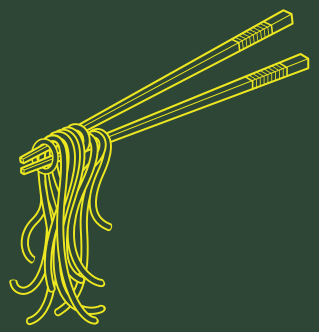
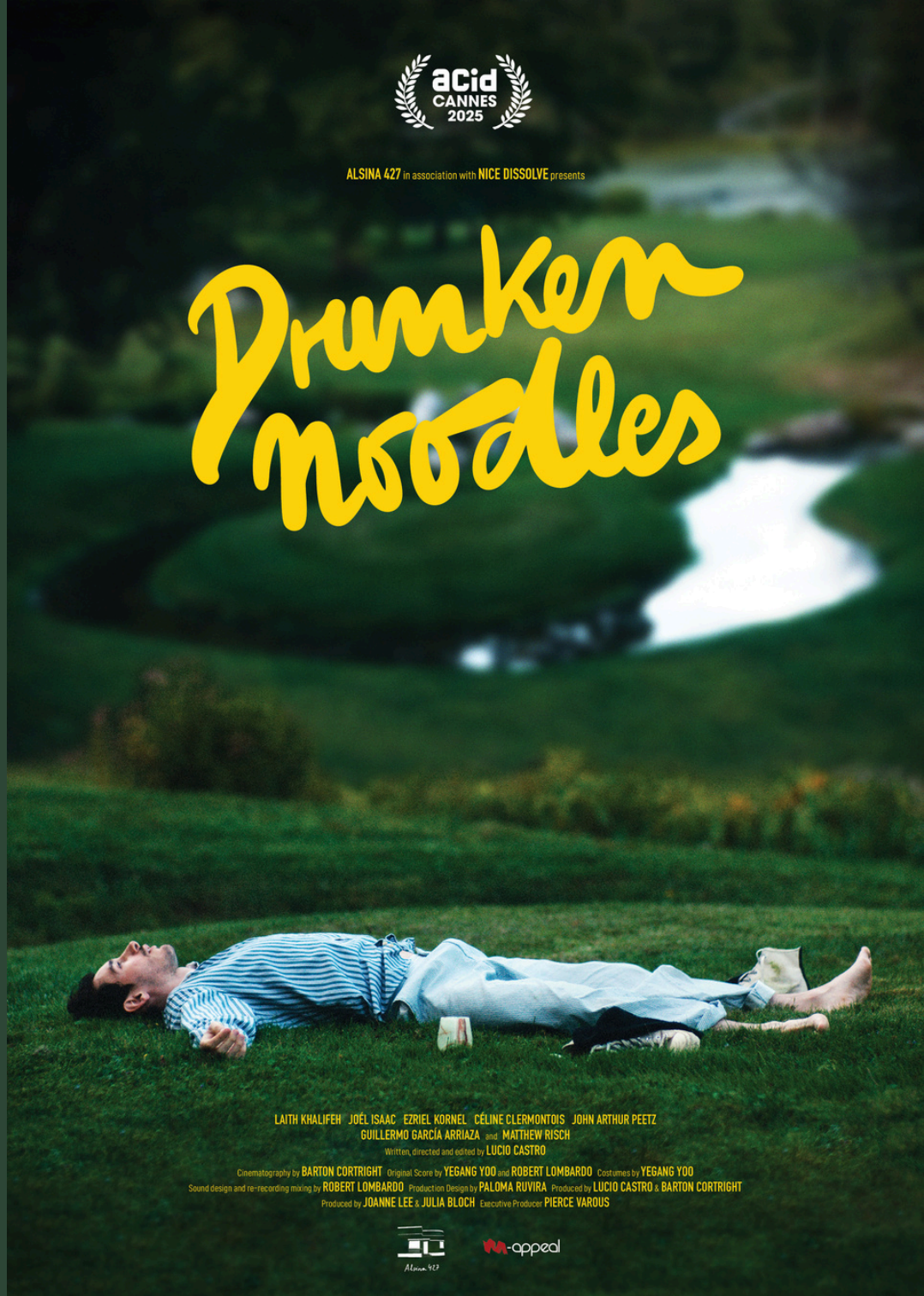

ACID
CANNES
2025
Drunken
Noodles



International Title: Drunken Noodles

Year: 2025
Country: USA / Argentina

Language: English / Spanish
Film running time: 82 min
Aspect ratio: 1.37
Speed/Frame Rate: 23.98
Sound Format: 5.1



LOGLINE

Over two summers, between city streets and forest paths, young art student Adnan has a series of unexpected intimate encounters.

