



# AMADOR

A film by FERNANDO LEON DE ARANOA

**“Well crafted and thoughtful. Successfully (...) blending black comedy, lyricism and social critique.”**

–Jonathan Holland, *Variety*



**Spain / 2011 / Drama / In Spanish w. English Subtitles / 112 min. / 1:2.35 /  
Dolby SRD**

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Marcela, a young immigrant with financial troubles, finds a summer job looking after Amador, a bed-ridden elderly man whose family is away. She thinks her problems are solved, but Amador dies shortly thereafter, putting Marcela in a predicament. His death leaves her jobless, something she can't afford to let happen...

Faced with a difficult moral dilemma, Marcela will prove that death can't always stop life.

## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

### **AWARDS:**

**GUADALAJARA** Int'l Film Festival – Best Director and Best Actress, Iberoamerican Feature

### **OFFICIAL COMPETITION:**

**BERLIN** Int'l Film Festival

**SYDNEY** Int'l Film Festival

**MIAMI** Int'l Film Festival

**BFI LONDON** Film Festival

### **OFFICIAL SELECTION:**

**ISTANBUL** Film Festival

**LIMA** Film Festival

**SEATTLE** Int'l Film Festival

## COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Marcela thinks life is a matter of opportunity. The elderly man she's taking care of over the summer dies, and the bad thing is he dies too soon: one month before she needed him to. His death leaves her jobless, without a means of survival. "He died, damn it! Couldn't he have held on a little longer?" she groans.

"Amador" is mainly about life, how sometimes even death isn't enough to stop it. Every decision made is made in life's name. It's the story's true protagonist: its motor, its beginning and its end, its necessity. I mean life with its mix of hope and guilt, pain and need. Life in capital letters, as a current, as a recess... Life that cries at weddings and laughs at funerals, confusing joy and pain; beyond genre, which it can't and won't understand. Life with its little piece of death, of course; and sometimes with its extra-time. This film, though dark and silent at times, might be the brightest I've made. Because it seeks out life much in the same way Marcela does: with desperation. Because it utilizes death for its own ends, and in doing so, for a moment, gives it meaning.

Marcela tries to solve the complicated puzzle her existence has become. She faces a difficult moral dilemma, one raised daily by survival itself: whether to follow our conscience or act out of necessity. The film attends an ethical debate between what we are and what circumstances force us to be. Between shame and dignity. The main character in "Bicycle Thieves", desperate from having lost his means of survival, himself robs a bicycle, revealing himself as the thief in the film's title: the death of the individual as a moral subject, before his son's very eyes. Through the course of this story Marcela will discover that we are most definitely, the decisions we make. And the hard part isn't making them. The hard part is living with them.

The film was shot with a deliberate elegance and serenity. In Lucio Godoy's music, in Ramiro Civita's photography and framing. It comes from Marcela's character, from her fortitude in the face of adversity, from the firm peace of mind she displays as the world, her world, seems to unravel around her. The film's structure is nearly musical. Repetition is abundant, elements that return like a chorus, constantly enticing us to reread something we've seen previously.

And, inevitably, humor. Humor perhaps a little darker than on other occasions. More perverse, but also more alive, out of necessity. Delirious at times, as only reality can be. And along with its precariousness and humor, solidarity as a base: Puri's solidarity with Marcela, in the end survivors of the same shipwreck. "Amador" is also about guilt, which often walks hand in hand with religion; about misery, and also about hope, which could very well be fiction's most beautiful form.

I was driven to make this film because I'm convinced that what happens in it could be happening right now, in any neighborhood of any city. There must be a woman out there somewhere faced with a difficult decision, forced by the circumstances. We'll hear her distressed voice on the radio at night, whispering her story to a stranger; alone and without direction, asking for advice, unsure

what to do. Her name might not be Marcela, but she's the same woman. "Amador" is inevitably linked to the hard times we are going through collectively, from the point of view of people for whom hard times are nothing new. Their precarious situation isn't dependent on how the stock market performs or newspaper headlines, because it's been there all along: present as it was present for their parents, in the countries they came from; it travelled with them when they decided to emigrate, the very thing they were trying to escape from. They come from the other side of fortune. Their struggle is an endless prize fight against life itself: they cling tightly to it whenever they feel they're about to get knocked out, and they're not afraid to fall, because they learned how to count to ten on the canvas.

