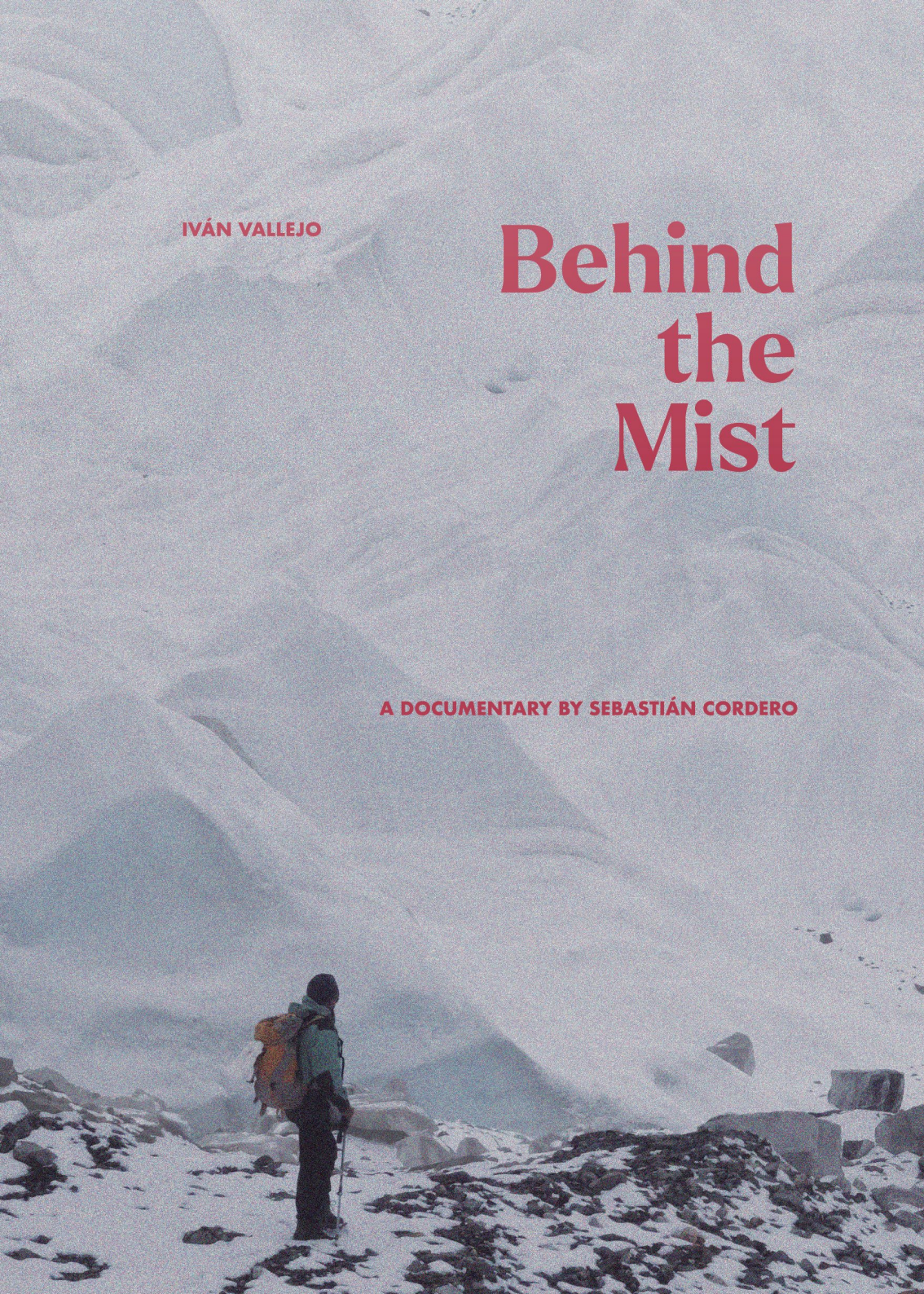


IVÁN VALLEJO

Behind the Mist

A DOCUMENTARY BY SEBASTIÁN CORDERO





IVÁN VALLEJO

THE FIRST ECUADORIAN TO SUMMIT MOUNT EVEREST (IN 1999), wants to make a film which will commemorate his trajectory. He invites Sebastián Cordero to the project, an Ecuadorian filmmaker who premiered his first film in Venice the same year that Iván achieved his feat. Together, they will travel to Nepal, where they will realize they share many similar life experiences, but they also have opposing views when imagining this documentary.

Image: Day 8, Khumbu glacier.

4 Conversations about mountains and filmmaking lead to philosophical reflections.

As days go by,
the higher altitude
and the depletion of
oxygen will raise the
debate to interior and
transcendental territories
putting at stake their
trajectories and their
egos when facing the
mountain and its
millenary depth.





Iván Vallejo's archive, 1999.



Ratas, ratones, rateros: Sebastián Cordero's first film, 1999.

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Stills from *Behind the Mist*, by Sebastián Cordero.







