

A LIFE IN A BATHTUB

“El orden de las cosas” is a Spanish short film that was released in 2010. It is short drama written, directed and produced by José Esteban and César Esteban, also named The Esteban Bros. It stars Manuela Vellés as Julia, Biel Durán as a young Marcos, Javier Guitiérrez as a middle-aged Marcos, Mariano Venancio as an old Marcos and Junio Valverde as Marquitos. The score was produced by Sergio de la Puente, and the photography director was Tom Connole. The film was nominated to the Goya, the most important cinema awards in Spain, for the best fiction short-film. The film also has won different awards in many short films festivals.



The main plot consists in Julia, a woman who lives in a bathtub from which she can't escape. Her husband, Marcos, has lost his belt, which he has inherited from his father. Marcos is desperate as he wants to find the belt. He asks his son Marquitos to search the belt, and he finds that Julia has the belt with her in the bathtub, but she doesn't want to give him the belt. Years passed for everyone except for Julia. Marquitos leaves home as he is uneasy there. Once he is out, he calls home but he never talks with Julia as Marcos wants to prevent that.

Although the film was included in the fiction category, could be named social cinema as it offers a hypothetical situation that makes reference to the genre violence. As it is a film that talks about hypothetical facts, it is full of references and symbolism. Two clear references of the film are the belt and the bath. The belt symbolises heritage and tradition, specifically, a tradition that establishes woman under the control of a man. The bathtub is the only place where Julia feels safe and comfortable. We can see in the film how gender violence case can break up a family. As Marquitos left home because of the situation and he asked his mom to leave home with him, but she can't as she was afraid. We can see this broken relationship referenced in Marquitos's plane.

When his plane broke up, Marcos said “I will fix it” but he never does it, so he has lost his son. We can also see that Marcos doesn’t really want to hurt Julia, he does it because of where he comes from. We can see this in the scene he receives his family’s visit, so his two brother’s wives are under control of their husbands, so Marcos thinks he has to submit Julia. It is a well-directed movie by the Esteban Bros, with a perfect photography work by Tom Connole. The performances of the thespians are realistic.



All in all, “El orden de las cosas” is a great way to show real and hard problems. As if they introduce you to a problem by referencing it or creating hypothetical and unreal situations, the audience will be able to think and build his own opinion as happened with me. I must be so lucky as I never have know or I’ve never been near of a gender violence case. Watching this short film, I was obligated to think to understand the film, as I couldn’t understand it the first time. In the film Julia is isolated, apart from the society and that’s the worse feeling you can have. Also, the film make me feel empathy for people who are in those situations, as their homes, the place when they are supposed to feel safe, are a hell for they, so they are living in a hell day after day.



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