

A group of men are on a train car. One man stands at the back, another sits in the middle, and two others lie down. A speed limit sign for 50 is visible on the right. The background shows a landscape with trees and a cloudy sky.

# THE KINGS OF THE WORLD

A FILM  
BY  
LAURA MORA

*“One day all men fell asleep...  
And the fences of the earth, burst into flames”*



Ciudad Lunar

· I A · S E L V A ·  
· C I N E ·



# SYNOPSIS

## (Short version)

Rá, Culebro, Sere, Winny and Nano, five street kids from Medellín, five kings without a kingdom, with no law and no family, looking for The Promised Land. The five will embark on a trip to claim a piece of land that Rá inherited after a long process of land restitution. *The Kings of the World* is a subversive tale about a savage and lovely clan that transits between reality and delirium. A Journey to nowhere where anything can happen.



# SYNOPSIS

(Long version)



**This is the story of RÁ (18), CULEBRO (16), SERE (14), NANO (13), WINNY (11). Five homeless kids from the streets of Medellín, Colombia. Five kings without a kingdom, without law, without family. Rootless.**

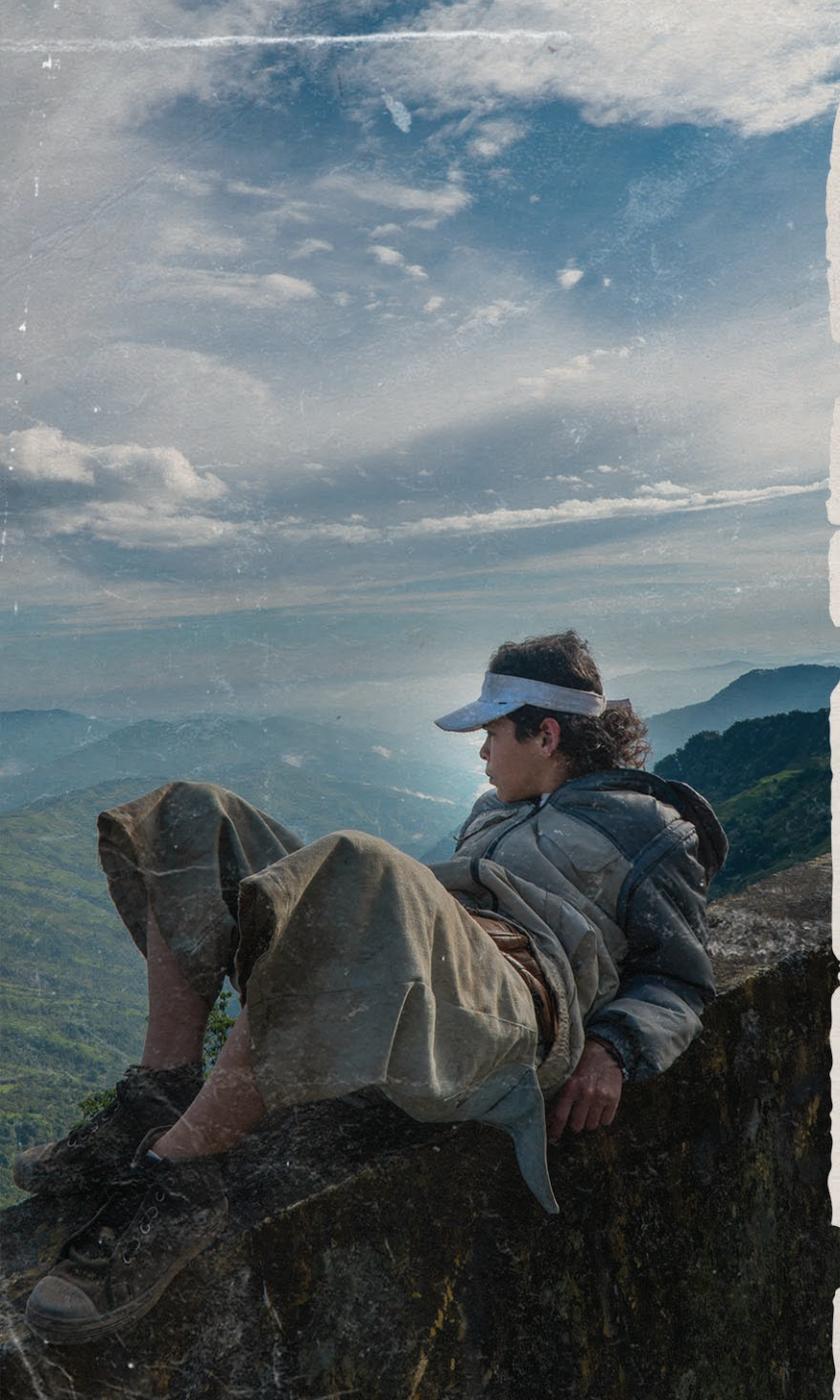
**In their hands they have the old property titles of a piece of land inherited by Rá. There lies the possibility of finally having a place of their own, where they can be free. Somewhere they can be safe and call home.**

