

G R E T A

SYNOPSIS

Pedro, a 70 year-old gay nurse and a big fan of Greta Garbo, needs to find an empty bed in the hospital in which he works to save his best friend Daniela. To do so he decides to help a criminal in police custody called Jean escape from the premises.



But then, worried about Jean's health he sets the criminal up in his apartment to be able to treat his wounds. The two wind up having a highly-charged affair that brings to the surface his own solitude, now augmented by Daniela's eminent death.



LOGLINE

To get a bed for his friend Daniela in the hospital where he works Pedro helps a criminal patient escape leading to a complicated relationship that sparks important changes in his life.

CAST

Marco Nanini (Pedro), Denise Weinberg (Daniela), Démick Lopes (Jean) Gretta Sttar (Mary).



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Armando Praça is a Brazilian sociologist and filmmaker born in 1978 in Aracati, Ceará. Has worked as assistant director, screenwriter and acting coach with renown filmmakers in Brazil such as Marcelo Gomes, Karim Ainouz, Márcia Faria, Sérgio Rezende, Halder Gomes and Rosemberg Cariry. His short and medium-length films include: A Mulher Biônica (exhibited at the Clermont Ferrand Short Film Festival), O Amor do Palhaço, Origem: Destino and Parque de Diversões. Will be releasing Greta, his first feature film, in 2019 while preparing to shoot his second entitled Fortaleza Hotel. Is also presently working on Ne Me Quitte Pas and Cachoeira do Descuido.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY



Parque de Diversões (Amusement Park)
(Fic. 10` - 2002)

O Amor do Palhaço (The Love of the Clown)
(Fic. 15` - 2006)

A Mulher Biônica (Bionic Woman) (Fic. 20` -
2008)

A Invenção do Sertão (Countryside
Invention) (Doc. 26` - 2011)

Origem: Destino (From: To) (Doc. 52` - 2013)

Flores (Flowers) (Fic. 10` - 2016)

Silêncio (Silence) (Fic. 15` - 2016)

CREW



Screenplay/Director: Armando Praça
Produced by: João Vieira Jr., Nara Aragão and Armando Praça
Executive Producer: Maurício Macêdo and João Vieira Jr.
Production Director: Maurício Macêdo
Director of Photography: Ivo Lopes Araújo
Art Director: Diogo Costa
Editing: Karen Harley
Costumes: Thaís de Campos
Make-up: Amanda Mirage
Sound Editor: Waldir Xavier
Sync Sound: Pedro Moreira and Moabe Filho

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR

WHY ADAPT A STAGE COMEDY, GRETA GARBO, QUEM DIRIA ACABOU NO IRAJÁ (FERNANDO MELO, 1973), FOR A FEATURE FILM DRAMA WHICH FIRTS WITH THE MELODRAMATIC?

I thought the play was really well written and like all comedies it was imbued with its own special drama, something I thought was an important story to be told about characters living on the rim of society who have rarely been represented in films. I was enchanted by the characters in the play, and most of all with the possibility of giving them a more humane treatment. When the play was released, during the military dictatorship, these characters could only be shown as stereotypes, caricatures, and their dramas treated as mockeries. And so I decided to face the challenge of turning this around. I was interested in the existential issues of these characters. And to do this today I had to find a different approach. As melodrama is the typical genre used to tell love stories destined to fail it made sense to use this kind of narrative construction. Based on this decision the more significant aesthetic references for the project arose like Pedro Almodóvar and Rainer Fassbinder, filmmakers who, each in their own way, brought melodrama up to date and made it a contemporary genre.

WHAT REMAINS RELEVANT THEN IN THE STORY OF THESE CHARACTERS, AFTER FOUR DECADES OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT?

While adapting the play I wanted to give priority to one theme, bring a universal issue, and one that doesn't belong exclusively to the LGBTQ+ community, or one that wasn't exclusive to any other kind of sphere of identity, one that would be able to create empathy in any person at all. After all, mankind doesn't have all that many big philosophical issues: death, solitude, and half a dozen others... And it was this that was already latent in the play, solitude. Our existence is always a solitary one. It doesn't matter who you are, with how many people you relate, your life experience will always be a solitary one. This feeling remains, it existed before the play, it has always existed and will always continue to exist, it is something that runs through all of mankind. And in that concerning Pedro, his age is something that heightens this solitude even more as the romantic idealization of relationships is always connected to the idea of youth.

IN FACE OF THE SOCIAL CHANGES OVER THE LAST YEARS, WHAT WAS THE POLITICAL PROCESS LIKE IN CONSTRUCTING THESE CHARACTERS STARTING WHEN YOU BEGAN WORKING ON THE SCREENPLAY IN 2008, UP UNTIL THE ACTUAL SHOOTING IN 2017?

