

LES FILMS DU 3 MARS PRESENTS

A FILM BY LAMIA GHRAIBI

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WITH RICHARD GOMES ESTRELA / ASHILA MÜLLER & NATHACHA DA SILVA LATTA | DIRECTOR LAMIA CHRAIBI
RESEARCH AND WRITING YZA NOUIGA & LAMIA CHRAIBI | DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MARCEL MUELLER
CAMERA FRANCISCO HERREDIA | EDITOR RENÉ ROBERGE | SOUND RECORDIST PRISCILA ALVES | COLOR GRADING SYLVAIN COSSETTE
SOUND DESIGNER OLIVIER CALVERT | MIXER HANS LAITRES | PRODUCTION PATRICIA BERGERON & LAMIA CHRAIBI

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■ **CIRCO - DOCUMENTARY FEATURE - 2024 - 88 MINUTES**

Country of production: Canada (Québec) - Filming Location: Brazil

Original language: Brazilian Portuguese - Subtitles: French, English

■ **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

In Rio de Janeiro, Richard dreams of dazzling audiences in the world's biggest circus tents. But when the 20-year-old artist is kicked out of his home by his adoptive mother, his life is turned upside down. Through an intimate, direct cinema approach, *Circo* immerses us in the lives of residents of Brazil's favelas as they seek to shape their own futures.

■ **LONG SYNOPSIS**

In Rio de Janeiro, Richard dreams of dazzling audiences in the world's biggest circus tents. But when the 20-year-old artist is kicked out of his home by his adoptive mother, his life is turned upside down. His once-clear dream begins to drift out of focus, and he embarks on a lengthy quest to find his way. A vibrant community of drag queens becomes his refuge, sparking a new path as he transitions to Ashilla. As uncertainty looms, the spirits of Candomblé offer him hope, while his sister remains an unwavering pillar of support.

Through an intimate, direct cinema approach, *Circo* immerses us in the lives of residents of Brazil's favelas as they seek to shape their own futures.





E TEAM

CREATIVE TEAM

CREATIVE TEAM

CREA

■ TEAM

Direction: Lamia Chraibi

Script: Yza Nouïga, Lamia Chraibi

Cinematography: Marcel Mueller

Camera: Francisco Herredia

Editing: René Roberge

Sound Recording: Priscila Alves

Sound Design: Olivier Calvert

Sound Mix: Hans Laitres

Color Grading: Sylvain Cossette

Protagonists: Richard Gomes Estrela , Ashilla Müller, Nathacha Da Silva Latta

Production: Lamia Chraibi, Patricia Bergeron (Productions Leitmotiv)

Distribution: Les Films du 3 Mars

■ TRAILER







DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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During a capoeira class in Montreal, I met Yza Nouiga (co-writer), who told me about her thesis on the benefits of a social circus for marginalized children in Rio de Janeiro. It immediately piqued my curiosity. In 2017, while visiting my sister in Rio, I visited this social circus and was fascinated by what I witnessed.

I returned the following year and met a young circus performer, Richard, driven by dreams of grandeur. At that time, the democracy established only 35 years earlier was shaken by the arrival to power of Jair Bolsonaro, known for his misogynistic, homophobic and racist ideologies and his nostalgia for dictatorship. As a Afro-queer artist, Richard represents all the facets of society threatened by this current government. I wanted to tell his story before it was forgotten.

My intention was to capture with authenticity an intimate quest for identity. For five years, I followed Richard and his family's journey through everyday life. I deeply believed in his dreams, and through direct cinema, I let myself be carried along by what his life offered me. From his adoptive mother who abandoned him, to his sister fighting for her daughter's custody against a drug trafficker, to his drag queen community and the spirits of Candomblé, Richard took me by the hand and transported me into the realities of the favelas, then into a long process of transitioning, strewn with doubts and pitfalls.

The vital importance of his relationship with his sister, within a fragile family resonated with my own story. The intersectionality of his quest awakened something in me. In making this film, I realized that it's through our dreams that we reclaim our destiny.

LAMIA CHRAIBI





DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

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Photo credit: Hamza Abouelouafaa

■ **Lamia Chraibi** is a French-Moroccan-Canadian filmmaker based in Montreal. She is particularly interested in the themes of social justice, identity, family and territory. She also deals with subjects related to body language and social art. The human being is at the heart of her approach. Her studies in social science (Sorbonne, Paris) and in documentary (L'Inis, Montreal) have shaped her sensitive and committed vision of the world. Her art is nourished by her identity questions, her migratory journey and her travels. Lamia's cinema is based on time and the trust established with the protagonists. With a poetic approach, her camera gives a voice to the forgotten from diverse backgrounds.

■ FILMOGRAPHY

LIKE A SPIRAL, 28 min, Documentary, 2024

CIRCO, 88 min, Documentary, 2024

STATU QUO, 10 min, Experimental, 2020

AMAZON VOICES, 52 min, Documentary, 2015



PROTAGONIST'S BIOGRAPHY

PROTAGONIST'S BIOGRAPHY



■ **Richard** grew up on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. He was still very young when he lost his mother to AIDS. Orphaned, Afro-Brazilian and queer, he began to encounter discrimination resulting from his intersectionality. He enrolled at the *Crescer e Viver* ("Grow and Live") social circus school at age six, graduating as a contortionist and aerial acrobat. Proud, introspective and eccentric, he meticulously controls the way he presents himself to others. He dreams of a career abroad with the world's most prestigious circuses, most notably Cirque du Soleil. Yet beneath his relentless drive for recognition lies a deeper yearning, a search for belonging. As he enters adulthood, he grapples with his contradictions while learning to define himself. His tendency to mask reality catches up with him and childhood traumas resurface. The discovery of the Afro-Brazilian spiritual practice of Candomblé becomes a source of grounding and peace. The world and practice of drag art allow him to express and emancipate himself. That's when he embarks on a transition to become **Ashilla** (she/her).





CONTACTS

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DISTRIBUTION

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MEDIA RELATIONS

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LES FILMS DU 3 MARS (F3M) promotes Quebec and Canadian auteur films nationally and internationally. From ideation through the final cut and onto the screen, we put our expertise toward helping our members market and distribute their work. A leader in the distribution of feature documentaries, F3M also promotes works of every genre and length. We strive to cultivate a taste for original works of quality among our viewers while ensuring representativity based on the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

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PRODUCTIONS LEITMOTIV is a Canadian production company founded in 2013 by Patricia Bergeron to support bold creative proposals. Like a leitmotif, to constantly remind ourselves that creation is an act of resistance, provocation and significance. Leitmotiv has produced seven award-winning short films, a virtual reality project and a first feature film: *Noémie Says Yes*. The company produces powerful, provocative fiction and documentary films by filmmakers with a singular signature.

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