



OFFICIAL SELECTION 2018
sundance
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INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM

LoveLing

BY GUSTAVO PIZZI
BRAZIL, URUGUAY 2018

Logline

On the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, Irene has only a few days to overcome her anxiety and regain her inner confidence before sending her eldest son out into the world.

Synopsis

Irene lives in a crumbling house in the outskirts of Rio with her husband and her four sons. Her teenage son Fernando is a local handball star and when he's scouted to play professionally in Germany, the family has only a few weeks to ready his departure and say goodbye. The perspective of Fernando leaving is a shock and a big change in Irene's life but also a chance to see herself as a woman again and not just as a mother. Irene gets her high-school diploma, finds a new job and pushes forward with plans for a new family home. As she flourishes, things begin to look up for her family as well. Irene understands that while some things come to an end, new things start and the future is bright as long as they stick together.



Interview with Gustavo Pizzi

by Marta Bałaga

You co-wrote *Loveling* with your lead actress and ex-wife Karine Teles – just like your previous film, *Craft*. How did that collaboration begin?

We first met when I was still making my documentary *Pretérito Perfeito* – Karine helped me a lot on that movie. Afterwards, we started to think about *Craft*. Its Portuguese title, *Riscado*, refers to someone who knows a lot about his job. It was a story about a talented actress, played by Karine, who struggles to find the right opportunities.

When we got married, we were both facing very similar problems. I was trying to make it as a writer and filmmaker, Karine as an actress. Stuck doing odd jobs, after so many bad experiences, we were wondering what it is that you need to succeed. The film ended up opening many doors for us. If it weren't for *Craft*, *Loveling* would never exist.





But you wrote the screenplay for *Craft* separately. Do you always work like that?

When we decide to write together, each of us contributes in equal measure. We collaborate very closely: we have a lot of discussions, we do our research and talk about possible references. One of us writes something and then gives it to the other to read, and we keep going through different versions until the first draft. It's a continuous process of sharing. We don't have many rules, we simply try to support each other and develop our ideas. But no – we never write together, sitting side by side. It's just easier this way for us.

Your first film mirrored your own experiences. Is it the same with *Loveling*?

There are many similarities to our lives. We both left home when we were very young: I was 16 years old, Karine was 17. We shot in Petrópolis where we were born and just like Fernando, I used to play handball. All of these things are very important for the

movie, but *Loveling* is more personal than autobiographical.

When I left home, I was only looking ahead. I didn't care about my parents or my brothers that stayed behind. But when I became a father, I started to think about the past. With Karine, we found ourselves wondering about all these things our parents might have felt at that time. Things we will probably feel one day too when our kids decide to start life on their own. So for all these familiar elements, *Loveling* is about something that we don't really know. At least not just yet.

When Irene finds out that her son might not be able to leave the country in time, she smiles. Why?

When Karine told her mother she was leaving, it was a bit like that. She said: "I am sick, you can't go!" Each person deals with these things in a different way and parents can be selfish as well. Which is also why I believe this movie is for everyone. Some people will recognise themselves in the son, others in the mother.

We were always very independent, Karine and me. And then we had twins [laughter]. Our parents came to Rio to help us, and that's when we started to talk about the movie. I said to my parents: "I can imagine it was very hard for you when I left." They didn't say much, but their eyes told me everything I needed to know. After that, I knew I have to tell this story.

In the film, you embrace this family with warmth. They have no money, their son is leaving and their house is literally crumbling around them. And yet they seem happy.

In life, very often things are just happening at once and you have to deal with them. But in *Loveling*, I wanted to show something more than just suffering. There's hope.

This family is not wealthy, but they don't live in favelas. They are fighting for a better life. And also, Brazilian women always have to be strong. In my country, they are the ones that usually keep the house running. Many men abandon their families or, just like Klaus, complain about having



to work all day and then dream about some business venture that will finally make them rich. Women have to be more pragmatic. They have to say: "Fine, have your dream. But we have to pay the bills now." Irene and her sister Sônia are just like that. They keep it all together. It's difficult and it's not fair, and of course you end up coming across many adversaries. But in life, even in moments like that you can experience joy, sense of accomplishment and happiness.

Were you trying to reflect the current situation in your country? In one scene, when things don't go according to plan, Fernando's father sighs: "This is Brazil."

