The Directors Round Table at Cine-Lit

Film Directors: Juan Carlos Valdivia, Celina Murga, Mariana Chenillo, Carlos Marqués-Marcet, Javier Corcuera and Gabriela Martínez Escobar

Moderator: Jauma Martí-Olivella, the University of New Hampshire

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Abstract

Since its inception in 1991, the Cine-Lit film conference, sponsored by multiple Oregon universities, in conjunction with the Portland International Film Festival, has climaxed with the Directors Round Table of invitees, all *auteurs,* from Spain and Latin America after several days of screenings of films from these geographical areas and the presentation of academic papers. At Cine-Lit 8 (2015), we were fortunate to attend one of the best Directors Round Tables ever. Below the reader will find a translation of that conversation with six

directors about problems of globalization, film financing in their countries and the local as well as the international distribution of their films.[2]

Keywords: *Auteurs;* Argentine Cinema; Bolivian Cinema; Catalan Cinema; Mariana Chenillo; Directors; Feature film; Latin American Cinema; Cine-Lit; Javier Corcuera; Documentary; Film Festivals; Independent Filmmaking; Carlos Marqués-Marcet; Jaume Martí-Olivella; Gabriela Martínez Escobar; Mexican Cinema; Celina Murga; Peruvian Cinema; Piracy; Portland International Film Festival; Spanish Cinema; Television; Juan Carlos Valdivia

Jaume Martí-Olivella: It's very emotional for me to be here once again. Believe it or not, it's been 25 years since Cine-Lit began. We're celebrating our Silver Anniversary and I would like us all simply to applaud our celebrating 25 years. (Applause).

Once again I have the pleasure of moderating this panel of film directors and stimulating a conversation with them. We are profoundly grateful to them for accepting our invitation to come to enrich Cine-Lit with their presence and their films.

Mariana Chenillo (1977—) hails from Mexico and has garnered many honors, but one of those honors is being the first woman to win an Ariel Prize in Mexico for her film *Cinco días sin Nora* (Nora's Will 2008). She also participated in that extraordinary, collective film, a homage to the Mexican Revolution titled *Revolución* (Revolution 2010) by contributing one of the short subjects that made up that film. Here she has presented her latest film, *Paraíso* (Paradise 2013), which I recommend. It's a joy of a film.

Javier Corcuera (1967—) comes to us from Peru and I say "he comes to us" because he almost didn't arrive. So, we're especially pleased to have Javier with us. Javier has had a very long and very prestigious career. I would like

to mention that his documentary *La espalda del mundo* (The Back of the World, 2000) dealt with the problem of human rights violations, a topic that has continued in many of his feature films, say for example *La guerrilla de la memoria (The Guerrilla of Memory* 2002), a portrait of the winter Iraqui conflict in Bagdad, another very beautiful film, *Invisibles* (2007) was made with four other directors). Perhaps an even more beautiful film is the one we've seen during this conference, *Sigo siendo* (Kachkaniraqmi, I am Still Here 2013).

Carlos Marqués-Marcet (1983—) is someone who garnered an honor related to his youth. He won the Goya Award[3] for Best New Director for a film that we've seen here during Cine-Lit, *10.000 kilómetros (10,000 Kilometers* 2014). Carlos is a member of a new generation of Spanish filmmakers who has traveled abroad, who offers a modern look at reality and therefore, I think it's terrific he's here to bring his vision to our round table discussion.

We have with us **Gabriela Martínez Escobar** whose extraordinary and moving documentary, *Tengan puestos los ojos en Guatemala (Keep Your Eyes on Guatemala* 2013), we've just seen in this hall. Gabriela Martínez is a professor at the University of Oregon—Eugene), she's Peruvian and has a long list of documentaries that deal directly with historical memory. Somehow her research makes us reflect because she makes a game of uncovering what must be uncovered.

Celina Murga (1973—) has arrived from Argentina. Celina was fortunate enough to make a film, produced by Martin Scorsese, that mediates between two worlds. Her film was made thanks to a Rolex Scholarship, and her film is the one we've seen at the Portland International Film Festival: *La tercera orilla (The Third Side of the River* 2014). Before that, Celina also produced and directed a series of films, among them [the short subjects] *Interior-noche (Interior-Night*

1999) and *Una tarde feliz (A Happy Afternoon* 2002). Her first feature film was titled *Ana y los otros (Ana and the Others* 2003), which won many prizes.

Finally, **Juan Carlos Valdivia** (1966—), who comes to us from La Paz, Bolivia, has had a distinguished career. His first film was *Jonás y la ballena rosada* (Jonah and the Pink Whale 1995), an important coproduction; *American Visa* (2005) followed, which also had a very important run on the festival circuit, and then came his film *Zona sur* (Southern District 2009) that received a long list of prizes. [At the Portland Film Festival] you probably all have seen his film, with the difficult to pronounce title, *Yvy Maraey* (Land Without Evil 2013), which is a beautiful journey back to our origins that personally gave me goosebumps.

