

PINOCCHIO

FILE NAME: PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE

CARLOS: Hello, everyone. And I'm just gonna welcome the filmmakers: Mark Gustafson, co-director of the film; and of course, the man that needs no introduction, Guillermo del Toro.

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GUILLERMO: Ola. I was here an hour ago, I think. [laugh]

CARLOS: We all had a chance to go to the exhibit, and we're still basking in its incredible craftsmanship. So we'll start with you, Guillermo, asking you about the origin of your fascination and love for Pinocchio. When did it start and why did you feel that there was still something new to tell about Pinocchio in this day and age?

GUILLERMO: Well, there's something new to tell about certain figures. I can boast and drop a name.

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GUILLERMO: When I had dinner with Garcia Marcus in Brazil many years ago, he said to me, "There are about 10 to 12 figures in literature that don't belong just to one country or one person. They are the vocabulary of human imagination." He said, "That's characters that even if you don't know the novel, you know the story." He said, "Frankenstein, Tarzan, Sherlock Holmes, Pinocchio," et cetera, et cetera. "Count of Monte Cristo," he said, 'cause we were talking about that. And he said, "And they can represent anything."

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GUILLERMO: "They can represent the future, the past, family science, politics." He said, "They're completely open to the voice of the singer, basically." So there will be as many Pinocchios as are many of us. There's always a new version if you have something new to tell about it. And my fascination goes back to childhood. I saw it when I was very young with my mother, the second or third movie. And I thought, this is the only movie I've seen in my life, you know, I'm seven, where it actually shows how scary it is to be a child.

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GUILLERMO: And I felt -- because to me, when people -- I was 75 when I was seven. I was the oldest seven-year-old in the history of mankind. And I've been aging a little backwards. I'm about 60 right now. So we're about to match it. But it's very personal in that way.

MARK: Guillermo had a bucket list when he was 10 years old.

GUILLERMO: [laugh] Yes. Yes. Yes. [laugh] If I live long enough, [laugh] yeah. I actually felt that way. I was a hypochondriac, and I read an Encyclopedia of Health, and I would come to my parents and say, "I think I have trichinosis. I think I have multiple sclerosis. I think [indiscernible]." [laugh]

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CARLOS: Of course, all of your movies have always been sort of tactile. You know, the physicality of your monsters is what really sets them apart. So it really makes sense that you would choose stop motion as the medium for this film. Tell us about, you know, what was your first stop-motion movie? Why this medium for that?

GUILLERMO: What people may or may not know is how much I did stop motion before Cronos. I did it in a lot of my short films. I had a company that did it professionally for 10 years. We did makeup, effects, and stop motion. We did clay animation for a couple of really famous in the '80s commercials for the International Book Fair.

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GUILLERMO: And we did commercials for Sharpie, for Cheese Whiz [laugh]. But I did it. I animated and I created the puppets and all that. And I was gonna start with a stop motion feature before Cronos. Mark has heard the story so many times that I'll be brief. We built about 100 and something puppets. And the first night we were shooting, we got burglarized. And not only did they destroy all the puppets and the sets, but they pooped and peed on the floor, which fully prepared me for Hollywood. [laugh]

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GUILLERMO: But I've always thought Pinocchio could only be retold stop motion because it's the only way the puppet would belong to the same world as the humans, but be an anomaly, you know. And everybody would swear they were not

puppets when they were puppets. And the only one that acted freely was the puppet, so.

CARLOS: Mark, I know that you also have a long history with stop motion. You worked with the great Will Benton. And, you know, tell us a little about the difference between those puppets with the claymation, the puppets that we've seen in films like, you know, the films from Leica, and the puppets that you guys chose for this one. The mechanics of their faces are very unique.

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MARK: Yeah. Well, when I started it, [indiscernible] the technology was still pretty crude. So, you know, the amateurs were much less sophisticated than, you know, what we're working with here. And we predominantly worked with clay, so we were sculpting each frame. But yeah, the technology has come quite a ways. And groups like Leica have pushed it, you know, way out, you know, like 15 years into the future. So we were able to come along and take advantage of all those advances that they made and say, "Yep, we'll use this, this, this, and maybe not this."

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MARK: But it just made it much easier for us to do what we wanted to do. There were some sort of subtleties. We felt like we really wanted to get at nuances in the performance of the characters, and these advances have allowed us to do that, particularly with the mechanics in the faces. Most of our puppets have mechanical faces. So the animators are manipulating them, you know, literally physically one frame at a time, you know, with the little Allen wrenches going in ears at the tops of the heads and then pushing little paddles around.

