

Berlinale
64 Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition

MARTIN SCORSESE
presents



The Third Side of the River (La Tercera Orilla)

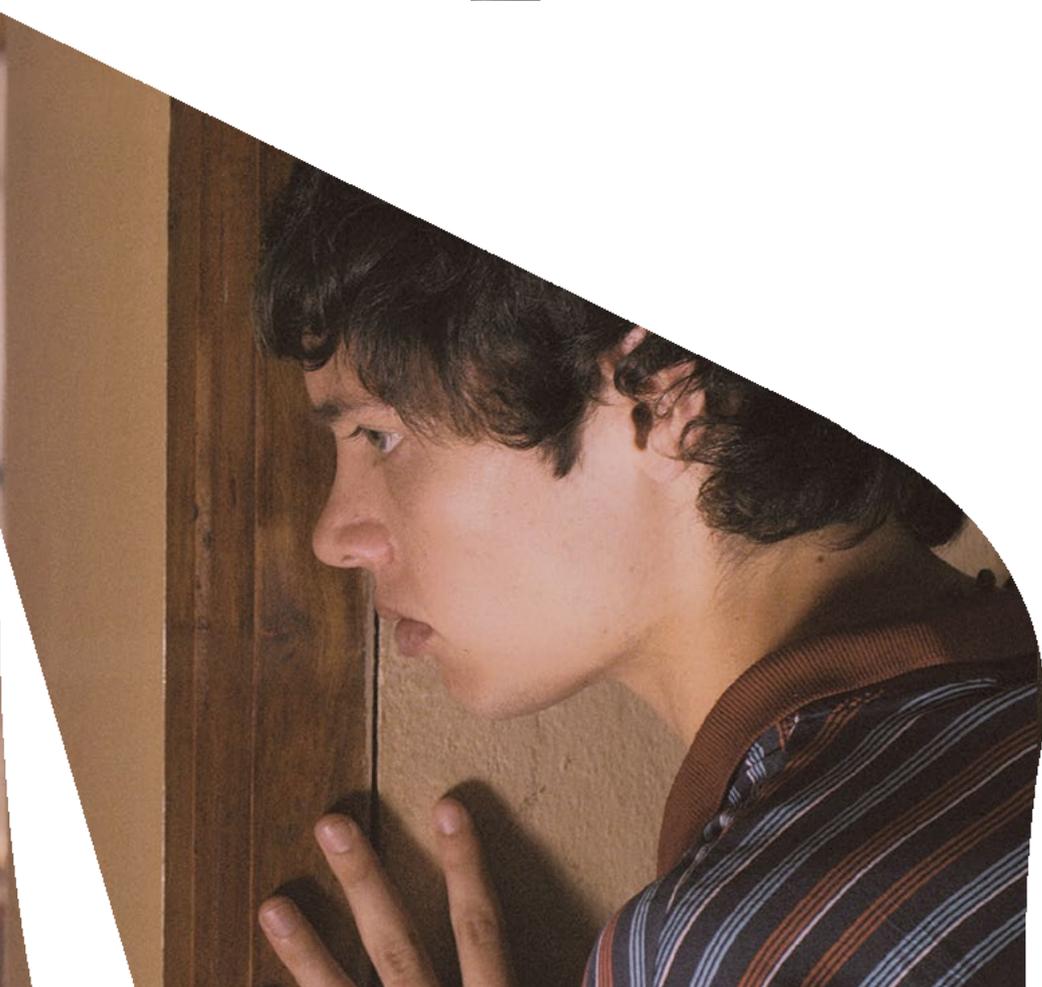
a film by CELINA MURGA



SYNOPSIS

Seventeen-year-old Nicolas lives with his mother and younger siblings in a small provincial city. His estranged father, Jorge, a respected doctor, has decided that Nicolas will be his successor in both his medical practice and agricultural business. Nicolas is pressured by his father's steps to prepare him for this responsibility, leaving no room for the teenager's feelings. Nicolas obeys his father, but he hates him. He has seen his mother suffer because of Jorge's double life. The first one with his official family, and the other one with Nicolas' family, not acknowledged publicly. As tensions between father and son rise, Nicolas realizes that he must make a choice and take action toward his own future.





THE THIRD SIDE

The »third side« of the river is a place that doesn't exist. It's a non-place. A river can only have two sides, never three. This refers to the place Nicolas is standing on -- not in one place or another. A little bit on his family's side, a little on his father's side. Pulled by these sides, he's really looking for a place of his own, that third place that doesn't exist now but that he plans on creating for himself. I believe that as human beings we have the possibility of transforming ourselves, no matter how adverse our initial situation may be during the years of our youth. I think that Nicolas is at the moment where he can discover that possibility for change. He doesn't know yet how to do it, he doesn't know if the way he chooses is the best either. But it's the way he finds today.

ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

The screenplay is from my original story inspired by a news item I heard about a 17-year-old who killed his estranged father, the man's recognized spouse and their small child. When I researched this subject, I realized I was most interested in exploring the relationship between father and son. I wanted to understand the tension endured by a character in such a complex situation. I also realized that I wanted my character to have an escape door, an exit. I didn't want to condemn him with the irrevocable weight of death. I decided to focus on my character's explosion as a liberating one and not condemnatory. I moved the background into the medical world, since I'm the daughter and granddaughter of doctors.

DOUBLE FAMILY

The double family situation is common in Argentina. But in a small provincial city, everything is more exposed. The well-known »secret« situation grows

COMMENTS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR CELINA MURGA

stronger: everyone knows, but they act as if they know nothing at all. We are confronted clearly with a society more defined by hypocrisy. This was an element that my writing partner and I wanted to integrate into Nicolas's context. This helps make for the hell he lives in. He is forced to escape from a social observation that restricts and chokes him. I was interested in exploring the relationship between a character and his environment, by placing the father and son in a particular context: a clearly sexist society which is very common in Argentinian provincial cities. In this type of society, roles have been held back and we find high moral standards and social judgment is highly determinant. The boundaries between what is private and what is public are very weak. Everyone knows, everyone sees, but no one says anything. As common as it may be to come across sexist social dynamics in my country, I believe that those traits of human behavior are not exclusive to Argentina nor South America. I think that in many different places of the world, people will be able to see themselves or people they know in this story, in these characters.

NOT THE OBVIOUS VIOLENT FATHER

Jorge is a father who hasn't really been a father. He never sat next to his son to do homework, to ask him



if he likes a girl, to cherish his words, his emotions. He's a father that walks into the house and moves around as if it were his own. His actions are violent, even when they are not boasting violence. He's a father with power, who comes to the house to have sex with Nicolas' mother, then leaves. It's Nicolas who has to watch her cry and suffer because of him. It's Nicolas who helps her with his younger siblings, who plays the role of man of the house.

It was very important for me to avoid the obvious violent father. I think Jorge believes he's doing the right thing with Nicolas. He behaves as he has seen his own father behave. Jorge thinks that taking care of the family is providing money, work opportunities, teaching accordingly to a mold, no questions asked and with no room for individuality.

From the very start I talked with Daniel Veronese (who plays Jorge) about the difficulty of the character to express any type of feelings. Everything he says is like a whip, he expresses in a brief manner, without connecting with his emotions, with no regard for the other. He's pure action, I don't see him as a man who stops and thinks about things. He just acts or reacts as he thinks he should, as he was taught to.

Daniel Veronese is actually a well known theatre director both in Argentina and in Europe, particularly Germany and Spain. It's his first time acting in cinema.

INNERTURMOIL

It's too difficult for Nicolas to speak up to his father. Most importantly, the father allows no dialogue. Everything he says to Nicolas is some kind of order. He is never included or allowed to take part in any decision. Nicolas also knows that his mother doesn't want Jorge to leave her. If Nicolas confronts his father, he jeopardizes the order of things.

COMMENTS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR CELINA MURGA

For me it was of most importance that the audience could observe the situations from inside Nicolas' head, from his point of view. I was interested in raising the idea of how in a supposedly quiet and calm place where apparently »nothing happens«, a character can suffer such inner turmoil. For me it's clear that not just any 17-year-old is going to react like this to the pressures of a father like Jorge. This is Nicolas' particular way of trying to get out of his situation. It's the only way he finds. It's interesting for me to see how he charges against these pressures. He can't speak, he can't express, because there is no space. The father won't give him that space, which drives Nicolas to react the way he does.

LEAVE OR DIE

Nicolas' turmoil is contrasted by events in the lives of his siblings – his sister's 15th birthday party and his younger brother's problems at school. These situations give volume to the character. We wanted to show different sides of him. I personally like the relationship with his sister. She's the only one able to contain him in some sort of way. They have a relationship based on deep love. Nicolas loves his family and because of that he faces a real dilemma. What to do if the ones you love the most are part of a context that hurts you? For him, it's almost a matter of life or death. Leave or die.



