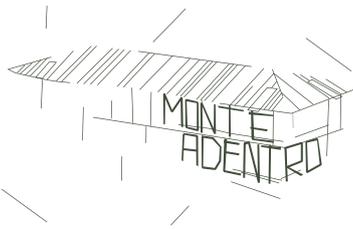


A film by  
**NICOLÁS MACARIO ALONSO**



[www.monteadentrofilm.com](http://www.monteadentrofilm.com)

## MONTE ADENTRO

A film by  
**Nicolás Macario Alonso**

Produced by  
**Heike Maria Fischer (Flor de Producciones)**  
**Nicolás Macario Alonso**

With  
**Novier Valencia**  
**Alonso Valencia**  
**Blanca González de Valencia**

## FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

**World Premiere:**  
54 th FICCI (Cartagena International Film Festival, Colombia) 2014

**International Premiere:**  
Visions du Réel International Film Festival (Nyon, Switzerland) 2014

DocBuenosAires (Argentina) 2014

MIDBO (International Documentary Film Festival Bogota, Colombia) 2014

DocsBarcelona+Medellín (Medellín, Colombia) 2014

**Award for BEST FIRST FILM**

Camerimage International Film Festival, Feature Documentary Competition  
(Bydgoszcz, Poland) 2014

**SPECIAL MENTION**

Festival des 3 Continents, International Competition (Nantes, France) 2014

SXSW Film Festival, Official Selection, SX Global Section (Austin/Texas, USA) 2014



For the complete and updated festival and awards list, please visit the film's official website (in News section) or facebook:

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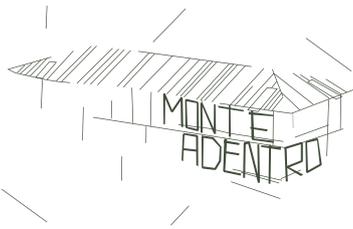
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## SYNOPSIS

MONTE ADENTRO explores the universe of one of the last muleteer families in Colombia and follows the mule train and lives of two brothers, "the Gypsies".

Alonso, one of them, now forced by the illness of their mother to live in a city, attempts to start a new life while accompanying his mother who the doctors won't allow to return to live in the mountains. Novier, the other brother, still in the mountains of Caldas Province, but now on his own and despite the lack of work, tries to make a living and maintain their old mountain house and the mule driving tradition, as their father and grandfather did. As each of them strives to make a living on their own, memories of their common past make them wish to go back to their origins.

It is not easy for a peasant family to survive in today's Colombia - with "progress" knocking on everyone's door and promising a better life in the city - let alone if they are muleteers, a centuries-old profession in extinction.



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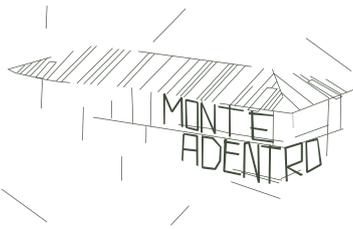
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## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### MONTE ADENTRO

COLOMBIA - ARGENTINA, 2014

Running time: 79 mins and 52 mins (TV version)

Aspect Ratio: 1.85 : 1

Original Format: HD

Screening Format: DCP

Language: Spanish

Subtitles: English

### CREDITS

**directed by:**

NICOLÁS MACARIO ALONSO

**produced by:**

HEIKE MARIA FISCHER

NICOLÁS MACARIO ALONSO

**production companies:**

FLOR DE PRODUCCIONES (ARGENTINA)

NICOLÁS MACARIO ALONSO

in coproduction with SEÑAL COLOMBIA

**executive producer:**

HEIKE MARIA FISCHER

**associate producers:**

MARÍA FERNANDA BARRIENTOS

DANIEL GARCÍA

**delegate producer** – Señal Colombia:

MANUEL FERNANDO PEREIRA CERÓN

**executive producer** – Señal Colombia:

JUAN FELIPE URIBE VALENCIA

with the support of:

Fondo para el Desarrollo Cinematográfico, Colombia



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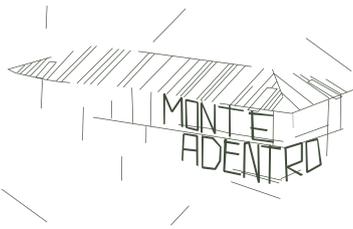
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BAL - BAFICI

DocBuenosAires

IDFA Academy Summer School





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## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### CREW

