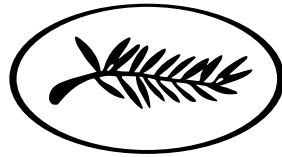


Suma Content Films, Los Esquiadores A.I.E., Movistar Plus+, El Deseo, and Le Pacte present



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2026 OFFICIAL SELECTION
COMPETITION

LA BOLA NEGRA

DIRECTED BY
JAVIER CALVO AND JAVIER AMBROSSI

Running time: 155 minutes

INTERNATIONAL SALES

goodfella

sales@goodfellas.film

<https://goodfellas.film>

INTERNATIONAL PRESS (EXCLUDING FRANCE AND SPAIN)

Martin Marquet

martin.marquet@me.com

Florence Alexandre

florence@anyways.fr



SYNOPSIS

LA BOLA NEGRA tells the story of three men whose lives are intimately connected through desire, pain and inheritance, across three different eras - 1932, 1937, and 2017.

DIRECTORS' INTERVIEW

Q: A simple question to get started: how did the idea for La Bola Negra come to you both?

JAVIER AMBROSSI

We were about to write another film, but we ran into rights issues because it was a biography. Around that time, Javi read La Piedra Oscura, a play by Alberto Conejero. It tells the story of Sebastián and Rafael—not explicitly in a queer way, but focused on their relationship. Javi immediately felt we should adapt it.

JAVIER CALVO

I remember I was on a plane reading the first page, and I started crying uncontrollably. I didn't even understand why. It just touched something very deep. I took that as a sign.

AMBROSSI

We had seen the play ten years earlier but rereading it with cinema in mind changed everything. Suddenly, in one night, the structure came to us: three timelines. It felt instinctive. We wanted to turn Sebastián and Rafael into a queer, impossible love story and include ourselves in the present timeline, questioning what we do with our heritage.

There was also this feeling that we don't always honor the struggles of previous generations of gay men. Today, at least in Spain, we live with rights that feel stable, but I'm not sure we always acknowledge the fight that made them possible.

Q: Your work often explores the past in a way that feels very relevant today. Is La Bola Negra about translating Lorca's emotional legacy for contemporary audiences?

CALVO

Yes, absolutely. In Spain, there's a kind of generational disconnect. Younger audiences often haven't even seen films by Pedro Almodóvar! There's a lack of engagement with cultural history.

AMBROSSI

We wanted to make that heritage accessible, to transform it into something emotionally immediate. Spain has an extraordinary cultural legacy: but we don't always carry it forward. What moved me is the idea that many people might discover Lorca through this film. That's beautiful. Art can act as a bridge between generations.

There's a moment in the film where Sebastián reads a poem and says, "I don't understand it." But by the end, after experiencing love, loss, and Spain itself, he finally understands the words. I love the idea that audiences might discover Lorca, maybe buy his books, and go through the same process.

Q: The film moves across different time periods but feels emotionally continuous. How did you approach that structure?

CALVO

I think this movie represents the peak of our investigation into the past. In earlier films, we explored history, but not with the same depth or importance as in La Bola Negra. There, the central question is what we do with our past, with our inheritance, with the objects and art that remain, with the traces history leaves behind. So yes, I think this film is the culmination of our engagement with the past.

Q: And yet the film seems less interested in reconstructing the past than in what remains of it. As it moves across different time periods, it never really feels fragmented. It feels more like a continuous emotional thread, with a sense of continuity extending all the way to the present.

AMBROSSI

Oh, it's a lot of work. We spend an enormous amount of time on the structure. We imagine it very precisely before shooting, even the cuts are already there in the script. If you read the screenplay, it's extremely close to the finished film. Of course, some things change, but we really take our time building that narrative architecture.



CALVO

We usually work with a huge whiteboard covered in timelines, emotional arcs, references, poems, actors' faces, almost like a collage. We map where each character is situated emotionally, how the timelines intersect, and how to navigate all those layers while maintaining a sense of continuity. A lot of it is very methodical, but there's also a large element of intuition. Sometimes it's simply a feeling: this scene belongs here, this moment needs to happen now.

