



BIG SCREEN COMPETITION
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM
2017



DONKEYOTE

Indira Prasad

a SUTOR KOLONKO and SDI PRODUCTIONS production in association with OPA FILMS in co-production with ZDF/ARTE directed by CHICO PEREIRA "DONKEYOTE"
written by CHICO PEREIRA MANUEL PEREIRA GABRIEL MOLERA with MANUEL MOLERA APARICIO GORRIÓN ZAFRANA PACA MOLERA PEREIRA MAMEN GÓMEZ HEREDIA
director of photography JULIAN SCHWANITZ editor NICK GIBBON sound MARK DEAS commissioning editor DORIS HEPP executive producers LESLIE FINLAY and NOE MENDELLE
produced by INGMAR TROST and SONJA HENRICI co-produced by CHICO PEREIRA supported by CREATIVE SCOTLAND and FILM- UND MEDIENSTIFTUNG NRW



Film und Medien
Stiftung NRW



arte

SUTOR KOLONKO

Scottish
Documentary
Institute

opafilms

SCREENING INFORMATION

WORLD PREMIERE
28 JANUARY 2017 ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

All Screenings:

27 Jan 2017 - 12:00 Press & Industry (Cinerama 3)

28 Jan 2017 - 18:45 World Premiere (Pathe 7)

29 Jan 2017 - 10:00 Public (LantarenVenster 3)

30 Jan 2017 - 11:00 Press & Industry (Cinerama 3)

2 Feb 2017 - 15:45 Public (Pathe 4)

4 Feb 2017 - 19:15 Public (Cinerama 6)

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SYNOPSIS

LOGLINE

Manolo and his donkey Gorrión go on a journey to the West.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Manolo leads a simple life in Southern Spain. He has two loves: his animals, in particular his donkey Gorrión ("Sparrow"), and wandering through nature. Against the advice of his doctor, he decides to plan one last walk in the US, the brutal 2200 mile Trail of Tears. But not without his donkey.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Manolo leads a simple life in the south of Spain. He has two loves: his animals, in particular his donkey Gorrión ("Sparrow"), and taking long wanders through nature. Against the advice of his doctor, he decides to plan one last walk by re-tracing the Trail of Tears, a brutal forced 2200-mile trek through the Native American Cherokee Nation. Even though the United States is a very far and ambitious journey to make on foot, Manolo wants to take his favourite walking companions, Gorrión and his beloved dog, Zafrana. But how to overcome the small obstacle of transporting a donkey, Manolo's chronic arthritis, a history of heart attacks, and Gorrión's fear of water? As their adventure continues, Manolo's wondrous friendship with his animals finds a beautiful equilibrium, man and beast intrepidly braving the harsh landscape together. Will they find the American West? More importantly, will they be able to see life as it is, and not as it should be?

CAST



MANUEL MOLERA APARICIO

Manolo is 73 years old and lives in a tiny village in the northern hills of Cordoba (Spain) with his wife Mamen. Now that he is retired, he spends his time doing what he likes the most: walking and feeling free. He never walks alone, always with his friends Gorrión and Zafrana - and his Samsung Galaxy! While walking Manolo talks to his animals, recites poetry, sings tango and practices English with his headphones.



GORRIÓN

Gorrión is a ten year-old Andalusian donkey. He does not know where he misplaced his microchip or whether he ever had one. But that doesn't worry him or his friend Manolo. He likes grass (lots of it) and walking in the countryside with Manolo. He does not like water or bridges or ships. This does not make him too enthusiastic about Manolo's overseas plans but he's a good sport. He gets on with Zafrana ok - if only she stopped barking once in a while.



ZAFRANA

Zafrana is a 5 year-old sheep dog from a breed known as Cantabrian wolf. She stays close to Manolo and she likes walking in the countryside, camping and cheese. She puts up with Gorrión's stubbornness although he does test her patience at times. She can sleep anywhere but sometimes she can be a bit naughty when she chews through things to sharpen her teeth. Ships and water are a doddle for her.



