

LA COCINA A FILM BY ALONSO RUIZPALACIOS



RAÚL BRIONES

TWO-TIME ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE

RONEY MARA

IA COCINA

A FILM BY ALONSO RUIZPALACIOS

Writer & Director
ALONSO RUIZPALACIOS

Based on the play "The Kitchen", by ARNOLD WESKER

Producers

RAMIRO RUIZ, GERARDO GATICA

ALONSO RUIZPALACIOS

LAUREN MANN, IVAN ORLIC

Director of Photography
JUAN PABLO RAMÍREZ

Cast
RAÚL BRIONES, ROONEY MARA
ANNA DIAZ, MOTELL FOSTER, ODED FEHR
EDUARDO OLMOS

MEXICO, U.S. / ENGLISH AND SPANISH
139MIN

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REQUIRED VIEWING

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WILLA

Elizabeth Woodward | elizabeth@willa.org

· 300

INTERNATIONAL SALES

HANWAY FILMS

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SYNOPSIS

It's the lunch rush at The Grill in Manhattan, and money has gone missing from the till. All the undocumented cooks are being investigated, and Pedro (Briones) is the prime suspect. He's a dreamer and a troublemaker, and in love with Julia (Mara), an American waitress who cannot commit to a relationship. Rashid, The Grill's owner, has promised to help Pedro with his papers so he can "become legal". But a shocking revelation about Julia compels Pedro to spiral into an act that will stop the production line of one of the city's busiest kitchens once and for all.

La Cocina is a tragic and comic tribute to the invisible people who keep our restaurants running and our stomachs full, whilst chasing a perhaps unreachable version of the American dream.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I started daydreaming about this film when I worked as a dishwasher and a waiter at the Rainforest Cafe in downtown London during my student days. Which was also when I first read Arnold Wesker's play The Kitchen, on which the script for this film is loosely based. Reading the play at the same time that I was working in an industrial kitchen made the experience much more interesting (and the work-days bearable). I was struck by the complex caste system that still exists in kitchens, and that are an essential part of what keeps them functioning. As with the crew in a ship, hierarchy is not something that is taken lightly behind those swinging restaurant doors.



The Grill is a big tourist trap in the center of New York City, where immigrants seek work because they are taken in without papers and the tips are good. The work is hard, and the food is awful. Very much like the Rainforest Cafe of my youth (and "The Tivoli" in Wesker's play), the cooks begrudgingly serve dish after dish of what they know to be horrible food. There is no space for art in such working conditions, which makes La Cocina an anti food porn film. I wanted to show what really goes on in these types of places that serve 3,000 people on a regular Friday; where there is never enough time for quality; where every dish is seasoned with the food-runners' drops of sweat; where the soup is drowned in baking soda to make it last three more days than is chemically possible; where the blood of the medium-rare steak that goes off to table eight is actually the cook's blood, who made a near-fatal mistake - all because of the pressure. The pressure is what breaks Pedro and makes him destroy Rashid's kitchen in the final act. The pressure is what makes Rashid unable to understand Pedro's reasons.



Frontiers play a big role in this film: physical, spiritual and social. The vertical structure of the kitchen is a perfect setting to explore what lies beneath a divided society that is stuck in the same living space. Seen under this light, a New York City restaurant, with its marked divisions between Front and Back of House, between Management and Workforce, American and Foreigner, becomes a perfect metaphor for the modern world. The "Line" where cooks place outgoing food for the waiters to take away into the dining room, becomes a concrete reminder of these frontiers. It is also the line that separates Pedro and Julia.

Pedro and Julia's impossible love affair plays like an upside-down romcom. We root for this odd couple with each flitting encounter between orders – as they laugh, flirt, fight and fuck in the fridges and corridors. In a sense, the characters themselves mirror the relationship between Mexico and the US: stuck together; forever apart. Like Justo Sierra once said: "Pity Mexico... so far from God, so close to the United States".

