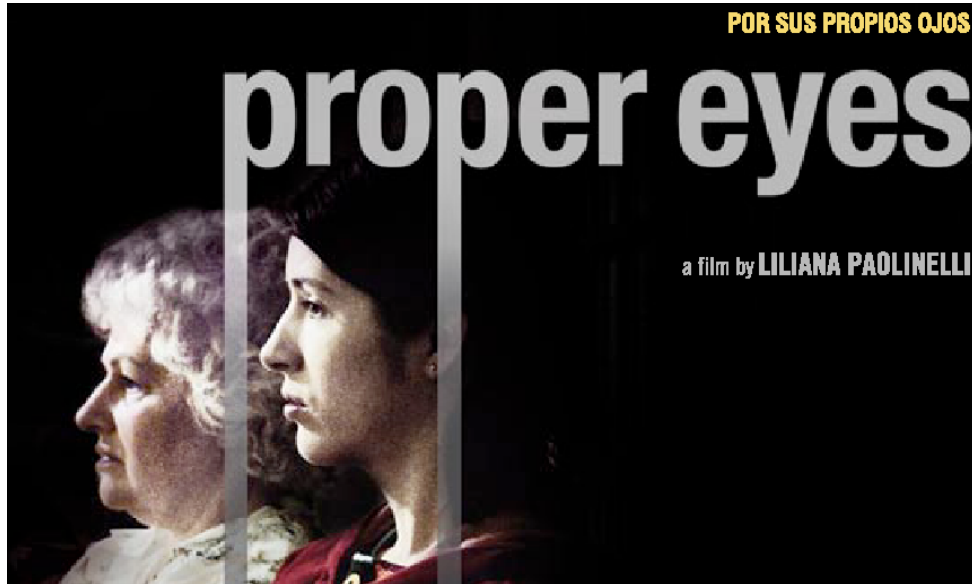


# FiGa Films

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MANDRAGORA PRODUCCIONES

Present



80 minutes

Argentina, 2007

In Spanish with English subtitles

Originally shot on HD, transferred to 35 MM

Dolby E

## TAGLINE

When you search for the truth,  
**look** at the world through proper eyes.

[WWW.PROPEREYESTHEMOVIE.COM](http://WWW.PROPEREYESTHEMOVIE.COM)

## SYNOPSIS

For her college thesis, film student Alicia (Ana Carabajal), along with her classmate Virginia (Mara Santucho), is making a documentary about the women in the lives of prisoners at a local jail. The only problem is no one is willing to be interviewed on camera.

In comes Elsa (Luisa Núñez), a desperate woman, whose son, Luis (Maximiliano Gallo), has recently been arrested for a petty crime. Elsa will grant Alicia an interview only if she visits Luis in jail. Alicia feels this is blackmail and tries to get out of it, but reluctantly agrees to Elsa's proposition.

When she visits Luis in jail, Alicia's world collapses. Mixing documentary and fiction, the film blurs these lines and takes the audience on a suspenseful ride.

Shot on location at the Bouwer and San Martín Penitentiary in Córdoba, Argentina, the picture is filled with subtle social criticism, fear, fantasy, and reality.

## REVIEWS

Argentine first-time director Liliana Paolinelli weaves a yarn about prisoners and the women in their lives in *PROPER EYES*. This year's Horizontes Latinos' (San Sebastian) spread underscores a gathering sea change in Latin American filmmaking: The move from political and social-issue pictures toward more intimate and introspective films.

**VARIETY, EMILIO MAYORGA**

"*PROPER EYES*, Liliana Paolinelli's first feature-length film, is a trip inside a maximum prison as seen through the eyes of the prisoners female relatives...a sobering and intense drama made by a developing new talent in Argentine cinema. Filmed in a documentary-style technique, the film's strengths are a solid script, an incisive camerawork that acts like a scalpel, and great acting." **AFP, France**

"With her first feature film *PROPER EYES*, Liliana Paolinelli is the major new discovery of 2007. Also in her film debut, the young and talented actress Ana Carabajal is excellent, earning her a well-deserved Best Actress Award at the 2007 Biarritz International Film Festival."

**RADIO FRANCE INTERNATIONAL, France**

"Director Liliana Paolinelli proves how documentary and fiction can coincide." **MANNHEIMER MORGEN, Germany**

"This film within a student film is a complicated, but clear testament between politics and morality, between coming together and falling apart, that serves Paolinelli as a catalyst to look upon an unknown world comprised of vigilance and punishment."

