



*Wishful  
Thinking*





Directors: Rodrigo Carvalhedeo, Silvia Lara  
Writer: Rodrigo Carvalhedeo  
Producers: Rodrigo Carvalhedeo, Silvia Chen

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# Wishful Thinking

A birthday wish sets in motion a surreal coming-out journey between Brazil and Los Angeles.

## Synopsis

Wishful Thinking follows Rodrigo, a closeted gay man who's originally from a conservative town in Brazil. Currently living in Los Angeles, he found a safe place to be who he is—as long as his family doesn't hear about it. This false sense of security is shattered on his birthday when his birthday wish sends him on a surreal coming-out journey back and forth between Brazil and LA. As the magical wishes wear on, he must confront his identity and relationships to understand coming out is more internal than external.





# Director's Statement

As a gay man, I have never felt safe to be my authentic self in my home country, Brazil. For 5 years, Brazil has held the shameful title of the country with the highest number of murders toward the LGBTQ+ community. Our former president was openly homophobic, claiming he'd rather have his son dead than gay. The machismo culture I grew up in made me dread opening up to my parents. But with family being a central part of my identity, that disconnect split me in two.

When I moved to Los Angeles, I thought I could simply be myself. But all the deep-seated shame had to be uprooted first. Storytelling became my outlet. Since I never saw myself in most mainstream coming-out stories, I wrote one that would feel true to me and to my family while still carrying a universality of the queer coming-out experience: the desire to be authentic. *Wishful Thinking* was born to show—not tell—my family my full identity through a light-hearted, surreal adventure. The film is my personal coming-out letter; it aims to create bridges of empathy across my family and my communities.

By sharing this vulnerable story that effected a real-life change in my family, I hope for *Wishful Thinking* to inspire LGBTQ+ youth and families that still struggle with the coming-out journey, especially those in places that remain closed-minded.

Rodrigo Carvalhedo





# The Team



## Rodrigo Carvalho

Writer/Director/Producer/Lead Actor/Editor

Rodrigo Carvalho is an LA-based writer-director, originally from São Luís, a tropical island in Northeastern Brazil. His studies have ranged from Engineering, Graphic Design, Writing and Animation, which give him a variety of skills and perspectives.

Rodrigo graduated from UCLA's Professional Programs in Screenwriting and Writing for TV, where his animation pilot, based on his hometown myths, won the award for Best Comedy at the UCLA Screenplay Competition. His work has accrued notable placements in professional screenwriting competitions.

As a gay man raised in a machismo culture, he writes about characters who navigate the struggle to be their authentic selves.



## Silvia Lara

Director

Silvia Lara is a lifelong storyteller born in Chihuahua, Mexico and raised back and forth between Mexico and Los Angeles. She strives to visually map the emotional shifts in tone provided by the story to depict as honest a portrayal of the human condition as possible.

In 2020, Silvia's work as a Director/Cinematographer awarded her the Grand Prize at the world renowned Frieze Art Fair at Paramount Pictures while her work as a cinematographer showcased in the PBS Film Festival, Outfest, and the Official Latino Film Festival.

As a UCLA and AFI Conservative alum, it is her greatest ambition to use her experience, education and skillset to tell stories from the underrepresented communities to which she has personal ties.



## Silvia Chen

Producer

Silvia Chen is a New York-based film and television producer. She came to the U.S. from Taiwan with a 6-year background in television advertising and music video production. As a proficient producer, she has produced over 40 TV commercials broadcast in Asia where her clients included Audi, Biore, Mazda, Suntory and P&G. A music video she produced, SLOW / ORIENTAL by Sunset Rollercoaster, won the prize for Best Music Video at the 2019 Golden Melody Awards in Taiwan.

Since moving to New York, Chen has produced a number of award-winning short films. She received an MFA in Film from Columbia University School of the Arts, where she was the recipient of the Richard Brick Fund for Special Distinction in Line Producing.



# The Team



## Maria del Sol

Composer

María del Sol is a film composer and classically trained pianist originally from Chile. Her recent work includes the score for "Sonnets for An Old Century," written and directed by Oscar-nominated screenwriter Jose Rivera.

María del Sol's compositions, ranging from electronic to orchestral, are strongly driven by the emotional power of story—and are intended to create dramatic soundtracks that capture both the intimate and the epic.

She received her Master's degree from the Screen Scoring Program at NYU Steinhardt where she studied under John Kaefer, Chris Hajian, and James E. Lawrence.



## Ela Thier

Consulting Producer

Ela Thier is the award-winning and critically acclaimed writer, director, producer, and performer in numerous award-winning shorts and several feature films, including "Tomorrow Ever After," "Foreign Letters," "Puncture," "The Wedding Cow." Thier is currently developing a dramedy series with actor-producer Reno Wilson.

Thier has been teaching popular screenwriting, directing, and producing workshops under the alias of The Independent Film School since 2006. Her readership has grown to over 30,000 members and over 1000 matriculated students. Thier attributes her popularity as an instructor to her belief that every human is uniquely talented, and that artists thrive with support rather than competition.



