

Strand Releasing

presents

The Headless Woman

A Film by Lucrecia Martel

Official Selection in the Cannes Film Festival 2008
Official Selection in the New York Film Festival 2008

Argentina
In Spanish w/English Subtitles
Color, 35mm, 1.2:35
Dolby Digital
87 minutes
Not Rated

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Synopsis

A bourgeois middle-aged dentist named Veronica (MARIA ONETTO) drives alone on a dirt road, becomes distracted, and runs over something. Immediately she becomes disoriented, unmoored from her identity and reality, like a sleepwalker who's actually awake. As the week goes on, she becomes obsessed with the possibility that she may have killed someone: a young boy whose body is found in a roadside canal. Veronica tries to piece together what happened while her husband systematically erases her tracks. A chilling parable about a woman in shock, Lucrecia Martel's third feature explores the intricacies of class and the role of women in a male-dominated society.

Cast

Verónica	María Onetto
Josefina	Claudia Cantero
Candita	Inés Efron
Juan Manuel	Daniel Genoud
Marcos	César Bordón
Marcelo	Guillermo Arengo
Lala	María Vaner

Crew

Writer, Director	Lucrecia Martel
Executive Producer	Verónica Cura
Producers	Pedro Almodóvar
	Agustín Almodóvar
	Esther García
	Verónica Cura
	Enrique Piñeyro
	Lucrecia Martel
	Marianne Slot
	Vieri Razzini
	Cesare Petrillo
	Tilde Corsi
	Fabiana Tiscornia
First AD	Bárbara Álvarez
Cinematography	Maria Eugenia Sueiro
Art Director	Miguel Schverdfinger
Editor	Guido Berenblum
Sound Director	Juan Pablo Miller
Unit Production Manager	Natalia Smirnoff
Casting	Julio Suárez
Wardrobe	Marisa Amenta
Makeup	Alberto Moccia
Hairdresser	

Director's Notes

The best thing about traveling by land is to refrain from sleeping and to listen:

-I very seldom have nightmares but when I have them, the main theme in general is that I killed someone. In my nightmares I am an assassin, and I wake up crying because I no longer believe in God, who could be the only one capable of comforting me with his mercy. The only one I respect. Then I dry my tears and feel that I am a good person, that it has all been a bad dream and that I would never kill anyone.

One night I dreamt that I killed a man with a stick. I got rid of the body but could not get rid of the head. I was in a hurry to go to work, so I put the man's head on a kitchen shelf. I would take care of it when I came back from work. When I got back in the evening, there was a note from my father on the table. It was that time when my father would come to the city on business and would fly back home in the evening. The note said: "I arranged your kitchen shelf. Love, Daddy."

Sure enough, the kitchen shelf now had a false bottom and behind it was the well-concealed head of the dead man. I woke up crying – what a great family I have! What unconditional love! I had the urge to call all my siblings, my parents; I could not wait to see them. You should meet them.

Last night I dreamt again. I was coming out of my Grandma's house after a visit and, when looking for my car keys in my purse, I found a black hand. Dark skin. I realized I killed a black woman. The keys in my purse are not my car keys but the keys to an apartment where I am going and where I know the body is. I woke up crying a screaming.

- Who did the hand belong to?
- I guess the maid's. Poor thing.
- And you never cry for the people you killed?
- Well, I hardly know them.

This movie was created in the vapor of this conversation.

Director's Biography

Born in 1966, Martel studied animation at Avellaneda Experimental (AVEX), attended the National Experimentation Filmmaking School (ENERC) for several years, and studied Communication Science. She directed a number of short films between 1988 and 1994, including *Rey Muerto (Dead King)*, when was part of *Historías Breves I (Brief Tales I)*. In 2001, Martel directed the film *La Ciénaga (The Swamp)*, which won awards in Berlin, Havana, Toulouse, and Sundance, among other festivals. In 2004, Martel wrote and directed *La Niña Santa (The Holy Girl)*, which competed for the Cannes Film Festival *Palm d'Or* that year. She was a member of the Cannes Film Festival Jury in 2006.

Director's Filmography

2007: Director. *The Headless Woman (La Mujer Sin Cabeza)*, 35mm, with María Onetto. Produced by Lucrecia Martel, Aquafilms (Argentina), El Deseo (Spain), Slot Machine (France), Teodora Films and R & C Produzioni (Italy).

2004: Director. *The Holy Girl (La Niña Santa)*, 35mm, with Mercedes Morán, Carlos Belloso and Alejandro Urdapilleta. Produced by Lita Stantic (Argentina), El Deseo (Spain) and R & C Produzioni (Italy).

2001: Director. *The Swamp (La Ciénaga)*, 35mm, with Graciela Borges and Mercedes Morán. Produced by Lita Stantic.

1998: Director of documentaries about Encarnación Ezcurra and Silvina Ocampo, produced by Lita Stantic.

1996: Creator of Magazine For Fai for TV.

1995: *Rey Muerto*, short film, 35mm.

María Onetto Filmography

2007: *The Headless Woman (La Mujer Sin Cabeza)* by Lucrecia Martel
Horizontal-vertical by Nicolás Tuozzo
La revolución es un sueño eterno by Nemecio Juárez

2006: *Noctámbula* by Paco Cabezas
El Otro by Ariel Rotter

2004: *Cuatro Mujeres Descalzas* by Santiago Loza
Arizona Sur by Daniel Pensa and Miguel Angel Rocca

2002: *Anillos de humo* by Alejandro Maci (TV)

1998: *Lejanía* by Leonora Kievsky

1997: *Peluquerías Gólem* by Mariano Pensotti