



The Hunt for Carlos Saura: Tradition, Modernity, and Resistance

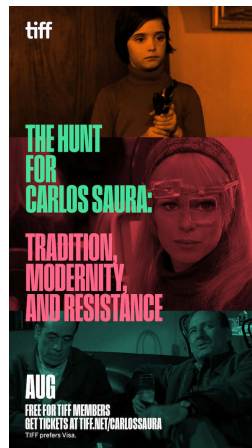


The Toronto International Film Festival hosts a retrospective of renowned Spanish filmmaker Carlos Saura, showcasing his exploration of Spanish identity through allegory-rich storytelling.

Through allegorical storytelling, Saura managed to evade the censors controlling the country's media. His third film, *The Hunt*, depicts a hunting trip gone wrong and evokes memories of the brutal Spanish Civil War. The year after Franco's death, Saura won a special jury award at Cannes for *Cría Cuervos*, which shifts between the harsh realities of a traumatic childhood in a fractured country and the fantasies created to cope with it.

Saura's later career involved youth and dance particularly the flamenco culture of southern Spain. With *Hurry, Hurry!*, Saura creates a classic of the quinqu or Spanish exploitation film genre. Using actual teenage delinquents, the group of kids descend into a hopeless oblivion of drugs, disco and grand theft auto.

Vividly capturing flamenco culture and dance, Saura's trilogy, which includes *Blood Wedding*, *Carmen*, and *Love, The Magician*, remains one of the greatest film collections on dance. Following the legendary flamenco dancer and choreographer Antonio Gades and his dance company, the films depict fictionalized versions of



The Goya Awards recognized Carlos Saura as “one of the fundamental filmmakers in the history of Spanish cinema.” He continually explored

FILM
TORONTO

Thu, August 08–
Wed, August 28, 2024

Venue

TIFF Festival Box Office, 350 King St W,
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themselves as they rehearse iconic plays and operas by Georges Bizet and Federico García Lorca. This flamenco trilogy paved the way for a later exploration of Argentine dance in the film *Tango*.

Spanish identity, starting his filmmaking during the Franco regime and continuing until his death in early 2023 at the age of 91.

PEPPERMINT FRAPPÉ

- **On Friday, August 9 at 6:30 pm. [Buy tickets.](#)**
- **On Wednesday August 21 at 6:30 pm. [Buy tickets.](#)**
- Directed by Carlos Saura, Spain, 1967, 94 minutes.
- Introduction by TIFF International Programmer and series curator Diana Cadavid and a Q&A following the screening with Anna Saura Ramón.

Lonely, mild-mannered doctor Julian (José Luis López Vázquez) starts losing his grasp on reality when he falls hard for his childhood friend's bride (Geraldine Chaplin), convinced that she's his idealized soulmate, and proceeds to transform his shy but pliable clinic assistant (also played by Geraldine Chaplin) into the erotic mirage of a woman he's after.

CRÍA CUERVOS

- **On Saturday, August 10 at 7 pm. [Buy tickets.](#)**
- **On Tuesday, August 20 at 6:30 pm. [Buy tickets.](#)**
- Directed by Carlos Saura, Spain, 1976, 107 minutes.
- Introduction by TIFF International Programmer and series curator Diana Cadavid and a Q&A with Anna Saura Ramón.
- Preceded by *Goya 3 de mayo*, Spain, 2021, 14 minutes.

Eight-year-old Ana (an unforgettable Ana Torrent), the second of three sisters, finds herself under the care of their strict aunt after witnessing their military father's death during a moment of intimacy. This event follows the tragic loss of their loving mother (Geraldine Chaplin) to illness. Ana seems to start moving between the living and the dead, believing she possesses the ability to end the lives of the adults who oppress her.

BLOOD WEDDING

- **On Thursday, August 15 at 6:30 pm. [Buy tickets.](#)**
- Directed by Carlos Saura, Spain, 1981, 72 minutes.

In *Blood Wedding*, the first film of Carlos Saura's flamenco trilogy, he collaborates with star choreographer Antonio Gades to bring Federico García Lorca's theatrical masterpiece to life. The film opens with the dancers donning their period piece attire, setting the stage for a narrative conveyed through rigorously expressive movement rather than traditional dialogue or exposition. Shot in a starkly lit studio without elaborate sets, Saura focuses on capturing the raw emotion and intense passion inherent in Lorca's story.



¡AY, CARMELA!

- **On Sunday, August 18 at 4 pm. [Buy tickets.](#)**
- Directed by Carlos Saura, Spain, 1990, 102 minutes.

For *¡Ay Carmela!* Carlos Saura adapts with Rafael Azcona the eponymous play by José Sanchís Sinisterra, set during the tense final months of the Spanish Civil War. The film follows a married couple of travelling Republican variety performers, who, together with their young, non-verbal assistant, find themselves stranded by mistake on nationalist terrain. After their arrest, the troubadours get a reprieve from the Italian fascist commander in charge, in exchange for a dedicated show for his troops — what could possibly go wrong?

FADOS

- **On Saturday, August 24 at 4:30 pm. [Buy tickets.](#)**
- Directed by Carlos Saura, Spain and Portugal, 2007, 89 minutes.

With *Fados*, the concluding installment in a trilogy dedicated to exploring diverse musical traditions, Carlos Saura turned his eyes and ears toward Portugal, highlighting its quintessential musical genre. Yet the vibrant performances captured in *Fados* expand its traditional confines, incorporating influences from music and dance genres that have thrived in Portugal's former colonies, such as reggae and hip hop. By integrating elements from Portugal's colonial past, the film not only pays homage to traditional takes on Fado but also embraces the dynamic cultural exchanges that shape its evolution.

THE HUNT

- **On Wednesday, August 28 at 6:30 pm. [Buy tickets.](#)**
- Directed by Carlos Saura, Spain, 1966, 87 minutes.

The Hunt marked Carlos Saura's breakthrough onto the international stage when it won the Silver Bear at the *Berlin International Film Festival*. The film follows a group of veterans on a rabbit-hunting expedition, each grappling with anxieties over aging, finances, women, and the decline of their virility. Through its portrayal of the lingering traumas of the Spanish Civil War and its critique of Spanish machismo, *The Hunt* established Saura as an artist with penetrating psychological insight, unafraid to challenge censorship boundaries.