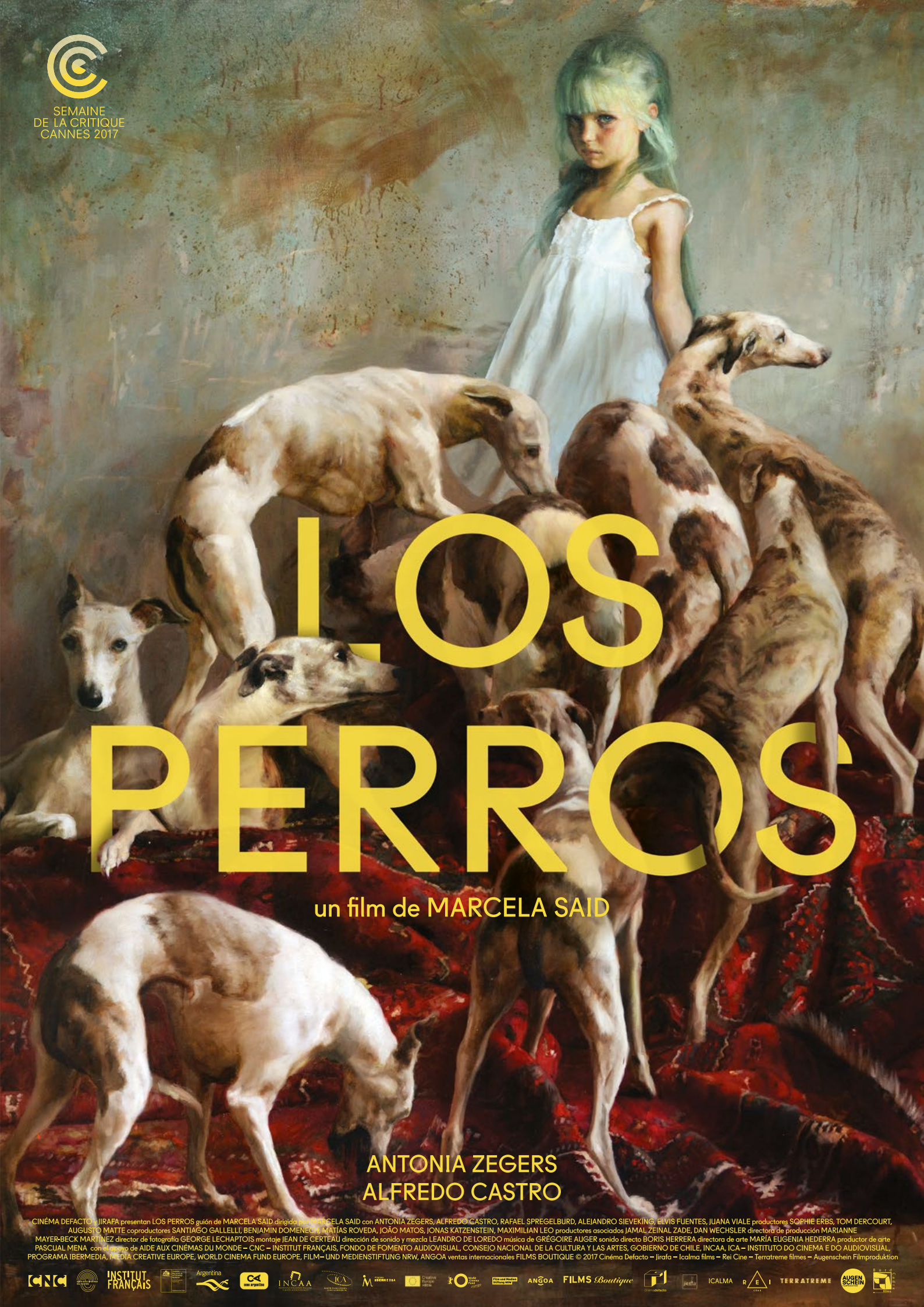




SEMAINE
DE LA CRITIQUE
CANNES 2017



LOS PERROS

un film de MARCELA SAID

ANTONIA ZEGERS
ALFREDO CASTRO

CINEMA DEFACITO - JIRAFa presentan LOS PERROS guió de MARCELA SAID dirigida por MARCELA SAID con ANTONIA ZEGERS, ALFREDO CASTRO, RAFAEL SPREGELBURD, ALEJANDRO SIEVEKING, ELVIS FUENTES, JUANA VIALE productores SOPHIE ERBS, TOM DERCOURT, AUGUSTO MATTE coproductores SANTIAGO GALLELLI, BENJAMIN DOMENECH, MATÍAS ROVEDA, JOÃO MATOS, JONAS KATZENSTEIN, MAXIMILIAN LEO productores asociados JAMAL ZEINAL ZADE, DAN WECHSLER directora de producción MARIANNE MAYER-BECK MARTÍNEZ director de fotografía GEORGE LECHAPTOIS montaje JEAN DE CERTEAU dirección de sonido y mezcla LEANDRO DE LOREDO música de GRÉGOIRE AUGER sonido directo BORIS HERRERA directora de arte MARÍA EUGENIA HEDERRA productor de arte PASCUAL MENA con el apoyo de AIDE AUX CINÉMAS DU MONDE - CNC - INSTITUT FRANÇAIS, FONDO DE FOMENTO AUDIOVISUAL, CONSEJO NACIONAL DE LA CULTURA Y LAS ARTES, GOBIERNO DE CHILE, INCAA, ICA - INSTITUTO DO CINEMA E DO AUDIOVISUAL, PROGRAMA IBERMEDIA, MEDIA CREATIVE EUROPE, WORLD CINEMA FUND EUROPE, FILM-UND MEDIENSTIFTUNG NRW, ANGOA ventas internacionales FILMS BOUTIQUE © 2017 Cinéma Defacito - Jirafa - Icalma films - Rei Cine - Terratreme films - Augenschein Filmproduktion





SEMAINE
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CANNES

LOS PERROS

A Film by MARCELA SAID

2017 | DCP | 1:1,85 | 5.1. | 94 Min

France/Chile

with English subtitles

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LOS PERROS



SYNOPSIS

Mariana is 42 years old, a member of the Chilean upper class that takes privilege for granted. Scorned by her father and neglected by her husband, Mariana still has the means to occupy her days with fertility treatments, running an art gallery and learning to ride a horse. Her riding instructor, Juan, is 20 years her senior, a former