**REHIN-NECKAR MANNHEIM, Germany**

"The probabilities are endless that this film, inspired by the documentary about women with family members in prison, will reap rewards." **EFE, Spain**

"*PROPER EYES* represents the best of Argentine cinema. Liliana Paolinelli's work demonstrates a fresh and interesting look at the human condition." **ESPECTADORES WORDPRESS, Argentina.**

## **AWARDS**

### **PREMIO SEMILLA – BEST FILM**

6th Cero Latitud – Quito Film Festival, Ecuador 2008

**Special Jury Prize - Best Film**

**Audience Award – Best Film**

**Best Screen Play (Liliana Paolinelli)**

**Best Actress (Ana Carabajal)**

2008 Gramado International Film Festival

**Prix Cinéma en Construction 11º**

2007 Toulouse International Film Festival

**Best Actress (Ana Carabajal)**

2007 Biarritz International Film Festival

**Best Actress (Luisa Núñez)**

2007 Biarritz International Film Festival

**Special Jury Prize – Best Actress - (Ana Carabajal)**

2007 Mannheim-Heidelberg International Film Festival

**Winner Best Feature Screenplay**

Agencia Córdoba Cultura SE 2006

## **Festivals**

**2008 AFI FEST Los Angeles, USA**

Official Competition

**6th Cero Latitud – Quito Film Festival, Ecuador, 2008**

Official Competition

**55<sup>th</sup> San Sebastián International Film Festival**

Official Selection- Horizontes Latinos

**2008 Sao Paulo International Film Festival, Brazil**

Official Competition

**16<sup>th</sup> Biarritz International Film Festival, France**

Official Competition

**56<sup>th</sup> Mannheim-Heidelberg International Film Festival,  
Germany**

Official Competition

**2007 Toulouse International Film Festival, France**

**XXII Guadalajara International Film Festival, Mexico**

Cine en Construcción

**2008 Shanghai Internacional Film Festival, China**

Panorama

**Tuebingen Film Festival, Germany**

Official Competition

**2008 Vilnius International Film Festival, Lithuania**

"Kino Pavasaris"

**Febiofest, Czech Republic**

Official Competition

**2008 Gramado International Film Festival, Brazil**

Official Competition

## **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

Liliana Paolinelli was born in Córdoba, Argentina, in 1968. She studied filmmaking at the National University of Córdoba, directing several music videos and shorts, including LA BOTELLA (THE BOTTLE), which was an Official Selection at the 2000 Cinéfondation Cannes Film Festival, VERDAD O CONSECUENCIA (TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES) and LOS PASOS EN LA HABITACION (THE STEPS IN THE BEDROOM)

She has also directed the documentaries ¡MOTIN! (RIOT!), COMEDIAS (COMEDIES) and TENER O NO TENER (TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT), which were commissioned by the Antorchas Foundation. Ms. Paolinelli has also received grants from the National Fund for the Arts in Argentina.

In 2001, Ms. Paolinelli won a scholarship from the Argentine National Foundation for the Arts. In 2002, wrote the stage play LUGAR COMUN (CLICHE) which was presented at the Theater for Identity / Teatrolaidentidad Festival.

In 2005, she was selected and participated in the Sundance Lab with the project LENGUA MATERNA (MOTHER TONGUE). POR SUS PROPIOS OJOS (PROPER EYES) is her first feature film.

## Interview with Liliana Paolinelli

### ***What is PROPER EYES about?***

It is about a film student named Alicia who wants to make a documentary about a difficult subject: the wives of prisoners. It is also about Elsa, a woman obsessed about her son being in prison and how she mistakenly believes that Alicia could be a possible love interest for her son.

### ***How did you confront this subject matter when writing the screenplay?***

The documentary footage I shot and the interviews I conducted with these women were extremely valuable to me when writing the script. Even though it is an original story, it feels more like nonfiction because of its strong correlation to reality. And it also has an autobiographical element. During the filming of the documentary I met a woman who wanted me to visit her son in jail, so in that sense, the film is filled with the experiences I had when taping the interviews.

### ***What interested you most in telling this story?***

The desire of Alicia to make Elsa open her heart and start talking, no matter what the cost. I was also interested in the clash of the different universes these two women were from, even though they spoke the same language, there is no commonality or common language.

