

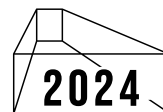
# FANTASTIC 7 <sup>2024</sup>

**Juan Carlos  
Fresnadillo**

FANTASTIC  
GODFATHER  
2024



# SUMMARY



EVENT ORGANIZED BY



MARCHÉ DU FILM  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



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INTERNATIONAL FANTASTIC  
FILM FESTIVAL OF CATALUNYA

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WITH THE SUPPORT OF



IN COLLABORATION WITH





# CHALLENGES OF THE GENRE CINEMA



## Guillaume Esmiol

Executive Director of Marché du Film - Festival de Cannes



Since its launch in 2019, Fantastic 7 has quickly become a pivotal showcase in Cannes, propelling boundary-breaking filmmakers and talents in the realm of fantastic and genre films. Thanks to the enduring collaboration between the Marché du Film and the Sitges Film Festival, this essential platform not only offers a stage for filmmakers to present their creative ideas, but it also fosters invaluable networking opportunities here in Cannes. As we enter its sixth year, we remain committed to connecting these talents with potential partners, ensuring their visions reach wider audiences and secure essential funding for their projects. With genres spanning from sci-fi to horror, the 2024 lineup promises an enthralling lineup of stories that push the boundaries of imagination, and we eagerly anticipate Fantastic 7's continued influence in shaping the future of fantastic cinema.

## Mònica Garcia Massagué

Foundation General Manager,  
Sitges – International Fantastic Film Festival of Catalonia



Fantastic II, III, IV....

The multitude of world premieres that have occupied movie listings during this first part of the year have confirmed the omnipresence of fantastic genre films and, with an even greater weight, of horror.

For some years now, analysts have been pointing out the recurring tendency to exploit the universes that are 'liked' by audiences and, as a result, prequels, sequels, remakes and episodic exploitation have become the norm. Audiences want to continue enjoying the adventures, vicissitudes and terrors of their favorite monsters and that only occurs with genre. And for the record, this repetition isn't at all incompatible with innovation, as titles like *Talk to Me*, *Late Night with the Devil* or *When Evil Lurks* demonstrated last year.

Fantastic is (perhaps) the only genre capable of giving birth to instant classics and generating sagas, which are strengthened even more by their fanbase. In this 2024 edition of Fantastic 7 we hope to discover some of these new titles designed to shake up both audiences and the industry.

## Bernardo Bergeret

Executive Director Ventana Sur/INCAA



Fantastic 7 emphasizing once again creativity, imagination, originality. 7 projects that today begin to outline their destiny in the world of the fantastic genre.

# Linked to the best fantastic filmmaking

Among the prodigious batch of filmmakers who created genre films made in Spain to shock audiences around the world during the first decade of the 21st century, Juan Carlos Fresnadillo shines as one of the most fundamental names in that wave.

Active for almost three decades, this artist born in Santa Cruz de Tenerife (an enclave that, due to its island nature, and in Fresnadillo's own words, invites one to escape towards fantasy) has blazed one of the most comprehensive careers that Spanish filmmaking has produced in recent years. Acclaimed both in his own homeland and internationally; not only in the short film format (with an Academy Award nomination for *Linked*, an audacious blend of noir and matrimonial black comedy with dreamlike drifts), but also in serialized storytelling and feature-length films.

*Intacto* (2001), his impressive debut in this last format, put him on the radar of cinephiles and of an industry where he would soon carve out a solid reputation as an auteur capable of satisfying the needs of the major studios. He would demonstrate this in *28 Weeks Later* (2007), sequel to the cult film by Danny Boyle/Alex Garland, which elevated this zombie phenomenon to the category of a must-see horror saga.

Always well-honed when it comes to understanding, connecting and stimulating the fears and desires of wide audiences, Fresnadillo has successfully combined his work as a director, screenwriter and producer to crystallize equally spectacular and ambitious projects, which have led him to have under his orders artists of the caliber of Clive Owen (star of *Intruders*, presented at the Sitges and San Sebastian Film Festivals), Robin Wright, Ray Winstone or Millie Bobby Brown, headliners of his new work, *Damsel* (2024), the latest global success from the Netflix label.

This impressive heterogeneity in his professional career makes Juan Carlos Fresnadillo the perfect Godfather to celebrate, precisely, the disparity in the forms and tones that *Fantastic 7* invokes in its impressive congregation of talent among the very best fantastic filmmaking to come.



# JUAN CARLOS FRESNADILLO

**Fantastic Godfather 2024**

**We caught up with Fantastic 7's new Godfather so he could share his passion for filmmaking with us and a few tips on how to make a successful entry into the film industry.**

***"It's essential to be surrounded by people who respect you and who genuinely believe in your vision of the story"***

**Could you explain how you first approached film and how you decided you wanted to become a film director?**

Well, I was about 15 years old when I literally started to devour movies by the great masters. That teenage impulse was largely fueled by my family's film-loving environment and a group of friends who were very much committed to discussing and analyzing films at all hours. Of all the cinema I saw during those teenage years, I would highlight two filmmakers who left a deep impression on me: Hitchcock and Buñuel. In fact, I remember I was 16 years old when I saw *Notorious* by the English filmmaker and I was deeply moved by that film, to the point that I felt, almost as if it were a revelation, that I wanted to be a film director.

