

presents

Cannibal

A film by Manuel Martín Cuenca

*"Cannibal pulses from first scene to last...
a beautifully composed character study, both chilling and moving."*
—Jonathan Holland, **The Hollywood Reporter**

"(It has) moments of exquisite stillness...a meditative film."
—Kier-La Janisse, **Fangoria.com**

*"[Cuenca's] most ambitious and well done work...
Cannibal is handled with refinement and beauty."*
—Juan Arteaga, **Cineuropa**



**Spain / 2013 / Suspense, Romance /
Spanish, Romanian with English Subtitles / 116 min / 2.35:1 / Dolby Digital 5.1**
[Official Film Webpage](#)

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FULL SYNOPSIS

Carlos is the most prestigious tailor in Granada, Spain. His life is a study in details, from the meticulous suits he creates for wealthy clients to the macabre murders he executes in the shadows. He performs these gruesome acts, including dining on the women he kills, without guilt or remorse. When Nina, a beautiful young immigrant from Romania, comes looking for her missing twin sister, she awakens in Carlos a kind of love he'd long since written off. As their relationship builds, based on secrets and deception, Nina's pure innocence will become undeniable, even by Carlos, a man driven by a dark secret. *Cannibal* is, in the end, a demon's love story.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Carlos's life is a study in details, from the meticulous suits he creates for wealthy clients to the macabre murders he executes in the shadows. He performs these gruesome acts, including dining on the women he kills, without guilt or remorse. When Nina comes looking for her missing twin sister, she awakens in Carlos a kind of love he'd long since written off. *Cannibal* is, in the end, a demon's love story.

LOGLINE

A demon's love story.

ASSETS

Official trailer: <http://youtu.be/g8W82ZzfXm8>

Downloadable hi-res images:

<http://www.filmmovement.com/filmcatalog/index.asp?MerchandiseID=366>

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

NOMINATED:

Goya Awards (Spain's Academy Awards) for:

Best Film

Best Director

Best Actor

Best New Actress

Best Adapted Screenplay

Best Cinematography

Best Sound

Best Set Design

OFFICIAL SELECTION:

Toronto International Film Festival
Torino International Film Festival
San Sebastian Film Festival
Zurich International Film Festival
Dublin Film Festival
Belgrade Fest Serbia
Glasgow Film Festival
Rotterdam International Film Festival
Off Plus Camera Film Festival (Krakow)
Santa Barbara Int'l Film Festival
Miami Int'l Film Festival
Minneapolis St. Paul Int'l Film Festival
Wisconsin Film Festival

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT – MANUEL MARTÍN CUENCA

Whenever I begin a new project, I ask myself why I want to work on it. If the answer that I find is too rational and convenient, something that immediately responds to a desire where the fantasy is success, I know that I don't actually want to make that movie. And yet, when I can't quite find the right words, when I'm bested by the need to speak about something that I don't know for sure what it is, I discover the value of that story. Because there is something irrational in film that drives me. I make movies because I like to learn, because I like to feel like a student who doesn't know anything and who keeps his sense of wonder intact.

This film wants to tell me something beyond what I could ever know. And that pushes me in a powerful way. Alejandro, my co-screenwriter, told me about this novel, *Canibal* by Humberto Arenal. And we felt that we should write this screenplay together, trying to figure it out together, trying to figure out the deep meaning hidden there in order to then turn it into a secret that the spectator can guess at. For us, the essence of film is mystery and the conviction that the views can actively participate in it. We construct a story and then we hide it so that it comes out from inside its soul, through the grating.

The fact that cannibalism is a huge taboo makes me think that there is something in its nature that is so close to us that we have decided to ban it. I believe that a ban always hides something and that we should ask ourselves about it, even if it is to reach the conclusion that bans should exist. Jean Genet wrote, "The kiss is the form taken by a primitive urge to bite, even to devour..." I wonder what he meant, what the act of devouring has to do with an act like a kiss. I wonder what destruction has to do with tenderness. And I realize that this film is about the dialectic between evil and love.

This story takes place on the margins and at an emotional breaking point. I think it is the best way to talk about our times and to question our society. Westerns and film noir teach us that the best and most accurate portrayal of our civilization is to be found on geographic and moral frontiers where we find those characters who are pushed away and excluded, those who shape the true sense of an era and its ethical dilemma.

