

UNA MUJER FANTASTICA

A FILM BY SEBASTIAN LELIO

 **67** Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition



SYNOPSIS

Marina and Orlando are in love and planning for the future.

Marina is a young waitress and aspiring singer. Orlando is 20 years older than her, and owns a printing company.

After celebrating Marina's birthday one evening, Orlando falls seriously ill. Marina rushes him to the emergency room, but he passes away just after arriving at the hospital.

Instead of being able to mourn her lover, suddenly Marina is treated with suspicion. The doctors and Orlando's family don't trust her. A woman detective investigates Marina to see if she was involved in his death. Orlando's ex-wife forbids her from attending the funeral. And to make matters worse, Orlando's son threatens to throw Marina out of the flat she shared with Orlando.

Marina is a trans woman and for most of Orlando's family, her sexual identity is an aberration, a perversion.

So Marina struggles for the right to be herself. She battles the very same forces that she has spent a lifetime fighting just to become the woman she is now – a complex, strong, forthright and fantastic woman.



SEBASTIAN LELIO

DIRECTOR

INTERVIEW WITH SEBASTIAN LELIO

How did you conceive Una Mujer Fantástica?

I like to think that the film, like Marina, its central character, is not afraid of pleasure and, like her, has a striking and shiny surface. It tries to combine the narrative and the visual pleasure in games of appearances that want to captivate, a sort of Trojan horse loaded with humanity.

What is your crusade, what is your challenge as the director of Una Mujer Fantástica?

I would like the viewer to end up intimately tied to Marina. So, regardless of his or her beliefs, values, or vision of the world, from watching her so much, the viewer ends up feeling like her, and from empathizing with her so much, the viewer wants to see her survive and prevail. Film invites us to feel like others, to experiment emotions that are often new to us, and these discoveries occur not within the films, but within the viewers themselves. Film prepares

us for life and allows us to explore our spiritual elasticity. I would like the viewer to surrender him or herself to a challenging journey, and to do so with wide-open arms. I would also like the viewer to feel that he or she has seen something beautiful, to feel that he or she was in contact with beauty.

What has the journey from Gloria to Una Mujer Fantástica been like?

I feel that, in some way, this film is a more complex construction than Gloria, because it is several films at the same time. But in spite of the fact that *Una Mujer Fantástica* exists in a different cinematographic territory that operates far beyond realism, it has, just as with Gloria, a higher inclination towards questions than towards answers. At the same time, it examines and exalts a powerful female character, yet for several reasons, *Una Mujer Fantástica* is much more than a film about a woman.

At a moment in time in which the transgender issue is being discussed around the world, where on the map is Una Mujer Fantástica?

I don't like judging while filming; I don't like looking down when filming, feeling that the characters are wrong or inferior to me. I need to situate myself in a place from which I can understand them, even the antagonists. When we began writing this film, the transgender issue hadn't exploded in popular culture like it did a year and half ago. Suddenly, the transgender figure moved from a misunderstood marginality to installing itself in

a central place in our current collective imagery. I think that the film communes intimately with its character's identity. In Spanish, the word that is used to refer to sexual identity is the same one that is used to allude to narrative style: genre. In this sense, the film itself is "trans-genre". It's a romance film, a ghost film, a fantasy film, a film about humiliation and revenge, a document of reality, a character study. The identity of the film itself fluctuates, it doesn't set, it doesn't stop, and it refuses to be reduced to one single thing. The fact that it can't be explained in any single way is perhaps one of Una Mujer Fantástica's most contemporary aspects.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Chilean film director and screenwriter.

His first feature film, *La Sagrada Familia* (2006) premiered at the San Sebastian Film Festival, it obtained several awards and worldwide recognition. *Navidad* was written with the support of the Cannes Film Festival Residence and premiered in 2009 Directors' Fortnight. *El Año del Tigre* was presented at the 2011 Locarno Film Festival. Sebastian Lelio was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship grant and received the support of the DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm.

His fourth feature film, the internationally acclaimed *Gloria*, obtained a Silver Bear for Best Actress at Berlinale 2013. *Gloria* represented Chile for the Academy Awards and Goya

Awards. The National Board of Review chose it as one of the year's five best films and it was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best International Film.

His fifth feature film, *Una Mujer Fantástica*, was supported by Berlinale's Residency. The film is co-produced by Fabula (Chile), Participant Media (USA), Komplizen Film (Germany), Muchas Gracias (Chile) and Setembro Cine (Spain).

Sebastian Lelio has been invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He is currently filming his first English-speaking feature film, *Disobedience*, starring Rachel Weisz, Rachel McAdams and Alessandro Nivola.



DANIELA VEGA

MARINA

INTERVIEW WITH DANIELA VEGA

Who is Marina Vidal?

Marina Vidal is a 27-year-old waitress and singer. She is Orlando's partner, with whom she has an adult, loving, and committed relationship, in spite of their differences in age and social class. Marina, though far from being perfect, is a resilient woman who has quite an impressive level of compromise with her own life. She loves deeply, and this gives her the opportunity of loving herself and overcoming any adversity. She's a brave fighter who doesn't falter when the world puts her to the test. She has a vital force that is capable of carrying her through against all odds. Today, while all of us are somehow standing on the edge of a precipice, she doesn't even look at it, and searches for beauty instead. She understands that even Orlando's death, or what her being transgender means to everyone else, will not keep her from pushing forward.

