

SLOT MACHINE PRESENT



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
CANNES PREMIERE
2023 OFFICIAL SELECTION

EUREKA

A FILM BY LISANDRO ALONSO

2H36 – FRANCE, ARGENTINA, GERMANY, PORTUGAL, MEXICO – 2023 – 1.85 – 5.1

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SYNOPSIS

Alaina is tired of being a police officer in the Pine Ridge Reservation, and decides to stop answering her radio. Her niece Sadie spends a long night waiting for her, to no avail. Hurt, she decides to begin her journey with the help of her grandfather: she will fly through time and space to South America, finally she will stop watching old black and white westerns that do not represent her in any way, and everything will feel different when she hears the dreams of other people, those who live in the forest. But there will be no definitive conclusions... Birds don't talk to humans, yet if only we could understand them, they would surely have a few truths to tell us.



DIRECTORS NOTE

Some time has passed since I made my last feature film. I've been busy with other things, some more important than others. More recently however, I have started thinking about the film I myself would like to make now, and about the people I would like to be surround by for a period of time— those who would join me on another cinematographic adventure, which will undoubtedly take us to undetermined places.

I have been reading a lot about different Native American Reservations within the United States, especially about one place in particular called PINE RIDGE, in South Dakota, where in 2017 I was able to spend a few months. In this Reservation, numbers are not on people's side. And there are only 23 police officers available to meet the needs of 50,000 native inhabitants. Nonetheless, people choose to remain in the Reservation and fight for their survival despite of the lack of interest, and even disdain, from other Americans, from other, younger, cultures.

I have also been interested in birds, in their flying and in their freedom. The ways in which they migrate from one place to the next, without worrying about borders, customs, or bank account issues. And despite it directly affecting birds more every day, climate change doesn't stop them from migrating or from continuing to reproduce. I see birds as bearers of some kind of wisdom unknown to humans, millenary and mysterious. Some birds can fly for up to 12 days without touching the ground. Twelve full days, not eating; sleeping and dreaming in images that are

full of enigmas. Fantastic images without any connections, where dreams last only for short periods at a time, where they dream only for a few minutes at a time.

I want to establish connections between the passage of time and the different cultures that have inhabited this land since the very beginning, before colonization. Some have lost connection with their direct descendants in trying to understand their way of being in the world, others share a direct link. I want to compare the races of Indigenous tribes in North America with those who live near the Amazon, escaping modernity with the hopes of keeping their ancestral traditions alive. We will travel to the rainforest so as to find people, and offer them work as actors. To work with them as equals would be a dream come true.

I want to get lost in the jungle with them and my crew. I want to be able to laugh and to work, and to feel observed by the birds and animals living within those trees, and traveling those rivers where they may see people who after a hard day's work, find a bit of gold – as they have been doing since the days when such gold-digging activities began – with no heavy machinery and no support, just the mere wish of getting rich fast.

Finally, the reason why I am very interested in making this film is because I realize that it's a film nobody has yet made. It wouldn't be superfluous to show – and get carried away by – the beauty and darkness of the America, the people who inhabit it, and the people who damage it.

Lisandro ALONSO



INTERVIEW WITH LISANDRO ALONSO

Would you say this your most complex film?

Yes, probably. It's hard to explain it or put it into words because it would be like trying to explain a painting. And I don't say that because I consider myself a painter but because it is extremely complex. But we can try...

Where did you get the idea for this film ?

In Jauja I decided to portray several different Indian characters. When I finished the film, I realized that I wanted to delve more into this imaginary world. I was instinctively drawn to Westerns, and to a novel by Cormac McCarthy, Blood Meridian, which describes the violence of Western expansion and frontier life, the massacres that took place, and the utter absence of laws to protect people. When you get down to it, society today is not all that different from what was going on in 1800, it's just expressed through different means. Tolerance for these cultures is not much greater now than it was then. We no longer use guns to exterminate them but we use more subtle mechanisms. The violence, corruption, ignorance and lawlessness today are similar to the Wild West period.

The film draws a contrast between the situation of Indians in the US and those in Latin America. What was your intention?

