



PRESS NOTES

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THIS IS NOT BERLIN
(Esto no es Berlín)

Mexico, 2019, 109 min. DCP

Sound format: 5.1

In Spanish with English subtitles

Aspect Ratio: 2.39

LOGLINE

A teenager finds himself in the underground night life in 1980s Mexico City.



SHORT SYNOPSIS

1986. Mexico City. Seventeen-year-old Carlos doesn't fit in anywhere: not in his family nor with the friends he has chosen in school. But everything changes when he is invited to a mythical nightclub where he discovers the underground nightlife scene: post punk, sexual liberty, and drugs that challenges the relationship with his best friend Gera and lets him find his passion for art.

CAST AND CREW

Production Company: Catatonia Cine

Director: Hari Sama

Screenplay: Rodrigo Ordóñez, Hari Sama and Max Zunino

Producers: Ale García, Antonio Urdapilleta, Verónica Valadez P. and Hari Sama

Supervising Producer Catatonia Cine: Charlotte Lerchner

Director of Photography: Alfredo Altamirano

Sound Mixer: Damián del Río

Sound Design: Javier Umpierrez

Music Supervisor: Max Oldham & Hari Sama

Editing: Rodrigo Ríos, Ximena Cuevas and Hari Sama

Art director: Diana Quiroz

Decorator: Shantal Franceschi

Wardrobe Designer: Gabriela Fernández

Make Up & Hair Designer: Karina Rodríguez

Casting Director: Viridiana Olvera

Cast:

