

[PRESS KIT]



BERLINALE
CO-PRODUCTION
MARKET

THE FIRST DEATH OF JOANA

[A PRIMEIRA MORTE DE JOANA]

Written and directed by CRISTIANE OLIVEIRA

Production

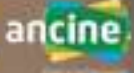
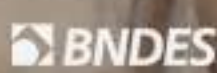
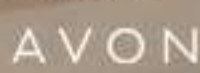
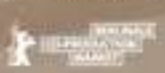
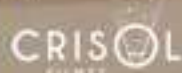
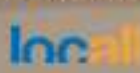
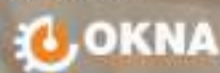
Co-production

Associate
Production

Sales

Distribution

Development Financing





SYNOPSIS

Late summer of 2007, South of Brazil. Joana, 13, wants to find out why her great-aunt Rosa died at 70 without ever having dated anyone. Encouraged by her friend Carolina, Joana starts an investigation about Rosa's past. As she confronts the values of her community, Joana realizes that all the women in her family have a secret, while something hidden inside her also reveals. She plunges into her imagination to find answers while a large wind power plant is being built in their small town.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

“Our bodies could be windows to connect us to each other or be the key to close ourselves away from the rest of the world. When you don’t fit the stereotypes about how to become a woman, you need to have the courage to create your own references. Especially in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, the state where I was born and raised, where conservative male domination is deeply rooted in the local culture. *THE FIRST DEATH OF JOANA* deals with these issues in a positive way. The sensorial journey of a girl discovering love, learning about herself while she observes how the older women in her family experience their own intimacy. I feel it is really important to educate young people about gender and sexuality as expressions of our identity. But movements against teaching these topics in schools have been gaining power. Why? As well as Joana plunges into her imagination to find her own answers, I make films. Not to give answers, but to keep asking questions.”

[Cristiane Oliveira]



PRODUCER'S NOTE

"THE FIRST DEATH OF JOANA is the second feature of the female director Cristiane Oliveira. Its project was selected for the Berlinale's Co-Production Market 2018 and won the AVON Fund for Female Directors (FAMA) for its production. Her first feature, "Mulher do Pai" (Nalu on the Border, Berlinale 2017), widely renowned (21 festivals, 20 awards) since the project stage - when it won the Berlinale's VFF Talent Highlight Pitch Award, was selected for the workshop Produire au Sud (Nantes) and funded by Ibermedia.

An artistic collaboration with internationally renowned professionals also contributed to the density of the film, such as: the Mexican art director Nohemi Gonzalez and the Uruguayan sound recordist Raúl Locatelli, both worked on "Silent Light", by Carlos Reygadas, and Raul is also known by great partnerships with Amat Scalante; João Nicolau, Portuguese director of the feature "John From" was script consultant; and the visual artist Cao Guimarães ("The man in the Crowd") took part on the editing process."

[*Aletéia Selonk*]

CRISTIANE OLIVEIRA

Born in Porto Alegre, Cristiane Oliveira made her debut in feature films with “Mulher do Pai” (Nalu on the Border, 2016) a Brazil-Uruguay co-production that premiered internationally at the Berlinale 2017 and won 20 awards (such as FIPRESCI Award at Uruguay IFF, Best Screenplay at Cinema Jove - Valencia IFF, Best Direction and Cinematography at Rio IFF, among others). Cristiane, who was selected to Berlinale Talents in 2017, is currently preparing her third feature film “Until the Music is Over”, a co-production between Italy and Brazil, that was selected to Berlinale Script Station 2021.



DIRECTOR'S BIO



ALETÉIA SELONK

Aletéia Selonk founded the production company Okna Produções in 2006 and since then she has produced six features, 20 shorts, and 16 medium-lengths, which won more than 70 awards worldwide. Based in Porto Alegre, Okna Produções stands out for being selected to participate in the most important events specialized in including projects in the international market and for being one of the most prolific production companies from Southern Brazil.



PRODUCER'S BIO





DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

Several female characters guide the protagonist's journey in *The First Death of Joana*, each of them has her own complexities. How were the characters built?

Joana's story came from a wish to talk about courage, the courage to be who you really are in the face of all the everyday violence one experiences when going through this process. The aunt's character was inspired by a woman who was very close to me and who never had a romantic relationship and died a virgin at 70 years old. Her story really moved me. The other characters also came from my personal experiences, as well as from Silvia Lourenço's - the co-writer - personal experiences. We thought about the factors that permeate the construction of our affections, such as social expectations of gender, prejudices regarding sexual orientation, racism and classism. Besides that, the family is a structure in which the concepts of autonomy frequently clash with the concepts of care and what is seen as protection can actually be a form of violence. In primary school I learned what behaviours were considered right "for boys" or "for girls". I was already aware that certain kinds of humiliation at school were reserved exclusively for girls. I remember the day someone said that I was supposed to like boys, not girls. As fears were created by the urgency to set the rules as to what was right for each gender, I started to feel that gender should not be a sentence for oppression and that sexuality should be seen as a natural development of one's affections. All of those personal feelings and experiences guided the creation of the characters.

