

OFFICIAL SELECTION
61 DONOSTIA ZINEMALDIA
FESTIVAL DE SAN SEBASTIAN
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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film festival
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2013

SUDACA FILMS PRESENTS A FILM BY MARIANA RONDÓN

PELO MALO

BADHAIR

SUDACA FILMS PRESENTS "PELO MALO" (BAD HAIR) | WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MARIANA RONDÓN | PRODUCED BY MARITÉ UCÁS | STARRING SAMUEL LANGE AND SAMANTHA CASTILLO

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICAELA CAJAHUARINGA | PRODUCTION DESIGNER MATÍAS TIKAS | FILM EDITOR MARITÉ UCÁS | SOUND DESIGNER LENA ESQUENAZI | CAMERA JOHN MARQUEZ | CASTING BETO BENITES | MUSIC CAMILO FROQUEVAL | VFX NACHO GORFINNIEL | WITH NELY RAMOS / BETO BENITES / MARIA EMILIA SULBARÁN
PRODUCED BY SUDACA FILMS IN COPRODUCTION WITH IMAGEN LATINA (PERÚ), LA SOCIEDAD POST (ARGENTINA), HANFGARIN & UFER FILMPRODUKTION (GERMANY), ARTEFACTUS S.R.L. (VENEZUELA) & JOSÉ IBÁÑEZ | INTERNATIONAL SALES FIGA FILMS

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PELO MALO
Bad Hair

Written and Directed by
Mariana Rondón

Produced by
Marité Ugás

Starring
Samuel Lange as JUNIOR
&
Samantha Castillo as MARTA

Cinematography: Micaela Cajahuaringa / Production Design: Matías Tikas
Film Editor: Marité Ugás / Sound Design: Lena Esquenazi / Camera: John Márquez
Casting: Beto Benites / Music: Camilo Froideval / VFX: Nacho Gorfinkiel
With: Nelly Ramos / Beto Benites / Maria Emilia Sulbarán

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La Sociedad Post (Argentina), Artefactos S.F.(Venezuela) & José Ibáñez.

With support from Centro Nac Autónomo de Cinematografía CNAC (Venezuela)- Programa
IBERMEDIA - World Cinema Fund- Berlinale (Germany) - Global Film Initiative (USA)

93 minutes – 1.1:85 – DCP 5.1 & 35 mm Dolby Digital

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"I am nine and I have bad hair."
"I am thirty and I have a weird son."
"If I straighten it, my mom will love me."
"If he keeps it up, I will hand him over to his granny."
"I hope she won't leave me."

SHORT SYNOPSIS

JUNIOR is nine years old and has "bad hair." He wants to have it straightened for his yearbook picture, like a fashionable pop singer. This puts him at odds with his mother MARTA. The more JUNIOR tries to look sharp and make his mother love him, the more she rejects him, until he is cornered, face to face with a painful decision.

SYNOPSIS

JUNIOR is nine years old and has stubbornly curly hair, or "bad hair." He wants to have it straightened for his yearbook picture, like a fashionable pop singer with long, ironed hair. This puts him at odds with his mother MARTA, a young, unemployed widow.

MARTA, JUNIOR and the baby brother live in a large multi-family building. MARTA, overwhelmed by what it takes to survive in the chaotic city of Caracas, finds it increasingly difficult to tolerate Junior's fixation with his looks. The more JUNIOR tries to look sharp and make his mother love him, the more she rejects him.

His paternal grandmother, a witness to his rejection, asks MARTA to give her the boy so that he can look after her. MARTA refuses and tries to correct her son's obsession by "setting an example," a cruel moment which was meant to be a lesson. JUNIOR finds himself cornered, face to face with a painful decision.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

One of the first images that came to me for this movie was a large multi-family building and the thousands of stories that take place behind those walls: heat, nudity, precariousness, fragility, sensuality, sex, violence, family, mother, child. The little, intimate stories I imagined grew more complex and so my characters were born.

They are helpless characters. Wounded and hurtful adults, and children who are learning how to hurt. Marta, the mother, focused on survival, teaches her son Junior to survive just like her, without resources, without freedom. But Junior is different, he fights with everything he's got for his desire: to straighten his hair and to dress as a singer for a picture he wants to give his mother: a picture that would show him as he wishes to be seen.