Xabiani Ponce de León - Carlos

José Antonio Toledano - Gera

Ximena Romo - Rita

Mauro Sánchez Navarro - Nico

Klaudia García - Maud

Américo Hollander - Tito

Hari Sama - Esteban

Marina de Tavira - Carolina

Juan Carlos Remolina - Emilio

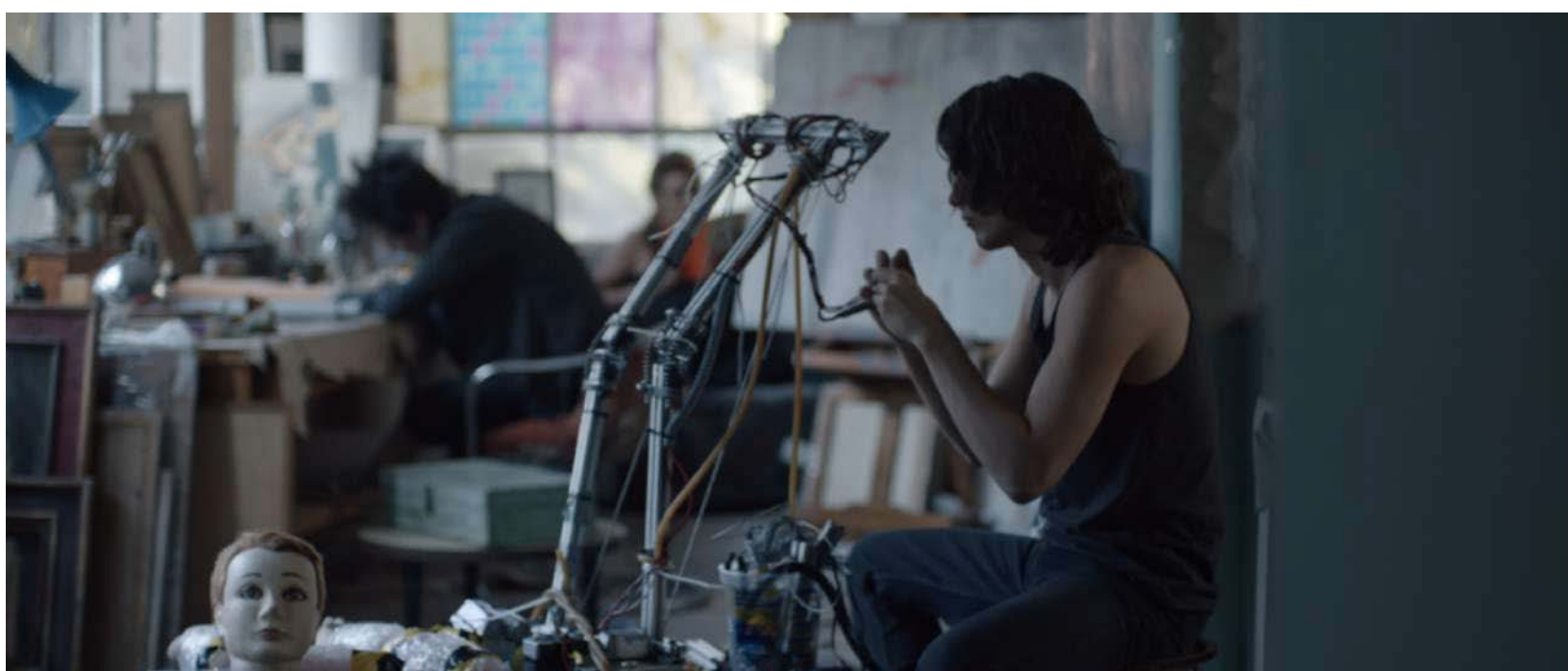
Lumi Cavazos - Susana

Fernando Álvarez Rebeil - Quiñones



DIRECTOR'S BIO

Hari Sama studied Directing at the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC Film School) and Musical Composition at the Centro de Investigación y Estudios Musicales (CIEM), in Mexico City. From a young age he has been torn between his two big passions: film and music. His films traverse pain and space, dark impulses and light. Hari has chosen to work on films that are nearly always autobiographical where he explores his own experiences, putting himself in uncomfortable places where a real humanist reflection is possible. His films have participated in numerous festivals around the world and have won several awards including San Sebastian International Film Festival, Shanghai International Film Festival, Biarritz Latin American Film Festival, Guadalajara International Film Festival and Morelia International Film Festival.



FILMOGRAPHY

Esto no es Berlín (This Is Not Berlin, 2019; feature)

Ya nadie toca el trombón (Nobody Plays the Trombone Anymore, 2016; short)

Sunka Raku, Alegría Evanescence (Sunka Raku, Evanescent Joy, 2015; documentary feature)

La tiara vacía (The Empty Tiara, 2014; short)

Despertar el polvo (Awakening Dust, 2013; feature)

El sueño de Lu (Lu's Dream, 2011; feature)

Tiene la tarde ojos (The Afternoon has Eyes, 2007; short)

La cola entre las patas (Tail between the Legs, 2005; short)

Sin ton ni Sonia (Without Rhyme or Reason 2003; feature)



CATATONIA

CINE

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Catatonia Cine, established in 2001, develops high-quality cinematographic productions and has been granted numerous awards in both national and international film festivals, among which stand out: El Sueño de Lu (Lu's Dream; dir. Hari Sama, 2012), Best Actress at the International Film Festival Shanghai, at the Arieles and the Film Festival Malaga; Despertar el polvo (Awakening Dust, Hari Sama, 2013), Kukulkan Award for Best Feature Film at the Riviera Maya Film Festival and Best Feature Film at the Three Borders Film Festival/Independent Film Project; and Sunka Raku - Alegría Evanescence (Sunka Raku – Evanescent Joy, Hari Sama 2015).

FILMOGRAFÍA PRODUCTORES - FILMOGRAPHY PRODUCERS

ALE GARCÍA & ANTONIO URDAPILLETA

Instrucciones para Su (Instructions for Su, 2019)

Esto no es Berlín (This is not Berlin, 2019)

Días de invierno (Days of Winter, 2019)

Estrellas solitarias (Lonely Stars, 2018)

Recuperando a mi ex (Getting Back My Ex, 2018)

México bárbaro II (Barbarian Mexico II, 2018)

Palomar (Dovecote, 2017)

Acapulco la vida va (Acapulco Lives Goes on, 2017)

Los reyes del juego (Dead Man's Hand, 2014)

Me Late Chocolate (I Like Chocolate, 2013)

La cebra (The Zebra, 2013)

Hecho en China (Made in China, 2012)

180° (2011)

Florería y edecanes (Florists and Hostess, 2010)

Seres, Genesis (2010)

Te extraño (Miss You Already, 2010)

El burro jorobado (The Hunched Donkey, 2009)Z

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I grew up in the Mexico of the 1980s, a few kilometers from Mexico City. My pre-adolescence was spent in the sadness that permeated my house, the hard rock bands of the late 70s and the middle-class gangs that faced blows, repaginating the search for recognition that they couldn't find at home. My generation is the daughter of a wave of collective divorces for which no one was prepared, it is heir to 1968 and 1972, to the protectionist dictatorship, to the television monopolies. That is, the public space had been outraged by the youth, there were no rock concerts, no drugs. But still, the few black sheep, we scratched enough in the desert land until we found the black gold of counter culture, of the UNDERGROUND. **THIS IS NOT BERLIN** tells the story of two teens, Carlos and Gera, who grow up in the suburb of Lomas Verdes - very close to the streets that I myself inhabited... children of broken families, conservative, dysfunctional. They have made a family out of a group of friends with whom they do not feel related to in almost any way. In their lives and in the lives of almost all of the characters, there permeates an atmosphere of disconnection. But thanks to Carlos' skills with electronics and the amazing repair of a synthesizer, their lives will change forever. As a reward, they are taken to the **AZTEC LOUNGE**, a bar where a silent yet powerful movement is stirring. The generation that **THIS IS NOT BERLIN** portrays is responsible for starting the recovery of public space for youth by youth, for throwing open LGBT conversations in a country and at a time that it seemed impossible. It is the generation to which artists like Gabriel Orozco, Francis Alys,

Damian Ortega, Néstor Quiñones or Rubén Ortiz belonged. The generation that adopted an imported post-punk counterculture from New York, London or Berlin as its own. In our raging need for expression we went out to the streets to enact performances, we staged concerts in abandoned buildings, we organized illegal happenings in private spaces. One of them was a gay bar that opened its doors to young artists and became one of the epicenters of this universe that, in the screenwriting process, we transformed into the AZTEC LOUNGE.