The movie is about Irene and how she deals with her eldest son leaving home, but it also talks about our times. As always, the on-going crisis mostly affects those who have less money. Small businesses, just like Klaus', are facing bankruptcy and instead of hiring new employees, factories prefer to import ready-made products from China. People are trying

to sell their properties, but nobody is buying. After years of growth, we are living in dark times. Our government, as proven by some newly introduced laws, doesn't care about protecting the rights of the workers and people living in poverty. People like Irene don't have a regular job, and it's getting more and more difficult to find one. So they dream about it.

When Klaus talks about Brazil, he is mostly referring to the bureaucracy. Whenever you are trying to get something from the state or from a big company, they will do everything in their power to stop you. In the movie the bureaucracy is good for Irene, as it can give her more time with her kid. But to Fernando, it's just terrible.

Your camera is hardly ever still. Why did you decide to use it that way?

In a family like this one, nothing is ever still. There is always so much noise and movement. We have one main point of view in this story, which belongs to Irene. We get to see her all the time and after a while, we start to understand her struggle. But there are also other

people in this family. The idea was to create tension between what could be happening inside of her head and their life together. Bit by bit, I wanted to get closer and understand what is going on, but without ever losing sight of Irene.

You also use the sound in an interesting way, for example when the happy announcement is interrupted by a strange noise. It turns out to be nothing more than a leaking tap, but it makes the whole scene rather unnerving.

When Fernando announces he is going to Germany, his family is happy, but also a bit shocked. Irene doesn't know exactly what is happening at that moment. She doesn't understand he is actually leaving home for good, she is not thinking about what it will mean for her. With all the talking and other kids shouting, this is the first moment in the film when we try to go inside of her head. She hugs Fernando and congratulates him, because she loves him and wishes him all the best. She suspects it's important, but she doesn't know why. The sound you mentioned helps creating a sense





KARINE TELES

Karine Teles is an actress and screenwriter. She was Dona Barbara, the mother from Anna Muylaert's awarded film *The Second Mother* and is also known for her role in Fernando Coimbra's *A Wolf at the Door* (premiered in Toronto FF 2013) and most recently for Felipe Sholl's *The Other End* (Best Actress for Karine and Best Picture awards at Rio IFF 2016). Karine was awarded – as actress and writer for Gustavo Pizzi's *Craft*, premiered at SXSW in 2011.. She is currently working on a new project called *Off Side*. She has been in more than 40 theater productions and 6 TV shows.



OTÁVIO MÜLLER

Otávio Müller is a Brazilian actor and theatre director. He is most known for comical roles in television, such as in Rede Globo's series *Tapas & Beijos*. In theater, he starred in the monologue *A Vida Sexual da Mulher Feia* and directed *Adorável Desgraça and Decameron: A Comédia do Sexo*. Among his works on film are the features *Alemão*, by José Eduardo Belmonte, *Um Homem Só* by Cláudia Jouvin, *Craft* by Gustavo Pizzi and *The Gorilla* by Jose Eduardo Belmonte, that granted him the Rio IFF Best Actor Award.



ADRIANA ESTEVES

Adriana Esteves is a Brazilian TV and film actress. She was nominated for an International Emmy Award in 2011 for her portrayal of Dalva de Oliveira in the miniseries *Dalva e Herivelto: uma Canção de Amor*. In 2017 she received her second Emmy nomination in the Best Actress category for her role in *Justiça*. She received much national and international acclaim for her role as Carminha in the hit soap opera series *Avenida Brasil* (2012). She also dubbed Scarlet Overkill on the Brazilian version of *Minions*.



DIRECTOR

Gustavo Pizzi is a Brazilian film director, producer and screenwriter. His directorial debut was *Riscado* (*Craft*, 2010), which world-premiered at SXSW and went to over 40 other film festivals worldwide. In 2010 Gustavo produced the short film Ivan's Distraction, which world-premiered at the Semaine de la Critique of Cannes International Film Festival. In 2012 Gustavo directed the documentary TV Series *Oncotô*. He also worked on the script of the TV series *#callmebruna*, already in its second season, broadcasted by Fox Premium in all Latin America. His is now developing the film/miniseries *Gilda*.

