



Initials SG



Writers/ Directors: Rania Attieh & Daniel García

Production Companies: Frutacine, En Passant, Schortcut Films, honto88

SALES CONTACT:

Visit Films

(718) 312-8210

info@visitfilms.com

PRESS CONTACT:

FALCO INK

Steven Beeman

(917) 854-8700

stevenmbeen@falcoink.com

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2019 / Argentina, USA, Lebanon / 98 min / Color / 5.1

Directors / Scriptwriters: Rania Attieh (USA), Daniel García (USA).

Cast: Diego Peretti, Julianne Nicholson, Daniel Fanego, Malena Sanchez, Francisco Lumerman

Production Companies: Frutacine (Argentina), En Passant (USA), honto88 (USA), Schortcut Films (Lebanon),

Producers: Ivan Eibuszyc, Georges Schoucair, Shruti Ganguly, Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia.

Cinematographer: Roman Kasseroller

Sound: Javier Farina

Art Director: Fernanda Chali

Hair & Make up: Daniela Deglise, Dolores Giménez

Costume: Pilar Gonzalez

Casting: María Laura Berch

Editors: Leandro Aste, Daniel García

Original Score: Bill Laurance, Maciej Zielinski

LOG LINE

Down on his luck, an aging Serge Gainsbourg wannabe struggles with an acting career he can't seem to get on track, an affair he doesn't want, and a crime he didn't mean to commit.

SYNOPSIS

Sergio Garces (Peretti) thinks himself a suave, attractive, talented Argentine man. He is in his 50's, but he thinks he's still 35. He lives in Buenos Aires, drinks a lot, and smokes a ton of weed. He wears fitted clothes and walks and talks like a gigolo. His friends call him "Frances" (Frenchie) on account of the fact that when he was younger he recorded an album of Spanish language covers of Serge Gainsbourg songs, and ultimately believes himself to possess a certain French quality. He scrapes by in life by getting odd acting jobs here and there, mostly as an extra in films that shoot around town. At the same time, to make ends meet, he also does the occasional porn job if it happens to fall into his lap - but his real passion, his dream, is to be an actor, a real artist.

After getting into a bike accident that ruins his face, he gets fired from an upcoming job and begins finding it increasingly difficult to land work.

Around the same time, a small film festival starts up in Buenos Aires, and naturally Sergio attends. There, he meets an American woman named Jane (Nicholson), 47, who is in town on business. Soon enough, Sergio and Jane are involved in somewhat of a "festival fling," although Sergio is a bit reluctant, mainly because he thinks he can get younger women.

Meanwhile, the 2014 World Cup is nearing its end, where Germany and Argentina are meant to battle in the finals. Sergio, along with the rest of the country, is passionately rooting for their home team. But on the day of the big game, fresh off the sting of losing yet another acting job on account of his busted up face, Sergio encounters a dark and serious turn of events...

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Cities, towns and locations have always inspired the narratives and genres of our previous films. From Tripoli, Lebanon to Del Rio, Texas to Troy, NY. As such we wanted to make a film in Buenos Aires since the first time we set foot there years ago, but we've wanted the film to buzz with the energy that the city gives to us - a narrative tale born of urban legend and mystique, like a story that gets passed from person to person over time, building along the way a sort of "larger-than-life quality" that often comes with tales of hearsay; a grimy, fictitious account of one of the underbellies of Buenos Aires, drawing some of its influence from trashy American pulp novels of the 1950s, with characters whose nicknames are catchy and who walk and talk like 'characters in a movie'.

This project is loosely inspired by facts, but that is not to say that it is based on a true story, per se. Instead, it has come together from the culmination of various bits and pieces of personal interactions with Buenos Aires that we have had over the past few years, and the myths/urban legends that cities and the characters that live in them provide through the universal ether. We are not from Buenos Aires -- one of us is from Lebanon, the other from USA -- but we spent some time there and have formed a specific relationship with the city that has included both work and leisure. In many ways, this film is simply a manifestation of our infatuation with Buenos Aires, a love letter, if you will, to the unpredictability of the city and its people, to its grit and grime, the way visually it seems like it's still in the 1980's, with its sepia toned dustiness, with its wobbly sidewalks and graffiti ridden walls, and for the way it seems like anything can happen.

