the Carris? How did they disappear? Were they brunette or blond, revolutionaries or parents, or merely a fiction created by those who remember them? With every turn, a more complex and suspect truth emerges. In the end, merging fact, rumor and imagination, Carri succeeds in reconstructing her parent's fate and her own construction of them. Emotional fraught and intellectually provocative, ***The Blonds*** is a compelling meditation on what it means to remember, and how love, longing, and fear all play a role. Carri's fresh cinematic vision reveals a generation forced to mourn those who they cannot remember, with resonance far beyond the tragic history of Argentina's "Dirty War."



Photos are available for download at www.wmm.com

* Playmobil is a trademark of Geobra Brandstatter, Germany



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The Blonds

Quotes

"*The Blonds* is by far the most innovative and successful in bringing the horrors of the period to the present."
- Deborah Young, *VARIETY*

"RIVETING! A daring personal viewpoint...[*The Blonds*] immediately establishes [Carri] as an innovative auteur with a distinctive personality."
- Pablo Suárez, *Film Comment*

"REFRESHING. A celebration of ideals and idealists, of people who gave up their lives for what they believe in. It is also a tribute to the cinema itself."
- Diana Sanchez, *Toronto International Film Festival*

"One of the most original and creative examples of New Argentine Cinema, *The Blonds* is also great political cinema, in the most complex and embracing meaning of that term."
- Diego Lerer, *CLARIN*

"A true cinematographic manifesto. *The Blonds* takes a radical gamble; it speaks in first person about the personal and collective trauma of recent Argentine history."
- Marcelo Panozzo, *El Amante Cine*

"Groundbreaking"
- *Gijon International Film Festival*

"Remarkable. Daring and intelligent...(Carri is a) talented filmmaker."
- *La Nacion*

"One of THE BEST FILMS OF 2003 ... a landmark work in the blending of private, political, documentary and re-staged propositions of 'reality'."
- Robert Koehler, *Rotten Tomatoes*

"(Albertina Carri) has a passionate way of understanding filmmaking. Sometimes it is not enough to have bravery, you need talent."
- *Los Inrockuptibles*

"Brave... one of the most creative testimonies on identity, on the last military dictatorship and on filmmaking."
- *El Summum*



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The Blonds

Credits

Argentina · 2003 · 89 Minutes · Color

Director/Script
Albertina Carri

Producer
Barry Ellsworth

Executive Producer
Pablo Wisznia

Unit Production Manager
Paola Pelzmajer

Assistant Directors
Santiago Giral/Marcelo Zanelli

Camera
Carmen Torres/Albertina Carri

Cinematography
Catalina Fernandez

Editor
Alejandra Almirón

Sound
Jesica Suarez

Title Design
Nicolas Kasakoff

Music
Charly Garcia
Ryuchi Sakamoto
Virus
Gonzalo Cordoba

Cast/Characters
Analia Couceyro

Publicity Contact: Cindy Kridle, Marketing and Communications Manager,
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The Blonds

Festivals and Awards

- Buenos Aires International Film Festival
 - * Audience Award, Best Film
 - * Jury Award, Best Argentine Film
 - * Official Jury Special Mention
 - * SIGNIS Film Critics Association Special Mention
- CLARIN - *Best Documentary, Best Actress, Best Music*
- Toronto International Film Festival
- Miami International Film Festival
- Rotterdam International Film Festival
- Göteborg Film Festival
- Festival Int'l del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, Havana
- Film Society of Lincoln Center, Latin Beat Series
- London Film Festival
- Princeton Film Festival
- Gijon International Film Festival



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The Blonds

Biographies

ALBERTINA CARRI, Director

Albertina Carri was born in 1973 and presently works in Buenos Aires. In 1991 and 1992, she studied screenwriting, cinematography and direction at the Fundacion Universidad del Cine. In 2000, with the support of the National Film Institute and the Hubert Bals Fund, she wrote and directed her first dramatic feature film, *I Won't Go Back Home*, about the intersecting lives of two Buenos Aires families brought together by a murder, which was selected for the Buenos Aires, Vienna, London and Rotterdam festivals, among others.

