



pUNK FILMS PRESENTS

THE WORLD OR NOTHING (El Mundo o Nada)

A FILM BY INGRID VENINGER

PRESS KIT

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Canada, 2019

Spanish w English subtitles, 84 minutes
DCP/HD, Colour, Stereo 5.1

Production Company:

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**THE WORLD OR NOTHING
(EL MUNDO O NADA)**

a film by Ingrid Veninger

SYNOPSIS:

The World or Nothing (El Mundo o Nada) is the first non-fiction feature film by award-winning Slovak-Canadian filmmaker, Ingrid Veninger. A portrait of 29-year-old Cuban twin brothers, Rubert and Rubildo, which begins two-months after their arrival in Barcelona, Spain. The film explores the obsession and opportunity of today's social media, the emotional cost of having big ambitions, the intimate bonds of sibling love, and the challenges of building a new life. For the brothers, "The World" means achieving one-million friends on social media, making their parents proud, starting a family, and gaining international recognition as a dancing, singing, performing duo. "Nothing" is not an option.

"To accomplish our goals, we can only have one view. We can't look forward and think sideways. It must be total focus. We feel our family are with us, but we need to concentrate to make this dream come true. In the end, it would be a good result for all of us. We want them to be proud of our actions." - Rubert Donatien Dinza (English translation by Claudia Munuera)

pUNK Films presents **The World or Nothing** (El Mundo o Nada)
Introducing **Rubert & Rubildo Donatien Dinza**
Cinematographer **Leon Guallart Diaz** Sound Recordist **John Switzer**
Editor **Claudia Munuera** Sound Designer **Jakob Thiesen**
Re-Recording Mixer **Eric Apps, cas** Colourist **Dave Muscat**
Produced & Directed by **Ingrid Veninger**





INGRID VENINGER: SHORT BIO.

Born in Bratislava and raised in Canada, *The World or Nothing* is Veninger's first experience with directing non-fiction. Since 2008, she has written/directed six narrative fiction feature films, (*Only, Modra, i am a good person/i am a bad person, The Animal Project, He Hated Pigeons* and *Porcupine Lake*), which have premiered at international festivals including, TIFF, Rotterdam, Slamdance, Whistler, Rome, OUTFest, MoMA and Busan, garnering awards and distribution worldwide. The recipient of the TFCA Jay Scott Prize, EDA Award for Best Director, TheWIFTS Visionary Award, and participant of the Berlinale Talents, Rotterdam Producer's Lab and inaugural TIFF Studio. Veninger co-founded the 1KWave in Toronto and initiated the pUNK Films FEMMES LAB to foster original screenplays written by Canadian women, sponsored by Academy Award winner Melissa Leo. Currently, she is completing her MFA in Cinema Studies at York University.

(selected) PRESS QUOTES for PREVIOUS WORK

"Ingrid Veninger: the DIY queen of Canadian filmmaking." **Liam Lacey, Globe & Mail**

"As Sofia Coppola did for *Lost in Translation*, Veninger uses naturalistic acting, keen cultural observations and deadpan comedy to excellent effect." **Peter Howell, Toronto Star**

"Ingrid Veninger hits her sweet spot with *Porcupine Lake*, which trades some of her scrappier aesthetic instincts for a more polished veneer but keeps the heart and prickly specificity of her best work." **Angelo Muredda, Cinema Scope**

"*He Hated Pigeons* is a hauntingly beautiful and moving masterwork of personal loss." **Laurence Kardish, MoMA**

"A touching character piece... *The Animal Project* is subtle, funny and moving." **Scott A. Gray, Exclaim!**

"*i am a good person/i am a bad person* shows keen insight into the contradiction between being artistically provocative and a responsible parent at the same time." **Peter Debruge, Variety**

"Veninger displays a confident control of tone and pacing [in *Modra*]... a prime example of heartfelt DIY filmmaking that really works." **Alissa Simon, VARIETY**