**And how did your interest in the fantastic genre come about?**

I think certain classic works from this genre that I read when I was young, like *Alice in Wonderland* (Lewis Carrol, 1865) or *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien, 1954) have a lot to do with my love for this genre. Also accompanied by films that I saw and that connected with the fantastic genre from places such as adventure or science fiction, as is the case with *King Kong* (John Guillermin, 1976) or *Logan's Run* (Michael

Anderson, 1976), both of which had a tremendous impact on me and somehow channeled my preference for this type of genre.

On the other hand, I get the impression that being born on an island (Tenerife, 1967) is a good breeding ground to develop a fantasizer's mind and to imagine fantasy worlds beyond the limits that the sea imposes on such a particular geographical place of origin.

**How do you approach a project? Do you usually work on several ideas at the same time?**

I always start with an incident or an image that in some way contains something that attracts me, that invites me to explore and find a





story that's hidden, trapped in that anecdotal event, which may have happened to me or someone I know. Or it can also be some image I've seen on the street or in the news.

There's something adventurous about that investigation; it's like a journey that excites me and triggers my curiosity to find some kind of hidden secret, to discover the characters that are hidden inside that possible material.

Regarding the number of projects I work on, I like to work on several stories at the same time, in a sort of subtle competition between each other, until something "jells" in a convincing way in one of them and then I concentrate exclusively on finishing a first draft of the script.

**What are your sources of inspiration or how do you undertake development?**

There are no guidelines in that regard, each project has its own identity and depending on the type of story, I may look for possible sources of inspiration or perhaps nothing in particular and I let myself be guided by what gradually emerges in the story itself. I usually look for inspiration and delve into places that have nothing to do with film. For example in my last film, *Damsel*, I revisited a series of paintings that are among my favorites: Goya's Black Paintings.

It was fascinating to study the light and color of that work. It's something that inspired me enormously when considering the visual treatment of the caves where the Dragon resides in my last story.

**Do you remember your first pitch? Can you tell us what it was like?**

My first pitch was *Intacto*, my debut feature film. After a few weeks working with screenwriter Andrés Koppel, we had a meeting with producers Fernando Bovaira and Enrique López Lavigne. We had prepared it extremely well, but I remember clearly that the film we finally made has very little to do with that pitch. It's curious to see how the first ideas for a story are practically an excuse for a group of creators to get together and start journeying together. From that point on, everything changes and transforms into the original story to the point that the final story that's filmed has little to do with the initial pitch. It tends to happen to me with almost all of my projects.



A break on the set of *Damsel*.



Directing Robin Wright.



2011 presentation of *Intruders*, at the Sitges Film Festival.

### **With your current experience, what advice would you give to those who are starting out in this industry?**

Well, to choose your traveling companions very well. In a film, it's essential to be surrounded by people who respect you and who genuinely believe in your vision of the story. I think that's the most important thing. If you manage to put together a good working group, you're on the right track so the experience, no matter what happens, whether the film works or not, will be a luminous and constructive learning experience.

### **Based on your experience, what are the basic keys to making a good pitch?**

To have prepared it extremely well. I don't believe in improvising during a pitch. I think you have to prove yourself as a storyteller and really hypnotize your potential audience in the best possible way. I usually rehearse a lot with my friends. And I also have a little trick that almost always works for me: I start telling the story as something that's happened to me recently. I never tell them that what I'm explaining is a movie. Or maybe I do and tell them it's a movie I saw recently. And that way I take the pressure off myself of being judged as a screenwriter.

### **How do you value your experience working with a production by a platform like Netflix (*Damsel*)?**

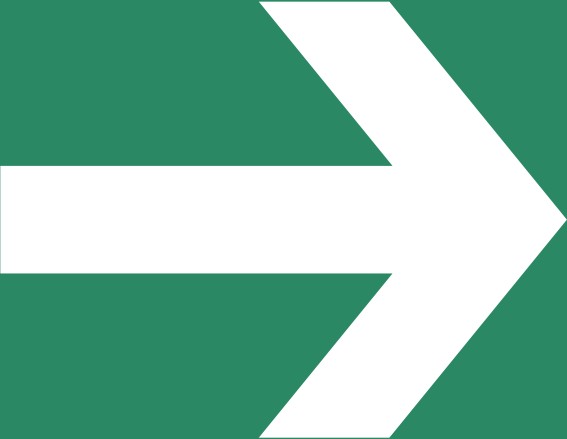
Well, very positively. The support and resources they provided for this complicated production, which went through an endless number of problems, delays and even a worldwide pandemic and all its restrictions, was very generous and creative. "*Damsel*" might not have been possible anywhere else.

### **In which direction do you think the fantastic genre industry is evolving: towards new ideas, use of AI, etc.?**

We are moving into a disconcerting uncertainty with the appearance of AI in the creation of images. The possibilities are endless but on the other hand, the displacement and possible nullification of technicians and creators is very worrisome. I hope the industry and legislators can wisely and equitably regulate the introduction of this new and exciting "toy box" in the audiovisual world.



# FANTASTIC PROJECTS





# SITGES

57<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL FANTASTIC  
FILM FESTIVAL OF CATALONIA



## SITGES - INTERNATIONAL FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL OF CATALONIA

### About SITGES

SITGES – International Fantastic Film Festival of Catalonia is the number one fantasy film festival in the world and is considered the film event with the greatest international impact for the fantastic genre industry. With a solid experience, the Sitges Festival is a stimulating universe of encounters, exhibitions, presentations and screenings of fantasy films from all over the world.