Carri received the Antorchas Foundation's creation grant, which she used to investigate animation techniques, resulting in *Barbie Can Also Be Sad*, a polysexual pornographic soap opera starring Barbie and Ken that has screened at festivals around the world. Her second feature, *The Blonds* was completed with the support of The National Arts Fund. Carri is currently at work on her next dramatic feature, *Gemini*, which has received the Fonds Sud grant and begins production in 2004.



Barry Ellsworth, Producer

Barry Ellsworth co-founded Apparatus Productions with Christine Vachon, Todd Haynes, and James Schamus. He collaborated on the underground film classic *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story*, and *Poison*, which won the grand jury award at The Sundance Film Festival. He has also played a key role in the realization of documentaries such as *Secuestro: Story of a Kidnapping*, which reconstructs three months in the life of a Colombian family during their daughter's kidnapping, and *Anemone Me* by Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks. He has directed six short films, including *Tommy's* with the actor Steve Buscemi. He currently develops and produces films by emerging filmmakers with strong personal vision in the United States and Latin America.



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The Blonds

Director's Statement

In 1999, I started researching on "the fiction of memory" - objective facts faced to fantasies, pieces of stories confronted to the impossibility of remembering certain things and the totally randomized impossibility of forgetting some details. In that moment, I entered that tunnel, and that erratic, ambitious and desperate search turned into the first half-hour of *The Blonds*.

While I was trying to rip my parents' absence (as if it were a corpse), I managed to put the past together with the present. Linking my present as a film director with my past, which is marked by this absence, seemed to be not only an ambitious work to do, but also an imper-tinent and challenging one. A challenge that appeared to be impossible, as my will of not talking about "The Past" with the solemnity that it would have meant—was unchangeable. This was not understood by any fund or producer that read my project. History, for them, lies in my parents' "disappearance" and not in my constitution as a person starting from an absence.

The Blonds is a game of mirrors with stories, substories and parallel stories, on rejection and encounters. Some are included in the film while others are part of a legend that grew around the picture. These mirrors of reality-fiction-documentary are showed in the movie as the "world of memory." For *The Blonds* and for me (as a result of it), memory is a vital organ, sometimes painful, sometimes delicious and sometimes scary. Memory is the Other's look exposed to his experience and his omissions. "While omitting it remembers," writes the main character, an actress who plays myself while I direct her in the film.

After this erratic, ambitious and desperate search, *The Blonds* finds its own way and tells the making of the picture. And I find the movie when the actress is playing myself as a character, and a woman, a neighbor of mine from the last place I lived with my parents, describes by family as "blond." And during this looking for a film shape, I find out a new family, the family made from us, those who made the picture.



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The Blonds

VARIETY

The Blonds

Los Rubios
(Argentina)

By DEBORAH YOUNG Mon., May 12, 2003, 6:59pm PT

The most complexly structured of this year's Argentine films, "The Blonds" treads a delicate line between documentary and fiction to reconstruct the kidnapping and murder of director Albertina Carri's parents during the military dictatorship. Flanked by a number of new docs on the subject of the *desparecidos* (the "disappeared"), "Blonds" is by far the most innovative and successful in bringing the horrors of the period to the present, by analyzing the way memory and identity are constructed. Its experimental techniques will keep some auds at a distance, but should be appreciated by festivals. Pic won a number of prizes at the recent Buenos Aires film fest, including audience award and best new Argentine feature nod.

Mixing the personal feel of Carri's feature bow "I Don't Want to Go Home" and the studied eccentricity of her short "Barbie Can Be Sad, Too", which was narrated entirely with dolls, "The Blonds" ambitiously attempts to find a fresh approach to a subject that still opens emotional wounds in Argentina. Pic begins with a film crew investigating the 1977 disappearance of political militants Ana Maria Caruso and Roberto Carri by interviewing residents of the neighborhood they lived in at the time they were abducted. Strikingly, the neighbors find little to say about the family, which included three small daughters (Albertina was 4 years old), and less to criticize about their deaths.

