
CINEFANTASTIQUE

SCREENING THE IMAGINATION

Guillermo Del Toro

- Born in Guadalajara, Mexico in 1964
- At an early age, he began experimenting with his father's Super 8 camera
- He learned about effects from Dick Smith (*The Exorcist*) and for 10 years he worked as a make-up supervisor
- At the age of 21 he was executive producer on *Dona Herlinda and Her Son* (1986)
- He directed around 10 short films before making his first feature film *Cronos* (1993)

Cronos (1993)

- 1536, an alchemist develops a mechanism to give eternal life.
- In 1937, an old building collapses and the alchemist, who has marble-white skin, is killed when his heart is pierced by the debris.
- Investigators never reveal what else was discovered in the building: basins filled with blood from a corpse.
- In the present, an old antique dealer, Jesús Gris, finds a 450-year-old golden scarab...

Pan's Labyrinth (2003)

- Described by Del Toro as a sibling film to *The Devil's Backbone*, *Pan's Labyrinth* being a feminine 'sister' to the former's masculine 'brother'
- Though wrapped in the images of the fantastic the film is rooted in reality and the brutality of a fascist regime
- There are horrific scenes of violence, murder, torture and assault

Spanish Horror

- Spanish horror efforts from *Who Can Kill a Child* to more recent work like *Rec*, often carry a subtle of not so subtle social commentary which is not surprising given the country's turbulent political past.
- Amando de Ossorio's *Tombs of the Blind Dead* for instance, featuring a zombie religious order murderously running amok, might be seen as an attack on Catholic Franco and his dying regime

Pan's Labyrinth (2003)

- Though the 'fantasy' is beautifully realised, this is no Disney sanitized version
- The fairy tale elements are presented in a much more brutal and traditional manner
- The original Spanish title was *El laberinto del fauno*. The Faun was not based on Pan but the fauns from Roman mythology despite the German and English versions of the film explicitly referring to Pan in the title.

Mandy (2018)

'The enchanted lives of a couple in a secluded forest are brutally shattered by a nightmarish hippie cult and their demon-biker henchmen, propelling a man into a spiraling, surreal rampage of vengeance.'

- It is a visual feast
- Highly stylized
- Combines light, colour and animated sequences
- It's arresting and cleverly constructed, at least on a cinematic level

Michel Gondry

- Began making short experimental films
- Pop videos
- Advertisements

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004)

- Joel (Jim Carrey) discovers that his estranged girlfriend, Clementine Kruczynski (Kate Winslet), has undergone a procedure to have her memories of him erased by the New York City firm Lacuna.
- He decides to undergo the same procedure.
- In preparation, he records a tape recounting his memories of their volatile relationship.
- The concept came from conversations between director Michel Gondry and co-writer Pierre Bismuth in 1998
- Gondry approached writer Charlie Kaufman with this concept, and they developed it into a short pitch.
- To their surprise a bidding war took place for the rights