

Puntos de fuga

Vanishing Points

a film from
Lina Rodríguez
with Clara Monroy



Puntos de fuga

Vanishing Points

a film from Lina Rodríguez

with Clara Monroy

72 minutes, Super 8mm, Digital, Hi8, 1:33, color

info@rayonverde.com

rayonverde.com





SYNOPSIS

Spanning over 70 years, two women recount their experiences growing up in Colombia and immigrating to Canada. Intersecting with key moments in Colombian history, *Vanishing Points* is an essay film that reflects on the entanglements between official histories and personal stories, and the complexities of diasporic identity.

Shot on Super 8mm, Hi8 and digital formats and punctuated by an expressionistic sound design, the film creates a polyphonic composition of mirrors, labyrinths, dreams and nightmares that questions the reliability of narration while destabilizing the idea of history and perspective.

“The task of the right eye is to peer into the telescope, while the left eye peers into the microscope.”

— Leonora Carrington (*Down Below*)

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

When I think about who I am, I can’t help but also think about my relationship to other beings, perspectives, spaces, times, stories and histories. It is precisely this feeling of interconnectedness and kinship that inspired me to make this film and create an essayistic travelogue that touches upon my personal history, my mother’s history and the history of Colombia.

As I was looking for audiovisual ways to deal with questions of proximity — the simultaneous closeness and distance that I feel between my mother and myself, Colombia and Canada, the past and the present — it became clear that the film could not rest in a stable and fixed perspective. It was then that I decided to shoot on multiple formats and develop an immersive soundscape that would further complicate our relationship to who is speaking where, when, how and about whom. In collaboration with my mother, I also mixed fiction and non-fiction strategies as a way to reflect on the processes of subjectivity and becoming.

I like to think of each film I make as a gift of some sort — not so much a finished work as something to share with others. Although as an immigrant I can feel invisible, lost and isolated at times, the making of this film gave me the opportunity to carve a space of refuge. I am grateful that in the end the film became a sort of mapping of my bonds of affection and their connection to historical and geological cycles, which reminded me that I am part of a bigger history and a longer story.





“For me, it’s been an honour to be part of my daughter’s filmmaking, both in past films and in this one, in which I play one of the leads. I feel grateful to her and to life for giving me this wonderful opportunity.

Vanishing Points has allowed me to reflect on the past, which sometimes feels close but sometimes distant, almost as if it had been my life and someone else’s life at the same time. And although one normally feels nostalgic when thinking about things that are no longer there, making the film has given me great joy because, in a way, it has put me in touch with loved ones, landscapes, houses and stories that I hadn’t visited in a long time.

There’s also a very emotional part of the film that made me think about the impact that certain events in Colombian history have had on my life, and also how my daughter’s migration to Canada has affected our lives and our relationship. I feel the film includes the stories of many other mothers and fathers who live far from their children for various reasons. In a way, perhaps the film wraps us all in a blanket, connecting us across distance and time.”

— Clara Monroy

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN LINA RODRIGUEZ AND FILMMAKER PABLO ALVAREZ-MESA

The film begins with images of structures absorbed by the jungle, by nature. At some point we can see the roots of a tree and a house intertwined. Although it reminds us of Armero's tragedy, it is also a somewhat comforting image. It sort of reminds us that all creations of life return to death, and that death is not necessarily the end. Can you talk about why you chose to open the film this way?

Since I embarked on the journey of making this film, I knew that I wanted to deal with the contradictions and complexities inherent in dealing with history, which for me is innately intertwined with nature, with all living things, but also with what we cannot see. Unlike what I

was taught at school, history doesn't just live in books, it is also inside each of us. It's in our houses and in our ruins, in the soil under our feet, in the sea, the sky, and in the plants, the animals, the insects, the rocks around us. But also in the untold stories, our whispers, our dreams, our nightmares, and in those who are no longer here but are still accompanying us. People, spirits, nature, places and actions are interconnected — we are constantly in touch with one another. This desire to engage with embodied memory and the lingering and fluid presence of the past guided me throughout the making of the film, and led me to different encounters with some of the places and spaces that have been significant in the lives of my mother and I.



As I thought of the film as a sort of road movie, I wanted to start in the place where my mother was born. Although Armero was technically erased from the map (this was an actual headline in many newspapers that reported on the tragedy at the time), it is still here. It has not disappeared, it has been transformed; it has changed, and it will continue to change.