WOMEN ARE NOT AT THE CENTER

I chose male lead characters because of the enormous challenge. Until this film all of my lead characters have been women. At first it felt a little distant, but the script collaboration with Gabriel Medina was key for character development. Women are not at the center of the story in this movie. This was a very conscious decision. I wanted to test myself in a story about men, where the point of view I had to develop was 100 percent masculine. Although women are not at the center, I do believe that they are really important characters. The mother is a key element. One of the things that bothers Nicolas the most is seeing how his father treats his mother. It really hurts him deeply. The close relationship that he has with his sister Andrea is also crucial to the story, especially its outcome.

ALIAN DEVETAC AS NICOLAS

We searched for the actor to play Nicolas for about a year in several cities of the region where we shot the film. Alian Devetac came to our casting because he was accompanying a friend. He's actually a musician (guitar, piano) and singer. When we saw him sitting in the waiting room, we said: that's him! Alian had this great expression that for me related immensely with the character: a very intense look, provocative yet full of fear. It was hard work convincing him to do the casting. Then what we usually do is meet several times with the person, try around different dimensions of the character. As we advance with the encounters we start visualizing what acting tools the person naturally has, how do they react to certain requests, what excites them, what parts of themselves can they bring to the character, if they get tired quickly or not. We constantly evaluate several elements that make the concrete act of making a movie. This was the case

COMMENTS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR CELINA MURGA

with Alian and it was really exciting to see him surprise himself with what he was capable of doing, with what he could make others feel, with acting itself. For him it was the discovery of a new type of expression.

WORKING WITH NON-ACTORS

I've been working with non-actors since my first movie. I enjoy greatly the possibility to meddle in worlds that are strange to me, as well as meeting people I wouldn't be able to in other circumstances. The type of coaching that non-actors need during a shoot allows for a particular bond with that person. Getting to know them more thoroughly, establishing ties of trust that run much deeper than a professional actor-director relationship. A more human bond is created.

A CERTAIN TRUTH

My path in cinema was first through fiction, documentary came after. I have always been interested in exploring the edges between these two genres. I came on to documentary because I realized that there was something in my filmmaking style that naturally contained it. I really enjoy working in real locations and with actors with no professional training. There is a certain truth about these situations that I'm interested in grasping and I think it works more intensely when the elements that make up that fiction are closer to what is real.



ENTRE RIOS

THE THIRD SIDE OF THE RIVER was filmed in Concepción del Uruguay, a small city with a population of about 75.000, 300 km from Buenos Aires.

I knew that I wanted to shoot in the province of Entre Ríos (where I was born and have filmed most of my movies) but we hadn't decided where in the province. We started looking for the necessary scenarios in different cities and in this one we found all the locations just how we had imagined and pictured them.

There is something about the fact I'm filming in my own province that seduces me. On a more personal note, it's a way of returning over and over to that childhood place. It's also speaking about stories I know, characters I have seen and places that generate very sensorial emotions in me. I'm also really interested in showing the world other regions of Argentina, showing different territories and idiosyncrasies that usually aren't the most showcased.

MARTIN SCORSESE PRESENTS

I met Martin Scorsese thanks to the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. Thanks to Scorsese choosing me as his protégé, we were able to create a relationship that has outlasted the program. He actually asked to be executive producer of THE THIRD SIDE OF THE RIVER. I was writing the movie during the time of the Rolex program. I spent a lot of time with Scorsese during the shooting and editing of SHUTTER ISLAND. At that time I was writing the script and it was so enriching to speak with him about the characters and the story. We talked a lot about the bond between a son and his father. We discussed developing the character of the father with the necessary ambiguity to make him

COMMENTS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR CELINA MURGA

more complex and human. He also helped me a lot with the masculine point of view. We talked about how Scorsese manages to give volume to his male characters, how he gets the spectator to empathize with them even though most of the time their actions could be socially questionable. I traveled to NY and watched a rough cut of THE THIRD SIDE OF THE RIVER with Scorsese. I was pleased to hear his compliments about leading actor Alian's performance and the mise-en-scene.



»After I read the script for *The Third Side Of The River*, I decided to join the film as a producer. I was struck by the documentary reality, the feeling for everyday life, the sense of looming danger. When Orson Welles was describing Vittorio De Sica's picture *Shoeshine*, he said that the camera just disappears and you're face to face with life up there on the screen. That's the way I felt as I watched Celina's earlier pictures, and I felt it as I read this script as well. I could see the action through her eyes.«

Martin Scorsese
Executive Producer of *The Third Side Of The River*

La Tercera Orilla (The Third Side Of The River) is Celina Murga's fourth feature film. It was selected for Official Competition at the 2014 Berlinale.