AMBROSSI

And certain ideas arrive very early and very instinctively. I remember when I first read *La Piedra Oscura*, that same night I knew it had to become three storylines, that we should adapt *Queer Sebastián* and *Rafael*, and that somehow, we also had to bring ourselves into it.

We also write with actors in mind. Sometimes we suddenly think, *Penélope* would be incredible for this part, or *Lola Dueñas* would be perfect as the mother, and then those roles begin to grow organically around them. So the whole process becomes this evolving collage of structure, emotion, literature with *Lorca's* poems, actors, memories, and intuition. And we spend a huge amount of time shaping all of that together.

Q: What's sticking is that disappearance isn't just about what's lost, but also what remains unspoken. There's this tension between what all your characters feel and what they can or can't express. And your process seems to reflect that, treating memory not as something fixed or archival, but as something deeply lived and emotional.

CALVO

Yes. There was a lot of hard work once we shot the movie, especially in the editing process. We kept taking lines out of the text and letting things remain unspoken, letting them be told through the eyes of *Sebastián* and *Rafael*. That became very important to us.

There's a line in a *Guitarica* song: "Arden las duras palabras que nunca aprendí" — "the hard words that I never learned." Everything you can't say, or don't dare to say, became central to the film.

And there's also something about the three timelines: they're all constructions. We feel like this country is always trying to construct itself, trying to fix itself, but it can never fully do it because we don't really have the proper tools.

AMBROSSI

To me, the movie is really about the inability to communicate. That's why the present-day storyline, especially the relationship between the mother and the son, is so important. They cannot put together what happened in the past. That's a central idea of the film: violence is the result of silence and uncommunication. We become worse because we're not even able

to put together the pieces of our own families. We cannot say, "You hurt me," or "I'm sorry." We don't talk about it, and that silence creates separation and violence.

That idea exists across all three storylines. It's in the images too: the failed video calls, all these attempts to communicate that never fully happen. Even *Alberto* holding the intercom button at his mother's house becomes an image of that failure. *Sebastián* cannot communicate either, not even when he's old and dying. It's simply not something he learned. And *Carlos* embodies it most directly. He wants to go back, but he can't. He already said no. And now there's another chance.

That was really the idea we wanted to construct as writers.

Q: One of the themes that connects to what you're saying is repression. In the film, it feels like repression doesn't just destroy lives, it erases them from memory. And storytelling becomes a way of bringing them back. Was that also central for you?

AMBROSSI

There's a line from *Lorca* near the end of the movie: "You have to save *La Bola Negra*." Why? Because it might help future generations not end up like the characters in the story. It's not just about war or politics; it's about something more intimate. About not feeling alone, about not having to say goodbye to someone you love in silence.



Q: Let's talk about your casting process. One thing that is particularly unique in the context of your production is to see your main characters embodied by actors who are openly gay.

AMBROSSI

Yes. That was one of the most important decisions in the film. For me, it's part of the ongoing fight, it's even a political decision. To have three openly gay men leading a major film, that's still rare. Even today, many LGBTQ+ stories are told by straight actors. We wanted this film to truly be made by gay men, not just about them.

Q: And your cast combines major actors like Penélope Cruz and Glenn Close with non-professional actors. What informed that choice?

AMBROSSI

It's something we've always done. From the beginning, like in Paquita Salas, we've mixed professional actors with people from our personal lives. We actually really enjoy working with non-actors.

CALVO

And it's something that feels exciting to us, to work with people who aren't the same faces you see in every Spanish movie. At least for us, that feels interesting. And I think we partly learned that from Pedro Almodóvar. He would cast unexpected people, a torero, drag-queen figures, Miguel Bosé, and I remember finding that really exciting when I was younger.

AMBROSSI

When people first read the script and saw

Sebastián, they kept asking, "Oh my God, is he really going to be played by a singer? Why?" But in our hearts, Guitarrica was the perfect Sebastián. We wrote the role for him. We adapted the part around him. And Carlos González, for example, is a very talented actor who had worked with us before in smaller projects, but this was really the first big opportunity of his career. Or Milo, he wasn't really an actor, but he gave this audition that was just perfect.

I really enjoy working with non-actors because they bring so much of their unconscious selves into the performance. They're not trying to repeat what made them successful before. They don't fully know what they're doing, and that creates something very alive.

