



76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin

Berlinale Panorama

THE GARDEN WE DREAMED

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO

THE GARDEN WE DREAMED

LOGLINE

In a land not their own, amid a fading forest,
a family carves out a fragile bubble of tenderness
- a fleeting garden of hope where love can still
take root

SYNOPSIS

Esther and Junior, a Haitian couple, undertake a journey to the northern part of the American continent with Esther's two daughters, Flor and Aisha, in pursuit of a better future. In central Mexico, they settle in a remote forest where illegal logging shapes both the lives of its inhabitants and the fragile forest that shelters them. As Junior grapples with the weight of his past and the family searches for their place in this unfamiliar environment, Esther becomes their anchor, cultivating moments of peace and care even as the world around them begins to fracture. Surrounded by Monarch butterflies migrating across the same landscapes, the family discovers in the forest a fleeting yet powerful space of love, and resilience.



Berlinale
76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Berlinale Panorama

THE GARDEN WE DREAMED

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO

AMONDO CINE and CÁRACA CINE in association with PENINSULA FILMS & ENTERTAINMENT, LOOKBOOK ENTERTAINMENT and TEOREMA in co-production with ATÓMICA.
PRODUCCIÓN ESPIRAL, ALERBIEJE PRODUCCIONES, THIRYAKI FILM, SULA ENTERTAINMENT, STELLIUM VFX and PIXEL. PRESENT A FILM BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO "THE GARDEN WE DREAMED"
STARRING NEREMIE BASTIEN, FAUSTIN PIERRE, KIMAILLE HOLLY PREVIL, RUTH AICHA PIERRE NELSON, CARLOS ESQUIVEL, MUSIC ROSALDO SISA, KYLE BIXON & MICHAEL STEIN
EDITING RAUL BARRERAS, SOUND DESIGN LENA ESQUEVIAZ, VALERIA MANCHEVA, COSTUME DESIGN GABRIELA GARCÍA, PRODUCTION DESIGN NICOLE SAGLES, FEDERICO CANTU
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY GÓRAN THIRYAKI, PRODUCED BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO, FERNANDA DE LA PIZA, ITZEL SIERRA, EDUARDO RÍAZ CASANOVA, CO-PRODUCED BY XAVIER LÓPEZ MIRANDA, MÓNICA LOZANO, MIA PADILLA, DIEGO SÁNCHEZ, ALEJANDRO SUGICH, GÓRAN THIRYAKI, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JUAN PABLO REINOSO, JOHN MOSS, ZACHARY DEREK, LINCIA DANIEL, ERENDIRA NÚÑEZ LARIOS, DANIELA MAUNG, BEATRIZ ELENA HERRERA BOURS, GERARDO MARTÍNEZ RUIZ, FRANCISCO JAVIER PADILLA GONZÁLEZ, NOAH MEISNER, EDUARDO LECUNA, JAVIER SEPULVEDA
SCREENPLAY BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO, DIRECTED BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO

AMONDO CÁRACA PENINSULA FILMS & ENTERTAINMENT LOOKBOOK ENTERTAINMENT TEOREMA ATÓMICA ESPIRAL ALERBIEJE PRODUCCIONES THIRYAKI FILM SULA ENTERTAINMENT STELLIUM VFX PIXEL PRESENT A FILM BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO "THE GARDEN WE DREAMED" NEREMIE BASTIEN FAUSTIN PIERRE KIMAILLE HOLLY PREVIL RUTH AICHA PIERRE NELSON CARLOS ESQUIVEL MUSIC ROSALDO SISA KYLE BIXON & MICHAEL STEIN EDITING RAUL BARRERAS SOUND DESIGN LENA ESQUEVIAZ VALERIA MANCHEVA COSTUME DESIGN GABRIELA GARCÍA PRODUCTION DESIGN NICOLE SAGLES FEDERICO CANTU DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY GÓRAN THIRYAKI PRODUCED BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO FERNANDA DE LA PIZA ITZEL SIERRA EDUARDO RÍAZ CASANOVA CO-PRODUCED BY XAVIER LÓPEZ MIRANDA MÓNICA LOZANO MIA PADILLA DIEGO SÁNCHEZ ALEJANDRO SUGICH GÓRAN THIRYAKI EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JUAN PABLO REINOSO JOHN MOSS ZACHARY DEREK LINCIA DANIEL ERENDIRA NÚÑEZ LARIOS DANIELA MAUNG BEATRIZ ELENA HERRERA BOURS GERARDO MARTÍNEZ RUIZ FRANCISCO JAVIER PADILLA GONZÁLEZ NOAH MEISNER EDUARDO LECUNA JAVIER SEPULVEDA SCREENPLAY BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO DIRECTED BY JOAQUÍN DEL PASO