PACA MOLERA PEREIRA

Paquita (Paca) is Manolo's eldest daughter; the younger is called Loli. Paca lives in Belalcázar (Córdoba), not far from Manolo and is a devoted Special Education Teacher who spends a great part of her time organising activities for her pupils. Usually it's the parents who worry for their children; however for Paca it's quite the opposite. She is deeply concerned for her father, especially considering that he has suffered two heart attacks in the past. Ultimately Paca supports Manolo's lifestyle - but she needs to be in contact with her dad, so she insists he calls her everyday from the road.



MAMEN GÓMEZ HEREDIA

Mamen is Manolo's wife. She listens to his stories and takes care of him when he returns from his walks. She recently retired from her job as a History of Art teacher, now spending her time painting as a practicing artist. Discreet, understanding and respectful of the lives of others, she also loves animals and traveling. In fact, unlike Manolo, she'd jump on a plane in a heartbeat.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR CHICO PEREIRA

- ROAMING FREELY IN A WORLD FULL OF BORDERS -

What was your inspiration for this film?

Manolo has always been an inspiration to me. He is my uncle and my godfather. When I was a child he used to take me and his other nephews into the country for “adventures”, which basically consisted of spotting wild animals, listening to fantastic stories about the countryside, or taking mysterious trips into the unknown. Thinking back, they were ordinary moments that he would turn into fantastic stories for us. All of us were fascinated by this character and sometimes we would wait at eight in the morning outside our houses to see Manolo passing by, begging him to take us with him. But one day, Manolo divorced my auntie and a terrible silence between the two families ensued. Many years passed when his nephews grew up without ever having contact with him. Our relationship was interrupted at some point in our childhood and stayed there, frozen in our memories.

Until Christmas Day in 2012 that is. That day I visited Manolo at his parents’ old house. I was about to move to the USA and I felt a strong need to see him. I recognized the same man as I had known before: his small eyes, his big ears, his deep voice and his same love for American hats. But something had changed: he had suffered two heart attacks and now walked with his new best friend, a beautiful Andalusian donkey called Gorrión (“Sparrow”).

We spent hours talking and we promised that never again would there be such silence between us. We wanted to pick up that same relationship from the very moment that it stopped. His nephews are now in their thirties, some have kids, but we are still Manolo’s children; to us, he is still that same wonderful storyteller. And what a big fantasy a film is! It should not come as a surprise that three of his nephews have become filmmakers and have been creatively involved in the making of this film, which has served as both the continuation of a broken relationship and the biggest adventure we’ve ever taken together.

When it comes to your filmmaking approach, the film seems to resemble your first film PABLO’S WINTER in a number of ways. Do you see DONKEYOTE as a natural continuation of your previous work and methods?

Yes, in many ways DONKEYOTE is a continuation of PABLO’S WINTER. The main thread running through both works is the development of a particular approach to documentary based on the notion of the encounter between real characters and filmmakers. I am really interested in the human and creative relationships established between documentary participants and filmmakers through the making of a film. On the one hand, I feel that it is this encounter between different sensibilities that these films document. On the other, this notion of the encounter also opens a door to creative freedom, in which reality becomes the result of a process of interaction with filmmaking as its core. We are always conscious that we are making a film. That liberates us from any claim to ‘truth’, and at the same time it fosters a nice sense of play. Having said that, I think the films contain a lot of true-to-life characters. This approach based on the notion of the encounter also has stylistic implications. For instance, by freely bringing together aspects of the representation of reality in one hand, and of fiction

cinema conventions in the other, the films emphasize some aspects such as performance and mise-en-scène, which are not automatically identified with the documentary genre.

DONKEYOTE and PABLO'S WINTER are also part of a larger project of making films in the area where I am from. One of my primary objectives is to depict rural and semi-rural areas in Southern Spain complete with all the complexities that they present. Another important objective of this larger project is to make cinema a more prominent part of everyday life in these places. I sometimes use the term 'Village Cinema' to refer to this wider and longer project of bringing together filmmaking and village life of which DONKEYOTE and PABLO'S WINTER are the two first instances.

The trio of Manolo, his donkey Gorrión and the dog Zafrana are a romantic and anachronistic bunch. It seems the film also carries a subtle comment on our over industrialized and globalized world.