At the same time, model toys are employed in other scenes to represent transparent fantasies about happy family life -- until a plastic spaceship swoops down and whisks away the parent figures. Although Carri herself is glimpsed in the film, her "role" as filmmaker/bereaved daughter is doubled by young thesp Analia Couceyro. This somewhat defuses the film's emotional charge, while at the same time underlining how difficult it is to construct an identity for oneself in the absence of such basic figures as a mother and father.

But generally the pic avoids the danger of letting its formal concerns overpower its emotional ones. Camerawork is personal and eclectic, while office decor is dominated by a poster of John Water's "Cecl B. DeMented" showing Melanie Griffith tied to a chair and gagged. Poster takes on ominous meaning when the talk turns to how prisoners were tortured.

Gagging also refers to pic's criticism of Argentina's new state film financing system, which recently became entirely based on film scripts. The film crew at one point peruses a letter from the agency refusing "The Blonds" financing, claiming the gravity of the subject warrants "a more rigorous documentary approach."



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The Blonds

the village VOICE

APRIL 7-13, 2004

TRACKING SHOTS



Women Make Movies

Analia Couceyro as director Carri

THE BLONDS

Written and directed by Albertina Carri
Women Make Movies
April 7 through 30, Film Forum

The youngest of three sisters whose leftist parents were arrested and "disappeared" during the course of Argentina's late-'70s dirty war, Albertina Carri boldly plunges into the murky depths of her own—and the national—past with *The Blonds*.

Neither documentary nor psychodrama, Carri's film is a mysterious combination of the two. (In that it resembles two other recent Film Forum attractions, Amie Siegel's *Empathy* and Pearl Gluck's *Divon*.) What's remarkable about *The Blonds* is how it continually thwarts generic expectations. Carri interviews neighbors with no interest in her family's fate beyond establishing their own exoneration. She records her parents' old comrades on videotape but uses the material for little more than second-hand accounts of the detention center where her parents were confined and presumably executed.

The Blonds, which is mainly concerned with the ways in which the unknown past informs the inchoate present, has affinities to E.L. Doctorow's novelized rumination on the children of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, *The Book of Daniel*. Similar conflicts churn the surface here. Carri's sisters refuse to speak on camera. Mysterious forces must vet the project, and the filmmaker responds with her own form of subterfuge. She employs a stand-in for herself and occasionally dramatizes childhood fantasies with animated Lego tableaux. In the end, this Borgesian hall of mirrors is a clutter of recollections and inconclusive interviews that suggests the impossibility of getting at any representational truth.

Tripping over fragments of fragments, Carri searches through thickets of fantasy and memory for a narrative line. Her parents were called "los rubios" (the blonds). But why? Was any member of the family blond? Whose memories are whose? The weather is always overcast in this engaging expression of moody bafflement. *The Blonds* is unpretentiously poetic and casually stylish, yet perversely precise. Reconstructing the past, Carri seems to suggest, is akin to grabbing the water in a flowing stream. J. HOBERMAN

The New York Times

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2004

FILM REVIEW

Personally Political: Fallout From the 'Dirty War'

By A. O. SCOTT

"The Blonds," an autobiographical semi-documentary directed by Albertina Carri, which opens today at Film Forum, is the second film shown in New York in the last few weeks to deal with the aftereffects of political repression in Argentina in the 1970's. Like Gastón Biraben's "Captive," which was part of the recent New Directors/New Films series, Ms. Carri's film concerns a child whose parents were among the tens of thousands of Argentines kidnapped, tortured and killed during the military junta's "dirty war" against leftists, and who must, years later, contend with the pain and confusion of events she barely remembers.

In this case the child was Ms. Carri. She returns with her film crew to her old house and interviews neighbors about her parents and their fate. The movie's title comes from one elderly woman's insistent (and erroneous) recollection that all of the family members — Ms. Carri, her parents and her two sisters — had blond hair. Memory, especially when filtered through a guilty conscience, plays tricks, and so does film.

In addition to appearing on camera herself, Ms. Carri is played by an actress (Analia Couceyro), one of several strategies



Women Make Movies

Analia Couceyro plays Albertina Carri, the film's director, in "The Blonds."

that complicates "The Blonds." Film Forum's publicity materials refer to this technique as Brechtian, but Godardian may be a better word, since the film has the fractured syntax and ruminant self-consciousness of Godard's late cinematic essays. It is not so much a documentary as a fictional film about the making of a documentary, or perhaps a documentary about the making of a fictional film about the making of a documentary.

