

have this industry against another industry, which is also at the margins. Then there's another idea of capitalism, which is the capitalism of the image. I don't want to talk too much about the real consumption of merchandise, because I have to deal with images. And we're in a bulimic world, consuming images the whole time, moving images at a high speed; we don't even know why. We're reproducing ourselves constantly. So, what I wanted to tell Pinky was: "Okay, you're going to represent yourself; you're going to be your own image. But being an image is not being you. And you have to be aware of that. You have to know that killing the Father here is not going to kill him in real life."

In the press notes for *Los Conductos*, you said, "I wanted to reject the rapport between realism and truth to which we have become accustomed. There seems to be a tendency in modern world cinema to highlight the evils afflicting emerging countries through a tragic form of realism." How filmic images circulate economically and culturally in the world seems to be a central concern of yours.

That is linked to my ambition to shoot on celluloid and 16mm. Because I want an image that is not an image of the present. It's not the image of the film industry—it's another image. I want to take some distance. I'm not making news; I'm not going to tell you how Colombia is.

Is it important for you to create beautiful images?

No, for me, what is important is that there is a sensuality coming from the materials, and then emotion is going to come from that sensuality. I don't want psychological emotion in my films, because with that, we go into mimesis and representation, into the identification of the viewer with the character. And that's absolutely what I want to avoid. I also need emotion, I want emotion, I love emotion. But in my films, it's coming from the materials, from sensuality. I want to use images against representation or against mimesis, and give them the freedom to be as they are. ♦

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- *Tale of Cinema & Nobody's Daughter Haewon* (Hong Sangsoo, 2005/2013)—Double bill and book launch; author Dennis Lim in person—June 18 at 2220 Arts + Archives

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ABOUT THE FILM

Medellín, Colombia. Pinky is on the run. He has just freed himself from the grip of a religious sect. He finds a place to squat and a job in a tee-shirt factory. Misled by his own faith, he questions everything. But as he tries to put back together the pieces of his broken life, violent memories return to haunt him and ask for Revenge.

70 min. | Colombia | 2020

Can Dialectics Break Bricks? by Devika Girish

The following is an excerpt of an interview originally published in Film Comment, May-June 2020

[Camilo] Restrepo's first feature...the trim, 70-minute *Los Conductos*[,] is “freely inspired by” the life of its lead actor, Luis Felipe “Pinky” Lozano. Having escaped from a violent religious sect a few years ago, Lozano plays a gun-toting version of himself here, grappling with a complex relation to revenge and morality... *Los Conductos* is a film made up of textures—faces framed within precise modulations of light and shadow, the grit of Medellín's urban environment alchemized ethereally onto 16mm film grain—but it also allows Restrepo to flex his remarkable knack for world-building. Devised partly as an opportunity for Pinky to exorcise his demons in the refuge of movie make-believe, *Los Conductos* combines a rigorous sense of material and mental space with a capacious and ever-mutating universe of ideas and references. The director draws on his own, his actor's, and his nation's memories; literary texts by Gonzalo Arango and Luis Vélez de Guevara; and other elements of pop media, folding them into a work that shifts idiosyncratically between noir, docufiction, and Lynchian surrealism. In addition, recurring acts of duplication and consumption, of objects as well as images, contemplate both the endless reproduction of violence in Colombia and the violence of endless reproduction.

I spoke to Restrepo in Berlin a few days before *Los Conductos* won the festival's Best First Feature Award.

When did you meet Pinky first, and how did you develop the story of *Los Conductos* with him?

I met Pinky in 2014. I was shooting *Like Shadows Growing as the Sun Goes Down* with my sister at that time, about a group of young people, marginal youths, trying to find money in the streets of Medellín, Colombia, by juggling and other such activities. Pinky was one of these people. Then in 2015, I went back to Colombia to shoot another film, and Pinky had no job at the time. So I asked him to become my assistant and taught him

some technical stuff. He told me that he was previously involved in a religious sect under the influence of a man called “the Father.” He was pushed to act in violent ways in the name of God. So he was kind of lost about what was good and bad. But one day he had [a moment of] enlightenment and understood that he was being manipulated against his own faith. So he escaped.

He said that he had one mission in life: to kill the Father, because that was an act of good that could save the other young people in the sect. I understood that he was going to do the same things he did when he was in the sect. So I said to him, “No problem, let's kill the Father. I'm going to help you. But we're going to do it in a film. The starting point is you shooting the guy and then we have to figure out what else can we do in the film. The killing is already done, so how are you going to reintegrate into society now?” So it was not only the idea of representing these events from Pinky's life, but also of creating a portrait of his mind, of a youth living in the margins of society.

Did Pinky have a specific kind of response to authority because of his past?

Yes, but not *against* authority. It's normal to imagine that he wanted to be a rebel, because his life was about submission for a long time. And I am a kind of a father, as the director of a film. But I don't deal in authority. Directing is like conducting an orchestra. You have your team and crew, and you have to conduct them all to more or less sing the same song, at the same time, at the same rate. I have to make decisions at the right moment. With Pinky, it was like: “You're the lead voice. Now you're going to sing. Then stop and continue with another melody.” That was probably a problem for him. He wants so badly to be good that he immediately follows someone that he trusts. And sometimes he was following me a little too much. I was really becoming a father.

There's a strong sense of tactility in all your films. Does that come from your background in painting and visual art?

Yes, of course. Because I shoot in 16mm, and I also developed my earlier films myself—though not this one, because it was too long. There's a handicraft aspect to it. It's more like being an artisan than an artist. There's this thing of making images with concrete objects, with materiality. I don't write a script, I make a collage of images, words, quotations from books, and then I have this audiovisual form which I'm constructing. So I deal with things, not ideas. Like artists, who cut and paste materials. If you want to [give form to] a material, you have to fight with it.

There's a recurring idea in *Los Conductos* that we're accessing reality through reproductions of it. One of my favorite images is the room lined with sheets of cloth that have flames painted on them. There's also Pinky's job at the T-shirt factory, where he's screen-printing fake Adidas merchandise.

Duplication is the main theme of the film. You have reality and the fake. You have the real Adidas and the fake Adidas. So you have good capitalism and bad capitalism. You