In many ways this film is also about spiritual homelessness. Though one might be tempted to look at it solely as a film about immigration, the real emphasis is elsewhere. Here, the character's condition of illegal immigrants is just that: a condition, a circumstance, a given. But what they're really struggling with is to find a sense of self, of community and brotherhood in the midst of hard labor. WORK is the other main theme: the struggle for the survival of the soul amidst the unstoppable machinery of global capitalism. As Thoreau wrote: "I think / that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, / ay, to life itself, than this incessant business." Or as Pedro, the film's protagonist puts it, when asked to retell his dream: "You can't dream in a kitchen."



You are inside the kitchen. Look at your fingernails. Touch your nose. Begin.

You are inside. You are in the stage wings. Underwater. On the other side of the river. From here you can see the faces of the workers with no makeup. You can see the baking soda reviving the sauce gone bad for many days now, the sweat that drips into the lukewarm pot of soup. From here you can see the underpants, the dirty rags, the broken china, the carcasses inside the freezer, the monster under the bed, the tumor growing quietly, unheeded, in the brain.

You are inside the kitchen. You might get wet. Your head might throb from the ceaseless roar of stainless steel. You might miss those you left behind. You might not have time to get to know anybody. You may not get to understand much of anything. You may not have time to dream.

Maybe, you only need to get through to the end of the shift; to your off-day; to the End Credits. Maybe you will only witness half the truth. Your judgement may be partial. Maybe none of it will matter. And maybe – just maybe – you will find a friend.

Bienvenido a La Cocina.

CAST BIOS RAÚL BRIONES Pedro



Raúl Briones stands out for his versatility and conviction in each of the characters he plays both in films and in theater.

His work has been widely recognized among the industry and specialized critics. His starring role in the film *Asfixia* (2019, Dir. Kenya Márquez), led to him winning the Ariel Award for Best supporting actor in 2020. *A Cop Movie* (2021, Dir. Alonso Ruizpalacios) earned Raúl his second Ariel Award for Best Actor in 2022. His third accolade was received with *North Skies Over an Empty Space* (2022, Dir. Alejandra Márquez Abella), received for best supporting actor in 2023.

On television streaming platforms we can see him in projects such as *Crónica de Castas* (Canal Once), *Club de Cuervos* (Netflix), *La Templanza* (Prime Video) and *Los Enviados* (Paramount+).

ROONEY MARA Julia



Rooney Mara has received various accolades, including two Academy Award® nominations, a BAFTA Award nomination, a SAG Award nomination and multiple critics and festival commendations. Mara began her career acting in television and independent films. She first gained recognition for her supporting role in David Fincher's *The Social Network* (2010). Mara had a career breakthrough when she starred as Lisbeth Salander in Fincher's thriller The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (2011), which earned her her first Academy Award® nomination for Best Actress. Her career progressed with leading roles in Steven Soderbergh's thriller Side Effects (2013), Spike Jonze's Her (2013), and Todd Haynes' romantic drama Carol (2015), all of which were critical and commercial successes. For the latter, she won the Cannes Film Festival Award for Best Actress and received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actress. She has since appeared in the Garth Davis's *Lion* (2016), David Lowery's *A Ghost* Story (2017), and portrayed Mary Magdalene in the Garth Davis's biblical drama Mary Magdalene (2018). Following a brief hiatus, Mara gained praise for her roles in Guillermo del Toro's Nightmare Alley (2021) and Sarah Polley's Academy Award® winning film, Women Talking (2022). Up next, Mara will be seen in director Alonso Ruizpalacios' La Cocina, which is based on the play The Kitchen, written by Arnold Wesker and will be premiering in Competition at the 2024 Berlin Film Festival.

Mara is known for her charity work and oversees the Uweza Foundation, which supports empowerment programs for children and families in the Kibera slum of Nairobi. She is a fierce advocate for animal rights and the preservation and conservation of the environment.

CAST BIOS

ANNA DÍAZ Estela

Anna Díaz (born 1996) is a Mexican film actress from the colonial city of Campeche in the Yucatán Peninsula. Anna is making her feature début in 2024 with *La Cocina* from acclaimed director Alonso Ruizpalacios and will be starring in films from Edgar Nito and Isaac Cherem later in the year.