If this sounds a bit maddening, it is,

THE BLONDS

Written (in Spanish, with English subtitles) and directed by Albertina Carri; director of photography, Catalina Fernández; edited by Alejandra Almirón; music by Charly García, Ryuchi Sakamoto, Gonzalo Córdoba and Virus; produced by Barry Ellsworth; released by Women Make Movies. At Film Forum, 209 West Houston Street, South Village. Running time: 89 minutes. This film is not rated.

WITH: Analia Couceyro.

though the confusion that "The Blonds" induces is clearly part of its intention. The film's open-ended, recursive structure is central to Ms. Carri's intellectual agenda, which is to emphasize the deceptive, indeterminate nature of the truth. It is sometimes hard to tell, though, whether she wants to explore the ways that individual and collective psychology contrive to blur and distort painful or shameful aspects of the political past, or whether her concern is with the grander, more abstract and ultimately more banal tendency of any representation to falsify what it tries to depict.

Too much of the film is in a mood of chin-scratching detachment, and this creates a vacuum in which its powerful, confrontational moments lose their force, the trauma of the past pushed nearly out of reach.

« entertainmentnews »

Argentine film at its best

Pablo Suarez for the Herald



A scene from *Los rubios*, the compelling, moving, and utterly creative documentary by Albertina Carri.

**BY PABLO SUÁREZ
FOR THE HERALD**

As the fifth edition of the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Films (BAFICI) is about to end (the closing ceremony takes place tomorrow evening), it's truly rewarding to see that Argentine cinema is wonderfully represented and destined to claim one or more prizes, both in the official competition and the competitive section *Lo nuevo de lo nuevo*, which showcases the works of the newest Argentine filmmakers.

Within the official competition, two most remarkable entries recently screened have drawn profound admiration from critics and the general audience alike. There's Celina Murga's debut film *Ana y los otros*, which casts a sensitive, enticing gaze upon the seemingly placid, yet often tricky realm of desire.

Also, there's *Los rubios*, the second film by Albertina Carri, a compelling, moving, and utterly creative documentary on the void

left by the kidnapping and disappearance of Albertina's parents in 1977 by the last military dictatorship. The third Argentine entry, Ezequiel Acuña's *Nadar sola*, a thoughtful, melancholy portrait of adolescence, has already been screened earlier in the festival, and reviewed in this last Tuesday's *Herald*.

Ana y los otros tells the story of Ana (Camila Toker), a young girl who goes back to visit her hometown of Paraná, in the province of Santa Fe, after having moved to Buenos Aires. Once there, she gets together with her old friends, and embarks herself into the search of a certain guy she was once sentimentally attached to.

Following in the steps of French master Eric Rohmer (as well as those of Iranian Abbas Kiarostami in the film's second half), yet finding a path all of her own, Murga draws a luminous, witty, and contemplative portrayal of an entire provincial society when it comes to matters of the heart. That, on the surface, since *Ana y los otros* is mostly concerned with what makes Ana do what she does, namely going after her very elusive old boyfriend.

What is she expecting to find? What is she really after? Fortunately, those are questions the film never answers — that's for viewers to figure out. Seldom does a film embody such a subtle and joyful exploration on the nature of desire and longing as *Ana y los otros* does. Furthermore, the film is impeccably written, beautifully photographed, never loses its alluring and meditative tone, and thus unfolds effortlessly, from the first frame to the last. A small gem not to be missed.

Los rubios is Albertina Carri's relentless, vigorous quest for the impossible: to fill the void left by the kidnapping of her parents when she was only four. What is indeed possible, as Carri's feature comes to prove, is to turn conventional documentary upside-down by explicating the production process of the film itself, rendering a narration within the narration. Carri intertwines her own voice as a first person narrator with that of an actress (Analia Couceiro), who plays Carri. The filmmaker has aptly chosen to leave out all kinds of archival footage. In short: she has avoided all traits of a formulaic approach in favour of a daring personal viewpoint.

