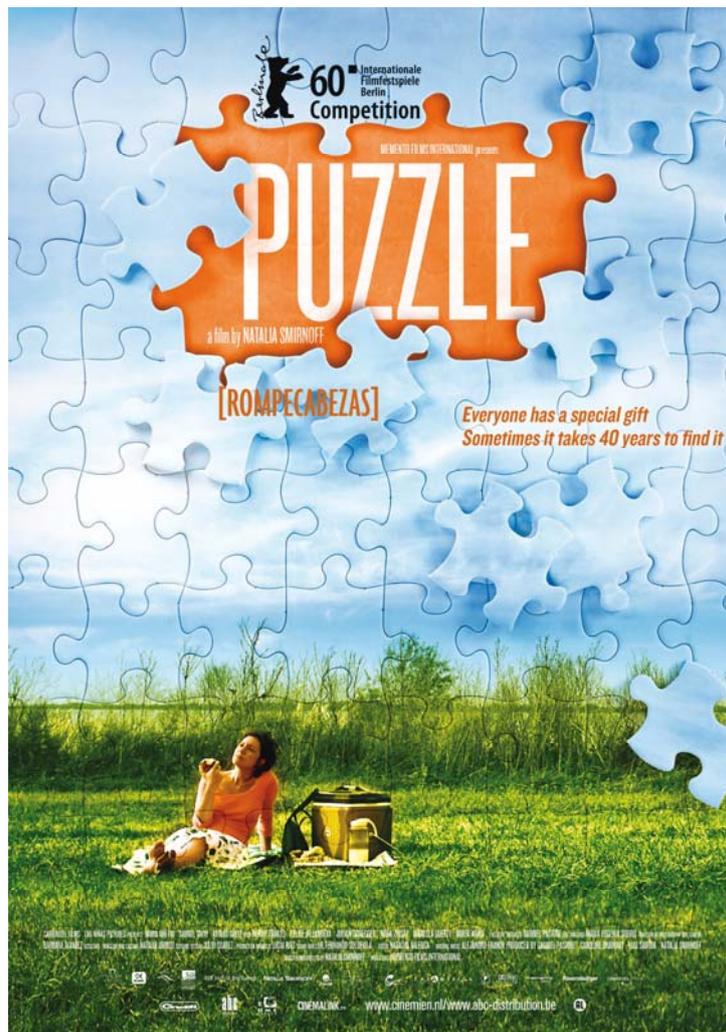


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PUZZLE – synopsis nl + fr

Maria del Carmen is een vijftigjarige vrouw die zich de laatste 20 jaar enkel bezighield met het welzijn van haar gezin. Wanneer zee en puzzel cadeau krijgt ontdekt ze dat ze een heel special gave heeft: ze kan zeer snel puzzelen!

Geïntrigeerd door een advertentie "Op zoek naar een partner voor puzzelcompetities" in een puzzelwinkel, beslist ze zich volledig toe te leggen op haar nieuwe verslaving, ook al krijgt ze weinig steun van haar familie. Samen met de adverteerder, een rijke aantrekkelijke vrijgezel, traint ze volgens de officiële regels, zelfs al moet ze hiervoor liegen tegen haar echtgenoot. Maria is zeker van haar stuk, ze zal verder gaan met het puzzelen, ze droomt ervan om het nationale toernooi te winnen en in Duitsland deel te nemen aan het wereldkampioenschap;

La famille de Maria lui offre un casse-tête pour son cinquantième anniversaire.

La surprise est de taille et elle s'en réjouit – d'autant plus qu'elle fait une étonnante découverte : faire un puzzle est non seulement distrayant, mais la patiente ménagère s'avère être particulièrement douée pour ce genre d'activité. Pleine d'enthousiasme, elle se rend au magasin où son cadeau a été acheté. Elle y découvre une petite annonce au panneau d'affichage : « Recherche partenaire pour le concours de puzzle ». Maria prend son courage à deux mains et faisant fi des réserves émises par la famille, elle contacte l'auteur de l'annonce.

C'est un vieux célibataire qui vit dans une impressionnante villa et il est fasciné par la façon anarchique dont Maria résout les puzzles. Leur objectif commun est de participer à la coupe du monde de puzzle en Allemagne.

