



EL FUTURO PERFECTO

THE FUTURE PERFECT

A film by Nele Wohlatz



VIENNALE

cph pix

Ji.hlava
2017



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Storyline

Xiaobin llegó de China a Argentina. Prueba nombres españoles como si fuesen vestuarios, a ver cuál le queda bien. Intenta nuevos gestos para darle un cuerpo a su nuevo rol. Habla un idioma a pesar de que no lo domina, hasta que se convence a sí misma de su habla. Y mientras tanto, usa la película como sala de ensayo para probar sus futuro posibles

Una película de Nele Wohlatz

Producida por Murillo Cine & Nele Wohlatz

Con el apoyo del Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales (INCAA) y Mecenazgo Cultural Buenos Aires.

65 min.

Color

DCP 5.1

1:1:85

Idiomas: Español y Chino mandarín

Subtítulos en Inglés

Año de producción: 2016

MURILLO
CINE

INCAA
INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE CINE Y ARTES AUDIOVISUALES

MECENAZGO CULTURAL
BUENOS AIRES

TALENTS

BAL
BUENOS AIRES LAB

DOC MONTEVIDEO
LABORATORIO DE CINE Y AUDIOVISUAL

Cast

Xiaobin Zhang, Saroj Kumar Malik, Mian Jiang, Dong Xi Wang, Nahuel Pérez Biscayart

Guión y Dirección

Nele Wohlatz

Producción ejecutiva

Cecilia Salim

Dirección de Fotografía

Roman Kasseroller
& Agustina San Martín

Edición

Ana Godoy

Dirección de sonido

Nahuel Palenque

Productor asociado

Gustavo Beck

Productoras

Cecilia Salim & Nele Wohlatz





VERDUL

米果

Sinopsis

Xiaobin tiene 17 años y cuando llega a la Argentina no habla una palabra de español. Sin embargo, a los pocos días ya tiene un nuevo nombre, Beatriz, y un primer trabajo en un supermercado chino. Su familia vive en el mundo paralelo de su verdadero, alejado de los argentinos. Xiaobin guarda dinero en secreto y se inscribe en una escuela de idiomas. Lo que aprende

ahí, lo ensaya en la calle. Después de la clase sobre “arreglar citas”, cita a un cliente indio del supermercado. Con Vijay apenas se pueden comunicar, sin embargo, empiezan un noviazgo secreto. Cuando practican el condicional, Xiaobin empieza a pensar sobre su futuro. ¿Qué podría pasar si sus padres se enteran de su relación con él? Cuanto mejor

es su español, Xiaobin más interviene en la escritura del guión de la película. Sus compañeros chinos comentan los sucesos desde el aula como un coro. El futuro perfecto se convierte en una sala de ensayos para su nueva vida.





Notas del Director

Los libros de idioma nos enseñan frases como *“El perro es gris. El gato es blanco”* o *“María atiende clientes por teléfono y vende pasajes de avión. Es agente de viajes”*. No somos los autores de esas frases ni sirven siempre para lo que deseamos decir. Son el texto de un rol que aún no conocemos, que es incómodo. Para manejarnos en un idioma extranjero, lo tenemos que actuar. Puede llevar semanas o meses hasta que un actor se apropia de su nuevo texto, y aún más hasta que un inmigrante se convence del nuevo rol que viene con su nuevo lenguaje.

Esto me pasó a mí después de que me mudé de Alemania a Argentina en el 2009. Pensaba que nunca iba a ser parte de la multitud que forma esta sociedad, igual a Xiaobin que una vez me dijo: *“Cuando estoy esperando en la parada del colectivo quiero parecerme a todos los demás. Cuando tenga dinero, voy a operarme los ojos y los cachetes”*.

Doy clases de alemán y en la escuela de idiomas conocí a Xiaobin. La primera vez que la vi estaba actuando en una obra de teatro que presentaban los estudiantes chinos. Justo había empezado a estudiar español y le costaba gran esfuerzo decir simples frases. Toda su concentración estaba en el habla, su cuerpo solo hizo gestos mínimos. Su texto era ficticio, pero su habla era real, testimonio del conflicto

que le producía su nueva ciudadanía, su nuevo lenguaje y el nuevo contexto. Era muy distinta a la actuación de actores no-profesionales que había visto hasta entonces. Pasamos por un proceso largo de ensayos, primero con Xiaobin, después con otros estudiantes chinos de la escuela de idiomas, para investigar este habla ambiguo en el que se confunde la actuación de un lenguaje con la de un rol. Xiaobin tiene 18 años, está a un paso de la adultez y tiene que encontrar su yo argentino contra la voluntad de sus padres. Como una actriz que aprendió a enfrentarse con las incertezas de un nuevo rol, Xiaobin se enfrenta con lo nuevo sin miedo. Escribimos el guión en colaboración, en un proceso en el que ella se pudo poner a prueba, reinventarse. Como consecuencia, la película también incluye a sus ideas del futuro, en diferentes variaciones. *El futuro perfecto* trata de la adaptación de una extranjera a su nuevo mundo, y su condición de extranjera define su modo de actuación, la estructura dramática, el dispositivo fílmico.