ABOUT IVÁN VALLEJO

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The first Ecuadorian mountain climber to Summit Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world, on two different occasions (taking different routes), without supplemental oxygen. He is also the seventh human being in history to climb the 14 eight-thousanders without the help of supplemental oxygen.

Born in Ambato on December 19, 1959, he is by profession a Chemical Engineer, and he taught mathematics for twelve years at the Science Institute of the National Polytechnic School in Quito, Ecuador.

He summited Mount Everest for the first time on May 27, 1999, and during twelve years he was committed to his project “**DESAFÍO 14**”, with the objective of summiting the fourteen highest mountains in the world (all above eight-thousand meters), without supplemental oxygen, which he achieved on May 1st, 2008, when he reached the summit of Dhaulagiri (8,167 m).



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After his experience with the 14 eight-thousanders, Iván became a professional speaker, who teaches lessons in leadership and motivation, which he learned throughout his mountaineering career. His stories have been heard internationally in Ecuador, Colombia, Perú, Bolivia, Costa Rica, México, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina and Spain.

To this day, he continues climbing mountains around the world.





Day 8, Khumbu glacier.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

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Sebastián Cordero (Ecuador, 1972)

Ecuadorian filmmaker, born in Quito.

He spent his teenage years in Paris and studied filmic writing at USC in Los Angeles.

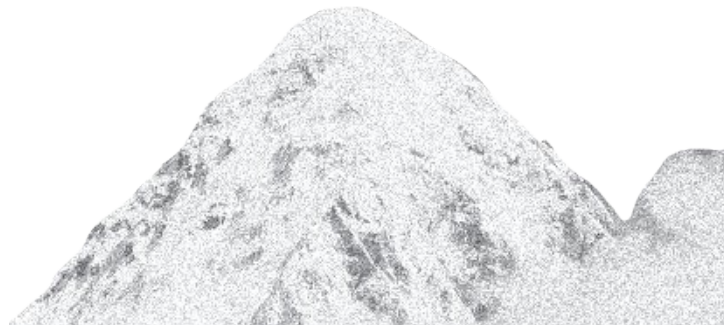
Writer, director, and editor of **RATAS, RATONES, RATEROS** (Ecuador, 1999), his first film, which premiered in Venice and became a social and cultural phenomenon in Ecuador. His next film **CRONICAS** (Mexico-Ecuador, 2004) premiered at Cannes and received several international awards. **RABIA** (Spain-Colombia, 2011) won the Special Jury Prize in Tokyo and four awards in Málaga, including Best Picture. **PESCADOR** (Ecuador-Colombia, 2011) marked a sharp turn towards a freer improvisational process, which contrasted starkly with the scientific rigor of the sci-fi thriller **EUROPA REPORT** (US, 2013), his US/English-language debut.

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In 2016 he premiered **SIN MUERTOS NO HAY CARNAVAL / SUCH IS LIFE IN THE TROPICS** (Ecuador-Germany-Mexico, 2016), a portrait of the city of Guayaquil, which was Ecuador's Official Selection for the 2017 Oscars.

Sebastián has been an advisor at the Sundance Writing Labs in the US and the Bertha Navarro labs in Mexico. In 2013 he founded the Screenwriting Lab for Andean countries in Cuenca, Ecuador, which he co-directs with Bertha Navarro. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).

He recently began directing immersive theater, adapting his movie **RABIA** with great success in Guayaquil and Quito (2019-2020), while he finishes his first documentary features, **AL OTRO LADO DE LA NIEBLA / BEHIND THE MIST** (Ecuador, 2022) and **ROSA** (Ecuador, 2023).






DIRECTOR STATEMENT

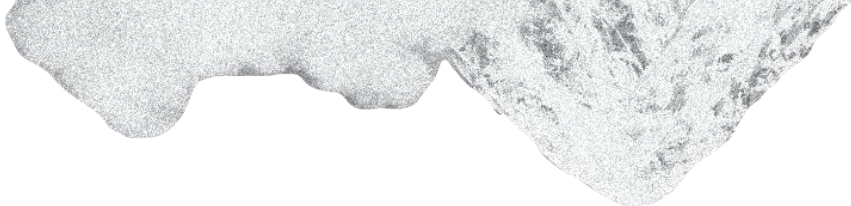
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I'm not a mountain climber, but I like long hikes, and when legendary mountain climber Iván Vallejo to join him on a trek to Nepal, I didn't hesitate to say yes. I'm not a documentarian either, but I like telling stories, and the documentary form has been calling me for a while now.

"Behind the Mist" is perhaps the most organic film I've worked on throughout my career. The documentary wasn't planned beforehand, and I didn't know what would happen, so I let myself be taken over by the project.


When Iván invited me to the project, I knew from the start that he wanted me to document our journey, but I had no clue what this film was really going to be about. I was on board, however, because I knew I was going

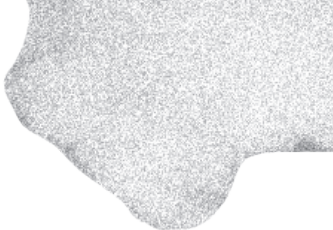




16 to experience something unique. I was at a moment of crisis in my career, accompanied by some internal turmoil: my last movie had not worked as well as I had expected, and I was seriously questioning myself and my creative process. Usually, I like to plan a lot when I make films: I've made fiction features for many years now, always using elaborate screenplays, so it was a challenge to let go of that structure. That said, I think that I've been unconsciously avoiding telling personal stories, although I've always thought that what I really want to do is explore a more intimate and confessional type of cinema. Without forcing things, this documentary allowed me to explore both paths.