cavalry officer known as The Colonel who is under investigation for human rights abuses committed decades before. When Mariana embarks on an affair with her enigmatic teacher, she's directly confronted with the outrages of the dictatorship for the first time and her increasing interest threatens to tear down the invisible walls protecting her family from the past.



INTERVIEW WITH MARCELA SAID

This isn't the first of your films to evoke the dictatorship in Chile. Would you say it's a theme like any other, or an obsession?

It's not necessarily an obsession, but since I grew up during the Pinochet dictatorship, where the military was omnipresent, it's a part of my history. When I was 13, someone told me what a democracy was, and that was when I realized that Chile wasn't one. Even if I'm not a direct victim of the dictatorship, it could never be a theme like any other for me.

Would you say then that your obsession – and this can be felt in most of your films – is actually evil, with a capital "E"?

Yes, but evil in general. Not necessarily the dictatorship's persecutors, but ordinary evil. The persecutor can ultimately be me, you or your loved ones. If we are ever forced to, we are capable of doing the worst. We need to be aware that there is a monster in all of us. Until we've understood that, we are in danger. That is how fascism is born.

When you wrote your first fictional film, you discovered that to make a character more lifelike, you must put a bit of yourself into it. Are you Mariana?

Yes and no. We obviously have some points in common. Mariana is curious like me. She is curious about human nature and its limits. What are humans capable of? That's the kind of thing I wonder about. But on top of that, she is cheeky, intriguing and unpredictable. You never know what she is going to do. That's what I like about cinema: the unpredictable.

Where did the idea for the story come from?

