



SYNOPSIS

There is light and beauty, even in the darkest of worlds. Stranded on an island in a post-apocalyptic world, teenager Dinky and her friends hatch a dangerous plan to escape in the hope of finding a better life. Meanwhile, her old friend Birdboy has shut himself off from the world, pursued by the police and haunted by demon tormentors. But unbeknownst to anyone, he contains a secret inside him that could change the world forever. Based on a graphic novel and short film by co-director Alberto Vázquez and winner of the Goya Award for Best Animated Feature (where Vázquez won Best Animated Short Film in the same year), *Birdboy: The Forgotten Children* is a darkly comic, beautiful and haunting tale of coming of age in a world gone to ruin.

TECHNICAL CREW

Direction: ALBERTO VÁZQUEZ
PEDRO RIVERO

Screenplay: ALBERTO VÁZQUEZ
PEDRO RIVERO

Based on the graphic novel "Psiconautas"
By ALBERTO VÁZQUEZ

Produced by: ZIRCOZINE ANIMATION
BASQUE FILMS

Co-produced by: ABRAKAM ESTUDIO
LA COMPETENCIA

Producers: FARRUCO CASTROMÁN
CARLO S JUÁ REZ
LUIS TOSAR

Associated Producer: AUTOUR DE MINUIT

Co-producers: PEDRO RIVERO
CÉSAR ROD RÍGUEZ
IÑIGO PÉREZ TABERNERO

Executive Producers: FARRUCO CASTROMÁN
CARLO S JUÁ REZ

Exec. Co-producers: PEDRO RIVERO
ALICIA VEIRA

Production Manager: ALICIA VEIRA

Animation Director: KHRIS CEMBE

Art Director: ALBERTO VÁZQUEZ

Editing: IVÁN MIÑAMBRES

Storyboard: ALBERTO VÁZQUEZ

Music: ARANZAZU CALLEJA

CAST

Birdboy: PEDRO RIVERO

Dinky: ANDREA ALZURI

Sandra: EBA OJANGUREN

Zorrito: JOSU CUBERO

Señor Reloggio: JOSU VARELA

Birdman: FÉLIX ARKARAZO

Falso Padre: JORGE CARRERO

Dinky's Mother: NURIA MARÍN

Zacarias: JON GOIRI

Araña: MARIBEL LEGARRETA

Loro: IKER DÍAZ

Hucha: JUAN CARLOS LORIZ

Sergeant: KEPA CUETO

Pato Hinchable: JON GOIRI

Mamá Pájaro: MÓNICA ERDOCIA

Psicopájaros: GILEN ALCALDE

76 minutes / Unrated

1.85 Aspect Ratio / Dolby Digital 5.1

In Theaters December 15

BIRD BOY

THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN



GKIDS



ALBERTO VÁZQUEZ | CO-DIRECTOR

Alberto Vázquez is an animation director, illustrator and cartoonist. His books and comics have been published in countries like Spain, France, Italy, Brazil and Korea. He has written and directed several animated short films, including *Birdboy*, *Ramiro*, *sucia rata*, *Unicorn Blood* and *Decorado*. His work has been nominated on two occasions for the Goya Awards, winning the Goya Best Animated Short Film in 2012. He has won over 80 awards in international events and his works have been exhibited in prestigious festivals worldwide as Cannes, Toronto, Annecy, Clermond-Ferrand, Animafest Zagreb and Slamdance. He just finished his first feature film *Birdboy: The Forgotten Children* (*Psiconautas, los niños olvidados*) based on his own graphic novel of the same name.

FILMOGRAPHY:

2016	Decorado (short film)
2015	Birdboy: The Forgotten Children (feature film)
2013	Unicorn Blood (short film)
2011	Birdboy (short film)



PEDRO RIVERO | CO-DIRECTOR

Pedro Rivero is a producer, director and screenwriter. He has written for several TV animated series and for the feature film *Goomer*, recipient of the Goya Award for Best Spanish Animated Feature Film in 1999. He served as producer, director and screenwriter of *La Crisis Carnívora* (2007), the first Spanish feature film in Flash animation for theaters, and *Birdboy* (2010), a Goya Award-winner for Best Spanish Animated Short Film, with more than 40 awards and 200 selections in film festivals. That short film served as the prequel for *Birdboy: The Forgotten Children*, the new animated feature that reunites him with co-director Alberto Vázquez. Rivero was President of the Basque Screenwriters Guild from 2002-2008, and is also an author of theatrical plays and comic books.