### ***How did you outline the character of Alicia?***

I wanted her to have the necessity of connecting with these people and, once her curiosity gets the best of her, finding herself in an unfamiliar place. And how this experience allows her to find herself in a different way, through the affection of this family. Because of her curiosity, she also feels a little morbid. Once she finds herself in this situation, the morbidity of being locked up behind bars and the unseen danger, it also stimulates her imagination to a point where she can never return.

### ***What other themes run through the film?***

Sexual fantasies, social prejudices of two colliding worlds, to be physically and spiritually naked, vulnerable and fragile in an unknown world.

### ***Why did it interest you to show prison life and the outside world?***

It has to do with the female condition, which represents the world outside, and in relation to that of the male, the life in prison. The relations have an interesting distinction. In general, the women are humble and accustomed to a certain, which is a very different sensation from that of the men in

detention. The male by contrast feels the need to bond. I chose the female point of view because it allowed the allusion of being incarcerated, which I find more dramatic.

***In what way did you connect with prison life?***

About ten years ago I made a documentary about this subject. It came out well, but it did not reflect the difficulties we had trying to convince these women to speak freely, the majority of which would not open up for fear of being socially condemned. In time, I realized that many of the interviews were incomplete and if these women had been more open it would have shed light on the problem. So I feel I took a little revenge in recreating the fictional film.

***How difficult was it to make a film about this topic?***

The major difficulty was obtaining permission to film in a real prison. It would have been impossible to think of recreating a prison anywhere else and still have a documentary feel to the film. Besides, there were also many references to Córdoba, the city where the film is set.

***PROPER EYES was finished with the support of Cine en Construcción (Films in Progress-Toulouse) did you consider this kind of support vital to its completion?***

The (monetary) prize helped, not in economic terms, but to generate a positive consensus with other funds and the Film Institute (Argentina).

***Much is said about films that play only in festivals and others that have theatrical releases, which audience do you think your film plays to?***

I don't know if there is such a distinction. I remember when filming I kept thinking, 'I hope it's good...' I know there are good films and bad films, naturally, one hopes you are considered the former and not the latter.

***Do you think you are part of a new generation of Argentine directors, or do you think that 'The New Argentine Cinema' is made up by the media?***

'The New Argentine Cinema' started with RAPADO and other films that were a significant departure from the previous Argentine cinema, but that phenomena was 12 years ago. I prefer to belong to a category that is indefinable, a cinema that is a mixture of the new and old that are considered 'good cinema'.

## Interview with lead Actress Ana Carabajal

Ana Carabajal talks about her role in **PROPER EYES**.

***Do you think **PROPER EYES** reveals a certain guilt on the part of the prisoner's mother that she could not communicate with her son?***

Yes. I think the film reflects the world where these women live in, you can see it their eyes, a mixture of sentiments and the question, 'What did I do that made him this way?' And above all, I think it is a film about people who do not communicate.

***What were the most difficult moments during production that required concentration?***

The scenes in the prison's hallways were the most difficult for me. The long walks where I would find myself alone at the end of a hallway and the prisoners would start talking to me. I thought at any moment a riot would start and I would be there alone.

There was also the scene, which was the first day of shooting, when I was searched that was particularly difficult. It was quite humiliating. I see that scene today and there is a horrible rawness about it. It was intense, but well controlled.

Another scene that was difficult was with Elsa in the kitchen, when she does not stop crying. We did it many times, it was very tiring and frustrating, very hard. The two scenes in the cell also required a lot of concentration. We had rehearsed it many times, but not the kiss. Liliana wanted us to do it for the first time on film and that's the way it ended up. These scene were difficult, but were the ones I enjoyed the most.

## Cast

**Ana Carabajal** - Alicia  
**Luisa Núñez** - Elsa  
**Maximiliano Gallo** - Luis  
**Mara Santucho** - Virginia

## CREW

Director and Screenplay - **Liliana Paolinelli**  
Executive Producers - **Paula Grandio, Cristina Fasulino,  
and Sol Martorell**  
Co Producer - **Juan Solanas**  
Production Companies - **Mandrágora Producciones SRL  
(Argentina) and Les Films du Sud (France)**  
Director of Photography - **Martin Mohadeb**  
Camera - **Ariel Ludin**  
Art Director - **Mauro Guevara**  
Sound Director - **Leandro de Loredo**  
Film Editor - **Lorena Moriconi**  
Music - **Vincent Artaud**  
North American Distribution & Sales - **FiGa Films.**

For more information, feel free to contact us:

**FiGa Films**

Home of the new Latin American Cinema

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