

PRESSKIT



76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Berlinale Generation



PAPAYA

A Film by Priscilla Kellen



PAPAYA

75 min | BRAZIL | 2026 | 1.66 | DOLBY 5.1 | WITHOUT DIALOGUE

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SCREENINGS IN BERLINALE

SUN. FEB 15th, 9:30 AM

@ ZOO PALAST 1 (World Premiere)

WED. FEB 18th, 9:45 AM

@ Filmtheater am Friedrichshain
(Official)

MON. FEB 16th, 4:00 PM

@ Filmtheater am Friedrichshain (Official)

FRI. FEB 20th, 2:00 PM

@ Kino Casablanca (Official)

TUE. FEB 17th, 1:15 PM

@ Cubix 6 (Official)

SUN. FEB 22nd, 4:00 PM

@ HKW 1 - Miriam Makeba Auditorium
(Official)

SYNOPSIS

Passionate about flying, a tiny papaya seed in the Amazonian forest must keep moving to avoid rooting. Through perseverance, she discovers the power of her roots, triggering a revolution that transforms her world and fulfills her dreams in an unexpected way.



A CONVERSATION WITH PRISCILLA KELLEN

Without dialogue, “Papaya” relies heavily on image, rhythm, and sound. What was it like to build an emotionally powerful narrative trusting solely in these elements?

It was a long process in which, starting with the first outline developed together with screenwriter Patricia Oriolo, moving through multiple script versions (with consulting from writer Indigo Ayer), and culminating in the shot breakdown for the final animatic (a kind of film sketch, a video storyboard), we worked meticulously on the dramatic arc in order to make the story clear without the need for dialogue or voice-over narration to explain the plot. Trusting in the universal capacity to communicate nonverbally, I guided the team to use resources of dialogue-free dramatic storytelling, such as visual actions, facial and bodily expressions, onomatopoeia (with voice direction by Melissa Garcia), and sound atmospheres, as well as drawing inspiration from diverse visual storytelling techniques—such as infographics—to represent scientific concepts in a simple and playful way. Subsequently, through the editing and assembly work of Elaine Steola, we made the final adjustments to rhythm and narrative over scenes that were already animated and sound-designed.

At a moment of renewal and international affirmation for Brazilian cinema, how do you see the role of animation within this landscape and the space it has been gaining at major festivals?

Animation expands the possibilities of language and narrative resources, bringing to the cinema screen the perspectives of professionals from other artistic fields.

Generation KPlus engages young audiences without sacrificing artistic complexity. How do you see “Papaya” fitting within this curatorial context and addressing this international audience?

Papaya weaves through themes such as existential conflicts and climate issues, which are also concerns of younger audiences. I wanted to approach these subjects in a playful and poetic way, leaving room for reflection and personal interpretation while respecting the viewers’ critical sense and their developing perspective. Generation Kplus affirms that there is space to address productions aimed at children with seriousness and cinematic depth.

The film combines collage, two-dimensional forms, and Latin American graphic references. What were the main technical and creative challenges in bringing this singular visual universe to life??

Incredibly enough, one of the greatest challenges in creating the settings and characters was achieving minimalism while conveying spatiality and depth of field, all while respecting the tiny scale of the seed. We found a solution by using almost exclusively geometric shapes with flat, contrasting colors, avoiding stylistic mannerisms of drawing and realistic illustration such as gradients or cast shadows. Once we adjusted our perception to the gestalt of cut-out shapes, the process became quite playful and fun.

“Papaya” marks your first feature-length film, and it is already premiering internationally at one of the world’s most important festivals. How did your trajectory in cinema and animation lead to such an authorial and symbolic project?

Although Papaya is my first original project, the process felt very natural. My path in animation began during my undergraduate studies in graphic design, when, through Anima Mundi, I decided to work with animated film. During that period, I met Ale Abreu and began collaborating on his projects as a designer and, later, became part of the art and animation teams on his first two feature films. I then directed the series Vivi Viravento, with 26 episodes. These were very different projects from one another, all of which I followed from development through completion, always seeking the language and style best suited to the personality of each work. This journey connects to a long-standing curiosity: since childhood, my interest in drawing, painting, artistic techniques, and art history has consistently guided my creative perspective.

