



THE GROWN-UPS

Kids who wanted to grow up and instead grew old

PRESSKIT



THE GROWN-UPS

"The Grown-Ups" is a feature documentary film, written and directed by Maite Alberdi ("Tea Time", 2014).

It is a co-production between companies Micromundo Producciones (Chile), Volya Films (The Netherlands), Mandra Films(France).

The World Premier will be at IDFA Feature Length Competition 2016.



LOGLINE

A group of friends with Down syndrome have attended the same school for over 40 years, they're aging and they have not been allowed to live adulthood on their own.

SYNOPSIS

A group of friends with Down Syndrome have attended to the same school for over 40 years, and they don't want to continue complying with school obligations. Most of their parents are dead, and none of them thought their kids would outlive them. They always believed that when their parents died, they would be able to do those things they weren't allowed to do before, like living on their own, having sex, being parents, getting married, and having a real job. But things are not changing for them, and they have to deal with the frustration of living as if they were still ten-years-olds, although they are almost fifty.



MAITE ALBERDI

As a director she has developed a highly particular style that achieves an intimate portrayal of the characters she works with, through everyday stories in small-scale worlds. In 2011 she premiered at IDFA her first and noted feature film "The Lifeguard". Through Micromundo, her production company, she directed her film "Tea Time", that has received important films awards as: Best Female-Directed EDA Award-IDFA, Best Documentary Award at: Miami International Film Festival, EIDF-EBS Korea, DocsBarcelona, FICG Guadalajara, among others. And was nominee for the Goya Awards as Best Iberoamerican Film. On 2016, she premiered her shortfilm "I am not from here", that is nominated for European FilmAwards.

FILMOGRAPHY

- THE GROWN-UPS (2016) 80 min.
- I'M NOT FROM HERE (2016) 26 min.
- TEA TIME (2014) 70 min.
- THE LIFEGUARD (2011) 60 min.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Original title:	Los niños
Film length:	82 min.
English title:	The Grown-Ups
Countries of production:	Chile, The Netherlands, France
Year of completion:	2016
Website:	www.thegrown-ups.com
Facebook:	"The Grown-Ups / Los niños"
Director:	Maite Alberdi
Cinematographer:	Pablo Valdés
Editors:	Juan Eduardo Murillo, Menno Boerema
Original Score:	Miguel Miranda, José Miguel Tobar
Producer:	Maite Alberdi
Production Company:	Micromundo Producciones
Company address:	Camino Real 4527, Santiago, Chile. www.micromundo.cl
Producers:	Maite Alberdi, Denis Vaslin, Fleur Knopperts, Sebastián Brahm
Co-Production:	Denis Vaslin, Fleur Knopperts
Co-production companies:	Volya Films, Mandra Films
Involved TV Stations:	TVN (Chile), Señal Colombia (Colombia), EO (Holanda)
Financed by:	Fondo Audiovisual CAIA (Chile), CORFO (Chile), CNTV (Chile), IDFA Bertha Fund Europe, CNC, Tribeca, Sundance, Bertha UK, World View, Señal Colombia



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The documentary portrays an unexplored niche: that of old people with Down's syndrome. We always speak about "Down's Children" and we are not used to seeing adults, much less older adults with this syndrome. What will they do during adulthood? What do we call them? This is a new reality. The situation is unattended: although they age prematurely, they are living longer lives. 20 years ago their life expectancy was of 25-30 years; today it is 60. If a woman has a child at 40 (a common age for the occurrence of Down Syndrome), and he lives until 60, he will outlive her. We face a demographic change in this group, which is increasing overtime.

We are used to seeing parents take care of their children. Only as recently as five years ago, specialized institutions are facing whole classrooms of students left alone because their parents died and no one is left to care for them. Nobody thought about it, neither the State nor the school, not even their parents, who were certain that they would outlive their children, many of which don't have siblings.

I want to tell this story that takes place in Chile, because it's one of the countries with the highest Down syndrome birth rate. Many make it to adult age, but nobody has thought about their needs as full autonomous citizens. The law does not recognize their autonomy and among other things, their parents are allowed to sterilize them without their consent. There are no employment or educational networks established for them past the age of 25. Treating them like children contradicts the accomplishments they have attained as adults and they don't feel like self-determined adults with the same possibilities as others. This is what I want the film to consider and convey.

As director, I want the viewer to identify with the impotence and the frustration of growing old before their time, without the possibility of experiencing what they wanted, thus feeling their aging process is unfair.



DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

2- Where did the idea for this film come from, and how did you find the characters?

The idea for the film stems from a personal interest, I had a close aunt with Down Syndrome; my grandmother's biggest worry was what would happen to her, when she was no longer around. My grandmother never thought her daughter would survive and raised her thinking she would always be there to care for her.

From this point on, I realized that this reality was becoming more and more common and that Down syndrome people lives' expectancy had changed radically. When my aunt was born, her life expectancy was 25 years, today is 60, therefore making them a group that has reached adulthood, in a society that had not created the conditions for them to develop into adults. I began researching all the institutions that service adults with Down syndrome, who might have been in the same situation. That is how I found the protagonists of this story, and because they were the only ones that were still lifetime friends. Public institutions in Chile allow them to attend school only until the age of 25, many remain isolated in their homes after that.