Celina Murga is the writer-director of acclaimed features *Una Semana Solos (A Week Alone)* and *Ana Y Los Otros (Ana And The Others)*. Both films premiered at the Venice Film Festival. *Una Semana Solos (A Week Alone)* won Best Film awards at Gijon and Munich, and Best Director at Thessaloniki. It was also shown at numerous other film festivals, including Rotterdam, London, Toulouse and San Francisco. *Ana Y Los Otros (Ana And The Others)*, Celina Murga's first feature, was named the Best LatinAmerican film of the year by the Fipresci (Foreign Press) and won the Audience Award at Vienna and the Jury Special Prize in Venice.

Celina Murga also directed the feature documentary *Escuela Normal (Normal School)*, which made its world premiere at the 2012 Berlinale Forum, where it won a Special Mention for the Caligari Award. The film was also featured at the London and Rio de Janeiro film festivals.

Born in Parana, Argentina, in 1973, Celina Murga studied photography and then film direction at Buenos Aires' Universidad del Cine. She wrote and directed several short films: *Interior-Noche*, *Frio Afuera* and *Una tarde feliz* (this last one in co-direction with Juan Villegas).

In 2009, Celina Murga was selected by the renowned Martin Scorsese to work and learn under his mentorship in the year-long Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative.

CELINA MURGA WRITER-DIRECTOR

Celina Murga has been invited as a jury member to important film festivals around the globe, like Munich, Freiburg and Valdivia. Since 2004 she teaches film direction at the Buenos Aires film school Centro de Investigacion Cinematografica.

2014 *La Tercera Orilla (The Third Side Of The River)*
2012 *Escuela Normal (Normal School)* – documentary
2008 *Una Semana Solos (A Week Alone)*
2003 *Ana Y Los Otros (Ana And The Others)*





CAST & CREW

MAIN CAST

Nicolas – *Alian Devetac*
 Jorge (Father) – *Daniel Veronese*
 Nilda (Mother) – *Gaby Ferrero*
 Andrea (Sister) – *Irina Wetzel*
 Esteban (Brother) – *Tomas Omacini*
 Lautaro (Half-Brother) –
Dylan Agostini Vandenbosch