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N 9.00
9.00
17.00
25.00
20.00



Prensa

*"It takes skill to successfully handle heavy issues with a light touch, but that's what German-born, Argentina-based writer-director Nele Wohlatz pulls off with her delightfully original documentary/fiction hybrid, *The Future Perfect*. This wryly amusing, intriguingly stylized tale of a Chinese teenager in Buenos Aires was named best debut feature when premiering in the 'Filmmakers of the Present' sidebar at Locarno – beating a 20-strong field that included no less a rival than Golden Leopard winner *Godless*. (...) *The Future Perfect* has successfully touched on complex themes of immigration, identity and the role of language in personal development and social interactions – all on an obviously minuscule budget, and in a running time exactly half that of, say, *Suicide Squad*."*

Neil Young (Hollywood Reporter)

"Sharply self-reflexive, with a serious underlay of philosophical inquiry, the film features a deliciously downbeat performance from Zhang Xiaobin. It's simply a delight to find a film that's so insightful about issues of identity, exile, language and self—and at the same time, so elegantly funny."

Jonathan Romney (Film Comment)

*"Few films this year have felt as assured as Nele Wohlatz's lovable Bressonian comedy of manners *El Futuro Perfecto*, which just won the First Feature prize at the Locarno Film Festival. At sixty-five minutes, it was not only the briskest film playing at the festival but also one of the sharpest. A comedy about a Chinese expat living in Argentina, Wohlatz's film proved a kind of antidote to festival fatigue: It's funny, straightlaced, and smart—a wry, surehanded spin on the documentary form with a subtle but rigorous use of offscreen space. And like the best of Bresson, it depends in large part on the presence of the lead nonactor, in this case the great first-time performer Zhang Xiaobin."*

Christopher Small (Fandor)

*"La película -que evita el pintoresquismo y los lugares comunes- jamás deja de fascinar. Hay tantas búsquedas e ideas en *El futuro perfecto* que se le perdona su "presente imperfecto". Se trata de un ensayo, una reconstrucción ficcional y un diario íntimo sobre lo que significa para una joven extranjera conocer y ganarse un lugar en una urbe hostil como Buenos Aires."*

Diego Battle (Otros Cines)

*"El Futuro Perfecto es una obra que le hubiera gustado a Wittgenstein, ya que presenta la realidad como una creación del lenguaje. Pero también hay otro modo, más político, de entender este trabajo, que hace referencia al recorrido de desarraigo y autoexclusión al que el inmigrante se ve sometido. Sin embargo, *El Futuro Perfecto* no transita los tonos del cine social; cuenta con la ligereza de los relatos de Rohmer. Y como en el caso del maestro francés, la simplicidad es sólo aparente"*

Carlo Chatrion (Festival del Film Locarno)



Language As a Rehearsal Space: *Excerpts from an interview with Nele Wohlatz in MUBI*

NOTEBOOK:

Like your main characters Xiaobin (Xiaobin Zhang) and Vijay (Saroj Kumar Malik), you also migrated from another country to Argentina. How much does the film mirror your own experience and how did you conceive your approach as a filmmaker to this subject?

NELE WOHLATZ:

When I first had the idea for the film, I was living in Argentina for 3 or 4 years and I was still confused about myself being part of that society. Living far away from my mother tongue and not being able to catch the finer parts of my everyday language made me feel inept as a film director. So I thought, if I don't feel part of the inner society, I should make something out of my foreign perspective.

I happened to teach German to make a living, so I asked in the language school if I could interview the students from the Spanish classes. They told me, "no problem," but that there were almost only Chinese students studying Spanish. The Chinese culture was completely unknown to me, and it intrigued me to have a protagonist who would be a foreigner to me and the other way around. There would always be a distance, which would reflect the distance I wanted to talk about,

the distance between a foreigner and her new world.

Later, during the shooting, I realized that what we were actually doing was creating something beautiful in a badly spoken language, creating sense within a very poor language. That making this film was also about appropriating our new language.

NOTEBOOK:

Already the title, *El futuro perfecto*, announces a desire to freely present different paths for the same narrative. It feels like your film enjoys playing with fiction and fictionalizing real, quotidian events. What was your process writing and structuring the film?

