

CINEMA

Juan Cruz: "The key to cinema is to convey emotion; and to raise awareness..."

The Aragonese creator triumphs in Sky History in Great Britain.

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

RAULLAHOZ NEWS / UPDATED 4/9/2023 AT 05:00



Juan Cruz, on a recent visit to Zaragoza. Jose Miguel Marco

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Juan Cruz from Zaragoza is all the rage in Great Britain. A Creative at Sky History, he does nothing but collect awards.

Shall we start with the awards?

Sure. At the Promax Awards, I won two gold and one bronze trophies in 2022. Before that, in 2017, I received the Young Filmmakers Competition award. The theme of this one was also highly valued.

What was it about...?

It was to do with risk in society. It was titled "*What does risk mean to you?*".

And what does it mean to you?

It occurred to me that one of the biggest risks is addiction to mobile phones and social media. It can seem that people are more connected, however, sometimes it's quite the opposite.

And from there, through the main door to Sky History...

Now I work on three channels for A+E Networks: Sky History, Crime+Investigation and Blaze.

The content of the first two is obvious. What is the third about?

As you said, the first two are based on true content. Blaze is too. Blaze's theme is mainly aimed at the male viewer: pawn shows, lumberjacks, treasure hunters, UFOs...

And all this created by a Zaragozan whose WhatsApp avatar is Alfonso I the Battler...

That's right. In London, I live in the Chiswick area, very close to Hammersmith which is where the A+E offices are. In Zaragoza, I lived in Calle San Miguel, near the church. I studied at Corazonistas and I was born in the Miguel Servet hospital. It's all very local.

When did you feel the call of cinema?

When I was in high school I enrolled in the film school '*Un perro andaluz*', by Leonor Bruna. There I discovered how to film, to produce and to edit. I started making shorts with friends. However, I initially studied Business Management in Zaragoza.

You never know what the future holds until you come across it...

Of course. I did my Erasmus in London in 2012 and the year after that I finished my degree. In 2015, I moved back to London. I then went to Washington, to work at the Spanish Embassy. From there, back to London again, this time to do a Masters in Film Production at the University of Greenwich, where I got a job while studying.

Like the meridian...

Greenwich is a district in London. I entered the film and television industry in 2017 and still here today.

It's only been a short time, but how have you managed to connect so well with the British audience?

The British viewer is quite different to the Spanish viewer - their characters are completely different as are their cultures.

By the way, you didn't say earlier about winning at the Berlin Flash Film Festival.

It was very special. It started in 2021-22 with my partner, Christina. A young girl, Sarah Everard, was kidnapped and then killed outside of London. As a result of this crime, we made a film about the fear that women suffer when walking alone at night. We submitted the film and were very excited to win this award.



You mentioned comedy is your thing...

And dystopias. But the prize in Berlin was awarded to that film.

Which film directors have impacted you the most?

Martin Scorsese.

New York vibes...

Quentin Tarantino, Christopher Nolan...

You haven't mentioned Spanish directors. Do you not like Spanish cinema?

To be honest, I rather not speak about what I don't watch. And to be fair, I seldom watch Spanish films.

But the great Pedro Almodóvar won an Oscar and everything!

I'm not the biggest Almodóvar fan.

I don't like him at all...

I prefer Paco Plaza and Jaume Balagueró.

Plaza and Balagueró: horror cinema, scary!

I like it. The key to cinema is to convey emotion. And it's fantastic if, on top of making art, you manage to raise awareness.

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