**director:**

NICOLÁS MACARIO ALONSO

**screenwriter:**

NICOLÁS MACARIO ALONSO

**director of photography / camera operator:**

MAURICIO VIDAL (ADFC)

**editor:**

FELIPE GUERRERO

**sound recordist:**

MILLER CASTRO / JOSÉ R. JARAMILLO

**sound design and editing:**

LENA ESQUENAZI

**music:**

ALEJANDRO RAMÍREZ ROJAS

**production manager / field producer:**

HEIKE MARIA FISCHER

**data manager:**

CATALINA TORRES

**graphic design:**

NICOLÁS RISSO



*flor de producciones*

**Contact**

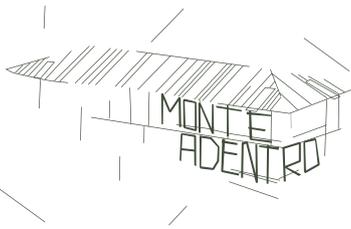
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## ABOUT HOW THE DIRECTOR MET “LOS GITANOS”, THE CHARACTERS WHOSE LIFE THIS FILM PORTRAYS

For the *Monte Adentro* documentary film project, I ploughed through mountains of texts, reading everything from descriptions by Baron Alexander von Humboldt to books on the history of the introduction of the railroad and cable cars to Colombia. All relate to mule-driving in one way or another. Most of them give the impression that there are no documents on contemporary mule-driving. That all documents describe the high-point of this activity but remain quiet on the life of mule-drivers today.

So the question arose: Do mule-drivers no longer exist? Yet immediately I recalled my many trips across the country's roads and how my gaze always fell upon mule trains lining the roadside to rest, opposite eateries or markets in various towns and departments.

Seeking other sources, I came to literature, with texts by Arturo Álape and Octavio Escobar Giraldo, among others. While these two differ in their genres, both recount peasant life, including the role of mules and mule drivers, as a constant presence among all the options rural Colombians have faced to survive since the very Declaration of Independence.

The contribution by the settlers of Antioquia who carved their way through the dense forests of what was Gran Antioquia, in search of better land, or just land of their own to work, is wonderful. Equally beautiful is to discover the significant contributions these men made to the country's economic, social and political development. To see that the Freemason ideas that shaped the radical party of the mid-1800s influenced and promoted the progress of colonization all the way to latter-day Lérica and Líbano/Tolima, tells me of a period of searching, of people who wanted a fairer country, where rural areas would be taken into consideration.

Then I see that the mule-drivers are heirs to great men, of striding, adventurous spirit. Tireless men who forged their trade at a key junction in the country's history.

The golden age of mule-driving was a century ago, but in the country's mountains they remain. Rural Colombia lies ignored and many people there learnt that mules could help bring an end to isolation.

I was also reviewing any audio-visual material I could find on mule-driving and concluded that this focuses primarily on interviews with former mule-drivers describing how they used to work. On how they came to be traveling and how they saw their trade change, until it came to an end.

I saw that there seemed to be no documents on the remaining mule-drivers. Maybe because there weren't any left?



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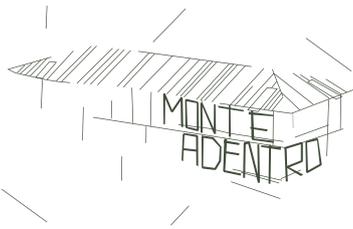
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So I decided to travel to find mule-drivers, beginning with the coffee-growing region. To seek families fully involved in mule-driving today. Truly, no easy task. There are only a handful left.

But, if the mountains are still there and few people have vehicles to take them from town to town, and there are no paths to all the mountain homes, how can there be so few mule-drivers?

I travelled through the departments of Tolima, Quindío, Risaralda, Caldas and Antioquia. I met many people connected with mule-driving. Most are no longer full-time mule-drivers and no one is interested in learning this trade as a way of life any longer.

I also met mule-drivers for tourists, who work posing as mule-drivers in various parts of the country's interior where Colombians travel. There, these people dress in typical outfits from the golden years of mule-driving, give explanations to the curious and tell stories about their "last mule-drive".

I met some who had actually been mule-drivers and others who would have liked to have been.

All this made me want to sink my teeth further into the issue and I decided to go back in time, by taking the route of Antioquia's colonization, but in reverse, from south to north. Thus, after a few days of arriving at Salamina/Caldas, one morning, traveling across paths in the goods jeep, some passion-fruit gatherers told me of some guys in the region known as "los Gitanos" ("the Gypsies"). Brothers who according to them were "destined" to be mule-drivers ("destino" -a local way of referring to a trade).