Our Europe is complacent. It has trouble admitting that evil inhabits it, that it is not just some waste caused by external agents, but an essential part of itself. We fight evil as if it were a vicious, but distant enemy. As if it had nothing to do with ourselves. Unfortunately, this is a simplistic view; it is too naïve.

Our story is set in a contemporary time, in the old provincial city of Granada, where tradition dominates daily life. In the midst of all this, Carlos is a cannibal

who lives out his condition without remorse, without guilt, conscious of the fact that the only thing that drives his life is survival. He neither asks nor questions. He only acts, relentless...until the time comes when he starts to question himself because a chink is opened in his soul. A crack that love starts to seep through. And through love, doubt does as well.

In the face of evil, love – it's what the story seems to be saying...and its capacity to redeem us.

But to what extent can love change the past? To what extent can love redeem it? The fantasy we all encourage tells us it's possible, that love conquers all. Our society provides stories over and over again where love triumphs. But what would happen if we were overestimating its strengths, its capacity to recover and to overcome all difficulties? What could happen if we were to realize that the power of this melodramatic love is less than we'd imagined...? And what would be left to us then, if love manifested its impotence? The only possible source for redeeming evil would be something that goes beyond love: forgiveness.

This is a story where these three forces must co-exist, inhabiting the same space. The first is evil, unaware of itself, embodied in a character who believes life is only survival. The second is love that – arising like an unforeseen force through the story of Carlos and Nina – affects the present and thus changes it, but is incapable of transforming the past. And finally, forgiveness, the only thing capable of travelling back in time and, from there, changing the future.

But how could a chink be opened in the armor of evil, in the conscience of Carlos, the cannibal? This was the question we asked ourselves over several drafts of the script until we found an answer: duality. The dual character of Alexandra/Nina (the twin sisters), is what makes the appearance of doubt possible, what makes it believable, and what makes possible for love to sprout as a precursor to forgiveness. Because Carlos confronts a ghost, someone he has already killed, and as such he faces his own mirror. A mirror that reflects who he really is back to him.

The fact that Nina shows up looking for her twin sister fractures the protagonist's conscience, elevating the story and transcending it beyond its realistic content. Everything becomes a metaphor. A dream. A reckoning with a ghost...suddenly, the realistic tale leads us to the supernatural. And the crime becomes a love story.

Ultimately, *Cannibal* is a film noir but, above all, it is a romance.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

MANUEL MARTÍN CUENCA, Director and Screenwriter

Manuel Martín Cuenca was born in Almería, Spain in 1964. He studied Spanish Philology at the Universidad de Granada and graduated with a degree in Information Sciences from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. In 1988, he began his professional work in film as an assistant director, script supervisor and casting director, working with directors including Felipe Vega, Alain Tanner, Mariano Barroso, José Luis Cuerda, Iciar Bollaín, and José Luis Borau. A decade later, he started to write and direct his own films. He has also taught Directing and Acting at several film schools in Spain and Cuba, contributed to various publications, and written a novel as well as several books on film.

In 2001, he wrote and directed a documentary feature-length film, *The Cuban Game (El juego de Cuba, 2001)*, winner of numerous international awards. In 2003, he took part in the San Sebastián Film Festival with his first fiction film as director and co-screenplay writer, *The Weakness of Bolshevik (La flaqueza del bolchevique)*, earning great critical acclaim and five award nominations from the Círculo de Escritores Cinematográficos (Film Critics' Circle) as well as nominations for the Goya Award for Best Screenplay, Adaptation; and for the Goya Award for Best New Actress, won by María Valverde.



One year later, he founded La Loma Blanca Production Company. The company collaborated in several of his films as a coproduction company. In 2005, his second fiction film as director and co-screenwriter, *Hard Times (Malas temporadas)*, was premiered in the Official Section at the San Sebastián Film Festival. This film also garnered excellent reviews and numerous international awards,

including a nomination for the Goya Award for Best Actress, Natalie Poza.

