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Cuatro contra el mundo

Four Against the World

Alejandro Galindo

Producer César Santos Galindo. **Production company** Cinematografía Azteca (Mexico City, Mexico). **Director** Alejandro Galindo. **Screenplay** Alejandro Galindo, Gunther Gerszo. **Director of photography** Agustín Martínez Solares. **Production design** Gunther Gerszo. **Make-up** Margarita Ortega. **Sound** Rodolfo Benítez. **Music** Gustavo César Carrión. **Sound design** Enrique Rodríguez. **Editor** Carlos Savage.

Cast Victor Parra (Paco Mendiola), Leticia Palma (Lucrecia), Tito Junco (Máximo), José Pulido (Tony), Manuel Dondé (el Lagarto), Conchita Gentil Arcos (Doña Trini), Salvador Quiróz (el General), Sara Montes (Tony's girlfriend), José Elías Moreno (commander Canseco), Ángel Infante (truck driver).

DCP, black/white. 99 min. Spanish.

World sales Nuevo Cinema Latino

40s and 50s film noir is considered the most American of genres, influenced by the hardboiled fiction of Chandler and Hammett and shaped by European emigrants who developed its murky camerawork and narrative style. What is less well known however, is that the same phenomenon took hold in neighbouring Mexico as far back as the early 40s. Alejandro Galindo's *Cuatro contra el mundo*, seen as the prototype for Mexican film noir, can now be discovered in a restored version.

Galindo's unnerving film tells the story of the demise of a gang whose sights are set on a brewery's money transporter. The raid ends in bloodshed and only four of their unlucky number actually manage to escape. They barricade themselves in the attic apartment of their leader's girlfriend who had just been packing her bags, her breakup note already on the table. Faced now with a suitcase stuffed full of money, she reconsiders her decision. Here the story takes a turn toward Mexican melodrama: the lady gives her heart to the most stoic and cold of all the gangsters, who is allowed to show his feelings for the first and only time in his life.

Christoph Terhechte

Mexican film noir

Cuatro contra el mundo revitalises the genre and its characters locked in another time. Director Galindo and Gunther Gerszo, set designer and scriptwriter, took a real event – the robbery of a beer truck – to make a singular plot that, while certainly Mexican, had all the marks of American film noir: a group of men risk it all in a crime that goes wrong.

We find feelings of guilt, a femme fatale who disrupts the fragile balance of male camaraderie, confinement, ambition, and betrayal. The presence of [actors] Victor Parra, Leticia Palma, Tito Junco, José Pulido and Manuel Dondé represents an effort to introduce realistic elements drawn from everyday news briefs in a naturalist drama that reflects urban crime more profoundly than any romantic film [of the Mexican crime melodrama genre] had previously done.

Rafael Aviña, *Catalogue of the Festival international de Cine de Morelia*



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Alejandro Galindo (1906–1999) was born in Monterrey, Mexico. He started studying Odontology in Mexico City, but discontinued his studies and went to Hollywood to work at several film production companies. In 1930 he returned to Mexico City, where he began to write screenplays and direct radio plays. In 1935, he shot his first short film, the documentary *Teotihuacán, tierra*

de emperadores, followed by his feature film debut *Almas rebeldes* (1937). His career as a filmmaker reaches into the mid-1980s and encompasses some eighty films of different genres. He is regarded as the cinematographic chronicler of post-revolutionary Mexico.

Films

1935: *Teotihuacán, tierra de emperadores*. 1937: *Almas rebeldes*. 1938: *Mientras Mexico duerme*. 1939: *El muerto murió*. 1940: *El monje loco*. 1941: *El rápido de las 9:15*. 1943: *Tribunal de justicia*. 1944: *La sombra de Chucho el Roto*. 1945: *Campeón sin corona*. 1946: *Los que volvieron*. 1947: *El muchacho alegre*. 1948: *Una familia de tantas*. 1949: *Confidencias de un ruletero*. 1950: *Cuatro contra el mundo / Four Against the World*. 1951: *Dicen que soy comunista*. 1952: *Sucedió en Acapulco*. 1953: *Espaldas mojadas*. 1954: *Y mañana serán mujeres*. 1955: *Tres melodías de amor*. 1956: *Policías y ladrones*. 1957: *Piernas de oro*. 1958: *La edad de la tentación*. 1959: *Ellas también son rebeldes*. 1960: *Mañana serán hombres*. 1961: *La mente y el crimen*. 1967: *Corona de lágrimas*. 1968: *Remolino de pasiones*. 1969: *Cristo 70*. 1970: *Simplemente vivir*. 1971: *Tacos al carbón*. 1972: *San Simón de los Magueyes*. 1973: *El juicio de Martín Cortés*. 1974: *...Y la mujer hizo al hombre*. 1977: *Mojados/Wetbacks*. 1978: *Milagro en el circo*. 1979: *El giro, el pinto y el colorado*. 1981: *Cruz de olvido*. 1982: *El color de nuestra piel*. 1985: *Lázaro Cárdenas*.