

Birds of Passage (Pajaros de Verano)

Directors: Cristina Gallego & Ciro Guerra. Colombia, 2018.

Language: Wayuu/Spanish/English (Subtitles). 126min. (15)

With: Carmina Martinez, Natalia Reyes, Jose Acosta



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This unique tale charting the rise of the Colombian drugs trade is told from the perspective of the Wayuu people, a series of clans in close association living on the desert-like Guajira peninsula in northern Colombia. While traditionally the Wayuu tended goats and raised cattle, they also learnt to use guns and horses to repel outsiders such as the colonising Spanish; who called them "barbarians and horse thieves", but feared them. Maternal authority is strong among the Wayuu; girls go through a long period of seclusion around puberty for instruction on life skills. The film begins in the late 1960s with Zaida (Natalia Reyes), daughter of the formidable Ursula (Carmina Martinez), emerging from her year of seclusion.

Co-directors Ciro Guerra (who made *Embrace of the Serpent*, also screened by WFC) and Cristina Gallego (whose original idea formed the basis of the screenplay) were committed to working collaboratively with the Wayuu, rather than exploiting their story; they were the first to see the completed film and most of the actors are Wayuu people, speaking their own language. The film is based on extensive research – e.g. the changes depicted in the family's style of housing are authentic. Look out for the birds who appear throughout; these have symbolic meanings for the Wayuu and they herald the story told in the film's five acts.

"Part anthropological study, part rise-and-fall epic and all-out mesmerizing, this regional spin on the "family business" saga makes you rethink the notions behind why we watch crime flicks past the vicarious thrills." David Fear, Rolling Stone

"Offers a lesson about the destabilisation of traditional modes of life and a fascinating glimpse into a little-understood community. That the filmmakers wrap it into familiar genre territory makes it all the more impressive." Christina Newland, Sight & Sound

Winner Best Film, Best Actress (Carmina Martinez) & Best Music: Fenix Ibero-American Film Awards

You can rate the film by a show of 1 - 5 fingers (5 = top) at the door on the way out. A committee member will be noting the scores.

You can also comment on: Twitter @wfc screenings ; the WFC Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WimbledonFilmClub/> ; or by email to info@wimbledonfilmclub.com

Please dispose of these notes yourself or take them with you. Thank you!