The film aims to compare the way Indians live in the forest, where they can still take refuge in their vast natural surroundings and hunt and fish, with the situation of Native Americans, who live on a patch of land allocated to them by the US government. They are cut off from their traditions and way of life, they do not enjoy the same rights as other US citizens,. I wanted to raise this question: If Native Americans could live like the natives in the jungle, would they prefer it? Would they be happier if they were less contaminated by the model of Western civilization?

Do you think that natives in South America have been more fortunate than those in North America?

That's one of the main issues that the film raises. Both groups have had bloody histories but in South America they have found refuge in places like the Amazon forests, where they can hide away from the rest of the world. Whereas in the north they lost their personality and some of them don't know who they are anymore. It is very hard to live without identity markers. And it's even harder to mix with cultures that came after yours and that continue to deny or ignore your existence. If I were a native, I would rather have been born near the Amazon than in the United States.



The period of time in which the film takes place seems to be intentionally ambiguous. Is this a way of reflecting on the circularity of time that these indigenous cultures believe in?

Yes, it will move in and out of time periods, which will be reflected in the photography, the wardrobe, the way people speak, and the lighting. The film starts in the past with the Western, but it's not a naturalistic past; it draws instead on the scenery of classic Westerns. Then it moves into the present, on the reservation, and finally it travels to a closer past, to the jungle of the 70s. I don't think this will pose a problem for the audience because spectators today are thoroughly used to jumping through time and space. When we search for information on the Internet we go from the present to another century without this troubling us in the slightest.

You often say that your stories grow out of places, that you are inspired by natural surroundings. What places inspired this film?

We shot the first part in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, a very arid place. Between 50,000 and 70,000 people live there yet there are only about twenty police officers, despite the serious problems with gun possession and drug use. I discovered this place in 2016, thanks to Viggo Mortensen, who had already been there several times. I took a few flights then rented a car and showed up there. I went back three more times..

All of your films take place in remote areas that are cut off from the world: Misiones in Los muertos, Ushuaia in Liverpool, the Pampa in Jauja... What interests you about these places?

The people there live with less and yet have more. They have been marginalized by society or have sought the isolation themselves. Some of them didn't have a choice but others made a conscious decision to live far from the kind of place I live in: a big cosmopolitan city. They have a different lifestyle, with different values. In both cases, I think it requires a great deal of courage to live that way. Why have they chosen to remove themselves from the world? Why would they want to live without traffic lights, cellphones, credit cards, without bosses and 8-hour workdays? In today's world, everything is so much alike that when I find

people who live differently it arouses my curiosity. Perhaps these people can teach me more about myself than my neighbor on the 7th floor. One of the biggest motivations for making this film is that I want to spend time with them. I get bored in Buenos Aires. I want to get out of the house and meet new people. Some filmmakers like to close themselves up in a set and make science fiction movies. I prefer to set out on an expedition and pretend I'm Matthew Henson.

All of your films can be seen as Westerns, but this one is a Western in a literal sense...

I tend to portray men who are tough and surly, who have identity problems and are uncommunicative. Men who seek revenge. That's the case in a lot of my films: La libertad, Liverpool, Jauja... This time I made a Western through and through, although it will probably end up looking less like a John Ford film than one by Glauber Rocha.

Do you consider Westerns to be the most essential genre in the history of cinema?

I grew up in the countryside, in contact with nature and horses. I did my studies in the city but my most vivid memories are elsewhere, playing around pigs and watching colts being born. My childhood memories are far more rural than urban. Later, when I started film school and they asked me to name my favorite movie, I chose Unforgiven. Deep down I have always felt that being a filmmaker means you make Westerns, a US genre par excellence. By making Westerns I can pretend I'm John Ford or Clint Eastwood. Natives were very important to me when I studied film. Today they've completely vanished from the screen. It is very rare to see them in movies. So, one of the things I'm exploring with this movie is how film culture gave us a particular image of the people who came from full blood natives and then overlooked them completely.

It is often said that you have an aversion to scripts and don't rely on them when you're filming. Would you say that that's true?

