



POWER ALLEY

(LEVANTE)

WINNER – FIPRESCI PRIZE (CRITICS' WEEK)

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL 2023

NOMINATED - CAMERA D'OR
CRITICS' WEEK GRAND PRIZE
QUEER PALM

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL 2023

OFFICIAL SELECTION

BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL 2023

“A punchy, confrontational energy infuses this celebration of queer sisterhood in the face of Brazilian conservatism... this spirited feature debut from Lillah Halla is a vivid, dynamic piece of filmmaking driven by the sparky connections between the teammates and a terrific, pulsing electronic score.”

Wendy Ide, SCREEN

For all press requests please contact:

AXI Films

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POWER ALLEY

(LEVANTE)

Directed by Lillah Halla

99 mins / Drama / 1.85:1 / Cert TBC / Portuguese and Spanish language
Brazil, France, Uruguay

An AXI Films Release

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#poweralleyfilm



LOGLINE

Hard times require furious playing...

Teen-volleyball player Sofia's future freedom and agency are threatened by a violent swarm mentality.

SYNOPSIS

On the eve of a future-defining championship, promising volleyball player Sofia (17) is faced with an unwanted pregnancy. Seeking an illegal termination, she becomes the target of a fundamentalist group determined to stop her at any cost – but neither Sofia nor those who love her are willing to surrender to the blind fervour of the swarm.

Winner of the FIPRESCI Prize (Critics' Week) at Cannes Film Festival, **POWER ALLEY (LEVANTE)** is the electrifying debut of filmmaker Lillah Halla.



CAST

Sofia	Ayomi Domenica Dias
Bel	Loro Bardot
Sol	Grace Passô
Glória	Gláucia Vandeveld
João	Rômulo Braga

CREATIVE TEAM

Director	Lillah Halla
Screenplay	María Elena Morán, Lillah Halla
Cinematography	Wilssa Esser
Editing	Eva Randolph
Production Designer	Maíra Mesquita
Sound Recordist	Ruben Valdés
Sound Mixer	Alejandro Grillo
Sound Design	Waldir Xavier
Music	Maria Beraldo
Co-Producers	with the participation of Badsista / Juçara Marçal
Producers	Santiago López, Hernán Musaluppi, Diego Robino
	Clarissa Guarilha, Rafaella Costa, Louise Bellicaud, Claire Charles-Gervais
Production companies	Arissas (Brazil), Manjeriçao Filmes (Brazil), In Vivo Films (France), Cimarrón Cine (Uruguay)
UK and Ireland Distributor	AXI Films
Principal Location	Sao Paulo, Frontier Territory (Jaguarão) (Brazil), Rio Branco (Uruguay)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"Hard times require furious dancing" - Alice Walker

LEVANTE (Power Alley) is the story of a young woman in a volleyball group that trains together, competes together, dreams together, under the guidance of a tireless coach who, above all, is by their side.

These are people who together resist and dare to challenge the present to build another future, a future in which they are free.

Although cinema is very much focused on the director and the producer individually, it is the collaborative side of filmmaking what interests me. Having come from a theatre background and the EICTV Film School in Cuba, I value human connections and exchanges as the strongest tool in cinema. I deeply believe we all get further as a team.

The people brought onto this film all have a HUGE voice. This was the family I chose. My power alley. I wanted the work to have their 'shine' – both from the cast and from the artists in the crew. When collaboration happens in a deep and synchronised way, it's magical.

In writing, for example, the longest and deepest collaboration of them all. The endless nights, the kilometre-long collections of the almost ten versions of this film over the course of 7 years with co-writer María Elena, the support of script supervisor Camila Agustini and all hands and hearts and eyes and ears this story has had, became the invisible underground stream that was foundational and guiding. Writing is such an intimate collaboration that it strengthened our bonds over these seven years more and more. No one has been by my side as intensely during all this time as María has. We have similar and opposite references; we are absolutely different people. Yet, when we sit down to debate and write, it is as if we were one and the same. But this is a construction (and a deconstruction) over time, this is not a given gift.

Once the story was there, it was time to look for more alchemical connections in the crew and cast. This, of course, would influence the story, in return. Added to this is that **LEVANTE (Power Alley)** is not a film of a simple theme, especially, not in the political moment in which we made it (and whose temporal and political marks were very much incorporated into the film itself).

Finding the best crew was as long and hard work as the casting was. I work mostly with women and try to protect - a safe space for dissident voices, and non-hegemonic workflows, different ways of thinking about hierarchy, the responsibility of telling such a story.

