



CONTACTS:

Annalee Paulo, 42West LA | Annalee.Paulo@42west.net | (310) 477-4442

Ashley Simon, 42West LA | Ashley.Simon@42west.net | (310) 477-4442

Todd Nickels, 42West NY | Todd.Nickels@42west.net

Kabeer Malhotra, 42West NY | Kabeer.Malhotra@42west.net

Tahajah Samuels, Brigade | Tahajah@BrigadeMarketing.com | (917) 580-6566

Lucy Rubin, GKIDS | Lucy@gkids.com | (212) 528-0500

SYNOPSIS

Paris, 1930. The infamous surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel is left penniless after the scandalous release of *L'Âge d'Or* leads to a falling out with collaborator Salvador Dalí. On a whim, Buñuel's good friend, sculptor Ramón Acín, buys a lottery ticket and promises to devote his winnings to fund Buñuel's next film. Incredibly, Ramón wins the jackpot, sending the two friends to the remote mountains of their native Spain to film the documentary *Las Hurdes: Land Without Bread*. Driven by mad artistic impulse and haunted by childhood memories, Buñuel must confront the specter of mortality looming over the lives of his subjects –and his own.

In a stranger-than-fiction tale befitting the master filmmaker, *Buñuel in the Labyrinth of the Turtles* tells the true story behind a fascinating episode in cinematic history, utilizing sensitive performances as well as excerpts from Buñuel's filmography to present a deeply affecting and humanistic portrait of an artist hunting for his purpose.





SALVADOR SIMÓ | DIRECTOR-SCRIPTWRITER

Salvador Simó is a film director and scriptwriter. He started studying animation at the American Animation Institute of Los Angeles in 1991 while also working at the Bill Melendez Prod Studio on a special Charlie Brown feature. When he returned to Spain he worked in the field of traditional animation for several companies, including Disney in Paris, where he lived for two years.

Subsequently, he returned to Barcelona where he continued working for Disney and set up a studio that worked exclusively for that same company (Disney), during three years, while studying Film Directing at the CECC.

Thereafter, Salvador moved to London to work in MPC's department of previsualization & layout, in projects like *Narnia*, *Prince Caspian*, *The Werewolf*, *The Prince of Persia* and the James Bond's movie *Skyfall*, where his knowledge on cinematography & animation opened many doors for him.

In 2008 he began directing an animation series in Asia, eventually shooting over 500 minutes of film. Then, in 2014 MPC again offered him a job. This time as head of film sequences in the animation feature movie *The Jungle Book*, produced by Disney, as well as in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men tell no Tales*.

In 2016 he moved back to Spain to direct the Buñuel feature film project: *Buñuel in the Labyrinth of the Turtles* which premiered in October 2018 at the Animation Film Festival of Los Angeles, where he was awarded the Jury Prize.



SALVADOR SIMÓ | DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When the producer Manuel Cristóbal proposed to me to direct a film based on the graphic novel “Buñuel in the Labyrinth of the Turtles”, it brought back memories about my father. I recall from my childhood years that he was a great admirer of Luis Buñuel. I remember when he'd tell me the story about some people who couldn't get out of a room because it had no doors. I couldn't understand but I found it fascinating!

The possibility of telling a story about Luís Buñuel was definitely fascinating for me though also terrifying. When I started writing the script with Eligio Montero we focused on Luis, who in 1932, when he shot the documentary in Las Hurdes, was a young director seeking his own filming style and language. That shoot represented a turning point in his career, changing the way in which he gave shape & form to Surrealism and his films, and to a certain extent it brings back to mind *Los Olvidados*, that movie he shot years later.

Throughout the months I spent doing research work and writing, my efforts were mainly focused on the life of the character himself, interviews, remarks and more interviews. On my bedside table I had a book from the Academy of Cinema with interviews of people who had worked with him, my favorite book for my research. I was so engrossed in the story that one night I even dreamt that I was having a coffee at a terrace bar with none other than Buñuel himself and spoke to him about the film.

In the movie *Buñuel in the Labyrinth of the Turtles* what I am trying to do is to portray that young artist, not like the famous director he is today, but as he was at the beginning of his career when hardly anyone knew him, just a guy called Luis. To that end, in order to get close to the character at the personal level, I was very fortunate in that I was able to count on his son, Juan Luis, with whom I held many conversations at his house in Paris, a series of encounters full of details, laughter and affection.