When I began writing the screenplay, understanding about gender issues was, in a general manner, much less than today. And although we have made progress over the last few years, both legally and culturally, there are still a lot of things that have to be changed, changes that take a long time to be put into practice. There is a certain social class and age range which for decades still hasn't benefitted from these conquests and the visibility that the theme deserves. Conquests which are about to be lost in Brazil today with the rise of an obviously homophobic political faction into power. The Daniela character connected me with relevant themes coming from the "queer" community and I was freer to work with her as she is a character that didn't exist in the original play, and creating her was a way in which to bring these issues to the surface. Daniela prefers euthanasia to being submitted to the, more often than not, inhumane treatment allotted poor transsexuals in public hospitals. And despite human right issues taking on an urgency not seen before, I never intended to make a film that dealt only with the political issues of the moment. To dialogue with them is fundamental but in my work I want to focus on more existential matters. Because we are all going to have to fight a lot more but in the end we will be able to surmount our political differences, I believe in that. Existential problems though are insurmountable.

BUT STILL, THE CHOICE OF THE CAST DIRECTLY ADDRESSES SOME OF THESE POLITICAL ISSUES. WHAT WAS THE CASTING PROCESS, IN A GENERAL MANNER, LIKE?

The premise is to always work with talented actors and actresses and then, once this is guaranteed, begin thinking about who that person really is, what they represent, and come to understand why you associate them to that specific character. And in this film, in some way, it is even more important because questions about representation are always present, like a backdrop. Pedro wants to be Greta Garbo. He creates a representation all his own based on an image created by the film industry itself. And so, I wanted to work this kind of representation and idealization on some level: how we see each other, how others see us and how we want to be seen by everyone. And for this, for Pedro's characters, I was interested in provoking a displacement of perspective. I wanted to work with an actor who while playing Pedro could move away from the place in which his/her image was comfortable with. Marco Nanini had never done a sex scene on TV nor in the movies, and although he has a very successful career of over 50 years both on screen and on stage, his image was profoundly associated to that of a traditional father, as Lineu who he gave life to for over 14 years straight in the humor series A Grande Família.

AND HOW DID THE IDEA COME ABOUT OF USING A TRANSGENDER ACTRESS, GRETTA STARR, TO PLAY A CIS WOMAN, MARY, AND A CIS ACTRESS, DENISE WEINBERG, TO PLAY A TRANSSEXUAL WOMAN, DANIELA?

Still during the casting process, some of the trans actresses refused Daniela's role. They mostly justified themselves by saying that they had no interest in playing a trans woman living in a vulnerable situation, sick, dependent. They also refused because of the possibility of appearing on the screen without any makeup or other artifices able to heighten their femininity and beauty. I understood that they had no wish to dissociate themselves from the persona they had created for themselves. Something very legitimate: for them, this fictional deconstruction emulated the deconstruction of their own identity. The first alternative I found was to find a cis actress to play the role, but it created another problem as well: how was I going to deal with the personal discomfort of filming a trans character being played by a cis woman without committing the error of representing this group of people in an offhanded manner once again? All these reflections led me to think that picking a trans actress to represent a trans character was insufficient from an artistic and political point of view as well, something that apparently seemed to be fulfilling a demand for representation but for me it was just as important to affirm the artistic freedom of any actress to play any role independent of her gender identity. The solution I found was to invite one of the trans actresses I had met to play the cis character. And so in this way Denise Weinberg wound up playing Daniela and Gretta Starr, Mary.

IN THE FILM WE ARE INTRODUCED TO AN IDEALIZED AND ROMANTIC GRETA GARBO AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF PEDRO, WHO, IN TURN, IS PRESENTED FREE OF ANY KIND OF MASKS, IN EVEN A CRUDE MANNER. HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THIS PLAY ON CONTRADICTIONS, THIS KIND OF WARPED PROJECTION OF IMAGES SEEN IN THE FILM, INCLUDING EVEN THE IDEA OF CINEMA ITSELF?

While writing the screenplay I revisited Greta Garbo's films. They all are full of melodramatic narratives, couples that for some reason or other, most often moral issues, are prevented from being together, but which, in the end, they overcome the problem separating them and live the love of their lives, or otherwise. At the same time, I read and researched her biography and it was very curious to realize how Greta herself had never succumbed to this romantic ideal set forth by her films. She had a life full of adventure, was married a number of times, supposedly with both women and men alike, had no children nor constituted a family as was commonly done by women in her generation. She didn't seem to be searching for the love of her life in an idealized manner. But still, the majority of us are always giving in to all these booby traps coming from the cultural industry, ideal beauty, romance, behavior... This all obviously can be seen in cinema. Reality is processed and transformed into ideals which create icons like Greta, James Dean, Marlene Dietrich and others. And so we decided to incorporate this icon into the film based on its contradiction. The scene in which Pedro narrates lines from *Grand Hotel* (by Edmund Goulding, 1932), in which Greta's character says her famous phrase that became a part of her public persona "I want to be alone" is an example of this.

