



HIVOS TIGER AWARDS COMPETITION

INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM

2016


OSCURO ANIMAL

A FILM BY FELIPE GUERRERO

SYNOPSIS

Oscuro animal tells the story of three women forced to flee their homes in a war-torn region of Colombia. Each woman's journey, marked by terror, takes her on a trek from the depths of the jungle to the outskirts of Bogotá, where each must gather the strength needed to start a new life.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I wish to make a film that focuses on those who have suffered the violent impact of war and who must yank up their roots and find a new place in the world. I propose the narrative vehicle of three separate overlapping stories, all on the meaning of being forced to leave the place of belonging. Stories of women fleeing alone, each confronting adversity until finally reaching safety.

The omnipresence of Nature, with all of its visual and auditory power, is the atmosphere from which these protagonists must escape. Metaphor of an OSCURO ANIMAL that relentlessly hounds them wherever they go.

It is this sense of terror, coiled and ready to strike, that is felt as a bone-deep reverberation that accompanies the characters throughout their flight.

In order to heighten this sense of being cornered, hemmed in by violence, I propose a film without dialog, of words held back, a sense of angst that cuts off any communication the characters might have among themselves or with the rest of the world. An audio device that is disturbing on its textual denial, as a declaration of a frontal cinematographic form.

INTERVIEW WITH FELIPE GUERRERO

By Paulo Pécora

Does the film deal directly and indirectly with the issue of violence in Colombia?

What interests me as a filmmaker is the idea of questioning the representation of violence. What the film addresses at a deep level, beyond the concrete events in it, is how to continue to deal with this issue, but from a different perspective. What I wish to ask myself in terms of aesthetic investigation is how to film and make felt on the screen the traumatic commotion that continues reverberating in the bodies of victims after the immediate impact of a violent event.

What made you opt for the absence of dialogue?

The absence of words takes us right back to the questioning of representation. As I developed the film, my wish was always to take away, detach, omit, recompose, deconstruct, reorder elements of the striking reality of Colombia. The search for the narrative vehicle focused on the representation of this specific sensation, the one that stays on in the victims after a violent event, and looked for a different way to narrate that emotion through sound and images. The omission of dialogue has to do with the need to show this resonance, the off-camera, as it were. Rather than the blow itself, the echo of it. The question was how to represent something as ungraspable as the consequences of violence for these people. Working without words was a way to address the emptiness that war generates. For me, silence, the impossibility of communication, provides an expressive charge even more powerful than the word.

So one might say that you give sound itself great narrative and expressive value...

All of my work attempts to take sound to the level of protagonist. I'm very interested in the not necessarily synchronous relationship between image and sound. I've always worked from the point at which that symbiotic relationship is broken. This allows me freedom and freshness when composing sound, something I really enjoy, and it provides me with an array of narrative and expressive tools. For me, the image is the space in which sound operates in time, just as in a musical score.

So then sound is a way of revealing something that is beyond image?

I think that behind the realistic façade of image there lies a more mysterious, ethereal space or zone. Sound opens a way that is unrelated to understanding, one that is more emotional and perceptive. This film presents us with a way of taking it in that is less obvious and direct, involving emotions, the unconscious, perceptions to a greater degree. Sound guides the telling of the story; it sustains the emotional charge that carries the actor through situations and environments. Obviously, the extended times of the long takes provides us with a broader way to take in the film.

Is paramilitary activity in Colombia one of the thematic cores of the film?

I wanted to disconnect the film from that theme in particular. In the creative process of appropriating Colombian reality, I've tried to put things on a more symbolic level, stripping the image of any news-like feel and eliminating any direct reference to a particular armed group. For Colombian viewers, the image of paramilitary activity carries a historical weight I wanted to get away from. Instead, I've tried to provide new visual codes, ones that make viewers observe with another kind of attention and interest. Also, I don't like the representation of paramilitary activity typically found on Colombian TV and in movies. I think this is a problem that we as artists interested in reflecting on armed conflict need to think about if we're going to avoid the trap of the gratuitously graphic, which is harmful and perverse. What interests me most is not the paramilitary itself, but rather what they, and not just they, create: that scorched earth, whose heavy, sickening air is breathed by the victims, who are all of us.