The Festival wrapped up its 56th edition setting a new audience record; consolidating its position as a worldwide benchmark when it comes to supporting both emerging and more seasoned talent, and bringing together a selection of films and activities that are ideal for collectively celebrating our love and devotion to fantastic films.

Thanks to the attendance of big-name artists and to industry initiatives that continued to strengthen the productive framework where the most audacious projects flourish, Sitges once again excelled not only as a magnificent celebration of genre moviemaking, but also as one of its main catalysts.

### About our choice: *Daniela Forever*

Nacho Vigalondo is, without a doubt, one of the most unique directors in today's Spanish fantastic genre filmmaking. Films like *Timecrimes*, *Colossal* or *Extraterrestrial* attest to his penchant for science fiction as a subtle tool to expose human nature.

This premise also accompanies his latest project, *Daniela Forever*, which shows a troubled protagonist resorting to lucid dream therapy to overcome his grief... or not.

Once again, Vigalondo plays with bewilderment and the constant reinterpretation of action, using scenarios that are very close to viewers. However, without straying a single millimeter from the parameters of science fiction to tell us a story of love, heartbreak, loss and misunderstanding between wakefulness and the dream world.

SITGES IFFFC



# SITGES

57<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL FANTASTIC  
FILM FESTIVAL OF CATALONIA

3<sup>RD</sup> - 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024

[sitgesfilmfestival.com](http://sitgesfilmfestival.com)



SPANISH KALEIDOSCOPE  
NEW SPANISH FANTASTIC FILMS

# DANIELA FOREVER

NACHO VIGALONDO

PRODUCED BY

DANIELA FOREVER A.I.E.  
SAYAKA PRODUCCIONES  
SEÑOR Y SEÑORA



SITGES  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL



# DANIELA FOREVER

If every night you could dream what you like...  
What would be the sense in being awake?



When Nicolas (Henry Golding) is invited to a clinical trial allowing participants to control their dreams, he takes the plunge in hopes of recovering from the tragic loss of his girlfriend, Daniela (Beatrice Grannò). But as his lucid dreams bring Daniela back to him, Nicolas becomes obsessed with the fantasy world that he's created and finds that his dreams aren't as perfect as they seem.

---

ORIGINAL TITLE: **Daniela Forever**  
TITLE IN ENGLISH: **Daniela Forever**

---

DIRECTOR: **Nacho Vigalondo**  
CAST: **Henry Golding, Beatrice Grannò, Aura Garrido and Nathalie Poza**  
GENRE: **Romance/Fantasy**  
NATIONALITY: **Spain-Belgium**  
LANGUAGE: **English**  
PRODUCERS: **Sayaka Producciones, Daniela Forever A.i.e., Wrong Men, Señor Y Señora, Mediacrest Entertainment**

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STATUS: **Post-Production**

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BUDGET: **4 M€**

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**B.I.G**  
BIFAN INDUSTRY  
GATHERING



## BUCHEON INTERNATIONAL FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL

### About BIFAN

Celebrating its 28th edition, BIFAN is Asia's largest fantastic film festival held annually in Korea, showcasing the best genre films and offering innovative programs. It draws film masters, rising talents, and genre fans worldwide. B.I.G Network of Asian Fantastic Films and Goedam Campus discover outstanding and brilliant genre projects and talents, while Beyond Reality expands the future of genre content with new media.

### About our choice: *Esper's Light*

BIFAN chose *Esper's Light* for 'Fantastic 7', which will be another challenge for director JUNG Jae-hoon, who has shown deep introspection and aesthetic world through a series of works crossing documentaries and feature films, intersects the daily lives of Korean teenagers and their online fantasy reproduction, exploring genres and media. It shows the possibility of infinite expansion beyond the boundaries between reality and virtuality. The film's adventure of crossing the boundaries of science fiction, fantasy, documentary, offline and online, reality and fantasy to find the 'world of teenagers' here and now is also about the world created by the times of the present, past and future and the medium of film. It will be an adventure in search of new territory. Lastly, Seoul Business Agency's in-kind support for Dolby Atmos, which has been with BIFAN as a reliable partner for a long time, will add a layer of completeness to this special and exciting cinematic exploration.



BIFAN



**BIG**  
BIFAN INDUSTRY  
GATHERING

**BEYOND  
REALITY**

고담캠퍼스  
GOEDAM CAMPUS



**2024 CALL FOR ENTRIES**

Submission Deadlines

Films Projects Fantastic Film School XR Contents

**April 30**

For Further inquiries, please email to  
films@bifan.kr (Features) short@bifan.kr (Shorts)  
naff@bifan.kr (Projects & Fantastic Film school) newmedia@bifan.kr (XR Contents)  
[www.bifan.kr/eng](http://www.bifan.kr/eng)

**28<sup>TH</sup>부천국제판타스틱영화제 2024.7.4—7.14**  
BUCHEON INTERNATIONAL FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL

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## Korean Film Council

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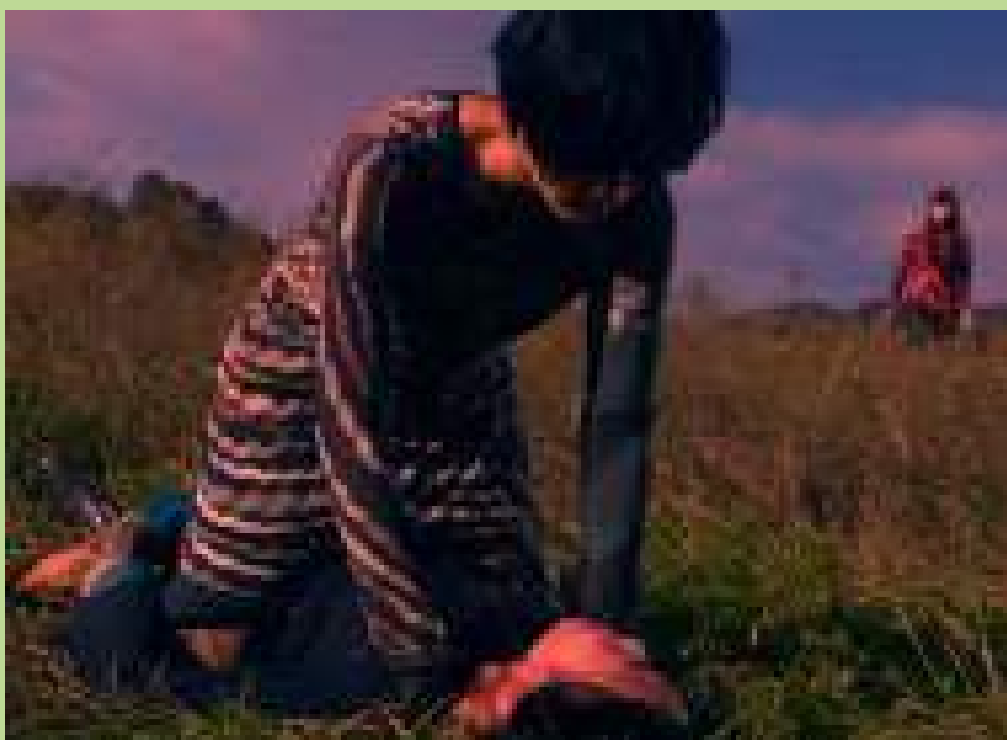
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# ESPER'S LIGHT

Where do the stories of the new generation lie?  
Where do their minds and bodies dwell?



Around ten teenagers live in a world where anyone can be whoever they want and create any story they wish. Amidst the pitch-black night of Lisan City, Alstroemeria Forest, and Ashua Island, their imagined stories flow through myriad choices, seeking out faint glimmers of light.

---

ORIGINAL TITLE: 에스퍼의 빛 (**Esper-ui-Bit**)  
TITLE IN ENGLISH: **Esper's Light**

---

DIRECTOR: **Jae-hoon JUNG**  
CAST: **Natasha VLADLENA, Daha SIM, Gyuri YANG, Hyori YANG, Saena LEE, Yeonjin CHOI, Seohwa HAN**

GENRE: **Teenage Fantasy Documentary**  
NATIONALITY: **South Korea**  
LANGUAGE: **Korean**  
PRODUCER: **KO Yoohee**

---

STATUS: **Post-production**

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BUDGET: **365,000 USD**

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## 45<sup>TH</sup> CAIRO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

13<sup>TH</sup> - 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2024



## CAIRO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

### About CIFF

Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF) is an annual international film festival organized by the Ministry of Culture in Egypt. It is accredited by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) and is committed to comply with all its conditions and regulations.



45<sup>TH</sup> CAIRO  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL

13<sup>TH</sup> - 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

# A TALE OF A FEATHER & A FISH

Mahmoud & Laila inherit a rare genetic disease that causes severe paralysis, which has left their family in an endless circle of doubt and fear, desperately seeking salvation, which they find in abundance through Laila & Mahmoud



A family is afflicted with a genetic disease that can only be transmitted by its females. Nagat & Fouad lost two sons, yet, Mahmoud survived having total paralysis. After many years Fouad is still unable to accept, full of anger towards his life & appears to be slipping into insanity. Mariam, Nagat's Nephew, is not affected yet she carries the disease which she doesn't want to pass on. Laila, Mariam's sister, is paralyzed. Nagat and Mariam are efficient caregivers; nevertheless, they feel defective, marked with the shame of carrying the disease. A tale of a feather & a fish is the story of Mahmoud & Laila who rose above their hardship & who proved that empathy, love & understanding are more important than ability. When Fouad, Nagat & Mariam open to this, they begin their healing journey.

---

ORIGINAL TITLE: **قصة الريشة والسمكة**  
 TITLE IN ENGLISH: **A Tale Of A Feather & A Fish**

---

DIRECTOR: **Ahmed El-Hawarey**  
 CAST: **Laila Eloui, Aly Sobhy, Reem Hijab and TBC**  
 GENRE: **Drama, Family, Magical Realism, Disability Culture, Mystery**  
 NATIONALITY: **Egypt**  
 LANGUAGE: **Arabic**  
 PRODUCERS: **Hala Lotfy and Dina Farouk**

---

STATUS: **Script Development, early financing**

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BUDGET: **740000 USD**

---

# 39 FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE CINE EN GUADALAJARA



## GUADALAJARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

### About FICG

The Guadalajara International Film Festival (FICG) is a key event in Latin America, renowned for its industry programs that promote genre cinema, such as fantasy, horror, and science fiction.