FILMOGRAPHY:

2015	Birdboy: The Forgotten Children (feature film)
2011	Birdboy (short film)
2007	La crisis carnívora (short film)



INTERVIEW

with **ALBERTO VÁZQUEZ** & **PEDRO RIVERO**

Interviewer: *Pedro, as the co-director and co-writer of **Birdboy: The Forgotten Children**, could you talk about how you first met Alberto and became involved in the film?*

Pedro Rivero: Well, the truth is how I got to know Alberto is a beautiful story because it is a Christmas story. I was looking for a comic to give to a friend and I found one of Alberto's comics. And before I gave it to them I decided to read it and I found that the narrative was amazing and the characters were very very powerful. And I talked with the owner of the comic book store and I asked him, "Who is this guy? Who is Alberto?" I didn't know Alberto from anywhere and he made a marvelous comic. And I decided to put myself in contact with him to see if he was interested in making a movie based on his comic.

You also directed the short film first and then the feature, what was the process like moving from the short to the feature? How was the production different or your storytelling experience?

P.R.: The making of a short film versus a feature film is completely different. In the short you're still experimenting, looking for how to find the style within the narrative, building certain ways of correspondence regarding co-directing and, well, that resulted with us opening more doors. The short film gave us a lot of ideas about how to tackle a feature film. And the feature film was a laborious process and much longer. We needed to involve ourselves fully and completely into the project. It was also the type of work that you can't do alone. What I mean is that you need two people talking and making decisions together. Fortunately, we had a great team that responded well to the challenges and we can say that this work was definitely collaboration. The success or failure of a film can be predicted on the first day that the whole creative team meets. If there is a good atmosphere, if there is great spirit on the first day, everything is going to work out. On the other hand, if the first day does not start out well, the film is going to be a disaster. I could tell from day one, having had both experiences, that in this case we were going to have a successful team. At the first moment, I saw that everyone was invested in the project and genuinely had the desire and passion to work on this kind of film.



Alberto Vázquez: Well, it's all from a graphic novel that I drew about eleven or twelve years ago. And it was a comic that was very narratively free and that tried to tackle a bunch of themes that I was concerned with at the time. For example, drugs, drug use, and exterior and interior contamination of the characters. So Pedro Rivero, the co-director of the film with me, got in contact and we began to think about doing a feature film based on the comic. We knew that it was going to be very difficult and it was better for the whole process to make a short film instead of doing animation tests. That way, if we didn't get funds to make the film, at least we would have made a short film. The short film works as sort of a prequel to the feature. The short went well, and we learned a lot. And we were lucky enough to get the funds to make a feature film. This whole process, from when we first began talking to finishing the feature, took eight years.



Alberto, could you talk about how you worked together with co-director Pedro Rivero and what the process between you two was like?

A.V.: We didn't shut ourselves away for a year with only this film. Instead it we worked on it over the course of eight years. And that allowed us to reflect on the story over time. Also, like I said before, this is based on a comic that I wrote ten years ago and it was important to make it better, no? If ten years has passed, in those ten years you have matured as a person and as an illustrator, and it was important to remember that while working, to ensure the work reflects the changes. And well, I am primarily an illustrator. The way I think is in drawing, and I have dedicated much of my work to the graphic look, the storyboard design, and background design. But if you picked up the comic and you translated it as a movie literally, I would say the movie would last only forty minutes. Therefore, we had to build out the story. Amplify the drama and the characters, and for that it was a continual process of communication. Even though I focused on drawing the storyboard and Pedro worked on the animatics of the storyboard, we had to talk the whole time. And on top of that it was a collaborative effort of other artists on the film as well, like the animation director Khris Cembe and other animators and artists that develop the characters and the scenes even further.