Q: In fact, there's such a strong sense of authenticity and connection in the film, both on and off screen. Was building that emotional reality, through the actors, the different timelines, and the way you approached your production, something that felt essential to you?

CALVO

For us it's the only way to work, to keep it real. It goes beyond the actors. It's the entire team. We've worked with the same people for years. They're not just collaborators, they're friends. That creates something real and truthful to us.

AMBROSSI

It's also just a fact that we've been working with many of these people forever. We've had the same AD for years, the same costume team. We worked with Ana López and with Roger Bellés

in art direction on our first film, La Llamada, ten years ago. Our crew are really our friends.

When we were shooting Veneno, we became very aware of the power of community. Having trans people behind the camera, on set, and on screen created something very special. People would watch Veneno and say, "Oh my God, this feels real." And it was real. I'll never forget the feeling we had doing theater with La Llamada, when we had no money and we were just a family. Audiences came not only for the show, but to experience that family, that sense of celebration, because it was genuine. So for me, building real connections is essential.

I'm not a director who pretends emotions are there. I want them to be real. I want the actors to truly connect, so we spend time together, we have dinners, we go out, we throw parties, we create bonds. We try to make a real family on set.

CALVO

Even with the extras, you can feel it. In scenes with hundreds of people, there's still something alive and intimate because everyone believes in what we're doing together. We never shoot on artificial sets or isolated corners pretending the rest exists. We use real locations because I need to believe in the reality of the scene when I'm in the editing room.

AMBROSSI

When I was learning to be an actor, I understood that actors need to believe completely. It's almost a kind of delusion, for a moment, they have to feel that everything is true. And as



directors, it's our responsibility to help create that environment. That's something we try to put into every aspect of the film: building a moment where all of us believe in it together, as a community.

Q: Poetry seems present everywhere, not only through the actual poems and the presence of Federico García Lorca, but also in the way the camera moves through time and space. So I'm curious: beyond this film specifically, how does poetry shape your creative process, both visually and narratively?

CALVO

I personally read a lot of poetry, and I think it's one of the most beautiful art forms. With so much ultra-realism and autobiographical storytelling today, I sometimes feel we've lost a sense of poetry and beauty, and that was something we really wanted to bring back into the film.

AMBROSSI

It's also the idea that you don't always have to understand everything completely. That's what I love about poetry, its freedom. Today, especially with the influence of platforms and their notes, there's often this pressure that everything must be immediately clear: "Oh, that scene is confusing." But poetry doesn't work like that. It allows space for mystery, emotion, and interpretation. And we wanted that feeling inside the movie.

Q: I'd love to talk about the metaphor of silence and snow in the film. Did you approach the snow almost as a character in itself?

CALVO

In the first pages of Lorca's play, the characters feel very realistic. He always said he wanted to write a very realistic play, but then, toward the end, strange figures begin to appear.

In Lorca's work, snow, like the moon or silver, is always connected to death. And he often portrayed these elements almost as physical characters, like women or spirits moving through the story.

We always knew the ending of the film was there, in the snow. And because the play is set in Granada, the snow immediately brought us to Sierra Nevada, those beautiful mountains above the city. We thought it could be interesting, and maybe very contemporary, to portray that character only as a voice resonating through the mountains, surrounding everything.

We were also inspired by *Así que pasen cinco años*, this very complicated Lorca play about time, about postponing feelings, postponing love, postponing becoming yourself because you're afraid to face it. And then time passes. That's why there are so many clocks in the Granada timeline, and why the snow says: "There is only now." Because time keeps moving forward, suits break, metal oxidizes, life continues.

AMBROSSI

And visually, I loved the idea of beginning with a black ball, something tied to rejection, and ending in white snow. It felt like a poetic, symbolic journey through color alone.

It was also important that the snow felt maternal, almost like a mother figure. In fact, it's the same voice as the woman in the bar who tells Carlos she lost her child, it's the same actress, just altered with an effect. Because the snow, in a way, is like a mother searching for her child.

CALVO

And there was something peaceful in that. Almost like the snow is saying: you were afraid to be yourself, but it's okay now. Rest. It's okay.

