

Film Notes

By Dan Hawkins

Comparsa

2025 | 79mins

Directors: Doug Anderson, Vickie Curtis

Writers: Lupe Pérez, Lesli Pérez,



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In South America, a 'comparsa' is a group of musicians, singers, and dancers performing as part of carnival. Lesli - one of the two sisters at the heart of this remarkable documentary - describes it as "a celebration of freedom. We take to the streets to protest through art and shout to the four winds, to demand justice, to free ourselves". In *Comparsa*, the comparsa they prepare honours victims of femicide and gender-based violence in their Guatemalan community, transforming grief into a call for justice. Guatemala has one of the highest rates of femicide globally, and a staggering 71% of cases go unsolved.

There is a long history of art as a form of protest, and *Comparsa* stands firmly in that tradition. Artistically shot and beautifully made by the American duo Vickie Curtis and Doug Anderson in their feature debut, the film intertwines the joy and colour of carnival with the weight of horrific loss, showing how creative expression can turn anger into visibility and public space into a stage for resistance.

At the film's heart, sisters Lesli and Lupe reveal extraordinary emotional intelligence and a passionate drive. Drawing on their own trauma, they comfort, inspire, and teach other girls in their community to stand up and speak out. They understand the importance of installing this spirit of protest in the next generation. Their chosen slogan for the comparsa and women's festival featured in the film is: Somos las semillas que trascienden desde las cenizas (we are the seeds that rise from the ashes).

'Comparsa is a project by people who care deeply about one another and who believe that the work we are doing to empower youth in Ciudad Peronia should be shared. Telling my story has given me strength ... it means a lot for us to be seen, to feel we have something to teach the world despite our circumstances'

-Lupe Pérez

What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

Please add any further comments here

Excellent

Fair

Poor

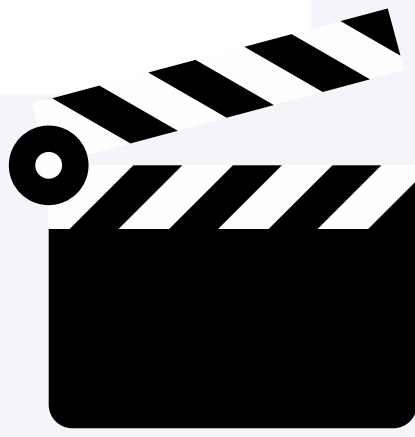


Did You Know?

- *Comparsa* was an entry in the International First Feature Competition at the 2025 Sheffield DocFest.
- Doug Anderson studied Physics and Italian at Harvard university.

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The Silence of Others (2018)
A powerful Spanish documentary about survivors of Franco’s dictatorship fighting to preserve memory and seek justice.



The Act of Killing (2019)
Award winning documentary that follows former Indonesian death squad leaders as they re-enact their 1965–1966 killings in the style of movies they love — from musicals to gangster films. The result is a surreal, chilling exploration of impunity, memory, and the human capacity for violence.

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