Being the first Brazilian animated feature selected for the Berlin Film Festival is a remarkable achievement. What does this selection represent for you personally, and for Brazilian animation as a whole?

For me, the selection of Papaya for the Berlinale is a true honor, a recognition of the artistic and cinematic quality of our animation, demonstrating the festival’s curatorial interest in authentic creations and its appreciation of Brazilian artistic creativity.

The selection of “Papaya” points to a growing interest in authorial, poetic, and diverse animation. What paths do you believe Brazilian animation can pursue following this international recognition?

I believe this recognition highlights the potential of Brazilian animation, underscoring our distinct identity, shaped by a diversity of languages, themes, and aesthetics. I see strong possibilities for creating new and beautiful works both independently and through co-productions with other countries, which broaden our reach and foster creative exchange. This movement also contributes to the training of new professionals and artists, boosts the audiovisual sector’s economy, and, above all, strengthens the development of our culture and our narratives. For me, this recognition reaffirms the conviction that it is worth investing in original ideas, exploring new paths, and believing in the power of animation made in Brazil.

In a film without dialogue, the soundtrack plays a central role in guiding the story. How was the process of creating the score for “Papaya,” and how does it help build emotions and meaning throughout the seed’s journey?

From the very beginning of the project, the proposal was to make the story clear in a nonverbal way, in order to reach the widest possible audience. Already at the animatic stage (a kind of video sketch), I added sound notes with reference sounds and music, marking atmospheres and points of climax.

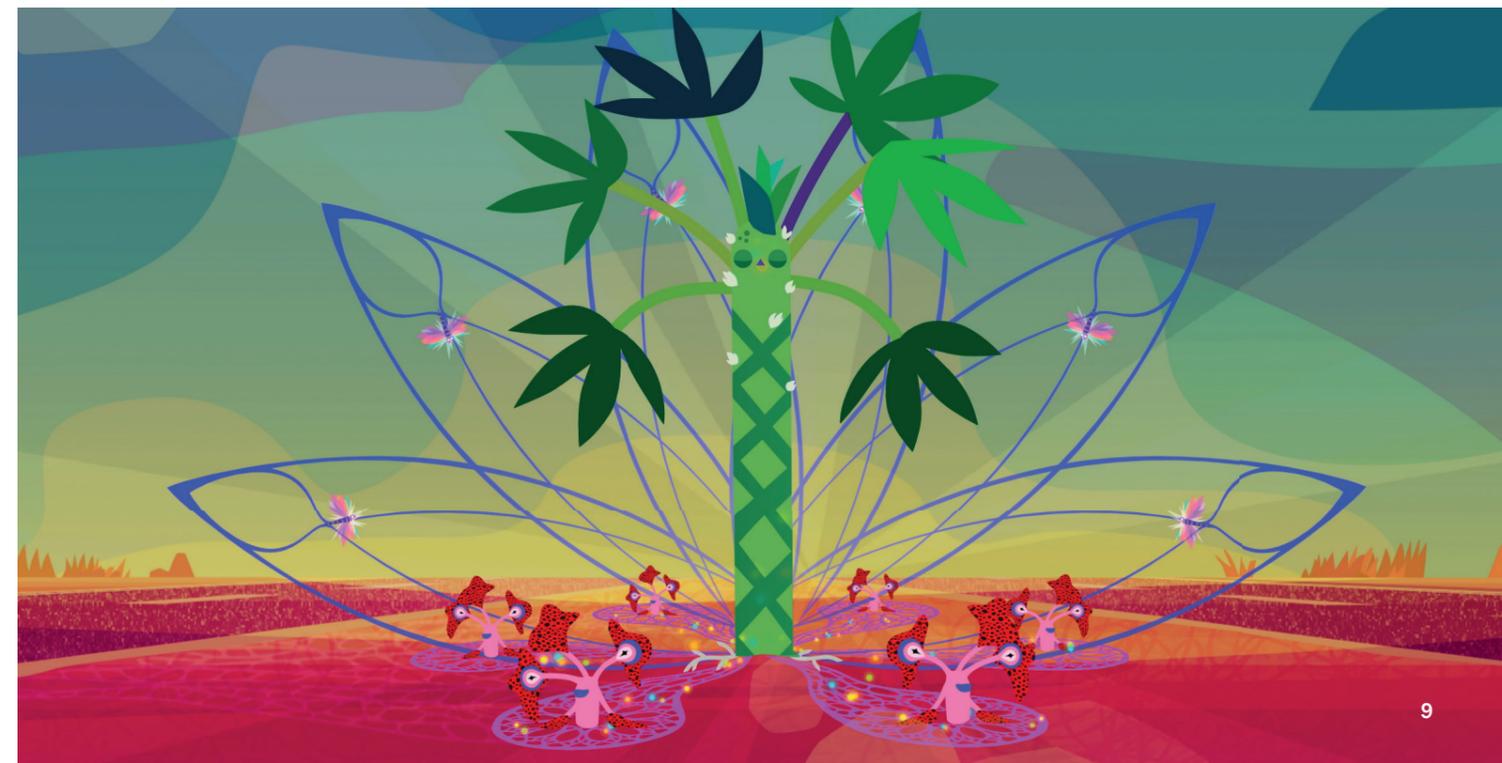
The animation and effects team developed the acting based on these sounds and reference tracks. When the film was nearly finished, music producer Talita Del Collado offered a deep reinterpretation of those references and created Papaya’s original score through a handcrafted process that took several months.

