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Kubrador / The Bet Collector

September 25, 2008 @ 05:09 pm by Beth Accomando
 Filed under: [Drama](#), [Foreign Language](#), [Local Events](#)



Gina Pareño gives a strong central performance in Kubrador/The Bet Collector (Global Film Initiative)

As with the San Diego Latino Film Festival's Cinema en tu Idioma, the San Diego Asian Film Festival tries to keep films playing in the community year round. SDAFF's [Philippine Cinema Showcase](#) runs in the South Bay at the [UltraStar Chula Vista Cinemas](#), and it brings new films to serve the Filipino community. This week you can catch the San Diego County premiere of the realistic drama *Kubrador/The Bet Collector* (opening September 26 at UltraStar Chula Vista for one week only), directed by Jeffrey Jeturian. The film has racked up a number of international awards including an armload of Philippine critics awards.

Arnold Marquez runs the Philippine Cinema Showcase, and he says "the main goal is to exhibit films that both the San Diego's Filipino community and mainstream audiences can enjoy. To the extent non-Filipino audience members take advantage of this opportunity to discover a national cinema nearly unknown in the U.S., the Showcase will better acquaint them with the Philippines and lend them an appreciation of some recent, very interesting developments in that country's motion picture industry."

Kubrador opens with a title card informing us of something known as "jueteng," an illegal numbers game rampant throughout the Philippines. It's widespread popularity gives power to those at the top who run it but there are a far greater number of lowly neighborhood bet collectors that are just struggling to get by. One such collector is Amy (Gina Pareño), a family matriarch who runs a small convenience store out of her home. With an unemployed husband and pregnant daughter, she is the only provider for her family and times are tough. So she starts supplementing her meager income by collecting bets. It turns out to be a tough job as many of her customers are not much

About

Satisfy your celluloid addiction with *Cinema Junkie* where you can mainline film 24/7. This film and entertainment blog is run by KPBS Film Critic [Beth Accomando](#), and also features the reviews of the KPBS Teen Critics.

So if you need a film fix, want to hear what filmmakers have to say about their work, or just want to know what's worth seeing this weekend, then you've come to the right place.

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[Cool Hand Luke \(Delux...](#)
Paul Newman, George Kenne...



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Paul Newman, Joanne Wood...



Newman and Woodward in their first film together.



[Paul Newman: A Life i...](#)
(Hardcover - Oct 19, 2006)



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better off than her. Director Jeffrey Jeturian follows her around as she travels the streets urging and cajoling as many as she can into parting with a few coins for a bet. She's persistent and also something of a gossip as she chats it up with each customer.



The raid that opens *Kubrador* (Global Film Initiative)

Jeturian opens the film with a police raid that sends dozens of people in a numbers racket fleeing through the cramped and crowded streets of Manila. These opening scenes convey a sense of life in the narrow, cluttered alleys of a Quezon City slum. In this world poverty and corruption are constant presences. Jeturian invests the film with energy upfront but then doesn't seem sure where to go from there. So Pareño, with her compelling performance, ends up carrying the film.

Kubrador has enough going for it that it could find some crossover appeal. But Arnold Marquez says trying to quickly (the program only started last month) create a program with crossover appeal is tough. "The series started much sooner than we'd have preferred, so in turn we've simply responded by working correspondingly that much harder. Creating awareness is our chief challenge, followed by budget, as well as many people's conceptual barrier against the concept of having Philippine film available every day, several times a day, for a projected yearlong program."

While the crossover challenge was one to be expected, Marquez also faced challenges in appealing to an increasingly diverse Filipino community: "The generational difference between members of our community is a challenge. The film my parents remember from the 40s and 50s is not the film immigrants from the 70s and 80s remember, all of which is different from the Philippine film of today. Our programming currently deals with such audience segmentation by offering a different type of film each week."

Marquez is hopeful about the future of this program as contemporary independent Philippine filmmaking gains attention around the world. For more information, you can visit their website www.philippinecinemashowcase.org where trailers for upcoming films can often be found. They are also starting an enewsletter that you can sign up for. And Marquez also welcomes emails at arnold@scaff.org.

Kubrador is unrated and is in Tagalog with English subtitles.

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