Anna is also a theater actress and has been in various stage shows with over 10 years of experience. She studied at the University of Arts Yucatán and currently resides in Mexico City.

LAURA GÓMEZ Laura

Laura Gómez is mostly known for her role as Blanca Flores on the hit series *Orange is the New Black* (2013-2019). Other work includes roles on the Goya & Independent Spirit Award nominated film *Upon Entry* (2022, Alejandro RojasJuan Sebastián Vasquez), *La Cocina* (2024, Alonso Ruizpalacios) and *Sambá* (2017, Israel Cárdenas, Laura Amelia Guzmán). Laura is currently in the final phase of development of her first feature film as writer & director. She currently splits her time between New York, Santo Domingo, and Madrid.

ALONSO RUIZPALACIOS Director



Alonso Ruizpalacios is a Mexican film director and screenwriter. He studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) in London. His first feature *Güeros* (2013), won over 40 prizes in festivals around the world, including Best First Feature at the Berlinale 2013. *Museo* (2018), his second feature, won the Silver Bear for Best Screenplay at the Berlinale 2018 and Best Director in Athens and Morelia. His third film, *A Cop Movie* (2021) won the Golden Ariel for Best Documentary.

He is trying to be more patient with his two boys Tomás and Martín.

JUAN PABLO RAMÍREZ Director of Photography

Juan Pablo Ramírez is a highly accomplished cinematographer based in Mexico City. His expertise extends across various film genres, including feature films, documentaries, short films, music videos, and commercials, shot in diverse locations worldwide. Notable works in his extensive portfolio include films such as *La Cocina* (Berlinale 2024), *Chicuarotes* (Cannes 2019), *I Carry You With Me* (Sundance 2020 NEXT Innovator Award & Audience Award), and *The Gasoline Thieves* (Tribeca 2019 Best Director Award).

Juan Pablo's cinematic journey began with his debut feature, *Las Lágrimas*, shot on 16mm, which garnered him the Carte Blanche award at Locarno and screened at over 40 festivals globally. A Summa Cum Laude graduate from the Centro de Capacitación Cinematografica (CCC), he joined the Mexican Society of Cinematographers (AMC) in 2016, showcasing his commitment to the craft.

Currently, Juan Pablo is actively involved in post-production for multiple films, including projects like Edgar Nito's *Un Cuento De Pescadores* and *Los Amantes Se Despiden Con La Mirada* by Rigoberto Perezcano. Beyond his cinematographic endeavors, Juan Pablo engages in photography and shares his wealth of cinema experiences through workshops. His contributions continue to shape the landscape of Mexican cinematography.



CREW BIOS YIBRÁN ASUAD

Editor

Yibrán Asuad Mújica is a Mexican film editor with more than 40 credits to his name. He is a founding partner and current member of the board of directors of AMEE - Mexican Editors Association, which began its activities in 2020. He began his editorial work in the late nineties with short and medium length films and TV documentaries.

Throughout his career he has edited several documentaries such as Eufrosina's *Revolution*, *Somos Lengua*, *The Return of the Dead, Rush Hour, Private Network, Chomsky & Mujica* and *Gods of Mexico*. However, he is best known for his work in fiction films where titles such as Drama/Mex, *Cochochi*, *So Much Water*, *Güeros*, *Alba*, *We Are the Flesh*, *Museo*, and *I'm No Longer Here* stand out and have received multiple awards in the international festival circuit. He has been nominated four times for the silver Ariel award in the best editing category for *I'm Gonna Explode* (2009), *Güeros* (2014) *Museo* (2019) and *I'm No Longer Here* (2020) for which he received the award.

In 2021, during the 71st Berlinale, he received the Silver Bear for the Outstanding Artistic Contribution for his work in Alonso Ruizpalacios's *A Cop Movie*.

Recently, he directed his first feature film *All the Freckles in the World* (2019), written by Javier Peñalosa and Gibrán Portela. Most recently he edited *Cassandro*, the first fiction film by Roger Ross Williams and is in pre-production of his second feature film.