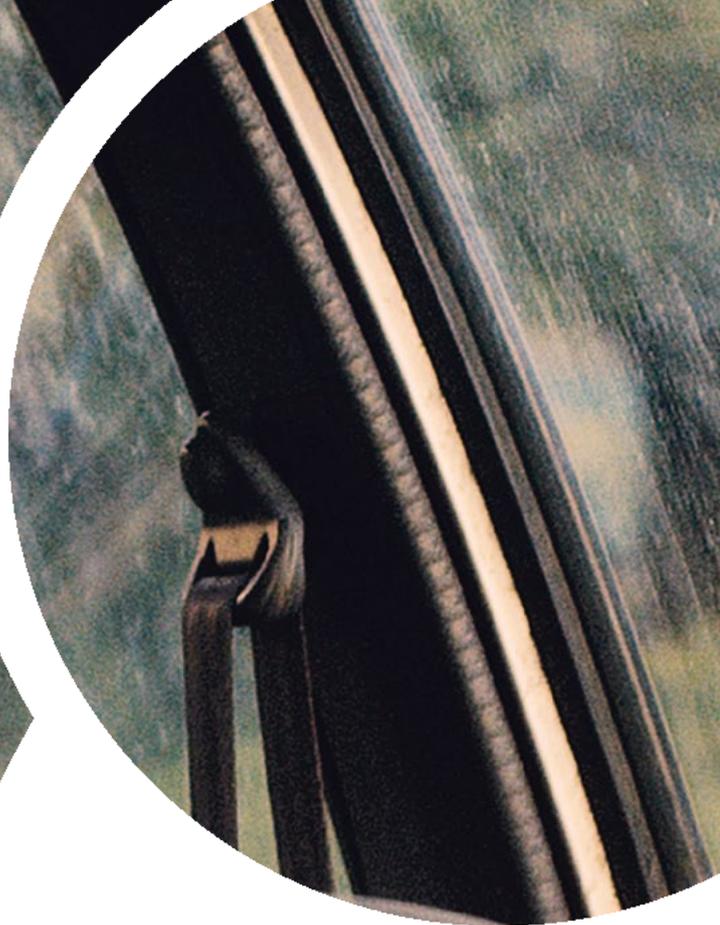
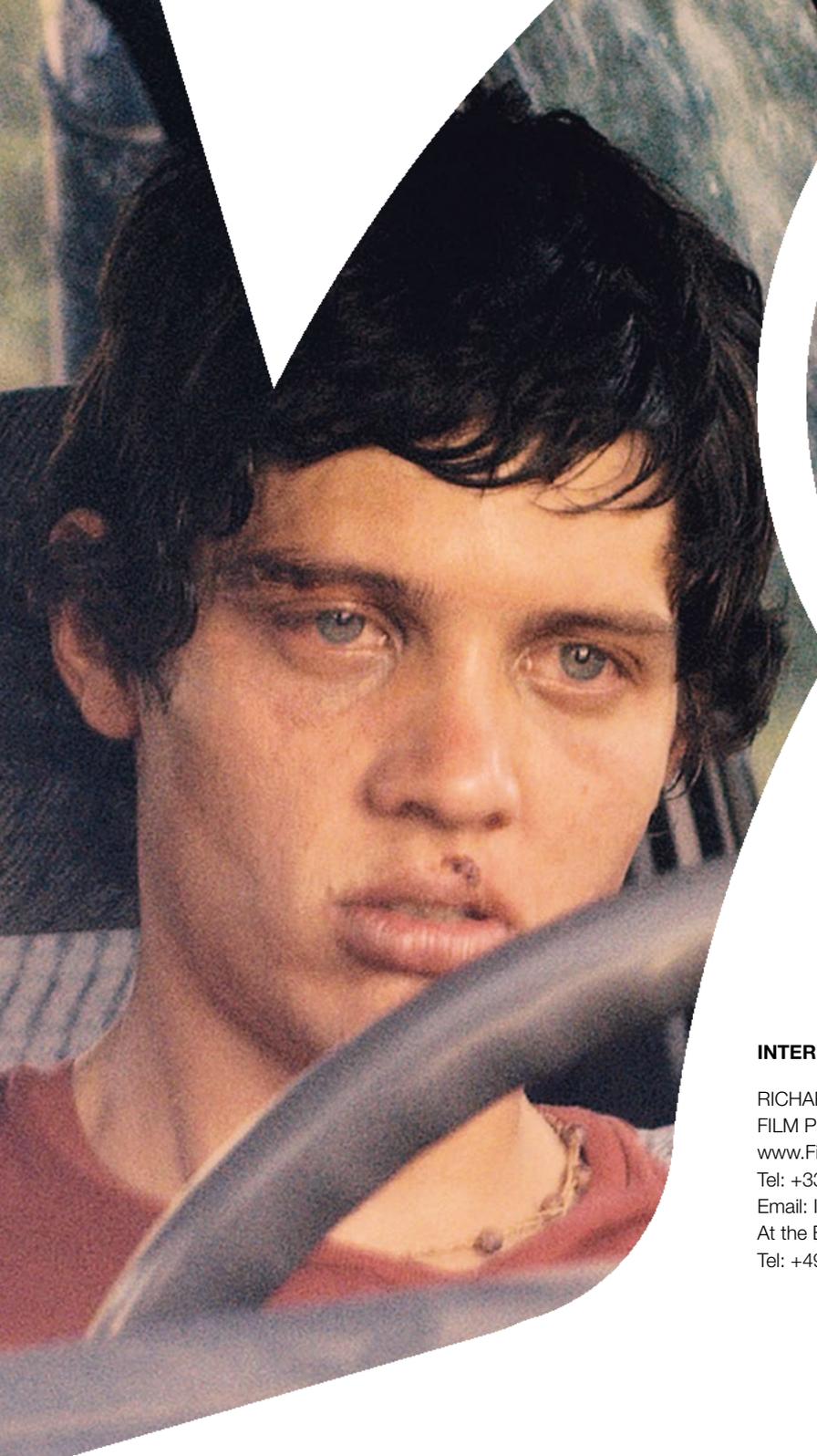
MAIN CREW

Director – *Celina Murga*
 Writers – *Celina Murga, Gabriel Medina*
 Director of Photography – *Diego Poleri*
 Editor – *Eliane Katz*
 Sound – *Federico Billordo, Andreas Ruft*
 Production Design – *Sebastian Roses*
 Costumes – *Paola Delgado*
 MakeUp – *Nestor Burgos*
 Casting – *Maria Laura Berch*
 Assistant Director – *Esteban Rey Cazes*
 Production Manager – *Silvia Lamas*
 Line Producer – *Ines Gamarci*
 Producers – *Juan Villegas, Celina Murga*
(Tresmilmundos Cine, Argentina)
 Co-Producer – *Peter Rommel*
(Rommel Film, Germany)
 Commissioning editors ZDF/arte –
Doris Hepp, Lucas Schmidt
 Co-Producer – *Jan Van Der Zanden*
(Waterland Film, Netherlands)
 Executive Producer – *Martin Scorsese*

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Argentina 2014
 35mm & DCP, Color
 running time: 92 minutes
 original version: Spanish
 format: 1:1,85





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