

Sud Express

A film by
Chema de la Peña and Gabriel Velázquez

Official Section Competition, San Sebastian Film Festival

Synopsis

SUD EXPRESS is an intersection of lives. Six stories about anonymous people intertwine during a train journey from Paris to Lisbon.

The protagonists of this trip across southwestern Europe allow us to explore their similarities and the great differences that still exist among them at this critical moment for the Old Continent.

It is a lively film because trains have always meant just that: thrills in motion.

Cast

Samuel
Tino
Mili
Lucía
Rober
Isa
Julián
Luis Antonio
Rashid
Prostitute
João

GERALD MORALES
TINO GUIMARÃES
GERMAN A. JOÃO
LIDIA PINVILLE
JAVIER DELGADO
PILAR BORREGO
JUANMA HERNÁNDEZ
MIGUEL MARTÍN
HICHAM MALAYO
SEVERINE BATIER
FERNANDO TAVARES

Crew

Screenplay and Directors	CHEMA DE LA PEÑA and GABRIEL VELÁZQUEZ
Executive Producers	CHEMA DE LA PEÑA and GABRIEL VELÁZQUEZ
Director of Photography	DAVID AZCANO
Art Director	REBECA CES
Music	JOSÉ ÁNGEL LORENTE
Live Sound	EVA VALIÑO
Image Editors	ANTONIO LARA and MARÍA LARA
Sound Editor	NACHO ROYO
Production Manager	FEDERICA ROMEO

TECHNICAL DATA

Color - 35mm

Screen Ratio: 1:1.85

Sound: Dolby Digital

Length in meters: 2,810 m

Production Year: 2005

Nationality: Spain

Running Time: 1 h 43 minutes

Language: Original in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic and Basque with subtitles in Spanish.

An ARTIMAÑA PRODUCCIONES Production (Spain)

Co-produced with FÁBRICA DE IMAGENS (Portugal)

With support from the JUNTA DE CASTILLA Y LEÓN, CAJA DUERO, ICAA, ICO and TVE

Distributed in Spain by

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Chema de la Peña

(Producer, Director and Screenplay Writer)

Chema de la Peña (Salamanca, 1964), an economist and autodidact, founded Artimaña Producciones in 1993 and shot his first short films. In 1999, Fernando Colomo produced his first feature film, *Shacky Carmine*, which was the start of his career making commercials and music videos. At the 2002 Goya Awards, he got a nomination for Best Documentary Film for *De Salamanca a ninguna parte*.

FILMOGRAPHY

1993	<i>El negocio es el negocio</i> (short film)
1995	<i>Lourdes de segunda mano</i> (short film)
1999	<i>Shacky Carmine</i> (feature film)
2002	<i>De Salamanca a ninguna parte</i> (feature film)
2004	<i>Isi/Disi</i> (feature film)
2005	SUD EXPRESS (feature film co-written and co-directed with Gabriel Velázquez)

Gabriel Velázquez

(Producer, Director and Screenplay Writer)

Salamanca, 1968. His first job in cinema was in 1995 as Production Manager in Salamanca for the short film *Lourdes de segunda mano* by Chema de la Peña. In 1996, he moved to Madrid and worked as Production Manager on various projects. That same year, he directed his first 35mm short film, *En Madison siempre es lunes*, which won the 1997 Luis Buñuel Film Prize.

FILMOGRAPHY AS DIRECTOR

1996	<i>En Madison siempre es lunes</i> (35mm short film)
1998	<i>Parabellum</i> (35mm short film)
2000	<i>London Calling</i> (35mm short film)
2001	<i>Soldaditos de latón</i> (35mm short film)
2002	<i>Charrosis</i> (35mm short film)
2005	SUD EXPRESS (feature film co-written and co-directed with Chema de la Peña)

Directors' Comments

As a teenager, I had a friend who worked as a ticket collector on the *Sud Express*. He told me thrilling tales of what happened during those semi-nocturnal voyages: robberies, suicides, Portuguese prostitutes getting on to provide services, entire compartments full of drunken grape pickers returning from Bordeaux... This opened a window onto sensations and emotions I had never felt before, where the journey itself was the attractive part, not the destination. This was the challenge and *leitmotiv* of SUD EXPRESS: to capture that whole emotional melting pot in images, that stream of sensations hitting the retina as we look out the train window, that almost epic feeling of travel that only the train still offers in today's world.

The film is also about lack of communication. All the main characters look to the *Sud Express* as a way out of their loneliness, as a better world in any sense, but they all bring along their inability to communicate the most basic feelings.

The result is a visceral film, shot more from the heart than the head, where the silences matter more than the dialogues, where feeling is more important than understanding, where intuition predominates over technique, and excitement flies overhead, grave and solitary.

Chema de la Peña

In early August 2004, SUD EXPRESS was a documentary project. But once we started scouting locations, seeing those wonderful places and talking to the people there, we felt we needed to go further. We thought of so many things we wanted to happen and we imagined so many characters that would be perfect to experience them... In short, there were stories we felt like telling and we couldn't leave it to chance... we had to make them take place.

In only three months, we wrote the script, chose the locations, got permission to shoot, held auditions, and assembled the crew, in addition to finalizing negotiations with our co-producers and financing... and, of course, shooting the film in three countries and in five different languages... It was crazy!

As this was the first film I directed, I concentrated so hard that I dreamt about it daily for a year. Each night after shooting, I'd close my eyes and start to go over each shot from that day. And I'd sleep like a log. Now, whenever I have trouble falling asleep, I choose one day from the shoot and try to remember each shot... and I still remember everything almost perfectly!

So many smells, landscapes, characters, people I worked with... All the sensations in my heart, captured on each still... It's hard to believe it's real! SUD EXPRESS was the most intense journey of my life. I hope that everyone who sees it feels its soul.

Gabriel Velázquez

ARTIMAÑA PRODUCCIONES

Artimaña Producciones, founded in 1993, has a solid background in the Spanish audiovisual industry. It was created as a vehicle for its founders' first steps in cinema and produced eight short films that garnered numerous awards at the festivals where they were shown, both nationally and internationally. Those prizes include the Luis Buñuel Film Prize, the Canal+ France Prize, and the Bronze Medal at the New York Film & Video Festival.

In 2002, Artimaña produced the documentary feature-length film *De Salamanca a ninguna parte*, which was included in the Official Section of the Seminci and obtained a nomination for Best Documentary Film at the Goya Awards.

SUD EXPRESS is its second feature-length film, co-produced with Portugal, and shot in France, Spain, and Portugal.

In parallel with these projects, the production company has worked in the advertising industry, developing a team that allowed it to shoot uncountable commercials and music videos.

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