NANW ROWLANDS

Casting Director

Nanw began her career in the film & TV industry working as a 2nd assistant director on studio movies, casting crowd for Disney's *Cinderella, Maleficent* and *Captain America*. She subsequently made a move into principal casting around ten years ago, working under the tutelage of renowned casting director, Lucy Bevan on projects from *Snow White & the Huntsman* to *American Gods*.

Nanw's credits as casting director include: the award-winning British independent feature, *Censor*; *A Small Light* for Disney/NatGeo, *The Colour Room* for Sky and *Outside the Wire* for Netflix; as well as providing UK Casting on Spielberg's *The Fabelmans*.

Nanw is originally from Wales and Welsh is her first language. After graduating from Oxford university, she moved to London where she now lives with her family.

SANDRA CABRIADA Production Designer

A visual artist graduated from the National School of Visual Arts and La Esmeralda, who began her working life painting backdrops for staging and by chance she met the cinema, where she found the space to develop herself professionally.

A FONCA scholarship recipient in her first years as a visual artist and winner of the Grand Prize at the Fifth Monterrey Bienal in the discipline of Installation Art, she combines creating her artistic work while she begins to create the decoration of several short films. Captivated by the idea of developing and creating visually different worlds in each film project, she increasingly participated in films as a decorator and art director.

Today she is a production designer with 6 Ariel Award nominations for different projects for best art design and best decoration, known for her work on *Museo*, a film with which she participated in the Artistic Contribution Competition during the 2018 Berlinale. *Güeros* by Alonso Ruiz Palacios, *I Carry You With Me* by Heidi Ewing, *Everything Else* by Natalia Almada, *Instructions Not Included* by Eugenio Derbez, four feature films by Arturo Ripstein among many other films that he has made in his career, without forgetting one of his first art designs *Nicotina* by Hugo Rodriguez.

Distinguished by her passion for her cinematographic work and dedicated to her artistic roots, she allows each project to be seen as a unique work, as a piece of art, leaving her stamp on each one of them. In September 2020, she was invited to join Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

RAMIRO RUIZ

Producer

Ramiro's notable career in national and international film production, along with his studies in anthropology, history, and photography, have given him the experience, intuition, and ability to produce cinematic projects that are both artistic and commercially viable. The various short films, feature films, music videos, documentaries, and series he has worked on have enjoyed considerable success and recognition both nationally and internationally. Among his most notable projects are: *La Caída* (Lucía Puenzo), *Enfermo Amor* (Marco Polo Constandse & Rodrigo Nava), *Extraño Enemigo II* (Gabriel Ripstein), *Museo* (Alonso Ruizpalacios), *Todos Queremos a Alguien* (Catalina Aguilar Mastretta) and *Güeros* (Alonso Riuzpalacios)

GERARDO GATICA

Producer

Gerardo Gatica is founder of production hub Panorama, best known for award winning films such as *Cassandro* (Roger Ross Williams), *Familia* (Rodrigo García), *Museo* (Alonso Ruizpalacios), *I'm No Longer Here* (Fernando Farías) and, most recently, Alonso Ruizpalacios' *La Cocina*.

CREW BIOS LAUREN MANN Producer

Lauren Mann is a produce<mark>r and photographer. She lives in Los Angeles, California with her three rescue cats Doctor Bombay, Aunt Clara and Norma Desmond.</mark>

Lauren Mann is partners with William Olsson at ASTRAKAN FILM AB who have been responsible for such titles including Oscar® Award winning duo The Daniels; feature film debut Swiss Army Man starring Daniel Radcliffe and Paul Dano distributed by A24. Lost Girls and Love Hotels directed by Astrakan Film AB partner William Olsson, produced by Lauren Mann shot entirely on location in Tokyo & Kyoto Japan acquired by Hulu. The Card Counter starring Oscar Isacc, Willem Dafoe, Tiffany Haddish and Tye Sheridan, written and directed by Oscar Nominated screenwriter Paul Schrader, presented by Martin Scorsese, distributed by Focus Features. Joyland, Pakistani language film and feature film debut by Saim Sadig which was the first Pakistani film to be presented in the 75 year history of the Cannes Film Festival where it won the Grand Jury Prize in it's Un Certain Regard competition category. Joyland also won the Queer Palm Award, became Oscar shortlisted for Best International Feature Film, Won Best International Film at the 2023 Independent Spirit Awards and welcomed Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai as Executive Producer. Joyland was acquired by The Criterion Collection. La Cocina written and directed by Alonso Ruizpalacios based on The Kitchen, a play by Arnold Wesker starring Rooney Mara and Raul Briones to premiere in competition at the 2024 Berlin Film Festival. The Boy With The Light Blue Eyes, feature film debut by Greek writer/director Thanasis Neofotistos, shooting outside Athens, Greece this February 2024 and in development a road trip dramedy to be directed by William Olsson.