Junior is going through a difficult initiation in life, marked by his mother's intolerance, who constantly nags him, convinced of his sexual ambiguity. Junior doesn't understand her anger, however, he tries to set her at ease, even by giving up on his desire.

Caracas is also hostile to them, a city of urban, political and family violence. Dreams encapsulated in multi-family buildings- the result of Le Corbusier's "Utopian city" project in the 50s- now turned into massive vertical hells. My characters live surrounded by references that fail to include them. The walls are now a canvas for representations of power, ideological statements; an iconography that feeds them on political messianism and beauty pageants. Empty models that end up bringing them back to their hopelessness.

ON WRITING

I'm interested in talking about helpless characters, who lack resources for emotional survival. I started by questioning a mother's love. Is it a matter of instinct or is it an unconditional duty? Emotion is not duty. I once saw somebody die because his mother didn't love him. He was fatally wounded. From the beginning I wanted to talk about this wound. The wound of love caused by intolerance.

I also wanted to talk about intolerance in a social context that is riddled with dogmas, which don't embrace otherness, where public affairs extend to the private life of its' inhabitants, highlighting their differences, be they social, political or sexual.

I also wanted to explore a condition that is becoming a constant in that society: matriarchy. The absence of the father. JUNIOR's was taken by violence. He is a witness of the power plays between the mother and the grandmother, for which he is the excuse. A paternal grandmother who only wants him out of convenience. Junior seems to be won over by her, but his yearning to make his mother love him, prevails.

BAD HAIR is the intimate story of a nine-year old child's initiation to life. A child who still plays, but who plays with everyday horror.

ABOUT THE ACTORS

From the moment when Samuel and Samantha first met, they liked each other. I needed intimacy and friendship between them, something that is indispensable to create characters who live in conflict and violence.

Samuel was the first to audition for the role of Junior. He fought for three months with many other kids to keep the role. Over time, he became more confident and grew as an actor. What struck me most about Samantha, was her energy. My job was to channel that energy. I appreciate the way she trusted me and was completely devoted to working in the moment as I directed her, improvising scene to scene without showing her the script. Indeed, none of the actors ever saw the script.

We rehearsed a lot before we shot. We created bonds, shared experiences. We kept coming back to the relationships, changing them, making them more complex until we found that comfort zone for the actors; where after so much improvisation they found their own small truths. And, most importantly, we had a lot of fun.

MARIANA RONDÓN- Director

Director, screenwriter, visual artist. Born in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. After studying Animated Film in Paris, she graduated at first generation of the Film School EICTV, Cuba. Her short film “STREET 22” received 22 international awards. Her first feature, “AT MIDNIGHT AND A HALF,” (2000) co-directed by Marité Ugás, received 5 “Opera Prima” awards and participated in more than 40 international film festivals. Her last feature “POSTCARDS FROM LENINGRAD” (2007) received 23 international awards, such as FIPRESCI at Kerala, Grand Prix at Biarritz and Revelation Jury Award at the de Sao Paulo Festival.

In Plastic Arts, her robotics installation “YOU CAME WITH THE BREEZE” (Fundación Telefónica Award) has been exhibited in Caracas, México City, Puebla, Gijón, Lima, Santiago and Beijing as part of the Olympics Cultural Project, 2008. She is presently working on the Interactive installation “SUPERBLOQUES.”

SUDACA FILMS

Independent film company founded by Mariana Rondón and Marité Ugás, for the purpose of producing Art House films, with worldwide commercial interest. Both, Directors and Writers, trade off the role of production, project to project. Their last film, “THE KID WHO LIES,” (Marité Ugás, 2011) was premiered at Berlinale- Generation 2011 and received International awards. It also was a huge success at the Venezuelan box office in 2011.

Their productions have received support from foundations, such as World Cinema Fund-Berlinale, Germany; Global Film Initiative, USA; Hubert Bals Fund, The Netherlands; Fonds Sud Cinema, France; EZEFE, Germany, and film institutes & organizations, such as CNAC- Venezuela, Conacine- Perú & IBERMEDIA.

They are presently preparing a new project entitled “HUAQUERO.”

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