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MARK: I mean, if you saw the exhibit, you know, you got a sense of that. I'm still amazed by it, and I've been doing it my whole life.

GUILLERMO: But, Carlos, if I may also before we collectively misconstrue, Mark is not only directing animation, as am I, but we are directing together. This is very important for me to say. We directed together this film. Animation is not his only purview, as is mine, is we made decisions together.

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GUILLERMO: And I don't think that either of us would be able to do this movie alone [laugh]. It was a brutal, gigantic, insane exercise to create this movie at this scale. And thank God we had a partner to do it.

MARK: And we shot for a thousand days, so.

GUILLERMO: A thousand days. With up to 60 plus units shooting at the same time. I mean, when people say --

MARK: I don't recommend it.

GUILLERMO: No.

MARK: I do not.

GUILLERMO: No. I mean, a high average is 30, 35 units.

MARK: Yeah. Yeah.

GUILLERMO: And that's high.

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MARK: After that, it starts [overlap] --

GUILLERMO: It's madness.

MARK: It is madness. 'Cause I found that I could track maybe 30 units, you know.

GUILLERMO: Yeah.

MARK: With a lot of help, obviously. But once you went to 31, I not only couldn't track the new one, I couldn't track any of the others. You know, it just all fell off the back of the truck.

GUILLERMO: Yeah. And I think that to pay attention to everything, we demanded 100 percent 100 percent of the time. And I know he doesn't want me to identify the shot, but it came to him directing, and [laugh] we demanded together to reshoot one shot, and he animated it.

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GUILLERMO: The last shot of the film is animated by him. The last shot we shot. Yes. [laugh]

MARK: And I hadn't shot anything in like 20 years, so it was very nerve-wracking. It was a pretty simple shot, but it did -- I mean, I thought I knew what I was asking the animators to do 'cause I had been an animator for many years. But holy smokes, it gave me renewed sort of admiration for what the animators do. And, you know, they're our actors, and they really brought these characters to life in, I think, kind of a brand-new way.

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CARLOS: Not to get super geeky or techy, but I know that it's important for you, Guillermo, that, you know, we've seen face replacement in other stop-motion animated films. And this one is, of course, the mechanicals. What was that sort of choice to not have [overlap]?

GUILLERMO: Well, Pinocchio, parts of Spazzatura and the cricket have replacement because the material leads to it. I mean, you don't want to see wood stretch. So it is better to do it replacement, and it's almost a graphic quality. But it was to return control to the animators.

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GUILLERMO: Because face replacement means you're gonna print a thousand faces, as you saw in the entrance to the exhibit on the pizza boxes, you print a thousand faces. But if you give control to the animators in terms of movement, you know, then you can move the puppet and you give them 1,200 or 1,002. But you give them what they need. And I think we wanted that from the beginning, and we spoke about that.

CARLOS: I also wanted to ask about, you know, your interest or decision of having some sections be done in Mexico and El Taller de Chucho and sort of, like, starting stop-motion animation in your hometown.

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GUILLERMO: Well, in this instance, I mean, representation can be done in many, many ways. The first level of representation is if you're in charge, don't fuck it up. That's the first level of representation. The second level of representation is, who can I invite that represents? And in this case, the actors are made of silicon and metal and wood and all that. So you say animation. And after Shape of Water, I tried to formalize stop motion by

creating a workshop, which is the El Taller de Chucho, and I invited -- this complicated our lives a little bit.

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GUILLERMO: It was not a triangulation that was done easily. But when Mark and ShadowMachine understood how important it was for animation in Mexico, we made the extra steps to ensure that they touched Pinocchio, the cricket, and they were in charge of a sequence. Those were the three things we wanted: Mexican animators animating main characters and Mexican animators taking charge of a sequence. And then Sergio [phonetic], one of the animators from the workshop, came to Portland and animated -- you can see him in the exhibit animating the kids running through the military camp, attacking each other with the rifles and the grenades.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:12:05]

GUILLERMO: That's one animator from Guadalajara taking charge of a sequence with multiple characters and a single shot, which is huge. And when we sent Leon [phonetic], another animator from Guadalajara, to get trained by Mackinnon & Saunders, to Manchester, in making amateurs, they came back and they said, "He taught us things we didn't know. He opened our eyes." And I think it's important to show the level of creativity that exists in Mexico, and that what we need is the chances to put in and apply it.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:12:42]

GUILLERMO: And that's the difficult thing we have existentially. We live in an area where creation at this level is very hard to do, and that opened the doors.

