

A CECILIA ATÁN - VALERIA PIVATO, CEIBITA FILMS, EVA LAURIA - RAÚL ARAGÓN AND EL PERRO EN LA LUNA  
COPRODUCTION



SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE  
**UN CERTAIN REGARD**  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

## **LA NOVIA DEL DESIERTO**

*(THE DESERT BRIDE)*

Argentina /Chile - 78' -Image Scope- Sound 5.1

A FILM BY CECILIA ATÁN AND VALERIA PIVATO  
STARRING PAULINA GARCIA AND CLAUDIO RISSI



**OFFICIAL SCREENINGS**

**THURSDAY MAY 25<sup>TH</sup> at 11AM and 10PM at DEBUSSY**

**FRIDAY MAY 26<sup>TH</sup> at 1PM at BAZIN**

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## **SYNOPSIS**

### **LOGLINE**

Teresa's life is turned upside down when she is forced to accept a job far away. On her way, she loses her bag, causing her to cross paths with El Gringo, a traveling salesman.

### **SYNOPSIS**

54-year-old Teresa has worked for decades as a live-in maid with a family in Buenos Aires. When the family sells the house, she is forced to take a job in the distant town of San Juan. Although feeling uncomfortable with traveling, she embarks on a journey through the desert. During her first stop, in the land of the miraculous "Saint Correa", she loses her bag with all her belongings. This unexpected incident leads her to cross paths with El Gringo, a traveling salesman and the only person who can help Teresa find her bag. What seemed like the end of her world will ultimately prove her salvation.



## DIRECTORS' NOTE

“Only by crossing the desert can we find ourselves.”

Our film proposes a journey through the desert, a desert that works as a metaphor: The discomfort of self-exploration.

At the start of the film Teresa inhabits a world she knows, and in appearance, a safe world. She believes she forms part of a family to which she dedicated her life. The years have gone by and she clings to the little she actually has. But circumstances change and everything she believed in suddenly falls apart. Now 54-year-old Teresa has nowhere to go.

Although for many this would be the end of the story, for us it is a beginning. Because we believe that the absence of this security is what can suddenly reveal to us unexplored inner potential; it will lead us to confront feelings and desires that we cannot even acknowledge as our own. For Teresa, the journey through the desert will slowly awaken her, allowing her to finally become aware of her own undiscovered strength.

The desert is hostile and Teresa's journey along the highway takes a viewer back to the founding myth of this Sanctuary: Deolinda Correa crossed the desert and died of thirst with her baby in her arms, but the baby survived by breast-feeding from her mother's dead body. It is the force of nature overcoming adversity; it is destiny challenging prior speculation; it is the unforeseen as the driver of change.

In this mystical and vital context, Teresa experiences the first setback that modifies events: she loses her bag carrying all her personal belongings. This unexpected incident leads her to cross paths with El Gringo, a charismatic traveler who will become her companion in her quest. Like an extension of the former universe, El Gringo and his pickup are outlined against the arid *Cuyano* landscape, a menacing and attractive option, awakening in Teresa the fascination provoked by all contradictions.

As they journey together through the different worlds unfolding around them, this silent, opaque woman slowly becomes tinged with life and color. Although every universe will have the characteristics of the very person who inhabits it, they will all add up to the same direction to which the Sanctuary has pointed since the beginning of the journey: Introducing Teresa to the world's variety and the inescapable potential of life.

At a time when the outer world tries to convince us that what is not experienced in our youth will most likely never take place, we wish to reclaim the value of the process, of the search, of the passage of time – the work that is needed to grow and find that safe place where it really exists, within oneself.

Cecilia Atán and Valeria Pivato

## **INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTORS**

### **Tell us about the origins of the film?**

The starting point of *La Novia del Desierto* was being able to represent a feeling of a *non-place* through a character. Teresa is a woman aged 54 who had dedicated her life to looking after a family and lived in a world which felt like her own, although in fact, it wasn't. At the start of the film, the house where she has worked for 30 years is sold and her circumstances suddenly change, her world falling apart in the blink of an eye. The dizziness and uncertainty that leaving this safe space prompts in her becomes the motor for change that leads her to embark on an unplanned quest, putting her in touch with her desires and confronting her with the world.

### **How did the filming go?**

The atmosphere during the shoot was very special, given that co-directing by two women is not common – at least not in Latin America. In this sense, we tried to transform this particularity into an asset, drawing the most from the individual capacities of each of us. Filming in the desert raised all kind of challenges, but we always strived to maintain a good energy and the unity of the crew. In this respect, being a duo allowed us to face setbacks with greater strength, and to discuss things to arrive at the best decision.