WOHLATZ:

Language schools could be understood as rehearsal stages for a new identity after immigration. That's how I came up with idea of using the scenes in the language school as the structuring elements of the film. You have the scenes of the life of Xiaobin since her arrival to Buenos Aires, and you have the scenes in a language school where we see a group of Chinese students rehearsing their new text, which is the Spanish language. What Xiaobin studies in school, she tries out on

the street, and the plot moves forward. Every time she learns something new, she can do more things and more things could happen in the film. That was the basic idea for the script.

Xiaobin and I started spending a lot of time together, going to places in the city, to the movies... We talked about our experiences as foreigners in Buenos Aires, and I collected all the small anecdotes, observations and comments that might be interesting. She became someone I liked a lot and I became someone important to her, so there was a mutual influence from the beginning, which wouldn't allow to distinguish too much between reality and imagination, fictionalization of real events.

For the dramatic structure, I asked Pío Longo for help. But how would we make Xiaobin an actress of her own life? How would this process of fictionalizing her own life work? We had to try out what we were writing, so we started rehearsing: Xiaobin and Pío would act small dialogues we wrote based on the things she told me, and we tried to find out what worked, what wouldn't work. The rehearsals were also acting classes. In the second year, I gave an acting workshop for Chinese Spanish students at the language school. I thought of



Xiaobin's classmates as a Greek chorus that interrupts the life of the protagonist and comments on it, judges or predicts. I had to invent "Spanish exercises" that would keep moving forward the plot, based on the more performative aspects of language classes. When I felt that it was the right moment, we started to shoot the scenes. The classroom you see in the film was our rehearsal space; most of the Chinese actors in the film were participants of the workshop.

NOTEBOOK:

At some point in the narrative a love story emerges. It feels unique because the new couple needs to create its very own dynamics to communicate and to understand each other, while also dealing with their respective cultural differences. Could you comment on your decision to make Vijay, a man from India, Xiaobin's love interest?

WOHLATZ:

The love story is there because it's a part of Xiaobin's life, but for several reasons we discarded the possibility to shoot with her real boyfriend. Malik is the only main cast in the film who doesn't represent himself—and that was interesting. The relationship between Vijay and Xiaobin kept being a mystery to me; I couldn't explain it. Malik

is totally different from the real Vijay: he's from another Hindu cast, he's a cook, his marriage was arranged by his family, he has a child. I think him being another person saved me from trying to tell the "real love story," it helped to be descriptive. I tried to focus on the aspects that reveal something about Xiaobin's process of arrival in her new society: that she chooses someone in a "limbo position" like her, not from Argentina, neither from China, as a foreigner also in a similar situation and therefore equal to her. That handicaps like not being able to speak the official language can work as a bond. That she's looking forward to confront her parents with a provocation, as a part of her coming-of-age conflict.

NOTEBOOK:

The daily life of Xiaobin in Argentina seems shaped by the vocabulary and grammar she learns from the books at her Spanish course. But as Xiaobin renames herself Beatriz/Sabrina her character gains new layers. What is the role of language in the film and how does it limit her character? How do these limits trigger the development of something altogether new for her?

WOHLATZ:

I think that language determines us, that we can only think as

far as words allow us to do so. Maybe that's why it's so humiliating to start living in new language as an adult. So I thought of Xiaobin's character as determined by her new language, and as a character evolving throughout the film as she speaks more Spanish. At the beginning, there are hardly any dialogues at all, since she doesn't speak any Spanish. In that part, the *mise en scène* is also more schematic: scenes at the beginning don't develop much in time, they are mainly told in only one shot, as if they were written by a short memory without too many details.

When Xiaobin starts studying Spanish she receives a new name, Beatriz, like a first hypothetical new identity. When I knew Xiaobin, she presented herself as "Beatriz" to me, but it was already, like, the third name she was trying out. Spanish names seemed like dresses to her which she would try out, looking for the one that suits her new role, her new identity. In that part, she would take the dialogues from the language manual and try them out on the street, because it's the only tool she has. What happens when one can only speak in sentences from the language manual? How far can you get with this? How do you help yourself when the language doesn't help you at all? In the first part, we thought about these kind of questions.

Before Xiaobin renames herself for the second time, before she tries out to be “Sabrina,” there’s an ellipsis. Suddenly, there’s already an intimacy established with Vijay and his time in Argentina is over, he’s about to go back to India. In that part, Xiaobin’s speech is more fluent. It’s also in that part that we invented different opportunities for Xiaobin to talk in Chinese. After being humiliated as someone who struggles to express herself, she gains the dignity and calm of someone who can unite identity and language. Of course, she had never lost her ability to talk in her mother language, but it takes her some time until she finds the opportunities to integrate it into her new everyday life and to complete her new identity as someone who is living in two everyday languages. In that second part, scenes are longer, have more development and more shots. And it’s only in the end of the film, in the futures, where we would use continuity editing as a support for the fictionalization.