MARK: They did a magnificent job. I mean, obviously, at first, I was a little nervous, and then just like, wow, you know, incredible. And including the cricket dance at the end through the credits, which is great.

GUILLERMO: The longest shot in the movie, I think.

MARK: It is the longest shot in the movie. Yeah.

GUILLERMO: And Brian, the head of animation, is somewhere around here, I think.

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GUILLERMO: I think Brian slept here, actually, so he may be awake. But Brian, I would say this for both of us, he is like the most stringent, vigilant animator you can ever meet. And he was delighted with the work in Guadalajara. So that was a great review.

CARLOS: I understand that before you started to work with the animators, you had sort of like eight commandments, you know, of animation, these sort of set of rules that you wanted, you know, to use. Do you guys wanna talk about what those were and why they were significant?

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MARK: Yeah. I think one of those rules that really became very important to us was this notion of animating failed acts, you know, to give the world some real sense of reality. You know, like reaching for -- you can see it in Pinocchio. He comes up and he reaches for a pencil and he -- no. Oh, that one's not it. This one. Okay, this one. So all that stuff is very hard to do. It adds days, literally, to a shot.

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MARK: But I think if you don't do it, something is missing. Like, the audience doesn't completely buy into the world, you know. So we look for everywhere where we could do that just to give this sense of a lived-in reality.

GUILLERMO: There is a saying which I quoted yesterday by Hayao Miyazaki, "If you animate the ordinary, it will be extraordinary." But if you notice, and I talked about this briefly when I introduced the movie, all animation now mostly blends with each other.

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GUILLERMO: You have the same sort of suburban, hip, sitcom attitude and the same sort of defiant poses, and in a really cool language that has been codified into, that's the way animation characters move and act. But that's not reality for us. It's not that it's good or bad, people can do it excellently, but we wanted to bring a level of acting that, as I think I said on one of the memos, is let's take pantomime from silent film and elevate it to at least actor studio level. You know, let's put it in the fifties or sixties, at least.

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GUILLERMO: And that means the rules were animate silence, animate age, animate pains, animate the characters listening, not just the characters talking. And we said what I said yesterday, we don't wanna see emotion. We wanna see "emotion." And sometimes we would reshoot the shot from the beginning because in stop motion, you cannot just reshoot a couple of frames. You have to start over from beginning to end. And we said, "We can see the character moving, but we cannot see the character thinking or feeling. We're doing it again."

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:16:21]

GUILLERMO: And those eight rules, I think -- I don't know if it's better, worse, what it is, but this movie has an incredibly detailed, incredibly conscientious, incredibly, inflexibly stringent level of acting in stop-motion animation.

MARK: And I think it helped that we've shot for so long. "Cause, you know, at the beginning, we went out and we got the best animators there were, but we all learned the language of the film pretty quickly. And everybody got on board with this notion. You know, it's this idea of, really, when you looked at a character, when you looked at their eyes, you see them processing information.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:17:01]

MARK: You see them feeling. And that's what motivates the motion.

CARLOS: Go ahead, Guillermo.

GUILLERMO: No. I think he said it. I like it. It is my second language, man.

CARLOS: [laugh] Let's talk about the boy scout, which I think, you know, for me particularly, Ewan McGregor as Sebastian J. Cricket is really excellent. What was sort of, like, the work with them and what you asked of their voices?

GUILLERMO: You know, some of the characters, I can say we wrote it for them. Ewan was a surprise.

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GUILLERMO: I was thinking of another actor for that part, and the studio said, "Would you try Ewan?" And I said, "Well, let's try him." And immediately -- I mean, he's a great actor, but that was not the voice in Pat McHale or my head. And all of a sudden, they said, "Let's try him. He's a great actor. What's the worst that can happen?" Well, the best that could happen is I think when we started hearing it, we said, "This is a whole new --" and I turned to Mark and I said, "Am I crazy or is the cricket now the star of the film?"

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:18:08]

MARK: Do you want me to answer that? [laugh]

GUILLERMO: Yes. Yes.

