



63 Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition

A FILM BY SEBASTIAN LELIO

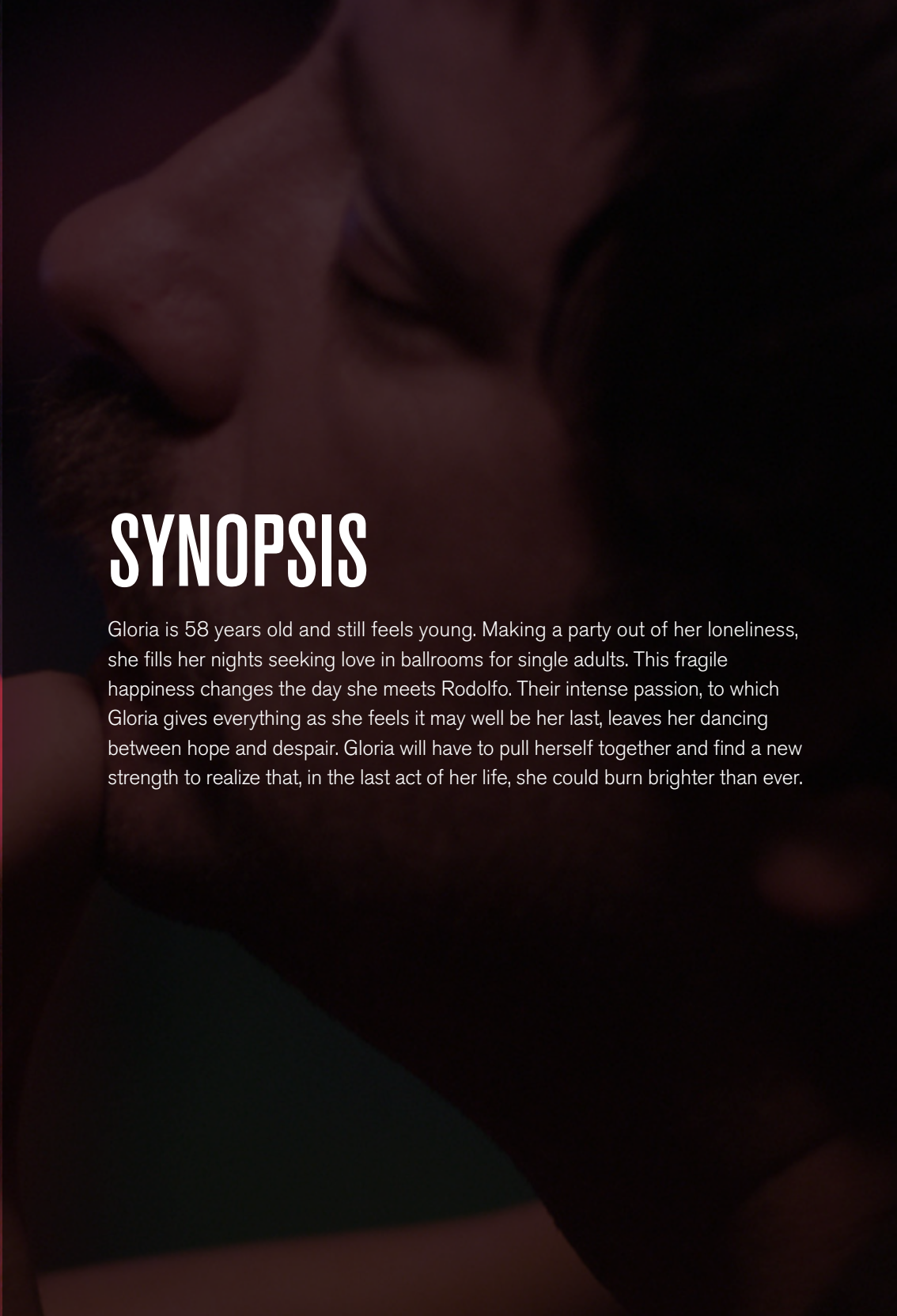
PAULINA GARCIA IS

Gloria



SYNOPSIS

Gloria is 58 years old and still feels young. Making a party out of her loneliness, she fills her nights seeking love in ballrooms for single adults. This fragile happiness changes the day she meets Rodolfo. Their intense passion, to which Gloria gives everything as she feels it may well be her last, leaves her dancing between hope and despair. Gloria will have to pull herself together and find a new strength to realize that, in the last act of her life, she could burn brighter than ever.





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The film is exclusively and radically told from a single point of view: Gloria's. There isn't a single frame in which her body isn't present. There isn't a single scene that isn't about how she's feeling things and the world. Gloria plays a supporting role of sorts in the lives of those around her.

The film's game is to turn this supporting character into an absolute leading role. The paradox is that -in most scenes- she operates as a supporting character since important things are usually happening amongst other people. Yet the film forces us to observe these events through Gloria's eyes: those of a woman searching for her place in a hardened world that doesn't seem to have too much space for her, but with the attitude of someone defending her individual freedom with heart and pride.

This insistence of following her all the time allows for the spectator to infiltrate beneath Gloria's skin, to never stop watching her, and to connect directly with her emotions.

