



# Reviewing Entertainment For Its Light

INTERVIEWS

## *Diandra Interviews Patricia Montoya: Making Films With Meaning*



We are entering the weekend run of the FANTASTIC Latino Film Market. With an initiative to build our community so that our stories reach even more hearts, one film that will catch your attention is Patricia Montoya's *Cuando la Rumorosa Calla*. Poignant, powerful, raw, and unafraid to enter the dark spaces of being a human that can lead to great light, the film is a personal one for Patricia, and she is fighting so that more see her art, which is what LFM is for. In our interview, we discuss inspirations behind her cinematic purpose to inspire.

**Diandra: What inspired you to make this film?**

**Patricia:** I came of age in the 1970 and 80's in Medellin, Colombia, in a middle class neighborhood. I went to a public school, historically known for high academic success and political involvement: located in the heart of the city's downtown. If, as what they say, geography is destiny, this geography and temporality marked me. I was heavily influenced by the music, poetry, theater, and social justice movements that were prevalent at that time, in that place. In my work, I am interested in theatrical adaptations influenced by absurd theater, experimental fiction, and non-fiction film, and performance art.

Later, in New York City, I was exposed to classic film and fell in love with the films of Luis Buñuel. As I became involved in the independent cinema world of the city in the 1990's, I learned about the work of Lourdes Portillo. These are the theoretical influences of *Cuando la Rumorosa Calla*.

With *Cuando la Rumorosa Calla*, I wanted to make a film within the traditions of Latin American cinema. That is a film with a social and political message that was poetic both visually and musically. But I am also influenced by my life experiences and artistic influences in the US, such as the dancer and filmmaker Yvonne Rainer, and the Cuban American performance art artist, Ana Mendieta.

As an immigrant, I have a personal relation to the US/Mexico border culture. I completed my graduate studies at the Visual Arts Program at the University of California, San Diego and had a long relationship with the Communications Department, both of which had close working relationships with Tijuana's art scene. All these intersections, personal, professional and academic, are mingled in the film.

Lastly, the work of argentine playwright Gilda Bona was a catalyst for me with her play *El lobizo de tras la sierra*. I was drawn to Gilda's theatrical mastery; the way her characters confronted each other with a dialogue that, while it was trying to hide the truth, was also revealing. The idea that of a woman confronting political corruption with her body and her words, a woman who turned vulnerability into power, was tremendously inspiring to me. The same with the idea of the political "desaparecidos" in Argentina and the women of Juarez in Lourdes Portillo's documentary *Señorita Extraviada*, whose bones are the only thing the families are left with, started to make sense to me. A theme that connected these women- identified experience throughout the world.

Coincidentally, we premiered the film in India, a country with a history of hate crimes against women. The bus as character came to me on a trip up the Mexico, USA border mountains of La Rumorosa, Tecate, Baja California, Mexico, a few years ago that reminded me of Luis Buñuel's film *Subida al Cielo*, which takes place on a bus ride up the mountains. Again, geography, spoke to me.



"CUANDO LA RUMOROSA CALLA" (WHEN LA RUMOROSA QUIETS) BASED ON THE PLAY "EL LOBIZÓN DE TRAS LA SIERRA" BY GILDA BONA  
WITH YUNUEM RHI, ADRIAN FRITSCH, ADOLFO MADERA & PACO MUJOTE CASTING BY ADOLFO MADERA MUSIC BY TONALI MAGANA SCREENPLAY BY MORANOBA SOTELO DIRECTOR BRENDA ARANDA EDITOR ALFREDO G. UNIBE  
ART DESIGN CESAR DOURIET PRODUCTION DESIGN EDUARDO TREJO PRODUCTION COMPANY SANTIAGO MADERA PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY PATRICIA MONTOYA

**Diandra: How do you feel Lucia's experience reflects universally?**

**Patricia:** Crimes against women-identified people happen all the time everywhere. When we were in pre-production, the election of judge Brett Kavanaugh was in the news in the united states, I was inspired by the activists Ana Maria Archila and Maria Gallagher screaming to senator Flake leaving the elevator Senate office building; women marching, screaming their truth and trauma to men who would not listen was another moment of inspiration to me. Women fighting, no matter losing or winning, a good fight is part of our history. That is what makes us warriors, and that is I wanted to convey in the film.

