

Les femmes de la Brukman, Robert Koehler, Variety, janvier 2008

A Les Productions ISCA presentation in association with Radio-Canada Television & RDI. Produced by Carole Poliquin, Isaac Isitan. Directed, written by Isaac Isitan.

With: Matilde, Liliana, Elisa, Juan Carlos, Nidia, Juan Caro.

By ROBERT KOEHLER

Turkish Canadian docmaker Isaac Isitan's "The Women of Brukman," about the takeover of a Buenos Aires clothing factory by workers, stands as the most explicitly anticapitalist film at Sundance 2008. Pic, though, actually revisits the same issues and politics expressed in Naomi Klein's 2004 "The Take," which also celebrated the Argentine trend in self-organized collective workplaces when owners abandoned businesses in the wake of the country's 2001 economic meltdown. Decently made though unremarkable pic will create few ripples on the fest scene, and won't sell much beyond Canada and a few South American markets.

The shocking 2001 downturn is best pictured here in stark images of the suddenly empty exec offices of the Brukman clothing company, leaving factory staff with no word or guidance on the company's future. Isitan's active camera follows the Brukman workers (not all of them women) as they battle in the streets and courtroom to attain legal ownership of the factory shop. Some former housewives are seen turning into Marxist activists, while others are less rabid but no less committed. The invisible bad guys -- the bosses -- remain unseen and unheard.

Camera (Technicolor, HD video), Tolga Kutluay, Isitan; editors, Fernando Lopez-Escriva, Diego Briceno-Orduz; music, Roberto C. Lopez. Reviewed at Sundance Film Festival (World Cinema -- competing), Jan. 24, 2008. Spanish dialogue. Running time: 88 MIN.