Mais il leur faut d'abord franchir les étapes de la sélection locale. Passionnée par son nouveau passe-temps et irrésistiblement attirée par l'univers des riches, qui lui est inconnu, Maria raconte des bobards à sa famille pour pouvoir s'entraîner sans être dérangée. Elle potasse les règles, se plonge de plus en plus dans le monde des puzzles et avec son partenaire, elle fait tout son possible pour réaliser leur rêve commun : la tenue du championnat en Argentine.

La famille de Maria ne se doute absolument pas de sa nouvelle passion qui n'intéresse ni son mari ni ses fils. La pratique du puzzle va entraîner une sérieuse épreuve de force au sein de leur foyer – Maria doit décider de ce qu'elle peut attendre de ses proches.

Lengte 87min. / Taal: Spaans / Land: Argentinië

Durée 87min. / Langue: espagnol / Pays: Argentine



PUZZLE – cast

Maria del Carmen	Maria Onetto
Juan	Gabriel Goity
Roberto	Arturo Goetz
Carlotta	Henny Trailes
Juan Pablo	Felipe Villanueva
Iván	Julian Doregger
Raquel	Nora Zinsky
Susana	Marcela Guerty
Graciela	Mirta Wons
Carmen	Mercedes Fraile
Victoria	Denise Groesman
Carla	Jimena Ruiz Echazu
Pedro	Pacho Guerty
Ricardo	Nestor Caniglia

PUZZLE – crew

Executive Producer	Gabriel Pastore
Art director	Maria Eugenia Sueiro
Director of photography and camera	Barbara Alvarez
Assistant director and casting	Natalia Uruti
Costume design	Julio Suárez
Production manager	Lucia Ries
Sound director	Fernando Soldevila
Editor	Natacha Valerga
Original music	Alejandro Franov
Produced by	Caroline Dhainaut
	Gabriel Pastore
	Natalia Smirnoff
	Luis Sartor
Written and directed by	Natalia Smirnoff



Interview

You started your career in cinema as a Casting Director and First Assistant Director. How did you draw on this experience for your first feature film?

I have been really lucky to work with very talented directors, such as Lucrecia Martel, Jorge Gaggero, Alejandro Agresti, Pablo Trapero, Ariel Rotter, Veronica Chen, Marco Bechis ... As First Assistant Director, you work very closely with the director and participate in the entire filmmaking process. This was wonderful, it made it easier for me when I got to be on my first set, directing for the first time.



I remember when I worked on Lucrecia Martel's films, we were always trying to find the best point of view for the story. So I learnt on set the importance of shooting with a clear point of view.

Also as Casting Director, I needed to act, to play the parts with the actors. This gave me a lot of training and an understanding of acting. I paid a lot of attention to these two aspects in my film.

Could you draw parallels between assembling a puzzle and making a film?

For sure! Assembling a puzzle is putting a lot of pieces together to create "the big picture". Writing and making a film is the exact same process. But with a puzzle of one million pieces!

To assemble a puzzle, you have to pay attention to every small piece. You have to discover its shape, its colors, its peculiarities... And only then can you start to see how all the pieces connect. It's the same with actors, shots, scenes, units, with props, sets, wardrobe, sounds, voices, colors, lights... You have to know each element, play with them. But to play well, you have to pay attention to each part separately and the piece them carefully together.

Gabriel Goity, Maria Onetto, Arturo Goetz: three renowned Argentinean actors. What guided the choice of you lead actors? Had you worked with them before?

I love actors whose work I can never predict. They're hard to find: they must be brave and willing to take a lot of risks. And I like actors who are good in comedy too. This was the priority in their selection because it would give another dimension to the film.

I met Maria Onetto when I was casting for "El Torro", by Ariel Rotter. During the period, I was also writing the script of "Puzzle". So, I was twice as anxious to offer her the part of Maria del Carmen. But it was perfect, like love at first sight. I sent her the script and she said yes two hours later. Then it took me three more years to shoot the film. She was kind enough to wait that long. Maria Onetto is such an incredible actress. She started her career on stage. She is so powerful: it's fascinating to work with her. She's always surprising you.