**After receiving the final letter from the land restitution program of the government, Rá will decide to embark on a journey with his friends to claim that piece of land from where his grandma was once expelled by paramilitary groups.**

**They leave Medellín, cross the mountain range in search of El Bajo Cauca, a region, where beauty and violence meet. Human contradiction will be present all the way: goodness and evil, solidarity and greed, love and hate. The violence of the country will manifest itself in this journey through the landscape.**

**But everything is worth it in this long journey. It is the adventure of a lifetime trying to find that piece of land, where they could be kings and break free. In the midst of the harshness and the beauty of the landscape they will also meet all these characters who live in the outskirts of a savage society who will teach them about the meaning of life and freedom. Inside a brothel they will recognize motherly love. On the road they will meet Vayú, an old man who stepped away from society, but who will give them shelter and protect them from the hostile world.**

**Nothing will stop them from reaching the dream of their promised land.**



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

## LAURA MORA

Cinema has become my attempt to establish a reflective and poetic dialogue with the world. Through the language of film, I have found the possibility to inquire emotions, the human contradiction, and set up questions about all that worries me and moves me.

*Killing Jesus*, my first film, was born from an absolutely painful, personal experience: my father's assassination in 2002. Making it was a cathartic and liberating experience. It allowed me to continue to inquire, on the topics surrounding violence. My point of view and my relation to the world is undeniably linked and altered by being born in a country as peculiar as Colombia, where beauty and violence appeared to be confused, mixed, and turned into one.

While I was casting non-professional actors for *Killing Jesus*, I realized that the ninety-plus guys that we interviewed, many homeless, all shared a feeling of terrible exclusion. A grim certainty of having no future. Yet like a profound contradiction they were filled with life, of a delirious dream tied always to the same wish: an obsession to have a place in the world, literal and symbolic.

At that moment, questions that I have always wondered began to arise. Questions regarding violence tied to land ownership, from the symbolic and the historic perspective. The key point of Colombia's conflict is precisely that, people who have been stripped of their lands, and push out of their homes, by landlords, the elite, and armed groups. Which have created the basis of a society that is extremely unequal.



The idea of five homeless kids, forever excluded from society, whose biggest wish is to claim a free and safe place, seemed like a sublime way to speak of the history of violence and honor the energy of those stripped of everything. A poetic way in which these young men take revenge on the world they were given by chance and reclaim what is theirs, the land. It is their most rebellious and honest political act.

We have helped build a world that continues to push people towards the margins as class structures continue to shrink; while capitalism has turned into an attractive and subtle form of violence, where each day less people fit into it.

However, humans are always finding new forms of lovingly connecting, especially when they are push out of the frame. Solidarity and the idea of liberty begin to take root from the most intimate and simple. Thus appear these sprouts of romantic ideals that inspire us to reclaim all that has been denied to us.

In the story there is a search to uplift the meaning of subversion character. Not to be confused with a subversive organization, but with the romantic principle of subversion: that desire to change the established order. A world without borders, without land owners, and world where all people are at a more equal standing from birth. This is a movie that wants to invoke a certain symbolic representation of these ideas. Especially in the moments where the dreamlike and real are confused.

