



# A MYSTERIOUS WORLD

a film by RODRIGO MORENO



61<sup>st</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Competition



## SYNOPSIS

Boris is stunned when his girlfriend Ana asks for some time apart. He doesn't know why and she can't explain it. Some time can mean so many things. How much time apart? A week, a month, years? During this imprecise period of uncertainty, Boris is left at the mercy of chance. His life transforms into an erratic urban journey: moving into a transient hotel, buying a temperamental communist-era car, meeting up with a long-lost classmate, random encounters with other women and repeatedly trying to get back together with Ana.

**AN ERRATIC URBAN JOURNEY  
INEXPLICABLY CONNECTED TO A TEMPERAMENTAL COMMUNIST-ERA CAR**

**COMMENTS  
FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR  
RODRIGO MORENO**



**UNCERTAINTY** When his girlfriend asks for some time apart, this gives Boris the opportunity to explore the unknown and to simply go with the flow. This time is a time of total freedom, and the freedom to say “I don’t know what to do nor when and I don’t have to explain anything to anyone.” For us poor submissive animals, such freedom can result in confusion and uncertainty which can lead to anxiety and depression or it can even put us in a perplexed state facing things which might end up being interesting. That’s the path that I chose for this film, the puzzling and distant gaze at what surrounds us when we’re in a state of patiently waiting after a total surrender to a new and permanent detour. A MYSTERIOUS WORLD tells the story of a period of uncertainty and how it can become a life experience.

**BREAKUPS** A crisis in a relationship offers an interesting time because new rules must be established, including the possibility that there might not be a rule which will govern our destiny. After having strictly made such an intense film like EL CUSTODIO, it was better for me to take a less fixed path. The story in A MYSTERIOUS WORLD came about as the merging of various ideas that I had in mind.

It was also out of creative necessity: I wanted to lose myself, I had to open doors without knowing where they would lead me. Boris and the time of separation express that necessity. I was interested in telling the story of a breakup not from the emphatic and tragic decision that provokes the period of separation, but from a much less dramatic sense and much less narrative in appearance. A breakup can be a narrative opportunity to explore and take a detour with the characters. The film is based on deviated moments which, even when pieced together, it’s not sure if we’re following a straight track or not. This is a disobedient, if not anarchic, narrative technique which I’m very much attracted to.



To take on a project, it’s necessary to have some kind of force strong enough to withstand the test of time and improbability of the long filmmaking process, from notebook to the first screening. A MYSTERIOUS WORLD had this force for me thanks to its free narrative and its anarchic spirit.



**LONELINESS** A MYSTERIOUS WORLD is about the intimacy of loneliness. Loneliness is not necessarily sad and it can be the chance for an existential encounter with oneself. More than anything else, a breakup means now having to be alone. In the film, we see how Boris deals with this loneliness: sometimes he gets lost, sometimes he enjoys being so free, sometimes he suffers from lack of company, sometimes he seems to be indifferent about his new status, sometimes he meets other girls. All these different situations function as stops along the strange journey that is this film.



**A DESERT FULL OF WEEDS** I'm not interested in winners and losers. I'm interested in characters who are outside of the competition. Like those who watch the show from the sidelines, as in my film EL CUSTODIO. Like those who, for some anarchic reason or by some exercise in freedom, choose to remain in the sidelines, standing at the edge of everything. This is the case of Boris. I have always found edges more attractive than the center, but the world doesn't seem to be directed to the edge. Most of the time, the world seems to be made for others, as if its order were foreign to those who actually inhabit it. That's why I feel the purpose of my work is to explore the territory that film and story-telling tend to generally ignore. It's like a desert full of weeds. At first glance, it can seem boring and unattractive, but that's what I like in the world.



**BORIS** Boris is no one special, and that's what I like about this character. We don't know much about him and it doesn't matter. The character grew piecemeal as the film progressed, and the result is that each viewer can carry a different idea about this character, surely based on his or her personal worries or characteristics. I think this generally happens with any protagonist. Boris has no recognizable profession. He's always dressed in the same way. We don't even know if he has any family. This isn't a story constructed with the help of factors and concepts that one can take from the outside world or real life. I took a radical stance toward this. In a way, this film found its own structure. In the case of Boris, this idea is crystallized by not knowing anything about him. We follow Boris as he follows the characters which pop up in the story. This is also a bit like a means of transportation which allows us to move along with Boris through the film, discovering what he discovers. Boris is the viewer's obsolete Romanian car, our Tokha.