BIOFILMOGRAFIA

Felipe Guerrero (Colombia) has worked as an editor for more than a decade on films exhibited and awarded internationally.

As a producer and director he's made the documentaries *Paraíso* (2006) and *Corta* (2012), which have been selected and exhibited in a wide circuit of festivals.

Oscuro animal is his fiction feature debut.

His films have been programmed at FIDMarseille, IFFR, FICCI, BAFICI, New Directors/New Films, Jeonju, DOKLeipzig, Viennale, Festival des 3 Continents France, Full Frame Documentary Film Festival USA, among other festivals.

In 2012 he founded mutokino, a production and distribution company based in Colombia interested in auteur cinema with an emphasis on formal experimentation and disruptive narratives.

CORTA (2012)

Director Felipe Guerrero.

Produced by Felipe Guerrero (mutokino, Colombia) and Gema Juárez Allen (Gema Films, Argentina).

Supported by Proimágenes Colombia, Ibermedia, Hubert Bals Fund, FIDLab FIDMarseille, BAL BAFICI, Open Doors Locarno Film Festival.

Awards: Márgenes, *Mención Especial del Jurado*, *Alucine Honourable Mention*.

Festivals: IFFR, BAFICI, Cartagena, Jeonju, Leipzig entre otros.

PARAISO (2006)

Director Felipe Guerrero.

Produced by Felipe Guerrero (mutokino, Colombia).

Supported by Proimágenes Colombia.

Awards: FID Marseille, *Mention Spéciale Prix Premier*, Docúpolis, *Mejor Documental Experimental*.

Festivals: Viennale, Festival des 3 Continents, Festival dei Popoli, IFFR, FICCO, Rencontres Cinémas D'Amérique Latine de Toulouse, Festival Internacional Cine Valdivia, Rencontres Internationaux du Documentaire de Montréal, entre otros.



A high-angle, top-down shot of a person swimming in a large body of green water. The person is seen from behind, with their head and shoulders above the surface. The water is a deep, vibrant green with gentle ripples and reflections. The overall mood is serene and somewhat mysterious.

CAST AND CREW

Oscuro Animal

(107', 2016)

Colombia, Argentina, Holanda, Alemania, Grecia

Screening format: DCP

Aspect ratio: 1.1.85

Sound: 5.1

Proimágenes Colombia

INCAA

Hubert Bals Fund - Netherlands Film Fonds

World Cinema Fund

Film- und Medienstiftung NRW

Cast:

Rocío: **Marleyda Soto**

La Mona: **Jocelyn Meneses**

Nelsa: **Luisa Vides**

Rufina: **Verónica Carvajal**

Reyes: **Josué Quiñones**

Ernesto: **Pedro Suárez**

Lucero: **Lorena Vides**

Script and directing: **Felipe Guerrero**

Executive production: **Gema Juárez Allen**

Producers: **Felipe Guerrero, Gema Juárez Allen**

Co-producers: **Marleen Slot, Ingmar Trost, Vicky Miha**

Direction of photography: **Fernando Lockett**

Line producer: **Paola Andrea Pérez Nieto**

Production design: **Marcela Gómez**

1st AD: **Julián Laguna**

Talent coaching and casting: **Carlos Medina**

Costume design: **Ana María Acosta**

Sound: **César Salazar ADSC**

Editing: **Eliane D. Katz**

Sound design: **Roberta Ainstein**

Mix: **Jan Schermer**

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Mutokino

gema
FILMS

Viking Film

SUTOR KOLONKO

b
booproductions

Proimágenes Colombia
Fondo Cinematográfico

INCAA
INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE CINE
Y ARTES AUDIOVISUALES

NL FILM
F NDS

HUBERT BALS
FUND

World
Cinema
Fund
europe

Film und Medien
Stiftung NRW