Then I returned to Salamina and perhaps because I was destined to meet them, the "Gitanos" just happened to be climbing the steep streets of Salamina helping with a move. I found this very odd -I thought mule-drivers carried coffee, or at least that's what we city-dwellers are always told.

Gradually, I built a relationship with them, accompanying them on the roads for days in the mountains, watching them load or unload things in the village. Then they invited me to their house and I met their mother, Doña Blanca.

"Los Gitanos" are two brothers, of a mule-driving father and grandfather, and the last of the family to exercise this trade. They live in a house in the mountains and this is how they look after their families.

There I realized that these three had to be the main characters of this story. A story that brings us to the present of this centuries-old tradition. A present that, through the same characters, is living its final days.



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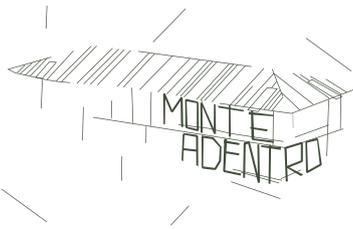
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## WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHAT, INSIDE US, IS IN RESONANCE WITH THE PAST?

Having found “the Gypsies”, as they call the Valencia family in this region, and discovered their struggle to be connected to their tradition and their fight for their history - a battle many of us have already lost or never had the chance to fight for - have closed a circle for me.

During the research I came to love them and empathize with their lives. With them I was able to explore not only the history and importance of muleteering in Colombia, but themes that are closely related to me and to my understanding of the world. What is at stake with them, is the ways we deal with our memories and the struggle we have to put up with in order to keep the connection with the past.

I believe this is a central theme in times of change and very important for Colombians’ critical lack of social memory. I feel that only by being able to know where we come from, we are then able to build a sense of identity. Not because we have to be like our ancestors, but because by looking back we reconstruct the path and it is this path and the way we went through it, what gives us that identity; perhaps the biggest legacy we might have.

All that and my revision of the country’s history, together with the observation of reality, resulted in a huge desire to tell a story about the Colombian peasant. About the inhabitant of this profoundly green country.

I wanted to tell a story where our past and our present meet. Where we see the difficulties that peasants were and are still confronted with, in an agricultural country with a 200-years-old democracy. A story about the force and uncertainty of change, about an abandoned countryside and the options left to the remaining families.

The title *Monte Adentro* means “inside the mountain” and is a metaphor of how the life of the Colombian peasants has been ever since Independence. Never taken into account or considered in the social scheme of the country, kept there in the mountains, in a universe with which we in the cities today have little to no relation whatsoever.

Paradoxically, in the middle of this mountain is the *arriero* (mule driver), a figure that has been very important in the history of the country. He represents hard work and the peasant’s life in Colombia and it was thanks to muleteers that half of the country was built and the extensive mountains, that occupy a third of the territory, were populated.

This documentary observes the emptiness and solitude arising among one of Colombia’s last mule-driving families, when they, trying to live life connected to their roots and not lose what their ancestors and themselves have worked so hard for, are confronted with the inexorable progress of modernity.



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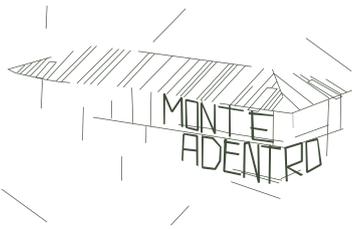
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## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR, NICOLÁS MACARIO ALONSO

Nicolás Macario Alonso was born in Argentina in 1975 to a Colombian mother and an Argentine father. He grew up in Colombia where his family moved in 1976 during the Argentine military dictatorship. He studied drama at Teatro Libre in Bogotá and at L'École Philippe Gaulier in London and Paris. In Colombia he worked in the local theatre scene (Casa del Teatro Nacional, Teatro Libre, Teatro Nacional), taking part in pieces like *Ad portas* directed by Juliana Reyes, *L'Avare* (*The Miser*) directed by Adriana Arango and *The Bacchae*, directed by Greek director Theodoros Terzopoulos, amongst others. In Europe he worked with various theatre and opera companies presenting his work in Italy, France, Greece and England, exploring genres from the Greek classics to physical theatre and Shakespeare to Antonin Artaud. In 2003 he started to write stories and scripts. He worked as Assistant Director of Opera Director Graham Vick in *Ulysses Comes Home* (Monteverdi) at the Birmingham Opera Company, England in 2005.

