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## LOCARNO 2021 Cineasti del Presente Review: *Zahorí*

by [GIORGIA DEL DON](#)

10/08/2021 - Marí Alessandrini's debut feature takes us on a magical journey to the ends of the earth where the noise of the city gives way to introspection in a setting where anything still seems possible



An Argentine director who graduated from Geneva's School of Art and Design [HEAD](#), [Marí Alessandrini](#) is presenting her moving, first feature film [Zahorí](#) [+] within the Cineasti del Presente section of the [Locarno Film Festival](#) (where she won The Films After Tomorrow production prize last year). The movie is a veritable homage to diversity, whether in terms of gender, ethnicity or religion, which sees its young protagonist - a custodian of various cultures inhabited by a hybrid gender who breaks with binarity to explore the animality inhabiting her very depths - teaching us to challenge conventions with our heads held high, with a view to building a better future where everyone can find their place.

*Zahorí* is the story of Mora (played by magnetic newcomer [Lara Viena Tortosa](#)), a thirteen-year-old who lives in an isolated spot on the border between Chile and Argentina with her little brother Himeko and her parents: two idealists who intend to achieve their dream of semi-self-sufficiency by growing their own vegetables on the immense Patagonian steppes. To live one's adolescence in such a remote location, oozing mysticism and synonymous with freedom of the fullest kind, is a unique experience. Yet clichés relating to biological gender as attributed at birth, or relating to a person's origins, reach even so far as here, like a poisonous weed insinuating itself through the walls of the school which all the children in the local area are free to attend. Neither foreign nor indigenous, neither female nor male, Mora feels like a "gaucho", because she can identify with the day-to-day existence of these solitary custodians of an ancestral tradition, and the deep relationship they forge with nature and animals. Hers is an almost crazy dream which drives her to look inwards, to her very depths, to seek out her true identity; one which is hybrid, animalistic and in constant evolution. The turning point in this initiatory journey comes with the escape of Zahorí, the

precious white horse belonging to her only mentor, the now very elderly Nazareno, which forces her to leave everything behind and to put herself to the test to find out just how far she's actually able to push herself. It's thanks to an intense and mysterious dialogue with a fertile yet cruel form of nature that Mora is slowly able to leave her childhood behind her in order to impose herself as a person. The sole protagonist of her own existence, she allows herself to be spirited away by the wind, and caressed by the sun and the sound of Zahorí's hooves, freeing herself of the limitations which society has forced upon her.

Mari Alessandrini's debut feature film shamelessly sings the praises of the weaknesses which define us all, over and above individual differences, and transports us to a timeless and borderless place where we can dream of a future that's diverse, far more inclusive and generous.

*Zahorí* is produced by [Le Laboratoire Central](#) (Switzerland), who are also handling international sales, in co-production with [El Calefón](#) (Argentina), [Cinestación](#) (Chile) and [Norte Productions](#) (France).

*(Translated from Italian)*

## more about: Zahorí



### Interview: Marí Alessandrini • Director of *Zahorí*

**“The steppe is right on our doorstep but it’s as if it creates some sort of abyss”**

The Argentine director and HEAD graduate speaks to us about her first feature film, which was shot in the Argentine desert and revolves around an extraordinary child ▶

12/08/2021



### Review: *Zahorí*

Marí Alessandrini's debut feature takes us on a magical journey to the ends of the earth where the noise of the city gives way to introspection in a setting where anything still seems possible ▶

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### Locarno unveils the programme of its parallel sections

The festival returns on the impressive Piazza Grande and offers this year a new competitive programme Corti d'autore, in the Pardi di domani section ▶

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### Locarno 2020 hands out its Leopard awards virtually

Lucrecia Martel and Marí Alessandrini, two directors whose gazes wander from Switzerland to Argentina, have won the two Leopard awards in the main section The Films After Tomorrow ▶

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## The Locarno Film Festival reinvents its programme

The festival has selected the 20 films (half of them international and the other half Swiss) which will take part in its new The Films After Tomorrow initiative ▶

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**Locarno 2022** – Cineasti del presente

Review: *Nightsiren*

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**Locarno 2022** – Competition

Review: *Stella In Love*

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**Locarno 2022** – Competition

Review: *Sermon to the Fish*

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**Locarno 2022** – Competition

Review: *De noche los gatos son pardos*

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**Locarno 2022** – Cineasti del presente

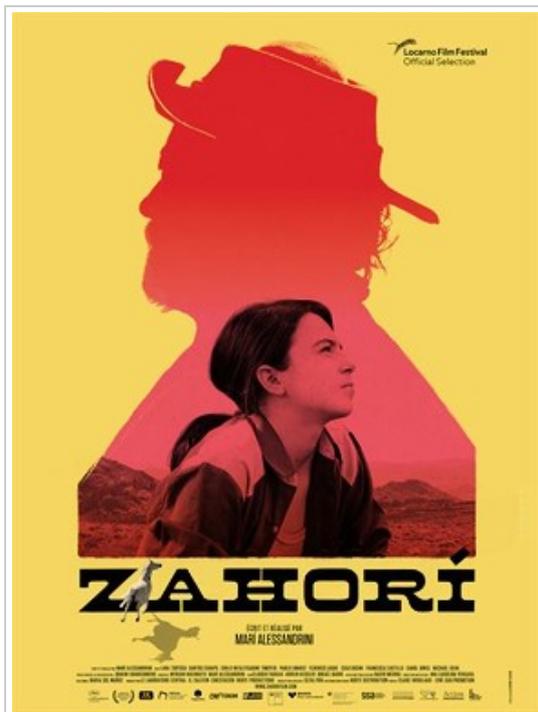
Review: *Safe Place*

11/08/2022

**Locarno 2022** – Competition

Review: *Piaffe*

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### trailers & videos

original title:	Zahorí
country:	Switzerland, Argentina, Chile, France
year:	2021
directed by:	Mari Alessandrini
screenplay:	Mari Alessandrini
cast:	Lara Tortosa, Santos Curapil, Cirilo Wesley, Sabine Timoteo, Pablo Limarzi, Federico Luque, Colo Susini, Francisca Castillo, Carol Jones, Michael Silva

### main awards/selection

Locarno  
2021

Cineasti del presente

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