Manolo is definitely a romantic character. He is in love with the ideal of roaming freely and the nomadic lifestyle, something that it is very difficult to accomplish these days. In this sense, he represents a pastoral and traditional view of life. But Manolo is also a very contemporary person. He is very keen on new technologies, and navigates the internet as well as he does the local hills. During shooting, it was common to see Manolo reading his e-book in the middle of nowhere, or looking for a place to charge his smartphone by following electricity cables along the way. If anything, these technologies actually serve to enhance his way of life. For instance, the smartphone makes him reachable by his family, which puts them at ease and allows Manolo to carry on. Manolo is very aware of this and uses technology to his advantage.

The film mostly builds on this combination and conflict between the traditional and the contemporary. Whether having to contact travel agents to inquire about taking his donkey to the USA in order to do a walking route together, or making a video to sponsors with his mobile phone to finance this nomadic journey, these endeavours pretty much embody this idea of the traditional/local in the modern/globalized world. During the moments when Manolo had to put up with the laughter of others while explaining his plans to travel with Gorrión to America, I felt that he was actually more modern than people realised; or at least, Manolo seemed less narrow-minded about what it means being modern. During the making of this film I was also aware of the paradox in the way that goods, services and money travel a long way in our globalized world, while the movement of people in space is highly restricted and becomes a threat to the system.

How do you turn animals into real 'characters'?

Since I was child, I've been amazed by the strong connection and communication that Manolo had with his animals. Looking at them through Manolo's eyes was a really fascinating experience. So it is actually Manolo who should be credited for the multidimensional way in which animals appear in this film. For instance, he has a very sophisticated relationship with Gorrión, and he became a translator of the animal's sensibility for us. There are also moments in the film, for example in the boat scene, when we witnessed in awe a great communicative exchange between man and donkey. In this regard, it is Manolo's relationship with his animals which is one of the clearest documentary aspects of DONKEYOTE.

Nonetheless, we were faced with the question of how to film and represent the animals. We came to understand that the basic element here was relationships, in this case the relation between Manolo, Gorrión and Zafrana, as well as between the animals and their environment. We will never know for sure what passes through Gorrión and Zafrana's minds, but for example we know that when it rains, it rains for the three of them, regardless of how differently they might perceive the rain. My approach to generate moments for the film relied a lot on putting characters in certain situations, and we took this approach also to represent the animals. How would Gorrión and Zafrana behave when facing the sea? How would Gorrión react meeting working mules? Would Gorrión be likely to get on a boat or be rather reluctant? Animals are always in documentary mode. You can introduce them in somehow fictional frameworks, but they always behave "their way".

This also applied to our own presence as the film crew. The first time we tried to film Gorrión he became really scared of all the film gear and wouldn't allow us to get close to him at all. Gradually, he allowed us into his space and we were able to film him very closely. Just spending an hour filming Gorrión on his own was a really interesting experience. The way he looks, moves, and shifts his attention has a particular temporal and spatial texture which felt very different from ours. This, and the silence around him, transported us into a particular frame of mind while filming alone with him. I think that this particular frame of mind reached in the encounter between human and animal subjectivities explain a lot of Manolo's love for animals and Nature.

The title is referring to Don Quixote. In what way were you inspired and guided by the novel and their infamous protagonists?

In the beginning the title DONKEYOTE appeared almost like a joke. It came from the close friendship between Manolo and his donkey, and from the man's endeavours to go to USA with Gorrión, which sounded very quixotic itself. Perhaps, it was also related to the fact that I am from La Mancha. But gradually we found out some thematic connections between the novel and the film, even though we have not really tried to do a proper adaptation.

Don Quijote is a character unable to recognize that times have changed. He wants to be part of a world of cavalry that is long gone. But far from accepting this fact, he tries to bring that world back at every corner, collecting misfortunes along the way, but never surrendering. Some aspects of Manolo's lifestyle also resonate with this. Manolo still remembers and wants to walk through a countryside without fences and gates, something which is not longer possible in Spain. The disappearance of public paths, which have been overrun by highways and roads, and most commonly fenced-off by landlords, makes impossible his desire to roam freely. The romantic idea of going to America with his donkey by boat takes both his desire for freedom and the limitation and restriction of movement to a more global scale. But Manolo always finds a way to keep going in spite of the disappointments. The dreamer, storyteller, and performative nature of Manolo also relate to Don Quijote. Manolo, like the character of the novel, goes out in search of adventures and creates stories about them. Ultimately it is the desire for adventure, more than the adventures themselves, that drive both Manolo and Don Quijote.