**ESTEBAN BIGLIARDI** Esteban Bigliardi, who plays Boris in A MYSTERIOUS WORLD, is one of the best young theater actors that Buenos Aires has to offer. I've seen him many times on stage in very different roles, reciting sometimes beautiful texts, impossible texts, even horrible texts. He always prevails with a singular charm. He is a captivating and unique figure with enormous stage presence. But meeting him offstage inspired me to give him a call. Bigliardi is a great guy to hang out with. After spending time with him, observing him, I decided to offer him the lead role.

He's a great actor not because of his pliability nor his versatility. These virtues don't really interest me in an actor. I care about how he is on set, the way in which he behaves towards his work in front of the camera, during rehearsals and even during the breaks. Being constantly aware that a film shoot is work is not my case. I look for relaxed working atmospheres where friendship and pleasure prevail in what we're doing. Contrary to popular belief, a liar doesn't make a good film actor. A good film actor must know how to deal with the truth. Bigliardi knows.



**THE TOKHA** The Tokha car doesn't really exist. It's actually an old Renault 6. My fictional Tokha recalls those obsolete products imported from post-Soviet Eastern Europe to my country in the early 90s. The absurdity of this car in *A MYSTERIOUS WORLD* - of any device that doesn't work efficiently - is a commentary on the helplessness we can feel about situations that we can't manage. How things work is sometimes inexplicable. Maybe love, too. That's the reason why I chose for the useful life of this obsolete car to represent the time of separation between Boris and his girlfriend. That's how the world seems to be: mysterious and unexplainable. Apart from that, on my mother's grandmother's side, my ancestors are Romanian. So I get a laugh out of the absurd destiny of a Soviet Romanian car.



**THE SHOOT** My plan was to make a 35 mm film with a small crew of 12 professionals, but on an almost amateur scale. Undressed streets as our sets, natural light, no trucks, no makeup, no catering. To avoid the extras that the film industry has adopted as essential. And they don't have to be. As an independent filmmaker, I think it's up to me to show that films can be made cheaper and smaller. I also believe that the smaller the production, the closer the director can remain to what it is that he wants to tell. Although the shoot was tougher with a small crew, everything still seemed more relaxed. We shot near our homes and it was summer, so it felt like friends getting together for some summer fun. I guess I found a system of working professionally without the pressure of professionalism. I'm eager to go on filming in this direction. We shot most of the film in the center of Buenos Aires, especially in Congreso, the neighborhood where I grew up. As the story functions like an urban journey, we shot all over the city, from south to north, east to west, trying to capture all those multiple and varied aspects the city of Buenos Aires has: the French architecture, the green suburbs, the 70s remnants.



**THE SONG AT THE MECHANIC SHOP** Atahualpa Yupanqui is another legendary figure of Argentinian music. It's only by coincidence that I chose songs both by Gardel and Atahualpa, but it's remarkable that they can coexist so closely together. It's pure simplicity played in concert and it can only be found on YouTube. No one has the original recording of that 1986 concert for television. Atahualpa was already an old man. I tracked down the person who had uploaded the material onto YouTube. A Buenos Aires dentist. He allowed me into his home to copy the recording. It's a lost jewel and rescuing it has all been part of my strange museum that is A MYSTERIOUS WORLD. A museum collection of lost objects: an old Renault 6, forgotten Buenos Aires bars, lost music.



**THE FRENCH SONG** The closing song is entitled Déjà. The words allude somewhat to the themes in A MYSTERIOUS WORLD, especially in this moment. It's sung by the famous tango singer Carlos Gardel, one of Argentina's few icons. It's an obscure recording from 1931. I heard it once on the radio and since then I have always wanted to use it in a film. The fact that it's sung in French might give a French air to everything else, but the fact that it's Gardel singing exempts the recording from any ridicule. There is no intention on my part to Frenchify my film. Appropriating French culture or the French language is something traditionally very Buenos Aires. And this film is very Buenos Aires.