Without further ado, I yield the floor to our directors. I had an initial question in thinking about general topics given the different areas that you're from; how do you characterize your documentaries in regards to traditional ethnographic narrative and to the modern approaches to documentary and performative documentary? I think there's a degree of proximity to and distance from traditional attitudes and the approaches taken by the documentarians present here.

I would like you too to talk about the dialogue—or the lack thereof—between Spanish and Latin American cinemas, and also in regards to a dialogue with U.S. filmmaking.

Juan Carlos Valdivia, Bolivia: I think that one of the more interesting tendencies in contemporary filmmaking is this feature film-documentary hybrid. Indeed, the films I've liked most over the last few years walk that fine line between fiction and documentary. Documentaries have improved considerably. I think we have left behind the classic documentary and begun a long list of creative documentaries—of course, inspired by fiction—and fiction has come closer to observing reality, which we've seen in minimalist, intimate cinema.

Somehow, since TV series are filling the space formerly occupied by the movies, television talks about human relationships, about the things that are important to us in our daily life, sexuality, corruption; TV is addressing topics that the movies have stopped bringing up. Cinema has become a very flashy spectacle and some other films are difficult to see because perhaps they are too arty.

So, in that sense, after *Zona sur* (Southern District), [I asked myself], "Hmmm, what's going on in my head? I have a very successful, very commercial film with movie stars, with movie posters plastered on the sides of city buses and all that." And I ended up feeling, "It's a very perverse system, where, no matter what, you end up in debt and with a mountain of problems despite millions of people seeing your film."

In my case, I took a cargo ship to Europe and didn't see a single movie for two years because somehow I realized that I had become a copycat and thought, "Maybe that film could have been made by someone else." So, I went on a very existential trip to see if I could reinvent cinema for myself. And a very personal film turns out to be the mise en-scène featuring those in my immediate family. I created a Frankenstein family that turned into a film where I put my aunt and my Mom and everybody in the same house, never imagining it would be as successful as it was. It was all filmed using circular shots with a documentary element to observe the life of this family.

The film you saw yesterday *[Yvy Maraey]* is, well, a performative documentary. I put myself in front of the camera and one way or another I interpreted the whole narrative and carried the burden of it.[4]

I think Latin American cinema is going through a very good spell because we have a very wide range of ideas, of voices and of the kinds of film that we're seeing.

As I grow older, I no longer have the patience for things I dislike. I think now I'm going to spend my time on weirder and weirder films, which are

the kinds of films I like to see. I hate popcorn movies and the idea of being entertained; I'm becoming more and more radical about it. I like provocative films. I think art is the only thing that is going to save us in this world. I like art. I like movies. I like films that make me think, that challenge me and those that break boundaries—and there's just not enough time!

Celina Murga, Argentina: I would like to take this opportunity to speak to this audience about Argentine cinema because perhaps not everybody is familiar with it and it's important we explore its current dynamics together. My first film was *Ana y los otros* (Ana and the Others 2004); the second was *Una semana solos* (A Week Alone 2007). The first two are features. My third film was the documentary *Escuela normal* (Normal School 2012) and my fourth film is *La tercera orilla* (The Third Side of the River 2014), which you've been able to screen the last few days here in Portland. In my films, there's always been some basis in fiction, but with many documentary elements, especially.

In speaking a bit more about Argentina, I'll tell you that since the 1990s there have been many changes related to filmmaking and related to a new generation that appeared in those times. There was a series of events during those years that led to a whole new wave of directors, of technical crews and of actors creating a different cinema. Perhaps it was based more on certain narrative ideas and a more personal esthetic, with a certain idea of searching for a more personal way to tell stories that don't necessarily deal with the great themes, but rather with more human elements, elements closer to people, closer to the personal lives of the people making the films. Those events were the founding of a private film school followed by the establishment of others,[5] the founding of a very important film magazine called *El Amante [Cine]*[6] that generated [interest and] a place to gather most of the movie-lovers of those times, the creation of the BAFICI [Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente, The Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema,

2000—], which is a festival that has grown and grown and really become a showcase for Argentine and Latin American films.

In some way Argentina was the spearhead, perhaps together with Mexico and Brazil. Today I am grateful to see too that after that seminal decade, alternative Latin American films have emerged that have been able to keep forging a trail forward. Later in this process, as in every historic process, it can be read now in hindsight, but at that time it was just a series of events.

In Argentina, we too have a very, very good Cinema Law that was upgraded at one point, shall we say. We have state support to make films, which is very positive because, in fact, there is very little private film investment.[7] Television is also required to put aside part of its earnings for the fund to promote cinema and that's very positive. I don't think that's happened in all Latin American countries.