Through initiatives like the “Genre Pitch,” FICG provides a platform for filmmakers working within these genres to showcase their work and connect with industry professionals. This commitment fosters diversity and innovation for films, enriching the cinema landscape and supporting the growth of genre on a global scale.

### About our choice: *Maleficarum*

The Guadalajara International Film Festival granted *Maleficarum* the opportunity to pitch in Fantastic 7 because of its gripping and original storyline. The project promises a compelling narrative filled with vengeance, ancient powers, and the consequences of seeking retribution. Such a concept would undoubtedly catch the attention of industry professionals at Cannes, known for its interest in innovative and thought-provoking cinema.

Moreover, *Maleficarum* seems to offer a fresh take on the horror genre, blending elements of supernatural intrigue with psychological depth. This combination could resonate well with the specific audience, which often appreciates films that push boundaries and offer unique perspectives.

Additionally, the project’s potential for cinematic excellence, would likely make it an attractive choice for promotion and distribution on the international stage. Overall, *Maleficarum* appears to have all the makings of a standout film, making it a natural pick for the Guadalajara International Film Festival to pitch in Cannes.

FICG

• 39 •

# FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE CINE EN GUADAJAJARA



7 AL 15 DE JUNIO

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• FICG | 39

COMUNIDAD DE  
MADRID

INVITADO DE HONOR



FICG

# MALEFICARUM

Seven curses to impose your revenge



In the depths of the desert, Delia, a vengeful teenager, summons an ancient king who grants her a crown of seven flames, laden with seven curses, to use against the girls who have harassed her and her friend for years. The curses take effect, and the flames extinguish in her crown, unaware that what is truly extinguished is her own soul.

---

ORIGINAL TITLE: **Maleficarum**  
TITLE IN ENGLISH: **Maleficarum**

---

DIRECTOR: **Antonio Gäehd**  
CAST: **Luna Sofía and TBC**  
GENRE: **Drama / Horror**  
NATIONALITY: **México**  
LANGUAGE: **Spanish**  
PRODUCERS: **Enrique Okusono, Gabriel Guzman, Miguel Ángel Marín**

---

STATUS: **Preproducción**

---

BUDGET: **1,4M USD**

---

# SXSW. FILM & TV FESTIVAL ↙



## SXSW FILM & TV FESTIVAL

### About SXSW Film & TV Festival

The SXSW Film & TV Festival celebrates raw innovation and emerging talent from both behind and in front of the camera. Featuring provocative dramas, documentaries, comedies, genre standouts, and more, the festival has become known for the high caliber and diversity of films presented, as well as its smart, enthusiastic audiences. On the genre front, SXSW has hosted the world premieres of *Evil Dead Rise*, *A Quiet Place, Us*, *Immaculate*, *Late Night With The Devil*, *Oddity*, and *Everything Everywhere All At Once*.

### About our choice: *Mommy's Home*

James Morosini's directorial debut *I Love My Dead* premiered at the 2022 SXSW Film & TV Festival in the Narrative Competition section, where it went on to win not just the Grand Jury Award but also the Audience Award. That film walked a remarkably tricky tonal line, proving Morosini knows how to balance humor and heart, which is why we're so excited to see what he does when he adds horror into the mix for his follow-up film, *Mommy's Home*.

SXSW



Photo by Tico Mendoza

**Join  
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FILM & TV  
FESTIVAL  
↙**

# MOMMY'S HOME

*Mommy's Home is a horror comedy about a young dad whose life is upended when his young mom, resurrected as a hot 24 year old, unleashes havoc on his family, marriage, and sanity*

The woman's laughter stops, locking eyes with the well-intentioned audience member.

WOMAN  
What did you say?

AUDIENCE MEMBER  
You look fantastic! We're happy to have you back.

She steps closer, feigning politeness.

WOMAN  
Thank you so for your kind words.

She grabs a butter knife, THRUSTS IT IN THE AUDIENCE MEMBER'S FACE—

The camera feed remains chaotic, capturing the horrifying spectacle. Blood. Chaos. The crowd scatters.

The footage cuts out.

BROOKE  
...Jack? Can you come in here?

She looks upstairs, horrified.

Jack and his wife, Brooke, are navigating the waters of adulthood when the unexpected happens: Hope, Jack's mom, is resurrected from cryogenic sleep, looking and acting as she did as a hot 24-year-old.

Hope's attempts to be the mother she never was stir up complicated feelings for Jack and Brooke. Amidst their reunion, other revived individuals from around the world begin to exhibit violent tendencies— a harrowing consequence of their preservation.

Hope's sanity unravels leading her to believe that Jack might actually be his father and that her grandson, Everett, could be her REAL son. As a body count starts stacking up, Jack is forced to protect his own family from his increasingly unhinged mother and her desperate attempts to cling to a life she was denied.