Gabriel Goity is a very popular actor in Argentina. He can be the sweetest person in the world and, a second later, a real demon. Maria del Carmen's husband needed to be someone strong. Not someone you could easily abandon. Their marriage is a marriage of true love, which makes the story stronger.

I met Gabriel a year prior to shooting "Puzzle". He was very busy doing a TV series and a theater play. But he loved the project and was incredibly supportive, even though he

didn't know me. Luckily he accepted and adapted his complicated schedule to make the film.

For the part of Roberto, I was looking for someone who could play the part without being prejudiced. Someone who took the puzzle assembling business seriously. I had originally pictured Roberto to be younger, but Arturo Goetz was perfect for the role. I had worked with Arturo on "La Niña Santa" and had cast him for several films. Watching his energy is one of life's pleasures. Before reading the script, he invited me over for tea and told me that his favorite tea varieties were Lapsang Souchong and Earl Grey, exactly the same as Roberto's in the script. I couldn't believe it. Ironically, Arturo used to assemble puzzles but had to quit because they kept him up all night. At that exact moment I knew it had to be him.

How does your film connect with what has been called the Argentinean New wave? What are your cinematic influences?

I really like some Argentinean films but don't feel connected to an "Argentinean New Wave". For instance, I don't see many common elements between Lucrecia Martel, Pablo Trapero or Lissandro Alonso. Of course, most of us are from the same generation, and in that sense I feel close to them. But I don't see a homogenous aesthetic movement. Some movies are more descriptive, others are more contemplative. Perhaps the shared quality is that they all have a clear point of view.

"Puzzle" tells a story, it has a typical plot, it's storydriven. Perhaps it is more conventional. It doesn't describe a particular social reality at a given period. It's more on the fantastical side.

As for the influences, the list is long. I love John Cassavettes and Tim Burton. I like Woody Allen, Claude Sautet, Rebecca Miller's "Personal Velocity", Jean-Pierre Jeunet's "Amélie", Pedro Almodobar, Billy Wilder and David Lynch, and many more! And Lucrecia Martel and Jorge Gaggero are a direct influence.

What is your relationship with Buenos Aires?

I couldn't live in any other place. I love our mix. For example, I'm Russian, Italian and Spanish and finally Argentinean. All these different cultures live together. Buenos Aires is European in some way, but not in others. And it's the "not European" part that turns the city into a chaos. A chaos which I strive in, because I don't think that life can be sorted. If you are looking for order there, for things to be accomplished in a straightforward way, or simply for people to be on time for an appointment, you are heading straight towards suicide.

In that sense, Buenos Aires is more honest than other cities. I like the warm side of people. But it's also a place where you can clearly see the dark side of people, yet in a sympathetic way. It's complex, really complex but I truly like it.

What statement does "Puzzle" make about contemporary Argentina and the emancipation of women in Latin-American society?

Everyone needs freedom and needs to be treated well. In our culture this doesn't happen. There are still too many deaths due to domestic violence in our country. And of course there's the "macho" myth, "men don't cry", which affects our culture and our marriages.

It's so important that women can work to earn their own living, so that they can be independent and adult. If the husband is the only one earning money, then the wife becomes almost like a daughter. Imagine how tragic her life becomes when everybody finally leaves the household – she's all alone with nothing to do. Too many women become crazy when they turn 50.