Ultimately, Carri's film is about constructing your identity when that of your parents was violently wiped out. Thus, her riveting film is also an attempt to reconstruct a family torn apart, and in doing so, it is also both a recalling and a reconstruction of haunting memories in a much-welcome, non-sentimental fashion, which addresses the essential queries a large part of Argentine society still prefers not to deal with. *Los rubios* is as autobiographical as it is universal, and that certainly is no small feat.



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BAFICI: Carri a strong contender

Los Rubios, the autobiographical, self-referential movie directed by Argentina's Albertina Carri, has become one of the strongest contenders for the main awards at the fifth edition of the Buenos Aires Festival of Independent Films (BAFICI). *Los Rubios* is an intense, visceral research into the fate of Carri's parents, abducted by murdered during the last military dictatorship.

An original combination of fiction, documentary and backstage footage, *Los Rubios* bears testimony to Carri's searing search for the past and the memory of sociologist Roberto Carri and Literature graduate Ana Maria Caruso, who disappeared in 1977.

Albertina Carri was only 3 years old the last time she saw them, but her film is a careful reconstruction through the recollections of relatives and friends, photographs and

Brazil and one from Mexico — have received subsidies from Fundación Antorchas, the Goteborg Foundation and the Hubert Bals Fund, in the framework of the current BAFICI edition.

From Argentina, Rodrigo Moreno's *El custodio* received \$10,000, and Ernesto Baca's *Virginal* \$8,000. *Ni por casualidad* by Philippe Barcinski (Brazil), and Issa maria Garcia Ascot Ogarrio (Mexico) each received 10,000 euros.

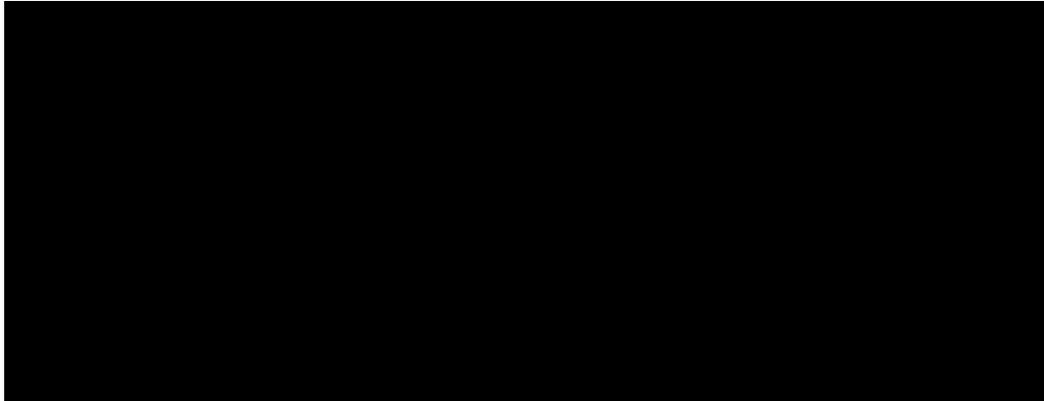


A scene from Albertina Carri's *Los Rubios*.

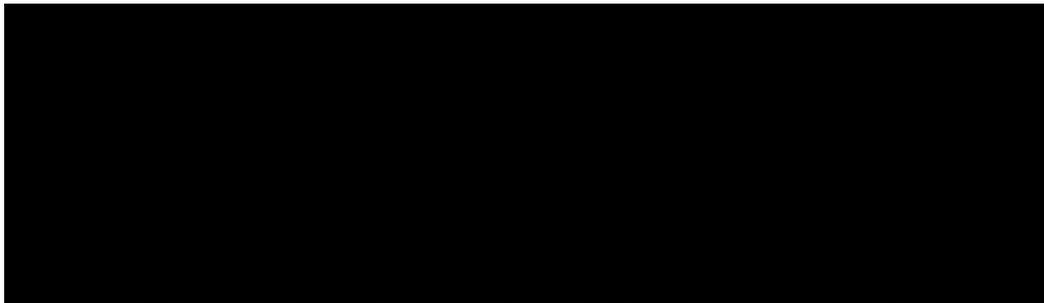
the narration of actress Analia Couceyro — the director's alter ego.