From personal experience. For one of my documentaries, I met with some former members of the military dictatorship. One of them was a retired colonel who was chief of security – now he's a horse-riding instructor. I took horse-riding lessons for two years to get an interview with him. That's where I got the idea for the film. In fact, I used some of the Colonel's reflections in my dialogues, in particular "I have no blood on my hands". Just like the character, my family criticized me for taking lessons with a "persecutor" under the dictatorship, about to be sentenced. But unlike Mariana, I didn't have a fling with him!

It seems that you, just like Mariana, are both attracted and repulsed by those described as persecutors.

It's true. Because nothing is ever black or white. Mariana is not just an upper-class girl trying to be free, that would not have interested me. She's a complex character. What's going on around her is even more complex. The colonel, considered to be a persecutor, is capable of showing the best towards her, whereas Mariana's own father is capable of the worst.

This difference can be seen in the two sex scenes in the film. Whereas the Colonel tries to give Mariana pleasure, the policeman who disapproves of him, rushes her and only thinks of his own enjoyment.

Exactly. The policeman takes advantage of the situation whereas the Colonel is generous. The one considered to be a persecutor treats her well, while the one who represents the law takes advantage of her. Another aspect I wanted to emphasize in the film was civilian responsibility. Some of the military did the dirty work, because they were merely pawns. Of course they should pay, but so should all the others. The reason that this terror could exist in my country was so that a neo-liberal economic system could be established. The United States are responsible, just like all of the Chilean upper classes, who grew rich under Pinochet, and who have been cleared of all wrongdoing today.

In your previous fictional film, *The Summer of Flying Fish*, the father/daughter relationship also plays a significant role. Is this another one of your obsessions?

(Laughs) I only realized it afterwards. I didn't do it deliberately. Maybe I have a subconscious desire or need to kill the father! My father has a very strong temperament, quite dominant, and he supported the dictatorship, in the sense that he thought Pinochet was good for the country, like lots of Chileans in fact. When I was younger, that horrified me. But it's a complicated story, and that's not the subject of the film!

In fact, both the father in *The Summer of Flying Fish* and the father in *Los Perros* believe themselves to be above the law.

It's the political class in Chile. The character of Mariana's father is inspired by my own, as you have seen, but also by the father of one of my friends, and other real-life characters.

LOS PERROS



He's an archetype, he represents power, all of that political class that feel as if they are above the law, the upper classes that became rich under Pinochet and went unpunished... But at the same time – and I love this contradiction – he loves his daughter, who he probably brought up alone after being abandoned by his wife. Once more, we can see the best and the worst in everyone. Here's a nice little anecdote: the wonderful actor who plays the father is 85, just like my father.

Antonia Zegers, who we have seen in several films directed by her partner Pablo Larrain, is incredible in this role. How did you choose her?

I saw a lot of actresses, but when I met Antonia, I loved her energy. She has lots of character, like me. I liked that, but I said to myself it wasn't going to be plain sailing! Since she's also really generous, everything went well. The same is true for Alfredo Castro in fact, who plays the Colonel, and Elvis Fuentes (the policeman), an actor who I discovered at the theatre and who had never worked in cinema. I was so lucky to have such talented actors who were so committed. They were my "accomplices", in a way. Given that the film is politically incorrect in Chili, I needed support.

Who are the "dogs" in the film's title?

The title refers to several "dogs". There are the real dogs in the film, to start with, that belong to Mariana, but also the men she is close to. Her father, her husband, the policeman...they're all very macho. Even if she says "I won't take orders anymore", she still has to put up with all this chauvinistic violence. Los Perros also refers to the military personnel who were "used" like dogs to do the dirty work. There is also a reference to the expression that the Chilean bourgeoisie use to describe the lower classes, those

who are not like them: “el perraje” comes from the word “perro”, dog in Spanish. And finally, in Chile, there are a lot of stray dogs.

The first dog in the film, the one that Mariana loves the most, is in fact a mongrel, not a pedigree.