To quote Michael Snow, “Events take place. Events take time.” What took place in this landscape was a terrible disaster where thousands of people lost loved ones as well as their houses and their livelihoods, so it is not surprising that when you are there, you can sense a sort of restlessness. You can feel a kind of unresolved trauma, but at the same time you can see how new life has been growing amidst the ruins.

By opening the film with these images of nature cohabiting with the houses of the people who used to live there, I wanted to remind us that history is not static, but a continuum. This cyclical nature of life and death is present throughout the film. I wanted to reflect on how the echoes of the past continuously move through and shape our present, just as the present simultaneously shapes our memories of the past.





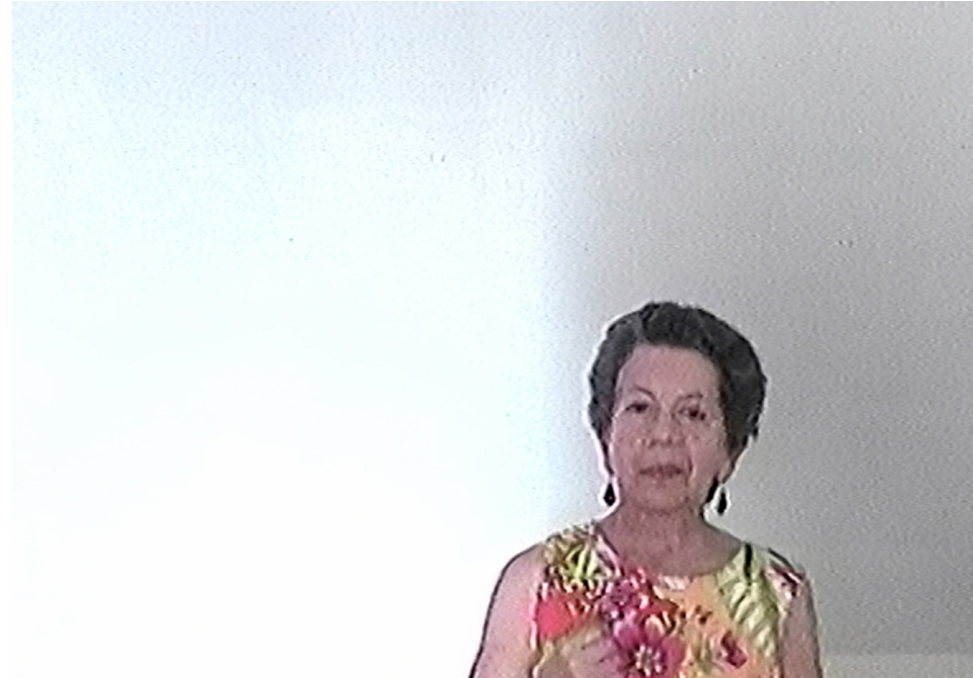
In different instances in the film, there are references to mirrors; we even see a mirror and your reflection while filming towards the end of the film. The film seems to me to be making reflections and refractions throughout. At times, our gaze is returned to us, and at others, it departs to a new place, a little murky perhaps due to memory or imagination, but we are invited to look elsewhere. I'd love to know more about how you see the relationship between cinema, time and mirrors?

I intentionally populated the film with reflections and refractions. There are repetitions, echoes, contradictions and variations of stories, voices, characters, images and sounds throughout. I strategically used the same sounds and ambiances in different parts of the film as a way to connect seemingly distant spaces and times emotionally. There are changing pronouns and tenses; my mother's voice and mine switch from first, to second, to third person. Although we hear the same voice, the character this voice is embodying is at times a version of herself and at times someone else, creating a narrative distance

that blurs the lines between fact and fiction. I also shot the same spaces on different formats so we would get a different perspective of the same space, hinting at a sort of doubling, a coexistence of multiple temporalities and past experiences. Other times I included some contradictions, like when my mother slightly reframes or tweaks a story she had told before, or when we hear two versions of a story back to back.

There's also the intertitles, which I see as another mirror: sometimes they reflect, and at other times they refract what we are seeing or hearing. I wanted them to function as a sort of direct address that reflects the audience in the act of looking and hearing the sounds and images in the film. As you said, there are several other instances where our gaze is returned to us, be it my mother staring at the camera or some of the wonderful animals (including our cat Cluny Brown!) that graced us with their presence. It was important for me to welcome the audience into this journey, remind them of their position, and invite them to participate actively in the creation of meaning.