SYNOPSIS

Adnan, a young art student, arrives in New York City to flat-sit for the summer. He begins interning at a gallery where an unconventional older artist he once encountered is being exhibited. As moments from his past and present begin to intertwine, a series of encounters - both artistic and erotic - open cracks in his everyday reality.





INTERVIEW WITH LUCIO CASTRO

What initially inspired the story of DRUNKEN NOODLES?

In the summer of 2021, a friend introduced me to the work of Sal Salandra, an artist in his late 70s who had recently begun creating explicit sexual tableaux in needlepoint— a craft typically reserved for gentler themes, like kittens playing with balls of yarn. I was instantly captivated and went to interview Sal at his Long Island home, thinking I might make a documentary. However, I left feeling that what drew me to his work remained out of reach. I realized that what I wanted to explore couldn't be articulated in a documentary, it had to be done through fiction. That's how DRUNKEN NOODLES began.

The film is set over two summers. The summer light and cinematography create a sensual, dreamy mood. What did you want the atmosphere of the film to evoke?

I was interested in the connections between places—between the city and the forest, but also between different kinds of portals: portals in the woods, portals in the city. I aimed to capture the liminal space of desire and, fundamentally, the most human experience—connecting with others. I wanted the film to trace these connections and secret doors with elegance and a kind of ease, as if these links to other worlds were always present. The cinematography was designed to treat reality and fantasy with the same gaze.

Adnan, the protagonist, is in a transitional moment: flat-sitting in New York, on a break from university, recently out of a relationship. Can you tell us more about him?

In films, characters are typically introduced in one of two ways: either by revealing everything about them upfront or by allowing the audience to discover them gradually. I write without knowing where the film will take me. I use the present tense, starting with a title and then moving from A to B, from B to C, without a set agenda. I enjoy discovering a character

through their interactions and how they navigate different situations. Adnan is specific—he's a Bard student doing a summer internship—but he's also very open and receptive to the world. I find this curiosity and openness very sensual.

As in your debut feature, END OF THE CENTURY, this film plays with time, blurring past, present, and future. How do you think about time in your storytelling?

This is truly how I write. I describe what happens to a character, and at certain points in the story, I feel the need to pause and write something that seems unrelated—though I trust that the connections will reveal themselves. Although my method is straightforward and intuitive, I am aware—and delighted—that the result is complex. As a viewer, I love making connections while watching a movie; it's stimulating and satisfying. I want to create that experience for others.

What is the role of art in the film?

My initial fascination with Sal Salandra's work inspired me to write and create this movie, and I wanted to explore what that fascination meant to me through fiction, which is my true passion. Being touched by art—whether it's a painting, a piece of music, or a poem—means that someone is expressing something that resonates deeply within us. This experience is profoundly moving because it transcends rationality and affects us at our core. For example, I admire the Chinese poet Li Bai, from the 8th century, whose work is also featured in the movie. Through his poems, I feel a direct connection to him, bridging time and space.

Adnan discovers Sal's work at a pivotal moment in his life, and when he later shares it with Yariel, something equally profound occurs: our assumptions about the food delivery guy—and all food delivery guys—are challenged. Art serves to shatter our preconceptions and becomes a conduit for connection.

Is there a connection between art and desire in your view?
What struck me when I first saw Sal's erotic needlepoints was their total lack of desire. He depicts sexual acts with such lightness and innocence that there's no room for longing. My film, on the other hand, delves into desire.

There's a line in the film where Sal says of the faun, "He can touch you, but you can't touch him." For me, that's the essence of desire—wanting something you can't have. When desire is fulfilled, it often fades or becomes something else. The film plays with that idea across different situations. I wanted to explore that fleeting, poetic space of desire.

The film centres on unexpected encounters and connections that shift something in the characters. What draws you to this theme?
In my opinion, making connections with others is the most important human act. It's how we change, challenge preconceptions, and develop empathy. I like to explore the life-altering impact that these connections can have through simple, transient interactions. Cinema is a powerful medium for depicting this, because it allows us to juxtapose moments across time and space and perceive their consequences.