### **Tell us about the actors?**

*La Novia del Desierto* is told through two marvelous actors, Paulina García (Chilean) and Claudio Rissi (Argentinian). We sent Paulina a first version of the script in 2013 and she immediately fell in love with the project and her character. Since then, we embarked together on the wonderful journey that is a film. Paulina's interpretation, and the time we spent working together during preparation for filming made Teresa a subtle being, built around the body language and silence. Even today, each time we see the film, we are surprised to notice the exquisite details in the construction of her character. Paulina and Teresa became one during the process and at the end of the shoot, she bade farewell to Teresa in a way that was both endearing and powerful:

Today is the last day of Teresa in the Cuyano desert. I will let you go here tonight, where you despaired so much and were so confused. I am leaving you here forever, like the late Correa. Beneath the vast skies, merciless suns and seductive winds. Today, I will take a minute to remember you for the last time on a path that is dry, yet paradoxically green, like you. All the experience-memory is left here. I will turn out that light, and LA NOVIA DEL DESIERTO will light up. A little bottle of water in your name.  
*Paulina García, 16 December 2016.*

Claudio Rissi's performance as El Gringo no doubt transformed him into a memorable character, who takes on life and fluidity through the dual dimension of menacing attraction and gentle seduction. In his delightful, fine lines, the character conveys a great Latin American part, captured by the actor with coherence and honesty.

**What were your sources of inspiration?**

Fortunately, we have both worked for many years as part of the crew of some great directors. In doing so, we have acquired some very different and individual ways of dealing with the various obstacles that come up in the course of making a film.

So when we think about our influences, we think that the film set has been a place of apprenticeship for us, due to the proximity this allowed us with creators such as Pablo Trapero, Juan Campanella, Christopher Hampton, and Juan Solanas, among others. Of course, we have also been influenced by foreign directors, mainly as spectators, but the experience of more than 15 years as technicians on set was decisive in our training.

## **BEHIND THE CAMERA**

### **Cecilia Atán, director and screenwriter**

Cecilia Atán was born in 1978 in Buenos Aires. She began her career as an intern with director Eduardo Mignogna on the set of EL FARO in 1998, which starred Ricardo Darín. She then became an assistant director before making her first short film, EL MAR, which was invited to the Short Film Corner in Cannes in 2012, before screening in competition at festivals in Biarritz and Mar del Plata. In 2015, she directed the documentary series in eight episodes, MADRES DE PLAZA DE MAYO, LA HISTORIA, which was nominated for the International Emmy Awards the following year. LA FIANCÉE DU DÉSSERT is her first fiction feature film. Cecilia Atán is also co-founder of the production company El Perro En La Luna, alongside Sebastián Mignogna and Guido Mignogna.

### **Valeria Pivato, director and screenwriter**

Valeria Pivato was born in 1973 in Buenos Aires. After studying design and filmmaking, she began working as an assistant director, script supervisor and casting director. She worked notably with Juan José Campanella on LE FILS DE LA MARIÉE in 2001, and on DANS SES YEUX, which won the Oscar for best foreign language film in 2010. She worked as script supervisor on NORDESTE by Juan Solanas, which screened in Un Certain Regard at Cannes in 2005. In 2008, she worked with Pablo Trapero on LEONERA, which was presented in competition at the Festival de Cannes. In 2013, she won the Patagonik International Screenwriters Competition with BEFORE AND AFTER... AND AFTER AGAIN. In 2017, she co-directed her first feature film, LA FIANCÉE DU DÉSSERT, with Cecilia Atán.



## **IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA**

### **Paulina García**

Actor, director and dramatist born in Santiago de Chile on 27 November 1960, Paulina García has won numerous awards throughout her long career, for both her film and stage work.

A huge star in her home country, her breakout international film was GLORIA by Sebastián Leilo, which screened in competition at the Berlin Film Festival in 2013, in which she played the title role. She took home the Silver Bear for her performance, which won unanimous praise from international critics and enjoyed a successful release in many territories.

Since then, she has alternated US independent films (BROOKLYN VILLAGE by Ira Sachs), major international productions (NARCOS, an original Netflix series), Latin-American films by internationally renowned directors (TOUT VA BIEN by Alejandro Fernandez Almendras), and debut films (THE DESERT BRIDE) by Cecilia Atán et Valeria Pivato).

### **Selected filmography**

- 2017 THE DESERT BRIDE (LA NOVIA DEL DESIERTO), by Cecilia Atán and Valeria Pivato  
Festival de Cannes (2017), Un Certain Regard  
EL PRESIDENTE (LA CORDILLERA), by Santiago Mitre  
Festival de Cannes (2017), Un Certain Regard
- 2016 TOUT VA BIEN (AQUÍ NO HA PASADO NADA), by Alejandro Fernández Almendras  
Berlin Film Festival (2016), Panorama  
Sundance Film Festival (2016), Competition  
BROOKLYN VILLAGE (LITTLE MEN), by Ira Sachs  
Sundance Film Festival (2016), Out of Competition  
Berlin Film Festival (2016), Panorama
- 2015 VOIX OFF (LA VOZ EN OFF), by Cristián Jiménez  
San Sebastián Film Festival (2014), Official Selection  
THE 33 (LOS 33), by Patricia Riggen
- 2014 NO SOY LORENA, by Isidora Marras  
UN CONCIERTO INOLVIDABLE: NUEVA OLA, LA PELÍCULA, by Elías Llanos
- 2013 GLORIA, by Sebastián Leilo  
Berlin Film Festival (2013), Silver Bear for best actress  
LAS ANALFABETAS, by Moisés Sepúlveda  
Venice Film Festival (2013), Critics Week  
I AM FROM CHILE, by Gonzalo Diaz  
GENESIS NIRVANA, by Alejandro Lagos
- 2012 EL MURO, by Paula Bravo
- 2007 CASA DE REMOLIENDA, by Joaquín Eyzaguirre
- 2004 EL ÚLTIMO SACRAMENTO, by Camilo Becerra
- 2002 TRES NOCHES DE UN SÁBADO, by Joaquín Eyzaguirre

