

AMERICANO
A documentary film by
Carlos Ferrand

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2007
110 minutes
Canada

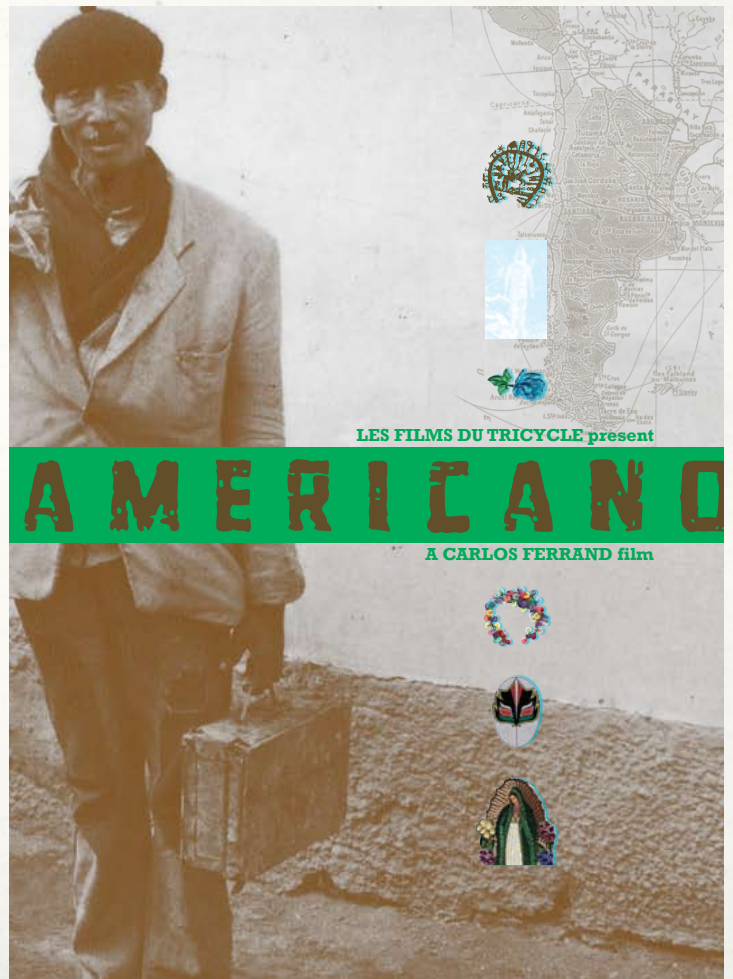
SYNOPSIS

From the Land of Fire to the Land of Ice

Americano is a personal journey through the back alleys of the Americas by Peruvian-Québécois filmmaker Carlos Ferrand. Travelling from Patagonia to Nunavut over a period of four years, he revisits some of the men and women he befriended during his wanderings through the Americas: family members; filmmakers and professors; a doctor; the cook of his childhood home. All have lived meaningful lives and carry the memories with them. All have stories to tell that bear witness to the political upheavals of recent years. And each in his or her own way encourages us to question our own identity.

Watching *Americano* makes us aware of the greatest gift an immigrant can give to his new country: sharing the story of where he came from and describing the pain of exile. The film is full of unforgettable scenes: a singing filmmaker; a cook who knows how to talk to animals; a hunter of shadows and disappeared peoples; masked wrestlers and human sacrifices; a prayer to Santa Virgen de Guadalupe; men and women who struggle for justice; gospel singing and an Aimé Césaire poem; and last but not least, the "Uncertain Princess"—and the filmmaker's hopes for the Americas.

The film maintains an intimate tone, revolving around the vision and words of Carlos Ferrand. It proceeds like a blues song, inspired by the presence of the founding peoples. Part road movie with an eye to the past, part personal diary, *Americano* is a film that is committed but not militant, poetic and above all, profoundly human.



BIO

Carlos Ferrand was born in Lima, Peru. For the past 35 years he has worked in filmmaking as a screenwriter, director of photography and director. He has directed more than forty films and videos, including *Cimarrones*, *Cuervo*, *Il parle avec les loups*, *Visionnaires* and *Casa Loma*. As a director of photography, he has collaborated on productions such as Céline Baril's *Du pic au cœur*, Jean-Philippe Duval's *Lumière des oiseaux* and Catherine Martin's *L'esprit des lieux* and *Dans les villes*. He works in both fiction and documentary. He lives in Montréal with his family.

FILMMAKER'S STATEMENT

This film comes from the need to find my familia americana.

Combining elements of the road movie, the quest for meaning and the Fata Morgana, this journey avoids the highways that lead toward the skyscrapers and other symbols of success. Instead it follows the roads where my friends walk, in search of a full life, too often denied.

Women and founding nations show the way. The search for an identity is the silent background to all these stories. I am an americano. Like a well-worn coat, a bit too large but comfortable, that definition suits me just fine.

At the editing stage, we decided to let the scenes live at their own pace, without sound or visual dissolves, without any effects whatsoever. The scenes are accompanied by music only when it comes from our characters themselves, long-time friends whose affectionate guidance helps us feel the pulse of the Americas.



Director
Carlos Ferrand

PARTICIPANTS

Fortunata Gómez, Lima, Peru

During my childhood, Fortunata was my family's Quechuan cook. She lives with her family in a house built in what was once a slum. She taught us that it's possible to speak with animals.

Pablo Perelman, Chile, Santiago

Pablo is a courageous filmmaker, whose brother was killed by Pinochet's henchmen. He is working on a feature film in Patagonia about the Selk'nam, a culture that has disappeared.

César Pérez, Bolivia, Cochabamba

We have been friends for 35 years. He is a Peruvian director of photography of Chinese origin who works with the great director Jorge Sanjinés, militant for change in Bolivian society.

Isabel Vericat, Mexico

Isabel is an intellectual, a feminist, a fighter; she is active in the struggle against the assassination of women in Juarez, a city on the Mexico-US border.

Carol and Fred, Arcata, California

Carol Cruickshank is my American sister. She and her husband, physician Fred Adler, are social justice activists.

Ajuba and Hisani Bartley, Brooklyn, New York

Ajuba and her husband Hisani are teachers in Brooklyn schools and active witnesses to the Black experience in the United States.

Elisapi Kujuaat, Nunavut, the Arctic

The Arctic, where Elisapi lives, is like a microcosm of my journey. It holds all the strength and fragility of the people and lands of the Americas.





Researched and written by Carlos Ferrand

Director and cameraman: Carlos Ferrand

Sound recordists: Catherine Van Der Donckt
Marcel Fraser
Juan Tadeo Guarani
Baruch Arias
René Laruta
Isaac Moreno

Editor: Dominique Sicotte

Producer Sylvain L'Espérance

Sound design: Benoît Dame
Catherine Van Der Donckt

Re-recording: Jean-Pierre Bissonnette

Archival research: Nancy Marcotte