I think this is my job: this orchestration of voices and desires, gathering the right people in crew and cast, who are also available and vulnerable- and creating room for the extensive process to come, by fine tuning our communication, our trust. The film style is the result of all this. But that doesn't happen out of sheer luck. Laying this groundwork first is how you build trust. And once trust is in place, it grows a film in ways one cannot imagine.

Each one of the people in this film had a very difficult story to share about abortion. Every single one. This was another undercurrent of meaning (among many others), which united us. Many rehearsals and scenes were triggers, we had safety words among the most vulnerable and exposed people there. We were moving very deep tectonic plates of our culture. There were many risks involved (and still are). A huge responsibility and challenges for a first film.

The plot of **LEVANTE (Power Alley)** is based on the stories and experiences of people we interviewed. People who, unlike me, were not lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. People who were victims of horrific strategies such as fake abortion clinics that kidnap pregnant women to prevent them from having an abortion, is, unfortunately, a reality in contemporary Brazil. The greatest inspiration for the story came from the many women interviewed who work collectively, tirelessly, clandestinely, despite the danger, to provide what public health refuses to do.

But at the same time, there was a very strong intuition during this process growing in me - the importance of **LEVANTE (Power Alley)** not being another film about the individual drama of a girl dealing alone and clandestinely with an unwanted pregnancy. Not because it is not important, but because this narrative is well known to us - as much as it's sad outcome, unfortunately, is as well known.

It made no sense in my worldview, nor in my cinema, to talk about abortion or to tell the tragic and individual story of a helpless young woman, a story we have heard a thousand times. My choice was to show this other side, collective solidarity, in which a group of people unite to transgress the laws of a state that does not protect life, that prefers to condemn them rather than give them security.

And to tell a possible story about an Uprising (Levante). After all, as violence arrives from Sofia's community, so does a welcome. Sofia is not alone, as she thought. Being an athlete is also about working as a team. The herd chasing her is fierce, but neither she nor those who love her are willing to bow down.

Lillah Halla

DIRECTOR & CO-WRITER

LILLAH HALLA

Lillah Halla is a Brazilian filmmaker graduated from EICTV, Cuba. Her short film *MENARCA* (2020), was one of the ten selected at the Cannes Film Festival Critics' Week, licensed by Canal + and MUBI. *MENARCA* was awarded at TIFF -Tirana (2021), Toulouse (2021), Kurzfilmtage Winterthur (2020) and Curta Cinema (2020). *LEVANTE* (*Power Alley*), 2023, is her debut feature film. Her second feature, *FLEHMEN*, currently under development, was part of Full Circle Lab Nouvelle Aquitaine and Sam Spiegel Jerusalem Lab in 2021/2022.

CO-WRITER

MARIA ELENA MORÁN

María Elena Morán was born in Maracaibo, Venezuela. She studied screenwriting in Cuba, at EICTV, and in 2012, she moved to Brazil where she started writing literature. Master and PhD student in Creative Writing at PUCRS, nowadays she lives in São Paulo and navigates both the cinema and literature worlds. Her first novel, "Os Continentes de Dentro" (2021) was published in both Portuguese and Spanish. Her most recent novel, "Volver a cuando", won one of the most important literary prizes in Spain, the Premio de Novela Café Gijón, and was published by Siruela, in 2023. She was one of the international guests in the 2023 Feria internacional del libro de Bogotá (filBo). The last few years, Morán has been working as a screenwriter in projects such as "Três irmãs", with Christiane Jatahy; "50 Dias", with Tiago Dottori; "Os Continentes de Dentro" (an adaptation of her homonymous novel), with Renata de Lélis; and "Flehmen", Lillah Halla's next film.



CAST

AYOMI DOMENICA DIAS - Sofia

Ayomi Domenica Dias, 24 years old, holds a Bachelor's degree in Performing Arts from São Paulo State University - UNESP, and started her path in theatre at the age of 9. In 2014, she began her career in cinema with the feature film "Na Quebrada," directed by Fernando Grostein Andrade, and since then has been part of the cast of important Brazilian audiovisual productions such as "Boa Esperança," by singer Emicida, directed by Katia Lund and João Wainer; "Dente por Dente," directed by Julio Taubkin and Pedro Arantes; "A Jaula," directed by João Wainer; "As Seguidoras," (Paramount+); "Barba, Cabelo e Bigode," (Netflix), among many others. In 2022, she joined the cast of the new play by Brazil's oldest active theatre company, Teatro Oficina, "Mutaç o de Apoteose," scheduled to premiere in May 2023. Also this year, in her first leading role, she stars in the feature film LEVANTE (Power Alley), directed by Lillah Halla, which had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival's Critics' Week.