International Title: THE GARDEN WE DREAMED

Original Title: EL JARDÍN QUE SOÑAMOS

Year: 2026

Country: Mexico

World Premiere: Berlinale 2026, Panorama

Genre: Fiction, Drama

Language: Haitian Creole, Spanish

Film running time: 100 min

Screening format: DCP

Shooting Format: Digital

Color: Color

Aspect ratio: 1:2,39

Speed/Frame Rate: 24 fps

Sound Format: Dolby Atmos

TRAILER

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This film is a study on two migrations: the delicate flight of the Monarch butterfly, which travels each year from the north of the American continent south to Mexico in search of warmth, and the human journey north from Central America and through Mexico in search of stability and possibility. They meet in a forest increasingly dismantled by illegal logging and the forces that profit from it. The relationship between the two creates a mirror and a metaphor - a landscape defined by both danger and fragile hope.

Living in central Mexico, I have witnessed the quiet disappearance of ancient trees alongside the arrival of Haitian families seeking to rebuild their lives. This reality led me to shift my creative direction, moving away from the satirical tone of my previous films toward a more intimate and human approach. Through the journey of Junior and Esther, I explore the tension between past wounds and the search for stability. While the narrative touches on social invisibility, it remains rooted in the warmth of the family unit.

I believe that even in the most precarious conditions, the human spirit seeks brightness. Beyond the thematic problems of our time, I wanted to capture the moments of play, the tenderness between parents and children, and the small acts of resilience that constitute a life. I want the film to serve as a vehicle for empathy, an invitation to see ourselves

in the "other." By focusing on the light that persists in the shadows of the forest, I hope to show that humanity's greatest strength is our capacity to care for one another when the world around us feels like it is falling apart.

Blending professional actors with Haitian and local non-professional performers, and working primarily in Haitian Creole, we sought authenticity that bridges fiction and lived experience. Collaborating with cinematographer Gökhan Tiryaki allowed us to treat the forest not as a backdrop, but as a living organism, intimate and vast at once. We aimed to capture the texture of rain, the density of the air, and the solitude of the woods.

The Garden We Dreamed is built on a balance of opposites: the ethereal magic of the butterflies and the harsh machinery of the logging sites. Through a narrative that moves from a bright family story into a growing, intimate tension, I want the audience to feel the weight of our social interdependence.

My intention is to open a conversation about the fragility of our environment and the human search for a place of peace, reminding us that, ultimately, hope remains our most vital resource in an increasingly volatile world.

DIRECTOR'S Q&A

Sound plays a powerful role in immersing us in the forest - the rain, the machinery, the silence. How did you conceive the soundscape as part of the emotional experience?

Sound designers Lena Esquenazi and Valeria Mancheva crafted an incredibly layered soundscape that mirrors the multiple realities of the film: the immersive forest experience, the contrast between the silence and the brutal sound of fallen trees or gunshots, and even the almost imperceptible flutter of a butterfly. These elements were beautifully balanced to create a complete experience where the viewer instantly feels in the shoes of our protagonists.

You shot in remote areas where the realities depicted in the film are present in daily life. What did working in those real locations demand from you - both creatively and ethically?