PRODUCERS

BUBBLES PROJECT

An independent production company based in Rio de Janeiro, founded by Tatiana Leite in 2012. The company is involved in coproduction and discovering new talents in Brazil and abroad. Bubbles Project's first feature production *Aspirantes (Hopefuls)*, directed by Ives Rosenfeld won Locarno's Carte Blanche and was screened at multiple festivals, including Karlovy Vary, Toulouse, Biarritz, Havana, Chicago and Thessaloniki. Their second film, *Pendular* by Julia Murat premiered and won the FIPRESCI Award at Berlinale Panorama 2017. Bubbles recent projects include *Familia submergida (The Immersed Family)* by Maria Alche, a minority co-production with Argentinian Pasto Cine, currently in post-production. Company's current development slate includes: *Other Times* by Christiane Jatahy, *Nona* by the Chilean director Camila Donosio, *Porco Espinho (Porcupine)* by Eva Randolph, *The inheritance* by João Candido Zacharias, and *Neuros* by Guilherme Coelho.

BALEIA FILMS

Baleia Films is a production company focused on the creation and production of content for cinema, television and new media. Its most recent works are *Carne* a mix of art installation, theatre, film and visual arts; *Otimismo*, a short story by Karine Teles that premiered at Festival Mix Brazil in 2015, and *Loveling*, by Gustavo Pizzi. In development, are the tv series *Gilda* and the feature *Anfibias*, both to be directed by Gustavo Pizzi.

TVZERO

Rio de Janeiro based production house TvZERO initially focused on production of documentaries and music videos and over the years it has incorporated new production segments and is now focused exclusively on production of cinema, TV and new media content, always aiming for diversity and technical excellence. In 2017, TvZERO-produced critically acclaimed drama *Gabriel and the Mountain* (Fellipe Barbosa) won two awards at the Critics' Week at Cannes Film Festival. TvZERO's previous feature titles include a docudrama *Nise – The Heart of Madness* (Roberto Berliner), which won over 20 international awards including Best Film at IFF 2015 and *Confessions of a Brazilian Call Girl*, which reached over 2 millions theatrical admissions in Brazil. In the field of TV production, it's most notable titles include the *Adoption Chronicles* TV series, broadcasted on GNT Channel, and *#callmebruna* (Seasons 1 and 2, 2016-) at Fox Premium. TvZERO's most recent title *492* (Henrique Goldman) and a minority coproduction *Loveling* (Gustavo Pizzi) will premiere in the beginning of 2018

MUTANTE CINE

A film production company created in 2011 by Agustina Chiarino and Fernando Epstein. From Control Z Films they have produced and distributed the films *25 Watts*, *Whisky*, *La Perrera*, *Acné*, *Gigante*, *Hiroshima*, *3* and *Tanta Agua*. They produced *El 5 de Talleres* directed by Adrinán Biniez and co-produced *History of Fear* by Benjamín Naishtat and *My Friend of the Park* by Ana Katz. Since 2012 they co-organize with EAVE the workshop Puentes.

Leveling

FESTIVALS

World Premiere: Sundance Film Festival
World Dramatic Competition

European Premiere: IFF Rotterdam

FILM INFORMATION

Original title: Benzinho
English Title: Leveling
Genre: Drama
Country: Brazil, Uruguay
Language: Portuguese
Year: 2018
Duration: 98 min.
Picture: Color
Aspect Ratio: 2.39 : 1
Sound: 5.1
Available Format: DCP, 4K

CAST

Karine Teles	Irene
Otávio Müller	Klaus
Adriana Esteves	Sônia
Konstantinos Sarris	Fernando
César Troncoso	Alan
Artur Teles Pizzi	Fabiano
Francisco Teles Pizzi	Matheus
Vicente Demori	Thiago
Luan Teles	Rodrigo

CREW

Director: Gustavo Pizzi
Screenplay: Gustavo Pizzi,
Karine Teles
Cinematography: Pedro Faerstein
Editing: Livia Serpa
Production Design: Dina Salem Levy
Sound Design: Roberto Espinoza
Music: Dany Roland, Pedro Sá,
Maximiliano Silveira

Production Companies: Bubbles Project,
Baleia Filmes
Co-production
Companies: TvZERO, Mutante Cine
Producers: Tatiana Leite,
Gustavo Pizzi
Co-producers: Rodrigo Letier,
Agustina Chiarino
Voulminot,
Fernando Epstein

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