

HISTORIAS CINEMATOGRAFICAS
in coproduction with
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FESTIVAL DE CANNES

WAKOLDA

a film by **Lucía Puenzo**



Synopsis

Patagonia, 1960. A German physician meets an Argentinean family and follows them on the long desert road to Bariloche where Eva, Enzo and their three children are going to open a lodging house by the Nahuel Huapi lake. This model family reawakens his obsession with purity and perfection, in particular Lilith, a 12 year-old with a body too small for her age. Unaware of his true identity, they accept him as their first guest. They are all gradually won over by this charismatic man, by his elegant manners, his scientific knowledge and his money — until they discover they are living with one of the biggest criminals of all times.

Patagonie, 1960. Un médecin allemand rencontre une famille argentine sur la longue route qui mène à Bariloche où Eva, Enzo et leurs trois enfants s'apprêtent à ouvrir une chambre d'hôtes au bord du lac Nahuel Huapi. Cette famille modèle ranime son obsession pour la pureté et la perfection, en particulier Lilith, une fillette de 12 ans trop petite pour son âge.

Sans connaître sa véritable identité, ils l'acceptent comme leur premier client. Ils sont peu à peu séduits par le charme de cet homme, l'élégance de ses manières, son savoir et son argent jusqu'à ce qu'ils comprennent qu'ils vivent avec l'un des plus grands criminels de tous les temps.



Director's note

The time Josef Mengele spent in Bariloche is the most mysterious period of his hideout in Latin America. All that is known is he worked as a veterinarian, experimenting with the Argentine cattle, while he secretly continued his research buying blood samples of pregnant women. An old rumor says he also made perfect human-like dolls, which soon became a myth. Mengele was a fanatic who saw himself as a visionary with an extraordinary historical opportunity. The essence of his ideology was to achieve biological perfection and to destroy anything interfering with this goal. This biomedical vision is at the heart of the Nazi movement, and not just tangential to its war.

I spent almost a year writing the script of *Wakolda*, based on my eponymous novel, submerged in the complex reasons which made the Argentinean government open its doors to so many Nazis, even making a law to allow them the use of their real names, while entire towns - like Bariloche - were openly friendly to welcoming them... Why hundreds of Argentinean families became accomplices to these men? What was the reaction of these closed German communities, settled down in Patagonia long before WWII, when Nazism turned into something hideous? More so, what happened to the teenagers raised in these communities when they became aware of the monsters they were living with? These questions triggered the plot of *Wakolda*: to combine History with the story of a family who could have lived with one of the biggest criminals of all times.

While exploring some themes and atmospheres that are part of my previous films (the construction of our sexual and social identities and the political awakenings). I wanted the cinematographic language of *Wakolda* to express the contrast between the grandeur of the Patagonian landscape and the tiny, organic details of the characters' private worlds.

Lucía Puenzo was born in 1976 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

After studying literature, film and theater, she published the novels **EL NIÑO PEZ** (2004), **9 MINUTOS** (2005), **LA MALDICIÓN DE JACINTA PICHIMAHUIDA** (2007), **LA FURIA DE LA LANGOSTA** (2010) and **WAKOLDA** (2011), all translated in more than fifteen languages.

Her first feature film **XXY** won the Critics' Grand Prize in Cannes Film Festival 2007 and a Goya for Best Foreign Film. Her second film **THE FISH CHILD** opened the Panorama section at the Berlin Film Festival 2009.

WAKOLDA is her third film.

Lucía Puenzo est née en 1976 à Buenos Aires en Argentine.

Après avoir étudié la littérature, le cinéma et le théâtre, elle publie les romans **L'ENFANT POISSON** (2004), **9 MINUTOS** (2005), **LA MALÉDICTION DE JACINTA PICHIMAHUIDA** (2007), **LA FUREUR DE LA LANGOSTE** (2010) et **WAKOLDA** (2011), tous traduits dans plus de quinze pays. En France, tous ses livres ont été publiés aux Editions Stock qui éditera **WAKOLDA** mi mai 2013.

Son premier long métrage **XXY** a remporté le Grand Prix de la Critique au Festival de Cannes en 2007 et le Goya du Meilleur Film Étranger. Son second film **EL NIÑO PEZ** a été présenté dans la section Panorama au Festival de Berlin, en 2009.

WAKOLDA est son troisième film.

Filmography

XXY (2007)
EL NIÑO PEZ [The Fish Child] (2009)
WAKOLDA (2013)

LOS INVISIBLES (short, 2004)
MÁS ADELANTE (short, 2010)



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Running time: 93 minutes

Format:
DCP / Scope
Color / Dolby Digital

Cast

ALEX BRENDEMÜHL *Mengele*

NATALIA OREIRO *Eva*

DIEGO PERETTI *Enzo*

ELENA ROGER *Nora Eldoc*

GUILLERMO PFENING *Klaus*

ANA PAULS *Nurse*

ALAN DAICZ *Tomás*

and introducing

FLORENCIA BADO *Lilith*

Crew

Director: LUCÍA PUENZO

Script: LUCÍA PUENZO

adapted from the novel WAKOLDA by Lucía Puenzo

Cinematography: NICOLÁS PUENZO

Editing: HUGO PRIMERO

Sound: FERNANDO SOLDEVILA

Set design: MARCELO CHAVES

Music: DANIEL TARRAB, ANDRÉS GOLDSTEIN, LAURA ZISMAN

DIRTY THREE (WARREN ELLIS, MICK TURNER, JIM WHITE) featuring NICK CAVE

Producer: LUCÍA PUENZO

Executive producer: NICOLÁS BATLLE

Produced by: HISTORIAS CINEMATOGRAFICAS

'Historias' general producer: LUIS PUENZO

In coproduction with:

PYRAMIDE PRODUCTIONS: FABIENNE VONIER, STÉPHANE PARTHENAY,

WANDA VISION: JOSÉ MARÍA MORALES, MIGUEL MORALES,

HUMMELFILM: GUDNY HUMMELVOLL,

MOVIECITY

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