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A ZEITGEIST FILMS RELEASE

DON'T CALL ME SON

A film by Anna Muylaert

Tall, dark, androgynously handsome, Pierre wears eyeliner and a black lace g-string, while having sex with both boys and girls. The confusion only goes deeper when the teenager's single, working-class mom is arrested for having stolen him (and his "sister") at birth. Thanks to the wonders of DNA, he's returned to his biological parents: bourgeois, straight-laced and thrilled to have him back -- at least until he shows up in a zebra-print mini dress. The turmoil of adolescence is plumbed with wit and compassion by writer/director Anna Muylaert, whose earlier film, *The Second Mother*, also dealt with familial loyalty and class tensions. Actress Dani Nefussi gives completely believable knock-out performances as *both* mothers, and newcomer Naomi Nero defies expectations as a broodingly intense, potentially volcanic six-footer in stiletto heels.

-Karen Cooper, Director, Film Forum

ANNA MUYLEAERT

Writer & Director

Born in São Paulo in 1964, Anna Muylaert studied cinema at ECA/ USP where she directed many shorts, among them the awarded *The Origin of Babies* (winner best film São Paulo Film Festival). She has directed the feature films *Durval Discos* (2002), winner of the Jury, Critics and Audience awards for Best Film at Festival de Gramado; *É Proibido Fumar* (2008), winner of the Jury and Critics awards for Best Film at Festival de Brasília; *Collect Call* (2013); and *The Second Mother* (2015) which won the Special Jury Award for Acting at Sundance Film Festival and the Audience Award for Best Film in the Panorama Section at the Berlin Film Festival. *The Second Mother* was sold to over 30 countries.

She was a film reviewer at *Estadão* and *Isto É*. Anna was on the creation team of the children's TV series *Mundo da Lua* and the hugely successful *Castelo Ratimbum*, at TV Cultura. She also collaborated on the scripts of the features *O Ano em que Meus Pais saíram de Férias* and *Xingu* by Cao Hamburger, *Praia do Futuro* by Karim Ainouz, and the TV series *Filhos do Carnaval*, *Alice and Preamar*, at HBO. In 2013 she directed the teleplay *Alem de tudo me deixou mudo o violão* and was the director the TV series *As Canalhas*.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNA MUYLELAERT

You are the screenwriter of your films and co-writer of several works for cinema and TV. How was it to start from a real life situation to create the story for *Don't Call Me Son*?

The basis of the plot of *Don't Call Me Son* is a very famous case in Brazil. The character of the first mother has even been used in soap operas, but no one really talked about the situation of the son. I wanted to develop this situation because I thought that in a symbolic way, every child has to change its mother and family when they become teenagers and start to show new sides of their personality that the family won't love as much as they used to when this child was a toddler.

Is that why you chose the same actress, Dani Nefussi, to play both mothers?

Exactly. I wanted the character to live a continuum: Although Pierre leaves his first mother he will soon meet her again in the face of the second mother. I chose that because I believe that our mothers shape the way we look at things in the very beginning and unless we make a lot of effort to change this, they will always be there in our subconscious, intermediating our relationship with life. But Dani Nefussi is such a great actress – and the makeup/ wardrobe characterization is so well done – that very few people notice that both moms are played by the same person.

With your previous film, *The Second Mother*, you achieved great success from both critics and audiences, and the film won awards at several festivals around the world, causing a major debate about social classes. How do you think *Don't Call Me Son* will be received? What do you expect from the film?

I see *The Second Mother* as the film of my maturity, a crowd-pleasing film that took me 20 years of work as a person, as a mother and as a filmmaker. It's the blossom of many characteristics that I have been working already in my previous films. *Don't Call Me Son* represents a break. In terms of style it's totally different of all my other films. I normally work with steady shooting and this one is filmed all with hand-held camera. And also in terms of storytelling, this is a younger film, full of locations and different situations, gaps and mystery. So, I don't know how it's going to be received, but it's certainly a break. Later I will probably come back to my old classic way, but at this moment I am very excited about doing a more provocative film.

How do you chose your crew?

Cinema is an art of the crew. Finding the right crew is maybe the most important action a director takes. After many years I have recently found the director of photography who really collaborates best with my storytelling: Barbara Alvarez from Uruguay (*Whisky, The Headless Woman*). She and Thales Junqueira (my art director) both understand deeply that in my directing I am never looking for beauty but I am looking for life, for authenticity.

You once again have a very eclectic but relevant cast, famous Brazilian actors as well as new faces. How do you choose the actors you're working with?

I look for actors/authors – I like actors that can contribute to their characters, who can improvise, who can create more something beyond the material I give to them, I like to be surprised by their performances. So, this is basically what I look for. Sometimes, I think of a famous actor for the leading role, but in *Don't Call me Son*, I looked for the most authentic teenagers. And I called Matheus Nachtergaele because I really like his strength on the screen and I really felt like working with him.

With *Don't Call Me Son* you're experiencing sensuality in filmmaking. Is it something you usually like to express through cinema or is it a new direction you're exploring?

It's totally a new direction. I think I began to make films when my first son was born 21 years ago. All these years I dedicated my life and my films to being a mother, staying at home, educating. Now that my kids are old enough to take care of themselves more, I felt more free to get out of the house and started to have a nightlife, for example. And at parties I met young people and discovered many new things that didn't exist when I was younger. I found it very exciting and decided to bring it into this film.

After the acclaimed *The Second Mother*, you go back to Berlin with a film that has a very generous look at the son's character. Do you believe *Don't Call Me Son* can encourage a discussion on the choices of a generation?

I hope so. This is a film that claims for the right of being whoever you want to be and it also doesn't let you categorise the main character in any way. That's what's most disturbing and fascinating about this film. You just can't put the protagonist in any box!

DON'T CALL ME SON

CAST

Naomi Nero Pierre / Felipe
Daniel Botelho Joca
Dani Nefussi Arcay / Glória
Matheus Nachtergaele Matheus
Lais Dias Jaqueline
Luciana Paes Tia Yara
Helena Albergaria Sueli
June Dantas Walmissa
Renan Tenca René
Luciano Bortoluzzi Marcelo

CREW

Camera **Barbara Alvarez**
Editor **Helio Villela Nunes**
Music (original Score) **Berna Ceppas**
Sound Design **Ricardo Reis**
Sound **Gabriela Cunha**
Production Design **Thales Junqueira**
Costumes **Diogo Costa**
Make up **Amanda Mirage / Westerley Dornellas**
Casting **Patricia Faria**
Assistant Director **Marcelo Caetano / Leonardo Rocha**
Production Manager **Cristina Alves**

PRODUCERS

Maria Ionescu - Sara Silveira - Anna Muylaert

Brazil - 2016 - 82 mins - Color - Aspect Ratio 1.89:1 - DCP and Blu-ray
In Portuguese with English subtitles

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