It's interesting, because in a way cinema and mirrors are both ways of framing what we see, but seeing isn't as easy as it seems. Both deal with speculations of how we perceive depth and time depending on where and who we are. Framing something is about both what is contained inside the borders of the frame as well as what is left out of the frame, what is not included. What is inside is connected to what is outside even if we don't see it or hear it. Just like when I see my reflection in the mirror, there is a here and an elsewhere. This reminds me of Godard, when he said that "When I think of something, I am thinking of something else" — which, again, points towards cinema's dual nature to reveal and conceal. I am interested in the juxtaposition of images and sounds because of how far they take us from what is contained within them.





The film travels across Colombia and ends in Canada, through a family, a personal story. In this sense, I feel the film is a family album — one of those hardcover albums where you turn the page, and suddenly find yourself in another time and place. Everything is the same, yet everything is so different. How important is a sense of place to you — not only in terms of the body, but also in terms of family relationships, or family perceptions? What effect does geography have on self-image?

Place has always been important to me, particularly since I immigrated to Canada, and it is precisely from this liminal space that I inhabit as an immigrant that I started dreaming of this film. Since the beginning, I knew that I wanted it to be in constant movement, to move from place to place, and for this movement to not necessarily be stable or linear. As a result, I decided to borrow the structure of a road movie, because it gave me a framework to explore subjective time, memory and identity. And, given that neither time, memory nor identity are solid (they are all full of holes, full of loops and detours that take us to unexpected

places), I wanted this journey through different times and places to constantly make us question where we are and who is speaking about who. This is where the decision to shoot on the multiple formats came about, but also why I pitched my mother the idea for us to work as a kind of duet, to lend our voices to one another so we could learn and unlearn who we are — to take space and take time to reimagine our stories and histories.

It's interesting, because there is another mirror between my mother and her family's internal migration within Colombia and my own migration to Canada, which in turn echoes the stories of many Colombians in the diaspora. I knew we would start with my mom in Colombia and end with me in Toronto. Nevertheless, it was beautiful how throughout the experience of making the film I started to realize that we both have had to deal with geographical and emotional displacement in different ways, in addition to living with the legacy of violence and unresolved trauma connected to Colombia's history.



Part of the process of making this film was not only reconnecting with places and stories that have been significant to me, but also re-encountering my mother, our family's history and the history of Colombia in a different way. I almost feel that the main territory I cover in the film is my own affective territory, which encompasses not only my family both in Colombia and Canada, but also places, spaces, histories and stories that have touched me, as well as so many loved ones who are no longer with me and that I have had to mourn from different distances. In that way, the film is indeed a sort of family album that takes us through fragments of memories.

Eduardo Galeano said in his book *El Libro de los Abrazos* that to remember (which I see as a kind of re-encounter) comes from the Latin verb "recordis," which means to pass through the heart again. In this sense, this film is my way of remembering how far and how close I feel from both Colombia and Canada, but it is also my attempt to continue tracing the visibility and invisibility of the physical and emotional places that linger within my own body.



Just like Varda said, if they opened us up, they'd find landscapes. We are not just one, we are many — we have many landscapes, many histories, many stories contained in us. We are constantly shifting and reshaping.

Speaking of the heart, it makes my heart sing to have made this film with my mother. Not only because it gave me the opportunity to share time together and expand my collaboration with her (she has played secondary characters in all of my fiction films), but also because I feel it is very important to create spaces to see and be seen by the women in our lives while simultaneously claiming and celebrating matrilineal heritage.

Vanishing Points weaves a kind of counter-history based on my own idiosyncratic gestures, rhythms and detours. During these crazy times, we desperately need many more counter-histories that can help us move away from the hegemonic patriarchal frameworks that have tried to organize and categorize women's desires, lives and contributions for too long.





In the film at some point an intertitle paraphrases an excerpt by Borges where he says that time is the substance we are made of, that time is the river that sweeps us along. But you choose not to include the whole passage, only a part of it. Instead of giving us the whole text, you cut to the film’s next chapter, which is titled “Lapses of Memory.” There is a beautiful tension here between the omitted text by Borges and the confession of your lapses of memory. Can you talk about the tension between the past and the present in your film?

It was never my intention to tell a complete story that would give us a sense of knowing exactly what has happened in my life, my mother’s life, our family’s life, or in the history of Colombia. Even if that was my goal, I wouldn’t even know how to put something like that together, because there are obviously so many layers to these histories that I don’t have access to because of my own perspective. I indeed have many memory lapses.