The first film he wrote and directed is *BEHIND THE RICKSHAW* (2008), a documentary (25 min.) about immigrants who work in London as rickshaw riders. The film reflects upon difficult themes such as coexistence and tolerance while forced displacements are occurring all over the globe.

He was invited as Latin American Director to the **Talent Campus Buenos Aires 2009**.

Nicolás studied cinematography at CFP-SICA in Buenos Aires from where he graduated with his short film shot in 35 mm, *AMAR TE MATA* (2012), which he wrote and directed.

Nicolás started to research for *MONTE ADENTRO*, his first feature-length film, in June 2009. The project was awarded a **development grant by the Fondo para el Desarrollo Cinematográfico (FDC)**, Colombia's national film fund, in October 2010.

The project was selected for the Documentary Workshop and Pitch / Encuentros Cartagena, at **FICCI (Cartagena International Film Festival) 2011** where it won the **first prize for Best Project**.

In April 2011 Nicolás participated in the seminar given by the Chilean documentary filmmaker Patricio Guzmán in Buenos Aires.

Nicolás was invited to take part in the **Robert Flaherty Film Seminar** in Hamilton/New York in June 2011 which in this edition was focussed on the universe of sound in documentary film.

*MONTE ADENTRO* was one of two Latin American projects selected to participate in the **IDFA Academy Summer School** in Amsterdam in July 2011. Nicolás was invited again to the **IDFA Academy** during IDFA in November 2011.



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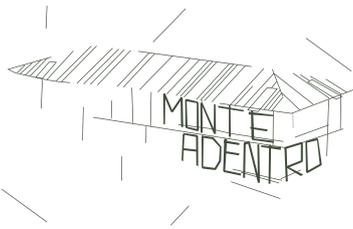
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In December 2011 it won the **post production award** (for one project in development) at the Forum for International Co-Production **DocBuenosAires / Latin Side of the Doc 2011**.

The project received an IBERMEDIA grant to participate in the **Latin Forum Pitch of DocsBarcelona 2012**, for which it was selected.

In September 2012 Colombian public broadcaster **Señal Colombia** joined as **co-producer**, after the project was chosen in the *Mercado de Co-producción*, their open call for co-production.

In October 2012 MONTE ADENTRO was one of three projects granted **production support from the FDC (Fondo para el Desarrollo Cinematográfico)**, Colombia for feature-length documentary.

It was selected for the **Buenos Aires Lab (BAL)** of the **BAFICI (Buenos Aires International Festival for Independent Film) 2013** where the jury awarded it with two postproduction prizes.

Nicolás is Director and Producer of MONTE ADENTRO.

His new project in development, EL PAÍS DEL NO ME ACUERDO, also a documentary, received Development Support by the Fondo para el Desarrollo Cinematográfico (FDC), Colombia in 2013.



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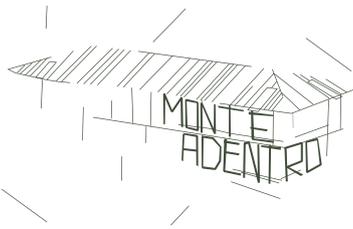
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## ABOUT FLOR DE PRODUCCIONES

FLOR DE PRODUCCIONES is an independent production company founded by Heike Maria Fischer and Nicolás Macario Alonso in 2008. It has its base in Buenos Aires, Argentina and its focus on documentaries. FLOR DE PRODUCCIONES has strong links with Colombia and also works with European Directors and production companies in the research, development and production of documentaries shot in Latin America, as Co-producer, Line Producer or for production service.

Amongst its finished projects and films are:

**Monte Adentro** - Feature Documentary, Dir: Nicolás Macario Alonso  
(Colombia/Argentina, 2014)

*(brief summary of awards and achievements during development and postproduction stage; see more detailed in Director's Biofilmography: postproduction awards at BAL/BAFICI and Forum DocBuenosAires/Latin Side of the Doc, IDFA Academy Summer School, Best Documentary Project at FICCI, Latin Forum Pitch DocsBarcelona, FDC/Colombia (development and production), co-producción with Señal Colombia)*

**Amar te mata** - short film (fiction) (35 mm), Dir: Nicolás Macario Alonso  
(Argentina, 2012)

**El sonido del bandoneón** - Feature Documentary, Dir: Jiska Rickels,  
co-produced by Selfmade Films and NTVF in cooperation with AVRO  
(Netherlands, 2011). Research and Line Producer