THE FILMMAKERS

DIRECTOR: CHICO PEREIRA



After several award-winning short fiction films, Chico Pereira (born 1979 in Almaden, Spain) moved towards documentary by devising minimalist narratives inspired by real-life characters and performed by them. As part of his research for the MFA Advanced Film Practice at Edinburgh Napier University, Chico started combining fiction and documentary film techniques. PABLO'S WINTER was his graduation film and his first feature length work. It won awards at DOK Leipzig, IDFA and Full Frame, and opened the 2013 MoMA Documentary Fortnight in NYC. A short doc POLARIS, about Filipino fishermen on Scottish boats, followed. Chico is funded by a prestigious scholarship granted by "La Caixa" to undertake a PhD in Social Anthropology and Ethnographic Film in Santa Cruz, USA. DONKEYOTE is his sophomore film to his widely admired debut.

Chico Pereira - Filmography (as director): DONKEYOTE (2017) feature documentary; PABLO'S WINTER (2012) feature documentary; POLARIS (2012) short; DISCO (2011) short; THE WAY TO MACONDO (2009) short; 6:05 PM (2008)

PRODUCER: INGMAR TROST - SUTOR KOLONKO (GERMANY)



Ingmar Trost graduated with a BA in Film Studies and Spanish & Latin American Studies and received his MA in Documentary Directing at Goldsmiths College in London. He is a member of the European Film Academy and an alumni of EAVE, Documentary Campus and EURODOC. Ingmar was Germany's Producer on the Move at the Cannes Film Festival 2015.

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About Sutor Kolonko - GERMANY

Founded in 2010, Sutor Kolonko produces documentaries and narrative feature films. The company has a strong focus on international co-production and strives at being a point of departure especially for young writers and directors. Sutor Kolonko's films include: the Cannes award-winning SOFIA'S LAST AMBULANCE by Ilian Metev, MODRIS by Juris Kursietis, THE CHAMBERMAID LYNN by Ingo Haeb and THE WEATHER INSIDE by Isabelle Stever. In 2016, Sutor Kolonko co-produced SOLITARY by Kristi Jacobson, ENLIGHTEN US by Jenny Carchman and HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM by Žiga Virč (all of which had their world premieres at the Tribeca FF 2016) as well as OSCURO ANIMAL by Felipe Guerrero (Hivos Tiger Competition IFF Rotterdam 2016).

Current productions and films in development include: MIMU PEPO TATI (WT) by Ilian Metev, OPUS ZERO by Daniel Graham and BEAUTIFUL SOULS by Tom Schreiber.

PRODUCER: SONJA HENRICI - SDI PRODUCTIONS LTD (UK)



Sonja joined Scottish Documentary Institute in 2004 at its inception and has developed SDI ever since, becoming co-exec producer of Bridging the Gap and many award-winning short documentaries, running the Interdoc programme, producing feature documentaries and investigating new business models and outreach campaigns through our Virtuous Circle initiative (2011-14). She is co-founder of SDI Productions (2007) with Noe Mendelle. She has written fiction (REWIND, 2009) and started her career in the administration of Edinburgh International Film Festival 1999-2003, where she was permanent member of staff for three years.

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About SDI Productions Ltd - UK

SDI Productions Ltd was set up by Noe Mendelle and Sonja Henrici in 2007 to provide the production platform for Scottish Documentary Institute for all our international feature documentaries. Noe and Sonja combine over 40 years' experience in film. Our films have played at major film festivals, such as Sundance, Cannes, Hotdocs, Tribeca, Full Frame, IDFA, Cinéma du Réel, Vision du Réel, and Leipzig, and have picked up major awards and nominations.