Historically, Argentina, as you probably know, has severe inflation. It stands at almost 40% annually. So, these funds never are enough because everything keeps going up in price and the funds stay the same. So, historically we've always found bridges usually and mostly with Europe, a lot with Spain, with Germany, with France especially, with Italy too, but in the last five years what has begun to happen is very positive and I think it's going to benefit all of us: these bridges are starting to be built within Latin America too. Indeed, we ourselves as Argentines have stopped looking towards Europe so much and have stopped worrying about—well, we still worry a little, but, well, we've made progress—pleasing those who are watching us from the other side of the ocean. Maybe it's something unconscious, but when one needs that money at some point it sparks a certain idea: "Well, we like this, we don't like that, this works well, this doesn't." I believe that these bonds, these bridges that are being built more between Latin American countries are going to end up being beneficial according to what each cinema each author, each director can contribute, can develop on an individual basis, without our trying to

please those who are looking at us. And the truth is increasingly these bridges are being built in the search for financing, especially to do coproduction.

There's a major issue that I think all of us are going to share regarding what today's filmmaking problem is, which has to do with distribution. We know the number of screens for seeing our films is basically shrinking considerably.

I have the very good fortune to be part of a group of directors in Argentina. We're around seventy young directors, and some not so young directors, a very active generation. My generation began to make films at the end of the 1990s[8] and now we are actively seeking alternative means of showing our films.

We lived through a time when we blamed everybody else: the State, Hollywood, the multiplexes,[9] everbody. After this phase, we said to ourselves, "Well, we have to start thinking about the problem in a different way." I think that in this sense I invite you all, and above all perhaps my Latin American Round Table friends to begin to build bridges, to look for those bridges, to seek a way to create directors' collectives and producers' collectives. We can present a more united front, not be so isolated, begin to look for give and take, look for these connections, these distribution networks so that our films really can continue to find an audience that I am sure exists, but sometimes is so hard to reach.

Mariana Chenillo, Mexico: It's very moving for me to come here to participate in something that's very different for me. In general, the film festival experience is different and that dialogue occurs on a different level because it's almost always centered only on a specific film in a q and a session. It's not so much an invitation to meditate as a group on our country's film situation.

Now that I've heard Juan Carlos Valdivia and Celina [Murga], Jaume's two questions made me ponder on whether there's enough mutual understanding between Latin America and Spain, which has been our principal source of coproduction, now that the crises and world economic movements have made

other channels possible.

Mexico too, for the last eight years or so the possibility has existed for businesses to invest their money in films. The difference is that the number of films produced in 2006 or 2005 is now fifteen times greater. On average, ten films used to be produced yearly and now some 150 are produced, which is a huge difference in every respect.

Yes, distribution still is a bottleneck where not all films get to the silver screen and not all films that do last very long on the marquee. It's no news to anybody that the screens are occupied by big-budget films that already have made arrangements with the cinemas. It's more than just a complaint. I think that in every economy, where certain products are not protected, certain cultural artifacts or products of any kind, well, they must be protected much more creatively and I feel that, as directors, we have many alliances.

My main reflection (don't think that I've got the answer; the question made me think of it) is that precisely now (and also concerning the question about Hollywood's influence on our own cinema), now that we have so much access to technology, social networks, fast connections and how quickly anybody can find information, to discover who did what and when, can read something about a film and get all the information… and it's very easy to see films not only at the cinema, but on many other devices: on a phone, on a computer, on a tablet. It's like on the one hand, we are much more exposed as an audience and as filmmakers to everyone else's work in every sense, in the sense of the work itself and of information about it. It's like we know everything about everybody because information is right at hand [on the Internet].

I think, and this is something very encouraging, that what I see among my friends and colleagues in Mexico and Latin America and from other parts of the world is that, instead of films looking more alike, interesting personal films are being made. It's valid now and I sense it in younger filmmakers because I teach classes off and on at the film school where I studied,[10] because I am in contact

there; I read screenplays.

In Mexico and in Latin America we have very closed bridges, we know each other, we share screenplays and I have the sensation as an insider and also as a viewer that a very personal cinema is being produced. We can turn to our lives. Yes, it's true that there are certain themes and the portrayal of certain things about our society that are considered important in Europe, but that is changing in the festival circuits notably and often certain distributors are looking for certain aspects of Latin America, but that's also something we're breaking down together because now there are a lot of us, because now it's a lot more possible to make any story [we want].

Globalization works well in many places, but it doesn't have to be a cliché, the lowest common denominator of what Latin American society is. There is no average Latin American society because our societies are very diverse, but what I see in my colleagues and in their films what I like the most about some of them I've seen—and there aren't many—is that everybody is turning to their own reality, towards their family or their childhood or their specific context and this is becoming possible. And I find this very encouraging; it's a new way forward.

What is definitely needed now is to reach those audiences and that the audiences have access to films, art and culture, not just those made for mass entertainment targeting thousands if not millions of people on the planet, but I think there's a kind of democratization in the distribution of films. It's happening one way or another and we don't know where it's going. I think that, on the one hand, it could seem dangerous because it could appear that we all have to make the same thing, but when you look at the result I think it's going in a different direction and we'll see what that is in a couple of years.