I wanted to create a film that felt from inside the conflict. Illegal logging is rarely depicted in films or the press, and never from such a close distance. The experience of migrating is also rarely seen with such intimacy. I wanted to bring the viewer to places they have never seen. This naturally meant planning very carefully and shooting in dangerous conditions, which thankfully never affected us because the warmth and humanity in the script expanded to everyone involved.

Working with Gökhan Tiryaki, how did you conceive a visual language that could capture both the intimacy of this family and the vastness of the forest - in a way that truly invites the audience to experience it on the big screen?

Before every scene and every shot, we discussed the feeling we wanted to convey: how the characters felt and what we wanted the audience to feel by watching them. We regulated our style in a completely emotional way, using the camera as a brush that painted a beautiful landscape each day. We were free, we improvised, and we repeated things when they did not work out. Thanks especially to Gökhan's experience, we achieved a perfect mix of poetry and extremely intense situations.

Were there particular cinematic references - visual, tonal, or atmospheric - that informed the visual style of the film?

Naturally, Nuri Bilge Ceylan's films were a reference on a spiritual level, while Ingmar Bergman's films informed the emotional level. However, the way we made the film was more connected to the cycle of nature, intuition, and inspiration. This allowed the film to feel completely original and self referential. I don't think I've seen a film like this one before.





CAST

Nehemie Bastien
Faustin Pierre
Kimaëlle Holly Preville
Rut Aicha Pierre Nelson
Carlos Esquivel

CREW

Director & Writer

Joaquín del Paso

Cinematographer

Gökhan Tiryaki

Set Designers

Nicole Sagues
Federico Cantú

Costume Designer

Gabriela Garciandía

Make up Designer

Licci Guerra
Jorge Fuentes

Editor

Raul Barreras

Sound Editor/Mix

Lena Esquenazi
Valeria Mancheva
Antonio Porem

Sound Recordist

Anuar Yahya Valdovinos

Composers

Rogelio Sosa
Kyle Dixon
Michael Stein

Production companies

Amondo Cine & Cárcava Cine

In association with

Península Films & Entertainment, Lookbook Entertainment, Teorema.

In coproduction with

Atómica, Producción Espiral, Alebrije Producciones, Tiryaki Film, Sula Entertainment, Stellium VFX, Pixel.

Producers

Joaquín del Paso, Fernanda de la Peza, Itzel Sierra, Eduardo Díaz Casanova

Coproducers

Xavier López Miranda, Mónica Lozano, Diego Sánchez, Mao Padilla, Alejandro Sugich, Gökhan Tiryaki

Executive Producers

Juan Pablo Reinoso, John Moss, Zachary Derek, Lincia Daniel, Eréndira Núñez Larios, Daniela Maung, Beatriz Elena Herrera Bours, Gerardo Martínez Ruiz, Francisco Javier Padilla González, Noah Meisner, Eduardo Lecuona, Javier Sepúlveda, Rodolfo Castillo Walker.





BIOGRAPHIES



JOAQUÍN DEL PASO

DIRECTOR

Born in Mexico City in 1986, Joaquín del Paso is a Mexican filmmaker known for incisive portraits of social hierarchies. Trained at EICTV in Cuba and the Polish National Film School in Łódź, he debuted with *Maquinaria Panamericana / Panamerican Machinery* (Berlinale 2016), winner of the Ariel for Best Original Screenplay. His second feature, *El hoyo en la cerca / The Hole in the Fence* (Venice 2021), won the Bisato d'Oro and Best Feature at Cairo. He also produced *Robe of Gems* (Silver Bear 2022) and Locarno winners *Love Dog* and *Sermon to the Fish*.



NÉHÉMIE BASTIEN

Born into a Christian family, orphaned of her mother, and trained at the Schenatsar Music School, Néhémie Bastien is a graduate of the ACTE School of Dramatic Arts in Haiti. A versatile actress and singer, she has rapidly emerged as a powerful voice in contemporary international cinema.