I'm not interested in the way stories are told on television or in certain narrative forms of cinema. I try to avoid telling a story with words. I prefer to use other vehicles. You learn more about the characters in my films by observing their surroundings than if they came out explaining every detail about themselves. I study situations and try to turn daily gestures into something uncommon, by the way I present them. I want the spectator to finish the movie in his own head, drawing on his own experiences and making his own connections. I make the spectator work, but it's the kind of work that, in most cases, doesn't require words.

In this new film, the storytelling aspect seems to be more present than usual...

That's true. Because the story is so strange that it requires some additional information. It's something that goes hand in hand: the more outrageous and complex the structure is, the more dialogues are needed. Otherwise the result would be too experimental and that's not the path I want to take.

What is the political dimension of the film ?

I think it will allow for a range of very different interpretations, depending on the spectator's background. A Native American will not experience the film in the same way as a white person, just as a European will not have the same experience as someone from the US or Argentina. The film concentrates more on the future than on the past. More than emphasizing a return to some original state, I want to raise the question of where we are heading. Where is progress taking us? What has the notion of progress done for Native Americans? Is it better to be poor in South America or to be slightly better off but completely isolated and with no future prospects? Is it better to live under a tree watching the light change throughout the day, or to be a cog in the wheel of Western civilization? What is clear is that this film calls into question our very notion of progress. That's why I use a genre with good guys and bad guys, whites and Indians. Because it takes us back to a time when there were no laws or authority figures. The boss was the one with the fastest shot. And that hasn't changed much: the people in charge today, the ones making the rules and furtively signing nebulous deals, are those who draw first.



LISANDRO ALONSO



BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1975 in Buenos Aires, Lisandro Alonso studied for three years at the Universidad del Cine. After co-directing his first short film *Dos En La Vereda* in 1995, he worked as an assistant director and sound designer until 2000. His first feature film, *La Libertad*, which focuses on the relationship between a lonely lumberjack and his environment, premiered at the Cannes Film festival, *Un Certain Regard*. After creating his own production company 4L, Alonso returned to Cannes in 2004 with *Los Muertos*, which premiered in the Directors Fortnight. Two years later, he completed his trilogy with *Fantasma*. In 2008, the director decided to lean toward a more fictional approach with *Liverpool*, following a young sailor looking for his mother in the lost villages of Tierra del Fuego. Five years later, *Jauja*, set in 19th century Denmark and Argentina and starring Viggo Mortensen, won the FIPRESCI award in the *Un Certain Regard* section at the Cannes Film Festival.