ORIGINAL TITLE: **Mommy's Home**  
TITLE IN ENGLISH: **Mommy's Home**

DIRECTORS: **James Morosini**  
CAST: **TBD**  
GENRE: **Horror, Comedy, Sci-fi, Erotic Thriller**  
NATIONALITY: **USA**  
LANGUAGE: **English**  
PRODUCERS: **Dawn Olmstead**

STATUS: **The script is written and the feature is in development**

BUDGET: **7-8M USD**

# PÖFF

BLACK NIGHTS  
FILM FESTIVAL



## TALLINN

### About TALLINN

Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, or PÖFF (8-24 Nov 2024), is the biggest and only A-class film festival in the region. It showcases genre films in PÖFF's main competition programs and across all Industry projects. The festival features a special genre program, Midnight Shivers; organizes the Haapsalu Horror & Fantasy Film Festival (HÖFF); and hosts the Marketing and Packaging Lab of European Genre Forum - a training program for debut genre filmmakers run in collaboration with Amsterdam Imagine and Fantastic Zagreb Film Festivals.

### About our choice: *Dog of God*

*Dog of God* is a captivating Latvian project created by the brothers Raitis and Lauris Abele. It was a participant in our European Genre Forum training program in 2022. The narrative draws its inspiration from true events and an actual werewolf trial that took place in the 17th century in Swedish Livonia.

This distinct Baltic genre gem showcases the Abele brothers' ability to weave a haunting story through a visually striking world. They employ the animation technique known as rotoscoping, inviting genre film enthusiasts to explore a unique cinematic experience.

PÖFF



INDUSTRY@TALLINN  
& BALTIC EVENT  
18-22 NOV 2024

PÖFF28  
BLACK NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL  
TALLINN 8-24 NOV 2024



The 28th  
**TALLINN BLACK NIGHTS  
FILM FESTIVAL**

8-24 NOV 2024



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# DOG OF GOD

In a sinful village, a self-proclaimed werewolf-shaman's gift of The Devil's Balls ignites an unforgettable sexual rave



In a 17th century Swedish Livonian village, constant rain and drunkenness prevail. When a stolen relic sparks witchcraft accusations, an 80-year-old self-proclaimed werewolf named the Dog of God arrives with a mysterious gift: The Devil's Balls. This triggers a chain of unexpected events that climaxes in a wild sexual rave party, transforming the village into a frenzy of unleashed desires.

---

ORIGINAL TITLE: **Dieva Suns**  
TITLE IN ENGLISH: **Dog Of God**

---

DIRECTOR: **Raitis Abele, Lauris Abele**  
ANIMATION ARTIST: **Harijs Grundmanis**  
CAST: **Regnars Vaivars, Jurgis Spulenieks, Agate Krista, Einars Repse, Kristians Karelins, Armands Bergis, Madara Madi Imantsdotire**  
GENRE: **Adult folk tale**  
NATIONALITY: **Latvia, USA**  
LANGUAGE: **Latvian**  
PRODUCER: **Raitis Abele, Kristele Pudane**  
CO-PRODUCER: **Giovanni Labadessa (USA)**

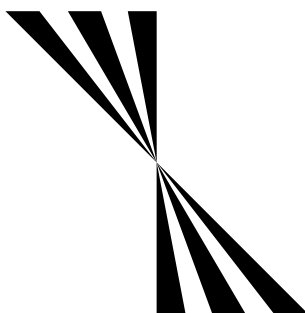
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STATUS: **Post-production**

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BUDGET: **720 000 €**

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Whānau  
Mārama  
New Zealand  
International  
Film Festival



## WHĀNAU MĀRAMA NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

### About Whānau Mārama

Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival (NZIFF) takes place nationwide featuring the best in global cinema.

NZIFF is the biggest film festival in the country with a history spanning 55 years and for all of those years we have delighted in screening films to delight, provoke and stretch people's tastes and imaginations. We are unapologetically committed to the in-cinema experience – where better to hear those gasps and squeals from the audience!

In 2024 we welcome artistic director Paolo Bertolin and will be showcasing approximately 70 films from around the world – all of them New Zealand premieres and including a selection of genre films for those dedicated fans of the best in horror, thriller and fantasy. We delight in inducting many new fans into the genre collections.

NZIFF receives major funding from the New Zealand Film Commission and, in 2023 and 2024, from Manatū Taonga Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

### About Our Choice: *Foreign Body*

In 2023 well-known New Zealand actor and comedian Tom Sainsbury served up the thrills in his debut feature film, *Loop Track*. Meeting with strong critical and audience acclaim, *Loop Track* took out the top spot in box office admits for New Zealand films at the festival ... and many audience members may have looked over their shoulders the next time they went for a bush walk!

As producer, writer, director and lead actor, Sainsbury showed the many layers of his talent and with his creative team – Gabe Lunte, Jonathan Potton and Milon Tesiram – emerged from adventures in short filmmaking with a successful debut feature.

We are excited about what this multi-talented team will produce in the future and we proudly present their next project *Foreign Body* at Fantastic 7 2024.

In *Foreign Body*, Sainsbury (this time stepping back from an on-camera role) takes a very normal event in the lives of many young people – an overseas experience staying with a local family – and adds the twist to move into the chilling world of psychological horror, staying faithful to the cinema of unease. Here in Aotearoa New Zealand, we're big fans of Sainsbury's talent and we're delighted to help the rest of the world discover him and his team.



Whānau  
Mārama  
New Zealand  
International  
Film Festival  
2024

31 July – 8 Sept  
2024

Nationwide  
throughout  
Aotearoa  
New Zealand

Executive Director:  
Sally Woodfield

Artistic Director:  
Paolo Bertolin

[nziff.co.nz](http://nziff.co.nz)

Proudly presenting *Foreign  
Body* at Fantastic 7, 2024



# FOREIGN BODY

An European gap-year student moves in with a New Zealand family to experience their 'culture', but quickly discovers the psychologically damaged and dangerous truth behind their polite smiles and warm hospitality.