Yes, that was deliberate. The second, however, given to her by her husband when the first one dies, is a Dalmatian. Mariana doesn't really like that it's a pedigree, in fact. So in this seemingly insignificant part of the storyline, I am referring to the social classes in Chile, which are quite distinct. There are the upper classes, the servants, the military – who are not part of the upper classes – the poor, and they don't mix. Mariana preferred her mongrel, and isn't afraid to sing traditional love songs with her housemaid.

It seems that you like animal metaphors. After the dogs, there is also a comparison with the horses, that need to be trained, like women. Or perhaps the opposite is true?

Yes, Mariana is likened to a mare by a friend of her husband. He says to him: “She is quite wild, that mare of yours. You need to tighten your grip, or you're finished”. It's another theme in the film, maybe even the central theme: the role of women in Chilean society. You see, I don't just talk about the dictatorship! My next film won't deal with it at all in fact. It's about violence against women and sexuality.

Do you consider Los Perros to be a feminist film?

I don't know if the film is, but I have discovered that I am in any case! Remember, I come from a country where our bodies don't belong to us. Abortion is still punished by law and a woman can be sent to prison if she is caught trying to have one. It's 2017! When you come from a society like that, it is impossible not to be a feminist.

What is interesting about Mariana's character, is that she is not a heroine. At the end of the film, she is holding a bomb in her hands – figuratively speaking of course – but she decides not to let it drop.

Yes, even though she could bring down her father and her entire social class, she stands alongside them. She doesn't betray them, even if that seems immoral. From when I started writing the screenplay – and I never changed direction – this was a cornerstone of the film: I didn't want a heroine. It's not a Hollywood film. I knew people might not like it. But I don't make films to please people. I make films that give people something to think about.

Let's talk about the music, which also has its own role. In the very first sequence of the film, which is filled with mystery, you might believe David Lynch was behind the camera.

I wanted tension. The music had to be original, and peculiar. When Grégoire Auger played those chords for me, which kind of reminded me of a dog barking, I knew that was the music for the film. Music shouldn't take centre-stage but it had to help me and accompany the story. I decided not to be afraid of it.

LOS PERROS



The photography is also stunning. The light seems to be completely natural.

Yes, it is practically all natural light. There is very little additional lighting, except in the night scenes. The camera is an Alexa, with very high definition, so we could film even when it was getting dark. I worked with the director of photography Georges Lechaptois, who is also of Chilean origin, but it was actually his first time filming there. He helped me a lot. We decided on handheld filming for the whole sequence, which allows the viewer to feel Mariana's breathing, in a way.

You originally made documentaries. It was ten years before you attempted to write your first fictional screenplay. Would you say that today you have found your ideal means of expression?

Yes, I love fiction. Even if documentary is a more activist means of expression, ultimately there are more restrictions, and it is not necessarily more creative. Fiction allows you to show the world but you can go even further. I feel freer. I am much less afraid than before, I am comfortable when I write, even if it takes me some time.

Do you think that Los Perros will shock Chileans?

It's possible. But the films that I like are designed to shock. I'm thinking of *The Night Porter* by Liliana Cavani, for example, or *The Pianist*, by Michael Haneke. They are wonderful, unsettling and unexpected films. Cinema allows for that. We are living in societies where we are controlled in lots of ways, and increasingly so, in what we are allowed to say or not say, do or not do, how to behave, and so on. If we can't overstep those boundaries in cinema, and in art in general, then where can we?