There's something truly radical about deeply connecting with someone, even in a fleeting or casual encounter. It might be the truest form of love—because it comes without attachments or possession. It's simply saying to someone, "I see you," and then continuing on, never to meet that person again.

Each of the film’s four chapters includes a moment where reality is interrupted. Why did you decide to include these moments?
That reflects a queer instinct, I think—a tendency to question what’s presented as reality and challenge norms imposed on us. I wanted to create an unstable sense of what is real throughout the film, which I find energizing for the viewing experience. Adnan embraces these ruptures, and his openness invites the viewer to engage with them as part of his reality.

What role does gay cruising play in the film?
I find cruising fascinating. It originated from a lack of spaces for gay sex, leading to encounters in the dark, in the margins of cities. I recently learned that the playground I take my daughters to is a popular cruising spot at night. It felt like uncovering a secret portal in a neighbourhood I know well, subverting my reality.

When Yariel gives Adnan the note, 'If an exchange occurs in the dark, does it mean it will last forever?' he’s alluding to the hidden nature of cruising. I believe gay cruising is a profoundly poetic act—it’s always happening and, at the same time, never happened, as it remains out of sight. The film also captures the humor in these interactions: after an intimate encounter, two people go back to being strangers. This tension between fantasy and reality in cruising is a driving force in the film.

LUCIO CASTRO – DIRECTOR

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Lucio Castro earned a BFA from the Center for Film Experimentation in Buenos Aires before moving to New York to study at The New School. His debut feature, END OF THE CENTURY (Fin de siglo), premiered at New Directors/New Films at MoMA in 2019 and later screened at the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema, where it won the Best Film Award in the National Competition.

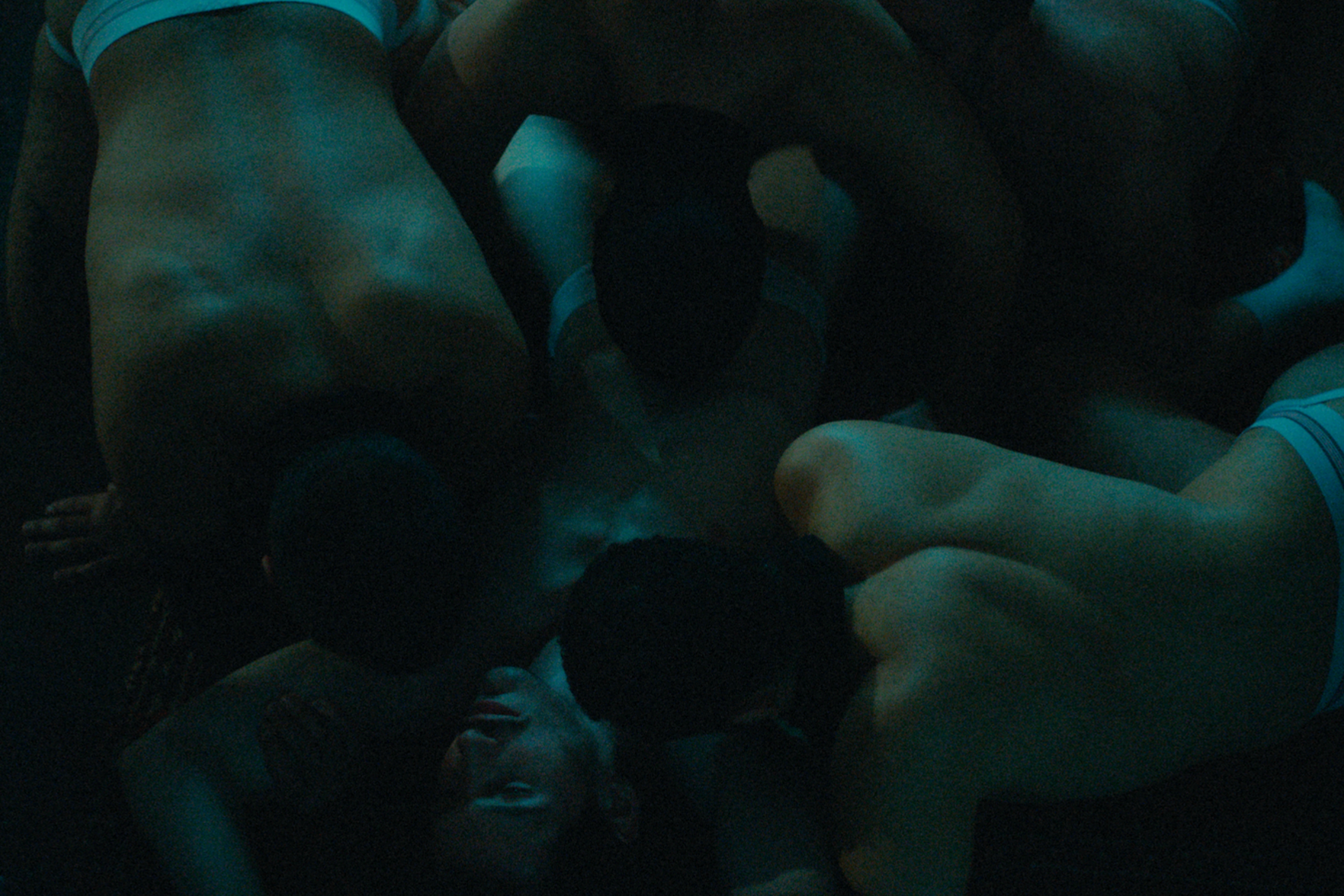
Castro's second feature, AFTER THIS DEATH, based on an original script he wrote, premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2025. He also teaches as an Adjunct Professor in the Graduate Film Program at NYU Tisch.