Adventurous Eduard, 18, has traveled to New Zealand from his home in Europe. To experience kiwi culture, he stays with the dairy-farming family the Dodds including Shane (Dad), Angela (Mum), and teenage kids Rhys and Joanna. Eduard's upfront nature is at odds with the overly sensitive and non-confrontational Dodds and he inadvertently offends them, repeatedly. The Dodds start punishing Eduard for his transgressions. When Shane accidentally shoots Eduard's leg the Dodds face a decision. They can either experience public shame for their lack of hospitality, or they... disappear him. But Eduard won't give up without a bloody battle for survival.

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ORIGINAL TITLE: **Foreign Body**  
TITLE IN ENGLISH: **Foreign Body**

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DIRECTOR: **Tom Sainsbury**  
CAST: **NA**  
GENRE: **Psychological Horror**  
NATIONALITY: **New Zealand**  
LANGUAGE: **English**  
PRODUCERS: **Gabe Lunte, Milon Tesiram, Jonathan Potton, Tom Sainsbury**

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STATUS: **The project is in its early development stages with a first draft of the script available**

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BUDGET: **2-3 million USD**

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# LATIN WOMEN FILMMAKERS BEHIND THE CAMERA

'The Woman who  
dreamed underwater'  
joins the WomanInFan family



WOMAN  
IN FAN

In the last edition of Ventana Sur Blood Window, the competition for feature film projects directed by women, WomanInFan Latina, took place. The contest had a clear winner with the project *The Woman who dreamed underwater*, an anguished look at a real mental illness: Capgras syndrome.

This condition makes those who suffer from it believe that one of their loved ones has been replaced by a double.

Interestingly, the project is directed by two women, **Alejandra García y Carla Teresa Sierra**, who advance their project, aspirations, and plans within the fantasy genre in this interview.





### The project

We wish to portray, from two different points of view, the famous phrase: love kills. Based on the Capgras Syndrome, we tell the story of the Rangel family, who, following the sudden death of their third newborn son, retire for a few days to their house on the Lake. Olga forgets the incident, but her analytical mind tries to make her remember through underwater daydreams; until one day she suffers a psychotic break during which she doesn't recognize her family; and believing that her husband and children have been replaced by impostors, she will do anything to recover her "real" family. Waging a battle between delirium and reality.

### The origin

*The Woman who dreamed underwater*, was born from the fear I felt in my childhood towards my mother (Carla). And now as a grown-up I understand that my mother always acted out of a misunderstood and misdelivered love, she never wanted to hurt me; but just like Olga, our protagonist, she managed to hurt my family to the core in the name of love.

This added to the fact that we have always been interested in talking about mental illnesses because we believe that it's essential to give them a voice and normalize the subject, from depression to horrific disorders, as in this case: Capgras Syndrome: "A delusion

where one believes that a close person has been replaced by an impostor".

### References

Since we were little, we've been fans of the genre. We started reading stories by Edgar Allan Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, Stephen King, and when I was a little older I (Carla) developed a fascination for Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, an obsession for Emily Brönte's *Wuthering Heights* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. My first horror movie, which I saw at an age that I shouldn't have, was *The Exorcist* and it marked me forever. October was always (and still is) my favorite month of the year (Ale), when I could see the whole gamut of horror movies that were shown on free TV. That's when I saw *Jaws*, I think I saw it so many times that it produced a very particular respect for the sea in my subconscious.

We grew up with the *A Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise, Carla's favorite, and *Pet Semetary*, Ale's favorite. Kubrick's *The Shining* and Hitchcock's *The Birds* became our classics. Haneke's *Funny Games*, Lanthimos' *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, Kent's *The Babadook* are definitely great benchmarks in the psychological horror we love so much and Peele's *Get Out* has the perfect blend of horror and humor that characterizes us.

### The filmmakers

We are a duo of female directors. In December 2023, our first feature film in development, *The Woman Who Dreamt Underwater*, was the winner at Blood Window-Fant.Latina of Sitges and TerrorMolins Festival awards. This year we also directed our 1st horror-comedy short film: *No le digas a papá*. Prior to that, among our projects as producer and screenwriter are: *Mexico Bárbbá: Mexico Bárbaro II* (Sitges Midnight X-Treme, Mar del Plata, Fantaspoa, Móbido); *This is not Berlin* (Malaga, Sundance, Tribeca, TIFF); *Después de ti* (Guadalajara); *Estrellas solitarias* (FICG, Icarus, Exground, Mardi Gras); *Los reyes del juego* (Chicago Latino, Pyongyang, Delhi, Tripoli-Lebanon). During our professional career we have attended different Work in Progress events such as: Los Cabos, Blood Window, Ventana Sur, Ibermedia, Mafici, Bolivia Lab; and participated in international meetings including Berlin Talents, Producers' Programme for Women in Vienna, among others.