Carlos Marqués-Marcet, Catalunya: Spain! Well, yes. No, it's not the same case as Latin America. We were like the big brother in financing everybody and

now we're the little brother! I say that a bit in jest. You go to the Rotterdam Film Festival and it's Hubert Bals in Brazil and Hubert Bals in Spain: the Hubert Bals funds are given to [complete films in] developing countries.

But we're not going to complain, we haven't come here to complain because later when you see the numbers in Spain too, well, people say "this has been Spanish cinema's best year," box office-wise—that strange thing and that it's so difficult to talk about audiences—about a curious phenomenon like the film *Ocho apellidos vascos* (Eight Basque Surnames, Emilio Martínez-Lázaro 2014) and nobody can explain its popularity. Why this film?

To give you a very brief overview, in Spain, the situation is a little like Argentina's in 2001,[11] in the sense that it's an obvious time of crisis, but that somehow forces you to beat the bushes [i.e. hunt for pots of money]. What's happening is that there is a increasingly clear division of what it is, on the one hand, a corporate development spurred on basically by two corporate groups, which are Atresmedia (A3Media)[12] and Telecinco,[13] because they have the obligation to invest five percent. They have changed their attitude somewhat and they have begun to work like the studios in the United States: they develop and they have their ways of doing things—and it works—and later they put their whole advertising blitz behind [a film]. The fact that you go to see the World Cup final game and you see a trailer for *El niño* (The Kid, Daniel Monzón 2014) during the half time break, well, you say, man, at least you're seeing that they're taking a chance on the film, that these people believe that a commercial Spanish cinema can be made and that people will go see it. We're finding out it's true.

I'm not from that world either, nor is it what I'm most interested in personally, but I believe that it is indeed necessary and very important to have a technical team, people, a way of thinking about ourselves and connecting with certain films that relate to the audience. I believe it's important. Apart from that, obviously, well, there's what's been called "Alternative Spanish

Cinema" or "New Spanish Cinema," a new generation of up-and-coming directors, the result of beating the bushes and then there's also a sensation of hopelessness in the sense that, well, if we're never going to be able to make a living doing this, let's do the hell whatever we want to do.

Luckily, Televisión Española [Spanish TV] is still supporting projects with little money. Televisión Española is still a bastion of support, but I don't know for how much longer because of the way things are, but they're continuing to give support. Obviously, it's very complicated to get a film to the movie theaters. It's what we were talking about, but other venues are turning up and then there are many people who are jumping into the pool. You constantly see this. In other words, you can find festivals like the Seville Film Festival and you go there and people get together, they meet each other. There's a lot of synergy among the young, up-and-coming generation of filmmakers and it's a long list. That didn't happen in the past. Somehow by following this path of what Spanish cinema was in the past compared to what it is now is really broadening the diversity.

Spanish films don't always travel abroad as well as they should. Internationally, a boom is still needed—I hope it happens because more or less it's happening, but it's curious to see how a film like *Magical Girl* (Carlos Vermut, 2014) can win at the San Sebastián Film Festival, but later, internationally, sometimes it's hard with the French, well, [Catalan director Jaime] Rosales (1970—) is always there, but sometimes… Well, I believe everything will work out; I feel very fortunate really to be living right now and above all, I have the sensation that you have to do it yourself because nobody's coming to save you…

On the other hand, the Asociación de Cineastas (Association of Filmmakers) was also founded in Spain,[14] which is struggling because any minute the situation could become unsustainable. In other words, the first time you get together with your friends to make a film and you finish it with your sweat and blood, but, when you want to make another film, your friends will probably

say, "Well, I have to pay my son's bills for whatever." There's a limit to what you can do.

There's a way to fight, on the one hand, to create an audience, and many filmmakers work towards that (i.e. la Asociación de Cineastas, the Filmmakers Association). It's a bit of a complicated idea—we were talking about it the other day—that has to do with education. Sometimes I have a problem with that bit about "educating people to see a type of cinema." It sounds like "brainwash children to go see our films." To attempt it or not, to avoid parroting that discourse, but indeed try to create other venues and places that existed before in the 60s and 70s and can be reclaimed. And, on the other hand, [we need] to pressure government policies somehow as well—not too much because there'll always be money and there'll always be a little available, but the problem is not to allocate everything to automatic support [i.e. subsidies], for example, which is what is happening.

One example is Galicia. In Galicia, the *Novo cine galego* (The New Galician Cinema) is one of the most interesting things happening in Spain. It's not a new cinema but it's almost the first Galician cinema. Well, it has always existed, but it's especially interesting because it's something that's been made for four bits, but with those four bits well spent, not much more is needed. It's a question of supporting a certain risk and another way at looking at cinema, which is very important.