FILMOGRAPHY

2023 EUREKA

2015 JAUJA

Cannes Film Festival 2014 – Un Certain Regard – FIPRESCI Prize

2009 LIVERPOOL

Quinzaine des réalisateurs 2008

2006 FANTASMA

Quinzaine des réalisateurs 2006

2004 LOS MUERTOS

Quinzaine des réalisateurs 2004

2001 LA LIBERTAD

Cannes Film Festival 2001 – Un certain regard

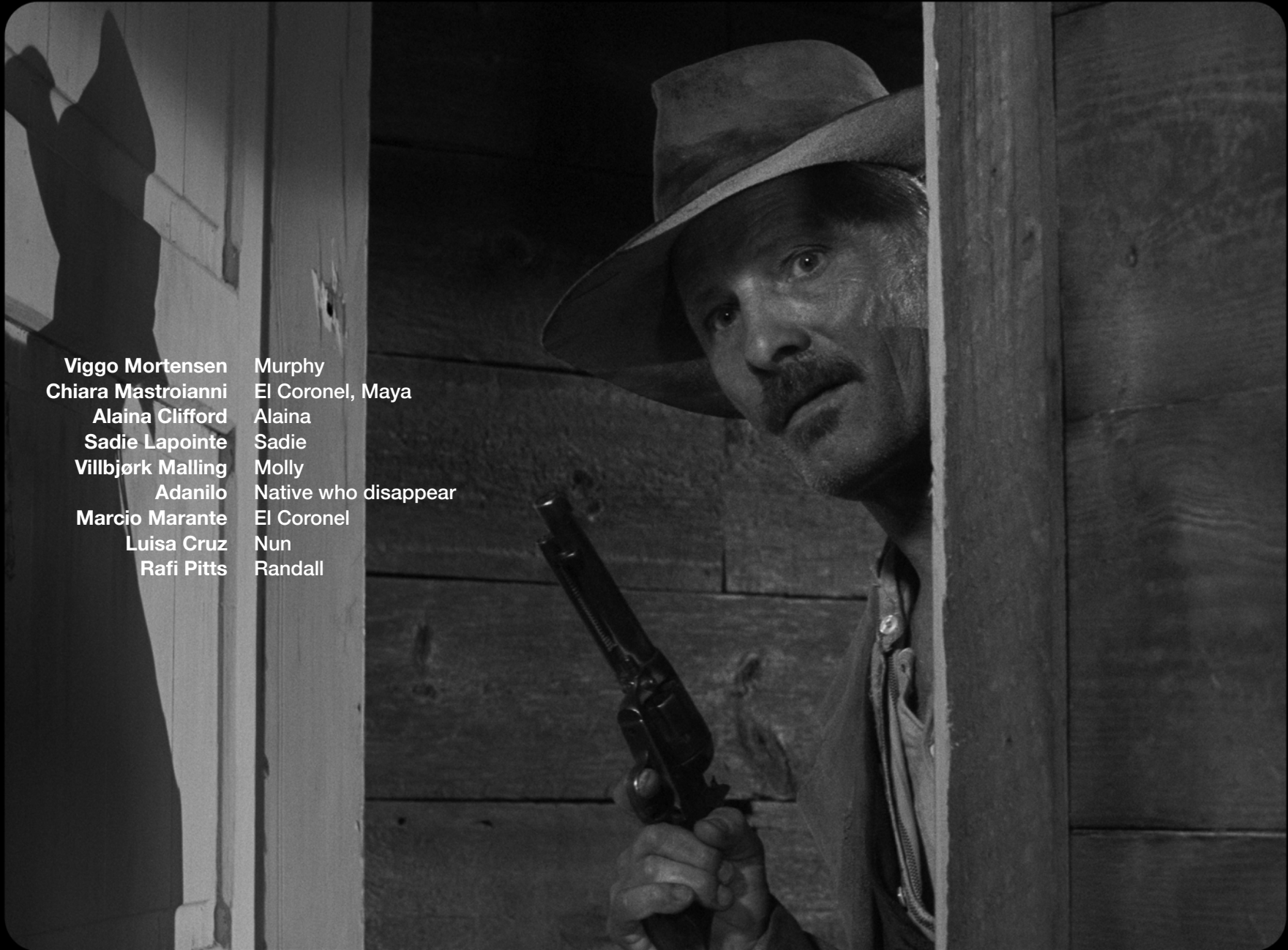
PRODUCTION

slot machine

SLOT MACHINE is a Paris based production company founded in 1993 by Marianne Slot and joined by Carine Leblanc in 2014. Since its creation Slot Machine has produced major artists such as Lars von Trier, Lucrecia Martel, Bent Hamer, Malgoska Szumowska, Paz Encina, Lisandro Alonso, Emma Dante, Marian Crisan, Juliette Garcias, Yeşim Ustaoglu, Sergei Loznitsa, Naomi Kawase and Benedikt Erlingsson.

EUREKA is the 4th film by Lisandro Alonso produced by Slot Machine

CAST



Viggo Mortensen	Murphy
Chiara Mastroianni	El Coronel, Maya
Alaina Clifford	Alaina
Sadie Lapointe	Sadie
Villbjørk Malling	Molly
Adanilo	Native who disappear
Marcio Marante	El Coronel
Luisa Cruz	Nun
Rafi Pitts	Randall

CREW



Directed by Lisandro Alonso

Screenplay Lisandro Alonso

Fabian Casas

Martin Camaño

Photography Timo Salminen

Mauro Herce Mira

Sound design Catriel Vildosola

Sound Santiago Fumagalli

Vincent Cosson

Production Designer Miguel-Angel Rebollo Fernandez-Paniagua

Marlene Rodríguez Serrano

Costume Designer Gabriela Fernandez

Natalia Seligson

Music Domingo Cura

Production Slot Machine

Producers Marianne Slot

Carine Leblanc

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