She developed musical elements inspired by the sounds of nature and, from them, composed the main musical themes influenced by Brazilian popular music from different regions, also culturally contextualizing Papaya’s native environment. In dialogue with Talita’s compositions, the producers at Submarino Fantastico studio created and edited the sound effects. And the singer Tulipa Ruiz, who lends her voice to the character Mother Papaya Tree in the film, also performs the final song, “Borboleta,” composed by her father Luiz Chagas and produced by her brother Gustavo Chagas.

Ale Abreu is internationally recognized, notably following his Oscar-nominated film Boy and the World, and acts here as artistic supervisor. How did your collaboration begin, and what did his creative perspective bring to the development of Papaya?

I began collaborating on Ale Abreu’s projects in 2003, initially as a designer and later as part of the art and animation teams on his first two feature films, Garoto Cosmico (2007) and The Boy and the World (2013), on which I served as Assistant Director. I then took on the role of General Director of the series Vivi Viravento (2017), with 26 episodes, based on an original idea and under the Artistic Supervision of Ale Abreu.

Sharing the belief that every story is unique and therefore each project deserves a production approach tailored to the specificities of its language, over the course of seven years, from development to completion, Ale offered us targeted guidance and suggestions based on his experience, with the aim of enabling the best possible execution of Papaya’s aesthetic proposal.



BIOGRAPHY PRISCILLA KELLEN



Priscilla Kellen is a director and artist with a multifaceted career spanning film, television, and illustration. She makes her feature film directing debut with "Papaya" after previously directing the TV series "Vivi Viravento" (Discovery Kids / Mixer / TV Cultura, 2017). A graduate in Graphic Design from Unesp, she brings a strong visual sensibility to her work, with expertise in design, animation, and illustration for film and publishing.

Her creative contributions include illustrating children's content for Editora Positivo, Folha de São Paulo, and co-authoring the book "Mas será que nasceria a macieira?" (Ed. FTD) in collaboration with acclaimed director Alê Abreu. With 15 years at Filme de Papel Studio, she previously served as Animation Assistant on the feature film "Garoto Cósmico" (Alê Abreu, 2007) and as Artistic Coordinator and Assistant Director on the award-winning film "The Boy and the World" (Alê Abreu, 2013), which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Feature in 2016.

FILMOGRAPHY

2017 *Vivi Viravento* TV-Series – Discovery Kids

2013 *The Boy and The World* – Assistant Director

CREW

Director	Priscilla Kellen
Animation	Birido Studio
Art Direction	Priscilla Kellen
Artistic Supervisor	Ale Abreu
Original Soundtrack	Talita Del Collado
Sound Design	Submarino Fantastico
Voice Direction and Casting	Melissa Garcia
Production	Boulevard Filmes
Producers	Leticia Friedrich, Lourenço Sant'Anna, Ale Abreu & Priscilla Kellen
Country	Brazil
French Distributor	Gebeka Films
Brazilian Distributor	Vitrine Filmes
International Sales	Best Friend Forever

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