



fish

*Marshland*  
(Spain 2014)

DIRECTOR : Alberto Rodriguez  
RUNNING TIME : 105mins  
RATING : MA15+

**Synopsis:**

Juan (Javier Gutierrez) and Pedro (Raul Arevalo) are two experienced homicide detectives from Madrid with different styles and methods. Working together to try to solve an investigation in which two young sisters disappear during the annual festivities in Spain's deep south in 1980, the two detectives have to put aside their professional differences in order to find and stop a serial killer. But there are obstacles including a strike by local labourers jeopardizing the rice crop and illegal drug trafficking, jeopardizing the hunt.

**Review: Louise Keller**

Winner of 10 Goya Awards, this engrossing murder mystery thriller set in the marshlands of Andalusia has plenty to recommend it, including a wonderful sense of place as the intricate pieces of the puzzle fall into place. Alberto Rodriguez's film, which he penned with Rafael Cobos begins with an outside perspective and as the plot evolves, we are drawn into the place, the characters and events that bring two Madrid homicide detectives together in search of two missing teenage girls. Tense and filled with surprises, the film's spectacular eerie soundscape enhances the stunning imagery of the all-important marshlands.

It is September, 1980 when Juan (Javier Gutierrez) and Pedro (Raul Arevalo) are partnered to investigate the disappearance of the young girls who were last seen three days earlier getting into a white Citroen. The tense relationship between Juan and Pedro is as much in focus as that of the other characters: Juan's unorthodox style that includes violence is at odds with that of Pedro, who is quietly analytical. Juan has a dark secret about which Pedro can only guess.

A negative of naked girls; a drunk with a shotgun; a man who knows all the shortcuts; a rare film; a journalist whose family call him Truman Capote; an illegal brick; an abandoned farmhouse; a psychic who guts fish; a man in a hat who smells of expensive cologne - these are some of the elements that Juan and Pedro encounter as they begin their investigation.

Is there a connection to the young girls who went missing in earlier years? What is the pamphlet that offers job opportunities for women?           Cont.

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**FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC**

10.00 am Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016  
8.15 pm Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016

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## **Review:** Cont.

And who is the man with a triangle tattooed on his hand? Julio de la Rosa's soundscape soars - like the flocks of low-flying birds that add to the eeriness. Red sunsets make a striking contrast to the wheat fields before harvest; the spectacular landscape as shown in aerial shots, looks like a patchwork quilt.

Rodriguez brings together all the elements with great skill, revealing information on a need to know basis and continually keeping us hungry for information. Gutierrez and Arevalo are excellent and the fact that there is constant tension between their characters adds greatly to the mix. The imagery of Alex Catalan's beautiful cinematography lingers, as does the complex elements of the plot and Rodriguez' characters.

Source: [www.urbancinefile.com.au](http://www.urbancinefile.com.au)

## **REVIEW: John Patterson**

It's 20 September 1980, Spain. Franco is five years in the ground. A new Spain is struggling to its feet after 40 years under the Generalissimo's deadening rule. ETA has today killed four Guardia Civil officers in the north and, on the TV, crowds throw fascist salutes in the streets of Madrid. The first stirrings of post-Franco labour unrest are dimly audible in the distance. And in faraway Andalucía, someone is raping and murdering teenage girls.

The genius of *Marshland*, Alberto Rodríguez's serpentine Spanish crime drama, is to be found in its period setting, between the death of Franco in 1975 and the landslide election of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party in 1982, which solidified the newly democratic state. We are in La Transición. Everything is either dying slowly or taking a long time getting born; in the interim, strange bedfellows are popping up everywhere. The mismatched-cops archetype that underpins *Marshland* is hugely enriched by the ideological opposition between sour leftwing idealist Pedro (Raúl Arévalo) and cynical, ex-fascist life-force Juan (Javier Gutiérrez), two out-of-favour Madrid detectives exiled to the boondocks to find a serial killer.

Pedro is the 'new' Spain, sick of corruption and the persistence of Francoism in the police's upper echelon, currently in bad odour for writing to the papers about his gripes, and he's played by Arévalo like a blank slate awaiting the markings of bitter experience. Handily, Juan is all bitter experience, a disgraced veteran of the Political-Social Brigade, Franco's Gestapo, and a heavy drinker who pisses blood, inwardly dogged by his past and his own vile deeds. When Pedro finds a crucifix in their hotel adorned with photos of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini, Juan shrugs, "Your new country..." But not Juan's, apparently. This pair, deeply at odds, are thrust into a mystery that delineates an entire rural society, discerning within it not just the persistence of the social and class divisions that Franco could never heal, but the enduring structural remnants of that other Spanish F-word, feudalism.