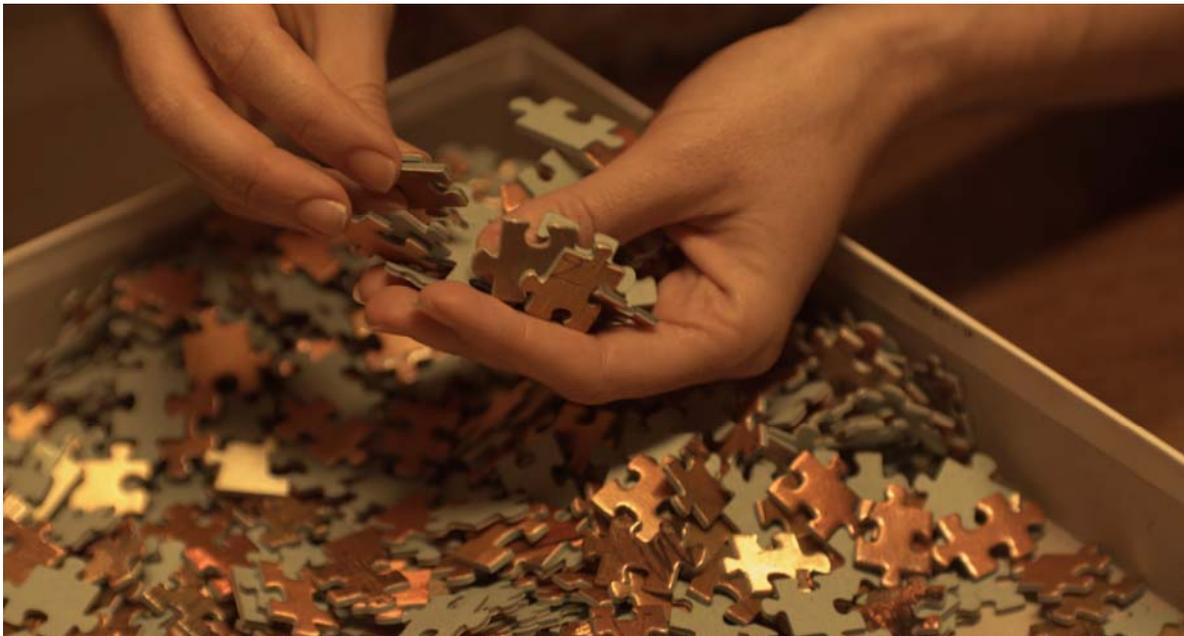
Another thing, which I find unbelievable, is the number of women who don't have a passion, who are simply housewives. I am not saying that this is wrong but there is something unbalanced in these situations. I believe that balance or at least trying to reach that balance is the most important objective in life. With happy mothers, the world would be better. I'm sure of that. Every woman in the world who is a working mother knows how difficult it is to find the balance. Many have failed with this. But this is part of the growing process as a woman, as a human being.

Are there similarities between Maria del Carmen's path and your own? To what extent is "Puzzle" an autobiographical film?

Maria del Carmen is a passionate and maybe even obsessed woman. I believe that when you decide to hold on to a passion and never let it go, you can change, like everything around you changes. You can even experience very intense, blissful moments. Those moments are unique, when you risk everything without ever thinking about the consequences. Maria del Carmen goes through such a turning point. There is no doubt that you lose some things in the process, but others are conquered. I have lived through a couple of experiences like this and they are landmarks in your life. There is no doubt: I'm close to Maria del Carmen.

On the other hand, my mother is also close to Maria del Carmen. "Puzzle" is about a mother, about all mothers in some way, about this marvelous and incredible feeling which makes her love unconditional to other people, to her children and her family – and also about her need to control everything. I love the fact that she is not an obvious hero, she is not strong in the usual sense. I love the way she wins, her willpower and determination are her strengths. That doesn't mean she feels no emotions or doesn't cry, but she doesn't shout, she is reserved and she accepts orders from others. She gets what she wants because she's loving, dedicated to others and she would keep on giving even if she didn't receive anything in return.

Sometimes we feel fascinated by strong personalities. I mean "strong" in the obvious way, visible fortitude. But as I was growing up, I learnt to focus on another type of strength. Strength you can't perceive at first glance. You just see someone who is able to adjust to the situation, without confrontation, but, if you keep watching, you begin to see that this person is always there, that she is fighting in her own way. I just learnt to recognize that other way of fighting. We are accustomed to the male way of fighting, but e like the female way, with no shouting, perhaps not so brave. Maybe, sometimes, Maria del Carmen seems lost, but she keeps on going. I learned to appreciate this from my own mother.