"Influenced by John Cassavetes and Mike Leigh, Canadian filmmaker Ingrid Veninger is developing an approach to her humanist form of dramatic cinema that is clearly all hers." **Greg Klymkiw, Canadian Film Corner**

"A skilled demolisher of boundaries, she presents visions of the human experience that are at once bold and genuine." **Martin Bilodeau, Programmer, Le Devoir**



CREW BIOS

LEON GUALLART DIAZ: CINEMATOGRAPHER

Born in Barcelona, Spain in 1998, Leon is currently based in Los Angeles. In his short but intense career he has produced several short films, music videos, and web series. Also a musician, Leon recently completed his first musical recording, UNO. *El Mundo o Nada (The World or Nothing)* is his first feature as cinematographer and his first time working with Ingrid Veninger. They connected via mutual friends on Facebook.

JOHN SWITZER: PRODUCTION SOUND RECORDIST

John Switzer has produced more than 50 records and has been involved in many more as a musician or engineer. He has gold records and numerous awards and nominations to his credit. Throughout the 1980s, John performed, toured, and produced with singer-songwriter Jane Siberry. While he has focused primarily on studio production since then, he remains active as a performing and recording musician. Since 2004, he has been a professor and Coordinator of Seneca's Independent Music Program. John is Ingrid's life partner and they have two children, Hallie and Jacob Switzer (both musicians). This is John's second feature film with Ingrid Veninger: he was also the production sound recordist on *Modra* (2010).

CLAUDIA MUNUERA: EDITOR

Born in Barcelona, Spain in 1997, Claudia graduated in Film at ESCAC (Escola de Cinema i Audiovisuals de Catalunya). As an editor she has worked on multiple music videos and short films. *El Mundo o Nada (The World or Nothing)* is her first feature as editor and her first time working with Ingrid Veninger. They were introduced to each other by cinematographer, Leon Guallart Diaz.

JAKOB THIESEN: SOUND DESIGNER

As a Toronto-based musician, Jakob has been exploring electronic and acoustic sound for over 10 years. Jakob's love of film is apparent in all his works. His sound edit and sound design credits include: *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire*, *Aftermath*, *Octavio Is Dead!* and sound recording for *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* and *Odyssey*. *El Mundo o Nada (The World or Nothing)* is Jakob's seventh feature film with Ingrid Veninger.



INGRID VENINGER: DIRECTOR STATEMENT

The World or Nothing (El Mundo o Nada) is my first foray into non-fiction and unlike my six script-based narrative features; my intention with this project was to start filming without a preconceived plan, or even outline. I knew three things before we started production: 1) The film would follow the twin brothers. 2) We would shoot in Barcelona for eleven days. 3) The film would be rooted in the traditions of *cinéma vérité*.

I first saw the brothers when they danced for tourists at a Cuban resort in Holguin, on New Year's Eve, December 31, 2015. They stole the show when they performed a perfectly synchronized hip-hop duet to Usher's *Yeah!* Near the end of the night, I watched as they animatedly spoke with their friends. I wanted to approach them, but ultimately didn't, because I didn't want to interrupt, but also I was intimidated. For two years, on and off, I thought about the twins. In 2017, I returned to Cuba, and to the same Holguin resort, with the intention of meeting the brothers in person, not being sure they would be there. After a few days, I learned they were in Havana and I secured a taxi to drive 11-hours from Holguin to Havana. During a two-hour meeting in the lobby of the Colina Hotel, even though we hardly understood each other, as I don't speak Spanish, and the brothers barely speak English, we felt linked. Being an only child, much of my previous work has explored a yearning to belong, and 'to fit' with another person – in friendship, romantically, or in a familial way. And in studying dance for the first half of my life, I have always had an affinity



for dancers. I think on their part, they liked my dreadlocks, and that I was working with my husband, John Switzer, that I was a legitimate filmmaker with a track record and that we traveled across the country to meet them. Whatever the reasons, at the end of our Havana meeting, I asked if the brothers would be willing to make a film with me – a documentary. There would be no script and no advanced plan. The film might begin with them waking up and would evolve from there. They weren't sure how interesting it could be, but agreed. I committed to return to Cuba in May 2018.