**Diandra: What about her, to you reflects, womanhood, Latinidad, and the injustices both can suffer?**

**Patricia:** The concept of womanhood has evolved for me to include hate crimes against trans women. The film does not touch on that but the issues that inspire it are part of that. In that case, womanhood, again, is a condition of fighters. We, as women identified people have to fight for our survival in every way for everything. That at least is the connection I make in the film. The injustices, as you ask, are in our everyday experience. And I don't mean victimhood. I mean confrontation, a sort of constructive anger, that which creates movements for change. In terms of Latinidad and injustice, Lucia represents more than suffering; instead, to me, she reflects a fighting spirit. The question I was investigating is, what happens to the victim of a hate crime? In terms of victims, they are always represented as passive. I wanted to show that they fight, that they confront, that they don't go quietly.

**Diandra: How do you feel the film reflects you and your perspectives of the world?**

**Patricia:** The film reflects me, and the way I see the world, through the way landscape, as geography is destiny, is prevalent in the film, the cultural references and heritage, through the music, and the fighting spirit of the women in the film. All of them are fighters, even the woman selling the tickets in the station. *\*Beautiful question.*

**Diandra: As a writer and director, what sides of you do you feel each brings out compared to the other?**

**Patricia:** As a writer I am quiet, reflective, slow; words are images, they mark time, and space, they clarify conflict, they give me peace. As a director, I am a leader. A tremendous crew, like the one that worked with me in Tijuana, expects of me to know what I am doing. They respect my vision, and I respect them back because they are making that vision become reality: in ways

that I have no idea how to do. The crew is solving and filling in the empty spaces that I've left unchecked. They challenge me when I am tired or lost. Without the crew, there is no film and I love that. I can't do it alone, which is opposite of when I write.

**Diandra: What has been your most frustrating and fascinating experience as a filmmaker?**

**Patricia:** Definitely working with the actors and the crew is the most fascinating experience. The most frustrating part is financing. It really is hard to be always cutting corners, gymnastics, in order to make things happen. Money is never enough and is hard to convince people to support you. I have to say though that I have been supported and surrounded by people who love me and have supported my efforts in any way they can but still, financing and distribution are definitely the most challenging aspects of filmmaking.

I'd like to add to this, the need of independent filmmakers, like me, who need support to keep making work. I financed the film at my own expense, which is considered the first mistake in film production, especially for a short, alternative narrative form like my films that won't make any money, with the hope to get further funding for upcoming projects. We had an Indiegogo campaign for the final stages of editing and distribution. Support for films like these is only available through grants that are competitive and take years to get. My effort right now is to find the right distributor so that takes me to the right producer willing to invest in my vision and team. I hope LFM gives me the exposure and opportunities to get closer to achieving this goal.

**Diandra: What is the most difficult hurdle and injustice you have suffered in trying to find distribution?**

**Patricia:** The festival system is challenging for me. This is my first film in which I've dedicated time, money and effort to show at a large scale, and it is also frustrating that the film is selected but not shown unless it wins a gold laurel or something like that. I am now trying to figure out how to make a gold standard film that is true to my voice and vision. I guess is all about the money one puts into the film. I find that unfair.

**Diandra: What films, from your childhood, must inspired you to become a filmmaker, and what did you love about them?**

**Patricia:** I loved Spanish cinema. In fact another reference in the film is Rafael Gil's *Don Quijote*, Ladislao Vajda's *Marcelino Pan y Vino*, the Golden Age Mexican films, *Cantinflas* and all of that. I loved westerns, *el Zorro*, etc., but I also loved Colombian cultural television and the old soap operas that were shown late at night when children were supposed to be in bed, but I saw anyway at my grandmother's house.

I think that is where the desire to adapt theater into films comes from. I liked that these shows were not only dramatic, but the actors were professionals from the theater doing television. It was a great way to see theater, in a way. There was something about the writing. I somehow knew that the films originated in writing. They sounded like books to me.



**Diandra:** What Latino films have most influenced you that you feel do not get the recognition they deserve?

**Patricia:** I think more support for low budget film is needed. Also, films made by latinx women directors need to be more highlighted. Sadly, I myself don't even know any latinx women director to mention here. Our media is so immersed in soap operas and entertainment that other voices get ignored.

**Diandra:** How do you see things like, Latino Film Market, are necessary to elevate Latino entertainment?

**Patricia:** I think venues like the LFM are crucial for the Latino entertainment industry and even though my films are not necessarily entertaining, on the contrary they are rather disturbing, I think the fact that the LFM chose me shows an effort or desire to show and promote work that is uncomfortable for the viewer. I think we need venues like this one if we want to survive in the cultural arena of this country.

Thank you very much for the really excellent and thought provoking questions, and for the attention you have given me, and my film.

Such phenomenal answers for a great film. Personally, it is provoked my thoughts, pushed my comfort, and pulled my emotions that are not just memorable, they are transformative. Cuando la Rumorosa Calla is certainly transformative, and more information can be found [Here](#). Please catch the last few days of the Latino Film [Market Here](#).