Bastien first garnered global attention for her breakthrough performance in Gessica Génés's critically acclaimed feature *Freda* (2021). The film premiered in the Un Certain Regard section at the Cannes Film Festival, where Bastien's portrayal of a young woman navigating the complexities of life in Port-au-Prince earned widespread praise for its emotional authenticity and nuance.

Continuing her rise on the international festival circuit, Bastien stars as Esther, the protagonist of the 2026 film *The Garden We Dreamed* (*El jardín que soñamos*), directed by Joaquín del Paso. The film, which explores the profound experiences of a family living in a foreign land, marked a major milestone in her career with its world premiere in the Panorama section of the 76th Berlinale.

Beyond the screen, Bastien is a gifted vocalist and performer whose artistic roots are deeply grounded in theater. Known for her magnetic presence, she consistently chooses projects that challenge traditional narratives, often centering the lived experiences of the Haitian diaspora and the intersection of cultural identity. Her filmography also includes notable productions such as *Kidnapping Inc.* and *At All Costs*.



FAUSTIN PIERRE

Faustin Pierre is a Haitian national, born on August 14, 1983, in Ouanaminthe, Haiti. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Education Sciences from La Salle University (ULSA) in Mexico City, graduated in 2015. In 2019, he furthered his academic background by earning a Master's degree in International Cooperation in Education and Training from Paris Descartes University in Paris, establishing a multicultural and international professional foundation.

A resident of Mexico for 14 years, he has built a distinguished career as a French language professor across all levels, blending pedagogical expertise with a deep intercultural sensitivity.

For the past four years, he has ventured professionally into the world of acting, honing his craft through various specialized courses, primarily at BM Casting. His commercial work includes appearances for prestigious global brands such as Coca-Cola, PlayStation, Lysol, and Flamin' Hot.

He has appeared in two feature films: *The Garden We Dreamed* (*El jardín que soñamos*, 2026), in which he plays a leading role, and *Mexico 86* (2026). As an actor, he possesses a keen interest in fiction and action cinema, genres that serve as his primary artistic and narrative inspirations.

Faustin Pierre successfully balances his vocation for education with his artistic growth, building a versatile career defined by discipline, continuous training, and a commitment to professional excellence.



RUT AICHA

Her parents and her two sisters crossed the Darién Gap on their way to Mexico. They eventually met our casting director and decided to settle in Mexico City, where they began rebuilding their lives. The girls are now in school and speak fluent Spanish.



HOLLY PREVILE

Born to Haitian parents who moved to Mexico to pursue their studies and ultimately decided to stay.



CARLOS ESQUIVEL

A native of the Amanalco region, Carlos makes his screen debut with this film.



GÖKHAN TIRYAKI

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Gökhan Tiryaki is an acclaimed Turkish cinematographer and director best known for his visually stunning collaborations with visionary filmmaker Nuri Bilge Ceylan on award-winning films like *Winter Sleep* and *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*. After beginning his career as a cameraman for TRT in the early 1990s, Tiryaki rose to international prominence for his mastery of light and composition, eventually becoming a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. While he remains a titan in the world of Turkish cinema with numerous Best Cinematography awards to his name, he has recently expanded his repertoire into directing, helming episodes for high-profile Netflix series such as *The Protector* and *The Gift*.



FERNANDA DE LA PEZA

PRODUCER

Fernanda de la Peza is an award-winning Mexican film producer and editor who has played a vital role in some of the most critically acclaimed works of contemporary Latin American cinema. After studying Communications at the Universidad Iberoamericana and Fordham University, she began her career working as an assistant director on landmark films such as Carlos Reygadas' *Silent Light* (Cannes Jury Prize 2007) and *Post Tenebras Lux* (Cannes Best Director 2012). She is a founding partner of Cárcava Cine and is best known for her producing and editing work on Amat Escalante's films, including the Venice Film Festival Silver Lion winner *The Untamed* (2016) - for which she won an Ariel Award for Best Editing - and *Lost in the Night*, which premiered at Cannes 2023. Her extensive portfolio also includes producing Joaquín del Paso's *The Hole in the Fence*, which debuted at Venice 2021 and won Best Film at the Cairo International Film Festival, and Natalia López Gallardo's *Robe of Gems*, which received the Silver Bear Jury Prize at the Berlinale 2022.

