



A conversation with Spanish filmmaker Irene Cardona



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Photo courtesy of SIFF Cinema

For Spanish filmmaker, Irene Cardona, her recent film represents several firsts. It's the first feature film for Cardona. It's the first time she has made the trip to the U.S. and it's the first time that Cardona has experienced the Fall/Winter rain that is so common in Seattle.

Cardona's first feature film, *A FIANCÉE FOR YASMINA*, has been described as a romantic comedy. But it can also be considered a sociodrama as it deftly explores the relationship of a group of misfit characters in the south of Spain dealing with love, lust and friendship under a socio-economic backdrop.

Cardona's first feature film has netted her several awards at the Malaga Film Festival including Best Film, Best Actress and Best Audience awards. She was in Seattle to talk about her first feature film, her future projects and her stint as a Master film prof at the University of Washington.

Q. So this film represents several firsts for you?

A. This is my first time visiting the U.S. and it's my first feature film! I've made some documentaries and short films before *A Fiance for Yasmina* (YASMINA)...I'm very happy to be here with this film.

Q. Would you describe YASMINA as a romantic comedy?

A. YASMINA tells the story of a group of misfit characters that meet together in isolation in a village in the south of Spain. Yes, YASMINA is a romantic comedy. But it is also a moral tale because it is not only about the sentimental feelings that are involved in the story...it also deals with the economic class and social situations in this group dynamic. I like to tell a story that doesn't come from Madrid or Portugal. This is a place where people have left for years. There was a lot of emigration because it was one of the poorest areas in Spain.. But now things have changed. There are people now from the South...from Africa. This is the paradox of the story - it's a land of emigrants that has become immigrants.



Q. This is your first time in the U.S. Has the film screened outside of Spain before?

A. The premiere of the film was in July 2008. After that we've been to France, Japan, Dubai, Morocco... but never in America until the Festival of New Spanish Festival.

Q. Are you involved in any other outreach in conjunction with your film?

A. Yesterday I went to the University of Washington and presented a Masters class with the students. It was great! I think they enjoyed having a Spanish director in class. There were students not only from film but also some Spanish classes. My class was about telling stories. I thought it would be of interest to students of cinema and also students of language. It's the point where film and literature are the same.

Q. Are you working on your next project?

A. Yes, I'm working on a new script with the same writer I made this film with. It will be a pornographic drama. We changed genres with this one (laughs). YASMINA is a comedy with kind characters - nothing too rude. But I think when you finish something, you wish to make something completely different. And I wanted to explore the dark side.

Q. How does humor play a role in your film?

Humor is not only something to masks the complexity of reality - it's the opposite. The humor helps you to realize the complexity of life. The movie is ultimately about confidence. How people can - or cannot - trust other people.