Oddly enough, when I began this adventure, I didn't like the idea that the film would have the "agenda" of reaching and "inspiring" people. Fortunately, I realized early on that the film didn't have to be a conventional portrait of a

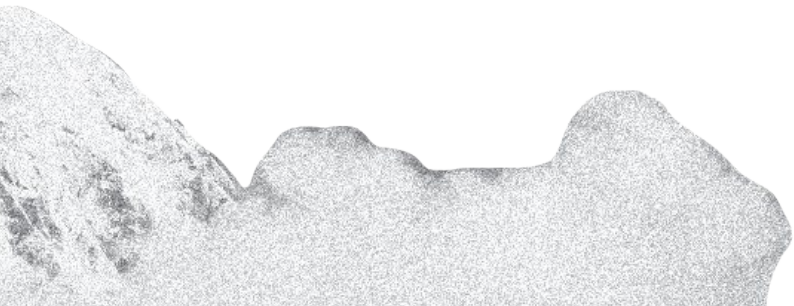




well-known and respected personality. I had a list of topics and questions which I wanted to ask Iván, but during a lunch stop in a remote village, we had a conversation which was more interesting than any of our interviews, and I had the good instinct to take the camera out and record it. From that moment on I realized the film would not be a portrait, but a conversation instead, and the editing process became tremendously revealing for me. I realized that the more I drew into my own worries and anguish, the more parallels I could see between the mountain metaphor and life, which is what makes the film interesting.

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The journey ended up being intense, and it made my cynicism vanish: amazingly enough, you can feel that in my footage. The structure of a journey which is surrounded by mist, with a climax where something exterior is revealed once an interior acceptance happens,

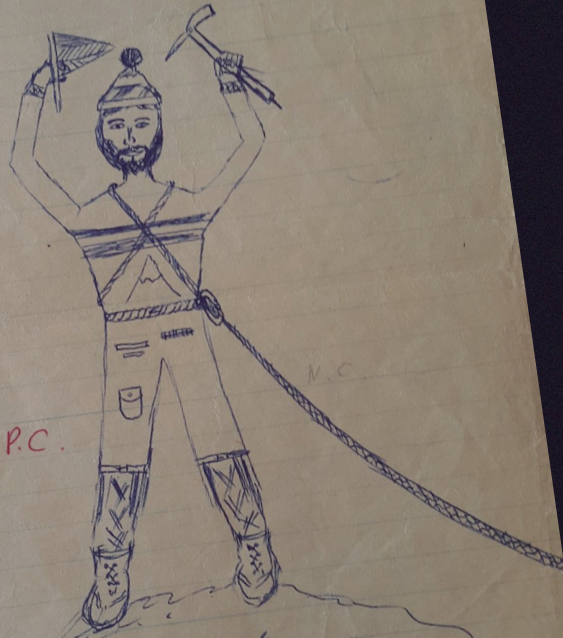


18 is not something I could have manipulated or controlled: it just happened this way. But what I did control was to use all the elements we would run into as part of the metaphor. In the end, the film does have an “inspirational” touch, but it doesn’t happen in the traditional approach of a “self-help” book, but it chooses instead to be honest and convey the daily doubts we all live with.

I feel exposed when presenting this film, but that is exactly the type of cinema I’m interested in making now.

Sebastián Cordero





P.C.

M.C.

Cuando yo era grande.
En la cumbre del Everest.

Si es posible.

Drawing by Iván Vallejo.

TITLE

Behind the Mist

ORIGINAL TITLE (Al otro lado de la niebla)

LENGTH 94' (APROX.)

IDIOMA SPANISH, ENGLISH, NEPALIS

FORMAT DCP / BLU-RAY

SUBTITLES SPANISH, ENGLISH,
FRENCH AND
PORTUGUESE

SOUND DOLBY 5.1 / STEREO



CREDITS

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This documentary was made with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage of Ecuador and the Institute for the Development of Creativity and Innovation (IFCI)

Ministerio
de Cultura y Patrimonio

Instituto de Fomento
a la Creatividad y la Innovación

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EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

ANTENA UNO

JIRÁFICA

SCREENPLAY AND PRODUCTION

SEBASTIÁN CORDERO

JOSÉ CARDOSO

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

IVÁN VALLEJO

SOUND DESIGN AND MIX

ESTEBANOISE BRAUER

COLOR CORRECTION

NICOLÁS ANDRADE

DANIEL ANDRADE

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

IVÁN VALLEJO

TEXT EDITING

NATALIA GARCÍA

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

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TRANSLATOR

JOSÉ BOROTO





Iván Vallejo, 2019.



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