MARK: No, it was great 'cause we actually wound up sort of expanding his role when we saw how charismatic the cricket could be. I mean, we had considered, you know, killing him early on, just, you know, getting rid of him. I know that's not cool. [laugh]

GUILLERMO: Before Production [laugh]. And before Ewan. I know. No.

MARK: Well, all right.

GUILLERMO: No. No. Let us say that we started saying, let's put him in this scene and in that scene and in that scene.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:18:45]

GUILLERMO: He was always on our radar, but Pat McHale and I were saying, "Should we kill him?" And we thought it could be great, and then we said, no. It's actually beautiful if the cricket and Geppetto learn from Pinocchio, you know. And I think that was the end of that.

MARK: Yeah. 'Cause really, if you look at the film, it's kind of Geppetto's story more than it is even Pinocchio's story because he's the one who has to -- it's not like he finds love. He recognizes it eventually.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:19:24]

MARK: And that's the arc that he's on. He just doesn't see it, to begin with.

GUILLERMO: You have Pinocchio learning to be a boy and all the other stories, and here is Geppetto learning to be a father. And that is far more valuable, I think. Yeah.

CARLOS: Before we pass it on to the other members to ask questions, I just wanted to ask you lastly about the songs and, you know, sort of how they were involved in the writing process. You know, were they always part of how you wanted to tell the story?

GUILLERMO: Yeah. Originally, when we started, the story ideas were similar, but the screenplay was very different. Gris Grimly was gonna direct. I was co-writing, producing with Henson.

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GUILLERMO: And we were thinking of going to -- we went to Nick Cave, and Nick Cave was gonna do the composition of the score and the songs. But then when I took over and I started the screenplay with Pat McHale, I thought of Beck [phonetic]. And we had a meeting with Beck. And we realized it was really hard to schedule meetings with rock stars. So we said, well, you know who's readily available? Me.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:20:37]

GUILLERMO: So Alexander said, "Why don't we try one song?" And I wrote the lullaby, My Son, really quick. I thought it was easy. All of a sudden, I thought I was Paul Williams [laugh]. And Alexander said, "Oh, you should write every song." And I said, "Yeah, I should, right?" And then he said, "No, you shouldn't. You're not really good. But the ideas are there, so why don't we flush them out?" So, like, some of the phrases: what do you call it, call it; everything is new to me, those things came from my failed attempt at lyricist.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:21:15]

GUILLERMO: But they [indiscernible] the songs. But Pat McHale and I wrote the Funeral March of the Rabbits. You know, Pat has a really beautiful and intricate use of language. So when the word threnody is there, that's him. When he says, "It's tribulations of my youth," that's Pat. [laugh] Yeah.

CARLOS: I think we're going to questions from members.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:21:46]

FEMALE: Hi. So you guys know the process. You've submitted a chance to ask a question. Just raise your hand when your number's called. Number 14.

CHUCK: Good morning. Chuck Koplinski with WCIA TV and Reel Talk with Chuck and Pam. Thank you so much. First, this is an incredible, incredible achievement. I'm still trying to process all of it, quite frankly, after seeing the film and then looking at this exhibit.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:22:20]

CHUCK: Obviously, this is a very difficult -- in an interview recently, Mr. del Toro, you said that this is the salad days for stop-motion animation. We've had [indiscernible]. We have Wendell, the Wendell film with Netflix, which is great too. This question is for both of you. This process has been around for over a hundred years. Why does it endure?

MARK: I think it endures because when you watch it, you actually can still feel a human hand at work.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:22:58]

MARK: You sense that people have touched this. And there's not a whole lot that's going on between the artist who's doing it and what you see on the screen. And it's particularly true of stop motion because -- I'm trying to -- do you mind?

GUILLERMO: No, no.