Four Latin American films — two from Argentina, one from

The Blonds



Argentina's dirty war. In Spanish. Opening April 7.
(Film Forum.)



Albertina Carri's autobiographical documentary about her parents' disappearance, "The Blonds," opens April 7 at Film Forum.



The Blonds

NEW YORK POST

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2004

Cry for them, Argentina

By V.A. MUSETTO

IN 1977, political activists Roberto Eugenio Carri and Ana Maria Caruso were arrested, tortured and executed by Argentina's military dictatorship. They were among 30,000

MOVIE REVIEW

THE BLONDS

★★★

A daughter's tribute.
In Spanish, with English subtitles. Running time: 89 minutes. Not rated (mature subject matter). At the Film Forum, Houston Street, west of Sixth Avenue. Through April 20.

victims of the infamous "dirty war" waged by the junta during its decade of power. The couple left behind three daughters.

Decades later, one of the girls, Albertina Carri, who was 4 when her parents were murdered, has directed and written "The Blonds."

It's a heady mixture of documentary, fiction and animation, shot in color and black and white, on video and film.

To keep the genre-busting on track, the real Carri sometimes is replaced on screen by an actress (sultry Analía Couceyro).

Carri and her small camera crew visit her parents' neighbors, friends and "comrades" to learn all she can about her parents. ("All

I have are vague memories.")

"He had a beautiful face," one former neighbor says of the filmmaker's father. "He was really good-looking."

"She was very emotional, extremely expressive," the elderly woman says of Carri's mother.

Argentina's "dirty war" has been extensively chronicled on the screen. "The Blonds" (which takes its name from a nickname for Carri's parents) tackles the subject with innovative vigor.

Carri doesn't learn everything she wants to know, but not for lack of trying.

The Blonds

Time Out New York

April 8-15, 2004



READING BETWEEN THE LINES Couceyro, playing a slightly younger version of *Blonds* director Carri, attempts to make sense of her traumatic childhood.

The Blonds

Dir. **Albertina Carri**. 2003. N/R.
89mins. In Spanish, with subtitles.
Analia Couceyro.

Menor is, almost certainly, the trickiest material to bring to the screen compellingly, requiring cine-diarists to plunge into a black hole of potential solipsism—taking an innocent crew with them—and somehow emerge on the far side of mass appeal. Think of the worst aspects of today-I-ate-a-chicken-salad-sandwich blogging and you'll understand why such endeavors are rarely indulged by paying customers (at least this one).

What a relief, then, to report that *The Blonds*, wrapped in oblique political commentary much in keeping with the quasijournalistic style of French collagist Chris Marker, shies admirably from such navel gazing. No doubt it helps that Carri, a 30-year-old Argentine, has a ghostly story to tell: When she was a young

girl, her activist parents were kidnapped and murdered by the junta conducting the "Dirty War." Employing the Brechtian device of casting an actor (Couceyro) to play her adult self, Carri propels her camera down police-station corridors and sedate neighborhood streets, inviting memory and imagination to fill up the scene of the crime.

What Carri's rambling investigation gains from fresh tactics—one stroke involves a faux-naive restaging of the abduction, using plastic dolls and a toy spacecraft descending to a theremin's warble—it loses, expectedly, in precision. As the director's surrogate wanders in a crop field wearing a blond wig (it's a long story), you get the slightest whiff of an unexamined life. But Carri has time; based on this first step, her future entries might be worth taking seriously. (Now playing; Film Forum.)

—*Joshua Rothkopf*

The Blonds



The Best Films Of 2003: Robert Koehler

Rotten Tomatoes

Film critic Robert Koehler weighs in with his best of 2003. Read on to find out which movies made it to his list.

BY ROBERT KOEHLER (Film critic--Variety, CinemaScope magazine)

(In alphabetical order)

THE BLONDES (Albertina Carri, Argentina)

Carri's personal examination of the legacy of her disappeared family by the Argentine junta of the '70s is a landmark work in the blending of private, political, documentary and re-staged propositions of "reality."



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The Nation.

