

The Brazilian Press about *Bikini Moon* at the Sao Paulo Film Festival

A brilliant auteur film.

Positioned on the delicate line between fiction and documentary, *Bikini Moon* is a modern, urban fairy tale, with a fascinating narrative, imposing itself as one of the best films of 2017, with the marvelous Condola Rashad.

(Felipe Brida, Cinema na Web)

One of the Highlights of the Festival

(Estadao)

Condola Rashad transforms *Bikini* into a figure which is, at the same time touching, funny, strong, vulnerable and charismatic.

(Mulher no Cinema)

Milcho, provocative as always, makes the most ingenious and tough comment on the information society.

He (Manchevski) shows us how sick mass society is, with all its facilities, its self-indulgence, comfort and impersonality.

[T]hrough Manchevski's lens we see a hypocritical and demagogical society, populated by the so-called good citizens full of "good intentions" who are, in fact, automatized, absolutely neurotic and schizophrenic, living in a decadent society about to collapse.

(O Que Tem na Nossa Estante)

Disturbing, restless, sarcastic, seductive, unpredictable – it is impossible to remain indifferent to a figure like *Bikini* when she appears in the crowd.

(Ccine 10)

By leading us to the darkest corners of *Bikini*'s psychological universe, the movie also takes us on a journey through the darkness of the collective psyche of our society.

Manchevski makes an acathartic film that aims to deconstruct the overall solid structure of the social model and the ideological discourse sustained by this status quo; he invades the privacy, dilutes the self, tears down the private spaces in order to question with such ease, "everything that is solid, dismantles into air." Or better: it dissolves itself like an acid trip.

His work is lysergic and provocative, sarcastic and ironic, it flirts with the surrealism in order to portray the reality in a form that no other documentary manages to do so well. The film's tagline is "a documentary about a fairy tale." It is not even a documentary, not even a pseudo-documentary (mockumentary); it is a fiction movie about a documentary, which is about a team

of documentarians, who are filming the reality, which turns into a freaked out urban modern fairy tale.

(O Que Tem na Nossa Estante)

A fake documentary which eloquently explores the boundaries of the use of social networks, spontaneous media, of the selfies, of I-shoot- therefore-I-exist .

The movie initiates a dialogue about the broken families and the life of the homeless in America.

(Felipe Brida, Cinema na Web)

Bikini Moon is a critique of the ideological dictatorship of reality show and documentaries.

(Omelete)

[S]trong performance of the two actresses Condola Rashad and Sarah Goldberg, extraordinary.

All of a sudden, the documented reality escapes its own reality. At one point, the documented object begins to document its own documentary team (with an old camera and low quality images, it captures nuances that were never seen before under the perfection shown by the high-quality lens). The object becomes self-conscious and becomes a subject. The object appropriates the film for itself; it appropriates the fiction about itself, the narrative about itself, the documentary about itself. It appropriates itself from the other. At another point, the object's intimacy is scrupulously explored; at another point in time the documented object is violated by the documentary crew (two positions that cannot be in a clash, that should be kept at a distance). Ironically, the documentary crew is omniscient and omnipresent showing up in the most unexpected moments, witnessing everything, starting from the illegal crimes up to the most intimate moments.

Milcho operates with inverted positions all the time. At times, we have the feeling that the filmed objects are even ourselves. Inside the film, he plays around with the concept of a film crew that deconstructs the classical cinematographic language, by displaying, without any problem, the microphones, the cameras, the backstage, the whole cinematographic apparatus, production and editing; justifying it as an aesthetic concept of the eccentric director Trevor: "we like the mic". He "tears down the curtains" several times, sometimes one inside the other; including during the disturbing and dramatic moments. The total subversion of the narrative language is reflected in the subversion of the instrumental language engaged by the film director Milcho Manchevski. As if he himself was susceptible to changing positions with his alter ego, the film director Trevor.

[F]ilm director-philosopher

(O Que Tem na Nossa Estante)

Documenting Bikini's life without judgment, and often in a frightening and fantastic way, requires extra effort from the cast.

Bikini Moon features a "film within the film" structure that goes beyond the plot, with the aim of unpacking and examining the way humanity observes the world through media.

(Rota Cult)

Documentary-fiction, "Bikini Moon" investigates society behind the cameras. As it unfolds, viewers begin to question what is true – and not only in relation to facts, but also to the very beliefs and desires of each character. Bikini, at first seen as crazy, ends up being the person whose world makes sense the most.

The director revisits the classic philosophical conflict "To be or not to be" for the cinema.

(IG Cultura)

Framed within the premise of a fake documentary (a genre that ostensibly aims to reveal the truth), the feature film by Milcho Manchevski asks a question: How much is the public manipulated by the media? What's more, how does our perception of the world change through the media perspective? Is everything we see in documentaries, newspapers, reality shows real?

In a generation where everyone can use a camera, post videos and become an „influencer“, BIKINI MOON reminds us that not everything we see, is the truth.

The structure of Bikini Moon develops in front of the eyes of the cameramen, as does the protagonist – a genuinely interesting and well developed character. Condola Rashad's performance is absolutely incredible, finding many nuances in Bikini's character. Sweet, but violent; calm, but explosive; emotional, and at the same time rational. These dualities are evidently contrasted in the gestures, in the uninhibited gait, in the loose laughter of a woman who, despite evident mental problems, maintains a certain level of "normality." We can never quite decipher whether she is lying or being honest, given the swings of her temperament at the least opportune moments: from her, we can always expect the improbable (and this feeling remains throughout the entire film).

With Bikini Moon, Manchevski (who was nominated for the Oscar for best foreign film for his Before the Rain) clearly intends to provoke the viewer to believe in the almost "surreal" – the finale, for example, is pure fantasy. **** (four stars)

(Ccene 10)

As a metalinguistic joke, the result is fascinating, because it arouses detachment from each image: we are invited to doubt everything we see. Documentary, by definition, is the "genre in which reality cannot be put in parentheses," but the so-called documentary features scenes that could never happen in real life. The filmmaker tests the limits of the viewer, offering

increasingly improbable moments, until the explicit intrusion of fantasy. At what point do we lose our confidence? Where does the suspension of disbelief reach its limit?

We have a whirlwind, an infinite network of possibilities for reading and movement. Like labyrinths, grace can be found in the pleasure of losing oneself.

The appearance of Bikini (Condola Rashad) has the effect of an explosion. She is funny, seductive, violent, spontaneous, lying. It's hard to take your eyes off that hypnotic figure. Bikini seems at once perfectly sane and completely crazy when she describes in detail her experience as a soldier in Iraq, her talent for carpentry ("I am like Jesus, with tits"), how she misses her little daughter, or evident mental problems. Was she telling the truth or not? Throughout the film, the doubt persists. *** **(three stars)**

(Adoro Cinema)

The documentary inside of the fiction not only mixes two formal genres but also our perceptions.

The result is invigorating because Bikini's disoriented state is depicted by the use of every filmmaking tool available (from raw documentary to stylized fiction) and also because of the "implosion" of the character – leading to an unexpected appearance of a fantastic realism. It is not only our experience that's being heightened, but also our connection to a woman with whom we plunge together into her own confusion. *** **(three stars)**

(Cine Resenhas)

Bikini, played by Condola Rashad, is a war veteran whose mental problems are palpable. The honesty of her comments and the stories she tells about her war experience are captivating.

(Papo de Cinema)

16 Must-See Films at the Sao Paulo International Film Festival (out of 400)

(Veja Sao Paulo)