As a woman, I am tremendously curious about exploring through film the behavior that has to do with the unprocessed masculinity. The conviction that is being a man born in certain contexts where irredeemably being a man means having to be violent. In addition, the need to conquer territory. I also wish to see the bonds between young men. How they display their affection and frustration. And when women are so far away, how they try to behave between brothers.



On the way, they will leave the city and cross a mountain range to arrive at that promised land, accompanied by a beautiful landscape that is still being disputed. Following Rá's noble obsession of arriving to a place that looks like his idea of a kingdom, they will discover that the only territory they will ever be allowed to conquer is perhaps that of the imagination, of affections, of dreams. The territory of the soul. As the group disappears, the idea of continuing, is also a way of honoring those no longer with them. As the journey continues the line between life and death will continue to blur.

I think of these kings without a kingdom, the sense of a journey to nowhere where everything is possible. Where they will learn from the wisdom of a farmer, and from the warmth of women in the midst of oblivion. But they will also meet the brutality of men who live in paradise, and they will have to accept death as a possibility of reaching the other paradise. There lies the story of this territory, one that still tries to understand its own nature and build its identity.

In *The Kings of the World*, I see a possibility to make a film that celebrates life. The lives of the excluded and the forgotten. Those who traverse mountains or cross seas with the idea of freedom, of finding the promised land. An opportunity to celebrate disobedience and resistance, while condemning the world.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and a blue jacket tied around her waist, stands in profile on the right side of the frame. She is looking towards the left. Behind her is a large, dark mound of earth or soil, which dominates the left and center of the image. The background is a bright, hazy sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and somber.

# LAURA MORA SEARCHES FOR THE PROMISED LAND IN "THE KINGS OF THE WORLD"

An interview with Laura Mora, director of *'The Kings of the World'*, which hits Colombian theaters October 6. The film, produced by **Cristina Gallego** and **Miranda Torres**, is the story of five youth who journey to reclaim the land that one of them has inherited from his grandmother and that violence threatens to take from them.



Director Laura Mora's (*Kill Jesus*, 2018) second film is as raw as it is poetic, both visceral and loving. Her story explores the beauty that exists on the edge, and in those seeking a place in the world. In the words of this director from Medellín, the film exalts the romanticism in the subversive and disobedient, which extended even her choices of where to shoot.

"I don't know how many people told me that I couldn't shoot in Bajo Cauca, but I never gave up. That was perhaps the first political act of this film. Proving that there should be no forbidden territories, that it shouldn't be impossible for anyone to know beauty, that's also an act of resistance. And confirming that, in a way, the power of violent people also lies in their construction of the very rumor of violence, by creating so much fear that it prevents contact with the territory," she continues.

In fact, what Laura Mora found in the region were open, supportive, wise, loving human beings. "That's part of the spirit of the film, to go a little against the grain, like shooting in the middle of the pandemic and all the social unrest that are such a part of this film."



The rebellion in the deeply honest and beautiful *Kings of the World* also has to do with its characters, “so rebellious that they aren’t even seduced by the idea of belonging to a 'gang',” affirms the director when speaking of Ra, Sere, Nano, Winny and Culebro, who embark on a long journey in search of the Promised Land.

The youth cast in the roles were between 15 and 22 years old and had no acting experience, yet they bring with them their truth, their experiences, their relationships with violence, and they place all their charisma and beauty at the service of their characters, all of them men.

“I feel that history, especially the history of Colombia, has shown us that violence is a kind of masculine inheritance, inherent to men.” It’s difficult, especially for young people from certain backgrounds. In the end, they’ve lived this war. A bunch of young, impoverished kids, fighting and defending the interests of powerful men.”

### **Masculinity and violence... how did you work on those themes with the protagonists?**

The beautiful thing about these particular characters is that they’re all very different from each other, despite the fact that they all come from very difficult places. But what surprised me the most during our long process together was the affection. It amazes me how affectionate they are with each other.

This is also another way of approaching this masculine universe, the recognition of affections, tenderness, brotherhood. Because men are told, especially in our context, that they have to take people and things by force. To be a man they have to conquer a street corner or displace a community, be the boss, constantly prove their power. That’s part of what we consider masculinity in Colombia.



