


NEW FROM **NEW YORKER FILMS**

"AN ENGAGING COMEDY. ARIEL (IS) A CHARACTER OUT OF PHILIP ROTH OR NEIL SIMON, WHOSE COMIC ANXIETY IS INFLECTED WITH A ROMANTIC, LATIN AMERICAN MELANCHOLY." -A.O. Scott, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"CAPTIVATING! A SLICE-OF-LIFE COMEDY!" -Jan Stuart, NEWSDAY

"RECALLS CLASSIC WOODY ALLEN!" -LOS ANGELES TIMES

"A WITTY AND CHARMING FILM." -VARIETY

 **WINNER**
GRAND JURY PRIZE
BEST ACTOR:
DANIEL HENDLER
BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL 2004



lost embrace

www.NewYorkerFilms.com

A FILM BY DANIEL BURMAN

 NEW YORKER FILMS

A charming comedy set in a multi-cultural Buenos Aires shopping mall, **LOST EMBRACE** is the story of a first, bittersweet encounter between a father and his young adult son. Ariel, ambivalent about the thriving community of Argentinean Jews to which he belongs, is a recent college dropout with hopes of escaping a career behind the counter of his mother's lingerie store. But first he must accept a long-overdue reunion with the father he has been running away from all his life.

ARGENTINA • 2004 • 100 mins • Color • In Spanish with English subtitles

This poignant film resonates with unexpected charm.

KENNETH TURAN

Walk with Ariel through the Galeria, the seen-better-days Buenos Aires mall that is his world. Here are the stormy Italians who fix radios, the Levin brothers who are really cousins, the Koreans who specialize in feng shui without speaking Spanish, Rita the way-sexy Internet queen, Osvaldo and his mysterious stationery store.

"Behind our counters," says Ariel (Daniel Hendler), the protagonist of Daniel Burman's funny, emotional, quietly wonderful "Lost Embrace," "we have our stories. Maybe not shattering ones, but worth telling." Ariel's most of all.

Winner of Berlin's Silver Bear for director Burman and best actor for Hendler, "Lost Embrace" is informed by this notion of the poignancy in the ordinary, of quiet stories that demand to be recounted. It's a film of unexpected, almost indescribable off-center charm that deepens as it goes on.

Director (and co-writer) Burman displays an assured but intimate filmmaking style, at once casual, playful and idiosyncratic. With key sections of the film related by Ariel in voice-over, it's also a style that fosters complicity and connection with a central character who otherwise might not be a personal favorite.

For 23-year-old Ariel is a brooding, dissatisfied young man who seems almost incapable of smiling. Having dropped out of college and dropped his girlfriend for no apparent reasons, he spends most of his time in the mall, helping his mother in her lingerie shop, Elias Creations, or fooling around with the enigmatic Rita.

Though he would wince at the description, Ariel, the grandson of Holocaust-era refugees, is in truth on a complex search for his personal and cultural identity. Feeling part European, part Argentine, part Jewish and completely discontented, Ariel is trying to figure out his place in the world, to come to terms with both an absent father and a particular kind of Jewish cultural heritage.

Director Burman's co-writer is Marcelo Birmajer, a respected Argentine author who specializes in stories about El Once, Buenos Aires' Jewish neighborhood. One of "Lost Embrace's" strengths is its exact sense of this very particular universe, of people who feel part of several worlds but not completely at home in any of them. It's hard, in fact, to think of another film that deals so casually but insightfully with the displacements that characterize Diaspora life.

The people closest to Ariel are not as troubled by their status as he is. His mother, Sonia (Adriana Aizenberg), just wants to get on with her life. His brother Joseph (Sergio Boris) is absorbed in his business, which involves importing novelties and maintaining elaborate feuds, some of which have fairly hilarious results. And his financial matchmaker best friend, the well-named Mitelman (Diego Korol), is too fascinated by his Lithuanian secretary to think about anything else.

Frustrated and bored by his world, Ariel is determined to reinvent himself as a Pole with a Polish passport. He pesters his eccentric grandmother (a wonderful Rosita Londner) for papers proving his Polish background, but even as he dreams of Europe he worries that it will be too cold.



Though he prefers not to think about it, Ariel's main problem is with his absent father, Elias of Elias Creations, who abandoned everyone years before to fight in the Yom Kippur War. Elias is in sporadic touch with his family, making phone calls and sending money when he can, but, as Ariel pointedly tells his mother, "What he owes us he can't send through the banks."

Broken up into sections labeled with onscreen titles, "Lost Embrace" has an episodic style, taking us through such incidents as Ariel's determination to see a Sophia Loren weeper called "Sunflower" about another family divided by war and Joseph's determination to settle a business conflict via a do-or-die foot race.

Although it sounds as feckless as its hero, "Lost Embrace" is held together by Ariel's questioning intelligence and the empathy and grace of filmmaker Burman, who knows enough to see through everyone and make us care about them just the same.

"In 'Lost Embrace,' " he says in a statement about the film, "I try to show the road that leads toward the construction of an identity, one based upon small anecdotes, tragedies and comic events, as well as on truth and lies."

It's in his ability to do just that, to in effect mix the essences of life in a wry and heady blend, to tell one of the world's oldest stories in a way it's never quite been told before, that sets "Lost Embrace" apart and makes it a film to cherish and remember.

LOST EMBRACE

Directed by Daniel Burman; written (in Spanish, with English subtitles) by Marcelo Birmajer and Mr. Burman; director of photography, Ramiro Civita; edited by Alejandro Brodersohn; music by Cesar Lerner; art director, Marla Eugenia Sueiro; produced by Diego Dubcovsky and Mr. Burman; released by New Yorker Films. Running time: 100 minutes. This film is not rated.

WITH: Daniel Hendler (Ariel), Adriana Aizenberg (Sonia), Jorge D'Elia (Elias), Sergio Boris (Joseph), Rosita Londner (Grandmother), Diego Korol (Mitelman), Atilio Pozzobón (Senior Saligani), Norman Erlich (Rabbi Benderson) and Isaac Fajn (Osvaldo).

Available for performance rental in VHS and 35mm to universities, museums, and other nontheatrical customers (all dates subject to theatrical approval)

CALL NEW YORKER FILMS TOLL FREE: 1-877-247-6200

85 Fifth Avenue, 11th floor, New York, NY 10003 • Tel: (212) 645-4600 • Fax: (212) 645-3232 • nontheatrical@newyorkerfilms.com