2- How does the investigation and shoot process develop?

The investigation had several stages, first it was a theoretical investigation on the subject, then we searched for the characters in all the establishments that fit the profile that I was looking for, and after selecting the place, we did a year-long follow-up observing given situations that happen there and the expectations that each of the main characters had.

I'm convinced that reality is cyclical and that everything that I saw during the investigation, will repeat itself in a similar way during the shoot. Therefore, I can foresee which of the situations that interest me will be the ones that we capture and wait patiently during the shoot until this happens. The ongoing challenge in a shoot, is to be invisible and become part of that world, which is the role that you take on, to be able to share for such a long time in a given place. The shoot made for a very intense year, coming and going to the school and also shooting some days during the second year.

3- What do you believe is this film's contribution to families, to the characters and society?

I believe each film is a contribution for parents of new generations, so that they can think about how they want to raise their children and what will they give them, looking onto their adult years. At the same time, it questions social issues that concern us all. It's a film that brings up a new and essential issue, what happens to adults with intellectual disabilities. We always talk about the children, but never of the adults. In Chile today, the law allows less than minimum wage salaries even if they do exactly the same work as someone without disabilities. Our labor laws allow this and I think that it's outrageous. This concerns all of us, I am very interested in opening up this debate, so that they can effectively work doing what they like and attain their dreams.

4- What did you learn about the subject while making this film?

I learned from people with Down Syndrome that common sources don't exist, I can't stand it anymore to be told: -but they're all so warm, or that they're little angels-, Etc. Just like in any group, they're not all the same, some are warm and some are not, there are those that are hard workers and those that are lazy, responsible and irresponsible, there are some that are very nice and some that are mean, those with good tempers and those with quick tempers and so on... They all have different dreams because they are different people, I think the film conveys that. We can identify with them as a group because we see distinct personalities and different ways of thinking, just like we would anywhere, as it was for all of us during our schoolyears or with our friends.

5- What did you learn about the trade during the making of this film?

About the trade, I learned that all the characters have different ways of being and of working. That's one of the main differences between fiction and documentaries in my opinion, fiction teams are usually alike, the amount of people working and the film techniques that repeat from one film to the next. In documentary filmmaking, as we work with different characters each time, the shooting style and the production are constantly changing. In this one, which is my third film, the radical differences with the last one and among all of them, have become very evident. Same style and same way of observing, but with different techniques, new ways of relating, new ways of envisioning the frames, the sound, the editing. When you change the characters you always have a new challenge, it's impossible to repeat, I have learned that you have to look for the best cinematographic language to represent each world. In this case, my decision was to leave out of frame all those people that were not disabled, so that we could connect with their world.

6- Which were your biggest challenges?

My biggest challenge was to break with the common belief and representation of Down syndrome people, to actually make the audience forget at some point, that they have a disability and identify with their wishes and their way of being, without seeing them as different people. To let themselves laugh and become emotional as they would with any other character, therefore reducing the gap. That was my objective and the biggest challenge, I hope I met it.

7- What was the benefit of co-producing this film?

The co-production allowed me to edit with a Dutch editor, Menno Boerema, who helped me solve this universal story. His feedback and international dialog with editors, producers and funding agents, undoubtedly helped the narrative and helped it derive into a less local representation.



AWARDS AND FESTIVALS

AWARDS

- AWFJ EDA Award, for Best Female-Directed Film
IDFA, Amsterdam, The Netherlands



FESTIVALS

- IDFA
Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2016
- Miami International Film Festival
Miami, USA, 2017
- FICCI, Festival de Cine Cartagena de Indias
Cartagena, Colombia, 2017
- FICG, Guadalajara International Film Festival
Guadalajara, Mexico, 2017
- Ambulante
México, 2017
- BAFICI, Buenos Aires International Film Festival
Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2017
- True - False Film Fest
Missouri, USA, 2017
- Tempo Documentary Film Festival
Sweden, 2017
- Salem Film Fest
Massachusetts, USA, 2017
- AFI DOCS
USA, 2017
- International Film Festival of Panamá
Panamá, 2017

REVIEWS

VARIETY

"Maite Alberdi's sensitive, good-humored study of Down's Syndrome adults expresses anger against the system with a light touch"

"Though Alberdi's short, audience-friendly film offers plenty of sweetness and light observational humor, the sad anger of its message still burns through..."

"The Grown-Ups" veers into outright tear-jerker territory, though not at the expense of its emotional authenticity"

by Guy Lodge

<http://variety.com/2016/film/reviews/the-grown-ups-review-1201924620/>

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

"Once Alberdi hands over her picture to the main characters and dispenses with an insistently whimsical score, The Grown-Ups becomes a fascinating parade of strong characters..."

("...")The Grown-Ups is as generally cheerful as its endearing stars, Alberdi delivering a bright film which is full of colour, judiciously edited to make its points with a light touch"

by Fionnuala Halligan

<http://www.screendaily.com/reviews/the-grown-ups-iffa-review/5111527.article?blocktitle=The-Latest&contentID=598>



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