Then, what is indeed also true and what we are left to accept or think of another way, we have to go abroad whether we like it or not. To think a film like *Magical Girl* (Carlos Vermut 2014) will premiere on three hundred screens in France whereas in Spain it debuted on thirty says a lot. We debuted *10.000 kilómetros* (10,000 Kilometers) that way. The screening we're going to have here [Portland, Oregon] is much greater than the film's premiere in Spain. Of course, the debate we spoke of earlier arises—we were just talking about it a second ago: how not to lose your identity with internationalization. I believe

that, indeed, it's by starting with what's local.

Why was [Pedro] Almodóvar (1949—) successful? Not because he was very international, but because he was very specific to his times, to his era and who he is. Later, finding that balance sometimes is hard and seeking synergies with other countries is hard and, well, to keep working is hard.

Javier Corcuera, Peru: I am going to complain! Yes, because I've just made a film in my country where there is no Cinema Law and where two families own 140 movie theaters. I'm not in Peruvian cinema, where no screen quotas exist, where public television puts up not one cent for Peruvian cinema, so not complaining is a little… [illogical]. Maybe in the context of Peruvian society it's like the triumph of radical neoliberalism. At least in the case of cinema, I believe that it's indeed time to complain and loudly.

Yes, we do make films because, despite all this, it's probably Peruvian cinema's best moment. Films with soul, heart and life are being made. I don't even know how it's being done, but it is. The problem is these films aren't shown as they should be, especially films that have a high cinematographic value. There's a box-office boom of ultracommercial films, with formulas completely for internal consumption that can't go to film festivals anywhere in the world because they are like TV comedies shown in movie houses to make money. Therefore, it's a bit of a strange situation because very good movies are being made and they are the last thing that is being seen.

I work in documentary film and I'm with you there in that I think it's interesting how the boundaries between feature films and documentary are disappearing. It's irrelevant to me whether a film is a documentary or a feature, as long as it's a film. I believe cinema is emotion and if a viewer feels emotion watching a film, it doesn't matter if it was constructed with the tools of feature films or with those of documentary or something in between. I am very pleased that the barrier between them is disappearing.

I have always worked in documentary film somewhat by accident because I thought I was going to make feature films since I studied to make feature films, but I began making film documentaries on commission and gradually I fell in love with the genre.

There's a special feature of documentary, now that things are blended... It's also happening to some extent in feature films, but there's perhaps a very important difference between a documentary and a feature. Documentary filmmaking consists of making films without knowing how they are going to turn out. With feature films, like it or not, you write the screenplay ahead of time. It may change, but you already know who the main character is, who the hero is and whether he's going to be killed or not, but in documentary, a main character may disappear when you begin to shoot and the secondary character becomes the protagonist in the film and anything can happen and, moreover, that's what it's all about.

I work on feature screenplays for others, In other words, I doctor feature screenplays, but I make documentary films. Something very strange happens to me when I work on feature screenplays. When the screenplay is finished, I have no desire whatsoever to make the film because I already know what the story is.

In contrast, I love documentary because I write a screenplay—in addition, I work a lot on documentary screenplays—, but I don't have a clue what the film I'm going to make is and I'll only see it the day I finish the final cut of the film. This adventure of making a film without knowing how it's going to turn out, I believe, is what sucks you in to the point you find it very strange to make a film knowing how it's going to end. That's how you become more and more involved in documentary. That's where I found my niche and I doubt I'll ever make a film knowing how it's going to end.

I like documentary too because in the world of the film industry, given the industry's dictates and all—documentary has changed now—but, when I

began to make documentaries, it was the refuge of independent filmmaking. It happens in features too, but many people who like independent film, who don't like being controlled or anything, well, since nobody was going to go see a documentary and nobody was going to distribute it and nobody was going to buy it, you could do anything you wanted. So, that was fine.

Actually, I hope documentary continues to be marginalized in the film industry because the day that documentary makes headway in the industry—which is already happening—they'll destroy the independent filmmaking space that used to exist. I'm not very optimistic about documentary. I think a strait-jacket is being placed on documentary. I think the industry is imposing itself on documentary. There's one thing I think is tyranny: the tyranny of 52 minutes. Outrages happen like, for example, you make a documentary feature film and later Televisión Española (Spanish Television) tells you to turn in the 52-minute version as well. And so, they say to you, "But don't worry, we're going to show the director's cut," that lasts for hours or whatever."

Can you imagine them asking [Spanish director Pedro] Almodóvar, "Besides giving us your film, make us a 52-minute version?" But that's what they do with directors of documentary films and it's a very common rule in documentary filmmaking, in the film industry. It's as if they said to [Gabriel] García Márquez, "Well, we'll publish *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* but condensed to only a hundred pages."

Therefore, I'm worried because I believe what's happening to documentary filmmaking is dangerous. All the documentaries made by the film industry—I'm not talking about independent documentaries—[commercial] documentaries keep on being made and will continue to be made no matter what, but the ones that sell, the ones that move along, the ones we see on television, are formulaic documentaries. They all look the same; they use very similar documentary formulas and so, this is a danger. I miss the times when the documentary was absolutely marginalized.

