

HUNTING SEASON

A film by Natalia Garagiola

World Premiere
Venice FF 2017 International Critics' Week Competition

original title
Temporada de Caza

Argentina / USA/ France / Germany / Qatar - 2017 - 105 min - HD - 1:2.35 - 5.1 - Spanish

LOGLINE

A respected hunting guide in Patagonia is faced with the education of his biological son recently expelled from school. In a wild environment, the father tames his son and teaches him how to respect nature and human relationships.

SYNOPSIS

Ernesto is a respected hunting guide in Patagonia, where he lives with his new family. After the loss of his first wife, he is forced to house his teenage son (Nahuel), whom he hasn't seen for more than a decade. Confronted with the past he left behind, Ernesto struggles to contain the violent outbursts of his son. Without the sympathy of his new family, Nahuel stretches the conflict with his father to a limit. In the hostility of nature, resentment gives way in to a possible relationship between these two men. The reunion will confront them with their own ability to kill and forgive.



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CAST

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| Nahuel | Lautaro Bettoni |
| Ernesto | Germán Palacios (<i>XXY</i> by Lucia Puenzo 2007) |
| Bautista | Boy Olmi |
| Clara | Rita Pauls |

CREW

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Director, Screenplay | Natalia Garagiola |
| DOP | Fernando Lockett |
| Editor | Gonzalo Tobal |
| Sound Designer | Santiago Fumagalli |
| Production Designer | Marina Raggio |
| Costume Designer | Victoria Nana |

Production: Rei Cine

Co-production: Gamechanger Films, Augenschein Filmproduktion, Les Films de l'Étranger

Producers: Santiago Gallelli, Matías Roveda, Benjamin Domenech, Gonzalo Tobal

Co-producers: Mynette Louie, Jonas Katzenstein, Maximilian Leo, Catharina Schreckenber, Philippe Avril.

Executive Producers: Julie Parker Benello, Dan Cogan, GERALYN Dreyfous, Wendy Ettinger.

Co-Executive Producers: Abigail Disney, Regina K. Scully

SUPPORTED BY

INCAA (Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales), Torino Film Lab (Production Award), Doha Film Institute, World Cinema Fund, Strasbourg Eurométropole, Buenos Aires Lab, Toulouse Cinéma en Construction, Cannes Nordic Factory, Rotterdam Lab, BrLab, TyPA.

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DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY

Her debut feature, TEMPORADA DE CAZA (2017, Hunting Season), premiered at Venice International Film Festival as a part of the Critics' Week Competition.

Between 2011-2014, she wrote and directed 3 fiction short-films: RINCÓN DE LÓPEZ (2011), released at BAFICI; YEGUAS Y COTORRAS (Mares and Parakeets; 2012) premiered at the Semaine de la Critique Short- film Competition (Festival de Cannes). Her latest shortfilm, SUNDAYS (2014), premiered at the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Festival de Cannes) as a part of the Nordic Factory.

She is currently writing her second film.

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

HUNTING SEASON is an intimate film with a central focus on an impossible father and son relationship. Set in the particular context of hunting, there is a wordless exchange, a silent dialogue that cuts across everything and takes it to a primal, common level. In the South of Argentina, one is part of nature but is also confronted by it, the ideal context to unveil the story of a teenager who faces duel, reunites with his barely known father and wonders what kind of man he wants to become. HUNTING SEASON is a portrait of the characters' inner landscape and the scenery itself, combining a narrative yet observational tone that draws the truth out of the characters with a crude, raw tone, furtive: like a hunter stalking his prey.

As I got into the world of hunters, through the making of the film, many questions arose: what leads a man to become a hunter? Is hunting exclusively for men? Are there different types of masculinity? What drives someone to the possession of what he admires the most under such an extreme formula, to kill what he loves? How can this formula apply to father and son relationships?

On my last trip an old hunter told me: "I go hunting every week, but I don't kill anymore. Now, I get to the point when I should pull the trigger and I simply let it live. I give life. In my eyes, that's hunting too".



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Q&A WITH NATALIA GARAGIOLA

When did you start thinking about this as a subject for your film? Did the writing process take a long time?

I first thought about a hunting trip as a point of interaction between a father and his son immediately after finishing "Mares and Parakeets", my second short film. Overall it took almost four years. During that time I took some short trips for inspiration to Patagonia, exchanged drafts with my producers and attended several writing labs. I've always been captivated by observing the varying shapes family bonds can take.

Was it difficult to get male psychology and reactions into your script?

It wasn't really difficult to capture male psychology, because basically the film's core is a father-son relationship seen from a distance. At first I felt captivated by this distance for itself, and after a while I realized that one can communicate a lot by portraying it subtly. Nahuel and Ernesto's rapport is based almost exclusively on physical rather than verbal exchange: it's only through action that they are able to articulate and convey what they feel, but are unable to put in words. The silence surrounding them changes its meaning along the way, but neither the silence nor its meaning is ever quite clear.

When directing your actors, what is important for you in the process?

One of the challenges was to achieve a natural tone and a safe crossover space between the more established actors and the rest of the cast, which includes non-professional actors. We invested a lot of time rehearsing the make-up of several characters and understanding in-depth a hunter's way of life and activities. Throughout this process, all the actors were able to own their characters, finding a path to their true nature. Once on set, there were no patterns or mistakes, just actions to be played out and performed. This method enabled us to explore every scene in great detail and establish a true relationship with the environment throughout the story.

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My intention was to create a large field of play, a broad freedom to capture as many moments of truth as possible given the very physical nature of the father-son relationship. I realized we had to work in natural locations, which was a necessary to this type of storytelling, although this posed some practical, logistical challenges.

Was shooting in Patagonia your first choice? Were you happy with the experience?

Patagonia was our first and only option, right from the beginning. The film was designed to be shot in natural landscapes, in and around the town of San Martín de los Andes, where we did actually shoot. The only problem was access to some very specific locations because of the climate. We'd thought about this beforehand, but it proved to be the case that the climate was indeed the main wildcard in the whole equation.



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What was the most difficult thing for you as a first-time director (of a feature length film)?

It was my first feature-length directing experience and I had great support from the outset; the team of producers and the crew were all very experienced. They not only trusted me, but also collaborated actively with creative input. One of my greatest challenges was to be able to nurture my own vision and ideas as distinct from that trust and input.

Why do you direct?

When my brothers and I were children, our parents would put on films for us rather than read stories to us. We would watch one film over and over again until the tape wore out, and only then would we watch the next film. In a way, nothing made more sense than making films for me and the step from one project to the next is very similar to that childhood experience. I find shooting on set to be one of my happiest experiences; personally, I find it absolutely fulfilling.

What about your future projects? Is there anything specific you wish to achieve as a filmmaker?

I believe no project is the same as the previous one, and that's something I find soothing and exciting at the same time. My main priority is always to tell a compelling story and to do so without too much waiting time between films. We are already working on my second feature film, which we expect to shoot soon.

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