Interviewed by Olivier Boucreux



MARCELA SAID

Marcela Said Cares was born in 1972 in Santiago, Chile. She graduated from the Catholic University of Santiago with a degree in aesthetics, and received her master's degree in Media & Language at La Sorbonne University. In 1999, she directs Valparaiso, a 52-minute documentary which gained international recognition. In 2001, she directs I Love Pinochet, documentary produced by Pathé. The film wins the Grand Prix at the Valparaiso Documentary Film Festival, Critic's Price at the FIDOCs, as well as the Altazor prize. It was selected at FIPA, and the Festival international of Biarritz, and was a national scandal-success in Chile. In 2006 she co-directs the 52-minute documentary Opus Dei, a silent crusade with Jean de Certeau. The film aired on France 5, Planète, TV5monde, TSR, RTBF, SBS, and was released in theaters. Opus Dei won the Pedro Sienna prize for best documentary. Again, the film provoked tensions in her home country. In 2011, her documentary El Mocito (70') was selected at the Berlinale Forum, and won the Horizonte Prize for best documentary at DOK Fest in Munich, and then the jury award at FIDOCs, FICV, and the Altazor award. In 2013, her first feature-film The summer of flying fish, produced and distributed by Cinéma Defacto, was presented at the Director's Fortnight of the Cannes Film Festival. It was then invited to New Horizons, Toronto, Sao Paulo, and won several award, in La Habana, River Run, Biarritz and Toulouse. It was released in April 2014 in France and in July 2014 in Chile. In 2014, she is a resident director at the Cinéfondation, the Festival de Cannes' Residency, and at the Sundance Screenwriter Lab, where she wrote her second feature-film, Los Perros, which premiered in Semaine de la Critique in Cannes.

LOS PERROS



FILMOGRAPHY

2017 **EL PUMA** - Feature film in development, produced by **Cinéma Defacto**

2017 **LOS PERROS** - Produced by **Cinéma Defacto & Jirafa**

*Semaine de la Critique 2017, Cinélatino, Sundance Screenwriter Lab, Cinéfondation
Festival de Cannes 2014, Berlinale Coproduction Market 2015, Arte International Prize 2015*

2013 **THE SUMMER OF FLYING FISH** - Feature film, produced by **Jirafa Films & Cinéma Defacto**

*Selected at the Director's Fortnight - Cannes 2013, PrixCiné + en Construction Toulouse 2013, Prix de la mise en scène
at Festival de Biarritz, at the Festival de Havana, Cinéma Latin d'Avray, Festival Cuenca Ecuador, and at the Run Rivers
Festival (USA).*

Selected at New Horizon, Munich, Toronto, Sao Paulo, Arte Film Week (Liban), Mar del Plata, Palm Spring, Miami, etc.

2011 **EL MOCITO** - Feature documentary, produced by **ICALMAfilms**

*Selected Forum - Berlinale 2011. Prize Horizonte, Prix for Best Documentary at DOK Fest (Munich), Jury Prize at
Fidocs, Altazor Prize 2012, etc.*

2006 **OPUS DEI - A SILENT CRUSADE** - 52 mn documentary by Marcela Said & Jean de Certeau

Prix "Pedro Sienna", best documentary 2007, CNAC Chile. / FIDOCS, Santiago.

Broadcasts: *Planète, France5, TV5MONDE, TSR, RTBF, SBSAustralie, etc.*

2001 **I LOVE PINOCHET** - Feature documentary

*Grand Prix at Valparaiso Documentary Film Festival, Critics' award at FIDOCS, Altazor award 2002, FIPA, Festival
de Biarritz, Festival Havana, etc.*

LOS PERROS

ACTORS

Antonia Zegers
Alfredo Castro
Rafael Spregelburd
Alejandro Sieveking
Elvis Fuentes
Juana Viale

CREW

Director and Screenwriter **Marcela Said**
Production Manager **Marianne Meyer-Beck**
Director of Photography **George Lechaptois**
Editor **Jean de Certeau**
Sound Design **Leandro de Loredo**
Composer **Grégoire Auger**
Sound Ingenieur **Boris Herrera**
Production Design **Maria Eugenia Hederra** and **Pascual Mena**
Color Grading **Isabelle Julien**