The process of making this documentary was different from anything else I had made, because in my previous role as director of fiction my job relied on control. I participated in every detail, line of dialogue, character action, camera movement, so as to make the world of the film feel real to an audience – what mattered was the result. However, with this documentary a relinquishment of control was required. An advocate for intuitive filmmaking is Canadian/Swiss filmmaker, Peter Mettler. As a producer, I worked with Mettler for over ten years (*Gambling, Gods and LSD, The End of Time*), and he often explained how his method was designed for “work in the field” and could not be anticipated in a written treatment. Indeed, an intuitive production model is one that I have long admired and found intriguing, because it can make for a cinema that is authentic and alive, both in the making and in the experience of the finished work. In addition to Metter, this project was inspired by the work of the Maysles brothers, Cassavetes, Agnès Varda, Denis Côté, Eduardo Williams.



One month before production, I learned the twins had moved to Barcelona, so I shifted the shoot to Barcelona without hesitation. In the opening minutes of the film, we see the brothers' love for each other, how they miss their family, dream to sing with Justin Timberlake, and aspire to increase their views on social media by posting videos every day, an opportunity not afforded to them in Cuba. Now, in the "free world", the twins channel their energies to online social media platforms, not only for promotion, but also for connection and exchange. Through the film we gain an understanding of the twins' present circumstances in Barcelona and learn a little bit about their past in Cuba, however, we know nothing about their future. Their future, as yet, remains uncertain and unknown, and so "uncertainty" became a guiding principle of this project in method, form, and theme.

Irrespective of documentary/fiction categories, which have been blurred since the beginning of cinema, a DIY process is the way that suits me. Working with a low-budget and compact crew not only affords me creative flexibility and economic efficiency, but more importantly -- how I want to make films is connected to how I want to live my life – less industry, infrastructure, and intervention, more direct-source art. The aesthetics of the everyday - the aesthetics of pragmatism – informs how I make my films, and that hands-on approach lives in the result and reflects how an audience experiences the work as real and true, which in turn mirrors the process.



INGRID VENINGER INTERVIEW WITH RUBERT (R) and RUBILDO (r)

Where: Hotel Courtyard, Barcelona Spain

When: May 25, 2018

English translation by Claudia Munuera

Which one is older?

r: Him.

How much older are you?

r: He's a few seconds older. Well, you came out first.

R: That's true.

What do your parents do?

r: Our mom was a nurse. She has always loved sewing. Her passion is sewing. Right now, she's unemployed, and sews when she feels like it. It's kind of a family tradition.

R: Our dad works in construction. He's always had the same job, even now.

When did you start dancing?

r: We started dancing when we were little kids. I remember... I have this image in my head, we would climb on the washing machine. We would climb up there and we would sing and dance all over our house. We were very, very young. We couldn't even... I have that image in my head. Do you remember?

R: Yeah...

r: Then we would dance, more seriously in primary school. We did traditional Cuban dance.

What was your job in Cuba?

R: In Cuba, I worked in a university teaching classes in the morning. At nights, we danced for the tourists on the beach.

r: We got our job as dancers in the hotel thanks to one of our teachers of Cuban culture. His name was Galván, and he used to record us dancing around the university. He showed one of those videos to the CEO of Codanza's Company in Holguín. We meet and told her that we had a couple of choreographies and she said she wanted to see them... So we danced there in her studio and she hired us for her dance company. That's how we started working on the hotels.

Is there a job that you would not to?

r: Here there are all kinds of offers to sell fruit and other stuff. But if we started selling fruit we'd have to forget about teaching and dancing. We can't go to the club every night and do the same show, we need time to exercise and make new choreographies. Most regular jobs are an eight-hour shift, a whole day. If I take a job from 9am to 5pm our music, dancing and making videos life suffers. I would prefer to earn less money but devote myself to a job that is building towards my dream. Earning less doing what I love makes me feel good.