In 2009, the documentary *Last Witnesses: Carrillo, Communist (Últimos testigos: Carrillo, comunista)* was presented at the Málaga Film Festival. It was nominated for the Goya Award for Best Documentary and won the Cartelera Turia Award for Best Documentary of the Year. After that, the company produced *Half of Oscar (La mitad de Óscar, 2010)*, his previous film as director and co-screenplay writer

before *Cannibal*. *Half of Oscar*, released in theatres in Spain in March 2011, was Premiered at Toronto IFF 2010 and at the Official selection of Gijon 2010.

FILMOGRAPHY

2013 – **Cannibal**

2010 – **Half of Oscar**

2009 – **Last Witness: Carrillo Comunist** (documentary)

2005 – **Hard Times**

2004 – **Madrid M11 – We Were All On That Train** (documentary)

2003 – **The Weakness of the Bolshevik**

2002 – **4 Cardinal Points** (documentary)

2001 – **The Cuban Game** (documentary)

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

ANTONIO DE LA TORRE (Carlos)

De la Torre studied acting with Cristina Rota and combined his early work in film and television with his job as a sports journalist for Canal Sur Televisión.

His filmography contains over 80 titles, making him one of the most prolific and sought after actors in Spanish film. He has worked with such directors as Pedro Almodóvar, Daniel Sánchez Arévalo, Álex de la Iglesia, Iciar Bollaín and Steven Soderbergh, among others.

His performance in Daniel Sánchez Arévalo's directing debut *Darkbluealmostblack* earned him the Goya Award for Best Supporting Actor, the Actor's Union Award and the Best Actor Award at the Toulouse Film Festival. His second starring film, *Fat People*, garnered him a Goya Award nomination for Best Male Lead. A regular in Sánchez Arévalo's films, he also participated in *Cousinhood* and will soon be seen in the upcoming *My Family and other Hooligans*. De la Torre worked with Pedro Almodóvar on *Volver* and most recently on *I'm So Excited*.

Nominated for a Best Male Lead Goya for *The Last Circus*, the past year his performances in *Unit 7* and *Invader* were once again recognized by the Academy with nominations for Best Male Lead and Best Supporting Actor, respectively.

Cannibal is his fourth collaboration with Manuel Martín Cuenca after shooting *Half of Oscar*, and the made-for-TV movie *El Tesoro* with him, as well as the short film *Hombres Sin Mujeres*.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2013 – **Cannibal**

2012 – **I'm So Excited**

2011 - **Cousinhood**
2010 – **The Last Circus**
2010 – **Half of Oscar**
2009 – **Fat People**
2008 – **El Tesoro**
2006 – **Darkbluealmostblack**
2006 – **Volver**

OLIMPIA MELINTE (Alexandra/Nina)

Olimpia Melinte, born in Romania, started her professional career in the Octav Bancila University theatre, where she made her debut as Wendla in Frank Wedekind's *Spring Awakening*, directed by actor Nicholas Ionescu. For this role, she received the Best Actress Award at the National Olympic Theater, Timisoara in 2005.

After studying Performing Arts at the George Enescu Arts Faculty, she made her film debut in 2009 in *Floating Things*, directed by Mircea Daneliuc. For this work, she received two nominations at the Romanian Film Industry COPO Awards as Best Actress and Best Newcomer in 2010.

In 2011, she was selected among 250 actresses for the leading role in Massimiliano and Gianluca de Serio's Italian-language feature film *Seven Acts of Mercy*, which got her a Best Actress Award at the Bobbio Film Festival in Italy. This film obtained ample recognition in international festivals, and established Melinte as a versatile actress able to play in four different languages.

Cannibal is her first experience in Spain.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2013 – **Cannibal**
2012 – **Killing Time**
2011 – **Seven Acts of Mercy**

CREDITS

CREW

Director	Manuel Martín Cuenca
Screenwriters	Alejandro Hernández Díaz Manuel Martín Cuenca
Producers	Manuel Martín Cuenca Fernando Bovatra Simón De Santiago Alejandro Hernández Díaz
Line Producer	Bárbara Diez
Director of Photography	Pau Esteve Birba
Art Director	Isabel Viñuales
Costumes	Pedro Moreno
Make-Up	Patricia López
Hairdresser	Paco Rodríguez
Sound	Eva Valiño
Editor	Angel Hernández Zoido

CAST

Carlos	Antonio de la Torre
Nina	Olimpia Melinte
Aurora	Alfonsa Rosso