LORO BARDOT – Bel

Loro Bardot began his musical career at the age of 18 with the release of his first EP "Caf  dos P ssaros". Despite having started in music, he holds a bachelor's degree in Performing Arts from ESCH, and his intelligence is focused on physical theater and soundtrack production. In 2015, acted in "Ramp", an English play directed by Scottish director Shona Cowie about the occupation of public schools in S o Paulo. Loro is best known for singing the opening song for the TV series "Ass dio" (Globo, 2019) and being featured in GQ magazine as one of the rising voices of 2019, alongside other artists such as Duda Beat, Jaloo, and MC Tha. In May 2021, he released the EP "Sess es de Quarentena", which addressed themes such as desire, death, and the passage of time. In 2022, Bardot worked as a microphone operator and soundtrack assistant for Greg Silvar's play "Outono Inverno", directed by Denise Weinberg. In 2023, Bardot is making his debut in the film industry in the movie LEVANTE (Power Alley), in which he stars alongside actress Ayomi Domenica.

GRACE PASS  - Sol

Grace Pass  is an award-winning actress, director, curator and playwright. She is the creator of the theatre group "Espanca!", and has written the scripts for various productions, having directed the plays "Contra  es" (Grupo 3 de Teatro) and "Os Bem Intencionados" (LUME Teatro) in S o Paulo. In cinema, she has acted in films such as "Elon N o Acredita na Morte" by Ricardo Alves J nior, "Pra a Paris" by L cia Murat, "No Cora  o do Mundo" by Gabriel and Maur lio Martins, "Temporada" by Andr  de Novais Oliveira, and "Vaga Carne," which she directed with Ricardo Alves J nior. She has received numerous awards, including the Shell Prize, the APCA, the Rio Festival, and the Bras lia Festival. In 2019, Grace was honoured at the Tiradentes Film Festival. Currently, Grace is working on the script of her first feature film, which she will also direct, as well

as developing a series as a screenwriter and actress, and the script for a theatre play.

GLÁUCIA VANDEVELD - Glória

Actress, director and teacher/researcher with works in cinema, TV, and theatre. She acted in the films "Arábia" by Affonso Uchoa and Jo.o Dumans, "No Coração do Mundo" by Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins, "Os Sonâmbulos" by Tiago Mata Machado, "Elon Não Acredita na Morte" by Ricardo Alves Jr., "Antes que o Verão Acabe" and "Angela", both by Marília Nogueira. She was also part of the cast of the series "Hit Parade", directed by André Barcinski and Marcelo Caetano for Canal Brasil. She is the creator of the plays "Jornada", under the direction and dramaturgy of Vinícius Souza, and "Banho de Sol", in partnership with Zula Cia de Teatro. As a guest actress for Grupo Espanca, she is part of the cast of "Congresso Internacional do Medo", directed by Grace Passô, "Dente de Leão", directed by Marcelo Castro, and "Real", directed by Gustavo Bones and Marcelo Castro. She also acted in the play "Sarabanda", directed by Grace Passô and Ricardo Alves Jr.

RÔMULO BRAGA - João

With a career spanning over 30 years, Rômulo Braga is an awarded Brazilian film, theatre and television actor. As a movie actor, he was in the Rotterdam selection for "Desterro", by Maria Clara Escobar, in Marcelo Gomes' Berlin Competition title "Joaquim", and won Best Actor at 2022 BRICS Film Festival and 2021 Festival de Cinema do Rio for "Sol" directed by Lô Politi. Other awards include Best Actor at 2018 Festival de Gramado and 2016 Festival de Brasília, and Best Supporting Actor at 2014 Festival de Cinema do Rio. Some of his series work include "Rota 66" (Globoplay), "Não Foi Minha Culpa" (Star+), "Aruanas" (Globo), "Irmãos Freitas" (Space and Prime Video), and "PSI" (HBO). In films, he is in "O Rio do Desejo" directed by Sérgio Machado, "Carvão" directed by Carolina Markowicz, "Valentina" directed by Cássio Pereira dos Santos, "Currais" directed by David Aguiar and Sabina Colares, among others.