

## Bilingual stories

We caught up with actor-producer Dillon Porter before the premier of *Bastards y Diablos*.

OLI PRITCHARD

**B**astards y Diablos – right from the start it's clear the film will be bilingual. That's common in Bollywood but rare outside. "No one makes a bilingual movie. It's really rare to see that," says actor and producer Dillon Porter. He plays Dion, one of two brothers on an exhilarating road trip through Colombia.

The brothers walk in two worlds, American yet Colombian at the same time, and the language plays a big part in that. "Yeah, it was pretty real to life in some regards. It raises the stakes," says Dillon, "when there's a language barrier, everyone has to lean in and pay attention. He's speaking English but in a thick accent. He's speaking Spanish, but so slow, so *gringo* that even [someone who doesn't speak Spanish] can understand."

As it's a road trip, Colombia itself plays a pivotal role in the film, and Dillon is clear about the importance of the country around them. He leans in as he tells me, "Definitely Colombia was at the forefront as a character. We were proud of that and that people can plot the brothers' journey through the landscape. And what a rich and diverse landscape." One memorable sequence involves the Parque Nacional de Café, and another the salt cathedral of Zipa. "It was fun for me in pre-production to be researching that, looking up places and the sumptuous quality of those landmarks allowed themselves to be expressed," enthuses the actor.

It wasn't all plain sailing, as the famous climate was an issue. "Weather sometimes played a role," he admits, "but we used that. 'Oh, it's raining great, that's another thing to play into the plot.'"

I wonder if he'll be recommending the country as a filming location. "Absolutely!" he chuckles, "especially if it's a real budget film. I hope the industry in Colombia sees an uptick. It's nothing to shy away from."

He's clear, though, that you should be here for the right reasons. "Don't come because it's a good deal. Come for all the reasons people would want to live here or be from here. Come for the people, come for the food, come for the biodiversity, come for the history, stay for the tax break. Who wouldn't?" He's preaching to the converted, of course. We all know what a wonderful country this is. Head to Cine Colombia for a screening of *Bastards y Diablos* to see it in its full glory.



Dillon Porter says that the Colombian weather played into the filming of *Bastards y Diablos*.

## On screen

### Poesía sin fin

★★☆☆☆

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**A**merican philosopher Daniel Dennett adopted the term "deepity" to refer to a statement that sounds profound but is actually trivial or just meaningless. And *Poesía sin fin*, the new film of Chilean-French filmmaker and self-proclaimed poet Alejandro Jodorowsky, is nothing but a two-hour long exercise in deepity, sugar coated with pseudo-surrealism that would make Luis Buñuel furiously roll in his grave.

This autobiographical movie revolves around the conflict between young Alejandro, played by Jodorowsky's own son, Adán, and his stern father, Jaime (played by Brontis Jodorowsky, Adán's older brother). Jaime appears in one scene as a floating, talking head that shouts "maricón!" to Alejandro for daring to write poetry instead of becoming a doctor. The young poet discovers that he is not a homosexual, and happily proclaims that he "didn't feel nothing" after being lustfully kissed by his saviour, another young man, whose broken heart he is oblivious to. This kind of cruel behaviour becomes a distinctive trait of Alejandro throughout the movie.

After leaving his house and his cartoonish family (Jewish stereotypes included), Alejandro finds refuge in the bohemian community of Santiago, Chile, populated, as the film puts it, by no less cartoonish artists. Tortured souls that seek creative freedom by smashing down pianos and wildly dripping paint on canvas à la Jason Pollock. Among this troupe that blindly recognises and proclaims their new member as a

"Poet!", Alejandro starts looking for his muse, which he soon finds incarnated in an angry female poetess. A city female warrior who can literally save his ass from a gang of gay rapists in a cheesy bar fight where text bubbles with words like "POW!" or "WHAM!" are the only detail that the director curiously forgot to include.

This level of cheesiness could lead one to think that it is the actual intention of Jodorowsky to mock the naivete of his younger self, but that would be a big mistake. He really intends for all of this pantomime to be taken seriously and tricks us into thinking that there's a profound and life-changing message hidden below the surface. When you scratch the colourful coat of failed allegories such the dwarf Hitler or the corset that rises to the sky tied to heart-shaped balloons, however, what you find is the over-inflated ego of an elderly man

who still thinks he is a revolutionary poet creating disgusting images "pour épater la bourgeoisie."

When a fascist dictatorship takes hold of Chile, Alejandro decides to try his luck in France, leaving behind a crowd of flat characters, one of the few symbolic images that actually makes sense in the whole movie. The film closes with the scene in which the young poet overcomes the old grudges he held against his father, but (spoiler alert) what the movie inadvertently shows is how the old Jodorowsky has become a salesman just like his father. The sole distinction is that his father, in spite of his flaws, was an honest man, while Jodorowsky ends up working for the same system that transforms cheap poetry into money, betraying the young naive artist he once was.

Opens in theatres on October 18.



*Poesía sin fin* is a two-hour long exercise in deepity.

Photo: Pascale Montandon Jodorowsky

### Bastards y Diablos

★★☆☆☆

FELIPE ROCHA

**E**d and Dion are two American half brothers that are reunited after the death of their Colombian father. Played by Andrew Perez and Dillon Porter, they are forced to travel to Colombia where they find out that their father left them instructions to scatter his ashes in the places that most mattered to him, sending them on a journey around the country.

Director of photography Peter Grigsby beautifully captures the colourful and vibrant landscape of the Caribbean region. There are also some very impressive shots of the salt cathedral of Zipaquirá and the coffee region. Too bad that the story does not live up to the standards given by the cinematography.

Early in the movie, via flashbacks, we are shown the late father (Gabriel) as a spoiled brat who spends his days drinking and mistreating women. Bad news is that his two sons turned out exactly like him.

The movie wants desperately to be a revealing journey of the soul as the two sons

discover themselves, their home country and the legacy left by their father. However, *Bastards* is basically a frat boy road trip disguised as a profound drama.

There are too many cringeworthy moments to even count. From comparing women to curry, to a foursome shot, to the cocaine use, there's plenty of awkwardness in the movie to go around and, no matter how much piano music or violin strings the director decides to use, the movie is still distasteful.

Ultimately, the foulest thing about *Bastards*, is the treatment of the women in the story. Supposedly the men (Gabriel and Ed, to be more exact) are driven by mad love in their quests. However, the women they "love" are just props in a selfish journey. None of the women that participated in the film have significant parts or character development. This would be understandable if the film didn't constantly portray women as objects to satisfy the men's own self centred needs.

In the very last sequence, the story decides to show us the true meaning behind it all with an emotional ending, but it's too little too late. A couple minutes of brotherly love cannot make up for 90 minutes of eye rolling scenes.

There are some great ideas hidden behind *Bastards*, especially the speech at the beginning of the film given by a cousin with bipolar disorder who does not want to take his meds because he wants to see the world as terrible as it is. Here's an idea: make a movie about him.

In theatres from October 19.