MARK: Okay. It really is a very intimate relationship between the puppet and the puppeteer. You know, they go behind this curtain onto one of those sets, like you saw down there, and it's just them and the puppet, and they have to bring it to life.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:23:39]

MARK: And as an animator for years, I understand the incredible satisfaction from breathing life into something and seeing that, and then you go, "I did that." And you see it on the screen, and not a lot of other hands have touched it. I mean, certainly, there's been a lot of hands before that, everything to get ready to shoot, but that sharp end of the nose, as it were, is that relationship between the animator and the puppet.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:24:10]

GUILLERMO: I think that is unlike any other form of animation. It's almost like an invocation of life, breath into an inanimate object that is so beautifully constructed that the sum of the craftsmanship of everyone touches and makes that reality tactile. We live in a world where so much of our life is virtual and digital and alien to human emotion and connection.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:24:43]

GUILLERMO: And stop motion is almost a jolt of staggering beauty created completely by human hands. I mean, to me, it's very moving. It's as moving as any other work of art to know that those little houses exist and will soon be in my collection [laugh]. That those puppets are real. They were fabricated. The fabric was miniaturized. The painting was done by hand.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:25:17]

GUILLERMO: And to me, it's almost like the closest it comes to you playing in the most expensive toy set in the world and seeing your toys come to life, you know. And I think that when you see a world of all the humans declaring themselves humans and their puppets, there's another level of -- a meta-level of significance there.

FEMALE: Thank you. Number 23.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:25:50]

FEMALE 1: Hi. Kay-B here with The Beat. And honestly, what a fantastic film. So I wanted to ask each of you, what did creating the story help you -- how did it help you process kind of your own grief from pivotal relationships? And what did it teach you about healing? And I'll start with you, Mark.

MARK: Well, I think it's really interesting, the relationship between love or joy and grief. That they can be right next to each other.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:26:23]

MARK: And that's why, you know -- this film has my favorite kind of ending of a film, which is bittersweet. It's true. It faces the truth about existing and when you stop to exist. And you know, the truth, as long as you stick close to that, that is really the most precious

commodity that we have. And I think it's one that we really, really -- it was our North Star through this whole thing.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:27:00]

GUILLERMO: Look, I think certain movies, you realize that came to you, and I know this sounds a little abstract, but it comes to you that you are there. And certain movies you know are gonna be a drop of healing for everybody and yourself. I think that this movie not happening for more than a decade and then happening, it happened at the right time. I think on a personal level, I was able to deal with how I was failed to as a son and how to live with that imperfection and see my father as a human being, as a guy that happened to be my father, but he couldn't fathom that role.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:27:48]

GUILLERMO: No one can. The father is a figure that surpasses biology and physicality. It's a shadow of gigantic proportions. And my failings as a father and the passing of my father. So it's a healing movie for me.

FEMALE: Thank you. Number 22.

GUILLERMO: That's me.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:28:24]

FEMALE: All right.

MALE: Congratulations on an incredible film. And the hard work that you guys put in is paying off in dividends. So definitely, take this moment to congratulate yourselves on such an incredible job. I speak for all of us, that is a great movie. Speaking on the challenges of stop motion, my question is, what was the one most difficult shot, if you can point out, the hardest shot to pull off [overlap]?

GUILLERMO: The one he did. [laugh]

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:28:56]

MARK: No, for me, it was, for sure. Well, just from a technical point of view, the shot of Spazzatura coming down into the carnival, like, sort of swinging in and making his way all the way through there and then up to the door of Volpe's wagon. And that one was complicated because it was a complicated camera move. It was a long shot. There were

a lot of characters. It was complex blocking. And it wound up taking us more than three months in the end, by the time we sort of set it up and got it shot.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:29:36]

MARK: But it was one of those shots that really felt like it was worth doing. You know, you have to pick those hero shots. And this one was really leading us to Volpe, you know, our villain. So, you know, that's how you do it. Here's the guy.

GUILLERMO: I think that if you take into account that some animators went into a set and stayed there for two years, two years. The conversation between Pinocchio and those things, an animator from Brazil, Thiago [phonetic], went in, and he didn't come out for two years.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:30:11]

MARK: Just 'cause we locked the door behind him.

GUILLERMO: [laugh] Yeah. And you think about the level of intimacy that gives an animator with the puppet. We stop our lives so these things can live. And therefore, the hardest shots for me are the quietest ones. The conversation between Pinocchio and his father on church, which is full of delicate, incredible nuance. The conversation of the two kids in the adjoining beds, which is full of tiny specs of life.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:30:48]

GUILLERMO: And to be completely candid, every fucking shot was the hardest. This is a movie where we did not -- oftentimes, I would say, "We are only as good as our worst shot."

MARK: Which I did.