This film also offers to us the opportunity of revealing to viewers another artist who was also a friend of Luis: Ramón Acín. A person with a really big heart, as big as his native land, Huesca. A producer by accident, as well as a painter, a sculptor, a poet and a man extremely devoted to others.

I hope you enjoy this voyage to the world of Buñuel as much as us.



ELIGIO MONTERO | SCRIPTWRITER

A professional scriptwriter. He obtained a university degree in Psychology from the USC and a title in Audiovisual Filmmaking & Production from the EIS in La Coruña. Subsequently, he obtained a master's degree in Intellectual Property Rights Management from SGAE, took various courses of the MEDIA Program and did a master's in Screenplay Editing (Artist-Media II Program), apart from attending many seminars under the preceptorship of prestigious national and international scriptwriters.

He started working in the film industry as executive producer in Eloy Lozano Producciones and Continental in the areas of advertising/commercials, cinema and television, his role being to seek co-productions and international funding (Berlin, London, Cannes, etc).

In 1999 he started working as a professional scriptwriter, first in multimedia applications, videogames, commercials and documentaries, then as from 2001 in the field of fiction. To begin with, in TV de Galicia, where he worked in several of the most successful series of that station: "Galicia Express", "Pequeno Hotel", "Mareas Vivas", "Pratos Combinados", "Rías Baixas", "Terra de Miranda", "A Vida por Diante", "El Show de los Tonechos", etc and was also the co-creator of two of the most outstanding, award-winning series in Spain and abroad: "Las Leyes de Celavella" and "Padre Casares".

Although he had already ventured occasionally into the realm of national fiction (as dialogist for "Al Salir de Clase"), in 2007 he moved to Madrid and began working in national series like: "Desaparecida", "UCO", "Guante Blanco", "Gran Reserva", "Hispania", "Gran Hotel", "Bajo Sospecha", "Seis Hermanas", fulfilling all sorts of tasks related to creation, coordination, plots, dialogues, etc.

Eligio has also been a member of the development teams for IJV and Voz Audiovisual projects, and several years ago wrote a novel ("La Viña Vieja" published by Planeta).

The series in which he has worked have won many national prizes (Mestre Mateo, Iris, Alma, TP, etc.) and international awards (TV festivals of New York, Seoul, Montecarlo, etc.) and been successful in quite a few countries: France, Mexico, USA, Russia, Argentina, Italy, Chile... At the personal level he has received the Mestre Mateo Prize from la Academia Galega do Audiovisual for the best script on three different occasions and the Alma Prize for the best Spanish TV script once.



MANUEL CRISTÓBAL | PRODUCER'S NOTE

Since I bought the graphic novel “Arrugas” so that Ignacio Ferreras could adapt it to the big screen, I kept searching for a story along the same lines that might captivate me. It wasn’t until I came across the graphic novel *Buñuel en el laberinto de las tortugas*, written by José Fernández de Vega, that I realized that a good film could be made, based on it.

At the time I was looking for a film project in which Salvador might be the director, and this particular project seemed to be the perfect one. Both of us were interested in the figure of Buñuel because he is a most contradictory character, as Luis’s close collaborator, Jean-Claude Carrière, himself clearly explained in his autobiography: “Mi último suspiro” (My Last Sigh).

Buñuel was extremely sarcastic, with a typical Aragonese sense of humor, somebody most amusing who wouldn’t take anything very seriously despite being a genius. Buñuel was modest, like many brilliant people are, and used to say that a day without laughter is a day wasted.

I am convinced that animation offers huge possibilities as far as narration is concerned, particularly when there is a world of fantasy around it. I have no doubt that Luis Buñuel himself would have made use of animation, like his friend Ramón Acín, the artist from Aragon and co-protagonist in “*Buñuel in the Labyrinth of Turtles*”, which contains animated pieces that many of us have discovered in the story.

I think that one of the most important things about *Buñuel in the Labyrinth of the Turtles* is that Salvador Simó, as its director, has focused on Luis as a person, reinventing him in a very warm way though showing little if any respect for the genius.

For this film we have put together a team which I hope pleasantly surprises viewers, with José Luis Ágreda as artistic director and Arturo Cardelús in charge of the music. I believe this film represents homage to the generation of Luis Buñuel’s grandsons and hope the audience finds it both amusing and amazing.



ABOUT GKIDS

GKIDS is a distributor of award-winning feature animation for both adult and family audiences. The company has scored eleven 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)
- *The Breadwinner* (2018)
- *Mirai* (2019)

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*, *Howl's Moving Castle* and others.

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