Nele Wohlatz

Nació 1982 en Hannover, Alemania. Estudió escenografía en Karlsruhe. Participó en el Laboratorio de Cine de la Universidad Di Tella en Buenos Aires y fue becada del Centro de Investigaciones Artísticas. En 2016 fue seleccionada para el Berlinale Talents. Su primer largometraje Ricardo Bär (codirigido por Gerardo Naumann) estrenó en el BAFICI 2013 y obtuvo premios en FIDMarseille, Duisburger Filmwoche y Antofadocs.

Films

El futuro perfecto

(Largometraje, Argentina 2016)

Tres oraciones sobre la Argentina

(Corto para Archivos Intervenidos: Cine Escuela, Argentina 2016)

La mochila perfecta

(Corto, Argentina/Germany 2014)

Ricardo Bär

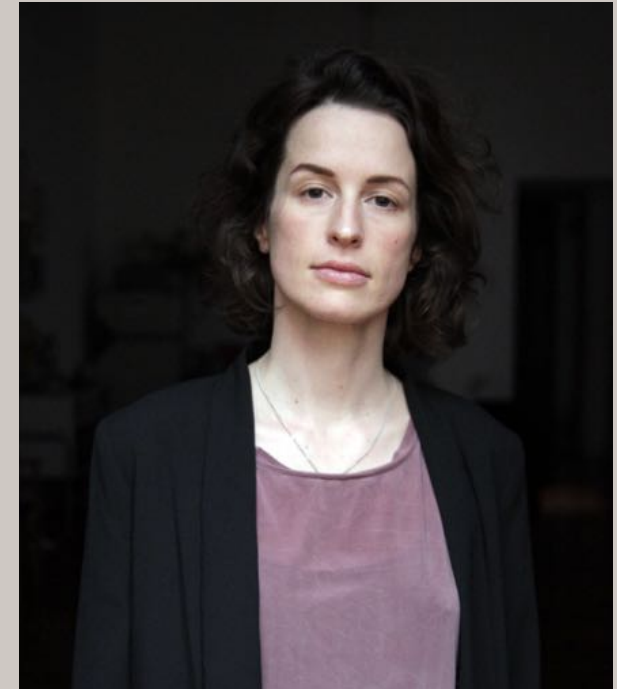
(Largometraje, Argentina 2013, codirigido por G. Naumann)

Schneeränder

(Corto, Germany 2009)

Novios del Campo

(Corto, Argentina 2009, codirigido por G. Naumann)



Murillo Cine

Murillo Cine es una empresa fundada en 2014 por Georgina Baisch y Cecilia Salim. Nació en la calle Murillo donde produjo su primera película **Hijos Nuestros** de Juan Fernández Gebauer y Nicolás Suárez. Es una productora que apuesta a ficciones y documentales que aborden la realidad con una mirada autoral e innovadora.

Hijos Nuestros tuvo su premiere mundial en la competencia argentina del 30 Festival Internacional de Mar del Plata, donde fue premiada con el premio de la SAE a mejor montaje y el premio de la FEISAL (Federación latinoamericana de escuelas de cine) a mejor película. Recibió una mención especial en el Festival Internacional de Cine de Málaga y ahí

mismo obtuvo el premio a mejor actor. Fue ganadora del concurso ópera prima del INCAA 2012 y del WIP Guadalajara Construye 2015.

En 2015 produjo **El futuro perfecto** de Nele Wohlatz (Pitching Documental Docmontevideo 2015, Docstation Berlinale Talent 2016, Ganador del BAL 2016 en el 17 BAFICI) estrenada en la competencia Cineasti del presente del 69 Festival de Cine de Locarno. Ganadora del premio Swatch a Mejor Ópera Prima, mejor película de la crítica independiente y obtuvo también una mención especial del jurado joven. En Carbonia FF recibió el premio a mejor ficción y el gran Jury Award en Afi Fest 2016.

En desarrollo, tienen las óperas primas

Mancha de Lucía Ursi Sotelo (Participante del Raymudo Gleyzer 2016) y **La botera** de Sabrina Blanco (Ganadora del Concurso Raymundo Gleyzer 2015 - Nuevas Miradas EICTV 2015 - Beca de desarrollo de proyecto 2015 de Fundación Carolina y Programa Ibermedia, Lobolab 2016). Con Rizoma, coproducen la segunda película de Agustín Toscano **El motoarrebataador**. (Ganador del Bolivia Lab 2015, Fondo de Desarrollo de proyecto de Ventana Andina 2015, Beca FNA y EICTV de escritura de guión, 2do premio VFF Talents highlight pitch award at Talents Project Market, Beca de desarrollo de proyecto 2016 de Fundación Carolina y Programa Ibermedia).

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