



EICTV of San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba, presents

# EL PASO

A film by Roberto Tarazona



## Logline

Two children venture into the Cuban night to hunt a monster.

## Short Synopsis

Two children wander into the darkness of the Cuban countryside. An adult paddles them silently to the other side of the lagoon where they live. They have gone out to confront the mystery that the elders talk about in secret: at night the cattle disappears, as do those farmers who dare to confront the "monster" they live with.

## Long Synopsis

In the depths of the Cuban countryside, eleven-year-old Fabián and nine-year-old Christian play, fish and laugh, oblivious to the drama that hangs over the adults every time a moonless night comes. Hidden in that same darkness, they end up spying on the adults talking about the constant horrors that surround them: livestock are disappearing hopelessly and some farmers have even lost their lives trying to cope with what assaulted them. Lost again in their games, the children are surprised by an unknown adult who invites them to follow him on a nocturnal quest. Armed with lanterns and wooden swords they are taken to the other side of the lagoon by which they live to begin their great solitary journey. The fantasy and playfulness with which the journey began come face to face with the harsh reality to which the children begin to belong: bones, fire and total darkness merge in a ritual of transformation with no return in which the boundaries between life, death, maturity and innocence are blurred.

## Director's note

I understand documentary filmmaking as a drive to an initial approach that, with the proper attention, sensitivity and deep respect, can become an honest encounter in which the portrayed and the portraitist converge. An encounter that, in addition to being ethical, allows the filmmaker to rethink himself by analyzing the position from where, what and how he looks at himself in order to transform his perspective and to act in consequence of the infinite human diversity. For this reason I appreciate when the structure or production of a film behaves in a plastic way, molding itself to the unique circumstances and characteristics of the people who inhabit the stories. In this way, I believe that a more horizontal order of priorities is established in which the clumsy and anxious machinery of cinema manages to work as a genuinely listening device.

I also feel an infinite curiosity for the passage states, limbic moments and vital transitions. I understand that these hinge moments contain us with what we used to be and with what we are about to become, so they have a complexity and a richness that helps us to revisit ourselves over time with all our nuances in constant transformation. Sometimes these vital flows are motivated, accompanied or catalyzed by the figure of a medium who accompanies and guides us; a Charon who helps us cross over to the other side to discover a new inner territory.

With these concerns in mind, I heard the story of Jibaro, a remote village in central Cuba that only could to be reached by crossing a dam in a boat. There I met Ashley, the boatman who takes care of the passage of the villagers to both banks. Eventually after expending days with him I also met the rest of his family, where I appreciated one of those limbic states: that of his grandson Fabián, a young boy who is leaving behind his childhood and innocence as he is influenced by the rough social and political circumstances around him.

A photograph of two children in a field. One child, wearing a plaid shirt, is holding a large, light-colored skull. The other child, wearing a blue shirt, is kneeling and looking at the skull. The ground is dark and appears to be a trench or a hole in the earth.

## Relationship with the protagonists

Listening to the stories of this rural Charon, Fabian, his eleven-year-old grandson, appeared, accompanied by his nine-year-old friend Christian. They both asked me all sorts of questions, showed me the way they played, hunted lizards to tame them or fished in the dam. I spent several weeks with the family, and on one of those walks with the children showing me around the area, they told me that they were big fans of the horror films that their parents let them watch on television. That invited me to change the direction of my idea of making a more conventional documentary to hybridize it with the games, ideas and imagination of the children in order to try to create a more participatory, free and choral film. 'The Leap' is the result of those fantasies, fears and playfulness in such a specific moment of their childhood and of the situation in Cuba nowadays.

## Roberto Tarazona

In 2015 he joined the European Film College in Denmark where he graduated as a cinematographer and specialized in directing.

In 2023 he completed the Master of Alternative Cinema at EICTV (Cuba).

In 2024 he returns to EICTV to join the Chair of Documentary Film.

## Tech aspects

English title: **The Leap**

Country of Production: **Cuba**

Language: **Spanish**

Running Time: **15 minutes**

Image: **Full HD / 16:9 / Color**

Sound: **Stereo**

Production Company: **EICTV**

## Key crew

Director: **Roberto Tarazona**

Producer: **Ángel Luis Medina, EICTV**

Cinematography: **Roberto Tarazona**

Editor: **Roberto Tarazona**

Sound: **Mónica Torregrosa Gallo**

Sound designer and mixer: **Nathalia Quimbay**

Executive producers: **Roberto Tarazona, Juliana Fanjul, Judith Ruiz Castro, Luis Alejandro Yero**

Color correction: **Claudia Romero**

Cast: **Fabián Olmo Águila, Christian Águila Almeida, Luisa Gálvez Capote, José A. Olmos Chaviano**

## Contact details

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