Marcela's boyfriend says selling flowers is a safe business because there are only three sure-fire things in life: love, life and death. And people celebrate all three with flowers. This film is about these three things, and it celebrates them as well. About life and death, which share the same room in the story: a room that could be in any suburb in any city. About how they are forced to coexist, about the need for them to. And also about what happens between them and what might be the thing that gives them meaning: love. The prophet said: "You wish to know the secret of death, but how will you find it unless you search in the heart of life?" Marcela knows this. Brave people, who even in death are able to recognize life's unmistakable gesture.

## **BIOGRAPHIES and FILMOGRAPHIES**

### **Fernando Leon De Aranoa - Director**

Screenwriter and film director, Fernando was born in Madrid in 1968. He set out to study Fine Arts, however, due to a fateful administrative error, he ended up studying Film & Communication Studies in Madrid's Complutense University, where he received his bachelor's degree. Nevertheless, his first professional occupation was as an illustrator. Early on, he began a long professional career as a screenwriter, scripting both several feature-length films, as well as popular TV shows and television series. At the age of 26 he wrote and directed his first feature length film, *FAMILIA*, for which he won the Goya Award for Best New Director and also Best Director, the Fipresci Award and the Audience Award at the Valladolid Film Festival, and the Best Film Award at the Houston, Miami and Angers festivals.

Before that he wrote and directed *SIRENAS* (1994), his only short film, and the short documentary *IZBIEGLIZJE* (1995), filmed during the last months of the war in Bosnia Herzegovina. Collaborated as screenwriter on *LA ESPALDA DEL MUNDO* (1997).

His second feature was *BARRIO* (1998), which won three Goya Awards, for Best Direction and Best Screenplay among others, as well as the Concha de Oro for Best Director at the San Sebastian Film Festival, and also the Fipresci, Fotogramas, José María Forqué, Sant Jordi and Turia awards, among others.

In 2001 he directed his first full-length documentary, *CAMINANTES*, which won the Best Documentary Award at the Havana Film Festival, as well as at the Los Angeles and New York Latino Film Awards.

His big international breakthrough came the following year with *MONDAYS IN THE SUN* (2002), featuring Luis Tosar and Javier Bardem. The film won five Goya Awards, including Best Film and Best Director; the Concha de Oro for Best Film at the San Sebastian Film Festival, and also the Fipresci, Fotogramas, Ondas, Jose María Forqué and Luis Buñuel awards, among others. He followed up with *PRINCESAS* (2005), which he also produced, and which won three Goya Awards, the Ondas Award for Film Event of the Year, and the Protagonistas Award, among others.

In 2007 he wrote and directed *BUENAS NOCHES, OUMA*, a short film included in the feature-length documentary *INVISIBLES*, released at the Berlin International Film Festival, and winner of the Goya for Best Documentary Film at the Spanish Academy Awards.

As an author of short stories, he has won the 2006 Camilo José Cela Award for the short story *LOS TRENES NEGROS*. Before that he won his second Antonio Machado Award for the story *MENSAJES*, and two years later was a runner-up for the same award, with *LAPICEROS*. He regularly collaborates as an advisor with

the Screenwriters & Directors Lab of the Sundance Institute, in Utah, and also with the International School of Film in San Antonio de los Baños, in Cuba.

In 2004 he founded his own production company, Reposado. AMADOR is the second feature film it produces.