And then suddenly, these guys break with this a little, hug each other, show support, affection; they can think collectively, but just as easily beat each other up. I feel like conflict is always right there, inevitable; there's something very erratic about them. It's hard for them to get over everything they've seen and learned in their lives. And they wage a daily battle within themselves.

### **How did you manage to gain the trust of this group of young men and establish such a close relationship?**

It's hard to build trust, especially in a country where trust has been constantly undermined, where that thread is so fragile and requires such care. And once a link is established, there are demands and a constant commitment not to fail, to keep your word. Society has so completely failed these kids, even before they were born, that they trust no one. And why should they? That's why maintaining trust is so important; it's the most ethical, human and horizontal way of relating.

I can't, and it would be irresponsible of me to pretend I could, guarantee that the experience of making a film could change anyone's reality. Life and social reality in our country is too complex. I can't and don't want to come across as a savior. That's not the basis of my relationships. It seems so arrogant to me anyway. Personally, I'm not interested in it.

So I've been very honest with them about all this. I'm sure the experience will be unforgettable for all of us —and I hope it will be inspiring—, but I can't guarantee that it will change their realities. And this kind of honesty builds trust.

All I can guarantee is that they know that they have a friend they can call. I may not be able to solve their problems, but I'll be there for them, listen to them, celebrate their victories, give them a hug. It's all I can humanly offer. And to me, having another friend in life is very valuable; it makes me feel a little less alone.

**Between your two films you've participated in a number of projects. How have you changed as a director?**

**Beyond whatever happened in my work, there were deeper things that have to do with my perceptions of the world. I've been able to focus on a lot of the things that concern me on a human, artistic, and intellectual level. The art that interests me tries to ask questions and reflects deeply, in this case about exclusion, the search for a place, about the landscape and the land. I feel freer in this film; although *Kill Jesus* is more autobiographical, *The Kings of the World* is more about my relationship with cinema, with reality and delirium, with my love and my pain for the world.**

**Describe the journey in *The Kings of the World*? What is it like and where is it headed?**

**I feel like in Colombian history we've been told about how people have been displaced and that, on the contrary, I wanted to tell a story about returning, about looking for a place where you'll be safe. It's a very romantic adventure, this thing about a "Promised Land", about dreaming of the possibility of justice, of believing that perhaps our perpetually-absent state might finally fulfill a promise. But I feel that deep down we're all looking for a place where we feel safe, where we can exist freely.**





**The film deals with a lot of different concepts, like the sense of belonging, territory, and hugs. How do you tie them together and make them present?**

**During the casting process for *Kill Jesus*, the boys were asked about their greatest desire and there was one answer that kept coming up: to have a symbolic or physical place, a place where no one would bother them. That caught my attention. How does something that we take for granted become impossible for a society or for certain individuals? So *The Kings of the World* is based on the search for a symbolic and physical place where you can be free.**

**Those desires, expressed by those young people, seemed to have found an echo in my questions about the landscape, about the dispossession of land in Colombia, about everyone who has lost a place in the world because of violence, and about the judicial apparatus that has failed to support them in their claim for justice.**

**In the “trip to the Promised Land” proposed in the film, these five boys meet other characters also living on the margins, who’ve also been abandoned by the State and marked by violence, and who become small “islands” that welcome them, that inhabit the border between real and imaginary, where our protagonists find a little affection, something in ruins that contains dignity and beauty. I feel like this film is my ode to the beauty that I find in the marginal, in that beat up landscape, that resistance that I find in those places and people on the periphery.**



**You define yourself as very controlling. How did that go, taking into account the cast and the difficult shooting conditions?**

When I started working with the director of photography **David Gallego**, that was one of the first things that got insinuated: this is a film where we can't control everything. Are we going to have preconceived ideas? Yes, but we have to be open to everything changing us." The result is that certain scenes turned out totally different from what we imagined. But that's just life, manifesting itself both in the landscape and in the boys. And films thrive on that. Overall, this movie may be the most extreme thing I've ever done.