What did playing Marina mean to you?

It was, by far, one of the most difficult things I've done in my life. It was very complex on an emotional level because of the way in which I began to go deeper into the role, and the way in which I began converting all of my emotions in order to give the character a life of her own. On the other hand, it's been one of the most gratifying experiences: it's been a tremendous honor to be directed by Sebastian, who I admire greatly. I am also proud to be part of a team in which all of us, including production, art, camera, wardrobe, sound, photography, etc., feel very close and special for having participated in this project. A special mention goes out to my fellow cast members, especially to Francisco Reyes; I'd like to thank all of them for the experience and affection.

What do you hope to happen with the film? What would you like for people to take away?

I would like for lots of people to watch it, and to see their reactions and discover the way in which we understand relationships and affection, as well as the way in which we conceive love.



FRANCISCO REYES

ORLANDO

INTERVIEW WITH FRANCISCO REYES

What is the story between Orlando and Marina?

It's a story of true love: Marina and Orlando simply love each other, and after meeting, they have discovered a refuge in one another. To them, the differences in their ages and sexual cultures are not barriers. It's inspiring to see how two beings whose intimacies are unknown to us, and whose lives we could prejudge maliciously, surrender themselves without hesitation, without fear, and without fuss, to a relationship in which judgments on good and evil, on what's correct and what's incorrect, what's normal and abnormal, simply aren't issues. Where a space for love is simply made evident and recognized.

Who is Marina to him? Who is Orlando to her?

To Orlando, Marina is an inspiring being that gives him new wings with which to enjoy life, that connects him to his love for what is honest, and allows him to find peace, affection, and company in her. Although he appears to be a regular man, he possesses a great internal strength, freedom, and courage that allows him to see Marina and recognize her as an extraordinary and kind being. For her part, Marina, whose life is a constant struggle

to live harmoniously within her social setting, recognizes in Orlando the simplicity and authenticity of this mature man, and discovers a refuge in him: a true and calm love. The two meet in their courage and in the conscious or unconscious search for what is beautiful and authentic.

What context does Orlando have to face, and how does he defend the relationship?

Orlando has broken away from his family. With the exception of his brother, who admires him greatly. He has neither his ex-wife's nor his son's comprehension, nor that of the rest of the family, whom after his death, unleash all of the violence provoked by ignorance and vulnerability before the unknown onto Marina. But this is not an issue for him, and he surrenders to his relationship without considering anybody's opinion or stance. He doesn't question himself over whether the person he loves is a man, a woman, or a transgender person, and this honest and authentic attitude surrounds him with a natural aura that prevents other people from interfering with him. There's no intellectual or ideological defense of his relationship with Marina. His great defense is the authentic love that he feels for her.

“I see *A Fantastic Woman* as a film of aesthetic splendor, narrative vigor, tension and emotion. Polytonal, multi-experiential, multi-emotional. It's a film that is both a celebration and examination of its main character: Marina Vidal. What will the viewers see when they see Marina? A woman, a man, or the sum of both? They will see a human being who constantly changes before their eyes, who flows, vibrates, and modifies herself. What they are seeing isn't precisely what they are seeing, and this condition turns Marina into a vortex that attracts the viewer's fantasy and desire, inviting them to explore the limits of their own empathy.”

DIRECTOR'S NOTE





PRODUCTION



CREDITS

DIRECTOR..... Sebastián Lelio
SCREENPLAY..... Sebastián Lelio and Gonzalo Maza
PRODUCERS..... Juan de Dios Larraín, Pablo Larraín, Sebastián Lelio and Gonzalo Maza
CO PRODUCERS..... Janine Jackowski, Jonas Dornbach, Maren Ade, Fernanda del Nido
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS Jeff Skoll, Jonathan King, Rocío Jadue Z., Mariane Hartard, Ben von Dobeneck
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER ZDF/ARTE Alexander Bohr
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER Martín Cárcamo
MUSIC Matthew Herbert
LINE PRODUCER Eduardo Castro
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Benjamín Echazarreta A.C.C
PRODUCTION DESIGNER..... Estefanía Larraín
COSTUME DESIGNER Muriel Parra
EDITOR Soledad Salfate
SOUND DESIGNER Tina Laschke

YEAR 2017
LENGTH 104 minutes
LANGUAGE Spanish
COUNTRY Chile, USA, Germany and Spain
PRODUCTION COMPANIES Fabula, Participant Media, Komplizen Film, Muchas Gracias, Setembro Cine
FILM FORMAT 4K
FILM RATIO..... 2,39:1
SOUND..... 5.1 mix
EXHIBITION FORMAT 2K DCP

SCREENING DATES

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

21:30 at CinemaxX 9 (Advanced press screening for Daily Press only)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

15:00 at CinemaxX 7 & 9 (Official press screening)

17:30 Private Market Screening - contact sales agent for location

22:00 at Berlinale Palast (Gala Premiere)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13

09:15 at CinemaxX 10 (Market Screening)

12:30 at Zoo Palast 1 (Public screening)

15:00 at Friedrichstadt-Palast (Public screening)

21:30 at Odeon Cinema (Public screening Berlinale goes Kiez)

22:30 at International (Public screening)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

19:00 at Berlinale Palast (Public screening)



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