Q: There's this powerful sense of transmission throughout the film, that time keeps moving, but we continue to live, remember, and pass stories on. It's something humanity has always done, since the very beginning of storytelling: in the caves of Altamira Cave for example, and now, in places like the Cannes Film Festival.

CALVO

Art was made to remember, or to tell other people that something happened.

AMBROSSI

There was a line we cut from the beginning of the movie, when Alberto goes to Athens and talks with some women. Alberto is speaking about Greek music records, and one of the



teenagers says, "My grandmother says that emotions disappear, people die and disappear, but objects stay forever."

We cut it because it felt too explicit, but it's really the central idea of the film. Our feelings, our pain, even our thoughts, they disappear with us. But if you write them down, if you create something from them, then maybe they remain. And I think there's something beautiful in that.

CALVO

There's also this idea of the utility of art. We know ancient cultures not because of the things we think are important today, but through their art, through books, paintings, music, stories. We know how people dressed centuries ago because of paintings. We know how people lived because somebody decided to tell it.



DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHY

WRITERS, DIRECTORS & PRODUCERS Javier Calvo & Javier Ambrossi

Javier Calvo (Madrid, 1991) and **Javier Ambrossi** (Madrid, 1984) are directors, screenwriters and producers. They are the creators of *La Mesías* (2023), which premiered in the Official Selection at the San Sebastián Film Festival and selected at the Sundance Film Festival, becoming the most award-winning series in the history of Spanish audiovisual. They also created the acclaimed series *Veneno* (2020), which became a phenomenon in the United States, and *Paquita Salas* (2016–2019), whose three seasons are an absolute flagship of Spanish pop culture. Their collaboration began with the stage play *La Llamada*, which they later adapted for the big screen in 2017 with packed cinemas following its release. Today, they are widely known as the most award-winning and influential creative duo in the Spanish audiovisual industry. Their second feature film, *La bola negra*, will have its world premiere in the Official Competition at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival.

ABOUT THE CAST

GUITARRICADELAFUENTE as Sebastián

GuitarricadelaFuente is a musician suspended between worlds. Raised in the early 2000s between the quiet coastal town of Benicàssim and his grandmother's village, Las Cuevas de Cañart, he grew up surrounded by the fading echoes of rural folk and flamenco, traditions he absorbed as he gradually discovered life beyond the margins of Spain. From this upbringing, he shaped a voice that resonates with the emotional limbo of a generation caught between genuine longing and digital overload. His stage name—a playful fusion of his surname, Lafuente, and the Aragonese diminutive for guitar, guitarrica—first gained attention with “El Conticinio,” a song recorded in 2018 using only a PlayStation microphone in his bedroom. Lo-fi and unfiltered, it carried a rawness that resonated deeply, setting the tone for his rise in Spain's music scene. Fast forward to 2025—many singles and two albums later—that same humble recording was chosen for an Apple commercial directed by Spike Jonze and starring Pedro Pascal, further cementing his global exposure. More than a full-circle moment, it captured the essence of his story: how vulnerability and authenticity can carry a singular vision from a bedroom to the world stage.

His songs—modern postcards from a dreamy past—reinterpret Spanish folk traditions into textured indie-pop landscapes, carried by lo-fi tones and flamenco whispers. In 2019, early hits like “*Guantanamera*” and “*Nana Triste*”

(with Natalia Lacunza) drew 59 and 70 million streams respectively, laying the foundation for his acclaimed 2022 debut album, *La Cantero*.

His second album, *Spanish Leather* (2025)—with a cover shot by Wolfgang Tillmans—marked a breakthrough moment, earning widespread critical acclaim and expanding his audience far beyond Spain. The sold-out Spanish Leather Tour across Europe, the United States, and Latin America—including appearances at festivals such as Lollapalooza and Estéreo Picnic—further established him as one of the defining Spanish artists of his generation. In 2026, he is set to make his acting debut in a leading role in *La Bola Negra*, directed by Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi and selected in Competition at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival—further expanding his presence beyond music and into contemporary auteur cinema.