**From the time you began thinking about it until now, the film has taken several years. Are you proud of the result?**

Yes, it's amazing how much it grew. *The Kings of the World* today is very different from what I thought it would be, but I think it's better. It taught me to recognize beauty in fragility. The boys were also my greatest teachers.

I think that I was more vulnerable during this film than in any other creative process. While *Kill Jesus* was a film of certainty, *The Kings of the World* is one of uncertainty, which I find beautiful because it taught me that art is only possible in the presence of vulnerability, cracks, the veil, when things are broken. This film is an uncertain journey, and so was making it. It was very intuitive. I didn't always have all the answers. It was also my own journey into the unknown.

*The Kings of the World* was produced by Ciudad Lunar Producciones and La Selva Cine, in co-production with Iris Productions (Luxembourg), Tu Vas Voir (France), Mer Films (Norway), Talipot Studio (Mexico) and in association with Caracol Televisión, Dago García, and Exile Content. Cinecolor and Film Factory are handling distribution in Colombia and international sales, respectively.



A photograph of Laura Mora on a film set. She is wearing a dark baseball cap with a white logo, a dark tank top, and headphones around her neck. She is sitting on the ground, looking off to the side. To her left is a professional video camera mounted on a tripod, with a black matte box attached. The background is a bright, outdoor setting with tall grass and a building in the distance. The text 'LAURA MORA DIRECTOR - SCREENWRITER' is overlaid in white, distressed font on the left side of the image.

**LAURA MORA**  
**DIRECTOR - SCREENWRITER**

Born in Medellin Colombia, 1981, graduated in Film Directing from RMIT University in Melbourne Australia.

Director of the feature film *Matar a Jesús*, premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and the San Sebastian Festival in 2017, where she was awarded a special mention in the New Directors section, Eroski award, and a Signis critics award, also won the Opera Prima Jury Award y Habana Film Festival and Roger Ebert Award in the Chicago Latino Film Festival, best iberoamerican film at the Palm Spring Film Festival. The film was selected in more than 30 festivals and has won more than twenty awards.

Director of the Netflix series: *Green Frontier* (4 episodes 2019) and *The Great Heist* (3 episodes 2020) And Caracol TV Serie *Pablo Escobar, el patron del mal* (2012).

*The Kings of the World* is her new film, which is in the post-production stage, produced by Ciudad Lunar ("*The Embrace of the Serpent*") in association with La Selva Cine, a company in which she is a founding partner in coproduction with IRIS PRODUCTIONS, TU VAS VOIR, TALIPOT and MER FILMS.

## FILMOGRAPHY

2020 *Great Heist*, Serie 3 episodes

2019 *Green Frontier* - Serie, 4 episodes

2017 *Killing Jesus* Feature Film

2015 *Before the Fire* TvMovie

2012 *Pablo Escobar, The Drug Lord* Tv Serie -83 episodes

2012 *Salome* Shortfilm

2006 *Brotherhood* Shortfilm



# PRODUCTION COMPANIES





**Ciudad Lunar**

Ciudad Lunar is a film production company, based in Colombia, created by the directors **Ciro Guerra** and **Cristina Gallego**. A platform to support filmmakers with works that transcends the purely commercial activity, motivated by personal searches and authorial proposals that contribute to the enrichment of the cinematographic narrative, whose quality allows them to open doors at a national and international level.

Its productions have been awarded best film in the biggest and best festivals around the world. Three of its films have been Colombia's official entry to the Oscars, and in 2016 it receives the first nomination for a Colombian film.

## **FILMOGRAPHY**

**2018 - *PÁJAROS DE VERANO / BIRDS OF PASSAGE*** directed by **Cristina Gallego** and **Ciro Guerra** – Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, opening film.

**2018 - *YO NO ME LLAMO RUBEN BLADES / RUBEN BLADES IS NOT MY NAME*** directed by **Abner Benahim** Audience Award SXSW.

**2017 - *WAJIB*** directed by **Annemarie Jacir**. Selección Oficial Locarno, Best Movie Amiens. Mar del Plata, Locarno, Dubai, Asian Pacific Awards, Kerala.