Everything that Pedro wants at that moment is the opposite of what he is saying, not unlike Greta's character in the original scene. In reality the urge to be alone arises from the exhaustion of looking for the perfect pair and not from any real urge for isolation. That is why, in the film, I used an image in which Greta was not playing her character but in the middle of a camera test for that which would be one of her last movies, that was never made. I thought this would be the ideal image: Greta before appearing in the scene getting ready to play the brokenhearted girl, this in some way exposes the contradiction of this idealization. I wanted to use this metalinguistic critique, which doubles as a defense: as I contradictorily think these idealizations produced by cinema beautiful and revealing. We are the ones who have to be alert and escape booby traps to not wind up like Pedro.

CAST

PEDRO - MARCO NANINI



With over thirty TV programs in his resume spanning fifty years of activity as actor, including daytime dramas and series, Nanini trailed a path simultaneously on stage and on the big screen. Born in Recife in 1948, he marked an era as protagonist in the A Grande Família sitcom aired by Globo TV between 2001 thru to 2014, as well as, on stage, performing in O Mistério de Irma Vap by Charles Ludlam and directed by Marília Pera along with dozens of other productions. For cinema, we can mention his participation in films such as Carlota Joaquina: A Princesa do Brasil (1995), Copacabana (2001), both by Carla Camuratti, Lisbela e o Prisioneiro (2003), Romance (2008) and O Bem Amado (2010), by Guel Arraes.



JEAN - DÉMICK LOPES

Démick is an actor from Ceara born in Fortaleza in 1978. He began his drama studies in 1995 with the Dionysios Aprendizes and Balaio theater groups and was a part of the Bagaceira Theater Group for nearly 15 years. Has participated in a dozen short and feature films such as Rania (2012), by Roberta Marques, Serra Pelada (2013), by Heitor Dhalia, Redemoinho (2016), by José Luiz Villamarin, Praia do Futuro (2014), by Karim Ainouz, Shaolin do Sertão (2016), by Halder Gomes, and Inferninho (2018), by Guto Parente and Pedro Diógenes. His TV series include Treze Dias Longe do Sol (2017), by Luciano Moura and Onde Nascem Os Fortes (2018), by José Luiz Villamarim.

DANIELA - DENISE WEINBERG



Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1956, Denise is one of the most awarded Brazilian actress in her generation. She has garnered ten awards for her work on stage, seven in cinema as well as an indication for the Emmy. With her career mainly focused on stage she founded the TAPA Theater Group over 40 years ago and in which she was active for over 20. Her resume includes twenty films such as *Meu Amigo Hindu* (2016), by Hector Babenco, *Linha de Passe* (2008), by Walter Salles, and *Salve Geral* (2009), by Sergio Rezende. For TV, besides her acclaimed participation in the *PSI* series, by Contardo Calligaris, for HBO, she participated in productions such as *Alice* (2008), by Karim Ainouz and Sérgio Machado and *A Teia* (2017), by Carolina Kotscho and Bráulio Mantovani.



MARY - GRETTA STTAR

Born in 1955 in Santos, São Paulo, Gretta is a MC and host besides her work as actress and performer. She has been presenting shows in international and domestic nightclubs now for over 40 years and has been on tour in countries such as China, Sweden, England and the Emirates. With a degree from the Ibero Americana College for translators and interpreters in São Paulo, she is also active as professional makeup artist in a traditional beauty parlor in São Paulo. She is also part of the cast of short films *Os Sapatos de Aristeu* (2008) and *Quem Tem Medo de Cris Negão* (2012), both directed by René Guerra.

PRODUCERS

CARNAVAL FILMES

Founded by experienced producers João Vieira Jr. and Nara Aragão, Carnaval Filmes is focused in original content and arthouse films. In partnership with creative minds, we are currently releasing the documentaries *Waiting for the Carnival*, by Marcelo Gomes and *Casa*, by Letícia Simões, the feature *Greta*, by Armando Praça and the animated TV series *Bia Draws*. Our next releases will be the features *Paloma's Wedding*, by Marcelo Gomes and *Party Over*, by Hilton Lacerda. Carnaval is coproducer of the next film by Armando Praça, *Fortaleza Hotel*, in partnership with Segredo Filmes and Moçambique Audiovisual.

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