BARTON CORTRIGHT – CINEMATOGRAPHER

Barton Cortright is a cinematographer, whose recent credits include Joanna Arnow's THE FEELING THAT THE TIME FOR DOING SOMETHING HAS PASSED which premiered at Director's Fortnight at Cannes and went onto to play TIFF, NYFF and receive distribution through Magnolia Pictures. Other recent credits include Ricky D'Ambrose's THE CATHEDRAL (Venice, Sundance, ND/NF). THE CATHEDRAL won the John Cassavetes Award at the 2023 Film Independent Spirit Awards. Over the past 12 years he has lensed over 20 feature films, primarily in New York City. This is his second feature with director Lucio Castro.





CAST'S BIO



©Azelion Manuel

Laith Khalifeh is an actor and filmmaker based in New York City. He wrote and directed his first short film PARA VERME CIERRO LOS OJOS, developed under the guidance of filmmakers Lucrecia Martel, João Salaviza, and Renée Nader. DRUNKEN NOODLES by Lucio Castro, which will have its premiere at Acid Cannes, is his acting debut.

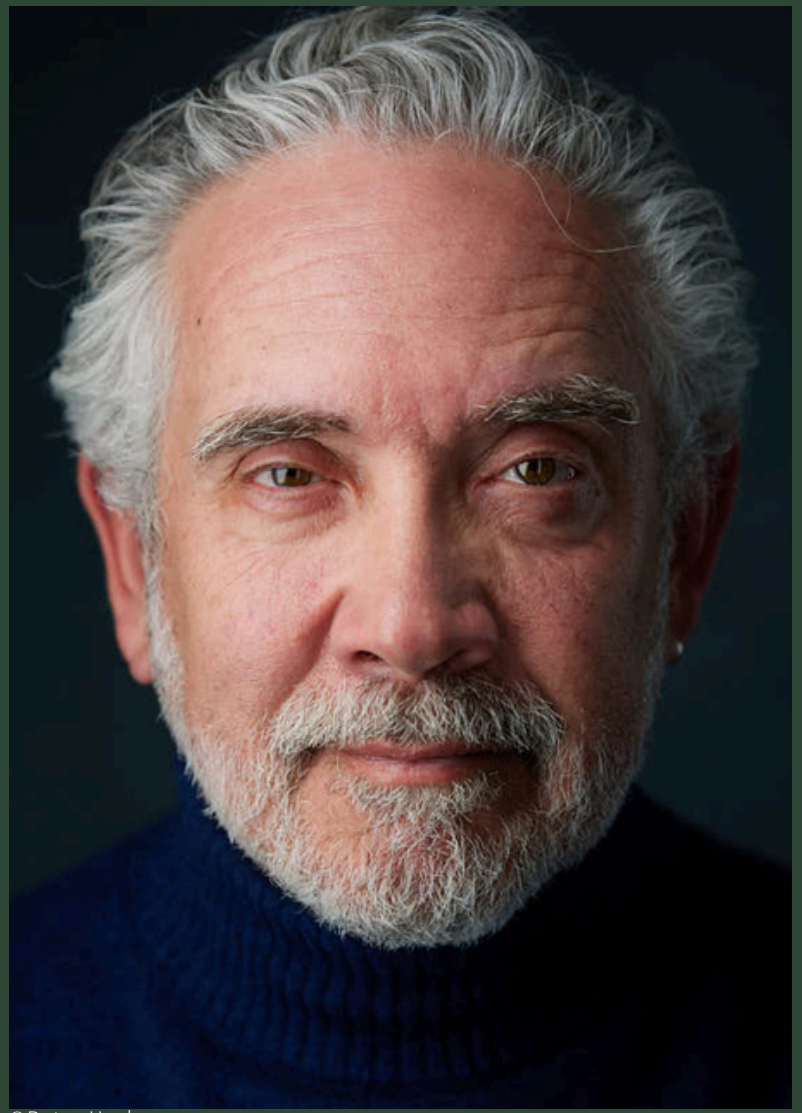


©Joelly Rodríguez

Joél Isaac is a classically trained actor with credits in Shakespeare's A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM as Oberon and Theseus, HAMLET as Polonius, THE CHERRY ORCHARD as Yepikhodov, and THE FANTASTICKS as Mortimer. He has performed in over 15 theatrical and film productions in Spanish and English.

In New York City, Joél trained at HB Studio and Stella Adler Studio of Acting. He started singing and acting at 5 years old. As a young kid, he was admitted to the Escuela de Bellas Artes de Carolina in Puerto Rico, where he was born and raised. He studied piano, folkloric dance and has a bachelor's degree in Audiovisual Production and Theatre from the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón.

His talents, range, and discipline have profiled him as one of the most complete figures of the current Puerto Rican generation of artists. Joél continues to train as an actor and singer in New York City, as well as being involved in developing theatre and writing his first film.