**2017 - *DEMONIOS TUS OJOS / SISTER OF MINE*** directed by **Pedro Aguilera**. Premiere Rotterdam 2017.



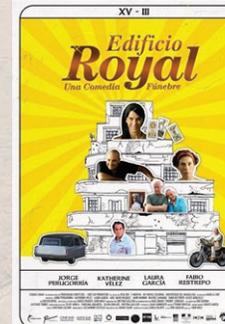
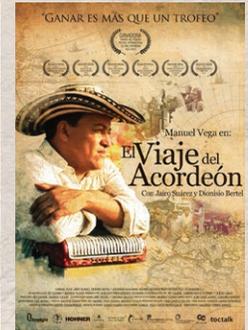
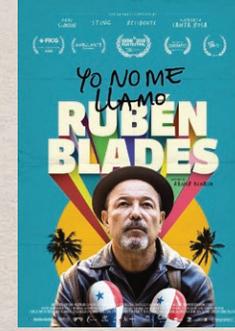
## Ciudad Lunar

**2015 - EL ABRAZO DE LA SERPIENTE / EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT** directed by **Ciro Guerra**. Oscar nominee for best foreign film, premiered at the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs 2015. 46 awards, 31 nominations. Best Movie Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, Cannes Festival, Ariel Awards, Macondo, 7 Fénix Awards, 8 Platino Awards, Mar del Plata, Lima, Odessa, Istanbul, Yereban.

**2013 - EL VIAJE DEL ACORDEÓN** directed by **Andrew Tucker and Rey Sagbini**.

**2013 - EDIFICIO ROYAL** directed by **Ivan Wild**. 2009 - **LOS VIAJES DEL VIENTO / THE WIND JOURNEYS** directed by **Ciro Guerra**. Selección Oficial Un Certain Regard Cannes 2009, Santa Barbara Awards, Macondo, Ljubljana, Cartagena, Bogotá.

**2005 - LA SOMBRA DEL CAMINANTE / THE WANDERING SHADOW** directed by **Ciro Guerra**. Premiered in Zabaltegi San Sebastian. Awarded at: Tolouse, Trieste, Bogotá, Cartagena.



· L A · S E L V A ·

· C I N E ·

LA SELVA CINE is a new production company based in Medellin, Colombia. It is born from the need to produce independent projects: including documentaries, fiction, and visual essays.

It is a space where creative discussion and project production in what we believe in prevails. Where the projects have the artistic charge that challenges and moves us. It is a film company founded by three friends with important and diverse careers within the Colombian film industry.

Daniela Abad, Director, documentary filmmaker ("the smiling lombana", "letters to a shadow"), Mirlanda Torres, Producer (on line producer on several productions like "Dog eat dog", to series like Netflix's "green frontier"), Laura Mora Director ("killing Jesus").

## FILMOGRAPHY

### Production

*The Bed* (2022) Directed by Daniel Abad

*The Kings of the World* (2022) Directed by Laura Mora

### In Co-production

*Diógenes* (2022) Directed by Leonardo Barbuy



# CRISTINA GALLEGO

## PRODUCER

Director and Producer and occasionally writer. She had won different awards as Director and Producer such as ARIEL, FENIX, PLATINO, MACONDO and the First Colombian Nomination to the OSCAR Awards. As different nominations and awards in festivals around the World.

In 2001, she creates the Production Company Ciudad Lunar with Ciro Guerra and has produced his features *WANDERING SHADOWS* (San Sebastian 2004), *THE WIND JOURNEYS* (Cannes – Un Certain Regard, 2009) and *EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT* (Director's Fortnight 2015, Oscar Nominee 2016), she also has editorial credits in the last two. *PÁJAROS DE VERANO* Opening Directors Fortnight 2018 (“Birds of Passage”) is her directing debut sharing credit with Ciro Guerra.

She also produced films from directors such as Pedro Aguilera (*SISTER OF MINE*, Rotterdam 2017), Abner Benahim (*RUBEN BLADES IS NOT MY NAME*, SXSW 2018) and Annemarie Jacir (*WAJIB*, Locarno 2017, co-producer) and her most recent production Laura Mora's *KINGS OF THE WORLD* 2022 San Sebastián Film Festival -Official Competition.