IVAN ORLIC Producer

Ivan Orlic is the founder of Seine Pictures and has produced or executive produced 11 feature length projects since 2012, including upcoming La Cocina from Alonso Ruizpalacios and *Mistura* from Ricardo de Montreuil. The comedy *Murder of a Cat* with Sam Raimi; the biopic Pele: Birth of a Legend with Imagine Entertainment; the mystery thriller trilogy Intrigo based on Hakkan Nesser's best-selling novel; and the comedy The Space Between. Documentary titles include Larry Flynt for President with Filmnation and 2022 EMA Best Documentary recipient Eating Our Way to Extinction, with a group of environmental activists led by Sir Richard Branson and narrated by Academy Award winner Kate Winslet, as well as the upcoming *Invisible Nation* with Ted Hope, directed by Vanessa Hope. He is co-founder of an entertainment tech startup and has been a panelist at numerous conferences and seminar events and a mentor at the Cannes Producer's Network. He's an alumnus of The Second City Conservatory as well as a graduate of UCLA Extension where he has also been a guest lecturer since 2014. Ivan holds an M.S. in Fisheries Oceanography, a field in which he is a published author, and sits on the West Coast Board of the Children's Tumor Foundation as well as on the Board of Trustees of the Croatian International Film Festival.

WILLIAM OLSSON

Executive Producer

William Olsson is a filmmaker and businessman. He lives in Göteborg, Sweden with his wife, Kim and their three children Agnes, Violet and Sten. William is a partner in Astrakan Film AB with Lauren Mann.

PATRICK PFUPAJENA

Executive Producer

Patrick Pfupajena is an executive producer for Seine Pictures and author of *Your Life:* A Daily Guide to an Abundant Life. He was formerly an executive assistant to Brian Grazer at Imagine Entertainment. He holds an MFA in film and his credits include *Mistura, Invisible Nation, Pele: Birth of a Legend, American Gangsters* and *The Wire.*

FIFTH SEASON

Executive Producers

FIFTH SEASON is a global leader in the creation, production, and distribution of feature films, star driven television series and premium documentaries. Known for producing and distributing award-winning content that engages audiences and moves culture, the studio's film titles include hit ensemble comedies 80 for Brady and the Book Club franchise for Paramount and Universal, John Carney's Flora and Son for Apple TV+, William Oldroyd's Eileen for Neon, the multi-Oscar-nominated The Lost Daughter from Maggie Gyllenhaal for Netflix and Michael Bay's Ambulance for Universal. The studio produces star driven TV series, including the 14 Emmy-nominated Severance, See and Truth Be Told starring Jason Momoa and Octavia Spencer, respectively, as well as the upcoming Lady in the Lake starring Natalie Portman, Jason Momoa's Chief of War and The Savant starring Jessica Chastain all for Apple TV+, Amy Schumer's Life & Beth and limited turned returning series Nine Perfect Strangers starring Nicole Kidman for Hulu as well as 2 seasons of Tokyo Vice for Max and Wolf Like Me for Peacock. In addition, FIFTH SEASON is the studio behind Emmynominated documentaries McCartney 3,2,1 and Being Mary Tyler Moore for Hulu and HBO, respectively and Sean Penn's Superpower for Paramount+.

