

"WANDERER", Adriana Lestido's film debut, was presented at in Mar del Plata

The well-known Argentine photographer presented her first film produced by Lita Stantic at the 37th Mar del Plata International Film Festival. Her proposal is as poetic as it is risky and was applauded by the public in every screening. To know a bit more about the making of the film, we interviewed the director.

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Between January 2019 and May 2020, Adriana Lestido embarked on a trip without any company or assistance around the Arctic Polar Circle and Svalbard Islands, an ice cold, inhospitable region shared by Norway and Iceland. During those months this Argentine photographer recorded an ecosystem, unknown to her, in all its splendour. In that white desert, the immeasurable, enigmatic and melancholic blend into elegant still images that dominate the film. Considering the way image and sound was recorded *WANDERER. The Conquest of home* comes close to an observational documentary, the label “exploration documentary” describes, more precisely, the director's true quest. In each and every scene, Lestido turns the camera into a tool to explore not only those spaces but her own personal, solitary experience.



WANDERER. The conquest of home

WANDERER. The conquest of home, participates in the **Latin American Competition** of the Festival. It's among the recent productions by **Lita Stantic & MaravillaCine**.



-Seeing ***WANDERER***, it's hard not to relate it to her book ***Antártida Negra, (Black Antarctic)*** from 2012. Where does the need for a change of language from photography to film come from?

I began studying film. I love the cinema and I'm more of a film spectator than a spectator of photography, even though I obviously love photography too. My work has always been in the form of essays and I work on them in a cinematographic manner. Editing and the relationship between images is essential. I'm not interested in single images, what I'm after is a visual narrative. In fact, I envisaged the series *Madres e Hijas* (Mothers & Daughters) as an audio-visual. I thought of the music that would go with each story and I presented it as an audio-visual work.

When I was in the Antarctic, I felt I'd reached a limit. I could have gone on with my work as it was, and it probably would have been fine but I needed to learn again. The use of a new

language was a challenge that would demand a new approach. I wanted to incorporate movement, after there might be something else, but now it was slight movement within the frame, which is the way I see generally. Perhaps that approach to what I see is what allows me to go a stretch further.

I knew I wanted movement, I wanted colour and I wanted sound. I wanted music and the sound of the wind, the sea and the birds to be present. At first, I didn't know if this project would end up as a film or an audio-visual screening. However, I gradually found the film, a unity with a beginning and an end that that transmitted what I wanted.

I needed to be in those places, to observe what happened to me there and risk doing it alone, without the support of a production company or anything. I wanted absolute freedom. What mattered to me was my experience. After, I did need a production company, that's when Lita and MaravillaCine came in.



Why the choice of such extreme locations and such extreme conditions. What does your Antarctic Project and WANDERER have in common?

When I was having a retrospective of my work in Madrid, I went to see a wonderful exhibition of Miquel Barceló. There was a small room with some paintings that were all white,

corresponding to a period of time he'd spent in the Sahara. It was all very white. I felt I had to head in that direction. I said to myself, "I need to go into the white, a white desert". Hence the Antarctic, which I feel was like a passage where something closed in me as a photographer and a path opened towards film.

I later even felt it physically, when I was in the North Pole. I had to do something that involved movement, sound, something that would transform me through my communion with the landscape and the four seasons.



Most of your work has to do with a person's presence and experience. Here, in spite of perceiving human traces, the human absence predominates.

All my first period, which is the roughest, like the series with the women in prison, had to do with love, lack of it, with relationships. In *Mothers & Daughters* I began to incorporate landscape in the series. Then I did another series, which is lesser known, an anthology, *El amor* (Love). There's only landscape there and a ghostly presence of a man that evokes absence more than presence. The challenge for me there was to transmit love and heartbreak through the landscape. Then Antarctic followed, where there's no human presence.



There's another thought-provoking element, the title. Those two states, wandering and conquering a home. What does it mean to you?

The conquest of home is the conquest of the inner self, the place that belongs to us. I believe you find that through wandering, being able to let go of the past, which is perhaps the greatest obstacle we have to evolve as human beings. So, you have to wander until you find your roots and when you let go, you're reborn you come close to a place of your own, your inner soul.