She teaches at various film schools and has been invited as a speaker at the United Nations in Geneva and TED Talks Bogotá. She is member of the Colombian Academy (ACACC), Mexican Academy (AMACC), and American Academy (AMPAS)



# MIRLANDA TORRES ZAPATA

## PRODUCER

Social communicator of the UPB-Medellín and carried out the highly specialized workshop "From field production to Executive production in the international market" at the International School of Film and Television in Cuba.

Credited as Producer in *Ruido Capital*, *Los reyes del mundo*. As Co-producer in *Manos sucias*, *El abuelo*) and *Diógenes*. Post Supervisor in the series *Maradona, sueño bendito* and *Barrio Norte*. Line Producer in Tv series *Karabudjan y Frontera verde* and for the films *El Callejón*, *Palmeras en la nieve*, *American Made*, *Loving Escobar*, *Gemini man*, *Contracorriente*, *El cartel de los sapos*, *Que viva la Música*, *Roa*, *El elefante desaparecido* y *Alias María*.



# PRODUCTION NOTES

## THE KINGS OF THE WORLD

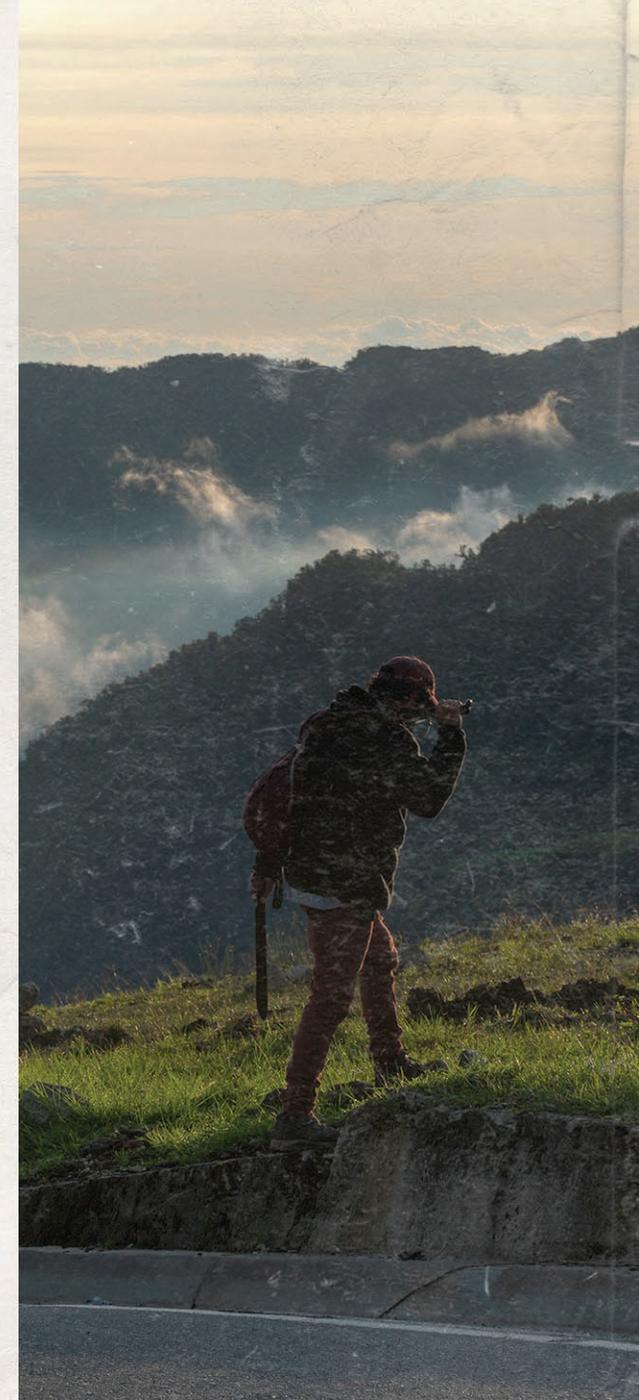
The filming of *The Kings of the World* took place in the Antioquia towns of Santa Rosa de Osos, Yarumal, Ventanas, Puerto Valdivia, Caucasia, Nechi, where they had to overcome landslides and the overflow of the Cauca River, the second largest river in Colombia. It also took place on the streets of the center of Medellín city, where they even had the participation of sex workers, associates, and pensioners.