### **MAGALY SOLIER (Marcela) – Actress**

Peruvian actress Magaly Solier was discovered in 2006 by director Claudia Llosa, and has since combined both her acting and singing careers.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY (complete)**

2011 "Amador" directed by Fernando León de Aranoa  
2009 "Altiplano" directed by Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth  
2009 "Milk of Sorrow" directed by Claudia Llosa  
2006 "Madeinusa" directed by Claudia Llosa

### **CELSO BUGALLO (AMADOR) – Actor**

Born in Galicia, he began his acting career in the 70's. He was a well known and established stage actor and director before he began to work more for the big screen.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY (recent)**

2011 "Amador" directed by Fernando León de Aranoa  
2008 "Cenizas del cielo" directed by José Antonio Quirós  
2007 "Pudor" directed by David and Tristán Ulloa  
2007 "Los Totenwackers" directed by Ibón Cormenzana  
2006 "Los sultanes del Sur" directed by Alejandro Lozano  
2006 "La noche de los girasoles" directed by Jorge Sánchez-Cabezudo  
2006 "Salvador (Puig Antich)" directed by Manuel Hueriga  
2005 "Para que no me olvides" directed by Patricia Ferrerira  
2004 "The Sea Inside" directed by Alejandro Amenábar  
2002 "Mondays in the Sun" directed by Fernando León de Aranoa

Among other awards, Celso won the Goya for Best Supporting Actor in 2005 for his role in "The Sea Inside".

### **PIETRO SIBILLE (NELSON) - Actor**

A Peruvian actor, he has worked in both cinema (feature-length and short films) and television.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY (complete)**

2008 "Pasajeros" directed by Andrés Cotler  
2007 "La gran sangre" directed by Jorge Carmona  
2006 "La prueba" directed by Judith Véliz

- 2005 "Ruta del Jaca" directed by Kristinn Kristinsson
- 2004 "Días de Santiago" directed by Josué Méndez
- 2003 "Ojos que no ven" directed by Francisco J. Lombardi

### **SONIA ALMARCHA (YOLANDA) - Actress**

Sonia has an extensive acting career in Spanish film, theater and television.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY (recent)**

- 2007 "La soledad" directed by Jaime Rosales
- 2004 "Muertos comunes" directed by Norberto Ramos
- 2001 "Sagitario" directed by Vicente Molina Foix
- 2000 "Las razones de mis amigos" directed by Gerardo Herrero
- 2000 "Soirée" directed by Aitor Gaizka
- 2000 "Torre" directed by Oskar Santos

### **FANNY DE CASTRO (PURI) - Actress**

#### **FILMOGRAPHY (recent)**

- 2008 "Los girasoles ciegos" directed by José Luis Cuerda
- 2007 "Clandestinos" directed by Antonio Hens
- 2007 "Déjate caer" directed by Jesús Ponce
- 2006 "Volver" directed by Pedro Almodóvar
- 2005 "Camarón" directed by Jaime Chávarri

# CREDITS

## CREW

<b>Director</b>	FERNANDO LEÓN DE ARANOA
<b>Producers</b>	FERNANDO LEÓN DE ARANOA, JAUME ROURES
<b>Executive Producers</b>	PATRICIA DE MUNS , AVIER MÉNDEZ
<b>Script</b>	FERNANDO LEÓN DE ARANOA
<b>Costumes</b>	FERNANDO GARCÍA
<b>Production Manager</b>	ANA PARRA
<b>Editor</b>	NACHO RUÍZ CAPILLAS
<b>Director of Photography</b>	RAMIRO CIVITA
<b>Sound Editors</b>	IVÁN MARÍN, DANIEL PEÑA Y ALFONSO RAPOSO
<b>Production Designer</b>	LUIS FERNÁNDEZ LAGO
<b>Music</b>	LUCIO GODOY
<b>Art Director</b>	LLORENÇ MIQUEL
<b>Make up</b>	ROMANA GONZÁLEZ
<b>Hair Dressing</b>	JOSEFA MORALES
<b>Casting</b>	ROSA MORALES
<b>First Assistant Director</b>	ANTONIO ORDÓÑEZ

## CAST

<b>Amador</b>	CELSO BUGALLO
<b>Marcela</b>	MAGALY SOLIER
<b>Nelson</b>	PIETRO SIBILLE
<b>Yolanda</b>	SONIA ALMARCHA
<b>Puri</b>	FANNY DE CASTRO