SDI Productions is all about supporting innovative combinations of visual and sound into new forms of storytelling. We look at Drama or Documentary as tools for storytelling not genres and give equal importance to content and form.

Recent productions include:

DONKEYOTE by Chico Pereira (2017), THE SECRET KINGDOM OF THE BIJAGOS by Noe Mendelle (2016), SEVEN SONGS FOR A LONG LIFE by Amy Hardie (2015), NORFOLK by Martin Radich (2015, iFeatures, Creative England, BBC, BFI), I AM BREATHING by Emma Davie & Morag McKinnon (2013, UK, C4 & Demark, DR - IDFA competition & BAFTA winner for Best Directing), FUTURE MY LOVE by Maja Borg (2012, UK/Sweden; SVT - EIFF, CPH Dox, Ambulante, Hotdocs, nominated for the Michael Powell Award for Best British Film), PABLO'S WINTER by Chico Pereira (2012).

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIAN SCHWANITZ

Julian Schwanitz is a BAFTA-winning Director of Photography with twelve years experience in drama and documentary across all professional formats. After recognizing his talent and love for camera work, he started his film education as a camera assistant in the German film and television industry, which gained him a place at a prestigious Cinematography school in Dortmund. He went on to study at the Screen Academy Scotland where he currently lectures undergraduate students in camera and lighting. In 2012 his documentary on Jocky Wilson, the multi award winning KIRKCALDY MAN earned him his second BAFTA and a nomination for a GRIERSON Award after scooping the Golden Dove for the best international short doc at DOKLeipzig. In 2013 the International Documentary Association awarded him with the IDA Award for Cinematography for his camera work on PABLO'S WINTER. Recent feature credits: DONKEYOTE (2017), WHERE YOU'RE MEANT TO BE (Sheffield, IDFA 2016), INSIDE EINSTEIN'S MIND (TV 2015)

EDITOR: NICK GIBBON

Nick edited the widely admired feature debut PABLO'S WINTER by Chico Pereira, and has worked on a number of award-winning Scottish fiction and documentary shorts. A graduate from Edinburgh Napier University, Nick's own films have screened internationally. Recently he has worked with contemporary dancers for Arts Council England, multi-media artists, and directed / edited the film of fine artist Craig Coultard's FOREST PITCH project, part of the London Olympics 2012 Culture Festival. He edited Amy Hardie's SEVEN SONGS FOR A LONG LIFE (SxSW 2016), before working on DONKEYOTE.

CREDITS

Directed by
CHICO PEREIRA

Director of Photography
JULIAN SCHWANITZ

Supervisor
STEPHAN COLLI

With
MANUEL MOLERA APARICIO
GORRIÓN
ZAFRANA
PACA MOLERA PEREIRA
MAMEN GÓMEZ HEREDIA

Editor
NICK GIBBONS

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ALEXANDER WEUFFEN

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WILMONT SCHULZE

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GONZÁLEZ

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SATTER

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INGMAR TROST
SONJA HENRICI

Picture Post Production
FARBKULT

Sound Design
RENÉ PELTSCH

Associate Producer
CHICO PEREIRA

Supervisor
ERHARD GIESEN (BVK)

Dialogue Editing
FALK MÖLLER

Executive Producer for SDI
Productions
NOE MENDELLE

Colourist
FABIANA CARDALDA

Commissioning Editor
ZDF/ARTE
DORIS HEPP

produced by
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SDI PRODUCTIONS LTD

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Executive Producer Creative
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LESLIE FINLAY

Title Graphics
FRANK HAMMER

in association with
OPA FILMS

Audio Post Production
TORUS
TONPOSTPRODUKTION

Supported by
CREATIVE SCOTLAND
FILM- UND MEDIENSTIFTUNG
NRW

in co-production with
ZDF/ARTE

(For full credits please contact sonja@scotdoc.com)

FACT SHEET

COUNTRY: Germany / UK / Spain

YEAR: 2017

TECHNICAL:

85 min. colour 25 fps

Format: 1:2.39

DCP – 5.1.

BluRay 5.1 sound

Language: Spanish with English subtitles; Spanish Original

PRODUCTION COMPANIES:

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SALES & DISTRIBUTION: Scottish Documentary Institute

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