BERNARDEAU Miguel as Rafael

Miguel Bernardeau, born in Valencia, Spain, is an internationally recognized actor best known for his role as Guzmán Nunier in the hit Netflix series *Élite*, where he starred for four seasons and became one of the show's most popular characters.

He trained in acting in Madrid at Centro del Actor and furthered his studies in the United States at Santa Monica College and UCLA Extension, as well as with renowned coaches such as Eric Morris, Esther Caporale, and Sara Mornell.

Bernardeau made his film debut in *Wave of Crimes* (*Gracia Querejeta*) and later appeared

in *It's for Your Own Good* (Carlos Therón) and *Josefina* (Javier Marco), showcasing his versatility on screen.

On television, in addition to *Élite*, he has appeared in series such as *Caronte*, *Todo lo otro*, and *Sabuesos*. He expanded internationally with Netflix's 1899 and took on leading roles in major productions such as *Zorro*.

More recently, he has starred in *Terra Alta*, based on the novel by Javier Cercas, the film *La Fiera*, and the limited series *Querer*, for which he received critical acclaim and a Feroz Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor.

Bernardeau continues to grow his film career with upcoming titles including *La bola Negra*, and *Una cabeza en la pared*, further establishing himself as a prominent figure in both Spanish and international audiovisual productions.

GONZÁLEZ Carlos as Alberto

Carlos González, born in Navarre, moved to Madrid at the age of 18 to train at Estudio Corazza. Since 2016, he has taken various courses and seminars in expressive movement and clowning with professionals such as Ana Gracia, Óscar Velado, and Manuel Morón.

At the same time, he took part in productions such as *Ensayos con Shakespeare y Lorca*; *Imaginando tres hermanas*, by Anton Chekhov; and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, by Bertolt Brecht — all three directed by Juan Carlos Corazza. He has also trained with Fernando Piernas. He has also received singing lessons. In film, he starred in *La bola negra*, by Javier



Ambrossi and Javier Calvo — selected for the Official Competition at the Cannes Film Festival. He has also recently worked on the films *Como volé*, by Salvador Calvo; and *A una isla de ti*, directed by Alexis Morante.

In television, he has been part of the main cast of *Mariliendre*, directed by Javier Ferreiro; in the series *La vida breve*, directed by Adolfo Valor and Diego Núñez; portraying Bob Pop in the series *Maricón perdido* — for which he was nominated for the Fotogramas de Plata and the Premios MiM Series, and received the Ley del Deseo Award — directed by Alejandro Marín, with whom he worked again on the special *Una Navidad con Samantha Hudson*. He has also appeared in *Amar es para siempre*, by Atresmedia; *All the Times We Fell in Love*, created by Carlos Montero; the second season of *Cardo*, created by Ana Rujas and Claudia Costafreda; *Veneno* — for which he also received the Ley del Deseo Award — directed by Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi; and *Señoras del (h)ampa*, created by Carlos del Hoyo and Abril Zamora.

In relation to theatre, he co-starred in *La cabeza del dragón*, directed by Lucía Miranda, at the Teatro María Guerrero.

In 2022, Carlos wrote and directed his first short film, *Muñeca*.

DUEÑAS Lola as Teresa

Born in 1971 in Madrid, Spain. Lola Dueñas has built an acclaimed career spanning over two decades across Spanish and French cinema, becoming one of Europe's most distinctive performers.

She gained international attention through her collaborations with renowned Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar, appearing in *Talk to Her* (2002), *Broken Embraces* (2009), and *I'm So*

Excited! (2013). She also starred in *The Sea Inside*, directed by Alejandro Amenábar, which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

In 2006, she appeared in *Volver*, directed by Pedro Almodóvar, which premiered in Competition at the Cannes Film Festival, where the female ensemble received the Best Actress Award. In 2009, she earned widespread critical acclaim for *Yo, Also*, directed by Antonio Naharro and Álvaro Pastor, winning both the Goya Award for Best Actress and the Best Actress Award at the San Sebastián International Film Festival.

Her notable film credits also include *20 Centimeters*, *Suzanne*, *Alleluia*, *The Boss's Daughter*, *Journey to a Mother's Room*, and *Robuste*.

Her television work includes *Loulou* (2018), *Aída* (2012), and *La Mesías* (2023), created by Javier Ambrossi and Javier Calvo.