PRODUCERS

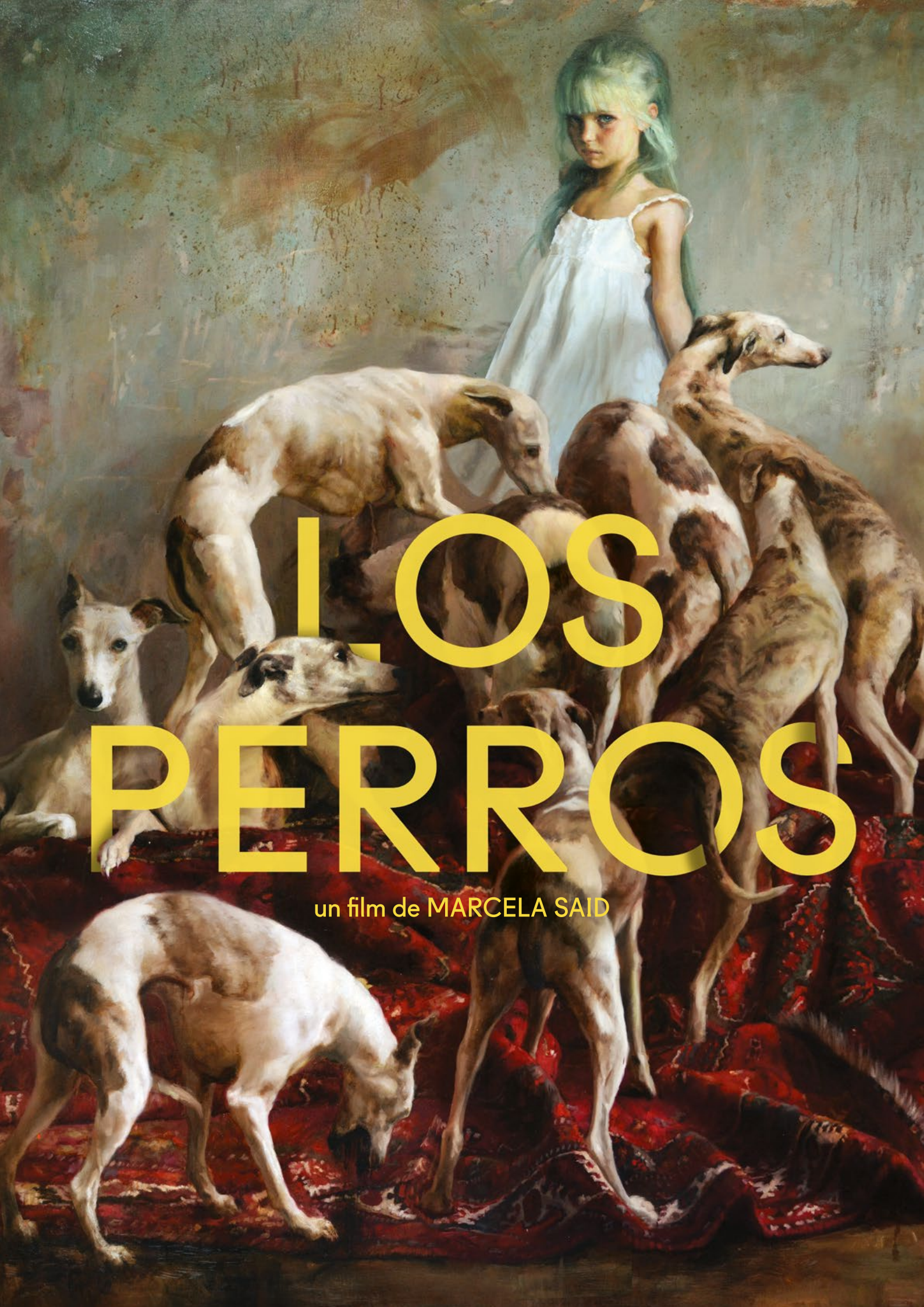
CINEMA DEFAC TO - Sophie Erbs & Tom Dercourt (*France*)
JIRAF A FILMS - Augusto Matte (*Chile*)

CO-PRODUCERS

REI CINESantiago Gallelli & Benjamin Domenech, Matias Roveda (*Argentina*)
TERRATREME FILMES - Joao Matos (*Portugal*)
AUGENSCH E IN FILMPRODUKTION - Jonas Katzenstein & Maximilian Leo (*Germany*)

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

Jamal Zeinal Zade and Dan Wrechsler



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