Could you talk about what the film has to say about modern society?

P.R.: I want the film to reflect many of the universal themes and issues that we deal with today. From that point, the film works as a metaphor for adolescence. In reality, we can almost transplant the nuclear accident that destroys the past of the characters as the hormonal bomb that destroys our childhood and brings us to adolescence. I think that this film doesn't have a specific message because adolescence is an experience that happens to everyone. In every generation we are going to lose our innocence as children and we have to inhabit a completely new world even though we don't like it and want to return back to the old one. In addition, there are themes of the environment and the importance of leaving behind a world that we have built and taken care of. As a father I'm worried about that. It's something that I immediately think about because the transcendence of our actions is in conflict with all of us, young and old, and I can't stay calm in regards to all of that.

The colors throughout the film are often very muted and dark, but there are also occasional bright and beautiful landscapes. Could you talk about the design and colors of the film, and how you approached trying to balance the tone of the film?



P.R.: Regarding color choices, I can't talk about this too much because I am colorblind. Fortunately, this film was very collaborative and I did not have to make those choices. For the good of the film and for the good of everyone involved. But diverging from that, it is true that the artistic concept is that the whole film happens within a day. We see as the day goes by that things start getting complicated. Furthermore, we see how the characters start getting more complicated. These complications are accompanied by the expressive manner of the color and how color shifts and changes depending on which person or relationship we're watching. For example, the most expressive and most intimate relationships between Birdboy and his inner demons are often accompanied by use of the colors black, and red, very simple – with some extreme angles (relating to German expressionism and cataclysm). All of the color choices were made to try to express the emotions of the characters that we see – and not just make a pretty image.





A.V.: This is something that worried us a lot. While this is a free and artistic film, we are working for an audience and a larger public. Therefore, we wanted the film to have a good rhythm and ensure it was enjoyable, as well as emotional, for the spectator. For example, if there were one or two very dark scenes or horrific scenes or emotionally strong scenes, we always tried to put in something in the middle that allowed the film to breathe. A lot of the comedic scenes come from the objects like the alarm clock, Señor Reloggio, or the inflatable duck, and that helps the spectator relax a little.

Alberto, in addition to what you talked about earlier about being an illustrator as well, so building from the graphic novel to the film, were there any influences for the images and the character design? Or was it primarily your own process?

A.V.: The influences come from the world of animals. Animals exist in every culture in the world. That is to say that every culture has their own myths involving animals, and they have a lot to do with literature, and in particular with children's stories. Using animals was interesting because they're iconic. They are universal; in whatever part of the world you're from, you understand them. I think that *Birdboy: The Forgotten Children* is a story that you don't know really where it's from, if it's Japanese, French, Spanish, or American. So the major influences were global. Then environmentally, as an illustrator and as an artist I have my own influences: illustrators that I like, things that I have seen, and things that I have read. But I do think that this film is fairly unique because when I wrote the comic, I didn't have much baggage, because I didn't start reading comics until I was 17 or 18. My first comic that I read was *Maus* by Art Spiegelman and that world is created with animals, rats and cats, during the Second World War and it was a comic that opened my mind. Almost all of my influences come from the underground comic world. Illustrators like Dave Cooper, I love and I take their work, pass it through my own personal filter and that's where a little bit comes out in *Birdboy*.





ABOUT GKIDS

GKIDS is a distributor of award-winning feature animation for both adult and family audiences. The company has scored nine Best Animated Feature Academy Award® nominations – the most for an independent distributor – with these acclaimed films:

- *The Secret of Kells* (2010)
- *A Cat in Paris* (2012)
- *Chico & Rita* (2012)
- *Ernest & Celestine* (2014)
- *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* (2015)
- *Song of the Sea* (2015)
- *Boy and the World* (2016)
- *When Marnie Was There* (2016)
- *My Life As A Zucchini* (2017)

GKIDS also handles North American theatrical distribution for the Studio Ghibli library of films, one of the world's most coveted animation collections with titles *Spirited Away*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Grave of the Fireflies* and others.

www.gkidsfilms.com

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