## Monica Lago-Kaytis

Consulting Producer

Monica Lago-Kaytis is a Latin-American producer born in Hollywood, CA. She joined Walt Disney Animation Studios in 1994 for the film "Pocahontas" and continued to work in a wide variety of production roles on traditional, CG and stereoscopic animated films including "Hercules," "Meet the Robinsons," and "The Princess and the Frog." She served as Associate Producer on "Wreck-It Ralph" and "Zootopia" then made her live-action debut with Netflix's "The Christmas Chronicles." Her talent for casting put Kurt Russell at the top of the list for his now iconic performance as Santa Claus.

Monica is a co-founder of the non-profit organization Rise Up Animation, which was created as a response to social injustice and inequity.



# *Authenticity & Inclusion*

To craft such a personal project, we had authenticity and inclusion as our top priorities for Wishful Thinking.

Our key creative personnel consists mostly of women of color, including our producer, co-director, production designer, composer, and consulting producers. We sought to honor the multicultural aspect of the project by bringing in talented people from all over the world with the goal of making the film specific yet universal. Nationalities represented in our crew include Brazil, Taiwan, Mexico, Chile, USA, Russia, Israel, and more.

The Brazilian cast, selected from our local community, brought in the native Portuguese as well as genuine cultural specificities. Part of the US cast identify as queer, with the director and his real-life partner playing themselves for the most authentic coming-out story possible.

With the film screened to the director's family to a supportive reaction, we included a portion of the footage of the screening in the credits to emphasize the real-life impact of the project.

By sharing such a vulnerable story that had a tangible effect on the director's family, we aim to impact LGBTQ+ youth and families that still struggle with the matter, especially those in places that remain closed-minded.





# Key Personnel

Directors	Rodrigo Carvalhedo Silvia Lara
Writer	Rodrigo Carvalhedo
Producers	Rodrigo Carvalhedo Silvia Chen
Executive Producers	Clayton Carvalhedo & Roseana Correa Miguel Mohana & Thiago Pinheiro Keli & Dennis Moloney
Associate Producer	Christian Kolb
Consulting Producers	Ela Thier Nabil Viñas Monica Lago-Kaytis
Director of Photography	Adam W. Karwowski Gemma Doll-Grossman (Beach Unit)
Composer	María Del Sol
Production Designer	Masha Lyass





# Cast

Rodrigo Carvalhedeo	Rodrigo
Fernanda Ruas	Mom
Artur Kratz	Dad
Stella Rodrigues	Grandma
Luísa Azevedo	Cousin
Louise Barros	Aunt
Petter Paulo Camargo Jaques	Uncle
Diego Lagos	Brother
Christian Kolb	Chris
Liam Shi	Lou
Jonathan Daniel Ingram	Andrew
Sewwandi	Jasmin
Chrissie Marie Bruzek	Carly





# Crew

First Assistant Director	Luisa Novo
Unit Production Manager	Shihan Lu
Art Director	Shania Gez Christopher Espinoza
Set Dresser	Natali Olvera
Art Assistant	Vitor Lima
Assistant Camera	Joe Vasquez
Focus Puller	Marley Maitland Hammer Geng
Gaffer	Erik Kjonaas
Best Boy	Xavier Madsen
Production Sound Mixer	Jason Flaster Eric Sarich (Beach Unit)
Hair & Make-Up Artists	Hanna Ribeiro Carley Franco
Production Assistants	Cassia Nunes Paulo Mello
Editor	Rodrigo Carvalheda
Assistant Editor/DIT/PA	Davi A. Pereira
Colorist	James Knott
Sound Designer	Jonathan Gauthier
Poster Designer	Brenda Maciel
Poster Design Contractor	André Dias
Family Screening Producer	Lucas Correa
Family Screening Videographer	Jonas Sakamoto





# Screenings & Events

## World Premiere

The Micheaux Film Festival



Nominations:

- Panavision Award: Outstanding Short
- Outstanding Comedic Short
- Outstanding Comedic Writing (Short)



## Special Recognition

NALIP's 2023 Celebration of Latino Excellence

# NALIP

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LATINO EXCELLENCE



## Screenings

- Vancouver Latin American Film Festival
- Reeling: Chicago International LGBTQ Film Festival
- Los Angeles Brazilian Film Festival
- Tampa International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
- San Diego Latino Film Festival
- Philadelphia Latino Arts & Film Festival
- Wyoming International Film Festival
- NewFilmmakers Los Angeles

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# *Specs*

Genre: Short, Drama, Comedy,  
LGBTQ+, Latino, Narrative Fiction

Format: 4k Digital | 2k DCP

TRT: 16m23s | Color | Digital | 16:9 | Stereo | 23.98 FPS

Language: English/Portuguese

Subtitles: English/Portuguese

Filming Location: Los Angeles, California

Production Time: May 2022 - June 2023