Different municipalities of the Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, land of territorial disputes, and in these days of landslides and floods due to the winter wave, served as a location for the filming of *The Kings of the World*, which ended in the center of Medellín, the second-largest important city of Colombia.

The work team consisted of more than 80 people, among whom more than 500 Covid-19 tests were carried out throughout the eight weeks of filming. However, this pandemic forced them to enter a week of general quarantine and several selective quarantines, for positive cases that were presented.

The more than 300 extras and extras, doctors, paramedics, lifeguards, firefighters, neighborhood, territorial, municipal, departmental and national authorities also made it possible to complete the filming and now the film enters the post-production stage.

The Kings of the World features a group of young people, between 15 and 22 years old, natural actors, lovers of gravity (high-risk cyclists), whose lives have been touched by street or rural area violence.



# TECHNICAL INFO



**Ciudad Lunar y La Selva Cine Presents:**

**In Co-production with:**  
Iris Productions, Tu Vas Voir, Talipot Studio, Merfilms,

**In asociation with:**  
Caracol Televisión, Dago García Producciones, Exile Content

**Supported by:**  
Cinecreacolombia, Ibermedia, FilMedellin,  
Alcaldía de Medellín, Luxemburg Film Fund, Sorfond, Cinema Du  
Monde, Unimedellin and Eafit

**International Sales:**  
Film Factory

**Starring:**  
Carlos Andrés Castañeda, Brahian Acevedo,  
Davison Florez, Cristian Campaña, Cristian David

Los reyes del mundo  
The kings of the world

**Music:**  
Leo Heiblum, Alexis Ruiz

**Sound Design:**  
Carlos E. García

**Mix:**  
Carlos E. García, Michelle Couttolenc

**Editing:**

Sebastián Hernández, Gustavo Vasco

**Production Design:**

Marcela Gómez

**Art Direction:**

Daniel Rincón

**Costume Design:**

Ana María Acosta

**Cinematography:**

David Gallego A.D.F.C.

**Asociated Producers:**

Daniela Abad, Maria Ekerhovd, Paz Lázaro,  
Biiniza Cojulun, Alejandra Buenrostro, Isaac Lee, Nando Vila

**Co-Producers:**

Katarzyna Ozga, Nicolas Steil, Pilar Peredo, Edgard Tenembaum,  
Gerárd Lacroix, Regina García Solórzano, Elisa Fernanda Pirir

**Writen by:**

Laura Mora y María Camila Arias

**Produced by:**

Cristina Gallego y Mirlanda Torres Zapata

**Directed by:**

Laura Mora

Drama, Road Movie, Adventures

**Country of Production/ Countries of Co-Production:**  
Colombia, Luxemburg, Mexico, France, Norway

**Original Language:**  
Español

**Duration:**  
104 minutos

**Aspect ratio:**  
1.85

**Sound:**  
5.1

**International Release:**  
September 2022

**Colombian Release:**  
October 6th 2022

# PRESS OFFICE IN COLOMBIA

**Litza Alarcón Romero**

Cel. 310 5664031

[litza.alarcon@oficinadeprensa.com.co](mailto:litza.alarcon@oficinadeprensa.com.co)

**Jeffer Goyeneche Wilches**

Cel. 313 2908692

[jeffer.goyeneche@oficinadeprensa.com.co](mailto:jeffer.goyeneche@oficinadeprensa.com.co)

# INTERNATIONAL SALES

**FILM FACTORY ENTERTAINMENT**

Lincoln 11, 2o 4a 08006 Barcelona Spain

[info@filmfactory.es](mailto:info@filmfactory.es)

(+34) 933 684 608

[www.filmfactory.es](http://www.filmfactory.es)