In addition, we have included actual events in the timeline of the film - the 2014 World Cup semi-finals and final that saw Argentina eventually lose to Germany. We were in Buenos Aires to witness the defeat firsthand. Setting a personal defeat amidst a national one seemed appropriate to us.

Stylistically, the film flirts with genre elements of classic noir and detective/crime thrillers of the past, so we wanted to pay homage to these genres with the camera and look of the film as well.

Thematically, the film is a dark comedy of a deluded individual who is grappling with his own idea of self-worth, success, and overall notion of masculinity – or,

at the very least, his own perceived sense of masculinity that is borrowed or given to him from the society/world around him. To put it quite simply, the character is somewhat of an asshole, exhibiting behaviors associated with misogyny, sexism, ageism, sleaziness, rage, anger, violence, all on the way towards committing murder(!). He is the anti-hero of our time.

Sonically, we are quite excited about the music in the movie. The covers of Serge Gainsbourg's songs, never before existing in Spanish, play throughout the film. The project also includes original compositions by British composer Bill Laurance (Grammy winner) and Polish composer Maciej Zielinski. The mix was done at the renowned Skywalker Sound Studios.

MAIN CAST

Diego Peretti is an Argentine Film and TV star. He is known for his comedic roles. He has been nominated and won several critics awards in Argentina and South America for Best Actor, and his work includes EN TERAPIA, LA RECONSTRUCCIÓN, MÚSICA EN ESPERA, LA SEÑAL and THE GERMAN DOCTOR. His most recent film MAMÁ SE FUE DE VIAJE was one of the biggest box office successes in Argentina in 2017.

Julianne Nicholson is an American Film and TV Actress. She Recently appeared in I, TONYA as head coach Diane Rawlinson, and has had notable roles in AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY, NOVITIATE and BLACK MASS, to name a few. She also starred in WHO WE ARE NOW by Matthew Newton, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2017. Nicholson is repped by UTA.

DIRECTOR'S BIO - Rania Attieh / Daniel Garcia

Rania Attieh & Daniel Garcia are winners of 2015 Independent Spirit Award "Someone to watch". They are also 2014 Guggenheim Fellows and 2012 U.S. Rockefeller Fellows in film.

Rania is from Tripoli, Lebanon and Daniel is from South Texas. Together, they have co-written, co-directed, co-edited and produced many films to date.

OK, ENOUGH, GOODBYE, 2011, their feature-film debut, received many supporting grants and many awards (Best New Director in Abu Dhabi Film Fest, a Jury Prize in San Francisco, Torino, BAFICI and Belfort).

RECOMMENDED BY ENRIQUE, a narrative feature shot in Texas, won "Best Performance" Award for the two lead actors at the LA Film Fest 2014.

H. set in Troy, NY, winner of the Venice Biennale College-Cinema production grant, was presented at Venice Film festival 2014, Sundance Film Festival 2015 and the Berlinale 2015. H. was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award 2015 for "Best Supporting Actress" for Robin Bartlett as "Helen".

INITIALS SG is their fourth feature film collaboration. The project was supported by the following institutions and markets: The Sundance Institute, IFP, Cinemart, San Sebastian Forum of Co-Production, Vision Sud Est.

Rania & Daniel work and live in Brooklyn, NY.

PRODUCER - Iván Eibuszyc - Frutacine

Iván Eibuszyc created FRUTACINE, an Argentine production company, in 2009. After working as a line producer on numerous productions with well-known Argentine directors, Iván decided to branch out as a producer and executive producer on independent films with an eye to support Auteur cinema. Since then, he has produced 10 films from acclaimed directors.