ELIZABETH WOODWARD

Executive Producer

Elizabeth Woodward is the founder and CEO of WILLA, a production and distribution company recognized by Forbes 30 Under 30 and Sundance Institute Catalyst Fellowship. She was also selected for DOC NYC 40 Under 40, Berlinale Talents, and the Impact Partners Producers Fellowship. Her recent films include *Another Body* (SXSW Special Jury Award, Emmy nominee) and *You Resemble Me* (Venice Film Festival, executive produced by Spike Lee, Claire Denis, Spike Jonze, Alma Har'el, Riz Ahmed). Other notable projects include Netflix's *The Great Hack* (Academy Award shortlist, Emmy nominee, BAFTA nominee, Sundance Film Festival), HBO's hit series *The Vow: A NXIVM Story* (New York Times Best TV Shows of 2020), a VR experience *Persuasion Machines* (Sundance New Frontier, SXSW).

Her films have been supported by Sundance Institute, Impact Partners, Chicken and Egg, Film Independent, Field of Vision, The Gotham, New York Foundation for the Arts, the International Documentary Association, among others. She is a member of the Producers Guild of America, the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, BAFTA North American, the Council on Foreign Relations Young Professionals Group, the Documentary Producers Alliance, and the Frontline Club. Elizabeth graduated magna cum laude and phi beta kappa from Brown University and received a masters with distinction from the University of Cambridge. She speaks fluent French and proficient Italian.

WILLA US Distributor

WILLA is a production and distribution company with a focus on socially important films, recognized by Forbes 30 Under 30 and supported by Sundance Institute. Headed by Founder & CEO Elizabeth Woodward, the company distributes a curated slate of films that are linked to the world's most pressing challenges. WILLA develops bespoke strategies to consistently connect their films with audiences by actively experimenting with innovative marketing, testing replicable distribution strategies, collaborating with film teams. Previous releases include *Another Body* (2023, Emmy Nominee, SXSW Special Jury Award, co-distributed with Utopia), *You Resemble Me* (2021, Venice Film Festival, executive produced by Spike Lee, Spike Jonze, Alma Har'el, Riz Ahmed, Claire Denis).

IA COCINA

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Producer RAMIRO RUIZ

Producer GERARDO GATICA

Producer IVAN ORLIC

Producer LAUREN MANN

Executive Producer MARCO POLO CONSTANDSE

Executive Producer ALEXIS GARCIA

Executive Producer CRISTINA GARZA

Executive Producer JOSE NACIF

Executive Producer WILLIAM OLSSON
Executive Producer PATRICK PFUJENA

Executive Producer ELIZABETH WOODWARD

Associate Producer JIMENA AGUIRRE

Director of Photography JUAN PABLO RAMÍREZ

Editor YIBRÁN ASUAD

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Sound Mix JAIME BAKSHT

Sound Mix MICHELLEE COUTTOLENC

Sound ISABEL MUÑOZ

Music TOMÁS BARREIRO

Costume Design Makeup ADELA CORTAZAR

Design ITZEL PEÑA

Music Supervision JOE RODRÍGUEZ

Music Supervision JAVIER NUÑO

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First Assistant Director CARLOS CRUZ SUAZO ALAN

Postproduction Supervisor DURÁN

Postproduction Supervisor FERNANDO ESCAMILLA BM

Casting Director CASTING

Casting Director SUSAN SHOPMAKER NANW

Casting Director ROWLANDS

Pedro / Associate Producer RAUL BRIONES

Julia ROONEY MARA

Estela ANNA DIAZ

Nonzo MOTELL FOSTER

Laura LAURA GOMEZ

Rashid ODED FEHR

Luis EDUARDO OLMOS

-- SOUNDOS MOSBAH

Mark JAMES WATERSTON

Chef LEE SELLARS

Max SPENSER GRANESE

-- BERNARDO VELASCO

-- ESTEBAN CAICEDO

-- NEBLI BASANI

-- JOSÉ LUIS PÉREZ

-- GUSTAVO MALGAREJO

Susan PÍA LABORDE-NOGUEZ

Inez SHAVANNA CALDER

-- MARÍA FERNANDA BOSQUE

Trisha JULIA HALTIGAN

Vago JOHN PYPER-FERGUSON



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