So, on the theme of Latin American cinema and Spanish cinema, the Latin American films we don't see… In Peru—I split my time between Spain and Peru—there's a wonderful place called Polvos Azules (Lima; literal translation, Blue Powders)[15] where you can find every Latin American film, every Spanish film, every independently made film in the United States organized by author, by date, by genre. It's all pirated and perfectly organized! And people buy them and people see movies in Peru because the Polvos Azules [Mall] exists.

So, if the pirates can do it, they who really are the great promoters of culture in Peru, how can it be that our institutions, our government can't? I really don't understand it. The only distributors of my films in Peru are Polvos Azules! I'll personally hand over a copy of my film with a dedication to Polvos Azules: "To Polvos Azules for democratizing culture in Peru" because there's nobody else.

When I was a young film student twenty years ago, I would have loved for Polvos Azules to exist in Peru because I would have seen a hundred times more films than those I was able to see back then. So, if they can do it, why can't we do it? Yes, it can be done. Yes, it can.

It's incredible the work they put into it. They make their own "extras" [for the DVDs]: they download interviews broadcast on TV. They do wonderful things. Now, besides, they have a pact with Peruvian cinema. They never pirate a film until after it has had its run in the movie theaters. If you ask for a new film, they reply, "First, [see it] at the movies."

So, it really can be done. So, yes, I think it's absurd that in the year 2015 we're still complaining that Latin America cinema isn't being seen in Latin America, that Spanish cinema is not seen in Latin America, etc., etc. because yes, it is possible. Of course, it's possible.

I think a complete revolution is coming too. Everybody always says, "it's coming, it's coming" and it never comes, but I believe that it will come and we're really going to see our films on the Internet, on other devices.

Mass experiences have started, but haven't become generalized, but I think there's a bright future out there, but we also have to keep fighting for the right to the screens because films are shown there that are often conceived for the majority... Cinema is a collective experience of viewers seated in an auditorium watching the silver screen, in five point one stereo (audio 5.1)... And I believe we have to keep defending filmmaking; laws have to be passed so that filmmaking is possible. It can be done by enacting cinema laws. It's possible to do it with Cinema Laws.

I had a bit of a surrealistic experience with my latest film, with *Sigo siendo.* It's a film made with Peruvian public money because it won a contest. Lately, contests in Peru have assured films have been made. There are public competitions that award money to make films. This is the positive side of what's been happening the last few years. It's been done with Peruvian public money; it's been done with Ibermedia's public money and Iberamérica's public money. It's been done with money from Televisión Española (Spanish Television), with money from the local Andalusian government [in Spain] because of Peru-Spain coproduction. And the Peruvians, the people who have paid to make that film because it has been made with our taxes, has no right to see it, not on public television and not in movie theaters. There is no guarantee that the film will be shown in Peru. For us, it has been easier to find a distributor in France than in Peru.

Something unusual happened to me that I'd like to tell you about because it's a little like the world turned upside down. In Peru, one family owns 140 screens under the name Cineplanet;[16] they didn't even want to look at the film. Our film was selected to be screened at the San Sebastián International Film Festival [Basque Country, Spain]. It had just won at the Lima International Film, etc., etc. And the scheduler for those 140 screens, who hadn't seen it, not only said no, he said, "No, I don't want to see it. I don't show that kind of film. I don't want to see it."

There's yet another network of another 140 screens owned by one family called UVK[17] that did see it. We screened it in one of their movie theaters. The family went to see it. They told us it was marvelous—that coverage would come out in *NOW*,[18] beautiful, wonderful… Next day, they called us and said that didn't want to show it. So, there was no other place to premiere it because all these cinemas depend on the family.

I was very excited about their decision because it was going to give me the chance to provoke a scandal by giving a press conference… I had my whole plan figured out. I was going to find alternative distribution, rent a small theater anyway I could and give away free tickets publically to Polvos Azules with the press covering the event.

But then something very strange happened. The multinational Fox Corporation representative called me and said, "Javier, I want to see your film." He saw it and he said to me, "It's an excellent film. I am truly moved and, though I shouldn't set a precedent," he said, "I'm going to show it."

So, I told him, "But all the Peruvian movie theater owners have told me that won't accept my film."

And he said, "Leave it to me."

Then, he went to speak to them and told them, "I won't give you this [Hollywood] film or that film if you won't show *Sigo siendo [I'm Still Here]*."

So, it was like the world topsy-turvy. Our ally was U.S. imperialism! And to think speaking with this Fox rep not only made it possible for my film to be premiered, but also to spend two months on the marquee. It became a total phenomenon because a lot was written about the film and people went to see it. Anyway, it worked, which was wonderful. He told me he had premiered the film because he came from a family of musicians and he couldn't betray his ancestors, something like that. But it was a fluke. It was a fluke that cracked the mold a bit but we filmmakers shouldn't have to be beholden to flukes because then many films like the one I made *[Sigo siendo]* won't premiere,

because what happened to me isn't going to happen to them; it was something abnormal.