- LOS LABIOS (2010, Arg.) by Santiago Loza & Ivan Fund. Cannes - Un Certain Regard (Winner of Best Actress).
- LO QUE MAS QUIERO (2010, Arg.) by Delfina Castagnino. Toronto, San Sebastian.
- HOY NO TUVE MIEDO (2011, Arg.) by Iván Fund. BAFICI (Winner, Best Cinematography), Pusan film festival.
- ME PERDI UNA SEMANA (2012, Arg.) by Ivan Fund. Mar del Plata International Film Festival.
- La Paz (2013, Arg.) by Santiago Loza. 63° Berlinale, Forum
- AB (2013, Arg. / Denmark) co-directed by Iván Fund & Andreas Koefoed. BAFICI.
- RECOMMENDED BY ENRIQUE (2014, USA/Arg.) by Rania Attieh & Daniel Garcia. LA Film Festival (Winner Best Performance Award, Ensemble cast)
- MAR (2015, Chile / Arg.) by Dominga Sotomayor. 65° Berlinale Forum
- H. (2015, USA / Arg.) by Rania Attieh & Daniel Garcia. Venice Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, 65° Berlinale Forum.
- KÉSZAKÁLLÚ (2016, Arg) by Gastón Solnicki. Venice Film Festival - Orizzonti (Winner FIPRESCI and Bisato D'oro Awards), Toronto Film Fest. New York Film Festival.
- MUERE MONSTRUO MUERE (2018, Arg. / France / Chile) by Alejandro Fadel - Cannes Un Certain Regard.

PRODUCER - Shruti Ganguly - honto88

SHRUTI GANGULY is an award-winning filmmaker based in New York City and Oslo. She has directed music videos and shorts for MTV, NYLON, Paper Magazine, Conde Nast, Chanel, and crafted the #MySentence series on prison reform for the Obama Administration. She has produced several projects that have gone to Sundance, Venice, and Berlin. In late 2017, Shruti started honto88, a production company that works in a variety of formats - from narrative and doc features to series, and branded content. She launched it with a narrative feature, Green Dolphin, by director Chris Kenneally and EP Keanu Reeves. Shruti recently directed the pilot for AstroTypes, a show she created, with Above Average, Archer Gray and NYLON, and she is developing a narrative series with Killer Films amongst other projects. Shruti worked for six years with James Franco on films and produced an experimental art performance with him and Marina Abramovic, called BIRD SHIT, premiering at MoMA. Previously, Shruti worked at NYLON, MTV, and Conde Nast, producing the CLIO-winning 73 Questions series. Shruti was a member of Obama's ECCO committee and is on the Creative Council for Emily's List. She is a co-founder the Resistance Revival Chorus and the Contributing Editor for Harper's Bazaar India. Shruti received her Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University, and went to NYU's dual MFA/MBA program at Tisch and Stern. She hails from India, by way of Oman.

PRODUCER - George Schoucair - Schortcut Films

Schortcut Films ("Schortcut") is a company dedicated to co-producing and financing independent feature films. It was founded by Georges Schoucair, best known for producing some of the most critically acclaimed Lebanese films.

Schortcut's aim is to support differentiated and ambitious independent films, which feature stories transcending boundaries and cultures, and are able to appeal to an internationally-wide audience while at the same time respond to an increasing demand for an alternative, engaging and stimulating cinema.

Building on the decade-long success of Schoucair's production house, About Productions (www.aboutproductions.com), Schortcut currently backs renowned producers and new talents in making diverse genre "author films" with imaginative scenarios and support them in finding the necessary funding for their productions, with a purpose of commercial success.

Over his 10+ years of experience, Georges Schoucair has developed and produced critically acclaimed [and award-winning] independent movies and has actively contributed to the establishment of an attractive and globally acknowledged environment for film investments in Lebanon and to the development of the Lebanese cinema, one of the most promising cinemas being created in the Middle-East today.

As a producer, Georges was able to develop strong relationships with prominent Arab and international film professionals and has closely worked with award winning directors (such as Kaouther Ben Hania, Ivo Ferreira, Alain Gomis, Annemarie Jacir, Khalil Joreige, Joana Hadjithomas, Mohammad Malas, Lucretia Martel, Shirin Neshat, Asli Ozge, Rafi Pitts, Ghassan Salhab, Bill Plympton, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Vatche Boulghourjian) and internationally recognized actors (such as Catherine Deneuve, Pierre Richard, Nadine Labaki, Nada Abou Farhat, Diamand Bou Abboud). His films have been exhibited at international film festivals such as Cannes, Berlinale, Toronto, Venice, Locarno, Karlovy Vary.