

CRITIC'S PICK

Los Reyes' Review: Dreamy Dogs Upstage Chatty Skaters

In this beautiful film, two canines while away the time as life goes on around them.

By **Bilge Ebiri**

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Los Reyes · NYT Critic's Pick · Directed by Iván Osnovikoff, Bettina Perut · Documentary · 1h 18m

In Santiago's oldest skate park, the kids come and go but the dogs stay the same. According to its directors, Iván Osnovikoff and Bettina Perut, "Los Reyes" got its start as a look at the inner lives of the youths that congregate around this aging sprawl of half-pipes, pools and ramps. But the filmmakers eventually realized that two stray dogs who lived in the park, Football and Chola, were their real stars.

The resulting film, which was shot over two years but breezes through its 78-minute running time, juxtaposes snatches of the kids' conversations with a visual focus on the dogs themselves. The canines don't do much — this isn't an attempt to anthropomorphize them — but they are mesmerizing to look at, as they lie about and chew on soccer balls, bottles, branches and, at one point, a brick. They also love to play a game where they balance a tennis ball on the edge of a ramp and then let it roll down. Exciting!

Los Reyes | Official Trailer



These dogs have enormously expressive eyes, but whether it's sorrow or curiosity or befuddlement we're seeing in them, we'll never know. Maybe that's the point. It would be tough to find greater meaning here beyond what we directly experience. The kids' ambling chatter, the dogs' routine of rest and play, lull us into a contemplative state, which allows us to better appreciate the mystery of existence. The directors avoid symbolism or didacticism, and instead immerse us in a sense of life lived at the languid pace of an afternoon daydream.

Los Reyes

Not rated. In Spanish, with English subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 18 minutes.

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Genre Documentary

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