The film's screenplay arises from certain stories that have happened to people that we know or from anecdotes that we've been told; they're real events that, in one way or another, Santiago has made possible. Santiago is practically another character in the film. *Gloria* is an individual story that takes place over the backdrop of a city thrown into upheaval. The leading character's quest to be loved and valued is set over the clamors of a Chilean society that wants its rights to be recognized. Chile is a modern and thriving country, but its social contract is very unjust.

Gloria's personal vindications subtly communicate the community's latent discontent. In the film, the collective's transforming power is reinforced by Gloria's own desire for change. I think that the energy in Gloria's character is what makes this film vibrant and human. In a certain sense, Gloria is like Rocky: the world strikes at her and beats her down, but she manages to get up once more and carry on forward, holding her head up high. This, to me, was always a great reason for which to film this woman's story, to film what we can see of her on the surface and to try film her mystery as well.





SEBASTIAN LELIO'S FILMOGRAPHY

In 2006, he completed *La Sagrada Familia*, premiered in San Sebastián, it received many awards and international recognition. *Navidad*, made its debut in 2009. Written at the Cannes Film Festival's La Résidence, the film was premiered at the Directors' Fortnight that same year. *El Año del Tigre*, his third feature film was released in the international competition of Locarno film festival 2011. Recently he was distinguished with the Guggenheim Fellowship and received the support of DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm for the development of his new projects. His fourth feature film, *Gloria*, received the Cine in Construcción award in San Sebastián film festival 2012.





INTERVIEW WITH SEBASTIAN LELIO

How did the idea of making this film and telling the story of *Gloria* come about?

Gloria arises from the question of whether there could be a film about the world of women from my mother's generation, and what this film would be like. It comes from the intuition that a film can sometimes be closer than you think, sometimes even just a few feet away. I wanted to infiltrate this generation's unknown planet and see what happened there.

There is something moving about these women approaching their 60s who transit through Santiago, Chile, today. Women who fight to find their place in a world that treats them with harshness, who sing in the car, who have been left somewhat on their own, for whom no one has too much time, and that, in spite of the years that have passed, refuse to give up and want to keep on feeling, dancing and living. The film reclaims that right, and it does so from the fascination with an endearing woman who is clinging on to life with her teeth and nails.

The soundtrack plays an important role in the film. What was the music selection process like?

Gloria is a film about feelings. And music (for what can have more feeling than music?) constitutes a central element in this tale, working almost as a Greek choir, constantly contaminating the story. At the same time, the characters express themselves through music, making the emotions of the songs that they listen, sing or dance to their very own, unconsciously commenting on their own lives, as if the music were a mirror of their own processes and dilemmas.

The film's soundtrack belongs to *Gloria*'s generation. It contains songs that range from worldwide hits to Latin American and Chilean cult songs. There are some disco tunes, as well as boleros, romantic ballads, salsas, cumbias, some rock'n'roll and one bossa nova: "Waters of March" by Tom Jobim. This last song is very special to me because it was one of the guides that led me to find the final tone for

the film. I aimed for *Gloria* to have something from bossa nova: a poetic of everyday life, a painful sort of levity, a certain natural charm, a little humor and a little pain, but above all, humanity and emotion.

How does *Gloria* relate to your previous films?

I think that *Gloria* is the natural consequence of my three previous films. It's a larger production, with more characters and more locations, but it insists upon worlds that I have explored before, and enquires, from a new perspective, into certain thematic and formal searches that I have developed before in *La Sagrada Familia*, *Navidad* and *El año del tigre*: the insistent observation of characters going through an evolutionary crossroads; family as a sacred trap; the interest in the tension that exists between person and character; and the conviction that film is a face-on battle.

How would you define the experience with the film's actors?

Gloria is a character film. Paulina García, the leading actress, was always at the heart of the project. The film was written to her measure. Her counterpart is Sergio Hernández, an actor that I greatly admire and whom I have gotten to know filming. Both are powerful and magnetic actors, which made things quite a lot easier.

Starting from the basis that if the screenplay is the map, the shooting is the territory (we worked on the screenplay for two years), we generated a set with space for improvisation so that the actors would be compelled to resort to their own intimacies in order to resolve each scene. This allowed for unconscious elements to emanate, material that had "its own laws", and that finally infected the screenplay with a new strength and ended up becoming the narration's essence.

INTERVIEW WITH PAULINA GARCIA

How did you prepare for this character?

Sebastian guided me through my preparation, flooding me with books and films. Then came the individual rehearsals stage, where we analyzed each scene, the way it would work visually, and how we would face Gloria's relationship with each one of the film's characters.

During the two months that led up to the shooting, I was so immersed in Gloria's universe that when the process ended I felt as if I were "waking up" from a deep night.

What was the biggest challenge of playing Gloria?

Gloria observes that the rhythms and courses of the events that take place around her do not depend on her. Gloria's internal movements are subtle, definitive, and concrete. Combining these three concepts was a difficult task.

What was the film's direction, and Sebastian Lelio's direction style like?

Sebastian works in a very relaxed manner; he's funny, and the shooting's atmosphere was very pleasant and intimate. He gives you plenty of freedom, to then take it all away! He's also demanding: he works with complete dominion, based on his observations, and he searches until he finds what he wants.



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PABLO LARRAÍN

SEBASTIÁN LELIO

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