GUILLERMO: [laugh] Which is the one he did. No. But that means you have to be intransigent about reaching truth. Because you know what, we look at a puppet or an animation figure in a more intense way than we see a human actor.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:31:22]

GUILLERMO: This is something I firmly believe. Because they are avatars that are almost, and I'm sorry to get a little groovy, but they are avatars that are almost superhuman. We empty ourselves into them. It's an act of

magic that only animation has. And animation, that's why it is a goddamn art form. And we need to respect it like that because it's the only one that gives us that experience. It's an act of magic. And I think I forgot the fucking question, so. [Let's go to 24?]. [laugh]

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:31:58]

MARK: Like, definitely, it's true. It's exhausting to do really good animation, stop-motion animation. The animators at the end of the day are just rung out because it requires so much focus to get it right. You know, it's equivalent to a live performance. But if you can imagine a play that lasted for eight or nine hours that you had to perform in every day, you walk away just spent. And I saw it in the animators. You could see it in their eyes. You know, as the day went on, more and more of themselves have been sort of emptied into this puppet.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:32:39]

GUILLERMO: Yeah. If you can imagine for a moment that an animator is watching at least six or seven vectors of action, they are lip-syncing, which tells them how many of the O or the C or the T or the U, how many frames they have to watch. If the character is in movement, they are moving with their arms, their legs, their torso, their weight, compression, expansion, right? If they are in the rhythm of a song or in the rhythm of an action, then they have to be fluid, more jerky.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:33:17]

GUILLERMO: There are about eight vectors all in their heads. There's a famous story of Ray Harryhausen animating the multiple heads of the Hydra, and he worked alone. And he got a phone call, and he answered, "Wrong number," hung up. He didn't remember where he was. He had to start over. So that's an animator for you.

FEMALE: Thank you. Number four.

ANDREW: Hi. I'm Andrew Powell from The GATE. I saw at the end of the exhibit that you put yourselves into the film.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:33:58]

ANDREW: I'm curious if you can hint at where we might find that.

MARK: I don't know whether I should tell you or not. Well, actually, we're the little ferry that's going out that Geppetto runs up the dock and stops and he's like -- he sees it going in the distance. Guillermo and I are on that ferry sort of on the deck. We're standing on the deck arguing with one another.

GUILLERMO: Should we reshoot this? [laugh] Yes.

FEMALE: Number 17.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:34:35]

MARIA: Hi. I'm Maria Estevez [phonetic] from Metro. I would like to ask you about the themes that it seems to be recurrent in your movies, which is the fascism, which is the war, which is the [kid surrounded?] by fascism and war, but also the father, the family, and the religion. Why you just always came back to those themes?

GUILLERMO: You know, I think that if you survive the first seven years of your life, you spend the rest of your life trying to make sense of those seven years, you know.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:35:06]

GUILLERMO: I think that you are broken by family, by institutions, by something when you are young. And then you try to make an artform of that. In the Japanese notion of wabi-sabi, the imperfect and the impermanent, there's a thing called kintsugi, which is when you repair a broken piece of porcelain with golden scars of resin and gold. And the scars are the beauty of the object.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:35:38]

GUILLERMO: And I think that's what art does for our soul. We're broken into many pieces as we're kids, and then we say, "Can I show you my scars," you know? And that's what you do. So the scars I have come from violence and religion and authoritarianism, totalitarian thought, et cetera, et cetera. So what can you do? I think that you sing a single song in your lifetime, but if you do it right and you do it in a state, somewhat, of grace, it becomes everybody's song.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:36:12]

GUILLERMO: You know, I think Pinocchio belongs to everyone that made it. And we are accurately proud of it, all of us, as our work. Because I think the secret of directing



is to extract self-portraiture from everyone involved. For everyone to be that involved that it becomes, everybody's giving it. And the movie flows with a grace that -- I've done 12 movies. I think it's the movie that was able to achieve the most grace. And I have to say, it is because of the amount of people, brilliant people, that were in the journey, you know.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:36:52]

GUILLERMO: So the recurring themes become everybody's pain, and everybody informs that. Art comes from pain and art comes from imperfection. And I think that that's what we need to celebrate as humans, to give each other room to breathe. And in this era we're in where imperfection is a matter that should be tried violently, this is an act of forgiveness to all of us. I think that you forgive [indiscernible] father son's conscience, violence, you can forgive everything. And this movie is an act of forgiveness.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:37:32]

FEMALE: Thank you. Number 20.

PAUL: Thanks so much. Hello. Paul Salfen from Dallas. I can't imagine what each of you went through, the emotions, all of this time that you spent working on this, the ups, the downs. But what is it that you kept in mind that kept you going when times were tough to get to this point of this beautiful film?

