



MASTERCLASS

ALFONSO CUARÓN

Alfonso Cuarón is one of the most acclaimed film directors today. He is known for his notable works which include "Children of Men", "Gravity", "A Little Princess" and "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban". Star Showbiz exclusively presents to you the best parts of his Masterclass during the Cannes Film Festival.

To be very honest, my journey is not one that I would recommend to anybody. It is frankly a journey filled with insecurities. I admire so many of my peers, and so many young filmmakers who have started their career with such amazing confidence. I had a child when I was 20, and at a point cinema became my primary means of financial support. At that time, it was extremely difficult for the young generation to do anything substantial, as the barriers of entries were extremely high at that time. I consider myself a 'blue collar' of cinema. I started my career as a worker, but always with a goal to become a director. When I was little, I used to sneak in to Churubusco Studios. Now that I am back, I never really left the studio. It's not that I learned much back when I snuck in, except for how you could sneak in without getting noticed! I would do any job that got me paid, be it writing, operating mics, or photography.

A big part of my career revolved around being connected around cinema not only as my passion, but also early on as a means of learning how to survive. Before I studied cinema, I studied philosophy. The funny thing is I didn't finish either (laughs). During the time that I was in film school, I met Emmanuel Lubezki, the great Mexican cinematographer. I was fortunate enough to have Chivo work for many of my



films. After that, I eventually worked with the likes of Tim Burton and Michael Mann. When I was young and into filmmaking, one of the directors that changed my life was Felipe Cazals with his film "Canoa". It completely changed the way I saw and approached things. When I look back, I am extremely grateful to that generation to have produced such masters of the craft. As I had previously mentioned, my journey was filled with insecurities. This insecurity is

one of the main reasons behind my friendship with Guillermo del Toro. I used to pride myself on being a 'blue collar' director and the fact that people had said that I had a lot of potential. So when I heard that there was another director who had done the same, I became insanely jealous! We first met when he 'complimented' one of my work saying that if the Stephen King novel it was based on was so good, why was mine so bad? (laughs). To my sur-

prise, he was right and we have been friends ever since.

One of the things me and Chivo tried too hard to be is unique. Even though we respected the work of our previous generations, we strived to make something entirely different and that somewhat interfered with the quality of our work. An advice I can give is do not obsess over your unique visual aesthetics, it will come with time. My first film, "Sólo con tu pareja", was a hit in Mexico, but failed to enter the States. At that time, I understood that I had to infiltrate the market to become really successful. It's funny how you can sometimes go your entire lives without anything being made. I was stuck in a limbo, too. So I decided to do some projects that I did not entirely love, but I needed them in order to survive. I am glad that I did. But when I did work on what I loved, I put my all into it. Once I finish a film, however, I never see them again. My friends and peers, Alejandro and Guillermo, consider their films as their babies that they have nurtured through life. They love them and so much more. For me, it's more like a case of having ex-wives. I love them so much, but I gave as much as I could. They gave me as much as they could. We move on and we love each other from a distance, but I don't want to see them again.

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Compiled by Sadi Mohammad Shahnewaz