*(Opening film IDFA 2011 (Dutch Competition), Special Jury Award at Femina Rio de Janeiro, Guadalajara IFF, amongst others)*

**Behind the Rickshaw** - Documentary short, Dir: Nicolás Macario Alonso,  
(UK/Colombia, 2008)

**24 UTC - The World at Midnight** - Documentary Series, Dir: Sophie Heldman, Susanne Binninger, Britt Beyer, co-produced by LOOKS Film, RBB and NDR, in cooperation with ARTE (Germany, 2007).  
Research and Production Management

Projects in development:

**El país del no me acuerdo** - Feature documentary  
Awarded with a script development grant from FDC, Colombia 2013

**La Ojiazul** - Feature-length film (fiction)



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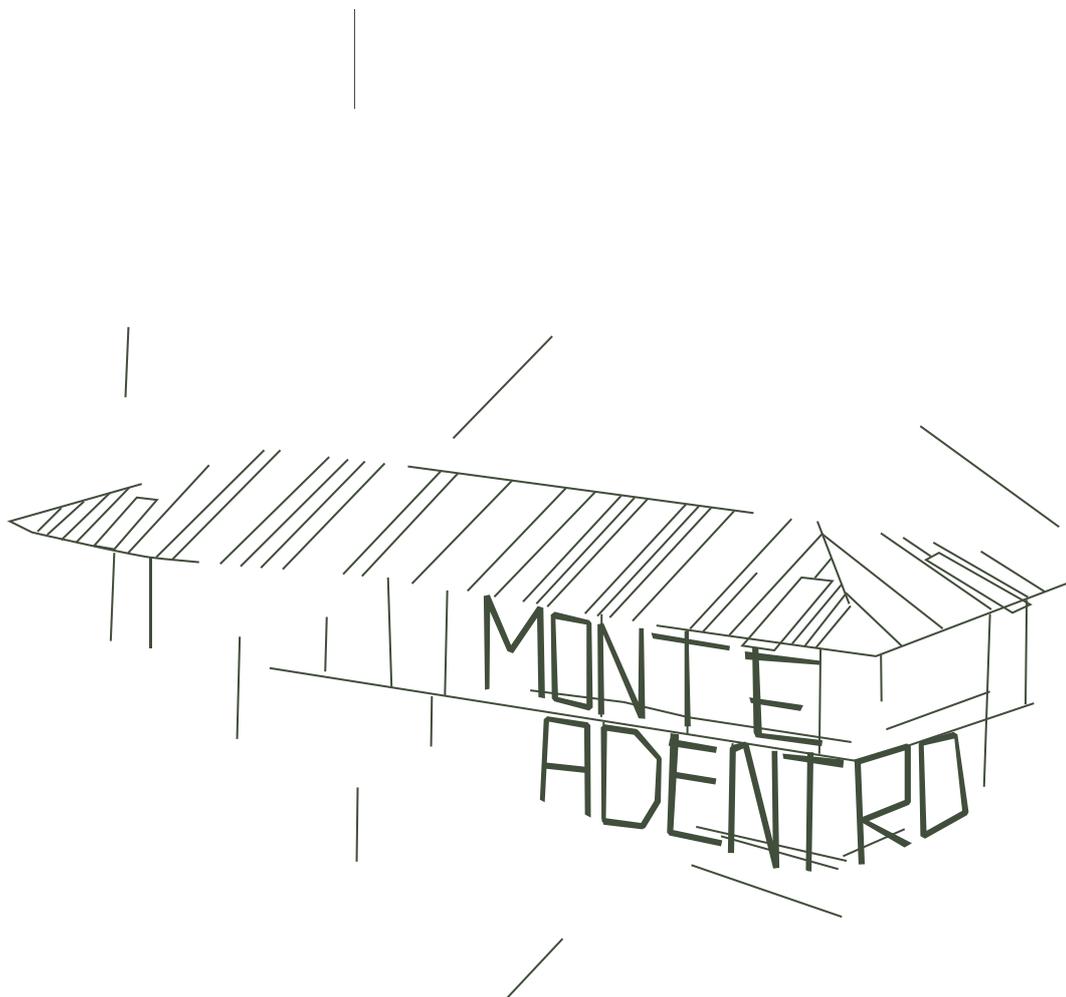
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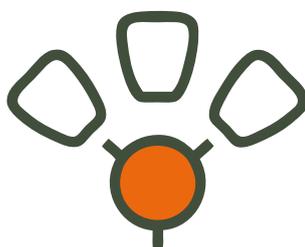
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