However, the history and politics merely enrich an already superbly confident thriller. Set in Andalucía's fenland marshes, it ably deploys the region's overpowering landscapes, in which everything seems visible but much remains hidden. The overhead drone shots are beautiful, abstracting that landscape into patterns reminiscent of fingerprint whorls, brain-scans or Mondrian paintings. Action-wise, there's an inventively staged car chase, and the climax, in a reedy jungle of marshes under powerful driving rain, is more than worthy of its ancestor scene at the climax of Joseph H Lewis's *Gun Crazy*. Sleek, wiry, intelligent: we can never have too many thrillers like this.

Source: [www.the-guardian.com](http://www.the-guardian.com) - John Patterson 3/8/2015 /accessed 20/3/16

## Some Thoughts On: *Wild Tales*

Wow, what a film! Where to start? Perhaps by telling you that by some strange coincidence I actually went to school with Gabriel Pasternak and that, years later my wife met him at a conference just before he was going off to Argentina to become a pilot for their national airline. Small world!

This was such an enjoyable and entertaining film. The theme of vengeance, revenge and retribution was delivered so creatively through the six tales. Opening with a plane full of Gabriel Pasternak's most disliked acquaintances and concluding with the wedding from hell, we were treated to the guilty pleasure of seeing the characters behave in ways that most of us would have thought, (fantasised?), about doing in similar situations, but never had the nerve, (or stupidity), to proceed with.

My two favourites, for that reason, were; 1. The explosives engineer who under stress, took his understandable frustrations with an unforgiving and unapproachable bureaucracy to a violent, but very satisfying, end. Who hasn't been exposed to such frustrations in this "your call is important to us ~ hold on please" world? And, 2. The road rage confrontation. Who amongst us has never felt the rage and frustrations that are such a part of everyday living? These two gentlemen just allowed their reactions to take them a tad towards the extreme! This, possibly the most violent of the tales, would not have suited everyone, but was a wonderfully constructed chapter. I don't think I have ever seen a windscreen mistreated so badly in my life before! Despite the violence, the most sickening one for me was the hit and run tale. Morality went out the window as lies and corruption reigned in an attempt to get the guilty son off the hook. The resulting attack on the 'patsy' house gardener and the failure of justice were mind numbing.

Terrific production values and wonderful acting across the tales made this a very special film ~ great black comedy, literally, epitomised by the two charred skeletons grasping each other in the burnt out car. A crime of passion? **Ross Armfield.**

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### COMING UP:

May	<i>The Mafia Only Kills In Summer</i> (Italy)	Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup>
June	<i>Far From Men</i> (France)	Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup>
July	<i>Rams</i> (Iceland )	Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup>
August	<i>A Family Affair</i> (Greece)	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> & Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>
September	<i>The Crow's Egg</i> (India)	Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>
October	<i>Tanna</i> (Australia)	Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> & Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup>
November	<i>Tehran Taxi</i> (Iran)	Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>
December	<i>Alex &amp; Eve</i> (Australia)	Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup>
February '17	<i>The Nightingale</i> (China)	Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup>

## Message from the President

What a wonderful adventure in film *Wild Tales* turned out to be. It was really enjoyed by everyone I've spoken to about it. I would like to thank Gerard and his staff at the Empire for accommodating our Tuesday night audience so well in cinema 4, at very short notice, due to the renovations that were taking place adjacent to our natural home in cinema 1. We fitted in with just two seats to spare! Apologies to those members who were obliged to sit much closer to the screen than they would have liked and to those who were separated from their cinema companions in order to find a seat. The good news is, Gerard assures me that the situation will return to normal by our next screening on the 1st & 3rd May.

Our membership is still growing, even at this late stage in our season. We are JUST under 400, so the committee will have to think very seriously about establishing an upper limit to membership or the introduction of a waiting list if our numbers continue to surge. Speaking of membership, I would ask all members to take very good care of their cards and keep them in a regular spot. Obviously, most members do just that, but in recent times we have had a huge increase in lost cards or forgotten cards on the day of the screenings. This creates a lot of extra work for our membership secretary and can slow down the smooth entry of members into the cinema. To also aid that smooth entry, it would be ideal if members could locate their cards and have them ready for presentation BEFORE they get to the cinema door ~ particularly if there is a queue in front of you. Some members recently have appeared quite put out when asked for their card at the door whilst juggling choc-tops and handbags. Please make it easy for everyone by having your card ready. Thank you in anticipation of your assistance in this matter.

If you would like to bring your guest/s for the season to any particular film could you please contact me personally by phone or text on 0427595453 / 48834144 or by email [rossarmfield@bigpond.com](mailto:rossarmfield@bigpond.com) rather than FISH's gmail address ~ this works much better for me.

Within one week of the committee selecting the first seven films of our next season, Gerard Aiken at the Empire had them all booked with the distributors and slotted into the cinema's timetable. We are so lucky to have his skills available to us. Thank you Gerard. The new films look terrific (including our first ever Icelandic outing ~ the 35th nation FISH has shown films from). I do hope you are able to arrange your future commitments around them should you choose to rejoin us for the journey from July! You'll find the 'newies' in this newsletter.

Yours in film

**Ross Armfield.**



### FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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