April 26, 2004

FILMS

Chronicle of a Disappearance

STUART KLAWANS

Arough but accurate gauge of national resilience: When dictators fall, how soon do filmmakers rise again? In the case of Argentina, the recovery was impressively quick. Almost as soon as the generals were gone, artists responded to the immediate past with remarkable feature films and documentaries:

Héctor Olivera's *Funny Dirty Little War* (1983) in the first category, Susana Muñoz and Lourdes Portillo's *Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* (1986) in the second. Since then, films inspired by the "dirty war" have developed into a large and significant subset of world cinema, with Luis Puenzo's *The Official Story*, Marco Bechis's *Garage Olimpo* and *Hijos*, David Blaustein's *Spoils of War* and (in a different mode) Fernando Solanas's *La Nube* among the most notable on the list.

We may now add to them Albertina Carri's complex and fascinating *The Blonds* (*Los Rubios*), which is having its US theatrical premiere at New York's Film Forum (through April 20). It is, I admit, not an easy picture to grapple with—but then, neither is its subject matter, which is the gaping hole in the filmmaker's life.

In 1977, when Carri was 4 years old, the police kidnapped and murdered her parents, the underground leftists Roberto Carri and Ana Maria Caruso. Years passed before the little girl learned what had happened. She grew up without memories of her mother and father, and no one has been able to supply for her what was lost. Her older sisters, who do remember the parents, evidently prefer not to talk about them, at least not for the record. Former comrades, when questioned, just rehash their own experiences and discourse on politics. The neighbors who saw Ana Maria and Roberto hauled away know only that they themselves did nothing wrong and don't want trouble; and the cops, strangely enough, have a hard time recalling anything before 1983.

Everyone, it seems, wants to forget what Carri can't remember. (Those old friends who mythologize her parents merely consign them to a different kind of oblivion.) As if to sum up this will to amnesia, the state agency that funds film production reviewed Carri's proposal for a movie about her parents and sent back a letter—incorporated

into *The Blonds*—saying that it could not yet decide whether to support this very worthy project and therefore was not supporting it.

Carri, in her various lives as baffled orphan, filmmaker and citizen, must find some way to cope with an intractable absence. Her response—by turns a documentary, fiction, essay, memoir and very low-budget animation—is no easier to describe than it is to categorize; but perhaps a list of topics will suggest what you may find, and admire, in *The Blonds*.

Doubles: The filmmaker you glimpse toward the beginning, conducting a hit-and-run interview with one of the parents' neighbors, turns out not to be the filmmaker. As a voiceover soon explains, she is the actress Analía Couceyro, who has been hired to portray Albertina Carri. Does this mean that Carri, for the sake of discretion, has taken herself out of the picture? No. She's on screen, too, and is often seen coaching her double.

Blonds: The neighbors used to refer to Ana Maria and Roberto as "blonds," implying that the couple were nonindigenous, inauthentic, un-Argentine. Another blond in the film—another victim of kidnapping and torture—is Melanie Griffith, who may be seen in the background of Couceyro/Carri's editing studio. She appears, bound and gagged, on a prominently displayed poster for John Waters's movie *Cecil B. Demented*.

Filmmakers: When you watch Couceyro in the studio reviewing videotaped interviews, or when she pretends to be interviewed herself or visits sites associated with the parents, you also get to see Carri's crew in action. They discuss how to proceed, conduct run-throughs, slate shots, film the filming; and as they do so, you get to know these young people. You understand that they have become Carri's present-day family and are

the real protagonists of the movie.

Masquerades: If so, then the surrogate family and the Carri double must be blonds, too. In the last section of the film, they all put on wigs, as if to fake—or is it flaunt?—the identity that was fatally assigned to Ana Maria and Roberto.

For a filmmaker—indeed, for a generation—that has been violently severed from its elders, this duplicitous, make-believe identification may be the only form of memory available. It's a self-contradictory basis on which to live, but not without hope. In the final shots of *The Blonds*, we see Couceyro from behind, at a distance, walking down a country road, and at the same time overhear someone from the film crew saying, "It's better. The film ends with her alone." But then, the film doesn't end like that. The shot is repeated, this time with the whole film crew walking together into the distance, their ridiculous blond wigs bobbing and shaking.

It's better. She is cut off but not alone.



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