©Peter Hurley

Ezriel Kornel recently performed the role of Galba in the New York Theater Festival production of NERO, written by Doyle Judge and directed by Chris Carver. The play won the BEST PRODUCTION OF THE FESTIVAL Award. He performed the role of Ganesh in Terrence McNally's A PERFECT GANESH, directed by James Kyberd, and as the psychiatrist in Tom Kampinsky's DUET FOR ONE, directed by Sue Lawless. Ezriel recently completed filming the feature film THE RENAISSANCE OF ODDITY TODD, written and directed by Noah Marks. He also appeared in the feature film MOMA DUCK, written and directed by Shannon Walsh, as well as THE KARAMAZOVS, written and directed by Anne Brennan. Ezriel has appeared in numerous short films, winning the Lead Actor Award at the NYU Student Film Festival for his role in PINKIES, written and directed by Marcus Quinn. Ezriel has also performed in THE WATCHFUL EYE OF FRANK, written and directed by Marco Adly, ONE DOLLAR, written and directed by Jack Nixon, and TOMORROW MAY NEVER COME, written and directed by Aiza Zulkarnay. Ezriel has studied acting with several outstanding teachers including Penny Templeton, Harold Guskin, Josh Pais, and Jeffrey Tambor. He is winding down his day job of 41 years as a neurosurgeon as he devotes more of his time to his passion for acting.



©Gabriela Herman

Matthew Risch is most known for his work in television in such shows as HBO's LOOKING and Netflix's TALES OF THE CITY and BONDING. He has also recurred on ABC's MODERN FAMILY and HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER, as well as SAINT X, SWITCHED AT BIRTH, and YOUNGER, among others. He co-starred in the film TEST (2013) and was featured in SEX AND THE CITY 2. Prior to that, he starred on Broadway as Joey Evans in the 2008 revival of PAL JOEY, Trip Wyeth in OTHER DESERT CITIES, Carlos in the original company of LEGALLY BLONDE, and Fred Casely in CHICAGO. He also wrote and directed the horror short STRANGER OUT OF YOU, which played the festival circuit in 2019.

