

WITFILM AND KLOOS & CO. MEDIEN PRESENT A CO-PRODUCTION WITH FILM UNIVERSITY BABELSBERG KONRAD WOLF AND BNN AND RBB IN COLLABORATION WITH ARTE
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NEW HEROES OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

TRANSIT HAVANA

A film by DANIEL ABMA

WITH WITH MALU CAÑO VALLADERES, ODETTE DIÓGENES DOMÍNGUEZ RODRÍQUEZ, JUANY SANTOS PERÉZ, MARIELA CASTRO ESPÍN, STAN MONSTREY, MARLON BUNCAMPER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOHANNES PAUS EDITOR JANA DUGNUS MUSIC ALEX SIMU SCRIPT ALEX BAKKER SOUND ALEXANDRA PRAET SOUND DESIGN JEROEN GOEIJERS, ALEXANDRA PRAET
DESIGN BARBARA PILIPP LINE PRODUCER NAZIMA MINTJES, VERONIKA JANATKOVÁ LINE PRODUCER CUBA CARLOS BUSTAMANTE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT CATHRIN GOEBEL COMMISSIONING EDITORS
SJOERD VAN DEN BROEK (BNN), DAGMAR MIELKE (RBB/ARTE), JENS STUBENRAUCH (RBB) PRODUCED BY IRIS LAMMERTSMA, BOUDEWIJN KOOLE (WITFILM), STEFAN KLOOS (KLOOS &
CO. MEDIEN) DIRECTED BY DANIEL ABMA SUPPORTED BY THE NETHERLANDS FILM FUND, COBO, GERMAN FEDERAL FILM BOARD, GERMAN FEDERAL FILM FUND WORLD SALES RISE AND SHINE

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TRANSIT HAVANA

NEW HEROES OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

A FILM BY DANIEL ABMA

SHORT LOGLINE:

President's daughter Mariela Castro organizes support and treatment for Cuban transgender people. Is the socialist island changing into a queer paradise?



LOGLINE:

In Havana, transsexuals Odette, Juani and Malú wait for genital surgery - performed by European top surgeons and organized by the president's daughter, Mariela Castro. Castro is leading a sexual revolution combined with classic state socialism. New possibilities face old problems: will Cuban trans people find happiness despite intolerance, poverty and prostitution?

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

Once a year, two plastic surgeons from Holland and Belgium fly to Havana to perform surgery on five Cuban transgender persons. The surgeons are invited by Mariela Castro, daughter of the president and head of the new state program for transgender care.

Castro organizes this as a modern completion of the socialist revolution of 1959 because, in her words, it is all about emancipation and self-realization. 'Homophobia no, socialismo si!' is the official slogan. The state helps transgender people with therapy, hormones, surgery and a new identity.

Is Cuba changing into a safe haven for trans people? For more than one year, filmmakers Daniel Abma and Alex Bakker follow the three main characters Odette, Juani and Malú and show how they deal with the reality of being transgender in Cuba. As 'new heroes of the revolution' they still face religious intolerance, discrimination, sexism, poverty and often a life in prostitution. Meanwhile they wait for the foreign surgeons to give them what they want most in life. Are their names among the five on this year's surgery list?

The documentary features the historic day when presidents Castro and Obama suddenly announce new diplomatic relations, creating great expectations among the main characters. 'TRANSIT HAVANA – New Heroes of the Cuban Revolution' gives us a unique insight into the paradoxes of Cuba, showing a surprising side of an island in transition.



LONG SYNOPSIS:

Once a year, two plastic surgeons from Holland and Belgium fly to Havana to perform surgery on five Cuban trans persons. The surgeons are invited by Mariela Castro, daughter of the president and head of the program for transgender care.

She started this program as a modern completion of the socialist revolution of 1959 because, in her words, it is all about emancipation and self-realization. The state now offers full medical treatment for Cuban transgender people, including psychological support, cross-sex hormones and sex reassignment surgery. All expenses are paid and transgender men and women can legally change their ID.

Transgender rights are part of Mariela Castro's heartfelt cause to improve the lives of LGBT Cubans. At the annual Gay Pride Mariela Castro leads the parade, shouting with hundreds the slogan 'Homophobia no, socialismo si!'. Since it is official policy, there is no public opposition to gay rights. But the history of intolerance in Cuba is still alive and makes it hard for transgender people to find a place in society.

Filmmakers Daniel Abma and Alex Bakker investigate the quality of life for Cuban transgender people and follow for more than one year how the three main characters Odette, Juani and Malú deal with the reality of being transgender in Cuba. As 'new heroes of the revolution' they still face religious intolerance, discrimination, sexism, poverty and often a life in prostitution. Meanwhile they wait for the foreign surgeons to give them what they want most in life. Are their names among the five on this year's surgery list?

Odette (38) still lives with her mother and grandmother. They don't accept her as a trans woman but Odette has no other place to go. From the main house she had to move into the garage next door. She tries to win her family's support and that of the church as religion plays a huge role in her life. Will Odette manage to free herself from the grip of her family and have the sex reassignment surgery?



Juani (64) is the first official transsexual person in Cuba. A warm-hearted character, he lives with his brother and, although very poor, he is a strong believer in the socialist state and loves Mariela Castro. Last year the European surgeons made his dream come true and constructed him a penis. Now he wants to 'breathe life into Pancho' and hopes to get an erection implant.

Malú (28) is the respected and somewhat feared leader of the Cuban trans community. She changed her life from the bottom to the top. Once a prostitute, she now helps others who work the streets, tries to keep them safe and healthy, even if it means bitching to them. Her whole life is devoted to the transgender cause. She has seen twenty other trans women get the operation, when will it be her turn?

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THE DIRECTOR:

Daniel Abma was born in 1978 in the Netherlands. He previously studied Primary school education and worked as a youth worker in Berlin and Brandenburg. He studied film directing at the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF, with a focus on documentaries. His film NACH WRIEZEN (Beyond Wriezen) was shown at IDFA and at numerous other festivals and won, among others, the prestigious GRIMME AWARD in Germany. His follow up HOLLANDA DEL SOL competed at DOKLeipzig, DOK.Fest Munich and in Krakow. TRANSIT HAVANA is his debut film.

CREDITS:

A Co-production of
with

in collaboration with
supported by

Script
Directort
Camera
Editing
Sound
Sounddesign

Music
Producer

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