CRAVAN VS. CRAVAN (2002)

La Plaza Monumental (building),
Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 749, Eixample

Isaki Lacuesta is an award-winning film-maker who prefers to divide his films into 'íveis escritos' (written cinema) and 'ines escrito' (unwritten cinema), rather than terms like 'documentary' or 'feature film'. CRAVAN vs. CRAVAN, ostensibly about Oscar Wilde's nephew (real name Fabian Avenarius Lloyd) with the pseudonym Arthur CRAVAN, is a palimpsest of layers, none of which might be completely true. Interwoven with the story of bohem/Dadaist poet CRAVAN is the tale of the narrator Frank Nicotra (also a poet and boxer), not to mention references to Pound, Chise, Duchamp, and a host of other artists and influential figures at the turn of the last century. CRAVAN vs. CRAVAN offers us a varied panorama of Barcelona sights: Las Arenas bulring (before it became a mall), La Monumental bulring, the Albánoes convent, the Montfort hillside park in las Ramblas, el Liceu, club close to the Rambla del Raval, Barcelona's port, a gym in Poblenou, the Estació de França modernist train station, and cloud-swirled panoramic views of the entire city. Lacuesta tapes interviews with people who (supposedly) know CRAVAN or had studied about him, as well as re-enactments of key moments in this fluid story, such as an exhibition boxing match in La Monumental between CRAVAN and heavyweight champ Jack Guelston Grant Johnson. Attempts to solve the mystery of CRAVAN - a mystery that starts with his birth in Switzerland and continues through France, Barcelona, New York City, and on to the New World - are shown to be futile. It seems that CRAVAN himself was the most active mythmaker about his own life. • Linda C. Ehrlich

Directed by Isaki Lacuesta
Some description: Boxing match between CRAVAN and "Jack "Guelston Grant" Johnson at La Monumental
Timecode for scene: 0:56:15 - 1:27:48

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ANTONIO GAUDÍ (1853)

LOCATION
Passeig de Gràcia, Carrer d'Olot, s/n, Gràcia

THIS 72-MINUTE DOCUMENTARY by Japanese film-maker visual artist Hiroshi Teshigahara (1937-2003) was based on memories of the director's first view of the architectural fantasies of Antonio Gaudí (Antonio Gaudi i Cornet, 1852-1926). When Teshigahara first visited Barcelona with his father in 1936 he encountered the world of the Catalonian architect - a world Teshigahara described as one of the greatest surprises of his life. He deeply regretted that he had insufficient film for his 16 mm camera at that time. In 1964 Teshigahara corrected that situation by returning with a full film crew. Most of Antonio Gaudí is without any narrative explanation except for the occasional subtitles to identify a building, set to hypnotic music by award-winning composer Takemitsu Tōru, as well as to European protestant music. We enter into Gaudí's early work and continue on through Passeig de Gràcia, and up to the Temple de la Sagrada Familia as if on wings, after several earlier teasing glimpses of the epics. We are shown little of Gaudí himself. Teshigahara evokes a world that is neither Spanish nor Japanese - a hybrid universe that examines Spanish inspiration within a Buddhist frame. This film, which offers a multiplicity of ways of looking, is in keeping with the eye of a ceramist like Teshigahara. The camera moves like a picture scroll, right to left, later to top to bottom, echoing the illusion of movement in the architecture. As Teshigahara says of Gaudí in Dean Aitken's The Delicate Thread: Teshigahara's Life in Art (Kodansha, p. 71), 'His works made me realize that [...] the world in which I was living still left a great many possibilities.'  

**Linda C. Ehrlich**

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