CREW

Directed by: Lucio Castro
Written by: Lucio Castro
Production company: Lucio Castro Inc. / Alsina 427
Producer: Lucio Castro, Barton Cortright
Coproducers: Joanne Lee, Julia Bloch
Cinematographer/DoP: Barton Cortright
Set Designer: Paloma Ruvira
Editor: Lucio Castro
Sound Editor/Mix: Robert Lombardo
Composer: Yegang Yoo and Robert Lombardo

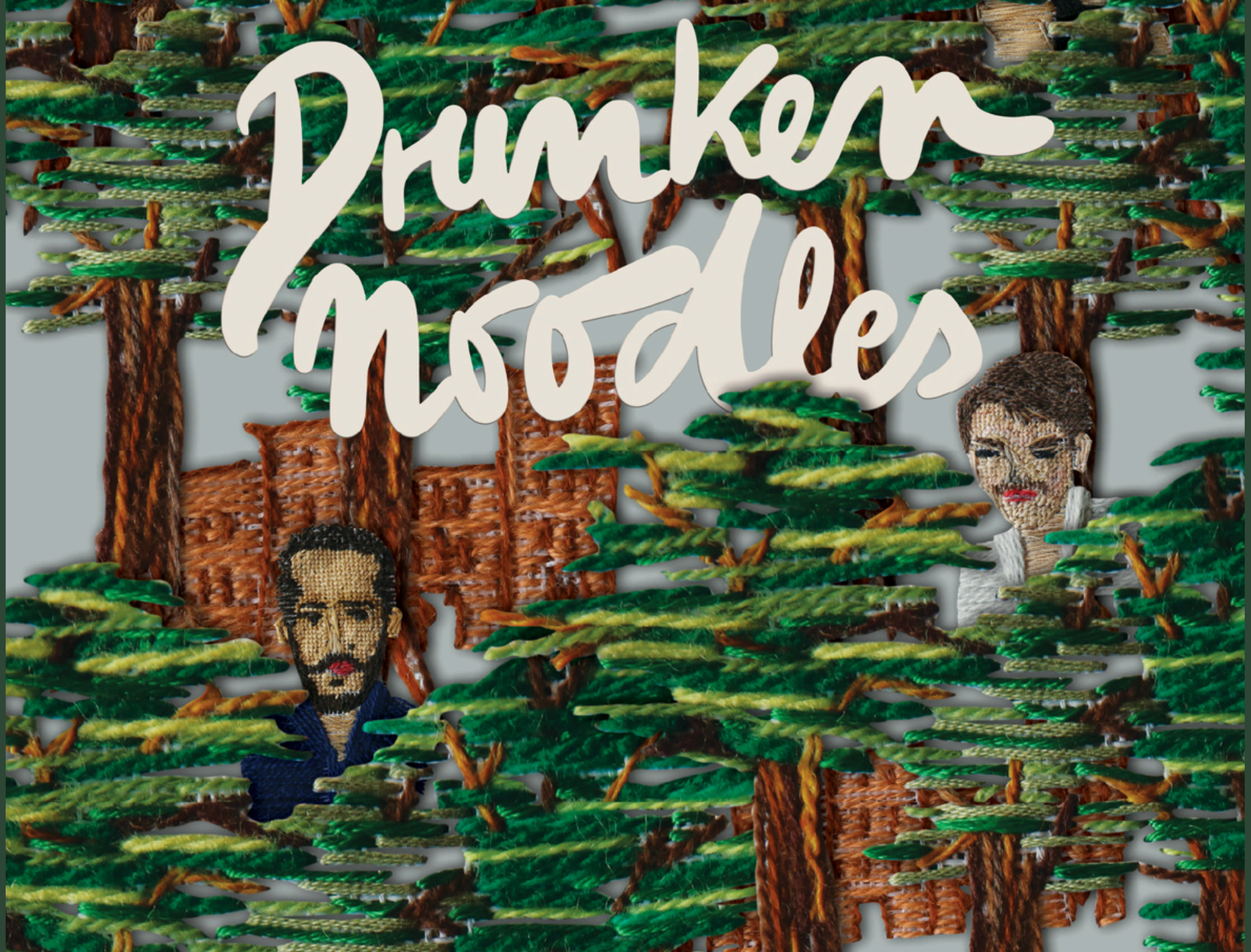
CAST

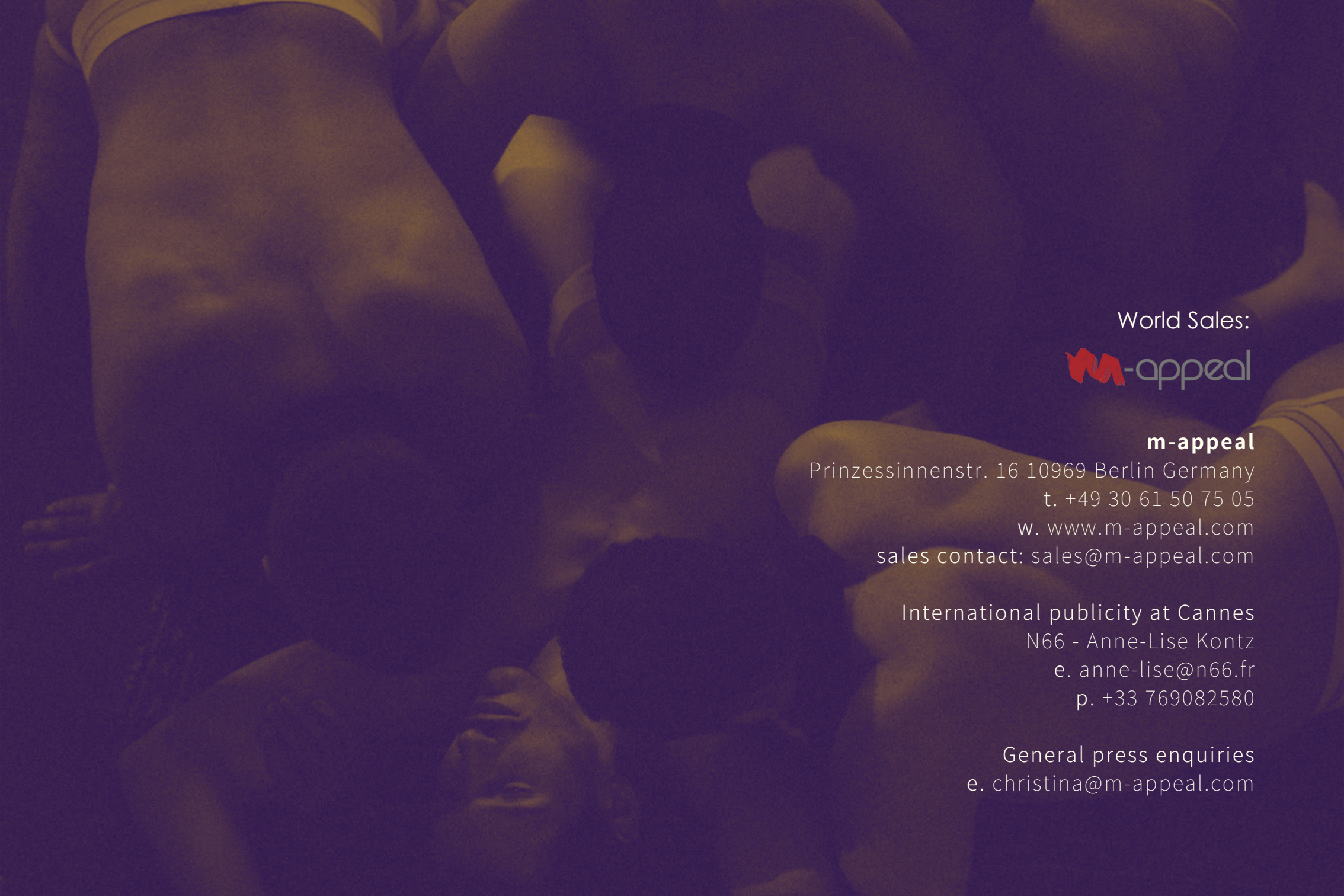
Laith Khalifeh - Adnan
Ezriel Kornel - Sal
Matthew Risch - Iggie
Joél Isaac - Yariel

LAITH KHALIFEH **JOÉL ISAAC** **EZRIEL KORNEL** **CÉLINE CLERMONTOIS** **JOHN ARTHUR PEETZ**
GUILLERMO GARCÍA ARRIAZA and **MATTHEW RISCH**

Written, directed and edited by **LUCIO CASTRO**

Cinematography by **BARTON CORTRIGHT** Original Score by **YEGANG YOO** and **ROBERT LOMBARDO** Costumes by **YEGANG YOO**
Sound design and re-recording mixing by **ROBERT LOMBARDO** Production Design by **PALOMA RUVIRA** Produced by **LUCIO CASTRO** & **BARTON CORTRIGHT**
Produced by **JOANNE LEE** & **JULIA BLOCH** Executive Producer **PIERCE VAROUS**


Drunken
Noodles



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