## RODRIGO MORENO DIRECTOR, WRITER

I was born in Buenos Aires in 1972. I studied film directing and script writing at the Universidad del Cine. Mainly I work as a filmmaker and I have written and directed two feature films, A MYSTERIOUS WORLD and EL CUSTODIO, both presented in the Official Competition of the Berlin Film Festival.

Before that, I co-directed EL DESCANSO with two friends. For 10 years or so, I taught film directing and script writing in a number of different schools.

Now I sometimes work as a consultant on various Latin American film projects. For the past couple of years, I have been venturing into the visual arts with photography and performance pieces. “Professional Radio Announcers Read Karl Marx’s Capital” was recently a finalist in an important Visual Arts Program in Argentina.

2010 [Un Mundo Misterioso \(A Mysterious World\)](#)

2007 [La Señal de R. D. Kell](#) (TV) - codirected with V. Tellas

2006 [El Custodio \(The Bodyguard\)](#) - Winner of the Alfred Bauer Prize (Most Innovative Film) at the 2006 Berlin Film Festival

2004 [Aeroplano](#) (short) 2001 [El Descanso](#) - codirected with

U. Rosell & A. Tambornino 1998 [Mala Epoca \(Bad Times\)](#) -

“Compañeros” (Comrades) episode only 1993 [Nosotros](#) (short)



## ESTEBAN BIGLIARDI AS BORIS



Boris in Rodrigo Moreno’s UN MUNDO MISTERIOSO is Esteban Bigliardi’s biggest film role to date. Bigliardi was recently seen in Rafael Filipelli’s 2009 film SECUESTRO Y MUERTE. He also appeared in the award-winning films CASTRO (dir. Alejo Muguillansky) and TODOS MIENTEN (dir. Matias Piñeiro). An accomplished theater actor, Bigliardi received much acclaim for his recent performances in Mauricio Khartoum’s “Ala de Criados” and Romina Paula’s “El Tiempo Todo Entero.”

Other theater credits include Romina Paula’s “Algo de Ruido hace”, Rafael Spregelburd’s “Acassuso”, Mariano Pensotti’s “Interiores”, and Henschel Schauspiel’s “Nachblind” and Handl Klaus’s “Salvajes”, both performed with the Goethe Institute.

## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2011 [Un Mundo Misterioso \(A Mysterious World\)](#)

dir. Rodrigo Moreno 2010 [Secuestro y Muerte \(Kidnapping and Murder\)](#) dir. Rafael Filipelli

2009 [Castro](#) dir. Alejo Muguillansky 2009 [Todos Mienten \(They All Lie\)](#) dir. Matias Piñeiro



## MAIN CAST

Boris: **Esteban Bigliardi** Ana (Boris' Girlfriend): **Cecilia Rainero**  
Ingrid: **Rosario Bléfari** Mechanic: **Germán da Silva** Levisman  
(Friend in Bookstore): **Leandro Uria** Bookseller: **Hernán Oviedo**  
Odette: **Lucrecia Oviedo**

## MAIN CREW

Director & Screenplay: **Rodrigo Moreno** Director of Photography: **Gustavo Biazzi**  
Production Design & Costumes: **Gonzalo Delgado** Editor: **Martin Mainoli** Sound  
Design: **Catriel Vildosola** 1st Assistant Director: **Nicolás Grosso** Line Producer:  
**Fernando Brom** Production Manager: **Micaela Buyé** Producers: **Natacha Cervi,**  
**Hernán Musaluppi** Co-producers: **Benny Drechsel, Karsten Stöter, Anne Tetzlaff**  
Associate Producers: **Fernando Epstein, Pascual Condito**



## TECHNICAL DATA

Argentina-Germany Length: **107 minutes**  
Format: **35 mm / Color / 1:1,33** Sound: **Dolby Digital**  
Original Language: **Spanish**

A film by **Rodrigo Moreno** a production of **Rizoma**  
(Argentina) in co-production with **Rohfilm** (Germany) with the  
support of **INCAA** (Argentina), **Visions Sud Est** (Switzerland),  
**ZDF/Arte** (Germany), **Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg**  
(Germany), in association with **Control Z Films** (Uruguay)  
world sales **The Match Factory**



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