R: Jobs I wouldn't do... Up until now, I've never seen a job I wouldn't do. But if I say "no", it's not because of some attitude, it's because I have to be focused. I can't accept a job where I would have to carry bags up and down because once I get injured my dancing career is over. All the jobs I do are directly dependant on how they affect my artistic career. Like my brother, I won't spend a whole day working on something that I don't love.

Would you ever do a job separately?

r: I don't think so. We try to do everything together.

R: We wouldn't work separately, but... For example, it's Friday and we have nothing to do. Someone calls us and says they want a dancer, but they only one to go to a club, or whatever. Then, we would still go together. One dances and the other one is there to support like, "I'm going to be here watching, you go do the job". That's the only way we would work separately. We'd never take a job that would keep us apart. What do you think?

r: I agree.

What if you suddenly won 1 million dollars?

R: If I had one million dollars, without hesitation, I would keep a quarter. I would share a quarter for the both of us. I would send the rest to my family. I have dreams of being an artist but it could never compare to my family. It doesn't mean anything. Once they're okay we'll be okay. Truly. I wouldn't need to ask my brother about it, I know we think the same way about this. We wouldn't need to vote or discuss it. A quarter million is more than enough for us. We would have enough money so my brother could have his computer to edit, a camera to record the music videos, and I could have my audio equipment to make our music. With a million I could buy a car, but I'm not worried about that, I can walk everywhere. I'm not someone whose dream is to own a car. My dream is a different one. What do you think, brother? What would you do with a million?

r: Me? Whatever you say, you are the oldest.

R: He always says I'm the oldest when we talk about this stuff.

r: I'm usually the one that makes decisions, but-

R: Like I told you, we don't need to discuss this kind of decision. When our family is involved we never argue about it... As long as they are okay. But, if we are talking about our careers he always makes the final decisions.

r: If I had a million dollars, I would probably cry for a month because we could buy a house for our family. But getting bling-bling and stuff like that... We don't care about that. I've lived my whole life with my brother and family with a simple sweater or pullover, we just buy shoes or clothes for our job. Art works this way. Marketing helps sell a singer's public image, and if you don't look good people won't follow you. That's how it is.

R: But-

r: No... I don't even wear a watch or rings. I am Rubildo, and he is Rubert, without earrings, piercings... I'm not saying that's wrong, if you like it go ahead, but I wouldn't spend my money on that. Money should be spent on food.



CREDITS

pUNK Films presents
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(The World or Nothing)

Produced and Directed by
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Introducing
Rubert and Rubildo Donatien Dinza

Cinematography
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Sound Recordist
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Editor
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Sound Design
Jakob Thiesen

Re-recording Mixer
Eric Apps, cas

FEATURING
Oneyda Dinza Michel – Twins' Aunt
Alieva Rodriguez Dinza – Twins' Cousin
Claudio Castellon Ortega – Cousin's Husband
Sophia Rita Castellon Rodriguez – Cousin's Daughter
Maylen Fiffe Hernandez – Rubert's Friend



THANK YOU

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John Greyson
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(Offering a space for us to edit in Barcelona)

Ellen Gould Ventura and Mario Scattoloni
(Responding to my Facebook post seeking a Barcelona-based DP, which led me to Leon Guallart Diaz, a 3rd year film student. This is Leon's first feature)

Jordi Bauli
(Allowing us to shoot in Barcelona's Antilla Salsa Dance Club)

Pedro Fontaine, Andres Landau, Mike Munn, Chris Mutton
(Viewing the first cut and sharing great notes)

Alexandra Rockingham Gill, Hannah Bussiere, Joe Solway,
Jamie Paul Rock, Christy Garland, Mom and Dad
(Viewing the second cut and giving awesome feedback)

Matt Code and Wildling Pictures
(Donating a space for us to picture lock in Toronto)

Everyone at **Deluxe Post Production** in Toronto
(My eighth feature collaboration with Deluxe)

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