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:38:03]

MARK: Well, for me, it was just the joy of working with all these artists, these incredibly talented artists. I mean, it's easy, you go out and you find people who are better than you at everything. And you learn from them every single day. And we had such a fantastic crew, and we were all pointed in the same direction. We felt that we were working on something that was really beautiful and important. And that allowed us to all support one another.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:38:40]

MARK: And we had Guillermo out there blocking the way for us. So there were no studio notes. We knew we were safe and we could make choices that weren't based on what the potential reaction of some soccer dad in Poughkeepsie would have to say. So for me, largely, it was the experience of

actually making this thing. It was the most joyous work experience I have ever had, easily.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:39:14]

GUILLERMO: I think that when you make a promise, like, I made a promise to the crew, I said, "No one will fuck with us," you gotta stay vigilant the entire time, you know. And I think that when you guarantee that, which is not easy, when you are sort of shielding the art form for everyone, then people give you their best. And there's nothing more beautiful than seeing people's best.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:39:46]

GUILLERMO: You know, every day, we would launch shots with animators. We would be on Zoom and talk to the animators, describe the gestures, blah, blah, blah. But every morning, I would wake up, no matter what I was doing, Nightmare Alley or, you know, Cabin of Curiosities, you would come to the folder and open the new shots that had been done for the day, and it was like Christmas morning every day. And then you see -- I will not go into details, but you see this animator that was a junior animator growing herself or himself into a role of prominence.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:40:28]

GUILLERMO: Or an animator that had just had a horrible experience healing through a sequence where they were doing their best. And you come to know them. You come to know them. They're like family. And I have to say, this is the only movie experience in 30 years where people didn't wanna leave. They didn't want it to stop. They wanted to stay together 'cause we really loved each other. All of us. Everybody.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:40:58]

GUILLERMO: There was not -- well, maybe --

MARK: Except for Brian.

GUILLERMO: [laugh] Except Brian. Wake up, Brian. No. But it was really that. I mean, I hate to say it, but this is a movie that we could keep doing over and over again 'cause we love it that much.

FEMALE: Thank you. And then the last one for today, number 15.

FEMALE 2: So I guess we're gonna leave it on a positive note. It's been quite an incredible year for you. You were just honored at the Critics Choice Celebration of Latino Cinema & Television Awards. Now you have Pinocchio.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:41:36]  
GUILLERMO: I'm a doctor.

FEMALE 2: You're a doctor. You're a master of the juggling act because, you know, you were working on three films at one time. So when you're looking back now as we're closing in on 2022, what's been the highlight for you this year?

GUILLERMO: I don't want to cry. You know, I think that all of us serve the purpose of opening the road for whoever comes after. And Alfonso [phonetic] was here before, and I was part of the celebration.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:42:15]  
GUILLERMO: I actually loved it. When Alfonso or Alejandro make some success, I feel like I'm getting it. I love them like brothers. And I think when I was a kid, there was only one model of filmmaker from Mexico, one single model. You were dictated to do just this type of movie. You were in a really -- the language of liberation was used to oppress.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:42:53]  
GUILLERMO: "You have to make movies about your reality exactly. And you have to portray only this type of story." And I disobeyed. I said I wanna do Flights of Fantasy that bring us back to reality and explain some truths. I wanna make movies with animated characters and giant robots and gothic romances because my roots are in Mexico, but my branches extend to the sky.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:43:26]  
GUILLERMO: And I think to be here creates a model for somebody else.

FEMALE: Thank you so much.

GUILLERMO: By the way, I don't know if Mark is like this, but the exhibition make me very sentimental. The exhibition is -- we went out teary-eyed 'cause it's so goddamn beautiful.

MARK: Yeah. Seeing this stuff that we worked on for so long resurrected -- some resurrections I questioned, but this one, it was amazing.

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:44:09]

MARK: And I think what it does is it focuses on the art of the people who made it, you know, when it's taken out of the context of the movie. So this is really a tribute to all the artists who poured themselves into this. We can never thank them enough.

GUILLERMO: Let's give a round of applause [indiscernible]. Thank you.

MARK: Thank you, everyone.

FEMALE: Thank you.

GUILLERMO: [indiscernible]

PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE [00:44:38]

[end of file: PINOCCHIO - CCA PRESS CONFERENCE]