So, I think that yes, there's still a lot of things we need to complain about. At least in Peru, there's a huge gap in the law and I believe it's a problem about which many things can be done. If the pirates can do it, why can't the rest of us do it too?

Gabriela Martínez Escobar, Peru: I'm Peruvian and so, there are many things I could say that are similar to what Javier has said. I share a lot of Javier's ideas. For scholarly reasons I share them and I don't know if I should say this in public, but yes to piracy! I say this in spite of writing and researching these problems. In point of fact, I wrote an article that grapples with everything having to do with policy, with the state cultural policies of Brazil, Peru and Colombia.[19] So, it's very interesting for me to listen to this and be on both sides, as a filmmaker and as a researcher of these problems, but I do believe that the role of the informal economy plays a very important role in the distribution of local films in Peru and in other countries.

In Guatemala, a gentleman known as "El Buqui"[20] does the same thing. He's very famous. He suddenly turns up and distributes films all over Latin America. So, I think for many of you who perhaps study cinema, if you are interested in the political economy of cinema, it's truly fascinating to study this aspect of filmmaking and how a film is consumed and distributed.

My case is a bit different in comparison with my colleagues present here because I'm from a generation, possibly the same generation as Javier. When I began making films in Peru, there was indeed a rather important Cinema Law (1972) that, for better or worse, worked at that time thanks to [General Juan] Velasco *Alvarado, who benefitted and promulgated it.* It's thanks to this law that many filmmakers, in my generation at least, and those from an earlier generation like Francisco Lombardi (1947—), [Alberto] "Chicho" Durant

(1951—) and many others who are well known in Peru or are well-established filmmakers could make films. There was a quota system for our [local] films to be screened in our country's movie theaters.

Unfortunately, the law was struck down. It disappeared when [Alberto] Fujimori came to power in 1991. From that point on, there have been other attempts to establish a law: the CONACINE [Consejo Nacional de Cinematografía] is one of the government institutions that gives away funds, as Javier mentioned, to winning screenplays. You can present your screenplay and if you win… unfortunately, they only have money to award one or two screenplays, sometimes three, and sometimes they don't give you all the money or they give you partial payments and if later the money runs out, you're stuck. So, it's not a sure thing.

In my case, I began by making films in Peru and, as Javier and I think, as many people of my generation do, we were trained to make feature films, but I consciously made the decision to make documentaries. Documentary interested me; I liked it a lot, not only for the same reasons Javier has explained, but also because of making my first film titled *Iñaca* (1987).

The word is from the Quechua word [Ñakaj]—meaning the "throat-cutter," derived from a sixteenth century myth about the Conquest. *Iñaca* is a mix of fiction and documentary where I insert a fictional story into the documentary. So, real people are part of my documentary that concerns this myth about *Iñaca*. Interestingly, they speak of even having experienced encounters with this Andean character who steals your body fat, an Andean liposuction! He steals your body fat, but the character is the equivalent of the idea of Dracula in Western civilization.

In the West, blood is the life force; in the Andean world, it's body fat, which has to do with the high altitude. So, you find the whole Andean worldview in it. What I did was to interview farm workers, people in rural areas and after compiling almost a years-worth of those interviews and

researching this character in the Andean world and part of Cuzco's Andean worked because the character is known in the central sierra as *Pishtaco.* Later, I inserted a fictional story in the documentary. I played a lot with the 1980s, the war and the presence of the NGOs [Non-governmental organizations] and what that meant in the context of sucking body fat from the people because, in addition, it connotes the national economy's surplus-value. So, as far as the mixing of fiction and documentary, it's not a very new idea. There are people who have experimented with it, who have done it concerning the Andean world, who have worked on it.

Another filmmaker much older than Javier and I, Luis Figueroa (1929–2012), did this with his most well known film, *Kukuli* (1961), a collective film directed by three people and produced by around five people. He also inserted a fictional part about the Andean legend of the kidnapping bear,[21] which [the anthropologist Efraín] Morote Best (1925-1991), a contemporary of [José María] Arguedas (1911-1969), worked on and incorporated into a documentary part about the Cuzco sierra. So, it's been done a lot. I think it's fabulous we're now using these methods to blur the line between feature films and documentary and that we're using technical aspects from each genre.

My work is divided in half… speaking of work and my connection with other countries… Actually, I consider myself a hybrid because I've lived exactly half of my life in the United States. So, I can't deny that films made here have had a certain influence on me, but I still continue to be closely tied to how we [Latin Americans] work on an image, work on filmmaking, on orality, on everything cultural in the Andean world where I was brought up and spent my formative years. So, I use both. I don't believe that one excludes the other, on the contrary. I think the combination enriches us. At least, I feel it personally enriches me.