## Claudio Rissi

Claudio Rissi is an Argentinian actor born on 14 April 1947 in Monte Grande, Buenos Aires. He has appeared in more than 30 films, including VIES BRULÉES by Marcelo Piñeyro, LES NEUF REINES by Fabián Bielinsky, LUGARES COMUNES by Adolfo Aristarain, EL FONDO DEL MAR by Damián Szifron, and JUAN Y EVA by Paula de Luque. He has twice won the best Supporting Actor award given by the Association of Argentine Critics; in 2001 for 76-89-03 by Cristian Bernard and Flavio Nardini, then in 2012 for ABALLAY, EL HOMBRE SIN MIEDO by Fernando Spiner.

Claudio Rissi has also starred in numerous TV series, such as OKUPAS and EPITAFIOS. In 2016, he played Mario Borges, an underworld boss in the series EL MARGINAL. This hyper-realist immersion in the Argentinian prison system won 11 Tatos (Argentine TV awards), and in 2016 won the Grand Prix at the Series Mania Festival in Paris, presided over by David Chase (creator of THE SOPRANOS). It will be screened in France this year by Canal+.

From 2014 and 2016, he played El Tatita in TERRENAL, a play written and directed by Mauricio Kartun, in which the celebrated Argentinian dramatist revisits the myth of Cain and Abel.

### Selected filmography

- 2017 THE DESERT BRIDE (La Novia del Desierto), by Cecilia Atán and Valeria Pivato  
Festival de Cannes (2017), Un Certain Regard
- 2015 JUSTO EN LO MEJOR DE MI VIDA, by Leonardo Fabio Calderón
- 2011 JUAN Y EVA, by Paula de Luque
- 2010 ABALLAY, EL HOMBRE SIN MIEDO, by Fernando Spiner  
Association of Argentine Critics (2012), Best Screenplay, Best Supporting Actor, and Best Cinematography
- 2007 MARTÍN FIERRO, LA PELÍCULA, by Liliana Romero and Norman Ruiz
- 2005 EL MATEN A PERÓN, by Fernando Musante
- 2004 PALERMO HOLLYWOOD, by Eduardo Pinto  
Sundance Festival (2005), Official Selection
- 2004 PROXIMA SALIDA, by Nicolás Tuozzo  
Festival de Amiens (2005), Audience Award, Prix SIGNIS and Special Mention
- 2003 EL FONDO DEL MAR, by Damián Szifron  
San Sebastián Film Festival (2003), Prix Horizontes  
Festival de Toulouse (2004), Critics Award
- 2002 LUGARES COMUNES, by Adolfo Aristarain  
San Sebastián Film Festival (2002), Best Screenplay, Best Actress
- 2000 LES NEUF REINES, by Fabián Bielinsky  
Festival de Cognac (2002), Grand Prix and Audience Award
- 2000 76-89-03, by Cristian Bernard and Flavio Nardini  
Association of Argentine Critics (2001), Best Supporting Actor
- 2000 VIES BRÛLÉES, by Marcelo Piñeyro  
Venice Film Festival (2000), Official Selection  
Toronto Film Festival (2000), Official Selection
- 1988 LA AMIGA, by Jeanine Meerapfel  
Berlin Film Festival (1990), Peace Award



## **ARTISTIC LIST**

Teresa Paulina Garcia  
Gringo Claudio Rissi

## **TECHNICAL LIST**

Written and Directed by: Cecilia Atán and Valeria Pivato  
Director of Photography: Sergio Armstrong  
Art Director: Mariela Rípodas  
Edited by: Andrea Chignoli  
Original music by: Leo Sujatovich  
Sound Designer: Miguel Hormazábal  
Costume design: Beatriz Di Benedetto and Jam Monti  
Produced by: Eva Lauría (Argentina) and Alejo Crisóstomo (Chile)  
Production companies: El Perro en la Luna (Argentina) - Ceibita Films (Chile)  
Co-producers: Cecilia Atán, Valeria Pivato, Eva Lauría and Raúl Aragón.  
Associate Producers: Zona Audiovisual, Haddock Films, Vanessa Ragone, Lucero Garzón, Florencia Poblete and Carolina Alvarez.  
International Sales: Cité Films  
French distribution: Memento Films Distribution