

LA CAMA

A film by **MÓNICA LAIRANA**

SYNOPSIS

Jorge (60) and Mabel (59) spend their last 24 hours together as a couple locked in their family home. They eat, fuck, cry and laugh. They dismantle their house, just as they do their relationship.





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The naked bodies of a woman and a man, collapsed, sitting on the floor with their heads hanging, their sexes exposed, grieving, devastated, inert, without energy. This is the first image that came to me when conceiving this film.

A couple who are separating, two bodies that try to love each other for the last time, and yet they fail. This tragic moment in which everything seems to come to a halt and float suspended in time.

Based on my own experience, *The Bed* is a raw and realistic exploration of the private and the intimate, the wonder of ordinary daily life. The intention is to portray that final instant of a couple breaking up.

Is it possible to capture the precise instant, the exact moment at which two bodies cease to be lovers and become estranged?

INTERVIEW WITH MÓNICA LAIRANA

By P. Andrés

How did the idea of “La cama” come to you?

My own separation was the point of departure for the story. The experience of a heartrending pain that I had never felt before. That got me thinking about how much more painful such a break-up would be for couples with many years of living together. As a filmmaker, the interest for narrating the break-up of a couple who had spent an entire life together kept growing in me. But I wanted to focus on the intimacy of the final hours of that lifetime together, at the point when there is no more war, no more struggle, no more reproach, and all that’s left is acceptance. And when, out of obligation, the other must begin to become a person estranged. I wanted to condense that whole situation into 24 hours and enclose the characters inside the house in which they’d spent their entire lives together. The idea was to stop the world outside for a moment, so the only world possible was that of those two people passing through this final crossing together. I wanted to portray the process of dissolution, of the dismantling of the rela-

tionship without scenes of arguing or fighting, but rather by focusing on the small gestures, the looks, the sensations and on the marvel of ordinary daily life. More than anything, I wanted to look closely at the bodies of the characters. Because their bodies are what are devastated by emotion.

What role does nudity play in your film?

The nude is considered an artistic genre in itself, and I’ve always been interested in dealing with it in my work. I’m especially interested in investigating the non-idealized type of nude that does away with the traditional concept of nude and seeks its essence beyond concepts of beauty. I’m interested in portraying real bodies, ones with the natural vestiges of the passing of time. To film the fullness of their folds, their wrinkles, their sexes naturally exposed to the camera by the strength and power of the true and the natural that they bring to the film. It is nude bodies also that take us to other, subtly suggested levels of reading, such as the fear of aging. Of itself

the image of a naked person also presupposes a situation of intimacy; it generates a proximity to privacy that I was interested in constructing with all of the formal tools available. A naked person is the image that I have of someone who cannot and does not wish to hide his or her essence. It is the image that I represent to myself of a person who dares to brazenly say, “This is me, how I was born, how I’m going to die.” It is, in truth, who we really are. And I wanted my characters to confront each other and themselves in this complex, painful situation, stripped of everything, raw.

The film has a very particular mise-en-scène. Why did you choose this way to represent the pain that your characters suffer?

In this work, my idea was to place the spectator in the situation of voyeur, that of a witness who observes all this intimacy from a certain distance. I wanted to deepen the sensation of spying on the intimacy of my characters in their most private activities. Eating, fuc-

king, taking a shower, getting dressed, crying, sleeping. The story grows as the spectator assumes the voyeur role and becomes involved, almost without realizing it, in this intimacy that is being observed. With this in mind, I decided on a register from optics and staging that are related in a way to observational mode cinema. The style of camera that captures intimate events without intervening in them, from a self-imposed distance, in order to achieve a kind of cinematographic narration with a strong sensation of truth. The sequence shot also contributes to building the sensation of spying on a situation or on a person, almost as if the camera weren’t present. Spying on another’s pain is a very uncomfortable and inappropriate situation, but it is a very powerful element of cinema, and the impact it has on the spectator at the human level is very profound.

Why did you choose such a singular rhythm for the film?

I feel that in today’s world, we live in a society in which

the speed of productivity, of technology, has made us believe that slowing the pace is a mistake. We don't allow ourselves the calm of contemplation, the serenity of silent observation, indispensable if we are going to feel empathy towards people and the world around us. I feel very far removed from this demand for speed. More profound reflection and the connection with another type of thought come when we abandon the need for quick answers, when we get over the impulse to abandon our pause. It is in that pause, in that moment of detention in which, in almost magical fashion, truly, inevitably, we find ourselves facing ourselves as human beings. Today, people rush and fill their agendas with obligations in order not to have to give pause for reflection on life and on themselves. It's even very common for couples to separate after vacation because during that time they were obliged to slow down, to contemplate life and each other, to share a lot of time together without the work that so often fills their hours and impedes reflection. To confront that pause, to rest the gaze, is something that interests me in life as well as in the filmmaking. I'm the kind of spectator who is in no rush. One who doesn't need all the answers, either, because life doesn't provide them.

How was the work with the actors? What importance do the silences, the looks have? The physical work with their bodies?