On the other hand, I am a documentarian, I am a filmmaker, but I'm an academic too. So, I also have the ability to be constantly checking in, to be looking at what I am doing and seeing how this can impact audiences or not and even speculate because I don't do film analysis, but I can speculate on how my colleagues will deconstruct it. So, I like this aspect too. Somehow I have fun when I am working on my screenplays or I'm developing ideas for a documentary.

I think documentary is a wonderful genre that even instructs people who make feature films. In countries like Cuba, for example, until a few years ago it was almost mandatory to make documentary films in film school. You had to make many documentary films before the ICAIC [Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos, The Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry] would give you money to make a feature film.

I think that's interesting because making a documentary helps you to observe human beings, it helps you understand people. When you interview people, you enter their world. It's a connection. I don't know. You enter another person's life, you get information that helps you quite a bit to create characters if later you decide to write a feature film. I think observing people, talking with people, making documentaries, studying reality helps you to construct better fictional elements. After all, as Bill Nichols (1942—), a film professor at San Francisco State [University], where I did my studies… concludes in one of his most recent books, "Feature films are another type of documentary." So, I think it's interesting for us to keep this in mind when we analyze both feature films and documentaries.

Jaume: Many thanks to you all!

Notes

1 My heartfelt thanks to my colleague and dear friend Keith John Richards for proofreading the English text. His suggestions were invaluable.

2 Nota bene: This Directors Round Table (2015) can be accessed at https://vimeo.com/333000581 and the Cine-Lit 5 Directors Round Table (2003) with Eliseo Subiela and Helena Taberna may be seen at http://vimeo.com/nancymembrez. No English subtitles on either.

3 The Goya Awards are Spain's annual Academy awards.

4 Valdivia is the screenwriter, director and protagonist of the film.

5 Starting in 1993, film was recognized as a university major in Argentina. (Belaunzarán 10).

6 *El Amante Cine (The Movie Lover)*: A monthly magazine headed by editor-in-chief Eduardo Antín ("Quintín"), Flavia de la Fuente and Gustavo Noriega 1991-2004. As of 2005, Noriega is editor-in-chief. As of 2008, the magazine only appears on-line and by subscription.

7 The law went into effect in 1995. "Ley del cine." https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/resolución-50-1995-259249/texto

8 CM is referring to the directors of the so-called New Argentine Cinema and not to an older organization, the DAC (Asociación de Directores Argentinos Cinematográficos, The Association of Argentine Film Directors).

9 In Argentina, the owners of megaplex cinemas usually favor the Hollywood "tanks" [i.e. blockbuster films], sure box-office hits, relegating locally made films, if they even run them, to off hours (morning sessions, for example).

10 MC is referring to the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (Center for Cinematographic Training), A.C., Calzada de Tlalpan 1670, Col. Country Club, Del. Coyoacán, C.P. 04220 Mexico, D.F.

11 CM-M is referring to the crash of Argentina's economy in December 2001.

12 Atresmedia, with headquarters in San Sebastián de los Reyes (Madrid). It changed its name in 2013.

13 Telecinco, with headquarters on Fuencarral Street (Madrid).

14 CM-M is referring to the Asociación or Asamblea de Directores Cinematográficos Españoles (Association or Assembly of Spanish Film Directors, ADIRCE).

15 Polvos Azules (Paseo de la República cuadra 4, Cercado de Lima) is a shopping mall of 2,400 small shops that sell falsely-branded merchandise, contraband electronic devices and pirated DVDs and compact disks. It's one of the most important, modern and popular shopping malls in Peru. Usually the authorities look the other way (Vigo). NB: "Polvos" might also have a more scandalous translation than simply "powders."

16 JC is referring to Cineplanet, a chain of multiplexes in Lima and in the provinces.

17 JC is referring to UVK Multicines. On its web page, it mentions that "UVK Multicines is a Peruvian business dedicated to provide the best film entertainment in its nine multiplexes."

18 The magazine *Now* at Behance.net. The *Sigo siendo* poster appears on this Peruvian web site.

19 Gabriela Martínez, "Cinema Law in Latin America: Brazil, Peru, and Colombia" (2008).

20 "One of the oldest businesses to offer advantages over others is the shop Clásicos El Buki known for its catalogue ranging from alternative cinema to commercial cinema. It began when pirated films began to be distributed over ten years ago. In the owner's conversation with his friends, they suggested he take advantage of demand for quality films. Thus, several factors came together: contacts to secure alternative foreign films, loans, donations and a search for original DVD titles. Today, his business even includes film subtitling, the pirate's recommendations and services on Facebook. His is one of the most recognized places within the world of piracy and national distribution" (Lucas Cajas 163-4). Also see El Buki's interview with *La Hora*.

21 According to the Andean legend, the kidnapping bear, sometimes called Jukumari, fell in love with a human female and carried her off to his cave. My thanks to Latin Americanist Keith John Richards for this reference.

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