EDUARDO DÍAZ CASANOVA

PRODUCER

Eduardo Díaz Casanova producer, founder and CEO of Península Films & Entertainment, has established himself as a powerhouse in Mexican cinema by bridging the gap between massive commercial hits and prestigious, socially conscious documentaries. His portfolio includes the box-office success *Hasta que la boda nos separe*, the Ariel-nominated *Danyka*, and the award-winning documentaries *Cartas a distancia* and *El Guardián de las Monarcas*. Currently, Casanova is expanding his global footprint through high-profile collaborations with Netflix and major producers like Monica Lozano, leading upcoming projects such as the hit series *Nadie nos vio partir*, the Juan Carlos Rulfo documentary *Binnizá*, and *Ciudad de muertos* (formerly *El Ojo Infinito*), a period piece inspired by the legendary photographer Enrique Metinides.

ITZEL SIERRA

PRODUCER

Itzel Sierra is a Mexican producer and actress known for her work in independent and binational cinema, including the 2026 Berlinale Panorama film *El jardín que soñamos*. In 2023, she co-founded Pink Lemonade Productions, a Mexico and Los Angeles-based company focused on projects bridging the two countries. She currently develops and produces international co-productions, such as *El Adiós* starring Adriana Barraza, alongside various new projects both in Mexico and abroad.

KYLE DIXON & MICHAEL STEIN

COMPOSERS

Kyle Dixon & Michael Stein (composers) are Emmy-winning and Grammy-nominated composers from Dallas, Texas, best known for creating the synth-heavy, nostalgic score for the Netflix series *Stranger Things*. The duo, who met as teenagers at a local skate park, are also members of the Austin-based electronic band S U R V I V E, which specializes in instrumental music performed on analog synthesizers. Their transition into film scoring began when the Duffer Brothers used their music as a placeholder for the *Stranger Things* pitch, eventually hiring them to compose the series' now-iconic theme and scores. Beyond their television success, they have composed music for films such as Joaquín del Paso's *The Hole in the Fence* (2021), the drama *Native Son* (2019), and the horror-thriller *The Retaliators* (2021), as well as series like National Geographic's *Valley of the Boom*. Their work is characterized by a lifelong obsession with vintage hardware and a distinct "neon noir" aesthetic that blends classic 1980s tones with modern electronic textures.

ROGELIO SOSA

COMPOSER

Rogelio Sosa is a distinguished Mexican composer, sound artist, and electronic music curator whose work bridges the gap between avant-garde electroacoustic composition and contemporary cinema. After honing his craft at prestigious institutions like IRCAM in France, he became a central figure in Mexico's experimental scene, directing the Aural Festival and producing visceral albums such as *Daturas* and *Eclíptica*. In the realm of film, Sosa is recognized for his atmospheric and tension-driven scores for features like Gonzalo Tobal's *The Accused* (*Acusada*) and Julio Hernández Cordón's *Buy Me a Gun* (*Cómprame un revólver*), as well as his experimental sound interventions for cinematic classics like Luis Buñuel's *L'age d'or*. His artistic signature - a blend of ritualistic noise, dark drones, and "neon noir" textures - continues to define his contributions to both live audiovisual performances and traditional film scoring.

RAÚL BARRERAS

EDITOR

Raúl Barreras is a distinguished Basque film editor and director who has built an international reputation for his work across Spain and Latin America. A graduate of the prestigious EICTV in Cuba, he is best known for his meticulous editing on the multi-award-winning drama *20,000 Species of Bees* (*20.000 especies de abejas*, 2023), which earned him a Goya Award nomination for Best Editing and achieved widespread acclaim at the Berlinale. His editorial portfolio includes a diverse range of high-profile projects, such as the surrealist workplace comedy *Maquinaria Panamericana* by Joaquín del Paso (2016) and the Nicaraguan feature *Daughter of Rage* (2022). In addition to his prolific career in the editing room, Barreras has successfully transitioned into directing, making a notable professional debut with his award-winning short film *Arnasa* (2022) while continuing to shape the landscape of contemporary Ibero-American cinema.