PUZZLE – Maria Onetto (Maria del Carmen)

Cinema (and TV movies)

2000	Lejanía	by Leonora Kievsky
2004	El disfraz	by Sergio Bizzio
2005	Cuatro mujeres descalzas	by Santiago Loza
2007	Arizona sur	by Daniel Pensa & Miguel Angel Rocca
2007	El Otro	by Ariel Rotter
2008	La Mujer sin cabeza	by Lucrecia Martel
2009	En nuestros corazones para siempre	by Javier Daulte & Sandra Gugliotta
2009	Nunca estuviste tan adorable	by Mause Martínez
2009	Rompecabezas (PUZZLE)	by Natalia Smirnoff
2009	Horizontal/Vertical	by Nicolás Tuozzo

Television

2005	Mujeres asesinas	
2006	Montecristo	
2009	Tratame bien	by Daniel Barone
2010	Lo que el tiempo nos dejó	



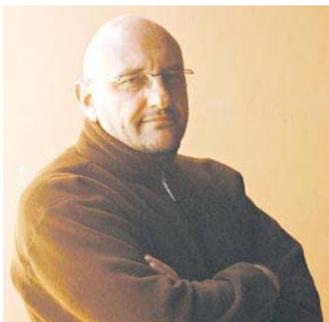
PUZZLE – Gabriel Goity (Juan)

Cinema (and TV movies)

1997	Zunz	by Alejandro Angelini
1998	Mar de amores	by Víctor Dinenzon
1998	Secretos Compartidos	by Alberto Lecchi
1998	Un Argentino en New York	by Juan José Jusid
2000	Acrobacias del corazón	by María Teresa Costantini
2000	Tesero mío	by Sergio Bellotti
2000	Nueces para el amor	by Alberto Lecchi
2001	Déjala corer	by Alberto Lecchi
2002	Relaciones Carnales	by Eliseo Subiela
2003	Chicas rollinga	by Ernesto Alguilar
2003	El séptimo arcángel	by Nicolás Corbelli
2004	Buena Vida	by Leonardo Di Cesare
2004	Adiós querida luna	by Fernando Spiner
2004	Tremendo Amanecer	by Gustavo Postiglione
2005	Sueños atómicos	by Omar Quiroga
2005	Pajaritos	by Raúl Perrone
2008	Un novio para mi mujer	by Juan Taratuto
2009	Rompecabezas (PUZZLE)	by Natalia Smirnoff
2010	Domingo de ramos	by José Glusman
2010	Aballay	by Fernando Spiner

Television

1995	Matrimonios y algo más	by Pablo Del Pozo
1995	Sorpresa y media	
1996	Trucholandia	
1997	Señoras y señores	
1998	Casa natal	
1999	Buenos vecinos	by Jorge Montere & Eduardo Ripari
2000	Secuestro	
2001	Poné a Francella	by Victor Stella
2002	El Pacto Copérnico	
2002	Infieles	
2003	Feminino masculine	by Eduardo Ripari
2004	Les Roldán	by Jorge Montero
2005	Mujeres asesinas	by Daniel Barone
2006	Gladiadores de Pompeya	by Diana Álvarez
2008	Atracción X4	



PUZZLE - Arturo Goetz (Roberto)

Cinema (and TV movies)

1998	Cómplices	by Néstor Montalbano
1999	El amateur	by Juan Bautista Stagnaro
2000	Plan	by Santiago Calori
2000	El camino	by Javier Olivera
2001	Four aimes and flyin' shoes	by Ty Roberts
2004	La niña santa	by Lucrecia Martel
2004	Cama Adentro	by Jorge Gaggero
2006	Derecho de familia	by Daniel Burman
2007	El Otro	by Ariel Rotter
2007	El asaltante	by Pablo Fendrik
2007	Una novia errante	by Ana Katz
2008	El nido vacío	by Daniel Burman
2008	La sangre brota	by Pablo Fendrik
2008	La ventana	by Carlos Sorin
2009	The city of your final destination	by James Ivory
2009	Scusate il disturbo	by Luca Manfredi
2009	En nuestros corazones para siempre	by Javier Daulte & Sandra Gugliotta
2009	Il richiamo	by Stefano Pasetto
2009	El cuarto de Leo	by Enrique Buchichio
2009	Los Condenados	by Isaki Lacuesta
2009	Rompecabezas (PUZZLE)	by Natalia Smirnoff
2010	Hija del sol	by Pablo Fendrik
2010	La llamada	by Stefano Pasetto
2010	Sin retorno	by Miguel Cohan

Television

2008	La bella Otero
2008	Donne assassine
2010	Lo que el tiempo nos dejó