In more than 15 years of work as an actress, I've learned the importance that the human body has a language in itself for communicating ideas, emotions and concepts. The body is the primary, essential instrument for any narration. For this reason, I was interested in my story revolving mainly around the bodies of the characters because it is their bodies that are pierced by feelings of confusion and deep sadness. Although this is a film about desperation, loneliness, the end of love, what drives and advances the plot are those old, wrinkled bodies, their nearness, their distance and the vibration that continues between them. Working with the actors was magnificent. We were all very convinced about what we were doing. Beforehand, we'd had purely physical training in order to generate the "every-dayness," the naturalness, that we needed. It had to appear that those bodies had known each other for an entire lifetime. And each had to feel comfortable with the other's body. At the same time, we rehearsed some scenes in order to begin to generate the relationship between them, which also had to be constructed

through look and silences. I wasn't interested in building a narrative based on the word and on speech, but quite to the contrary, to give more importance to the minute observation of the bodies in each situation they had to confront. It was intense work that we really enjoyed. Sandra Sandrini and Alejo Mango are two magnificent actors, with tremendous dedication to the work and great humor.

How has your experience as an actress helped in terms of directing your actors and considering the tone of interpretation?

I think the most important thing was the relationship that could be built between them through frank and sincere communication. The transparency of my intentions for the film in each of the conversations and in the previous rehearsal work was fundamental to the final outcome. So with regards to this, as an actress, the experience of having sometimes felt distant from a director's intent (in the sense that information about mise-en-scène that is communicated to the actors is in most cases scarce) results in a defense mechanism, especially when it comes to scenes involving nudity or certain exposure. I'm convinced that actors are allies and that it is very important for the

director-actor relationship to be very up front in terms of what the director wishes to capture and require from the actors. How we're going to use their bodies and their emotions. I am very much the enemy of manipulation of actors on the set, as if they were the only part of the team incapable of comprehending what must be done in order to best contribute to making a better film. I also enjoy working with actors whose egos don't upstage the work. I mean actors who understand that filmmaking is the sum total of many elements, no one of them being above the other, but rather each taking its place and adding to the whole. Understanding the language of actors is without a doubt something that makes the work easier. To understand what they need to comprehend or do with their bodies before shooting the scene is something very good, fundamental. Sometimes, even though time is short, it's necessary to know how to wait until the actor says he or she is ready. Then we can be sure that he or she will give the utmost, which results in a better take.

MÓNICA LAIRANA

Mónica Lairana (1973) is a filmmaker and actress. She graduated from the Buenos Aires School of Theater (ETBA, 1989-1992), founded by the renowned theater director Raúl Serrano. *Rosa*, her debut film as screenwriter and cinema director, competed for the Palme d'Or at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival in 2010 and received various awards at international festivals. Her second short film *María* (2013), premiered in Rotterdam, won Best Short at the Latin American Festival in Vancouver (Canada); Best Latin American Film at the 54th Zinebi (Spain), the George Melies Award for Best Short at the Conosur, sponsored by the French Embassy, and the Silver Cóndor Award for Best Short of the Year, sponsored by the Argentine Film Critics' Association (ACCA). In 2014, at the request of the Argentine National Cinema Museum, Lairana released *Emilia* (found footage) as a tribute to the former Argentine Newsreel Sucesos Argentinos. The film was screened at a special event at the Buenos Aires International Film Festival (Bafici) and shown as well at the Vienna Film Festival. As an actress, Lairana has worked in a variety of Argentine feature films, and she has received both film and stage awards for her performances.

FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTOR:

2018 *THE BED* (Feature film, 4k, Argentina, Germany, Brazil, Netherlands, 94')

2014 *EMILIA* (Short film, Found Footage, HD, Argentina, 4')

2013 *MARÍA* (Short film, HD, Argentina, 12')

2010 *ROSA* (Short film, 35mm, Argentina, 10')

OUTSTANDING FILMOGRAPHY AS AN ACTRESS:

2017 *EL APRENDIZ* by Tomás de Leone

2015 *EL PATRÓN Radiografía de un crimen* by Sebastian Schindel

2013 *MUJER LOBO* by Tamae Garateguy

2004 *EL CIELITO* by María Victoria Menis

1996 *EVITA* by Alan Parker



CAST

ALEJO MANGO

Filmography

2009 *El Perseguidor* by Víctor Cruz

2008 *Lluvia* by Paula Hernández

2006 *Las manos* by Alejandro Doria

2006 *Solos* by Toti Glusman

2004 *La niña santa* by Lucrecia Martel

SANDRA SANDRINI

Filmography

2012 *Paisajes devorados* by Eliseo Subiela

2006 *Nuovomondo* by Emanuele Crialese

2000 *Las aventuras de Dios* by Eliseo Subiela

1997 *Pequeños Milagros* by Eliseo Subiela

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Country of production: **Argentina**

Year: **2018**

Genre: **Feature film, fiction**

Language: **Spanish**

Format and Final Format: **4k / DCP**

Aspect ratio: **16:9**

Sound: **5.1**

Running time: **94'**

CREW

Written and directed by **Mónica Lairana**

Executive producers: **Adriana Yurcovich, Ana Alice de Morais**

Producers: **Mónica Lairana, Adriana Yurcovich, Paulo Pécora, Gema Juárez Allen**

Co-producers: **Ingmar Trost, Ana Alice de Morais, Frans Van Gestel, Arnold Heslenfeld, Laurette Schillings**

Production companies: **Rioabajo, Gema Films, Sutor Kolonko, 3 Moinhos, Topkapi Films**

First Assistant Director: **Dieguillo Fernández**

Cinematography: **Flavio Dragoset**

Art Directors: **Maru Tomé, Renata Gelosi**

Editor: **Eduardo Serrano**

Sound Director: **German Chiodi**

Sound Post Production: **Manuel De Andrés, Juan Sebastián Pappalardo**

Unit Production Manager: **Leandro Borrell**

Casting: **Gabriela Fantl**

Wardrobe: **Laura Donari**

Hairdresser: **Elizabeth Gora**

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