LENA ESQUENAZI

SOUND DESIGNER

Lena Esquenazi is a premier sound designer whose work has defined the sonic identity of contemporary Latin American cinema. A six-time Ariel Award winner, she has achieved significant international success, most notably earning the Best Sound Creation Award at the Cannes Film Festival for the acclaimed drama *Noche de Fuego* (2021). Her career is marked by high-profile collaborations with directors like Tatiana Huezo and Alejandro Landes, leading to prestigious honors such as the Platino Award for *Monos* (2019) and a Berlinale Best Documentary award for *El Eco* (2023). Recognized as a master of her craft, Esquenazi's influence extends from major feature films to recent high-end streaming projects like the Juan Gabriel Netflix bioseries *Quiero Debo y Puedo*.

VALERIA MANCHEVA

CO-SOUND DESIGNER

Valeria Mancheva (Co-Sound Designer) is an accomplished sound editor and designer whose work spans acclaimed international features and documentaries. A graduate of Cuba's prestigious EICTV, she is known for her technical precision and creative soundscapes, frequently collaborating with industry leaders like Lena Esquenazi. Her portfolio includes contributions to Alejandro G. Iñárritu's *Bardo* (2022) and the documentary *En la Caliente: Tales of a Reggaeton Warrior*. Beyond technical sound work, she has also expanded into directing and screenwriting, reinforcing her reputation as a versatile talent in contemporary Ibero-American cinema.





An international film collective based in Mexico City and Warsaw. Founded by graduates of the Polish National Film School in Łódź, the company focuses on independent arthouse features and documentaries with a strong artistic identity. They are known for high-profile festival titles like *Maquinaria Panamericana* (Berlinale), *The Hole in the Fence* (Venice), *Robe of gems* (Berlinale), *Sermon to the fish* (Locarno) and *Love Dog* (Locarno). They are in the post production of *Margarethe Doesn't Want to be Seen Dancing* by Gabriel Herrera Torres.

PENÍNSULA

FILMS & ENTERTAINMENT

Founded in 2018 by Eduardo Díaz Casanova, this Mexican production house focuses on bridging the gap between culture and commercial industry. Their portfolio is diverse, ranging from Ariel-nominated films like *Danyka* and documentaries like *The Guardian of the Monarchs* (Netflix) to successful theatrical comedies like *Hasta que la boda nos separe*.



A Mexico City-based production house founded in 2018 by Fernanda de la Peza, dedicated to auteur and independent cinema, dedicated to independent auteur cinema. Its work focuses on accompanying projects with a singular vision, supporting both established filmmakers and emerging voices from the national and international scene. Since its inception, the company has fostered international co-productions as a form of creative dialogue between artists from different countries, strengthening networks of collaboration and circulation. Its films have been selected at festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin, San Sebastián, Turin, Tribeca, and Ventana Sur.

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR



Pimienta Films is an independent production and distribution company based in Mexico City, founded in 2008 by Nicolás Celis. The company produces bold, author-driven fiction and documentary features and has developed strong international co-production partnerships across the Americas and Europe.

Pimienta Films has collaborated with internationally renowned filmmakers such as Alfonso Cuarón, Amat Escalante, Tatiana Huezo, Ciro Guerra, Cristina Gallego, James Franco, and Yuri Bykov, earning international critical acclaim while continuing to champion new talent.

World Sales:



m-appeal

Prinzessinnenstr. 16 10969 Berlin Germany

+49 30 61 50 75 05

www.m-appeal.com

sales@m-appeal.com

International publicity Berlin

Mirjam Wiekenkamp

NOISE Film & TV

mirjam@noisefilmpr.com

General press enquiries

joao@m-appeal.com

