



WEIGHED BUT FOUND WANTING

Il Cinema
Ritrovato

54^e festival
la rochelle
cinéma

A FILM BY LINO BROCKA

- ONE OF LINO BROCKA'S FIRST MASTERPIECES -
NEVER RELEASED OUTSIDE THE PHILIPPINES



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WEIGHED BUT FOUND WANTING

A FILM BY LINO BROCKA

A SEMINAL MASTERPIECE OF THE PHILIPPINE NEW WAVE

Kuala lost her mind after being forced to have an abortion by her lover, a married man named Cesar. Since then, she has been wandering aimlessly through the village, enduring the mockery of its residents. Junior, unlike his father—the infamous Cesar, who has never stopped chasing women—is a sensitive teenager madly in love with the pretty Evangeline. Until the day when, tired of being rejected by his beloved, fed up with his parents’ endless arguments, and sickened by the hypocrisy of those around him—who are always quick to lecture the common folk but far more lenient toward the actions of the town’s elite—Junior decides to switch sides. He then befriends the town’s two scapegoats: the couple formed by Kuala and Berto the leper, who are expecting a baby...

“After winning over a wide audience in commercial cinema, Lino Brocka emerged with *Weighed But Found Wanting* as one of the brightest voices of modern Filipino cinema. The film burst onto the scene ‘like a rock flung through a plate-glass window,’ signaling a profound shift in tone, ambition, and social consciousness, and later came to be recognized as one of the works that inaugurated the Golden Age of Philippine cinema in the 1970s.

Set in Nueva Ecija, the rural province where Brocka himself grew up, the film follows Junior, the sensitive son of a wealthy family, and his friendship with Berto, a volatile outcast mocked and feared by the community. Around them unfolds a world shaped by gossip, religious hypocrisy, class prejudice, and cruelty disguised as respectability. As critic Noel Vera observed, with Junior, Brocka inscribes himself within a cinematic tradition stretching from *I Vitelloni* to *The Last Picture Show*: portraits of provincial youth whose



coming of age unfolds through disillusionment and the painful discovery of social reality.

More than its central plot, what gives the film its lasting force is its attention to the absurdities and cruelties of everyday provincial life. Its emotional core resides above all in Kuala and Berto, the community’s most rejected figures, and in the ‘simple yet devastating love story found at the bottom of this world.’ Brocka’s understanding of society’s outcasts did not arise from distance, but from an intimate familiarity with exclusion and moral judgment. Returning cinematically to the landscape of his youth, he transforms the seemingly quiet rhythms of provincial life into a piercing portrait of Filipino society, where Catholic morality, entrenched hierarchies, and the promises of modernization mask deeper currents of violence and repression. In this sense, *Weighed But Found Wanting* already anticipates the political force of Brocka’s later work under Marcos: films that turned cinema itself into a space where authoritarian structures could be confronted and quietly subverted from within.”

Cecilia Cenciarelli, co-director Il Cinema Ritrovato

THE GROUNDWORK OF LINO BROCKA'S CINEMA

“*Weighed But Found Wanting* stands at the point in Brocka’s career when one could say, ‘This is where Brocka matured as a filmmaker.’ This is where he took a new look at his craft and realized something innovative: film was a tool for social criticism. Many reasons supported this claim. There was no longer a reliance over comics fantasy for the source of his story, no matter how close the story was to reality. This time, the story was inspired by reality. This made Brocka’s cinema to resonate the style of Italian Neo-Realism, even coming close to Third Cinema with its film politics. These are not empty claims. Brocka, in one of his talks, remarked how he admired the gritty realism of the Italian Neo-Realist directors. Among his favorites was Federico Fellini’s *Nights of Cabiria* (1957). With the worldwide popularity of the Neo-Realist style, it is not farfetched to consider how Brocka found inspiration in the liberating principles behind the making of the postwar Italian films. Embarking on the film that he made, it is said that the story for *Weighed But Found Wanting* was inspired by his own growing up years in his mother’s hometown in Nueva Ecija. The characters were drawn from the real people he knew when he was young. The events, the circumstances, the hypocrisy and the scandal were all too real for the director, he just had to make a movie about his past. [...] It served as a blueprint for what his later films would be and for

what his cinema legacy would be like. *Weighed But Found Wanting* is already critical when it was made, although, admittedly, it retains a certain observational distance—it diagnoses social illness but it has no urgency in its tone. Sadness overcomes the viewer at the end of the film. Brocka’s later films would feel more urgent and confrontational. *Manila in the Claws of Light* exposes systemic injustice with bleak realism, while *Insiang* (1976) pushes into darker emotional territory, portraying cycles of abuse and retaliation. In this sense, *Weighed But Found Wanting* can be seen as a foundation: it articulates the critique that Brocka will later intensify in his later movies.”



a film by Lino BROCKA
starring Lolita RODRIGUEZ,
Christopher DE LEON, Mario O’HARA,
Eddie GARCIA, Hilda KORONEL,
Lilia DIZON, Laurice GUILLEN
script Mario O’HARA, Lino BROCKA
photography Jose BATAAC JR.
editing Augusto SALVADOR
music Lutgardo LABAD
producer Raul ROCO
a film directed by Lino BROCKA

A MEANINGFUL TITLE

“The original title (*Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang*) means ‘weighed but found wanting’ (from the Book of Daniel) and suggests a moral judgment not just of individuals, but of society as a whole. But what is of interest in the film is Brocka asking who is it that judges anyone for being ‘wanting’ or for being inadequate to satisfy which ideal standards? Brocka uses stark realism and emotionally intense scenes to confront viewers with uncomfortable truths about class divisions, moral double standards, and collective cruelty. This allows the audience to look at themselves in the film and ask which characters best reflect themselves. This is when Brocka’s cinema takes the shape of the society he reflects through his films. The film’s climax—marked by chaos and mob violence—underscores how easily a community can turn against its most vulnerable members.”

Extracts of the
« petit livre Carlotta Films » #23,
Weighed But Found Wanting. A cinema in the shape of society written by Nick Deocampo (filmmaker, producer, historian, writer and professor at the University of the Philippines)