Her upcoming projects include *Dos Madres*, *La Bola Negra*, selected for the Official Competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 2026, and *Le Cabinet du Docteur Albertini* directed by Emmanuel Mouret. Known for her emotional intensity and versatility, Lola Dueñas continues to be a major figure in contemporary European cinema.

CRUZ Penélope as Nené

Academy Award winner and three-time nominee Penélope Cruz has proven herself one of the industry's most accomplished performers, becoming the first actress from Spain to be nominated for and win an Academy Award. Her acclaimed credits include *Volver*, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, *Nine*, and *Parallel Mothers*, which earned her an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress and the Volpi Cup for Best Actress at the 2021 Venice Film Festival. In 2022, Cruz

partnered with The MediaPro Studio to launch her production company Moonlyon. Recently, she starred in *Ferrari* alongside Adam Driver and Shailene Woodley, earning Screen Actors Guild and Gotham Award nominations for her supporting performance.

This year, Cruz starred in *The Bride*, directed by Maggie Gyllenhaal, alongside Jessie Buckley, Christian Bale, and Peter Sarsgaard. Upcoming projects include *Day Drinker* with Johnny Depp, *Bunker* from Oscar-winning writer-director Florian Zeller, and *The Invite* directed by Olivia Wilde. She will also appear in *La Bola Negra*, premiering at the 78th Cannes Film Festival, and is set to lead Nancy Meyers' untitled return to directing, slated for release Christmas of 2027.

CLOSE Glenn as Isabelle

Glenn Close is one of the most celebrated actresses of her generation, with eight Academy Award nominations to her name. She is a three-time Emmy Award winner, three-time Tony Award winner, and three-time Golden Globe winner. Her iconic screen credits include *Fatal Attraction*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Albert Nobbs*, *The Wife*, *101 Dalmatians*, and the acclaimed series *Damages*, for which she won two Emmys. She recently starred in Netflix's *Back in Action*, Lee Daniels' *The Deliverance*, and Apple TV+'s international thriller *Tehran*, Rian Johnson's *Knives Out* mystery *Wake Up Dead Man* for Netflix, the Hulu legal drama *All's Fair*, and *The Summer Book* from Music Box Films. Upcoming projects include Javier Ambrossi's and Javier Calvo's *La Bola Negra* premiering at Cannes and *Playground's Eight Part Limited Series Up To No Good* for Sony.

CAST

SEBASTIÁN	Guitarricadela fuente
RAFAEL	Miguel Bernardeau
ALBERTO	Carlos González
CARLOS	Milo Quifes
TERESA	Lola Dueñas
NENÉ	Penélope Cruz
ISABELLE	Glenn Close

CREW

Directed by Javier Calvo & Javier Ambrossi
Screenplay by Javier Calvo, Javier Ambrossi et Alberto Conejero
Produced by Javier Calvo, Javier Ambrossi & Jorge Pezzi
Associate producers Guillermo Farré, Fran Araújo, Manuela Ocón Aburto, Jean Labadie, Alice Labadie, Pedro Almodóvar, Agustín Almodóvar, Esther García
Executive producer Paula Cipriota
Line producer Mariano Piñeiro
Director of photography Gris Jordana
Editor Alberto Gutiérrez
Production designer Roger Bellés
Original music by Raül Refree
Costume designer Ana López Cobos
Hair designer Mariló Osuna
VFX supervisor Pablo Morillas
FX supervisor Laura Pedro
Production sound mixer Pau Costa
Supervising sound mixer Rodrigo Madrigal
Supervising sound editor Alejandro López & Anna Harrington
Sound mixer Mayte Cabrera
Background design Laura Ruiz Penacho
Movement & Choreography Belén Martí Lluch
Casting Eva Leira & Yolanda Serrano
Production manager Carla Lapiedra
1st Assistant director Álvaro Riesgo
Coproduced by Suma Content Films, Los Esquiadores A.I.E., Movistar Plus+, El Deseo, Le Pacte
With the participation of Atresmedia & Crea SGR
With the support of Gouvernement espagnol, Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Visuales
Spanish distribution Elastica
International sales Goodfellas