The film takes place in 2007, but it addresses topics that are considered quite sensitive by the conservative movements that gained strength in Brazil recently. Why did you choose to situate the film in 2007 and how does it dialogue with the situation of Brazilian youth nowadays?

Between the years of 2005 and 2007, when I used to spend summers on beaches close to Porto Alegre, I saw the landscape of the lagoon region change. There are more than 20 lagoons that compose a unique system in the world because of its extension, there are almost 700 km of fresh water. This landscape gained giant white wind turbines that form the biggest wind power station of the South hemisphere and there I saw the ideal scenario to build Joana's story, since she is a teenager who was also going through changes. In



DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

that time we felt that Brazil was going through positive changes regarding identity issues, especially those related to gender, race and sexual diversity. That context stimulated us to develop the project. Unfortunately, in 2018, when we obtained the resources to shoot, the scenario was of political regression, specially for young people, since there are several bills that try to forbid teaching about genre, sexuality and religious diversity in schools. However, it is in the scholar phase that curiosity and violence regarding those topics start, therefore, it is necessary that young people receive qualified information about them. Brazilian justice was contrary to some of these bills, but new conservative bills keep arising and teachers are persecuted in schools.

The film has moments that dialogue with the fantastic genre. How does this genre relate to the narrative and to the themes the film addresses?

Adults tend to avoid certain themes when dealing with children and teens, as if they are not already able to learn. When curiosity arises, it means they are ready. Everyone has the right to receive proper information. Joana is not satisfied with the answers the adults give to her questions, that is why she creates a particular universe that helps her to elaborate her own answers.

The word “death”, that is part of the title, seems to gain various meanings throughout the film. Your previous film, “Nalu on the Border”, also presents a death that is outstanding for the destiny of the protagonists in its narrative. What is the meaning of this word in your second feature film?

The death of the great-aunt is the fuse for Joana 's search for answers about her past, which leads her to discover more about herself. The death in the film is related to passage, transformation and how sometimes we need to die somehow to be reborn in our fights so we can exist. Besides that, there is a quote by the poet Mário Quintana that inspired the title: “To love is to move the soul to another home”, he says. Therefore, there is a symbolic aspect regarding that moment in life in which one loses control over their body, when the body is occupied by the memory of someone we fall in love with and this presence starts to interfere in the way we present ourselves to the world.

Cast: LETÍCIA KACPERSKI, ISABELA BRESSANE, JOANA VIEIRA,
LISA GERTUM BECKER, ROSA CAMPOS VELHO, PEDRO NAMBUKO,
GRACIELA CAPUTTI, EMÍLIO SPECK

Written and Directed by: CRISTIANE OLIVEIRA

Produced by: ALETÉIA SELONK, CRISTIANE OLIVEIRA

Associate Producers: CORENTIN DONG-JIN SÉNÉCHAL,
DANIEL CHABANNES, GUSTAVO GALVÃO

Executive Producers: GRAZIELLA FERST, GINA O'DONNELL

Line Producer: GINA O'DONNELL

Co-writer: SILVIA LOURENÇO

Cinematography: BRUNO POLIDORO

Art Direction: ADRIANA NASCIMENTO BORBA

Costume: ISADORA FANTIN, MARIANE COLLOVINI

Hair and Make up: NANCY MARIGNAC

Editing: TULA ANAGNOSTOPOULOS

Sound: RAUL LOCATELLI, HUDSON VASCONCELOS

Sound Supervising: MIRIAM BIDERMAN

Sound Design: RICARDO REIS

Original Soundtrack: ARTHUR DE FARIA

Mixing: PEDRO NOIZYMAN

Acting Coach: VANISE CARNEIRO

Casting: NADYA MENDES

CREW





TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Original Title: A Primeira Morte de Joana

English title: The First Death of Joana

91 minutes

Year: 2021

Color

Aspect ratio: 1:2,35

Shot in 4K

Deliveries in 2K

Available for screenings in DCP

Sound format: 5.1

Original languages: Portuguese, Hunsrückisch and German

Locations: Osório and Santo Antônio da Patrulha, RS / Brasil



CONTACTS

PRODUCER

Okna Produções

okna.com.br

Aletéia Selonk (producer) - aleteia@okna.com.br

Graziella Ferst (executive producer) - grazi@okna.com.br

DIRECTOR

Cristiane Oliveira

crisolfilmes.com

crisolfilmes@gmail.com

SALES

Patra Spanou Film

patraspanou.com

film@patraspanou.biz