The writing process was Jungian in the sense of self-exploration. The research took me to painful places of my adolescence but also allowed me to revisit the moments that made me a filmmaker and musician. This gave me a sense of aesthetic direction. I had the opportunity to speak again with both my accomplices of those times and with artists who were then almost unattainable for a young man, and therefore to rethink an entire worldview. During preproduction, many of them, now recognized artists, also shared knowledge and memories for my actors to evoke; a need for vital expression in line with aesthetic ideals of breakage. I must admit that the process of preparing for the film was very demanding: intense, profound, psychoanalytic, mystical. In a magic circle we found the fundamental scars of both the actors and characters. We played with art... we discovered our personal artist. We saw new lights peering into our own abysses. Carlos and Gera encounter a world of color. Drugs, art, the party as a creative act, personal dress as a



flag of resistance, the possibility of an authentic and free sexuality.

But of course, nothing is free and that world was full of paradoxes. The young people put their friendship and their lives at risk. We all did at some point, desperately seeking reconnection: with the other, with divinity, with ourselves.

For years THIS IS NOT BERLIN brewed in my soul. But this year, everything rotated like a Rubik's cube, until she was born.



FESTIVALS

2019 Sundance Film Festival, World Cinema Dramatic Competition – World Premiere

FUNDING

Mexican tax incentive EFICINE Production 2017

CO-PRODUCTION MARKETS AND WORK IN PROGRESS EVENTS:

Incubator — Guanajuato International Film Festival 2017, Mexico

Cinépolis Distribution Award and Special Jury Prize at Impulso Morelia

— Morelia International Film Festival 2018, Mexico

Copia Final at 2018 Ventana Sur, Argentina



ACTORS BIOS

Xabian Ponce de León (Carlos)

Born in Oaxaca, México, Xabian Ponce de León studied CEFAC and theater with Margarita Mandoki and Rene Pereyra. He started his acting career in 2002 and has participated in numerous theater and television productions. This Is Not Berlin marks his film debut. Ponce de León also has a music group currently in the process of recording their first album.

José Antonio Toledano (Gera)

José Antonio Toledano began his acting career taking stage and musical comedy workshops at the Luces de Bohemia Forum in Mexico City. He has participated in plays such

as Corona de amor y muerte by Alejandro Casona and musicals such as Godspell and Grease. In 2000, he started a successful career in voice dubbing and is known for being the voice of Finn in Time for Adventure, Parzaival in Ready Player One, Ekko in the videogame League of Legends as well as being the recurring voice of Jaden Smith and Nat Wolff. He has also worked in television and film, including Hari Sama's This Is Not Berlin. In 2015 he started studying photography and is currently taking film courses at Churubusco Studios.

Ximena Romo (Rita)

Ximena Romo began her career in independent filmmaking and has recently gained international recognition for her leading role in Manolo Caro's Tales of an Immoral Couple (2017). Her film debut took place in 2008 in Gerardo Naranjo's I'm Going to Explode. Later, she appeared as María in Oveja negra (2009), directed by Humberto Hinojosa Ozcáriz. Her next film was Amaneceres oxidados (2010) by Diego Cohen. Romo co-produced the short film El retrete de Elena (2010) and played a part in the internationally acclaimed biopic Gloria (2013) by Christian Keller, which won an Ariel Award for best film and was Mexico's submission to the category of Best Foreign Language Film for the 88th Academy Awards. Romo has both television and stage credits to her name, having participated and gained popularity for her portrayal of Nora in the soap opera El color de la pasión (2014) and in the plays La llamada (2015) and Frente a frente (2016), Mauricio García Lozano's homage

to Shakespeare's 400th anniversary. Romo launched an independent film production company in 2010.

Mauro Sánchez Navarro (Nico)

Mauro Sánchez Navarro's recent roles include Charlie Dalton in the Mexican theater version of The Dead Poets Society and El marrano in Telemundo's Señora Acero. Film credits include Los niños perdidos and Como te ves me vi. His biggest passion is theater and has acted in plays such as El chico de la última fila, Chamaco and Lo que se ve desde el cielo.

Marina de Tavira (Carolina)

Marina de Tavira Studied acting in Mexico at Núcleo de Estudios Teatrales, la Casa del Teatro and el Centro de Formación Teatral San Cayetano. She has played leading roles in Mexican stagings of Harold Pinter's Betrayal, Beth Henley's Crimes of the Heat and David Mamet's The Anarchist, among many others. De Tavira has also participated in feature films by Issa López (Side Effects), Busi Cortés (Las Buenrostro), Rodrigo Plá (The Zone), Alfonso Pineda (Love, Pain and Vice Versa), and Mariana Chenillo (Nora's Will), among others. Most recently, she was directed by two-time Oscar winner Alfonso Cuarón in his critically-acclaimed piece Roma, for which she has earned a nomination for Best Supporting Actress. Her career has mainly developed on the Mexican stage working with the most prestigious directors on the scene.