### Genre in Latin America

In Mexico specifically, horror films have always been well received by audiences, we are a country that enjoys a good scare; we believe that to be a strong industry within genre we need more support from production companies, distributors and above all from people involved in financial backing, who are still somewhat reluctant to support genre due to moralistic issues. Investors are afraid (ironically) to put their name on "risky" projects, outside of comedy, with strong and/or controversial themes; they prefer to play it safe with a light comedy which impedes the growth of genre, even though we have plenty of talent and many stories eager to be told with the peculiar humor and Latin point of view that is far from what we are used to seeing in American films. It's sad and a little frustrating to see how we are progressing at such a slow pace, after so many years, we are still a Country - and we believe that several Latin American Countries are as well - with a closed mind and that affects the growth of culture and the different types of expression in art, in our case, in the themes of our stories. Our audiences are ready, it's just a matter of serving them the main course.

On the other hand, every day there are more and more Latin American films, festivals and grants specializing in fantastic genre. And the most important thing is that thanks to the creators already positioned in genre, new voices have been promoted and greater visibility has been achieved.

### Women filmmakers in Mexico

We are from the north of Mexico; we grew up in a world of macho men. We always knew that to succeed in our chosen profession we would have to create our own opportunities because no one was going to give us

anything for free.

We believe that the greatest barrier that we face as women in the fantastic world is the skepticism of executives, investors, and even our colleagues. They still look at me (Carla) with disbelief and are surprised that someone "like me" can write horror. There is still a great deal of reticence towards women's ability to tell ruthless, bloodthirsty, sadistic, heartless, savage stories. There is this false idea that because we are vulnerable beings, full of emotions, we can't handle the weight of genre, which for us is a great tool; being vulnerable is the best weapon to tell any kind of story. In my case (Ale), I started producing films at a very young age, and what I perceive is that currently the evolution has been slow. When looking for funding for different projects (such as fantastic films), investors go off on a tangent, a little because of the skepticism we talked about, or because they don't want to commit to someone who, because she is a woman, can handle these "forbidden" topics. That's pretty par for the course.

In general, there are few opportunities within the fantastic genre, and those usually go to men. The barriers and limitations will always be there, but they are the ones you set and/or the ones you allow to affect you; the ones that can really hold you back. We believe that the most important thing in a project isn't the gender of its director; it's his or her ability.

Today we have Mexican women who have stood out with their films and series within the fantastic world at an international level. And this is because they are talented. To have opportunities and excel in this genre, or any other, the basis will always be a good script. And from there, your skill in constructing the film and how your creativity intervenes together with the heads of your departments. At the end of the day, filmmaking is a craft that is done as a team. And as women, it is our goal to break down the barriers we face to lead our team and pave the way for those who come after us.

### Next step

Now the project already has a large part of the financing. This year we will attend the Sitges and TerrorMolins Festivals to participate in the market and find a Co-Producer specializing in genre who is interested in participating creatively and in the post-production.

This year we want to cast the Mexican actresses we have in mind for Olga, and we are interested in finding a foreign actor who speaks Spanish for the role of Miguel, the husband. We think it would be interesting to do part of the post-production outside of Mexico. And for this contribution to be able to enhance the project's vision. That ultimately, we don't have a film that only identifies with Latin American audiences. And that we can open the way for an international distribution in festivals and theaters in the European market.



WOMAN  
IN FAN

# 'EL CHINO' BY WOMANINFAN PRODUCTION

## Residencies, production support, and promotion open new doors to genre led by women

Estíbaliz Burgaleta was the winner of the first short-teaser contest *Women just wanna have FAN* and she did so with a zombie proposal. Two years later, the short film, titled *El Chino*, is on the verge of beginning its filming this May. The financial support for production has been the final push to take the step towards her feature film project, as Burgaleta describes: "It was the necessary boost to make another version of the script for the feature film and to find the crew to make the short teaser: the Trampoline Production Company, Andrea Casaseca co-directing and the entire technical crew".

But let's take a moment to remember the project of this Spanish promise. As an apocalyptic comedy, *El Chino* tells the story of a group of normal people who are surprised by the zombie pandemic while shopping. To survive, they choose to lock themselves up in the Chinese store, where they at least have supplies on hand. But their coexistence will prove to be almost as

lethal as the zombies themselves. The short teaser, funded by WomanInFan program, is based on that universe and tells a parallel story, about a girl who will try to convince the people who have already locked themselves up inside the bazaar to let her in. In this way both the short and the feature film work independently of each other, but they make you want to know more about this universe.

And as references for the project, Estíbaliz Burgaleta has played it safe: "One of the most creative and fun aspects of the fantastic genre is that it allows you to combine many genres and styles. Those horror films with drama, like *The Babadook*; the everyday science fiction of *Black Mirror* or *Coherence*. Of course, the mixture of horror and comedy of *[REC]* or *Shaun of the Dead*, we're crazy about them, and they are this project's direct benchmarks".



If the feature film project were to achieve, Burgaleta would be the first Spanish (woman) director to helm a zombie movie in the history of national fantasy. This filmmaker already feels part of the fantasy family; a genre that is experiencing one of its sweetest moments, as she herself appreciates: "The fantastic genre is enjoying a good moment creatively speaking. It has a loyal audience, and every year there are genre films killing it, both in the independent and commercial circuits. Even so, there's still a part of the public that says they don't watch horror films or that considers fantastic films to be somewhat second rate, and the big awards, and the labs and many useful calls for entries to find support, tend to ignore the fantastic genre. Films like *Titane* or *Everything Everywhere All at Once* have paved the way, but they are exceptions to the rule".