The incompleteness and interruption of the Borges quote was another strategy that I used throughout the film to complicate the idea of knowledge, particularly considering that in Colombia I also grew up under multiple legacies of colonialism. Ironically, in history classes I learned

more about European history (the French Revolution, for example) and the “heroes” who colonized us (and whose statues still stand in many of our squares) than about the complex histories of the territories under our feet in Latin America, or about the indigenous peoples who continue to be engaged in various forms of resistance against threats to their territories, cultures and lives.

Through the audiovisual approach of the film and the ongoing mixture of fiction and non-fiction, I aimed to embrace the fluidity of identity and experience, using crisscrossing threads of sound and image to create a tapestry rather than a single, “official” perspective. I used photos from my family’s archive, multiple formats shot by multiple people (including myself), non-synchronous voiceover, ambiences, Adriana’s beautiful score, sound effects and silence as organic elements to create a sense of time, place and perspective that is at once familiar and fragmented. I wanted to express how we are constantly walking on shaky ground when we talk about the past and its connections to the present, and vice versa.

It is interesting to look at definitions of the words “history” and “story” in the English dictionary. History is supposed to be the factual study of past events, requiring accuracy and evidence, while a story is supposed to be a narrative that



can be either real or imagined. I have always loved how “historias” in Spanish and “histoires” in French encompass both histories and stories simultaneously, while in English we need two separate words to specify which one is which.

The entanglement between histories and stories involves everyone (our bodies, our spirits) and everything (territories, other beings, our surroundings), because we have all inherited so many official histories from colonialism and the State. This is why I am so grateful for having had the opportunity to make this film with people that I love, and in a manner that made sense for us to come together. Like many other Latine filmmakers in the diaspora like yourself, I am continuously looking for ways to resist how Netflix and Trump (and so many others before them) insist on narrating who we are, where we’re from and where we belong.

Pablo Alvarez-Mesa is a filmmaker, cinematographer and editor working mainly in non fiction, whose films have played and earned awards at international film festivals including Berlinale, IFFR, Viennale, MoMA, Visions du Reel, and RIDM. His work in cinema lies in the relationship between fact and fiction; between what is recalled and what is inevitably constructed. Pablo is Sundance Doc Fund grantee, an affiliate member of the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University, and a Berlinale Talents, Banff Centre for the Arts and Canadian Film Centre alumnus.



WITH

Clara Monroy

TEAM

directorLINA RODRIGUEZ

producer BRAD DEANE LINA RODRIGUEZ

production manager NATALIA BERNAL

cinematography ALEJANDRO CORONADO BRAD DEANE

additional cinematography NIKOLAY MICHAYLOV LINA RODRIGUEZ

sound JUAN CAMILO MARTINEZ
BRAD DEANE LINA RODRIGUEZ

composer ADRIANA GARCIA GALÁN

editing & sound design LINA RODRIGUEZ

re-recording mixer LUCAS PROKAZIUK

online editor MAC PEPLER

vfx ALEX CANANZI

colorist SCOTT HANNIGAN

designer CRAIG CARON



LINA RODRIGUEZ

Lina Rodriguez is a Colombian Canadian filmmaker. She has written, directed, and produced six short films (*Convergences et rencontres*, *Pont du Carrousel*, *Einschnitte*, *Protocol*, *ante mis ojos*, *Aquí y allá*) and five features (*Señoritas*, *Mañana a esta hora*, *Mis dos voces*, *So Much Tenderness* and *Puntos de fuga*), which have been showcased in festivals and cultural venues including the Berlinale, TIFF, Locarno, NYFF, the Mar del Plata International Film Festival, the Harvard Film Archive, the ICA in London, Festival du nouveau cinéma, Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image, Film at Lincoln Center and Tabakalera Centro Internacional de Cultura Contemporánea. She has had retrospectives of her work screened at Sala Leopoldo Lugones in Buenos Aires, Cineteca Madrid, Cinemateca de Bogotá and her films are currently featured on the Criterion Channel.





FILMOGRAPHY

2025

Puntos de Fuga (Vanishing Points), 72 min.

2022

So Much Tenderness, 118 min.

2022

Mis dos voces (My Two Voices), 68 min.

2019

Aquí y allá (Here and There), 22 min.

2018

ante mis ojos (before my eyes), 7 min.

2016

Mañana a esta hora (This Time Tomorrow), 85 min.

2013

Señoritas, 87 min.

2011

Protocol, 1 min.

2010

Einschnitte, 4 min.

2009

Pont du Carrousel, 6 min.

2007

Convergences et rencontres, 6 min.

